College Strategic Directions
Navigating the Path Ahead 2021 - 2025
MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

In fall 2020, our Board of Trustees launched a collaborative process to develop new strategic directions for Delaware Tech, which were derived from an in-depth review of current and future trends and will help us be responsive to external forces while continuing to fulfill our Mission of keeping students at the center of everything we do. With guidance from Board members and College administrators, the Strategic Directions Task Force identified trends that will impact us in the near future and developed strategic directions that enable us to address those trends and advance the College’s Mission and Vision. The strategic directions were then vetted by the college community, and feedback was considered and incorporated before being presented to President’s Council and the Board of Trustees for approval.

Strategic directions provide the framework for our future goals and objectives, and it is our collective responsibility to apply them in ways that continue to advance Delaware Tech as a strategic partner in meeting the educational and workforce needs of the state. During this time of transformational change at the College, these strategic directions position us to be responsive, innovative, and successful in our work over the next four years.

My thanks to the members of the Strategic Directions Development Task Force for their hard work in creating our 2021-2025 College Strategic Directions, which will guide our future planning efforts as we renew our commitment to keeping students at the center of everything we do.

Mark T. Brainard
President

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Strategic Directions respond to trends in the external environment that will impact accomplishment of the College mission and vision. The Strategic Directions position the College to successfully address opportunities and obstacles presented by external trends. The Strategic Directions serve as the foundation for developing strategic goals in the College and Campus Plans.

1. Augment innovative and flexible program offerings that reflect best practices, address workforce needs, and advance student success.

2. Strengthen the framework for holistic student supports to expand delivery and outreach to all students.

3. Institutionalize the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

4. Foster employee development and retention.

5. Invest in technology and facilities to advance flexible, innovative, and secure learning and work opportunities.

6. Optimize strategic partnerships to respond to economic change, innovations in technology, and shifting workforce demands.
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<td>Changing Demographics</td>
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### Trend Areas In Relation to Strategic Directions

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Trend Area
Learning Transformation

Student success, retention, and academic performance depend on innovative and flexible learning modalities, relevant content and programming, well-trained faculty and staff, and digital equity and access across the education spectrum:

- Students want colleges to adapt to new learning environments without losing the traditional feel of attending college, including flexibility, modular learning, remote learning, and short-term certificate programs that articulate to degrees.

- Higher education institutions should provide technological resources, universal design for all courses, extensive virtual support, and computer lending opportunities to the student population to alleviate equity discrepancies.

- Because an increasing number of students access higher education virtually, using cell phones and through video conferencing, higher education institutions need to address challenges such as equity, perceptions about using technology, appropriate standards and policies, accessible and creative course design, and student attitudes about learning outside of the traditional classroom.

- Higher education institutions need to provide better bridges for students with credit for prior learning, stackable credentials, skill-based and online credentials, and non-degree and skills training options.

- Higher education institutions need to provide ongoing professional development to address the advancement of online and remote learning, especially for many occupational programs which traditionally rely on in-person, hands-on instruction.

- Social, technological, and economic issues impact digital equity and access, such as data privacy, increased use of personal devices, and mergers/acquisitions in higher education.

- Artificial intelligence, automation, and virtual reality are currently progressing at an accelerated pace and will impact higher education, benefit all learners, and increase learning opportunities and experiences.

- Offering baccalaureate degrees at community colleges supports the extension of associate degree programs, advances socioeconomic mobility for low-income students, serves a more diverse population, and limits negative impacts of transfer credit policies, cost, changes in career fields, and access to higher education.

Overarching Trend

Changing student expectations, varied learning demand, and equitable access will require higher education institutions to expand and sustain ongoing development to support students and employees in a more flexible, diverse, automated, and skills-oriented educational environment.
As students at higher education institutions have increasing demands and barriers that hinder successful completion of college, higher education institutions must design and implement an equitable and holistic student support approach to provide all students with the nature and level of support needed to achieve their educational and career goals.

- Community colleges enroll the most diverse population in higher education, resulting in the increased need for targeted approaches and customized services to support recruitment, persistence, retention, and completion.

- Community colleges need to develop, expand, and enhance services to address the economic circumstances, competing demands, and limited financial and medical resources impacting their students.

- Wraparound support services designed to address basic student needs (housing, food, medicine, employment), especially at critical times in the student’s educational journey, are essential to overall student success.

- Increased mental health challenges necessitate that higher education institutions strengthen related support services, expand collaboration with external resources, and invest in professional development for faculty and staff to recognize these challenges and connect students with critical support.

- Increased cost of attendance and complex financial aid processes hinder access to higher education and impact student retention and completion.

- Institutions of higher education must strategically align holistic student supports with the mission and institutional priorities of the institution.

