SECTION 1

Orange County Community College was founded in 1950 as the first County-sponsored community college in the State University of New York (SUNY) System. The main campus in Middletown is located on 37 acres in the western end of the County, and the Newburgh campus is situated in the County’s eastern end overlooking the Hudson River. As a public, open-access community college, SUNY Orange prides itself in fulfilling the five critical purposes of a comprehensive community college: transfer/liberal arts education; vocational/technical education; developmental education; adult, continuing and community education; and student support services.

SUNY Orange’s mission: *We are a community of learners dedicated to providing high-quality and accessible educational and enrichment opportunities that foster lifelong learning.*

In order to execute our mission, on September 23, 2015, the SUNY Orange Board of Trustees approved the Strategic Plan 2015-2020 ([http://www.sunyorange.edu/aboutus/docs/StrategicPlan2015-2020_LR.pdf](http://www.sunyorange.edu/aboutus/docs/StrategicPlan2015-2020_LR.pdf)). This compelling strategic plan was accepted only after a yearlong community effort to construct a relevant and timely plan. Robust participation in the process came from SUNY Orange employees, students and Trustees, as well as the Orange County Chamber of Commerce, high school partners, and alumni. Numerous data sources, such as the College Profile, recommendations generated from the College’s Middle States Self-Study process, and measures from SUNY Orange’s Institutional Effectiveness Plan also informed the construction of the Strategic Plan 2015-2020. The plan’s priorities are: 1) Awareness and Access, 2) Student Support and Success, 3) Collaboration and Communication and 4) Efficient and Effective Operations.

The June 2015 arrival of the SUNY Excels 2015 Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) narrative template and accompanying data proved timely and germane. The College’s newly established executive leadership team recognized the opportunity to prepare a PIP while simultaneously engaging the College community in needed conversations regarding the implementation of the new Strategic Plan 2015-2020.

While faculty were customarily away from our campuses in July and August, the College Cabinet studied the SUNY Excels data. Cabinet agreed that the SUNY Excels data told us some surprising things about SUNY Orange. Notably, Cabinet recognized: remarkable demographic changes in our student body; a lesser rate of completions than comparable community colleges; a relative lack of workforce and short-term occupational certificate programs; and an extraordinarily small online footprint.

These observations were subsequently framed by Cabinet into six themes:

1) How Can We Best Support the Learners We Enroll Today?
2) How Can We Best Improve Completions?
3) Simplifying and Clarifying Our Programmatic Options
4) Virtualization (Distance Education and Hybridization)
5) Preparing Students for Workforce and Industry
6) Recruiting Diverse Students and Creating a Culturally Competent College

These themes, despite matching well with the then still-in-draft-form 2015-2020 Strategic Plan, were deliberately colloquialized by Cabinet to more readily approach the College community for a meaningful dialogue. The themes and data evidence were introduced to the entire College community at the College Assembly on August 26. Participants broke into six workshop groups organized around the themes to react to
Cabinet’s identified themes, to critique the supporting SUNY Excels data, and to brainstorm what SUNY Orange could do to address the shortcomings inherent in these themes.

By mid-September, Cabinet and Shared Governance’s Planning, Budgeting, and Institutional Effectiveness (PBIE) Committee separately analyzed the all-College input and provided recommendations to the executive leadership team. These recommendations included both recommendations for further study and actionable items to address the more apparent shortcomings within the six themes.

Concomitantly, an ad-hoc subgroup from Cabinet cross-walked the SUNY Orange Strategic Plan 2015-2020 with SUNY Excels/Power of SUNY 2020. The ad-hoc group verified that SUNY Orange and SUNY System were tightly aligned in their aspirations (see graphic at right).

The table below displays the synergy between SUNY Orange’s Strategic Plan 2015-2020 (http://www.sunyorange.edu/aboutus/docs/StrategicPlan2015-2020_LR.pdf) and SUNY Excels by plotting the overlap between each of the objectives from within the Strategic Plan’s four priorities against the SUNY Excels/Power of SUNY 2020 foci.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUNY 2020 Goal</th>
<th>SUNY Orange Strategic Objective</th>
<th>Access</th>
<th>Completion</th>
<th>Success</th>
<th>Inquiry</th>
<th>Engagement</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.1 Online Offerings</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1.2 College Diversity</td>
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<td>1.3 Marketing</td>
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<td>2.3 Retention, Completion, Transfer, Employment</td>
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<td>2.4 Offerings and Scheduling</td>
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<td>4.4 Planning</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Convinced of the alignment between our local Strategic Plan 2015-2020 and the system’s aspirations, by mid-October the executive leadership team re-categorized Cabinet’s and PBIE’s vetted action items to fit with SUNY
Excels’ 17 PIP prompts. The team also established a draft of the numeric goals related to SUNY Excels metrics. These documents were presented to Cabinet on October 14 for review, comment, and revision.

The revised draft of the complete PIP was released to the College community as an all-College open email on October 16. The College community was invited to reply to the email or to bring their feedback to Divisional meetings held on October 19. After this final input was considered and incorporated by the executive leadership team, the PIP was finalized and submitted on October 21.

