

SUNY Niagara Strategic Plan



SUNY
NIAGARA



2023-2025

SUNY NIAGARA

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SUNY Niagara 2023-2025 Strategic Plan

Introduction

In 2022, SUNY Niagara undertook a comprehensive review of its enrollment management planning, looking at the entire enrollment funnel from prospect to post-graduate outcomes. The Committee established goals for the plan around the following clusters.

1. Student Funnel from Recruiting to Completion
2. Recruiting and Marketing
3. Educational Offerings
4. Data

With those strategic goals in mind, the Strategic Enrollment Management Committee led a college-wide review and update of the College's goals around areas related to new enrollment streams, curricula, engagement with regional industries, and sustainability of continuous improvement efforts.

The Committee followed through with detailed strategies and tactics that are flexible and designed to be modified by divisional leadership and program directors or coordinators.

Our 2023-2025 strategic plan thus envisions a three-year process to transform the college around new academic programs, innovative ways to improve our conversion, persistence, and retention metrics, and efficiency measures that will allow all of this to be feasible within the budget of a medium-sized institution. We aim to complete the physical transformation of SUNY Niagara in order to accommodate new programming in allied health as well as advanced technology, formally establish NFCI as our second campus, and grow college access through a mix of scheduling and modality changes in order to make it easier for working adults to access college.

Local plans within college divisions provide further detail on our plans and outcomes. Please click "Read More" for detail.

Developing plan goals

While the college organized its work around four broad clusters, more specific and targeted goals were emerging. These would become the specific goals targeted by the college. They are as follows:

1. Increase Adult Enrollment by 5%
2. Increase Diversity within the College's Student Population to Ensure the Demographics Keep on Pace with Regional Diversity

3. Increase Retention by 3%
4. Increase Yield of Accepted to Enrolled Students by 3%
5. Stabilize the College Graduation Rate and Increase Rates within Specific Cohorts and Programs
6. Develop a Marketing Plan that Employs Strategies to Support Enrollment within Targeted Cohorts and Programs
7. Promote an Efficient and Innovative System of Continuous Improvement to Support Student Success

These 7 goals aim to impact several key performance indicators, such as the college's graduation and retention rates, enrollment, and financial health.

Our Mission and Vision

Our Mission and Vision did not change between the 2019-2022 and the 2023-2025 plans. They are shown below.

Mission

SUNY Niagara provides flexible teaching and learning environments dedicated to educational excellence and committed to our core values of student centeredness, accessibility, comprehensiveness, collegiality, community partnership, and lifelong learning. Through the liberal arts and sciences as a key component of all academic programs, our College nurtures and empowers students to recognize and to value our common humanity as well as the richness of our diversity. SUNY Niagara offers quality academic programs while providing supportive student and academic services. To produce engaged citizens, SUNY Niagara provides cultural, social, recreational, athletic, and global experiences. SUNY Niagara is a major contributor to economic development through transfer, career and technical education, workforce development, and continuing education. To demonstrate integrity and accountability, SUNY Niagara operates through a collegial model of shared governance, which provides for a comprehensive assessment of all aspects of institutional effectiveness.

Our Vision

SUNY Niagara will be a leader in providing a dynamic, high-quality educational environment responsive to current and emerging needs of our students and community.

Our Core Values

The College maintains a set of core values that help define its Mission, Vision, and Strategic Plan.

- Student Centeredness
- Accessibility
- Comprehensiveness
- Collegiality
- Community Partnership
- Lifelong Learning

Our Institutional Learning Outcomes

The College has high expectations for its students and promotes a series of learning outcomes that impact all of our students.

- Independence
- Knowledge
- Curiosity
- Communication
- Values

SUNY Niagara's Strategic Goals

Goal One:

Increase Adult Enrollment by 5%

The College's adult enrollment goal is to increase adult enrollment from a Fall 2022 baseline by 5%. This report summarizes current activities as well as progress toward that goal. Adult students are defined as 25 or older for the purposes of this report.

Initiatives:

- Develop and implement a 3-year recruitment plan to address enrollment gaps
- Simplify and expand credit for prior learning to drive additional enrollment activity for both workforce and undergraduate offerings
- Increase regional reach through development of industry-driven workforce and undergraduate programming
- Build student course schedules that are flexible and responsive to student demand

- Investigate creating an Evening College to accommodate students attending classes at night and on the weekend.
- Expand services offered by the College's Child Development Center

Goal Two:

Increase yield of accepted to enrolled students by 3%

The College's relationship to Western New York is defined in part by the number of applications for admission that it receives from prospective students. This goal was designed to measure and impact the efficiency and effectiveness of that admissions process by improving the yield of applicants who go on to become SUNY Niagara students.

