Annual Report: 2019-20 Academic Year

The Mercy College 2020 Strategic Plan, finalized in February 2015, specifies four strategic goals and related objectives that are rooted in the College's mission of providing transformative educational experiences to students. The strategic goals focus on student learning, support for student success, affordability and stability, and building a college community. The development of the plan was informed by evidence from: focus groups conducted with faculty, staff and students; data-rich self-studies of the first year experience and of the institution during the decennial review; institutional indicators, and market data on enrollment and regional trends. To evaluate progress on the plan, metrics for each strategic goal were identified and reviewed by the Strategic Planning Committee in spring and fall 2015.

The College identified funding that is allocated annually to support strategic initiatives linked to the plan. Those initiatives have been noted with an asterisk (*) in this report.

The report for each goal, below, outlines the key strategic activities that contributed toward our strategy in the fourth year of the plan. The time frame for this report is July 2019 through June 2020. The college has continued to advance the strategic activities identified in the 2014-15, 2015-16, 2016-17, 2017-18 and 2019-20 reports.

Goal 1: Student Learning

KEY INITIATIVES

1. **Support for Faculty Members*:** Expanded initiatives to support faculty excellence, thirty-eight faculty members participated in either Pulse on Learning, Teaching and Learning Essentials course, or both. 429 Faculty members participated in the Teaching the Pulse On Learning Survey.

2. **New Academic Programs:** Expanded program offerings across campus locations and distance learning. New programs registered include: program names and registration approval dates are as follows: GRADUATE: Alternative Route School District Leader (July 2019), Business Analytics (April 2020),. UNDERGRADUATE: Biology, Biomedical Sciences Track (February 2020), Biology, Animal Sciences Track (March 2020), Criminal Justice, Homeland Security Specialization (June 2020). Programs expanded to Manhattan include: GRADUATE: Nursing Education (September 2019), Nursing Administration (October 2019), Cybersecurity (June 2020), Adolescence Education (September 2019). UNDERGRADUATE: Sociology (December 2019), Computer Science (June 2020), Cybersecurity (June 2020).

3. **Growth of Nursing Program:** Expanded nursing programs, coordinating enrollments with instructional resources and facilities, unifying faculty and staff, creating provisional leadership structure, and quality assurance – monitoring nclex results.

4. **Academic Technology Enhancements:**. In response to the COVID-19 Pandemic, academic technology enhancements were implemented to provide a [HyFlex Course Model](), offering flexibility and student choice. The HyFlex Course Model provides the ability to implement social distancing, provide on-campus instruction, and allow for student online flexibility. Students who are unable to attend in-person classes can fully participate online. The technical foundation of a good HyFlex classroom includes sophisticated cameras, microphones, teleconferencing software, wireless, and substantial bandwidth. In order to fully leverage the technology, the college provided in-person, virtual and online training for faculty on how to use the new technology and guidance on how to teach a HyFlex Course; both in-person and online students. The following enhancements were made: Zoom, Level 1 technology in 39 classrooms, Level 2 technology in 70 classrooms, Level 3 technology in 5 classrooms (3 existing), Experiential Learning Lab Tech Set – 39 Classrooms, and Document Cameras and Training Sessions.

Goal 2: Student Success

<u>**KEY INITIATIVES**</u>

1. **Expanded the PACT Program:** At its inception in 2009, the PACT program served only students who began with the College as freshmen, in 2015 it expanded to include transfer students, and in fall 2019 the college expanded this intrusive advising program to include graduate students.

2. **EPIC:** EPIC started as a pilot in three courses in Spring of 2018. By 2018-19, 18 courses had embedded EPIC modules into their curriculum. Through predominantly planned systematic rollout across the student experience, the number of courses that embedded career modules into curriculum in 2019-20 grew to 55. This integrated approach to career preparation (mostly as required, graded homework modules assigned by faculty) removes many barriers for students that exist under optional career models.

3. **Response to COVID-19 Pandemic:** The college pivoted swiftly to address the needs of the students to ensure student success through the pandemic. The college deployed the Mavericks Safe App to facilitate daily health screenings, provide health and wellness resources, emergency plans and campus support resources. Mercy College also established a Student Emergency Fund to help students now and in the future address urgent needs essential for completing coursework online, from food and rent to laptops.

Goal 3: Affordability and Financial Health

Note on Metrics

a. *Student Affordability*: The Carnegie Classification used to calculate the tuition ranking changed in AY17-18; therefore, the metric is not currently available in a format that can be used to compare to historic performance.

KEY INITIATIVES

1. **Mercy to leave Yorktown Campus when lease expires in May 2021**: As part of an effort to streamline operations, Mercy College will be relocating academic instruction and business functions at the Yorktown Campus to other Mercy Campuses and to the recently acquired Tarrytown property.

2. **Continued Fundraising:** Successful fundraising of $1,487,973.00 in FY20, including $471,942 for Mercy Scholars Cohort 4 (FY20).

3. **Expansion of Student Success Initiatives:** Through generous donor support, the college announced it will be expanding its Career Education Hubs to the Manhattan and Bronx campuses.

Goal 4: College Community

<u>**KEY INITIATIVES**</u>

4. **Service Excellence:** The college-wide Service Excellence initiative launched a website this year to provide the community with the most updated information on the initiative and highlight employees demonstrating exceptional service excellence. An "Everything Speaks" checklist was created for every campus to engage in continuous collaboration on visual improvements. Pilots for collecting student feedback on service experiences were also conducted in the efforts to develop a sustainable system. A Service Obstacles System was designed and launched that allows for staff and faculty to submit service obstacles so that members of the community can come together and create solutions that reflect the College's philosophy and standards.

5. **Mercy For Life**: In an effort to engage in community building activities, including listening sessions with students and attendance at student events, listening sessions with every academic department and every division of staff, participating in alumni events, the President has participated in approximately 98 community building events (including in-person and virtual events).

6. **CNR Legacy:** Strong focus on alumni events (210 CNR alumni personally invited to events), donor relations and events (CNR donors contributed $33,683), enhanced efforts in volunteer alumni leadership, extensive messaging and communication with CNR alumni, and continued CNR related program participation.

4. **New Website Launch:** In support of its commitment to service excellence, the College launched an innovative new website that aims to simplify the college search process for the thousands of students seeking their next step. The navigation has been simplified which optimizes both smartphone and desktop use, and the new website has a focus on presenting important information prospective students and their families need, while also continuing to serve current students, faculty, and staff.

1. **Exposure and Recognition within the Community**: President Hall continues to promote the visibility of the college through various engagements. Also, Mercy College achieved many accolades, including: recognition by Westchester as "Best College" for 2020 – for the second year in a row, Mercy College PACT Program recognized as 2020 Finalist by Examples of Excelencia by Excelencia in Education, Mercy College wins top spot in annual Hobsons Education Advances Award for Admission, and also is recognized in three categories; Social Mobility, Campus Ethnic Diversity, and Best Regional University; by U.S. News & World Report's Best College Rankings 2020.