The SUNY Excels PIP process served as the catalyst for a new executive leadership team to openly, honestly, and aggressively acknowledge challenges relevant to SUNY Orange and SUNY System with the entire College community. We rallied as a College community to provide tactical solutions to address our lagging completion rate; to support our rapidly changing student demographics; to better serve our County with workforce-inspired programs; and to make the actuality of anytime-anywhere college more available to our students. We proudly submit these documents in support of our service to our SUNY Orange Strategic Plan 2015-2020 as well as to our SUNY Performance Improvement Plan.

SECTION 2

2.1 ACCESS

1. Full Enrollment Picture

As an open access community college, SUNY Orange welcomes students with varied academic backgrounds who enroll directly upon high school graduation, as adult learners, or as transfers further along on their educational path. The College ensures student success by engaging students from admission to graduation through effective advising, counseling, career guidance, extra- and co-curricular activities, and academic support services.

In recent years the College has experienced enrollment shortfalls attributable to the changing economic climate, a decline in County high school graduates, and increased competition for students. Historically, recruitment was focused on the high school population so it is not surprising that students aged 21 and younger represent 65% of all students enrolled in Fall 2015.

Given the downward trend in enrollment, the College is actively working to support and retain its current students while developing effective strategies and programming to attract new audiences. As articulated in the College’s Strategic Plan 2015-2020, the institution will develop and implement a marketing campaign to expand the visibility of the College’s excellent programs.

*SUNY Orange is committed to playing an instrumental role in supporting SUNY’s enrollment goal by increasing the College’s overall student population to a total of 7,325 students by Fall 2020 (an increase of 5.4% from Fall 2014). To do this, SUNY Orange will maintain its partnerships with area high schools and continue dialogue and collaboration with local school districts via regular Faculty Exchanges, while expanding the range of online offerings, and introducing new program and certificate opportunities designed and intended to meet the needs of adult and non-traditional learners.*

Integral to Access is the College’s recently submitted RFP to re-establish the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP). Given the economic demographics of our service area and student population, we are an institution that is poised to recruit and retain a cohort of EOP students. In addition to an accelerated Summer developmental immersion, EOP students will be engaged in career assessment and goal-setting from the outset with guidance and advising provided by their Success Coach. Financial literacy will be reinforced through group and individual activities. Cognizant of the growing Hispanic enrollment at SUNY Orange, the EOP program will sponsor Spanish-language parent/family educational presentations such as financial aid workshops and understanding the future economic value of an associate degree. If funded, the EOP program (75 students) together with TRIO (140
students) will bolster our recruitment efforts and contribute to our enrollment goals while providing much-needed resources to an under-served student population.

**Educational Offerings** -- The College offers three degrees: the Associate in Arts (AA) and Associate in Science (AS) preparing students for successful transfer to four year institutions; and the Associate in Applied Science (AAS) providing the knowledge and skills for entry into the workforce. The College also offers a very limited number of Certificate programs. The College’s three Academic Divisions--Liberal Arts, Health Professions, and Business, Mathematics, Science and Technology (BMST)--provide oversight for 33 associate degree programs and 5 certificate programs offered full-time or part-time, day and evening, as well as online. Twenty-six percent (as indicated in the Fall 2015 Enrollment report) of degree seeking students are enrolled in AAS programs. Non-credit courses and workforce development opportunities are offered by the College’s Continuing and Professional Education (CAPE) including growing programs in ESL and high school equivalency (HSE).

SUNY Orange places high value on maintaining currency in degree programs. However, we have not historically embraced the role Certificates can play in deployment of career ladders and in career planning. As indicated within the Excel spreadsheet, the College plans to significantly increase the number of certificates awarded from 7 to 200 by 2020. To accomplish this benchmark, it is necessary for the institution to determine whether the certificates currently offered best meet student need and industry demand. Working closely with business and industry partners to identify valuable and marketable knowledge and skills is paramount to offering right-sized and scoped programs that serve our community and open the door to lifelong, SUNY-provided education. To support this effort, the College will:

- Engage with the SUNY Orange community to develop a strategy to build competencies in delivering vocational/technical and stackable certificates and credentials.
- Work with Orange/Ulster BOCES and regional business and industry to identify areas where we can integrate efforts for adult vocational program delivery.
- Through collaboration with Hudson Valley Educational Consortium partners and use of tools such as EMSI, determine training needs and opportunities within the region.

SUNY Orange has several new programs recently launched (AAS New Media) or soon to be offered that have the potential to attract new audiences. Currently awaiting approval from SUNY and NYSED, and once approved, an AS in Public Health will be part of the Hudson Valley Educational Consortium (HVEC). Reviewing offerings is a central theme in the ongoing academic master planning process. Along with reviewing programming, there will be an examination of scheduling and an ongoing evaluation of current program offerings.

Approximately 65% of all first-time students entering SUNY Orange place into at least one developmental course; this is an increase of 15% over five years. Consequently, the College has identified that one of its primary areas of focus is in addressing developmental education. **Scaling the Summer College Readiness Program** to accelerate students’ completion of developmental courses (See Completion - Time to Degree) as well as building academic bridges from our strong non-credit ESL and HSE programming to credit certificates and degrees are important capacity-building activities.

2. NYS Residents Served by SUNY Orange

Consistently, 98% of SUNY Orange students reside in New York State. The College, as previously stated, is focusing efforts on more effectively targeting those populations within the service area that are underserved. For example, the College has strong programming for populations needing English as a second language and we see opportunities to draw from the growing number of veterans who reside in Orange County.