Initiatives:

- Develop and implement a 3-year recruitment plan to address enrollment gaps
- Work more closely with local school districts to promote the college – CTE Programs and Clubs that lead to programs at the college – e.g. FBLA, Skills, Future Teacher, ProStart, etc....
- Recruit high achieving students through the honors program and scholarships
- Develop a comprehensive communication plan that moves students through inquiry, acceptance and registered
- Develop events that assist moving students through the funnel
- Improve conversion rates for accepted students in selective admissions-policy programs (accepted to enrolled)
- Improve conversion rates of accepted non-selective admission-policy programs (accepted to enrolled)
Improve conversion rates for accepted students from historically underrepresented populations (accepted to enrolled)

Goal Three:

Increase retention by 3%

The College tracks overall persistence and retention rates. Persistence is the measure of whether a student is continuously enrolled from one full term to the next full term. We can thus measure persistence from fall to spring or from spring to fall. The classic measure is from fall to spring, as more students enter college in the fall than in the spring semester.

Retention is the measure of whether a student is enrolled from one full term to a third consecutive subsequent term. A student who enrolled in college in Fall 2023 and also in Fall 2024 will therefore be counted as persisting.

Both measures are focused on incoming entry cohorts for students who are new to SUNY Niagara. We therefore report the data for both students who are first-time in college and those who are first-time to SUNY Niagara but who have had previous college enrollment elsewhere (transfer students).

Initiatives:

- Work with Academic Notice (probation) students to improve their academic status
- Develop programming for transition to college
- Review barriers to advising for faculty
- Review barriers to persistence and retention
- Provide professional development for faculty and faculty advisors
- Review focus on target populations in communicating and supporting student engagement

Goal Four:

Stabilize the College graduation rate and increase rates in specific cohorts and programs

The College seeks to stabilize its graduation rate by identifying select cohorts for improvement. The three-year graduation rate trended sharply upwards during the 2-3 years prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and then dropped by several points in the cohorts that have been admitted since the pandemic began. The College seeks to stabilize by focusing on programs with lower rates or where specific cohorts can be assisted.

Initiatives:

- Determine cohorts with low graduation rates and investigate why students leave prior to graduating
- Set graduation goals for specific programs to increase graduation rates by programs of study
- Promote Reverse Transfer for stop outs who transfer on to other institutions and are eligible to transfer credits back to complete graduation

Goal Five:

Increase diversity within the College's student population to ensure the demographics keep on par with the diversity within the local service area and the WNY region

SUNY Niagara is a diverse institution with students coming to the College from all walks of life and geographic areas. The goal of the College is to maintain a level of diversity that at least matches the Western New York region around the College. This includes the counties of Niagara, Orleans, and Erie.

Initiatives:

- Develop plan to fill EOP program with qualified students (75 to 100 students). Improve the retention rate each year by 5%; Improve the graduation rate each year by 2.5%.
- Develop new sports programs to attract students from diverse backgrounds
- Develop and implement a 3-year recruitment plan to address enrollment gaps
- Develop a plan to increase the diversity of the scholarship recipients for the college

Goal Six:

Develop a marketing plan that employs strategies to support enrollment within targeted programs and specific audiences

The College's approach to marketing and public relations has shifted as its mix of curricula has shifted toward a growing adult (25+) population. As the College develops more workforce, evening, and online curricula to appeal to mid-career professionals and community members looking for short-term career and technical education programs, it has evolved its marketing and public relations accordingly.

Initiatives:

- Deploy a New College Brand: Developed throughout 2023 and deployed in early 2024, the College's rebranding campaign culminated in a name change from Niagara County Community College to SUNY Niagara. The College also developed new styles for the rebranding and is in the process of conducting a major redesign of its website.
- Reach New Markets through Technology: The College is engaged in a wide range of modernization initiatives to improve College workflows. These are in progress during 2024-2025 and include the redesigned website, new analytical tools to measure impact, and new web editing software and training for staff.

Goal Seven:

Promote an efficient and innovative system of continuous improvement to support student success

SUNY Niagara is a high-retention and high-graduation institution because it adopts a mindset that encourages continuous improvement within a collaborative governance environment. It seeks to enhance this approach through the formal development of a system that promotes continuous improvement through a dedicated infrastructure and work processes. This goal thus impacts financial stability, improvements in how the College recruits and matriculates students, and improvements in its use of detailed and responsive data.

Initiatives:

- **Develop a data informed culture:** The College has begun assessment of its current data culture and will have results of this assessment by early Spring 2025. This will consist of a data culture survey as well as a review of data needs for all stakeholders.
- **Administer JEDI Data Action Plan:** The JEDI Data Action Plan was developed in light of data gaps existing in the area of race, ethnicity, sex, and gender identity. These gaps were identified in 2022-2023 and a data plan was developed by the JEDI Committee. Plan elements were developed in 2023-2024 and several reports are now in deployment. As the College appoints a new Chief Diversity Officer in 2024-2025 the plan will be reviewed and adjusted in alignment with presidential and strategic priorities.
- **Diversify staffing at all levels of the institution:** While the College has not yet reached parity with the diversity of its service region, it is becoming a more diverse faculty, with a change in non-White faculty from 7.8% in 2017 to 10.7% in 2022.
- **Increase efficiency in Human Resources:** The College implemented a range of software tools during the past several years to assist the Office of Human Resources with recordkeeping, state and federal compliance, and staff evaluations. Most functions are now fully digital and allow for employee self-service.

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