3. Diversity
Although homogeneous in age, the student body reflects the changing racial, ethnic and socio-economic diversity of Orange County. Fifty percent of degree students enrolled in Fall 2015 are under-represented minorities (URM=Black, Hispanic Native Alaskan, 2 or more races). Of particular note is the percentage of Hispanic students, which has risen steadily over the past five years to just over 26 percent of the total population. Fully 32% of new students this semester identify as first generation; 300 are veterans or dependents and 27% are Pell recipients.

The SUNY Diversity Survey—which will be administered for the first time in Spring 2016 and includes options for self-reporting on disability, gender identity, first generation and veteran status—will provide a fuller picture of the students on our campuses. It is incumbent upon SUNY Orange to ensure that faculty and staff are culturally competent, attuned to the students we are serving today and better prepared to recognize and remove barriers to student success.

The College’s recent Strategic Planning process reaffirmed the importance of diversity not just among its students but among the faculty and staff. Efforts to create and maintain a diverse workforce include a variety of employee recruitment and retention strategies. Whether through collaborations between Human Resources and the Committee on Institutional Diversity and Equity (CIDE), expanded advertising venues for all vacancies, or enhanced orientation and mentoring programs for new faculty, the College has worked to grow and maintain a qualified and more diverse workforce. Since Fall 2009, the percentage of minority faculty at the College has more than doubled with 18% of faculty identified as under-represented minorities. SUNY Orange staff that identify as a minority has also increased significantly, from 14% in Fall 2009 to 21% in Fall 2013.

Ongoing efforts to improve and enhance the cultural competence of faculty and staff and to provide a welcoming and safe environment for our students include:

- Task Committee on Institutional Diversity and Equity (CIDE) with creating a training and programming schedule for building cultural competencies.
- Hire part-time Veterans Services Coordinator as the point person for prospective and current veteran students (budgeted 2015-16).
- Increase Center for Teaching and Learning programming/safe conversations for faculty and staff on understanding other cultures, including disabilities, veterans, etc.
- Record a student’s preferred name into Banner (Ellucian) so it may be used by professors in their class rosters (i.e. transgender student). This will create a more personal (friendly) relationship the first moment the student is welcomed into a class.
- Identify, outfit and publicize universal, single-stall bathrooms on both campuses.

At SUNY Orange a deliberate outreach into our Hispanic community and an organized internal effort to establish events, clubs, and other organizations will increase awareness and promote engagement with this population.

From the Student Opinion Survey results included within the SUNY Excels data, we were able to validate additional important characteristics about our students. Educational attainment of parents is low, 42% of students work in excess of 21 hours per week, and 88% indicate spending time each week shouldering family-related responsibilities. SUNY Orange’s students are balancing work, family commitments, finances, and their studies seemingly in higher proportion than their peers at other SUNY community colleges. These life responsibilities presumably impact the percentage of our students who are pursuing their degree through part-time student status. We have committed to dig more deeply to understand the needs and barriers to success that these students face.

4. Capacity

The SUNY Orange branch campus was designed and built to address growing student demand and bolster the revitalization of the City of Newburgh. With a maximum enrollment planned to be 3,000 students, the campus
enrolls half that number four years after the opening in its new location. It is time to overhaul scheduling, expand curricular offerings and deliberately outreach into the African-American and Hispanic populations surrounding the Newburgh campus to determine the programs and formats that would be of special service to these prospective students.

Additionally, the College’s Newburgh campus is a resource for the P-TECH Program and the EOP program if approved by SUNY. Our P-TECH collaboration with Newburgh Free Academy is designed to serve 50 students per class year, with the program capacity of 300 students expected to be reached in 2020. As P-TECH models across the state become operational and best, effective, sustainable practices emerge, such programming has the potential to be successfully replicated.

To address the growing demand for graduates trained in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) fields, the College recently built the 107,000-square foot Rowley Center for Science and Engineering on our Middletown campus. This facility houses SUNY Orange’s STEM-related degree programs of architecture, biology, engineering and the sciences. This new building positions us well to increase capacity and the College has initiated targeted marketing and student recruitment initiatives to grow these programs.

With the Seamless Transfer Initiative, the College anticipates that graduation rates and time to degree will be impacted in part due to the 64 credit hour limit, as well as being able to clearly demonstrate to students a clear path to achieving their educational outcomes within SUNY. The seamless transfer paths will be integrated into a cohort-based approach whereby curriculum development, scheduling, extra-curricular activities, advising, etc. can be better targeted. Since the focus of seamless transfer is to support students, the College plans within its marketing efforts to communicate these paths and their benefits to students’ academically and financially. (See Completion)

The College recognizes the need to move more student support services online to address the degree needs for part-time students and working adult students—both populations we project to grow. Perhaps more important is the recognition that additional online academic offerings will increase access to educational opportunities, especially for non-traditional students, and will have a positive effect on the enrollment reflected both in head count and in AFTE. This effort aligns directly with the College’s Strategic Plan objective that states that the College will increase online offerings as a means of expanding access, increasing enrollment, and promoting academic success.

To further this strategic direction SUNY Orange will

- Hire an Instructional Designer who will serve as coach, instructor and mentor to all faculty with the goal of increasing DL offerings and increasing virtual support for our students. Resources, including those available within SUNY, will be delivered to faculty in ways that encourage growth of online learning and support.
- Utilize technological tools to provide high-quality services and educational offerings in ways that are accessible anytime/anywhere for our students in order to increase success, retention and completion of degrees.

Redefining “access” from a facilities perspective, the College’s recent Facilities Master Plan encourages better signage linking the community to our campus. Further, the Plan calls for the redesign of the Shepard Student Center to centralize student and business services, the Honors Program, Phi Theta Kappa honor society and the Veteran’s resource room in one location. This will create a visually more inviting and functional “front door” to the College for students and families who we welcome to our community of learners.

2.2 COMPLETION

5. Completions
In reviewing our completion rates, retention rates, and time-to-degree in comparison to the sector, we make three important observations: our retention rates seem strong; our completion and graduation rates lag behind the sector; our time-to-degree is high. These observations have raised questions for our consideration: Why do students leave SUNY Orange prior to completion? What strategies can be employed to convert students who are persisting into completers? What impact does our growing part-time student population have on our time-to-degree rate?

Our general strategies to increase persistence and convert persisters to completers, while reducing time to degree, follow.

- **Taking a comprehensive approach toward improving clarity and cogency of our communication (including marketing) with students, both potential and incumbent, will increase total numbers of students served as well as retention and completion rates.**

- **By providing the types of support, at times and in venues when students can and will utilize the support, we anticipate positively impacting our retention and completion rates. In large part this rests with the adoption of online and electronic tools and resources that support student learning. For example, we are aware that many of our sister institutions within the SUNY system have already adopted the use of NetTutor. We plan to pilot use of this service in AY 2015-2016. Through collaborative sharing with our Hudson Valley Educational Consortium partners (and others within SUNY) who have already adopted its use, we can quickly learn from and deploy best practices to serve our students.**

- **Two important but longer-term strategies are: scheduling overhaul and accelerating developmental offerings. As part of the first phase of these changes, several preparatory and mapping projects need to take place: a review of whether or not our course offerings are out of sync with published four-semester sequences (i.e. preparation work to be done prior to a full-scale Finish in 2 program can be launched); an analysis of under-enrolled courses and patterns in their offering times or deliveries (with subsequent adjustments made to the course schedule); construction of degree-requirement packages in compact timeframes, including non-traditional (i.e. not Fall and Spring) semesters; translation and conversion of our successful Summer College Readiness Program into accelerated developmental offerings during a regular semester; review of faculty loading, as defined by our contracts, and how accelerated offerings can be integrated while honoring contracts.**

- **Building cohesive cohorts is a central tenant to our development of Registered Tracks within our AA and AS Liberal Arts degree that align with SUNY Transfer Paths (currently in the process of seeking our internal curricular approval prior to submission to SUNY and NYSED). Block scheduling, pairing club activities and cohorts, providing venues for informal learning to take place between faculty and students, are all retention strategies in AAS programs that have informed the decisions to create such tracks. In addition, we plan to market the advantages of beginning at SUNY Orange in a Registered Track and seamlessly transferring to a SUNY institution for a baccalaureate degree.**

- **SUNY Orange intends to pursue applications for major grants to augment and build upon strides made via our Title III grant awarded in 2013. The College was awarded the Title III, Strengthening Institutions Programs, grant focusing efforts on transforming the student experience to increase engagement, persistence, and retention. After three years of the grant’s implementation, the one year retention rate of SUNY Orange first-time, full-time students is now 64%. Strategies to continue, through integration into practice and process, beyond the life of the grant, include: effective use of the MySUNYOrange portal as a communication tool with students; transitioning our operations so students can effectively conduct business via mobile devices; scaling the use of technological tools to enhance and improve the effectiveness of academic advising; shifting the existing culture of comprehensive narrative explanation of programs and services; creating video summaries for each degree and developing our Trigger Points project to provide easily accessible electronic resources that address commonly recognized academic stumbling blocks for students.**
• Recently SUNY Orange was awarded a $1.1 million dollar **TRIO Student Support Services Grant** with the goal of increasing the persistence, retention, and transfer rates of low-income, first-generation students and students with disabilities. The services that the grant provides will enhance eligible students’ academic development and support their progress towards successful completion. Services include, individualized student success coaching; financial literacy training; peer mentoring and personal counseling; mid-term progress evaluations; tutoring groups; financial aid assistance; career enrichment activities; and transfer advising. Best practices for intrusive advising via TRIO, and as practiced by our HVEC partners, will be shared via Consortium-sponsored faculty sharing events and venues to improve advising for all students.

• The percentage of part-time students has been steadily increasing, with a five-year percentage change of 18.2%. This, combined with our analysis of the Student Opinion Survey results, has focused our attention on part-time students and examining and eliminating barriers to student success of that population. This area requires more inquiry and analysis.

• **Reverse Transfer** Currently we are working with SUNY New Paltz (our largest transfer partner) on a reverse transfer project coordinated by the Office of Student Mobility. SUNY Orange had been a participant in a SUNY-sponsored Win-Win project and is supportive of these SUNY-initiated projects.

Also See: Access – Building Capacity, and Completion – Graduation Rates, Time to Degree

6. SUNY Orange and Student Achievement/Success (SAM)

• SUNY Orange was one of the first colleges to submit data to the Student Achievement Measure (SAM) repository. The College applauds SUNY efforts at recognizing alternative measures of student success, particularly from a community college perspective. SUNY Orange is currently exploring, with SUNY input, the viability of participating in the Volunteer Framework of Accountability (VFA) in order to obtain more appropriate measures of success from the perspective and mission of a community college.

• In order to come to a better understanding of non-completers, we will continue to track transfer activity of our students. Some of our work utilizing the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) data has been fruitful thus far in gleaning patterns of behavior for our students. We anticipate continued and expanded utilization of such data.

7. Graduation Rates (*note: this section includes Retention*)

• While SUNY Orange’s graduation rates are lower than the rates of our sector institutions, the College’s rates have been steadily improving. It is a priority of the College to continue to improve the rates of graduation. **The College seeks to move our 150% graduation rate from 17.8% to 24% by 2020. This is one of our more ambitious goals outlined in this plan.** Detailed descriptions of plans and strategies are found in other sections of the report: Also see: Access – Building Capacity and Completion (above)

• Commentary on **Retention Rates** is included here because our stance is that improving retention rates will positively impact graduation rates. Specifically, **we intend to substantially increase the retention rates of our part-time student population from 44.9 to 52% by 2020.**

• Our College and Foundation will work together to pilot “gap” assistance (i.e. financial support devoted to assisting students with costs that research has shown interfere with students’ ability to proceed and succeed with academic study).

• As part of our Academic Master Planning process (which is being carried out during AY 2015-2016), we are in the process of compiling a report on what best practices/high-impact practices are used by institutions that have high student satisfaction scores on the SUNY SOS and demonstrated student retention and success. Coupled with CCSSE-identified and George Kuh-identified promising practices,
and through a collaborative process that includes input from shared governance, strategies that SUNY Orange will pursue and employ will be determined by March 2016 and codified in the next iteration of the Academic Master Plan.

- **Seamless Transfer Initiative**, the College anticipates that graduation rates and time to degree will be impacted in part due to the 64 credit hour limit as well as being able to clearly demonstrate to students clear paths to achieving their educational outcomes within SUNY. The seamless transfer paths will be integrated into a cohort-based approached whereby curriculum development, scheduling, extra-curricular activities, advising, etc. can be better targeted. Since the focus of seamless transfer is to support students, the College plans within its marketing efforts to communicate these paths and their benefits to students’ academically and financially.

- **DegreeWorks** has been implemented at SUNY Orange and is in use by advisers and students. All students participate in an orientation session (i.e. New Start) in which they receive hands-on training in the use of DegreeWorks. Looking forward, we are optimistic that when Phase III is rolled out, students can place transfer scenarios into the system and longer-term academic plans can be built and managed. This will bolster our Seamless Transfer work and message.

- Our Center for Teaching and Learning regularly schedules training sessions for faculty and advisors on the use of DegreeWorks.

- Additionally, regarding transfer patterns of our students, the College has submitted data to the National Community College Benchmarking Project for over a decade. SUNY Orange is making significant progress in submitting and utilizing data from the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC). Learning the transfer activity of SUNY Orange students is valuable to the College.

**8. Time to Degree**

- Strategies that will reduce time to degree and increase graduation rates will primarily be employed through comprehensive scheduling review and changes along with carefully and intentionally planned distance education offerings.

- Through scheduling changes, offer “out-of-sequence” students the availability of completing the required course(s) without sitting out a year.

- Through program development, offer more Certificate programs that will prepare academically tentative students for the workforce while providing the resources to support their curiosity, employment advancement needs and potential of attaining a two-year degree.

- In order to prepare for the roll out of a Finish in 2 program, an analysis of all of our degrees is in order. Over time, we may have gotten out of sync with four-semester sequences and the courses that we actually offer. It is time for a recalibration.

- **Remedial reform/GAP** - Students languishing in developmental coursework is a contributing factor to non-completion as well as lengthening time-to-degree. Approximately 65% of all first-time students entering SUNY Orange place into at least one developmental course; this is an increase of 15% over five years. Consequently, the College has identified that one of its primary areas of focus is to address developmental education. The College plans to accelerate students’ completion of developmental education and ensure college readiness by refining processes, services, and course sequences. We are encouraged by success that students have had in our accelerated Summer College Readiness writing-intensive offerings and we intend to replicate and scale proven success strategies.

- More proscriptive block scheduling for students who place into two or more developmental courses (which may also function as cohort building) will be developed as part of scheduling changes. Currently all students select courses a la carte. On one hand, this flexibility may be useful in accommodating work and family responsibilities (*See observations in Diversity regarding students’ responsibilities*), however
on the other hand, it does not lend to cohesiveness of linked courses and cohort building (i.e. proven strategies for student success).

- **White Paper/Investment Fund Proposal Submission** - The College’s proposal to create a Center for Excellence in Mathematics, a venue for experimentation, acceleration and reinforcement of math skills and knowledge, is directly tied to three Excels categories: Access, Success and Completion.

- **SUNY Orange** recognizes the need to accelerate other developmental offerings, especially our higher-level developmental writing course (WRT 040). A White Paper was originally submitted with a proposal to redesign developmental writing but was not pursued at the next level due to insufficient time to fully develop the proposal. The three key aspects to accelerating writing are: accurate and predicative initial assessment of placement, content structured in an accelerated format, and utilization of computers to foster writing skills (this represents a switch from hand writing that currently takes place in our coursework). We intend to pursue these pedagogical changes and seek grant-funded or SUNY System support to do so.

- We are in the process of conducting an analysis of all our degrees and what courses are needed to complete them in online formats and, as part of this review, how OPEN SUNY can work for our students.

- As part of the scheduling overhaul project, we plan to identify which courses are best suited or well-suited for hybrid delivery, and intentionally integrate that delivery format into block scheduling.

### 2.3 Success

#### 9. SUNY Advantage

To achieve true success, SUNY Orange must support the learners we enroll today by providing the types of support at times and in venues when students can and will utilize the support. We anticipate positively impacting retention and completion rates by listening to and understanding the needs of our student body. This correlates with our Strategic Plan 2015-2020 (Priority 2: Student Support and Success; Objective 2.1: Prepare students for college success through academic planning and advising and comprehensive, ongoing support).

**Applied Learning** -- In supporting student success, the College has many successful programs, services, and structures to recognize as well as on which to expand and enhance. Being student-centered, the College recognizes, through comprehensive planning, student feedback, and via the Middle States Self-Study accreditation process that advising is an area that needs to be improved. As identified in the results of the Student Opinion Survey (SOS) and in the Community College Survey for Student Engagement (CCSSE), students are less than satisfied with advising services. Consequently, in order to support student success, advising is a priority that will be central to two planning documents, the Strategic Plan and Academic Master Plan.

- The College, in response to the **SUNY Applied Learning Initiative**, has formed a committee to identify current practices as well as explore future practices for creating additional opportunities for students that “go beyond basic curriculum.” This initiative for applied learning was also recognized through the strategic planning process as an institutional strength and appears as an objective to increase such activities in the College’s Strategic Plan 2015-2020.

- Creation of an “all purpose” internship course to provide opportunities to students who currently do not have such learning experiences within their designated degree program. Currently SUNY Orange internships are tied to academic departments, all award credits and are a culminating experience in the student's program of study, available only to second-year students.

- SUNY Orange requested capital improvements to strengthen applied learning outcomes in health sciences through a new **Center for Inter-Professional Education and Simulation** -- an innovative interdisciplinary approach to allied health education. Included are: renovations to replicate a hospital environment with sections supporting individual disciplines, control and observation rooms, debriefing
classrooms, and a model apartment to practice home healthcare scenarios; simulation mannequins; laboratory furnishings, and other equipment. In addition within the grant request is a proposal to establish a high-impact networked improvement community among HVEC partners for sharing best practices tied to campus and system goals. HVEC will coordinate the implementation of key reforms improving the delivery of instruction, student services and institutional management practices through its innovative high-impact networked improvement community of practice. This scalable, replicable strategy harnesses the power of SUNY at a regional level to support SUNY System and individual campus performance improvement efforts. Implementation teams will focus on three major areas: applied learning; student support and institutional practice; and the regional completion agenda campaign, taking HVEC’s current collaboration and pushing it to the next level, representing a scalable and highly replicable model for SUNY.

Multi-Cultural Experiences -- The College’s recent Strategic Planning process reaffirmed that we value diversity as well as the opportunities to provide multi-cultural experiences and events for our College community.

- SUNY Orange’s Global Initiative is a College-wide interdisciplinary focus on a topic of global importance. Global Initiative seeks to expand students’ horizons, bring academic departments together in collaboration and infuse a global perspective on the College curriculum. While the Global Initiative is rooted in the College’s International Studies Program, the project involves students, faculty, staff, and community members in a year-long focus including discussions, lectures, workshops and other special events. Recent topics have included: Global Health, Asia, Sustaining the Earth, and Latin America. This year our theme is Water. Water is a yearlong celebration and exploration that addresses the global, human, scientific and environmental significance of our most precious resource. By sharing common concerns, these topics effectively bring our diverse community together.

Cultural Affairs -- Our cultural affairs programming is diverse and is meant to provide enriching experiences for both the College community and the community-at-large. Events are open to all members of the community and free of charge to all SUNY Orange students. To improve offerings, the College seeks to:

- Develop a college master calendar the entire College community can access for all scheduled cultural events including student clubs and activities. This will be available to all students, faculty, and staff.
- Purchase software for Central Scheduling that it allows individuals planning an event to see location conflicts and availability of rooms. The software provides a centralized scheduling and data repository for events at the College.

Committee for Institutional Diversity and Equity (CIDE) -- Our Committee for Institutional Diversity and Equity (CIDE) collaborates with the Human Resources Office to more closely match potential new employees’ demographics with student and county demographics. In addition, this committee directs strategies to infuse diversity and equity into all aspects of campus life, academic and non-academic, and assists in coordinating educational programming that celebrates diversity and equity.

Research -- SUNY Orange holds its fourth annual SUNY Orange Achievements in Research and Scholarship (SOARS) conference in Spring 2016. The goal of the SOARS Conference is to promote and highlight research accomplishments and scholarly achievements of SUNY Orange students under the mentorship of SUNY Orange faculty. The SOARS Conference provides an opportunity for all SUNY Orange students to celebrate and share their achievements in research and scholarship, and many continue on to present their research at the prestigious Beacon Conference.

SUNY Orange is an active member of the Beacon Conference consortium and the College will host the regional conference in 2017. The Beacon Conference was established in 1993 to recognize, celebrate, and showcase the academic achievements of outstanding students at community colleges in the mid-Atlantic region. In 2014, two SUNY Orange Honors students were winners at the Beacon Conference for submissions in the literature and globalization category.
SUNY Orange’s nationally lauded Honors Program highlights the cross-disciplinary nature of learning, believing that all subjects of academic inquiry are important, as are cultural awareness, community building, community service, and leadership. Featuring smaller, discussion-based (Socratic style) classes and assignments that allow for individual research and creativity, we stress the benefits of classroom education as well as the importance of non-traditional learning. Students who complete the Honors program do so having completed capstone projects under the tutelage of a mentor. They leave SUNY Orange as well-rounded individuals with much to offer transfer colleges, employers and communities.

10. Financial Literacy at SUNY Orange

SUNY Orange recognizes the financial challenges students face as they pursue higher education. Access to educational opportunities has consistently been part of the College’s mission since its founding in 1950.

- Understanding that financial literacy is essential to student success, the College’s Financial Aid Office is committed to supporting students on both campuses throughout the aid process. The Financial Aid Office keeps up to date on financial aid requirements, restrictions, and revisions, etc. Communicating clearly to students is imperative. The Office’s webpage includes need information, forms, tutorials, etc. to help support students and their families through the process of applying for and receiving aid.
- Through a New York State Higher Education Services Corporation (HESC) Challenge grant, a financial literacy specialist is able to conduct workshops for students on campus through Student Support Initiatives to help them better understand and effectively navigate the aid process.
- Student feedback on their financial aid literacy and experiences is collected in several ways, including after every workshop, the administration of the CCSSE and SOS, as well as in the National Student Financial Wellness Survey (conducted through Ohio State).
- The College has implemented **SUNY Smart Track** and makes that resource available to students from the SUNY website. A SUNY Smart Track award letter is provided to each student. Smart Track has been used to augment our existing financial literacy communication with students and their families. From the Excels data, we know that finances are a major concern impacting our students and SUNY Orange will be devoting more resources to helping students and their families understand financial issues associated with a college education.
- SUNY Orange’s default rate included in the SUNY information provided on Table 16 indicates a rate of 10.4% for 2011. Recently, the College received updated information that our Fall 2012 default rate jumped to 13.4%. While this news is unsettling, the increase is reflective of a three-year average during a period of nationwide financial uncertainty and crisis. As the nation recovers, we believe our default rate will slowly begin to decline. SUNY Orange has set a goal of 12.5% for 2018 and 11.5% for 2020.
- The College recognizes that simply having information available and accessible does not mean that it is being utilized and understood. Another effort under way is “Family Matters,” which ensures that information provided to families regarding financial aid is also available in Spanish. The College believes that making available the information to our Spanish speaking population will increase its understanding as well as their engagement with the institution, further enhancing the College’s reputation as accessible.

**Career Advising** -- Student Opinion Survey (SOS) results within the Excels data indicates that advising is an area of concern for our institution. Currently, students have access to Student Lingo (an online video) and Career Exploration tools available in the Career and Internship Services Office. Exploring career options and opportunities is a key component to advising. The College has set a goal by the end of Fall 2017 that 60% of all new students will complete a career inventory by their second semester.

- We recognize the need to advise our students towards career exploration more directly as part of the advising process and not as a stand-alone service.
Career Services can enhance the academic program by providing professional development skills and experiential education services, in addition to work-related opportunities, which complement degree programs.

Student Support Initiatives -- SUNY Orange has been the recent recipient of two grants: the first a $1.8 million Title III - Strengthening Institutions Program Grant in 2012 and a $1.1 million TRIO Student Support Services grant in Fall 2015. Together these grants position SUNY Orange to meet the SUNY 2020 challenge of timely degree completion. The new TRIO funding will support 140 students, who will be part of the Student Success project (our project title), which will feature a proactive “intrusive advising” approach that includes individualized student success coaching, financial literacy training, peer mentoring and tutoring, career enrichment activities, and transfer advising.

- Investigate why we appear to spend less per FTE on Academic Support than others in our cohort.
- Hold focus groups with students to collect more information about students’ levels of satisfaction and dissatisfaction in the categories used by both the SUNY Student Opinion Survey (SOS) and the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE).
- Delve into the differences in responses between full-time and part-time students and identify patterns that emerge.
- Compile a report on best practices used by institutions with high satisfaction scores on the SUNY SOS.
- Offer advisor training through the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL).
- Review our split model of advising and determine if it is working for our students, what it would take to overhaul the system, and what resources are needed to make a major change in our advising model.
- Explore possibilities of instituting a first-year experience course.
- Create video summaries for each degree program. Use our CTL and New Media program as resources.
- Acquire a technology platform to bring a user-friendly version of the catalog online.
- Institute a peer mentoring group to increase academic performance, campus participation, and retention.

Veteran Support -- SUNY Orange supports the initiative passed by the SUNY Board of Trustees to ensure access to a SUNY degree at the in-state tuition rate for all veterans and their dependents. SUNY Orange has a growing veteran population with more than 300 enrolled. To ease the transition from military to civilian life, SUNY Orange has instituted several new services.

- A new dedicated lounge area has been made available for veterans to meet informally with their peers.
- A Veterans Administration liaison is now on-campus once a week to assist veterans in registering for the VA Health system, help in filing claims and assist with mental health services.
- A “Vets4VETs” program is available to pair a veteran mentor with another veteran and guide them through the hurdles of college life and to share common college dilemmas.
- The newest addition to dedicated veterans services in Fall 2015 is the hiring of a part-time Veteran’s counselor to work with veterans on a regular basis as their advocate connecting them with all the veteran benefits and college resources available.

Job-Linkages Act -- SUNY Orange was awarded $69,300 in fiscal year 2014 and an additional $64,193 in fiscal year 2015 from the Job Linkage Incentive Funding Initiative, in recognition of our achievement of metrics attributable to this incentive program. The addition of these new funds assisted the College in the addition of a new degree program to its portfolio of offerings: the New Media program (a digital media AAS degree program) and Public Health (an AS degree. This new program has created much interest within our local community and employers.
2.4 INQUIRY

13. Scholarship, Discovery and Innovation

Although not a focus of community colleges, SUNY Orange has had involvement in applied research via scholarship, discovery and innovation. Below are a few examples of ongoing efforts in the areas of scholarship, discovery and innovation:

- SUNY Orange faculty and students participate in a number of research programs including SOARS (SUNY Orange Achievement in Research and Scholarship), the Beacon Conference, and the summer research projects in STEM with SUNY Purchase and New Paltz. SOARS is an in-house opportunity for students to enhance their resumes by presenting research and scholarly work while Beacon is a regional conference.
- The College’s Center for Teaching and Learning is a valuable faculty and staff development resource. The Center has a full-time director, full-time multi-media specialist and two part-time support staff who produce programming designed to enhance the teaching and learning environment.
- The College’s child care centers (the Morrison Lab School and the Newburgh Lab School) serve as a learning lab for students in the College’s early childhood education programs.
- SUNY Orange is fully engaged in the SUNY Applied Learning Initiative. We have been active participants from the early stages. We are currently conducting an inventory of all the applied learning offerings and opportunities that take place during an academic year.
- The SUNY Orange Foundation has established an Innovation Fund from which staff, faculty and students can apply for funding for entrepreneurial ventures.

2.5 ENGAGEMENT

SUNY Orange has been involved in a number of ongoing engagement efforts. They include StartUp New York, Alumni Relations, Philanthropy, Civic Engagement and Economic Development. Below are a few highlights of accomplishments in each of these areas.


- Created a review team comprised of College leadership, Empire State Development Corp. and the Orange County Partnership
- The College’s StartUpNY program currently have businesses in the pipeline.

15. Alumni/Philanthropic Support

Alumni

- Created an Alumni Council.
- Started a program for young alumni called SUNY Orange Alumni Gold (Graduates of the Last Decade).
- Created an Athletic Hall of Fame.
- Alumni are formally engaged in the annual Commencement Ceremony.

Philanthropic Support

- Current Net Assets of the SUNY Orange Foundation stand at $13,516,395.
- Annual giving from July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015 resulted in 1,048 gifts, of which 297 were from alumni
- The College cultivated 167 new donors from July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015.
• The amount of major gift support (gifts of $25,000 or more) received from July 1 2014 to June 30, 2015 was $720,000.

16. Civic Engagement

• Between 12,000 and 15,000 people attend SUNY Orange cultural events in the past academic year. The College has a full-time Cultural Affairs coordinator and a part-time Cultural Affairs who develop and provide rich programming throughout the year.

• Staff, faculty and students spend many hours annually in volunteer efforts, both in personal endeavors and within community outreach events supported by the College. However, the total number of hours is difficult to quantify. Some College-supported examples include the Heart Walk, United Way campaign, food and coat drives, and Holiday Adopt-a-Family.

17. Economic Impact

• A College-commissioned economic impact study indicated that the impact of the College is $301.5 million into the local economy. Each dollar invested in SUNY Orange by taxpayers at the local and state level generated an estimated return of $2.90, while the goods and services needed to support the College’s 1,364 employees created an additional 504 jobs within Orange County.

SECTION 3

Throughout this narrative, we have attested to our ongoing commitment to fulfilling our local mission as we faithfully serve our students and community. We at SUNY Orange have likewise reaffirmed our commitment to increasing the retention, success and completion of our diverse student populations in support of SUNY’s long-range, statewide strategy to significantly boost graduation rates and position all SUNY graduates to positively impact our local, state, national and global communities.

Specifically, we have committed to “move the needle” in these areas:

• Increase enrollment
• Increase graduation rates and convert those who we retain (persisters) into completers (graduates)
• Decrease time to degree
• Embrace development of Certificates that a) address employment needs and b) can scaffold into Associate degrees (and beyond)
• Learn more about the barriers to success that our growing part-time students face (this includes cultural competency building)
• Increase our distance learning (DL) presence and online footprint

For each of the items above, we have clear direction and initial steps that are immediately actionable as an institution. Moving forward, we are confident that the strategic priorities and objectives set forth in our recently approved SUNY Orange Strategic Plan 2015-2020 dovetail nicely with the SUNY Excels initiative and provide us with a framework to translate the more far-reaching goals and metrics of this Performance Improvement Plan into clear, concise actions steps for consistent improvement and growth over the next five years.

By remaining true to our mission, attuned to the needs of our community and the region, and guided by careful planning documents, SUNY Orange intends to serve more students, prepare them exemplarily for employment and transfer, and engage in ongoing programmatic dialogue with the wider communities in the Hudson Valley, SUNY and New York State.