Overarching Trend

Increasingly diverse student needs demand higher education institutions to provide intentional, equitable, holistic, and student-centered academic and wraparound support services, financial supports, and personalized engagement efforts to foster student success.
Workplaces are evolving to require diverse, equitable, and inclusive practices; secure and comprehensive remote work structures and policies; and investments in employee development:

- Higher education institutions seeking to build a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive campus community will need to link these values to its mission and guide efforts to conceptualize, define, nurture, assess, and cultivate those values as an institutional practice.

- Organizations seeking to establish a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion will need to understand and invest in the policies, processes, physical spaces, and products needed for people to feel valued and included.

- Employee expectations for flexible and remote work opportunities in a post-pandemic environment require organizations to review, revise, and establish equitable remote work policies, processes, and resources.

- Remote work environments, necessitated from the pandemic, present higher education institutions the opportunity to rescale and/or reinvent their business models and will require a robust, reliable, secure, and accessible technology infrastructure.

- As institutions of higher education transform technological structures and increasingly rely on these structures to deliver instruction and conduct operations, cybersecurity attacks are rising.

- Organizations will need to address the aging workforce population by expanding and enhancing related professional development opportunities and work/life balance initiatives.

Overarching Trend

Heightened societal values and expectations will challenge organizations to establish a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion and transform technological structures and policies to support remote work and professional development opportunities.
Changing demographics will affect higher education as a whole with declining enrollment and an increasingly diverse and aging student population:

- One major population change that has been anticipated for a while is the aging baby-boomers. That will result in both older workers (as some will choose not to retire) and increased health care needs, and fewer numbers of high school graduates as the population in Delaware remains stagnant in this age group.

- By 2026, two-year colleges will experience a national decline of 10% because in 2008 – 2019, 6.6 million fewer children were born as compared to 2007.

- Reverse transfer from four-year institutions has experienced a strong decline, further affecting community college enrollment.

- The decline in male students was three times that of females. Among undergraduates, the decline was greatest with international students 14.9%, Native Americans 9.6%.

- Demographics of community colleges are experiencing change with increased female and Hispanic populations. Additionally, 44% of community college students are over 25 years of age. More students are parents and half of those are single parents.

- For first-generation college students, particularly students of color and those from low-income families, community college can be a path to a four-year degree or a middle-skill career.

- The top concerns of Generation Z students when considering their educational futures were costs (50%) and landing a solid job (44%). Another 44% fear they will not have the skills they needed once hired. While more than 50% of students surveyed say they are worried about their future, a staggering one-third say the financial fallout of the pandemic has made it unlikely they will pursue a four-year degree.

Overarching Trend

Changing demographics of the student population will require higher education to continually shift practices, policies, programs, and recruitment and retention efforts to combat declining enrollment and ensure access, value, and accountability.
Trend Area

Strategic Workforce Partnerships

Economic growth and a sustainable workforce requires collaborative engagement among business, community, and higher education to train, upskill, and reskill individuals and address employer needs.

• Delaware’s Workforce Development Board envisions an integrated workforce system in collaboration with diverse partners that promotes innovative workforce investment to prepare and connect Delawareans with training, education, jobs, and other resources through higher education and other professional or trades training programs.

• Delaware economic strategy focuses on attracting and sustaining businesses in the healthcare, manufacturing, and distribution and logistics industries and creating job training opportunities.

• Growth and support of rural communities is critical to stimulate and foster entrepreneurial opportunities.

• Highest projected job growth industries in Delaware by 2028 include healthcare, social assistance, construction, transportation and warehousing, accommodation and food services, manufacturing, and education.

• Innovation in technology, automation, and artificial intelligence will impact workforce needs and required job skills.

• Expanded community partners and networks are needed to respond to identified skills gaps, develop effective, relevant work-based learning opportunities and program offerings, and support workforce needs.

• Students are expecting colleges to play a bigger role in facilitating co-ops, externships, and project-based learning through industry partnerships.

• Colleges and universities are providing customized, short-term, alternative credentials in boot camp formats for companies seeking specialized skills sets for their employees.

Overarching Trend

Higher education institutions must increase and sustain meaningful strategic partnerships with businesses and organizations to address industry needs, technology shifts, and educational gaps and optimize workforce skills and economic growth.
MISSION

Delaware Technical Community College - Students are at the Center of Everything We Do. We empower students to change their lives through comprehensive educational opportunities and supportive services. As the state’s only community college, we provide quality education that is accessible, relevant, and responsive to labor market and community needs while contributing to Delaware’s economic vitality. We value all individuals and provide an inclusive environment that fosters equity and student success.

VISION STATEMENT (2020 - 2024)

Delaware Technical Community College will be:

• An institution dedicated to providing innovative, flexible instructional practices, high-impact engagement strategies, and holistic services to ensure equity and support student success.

• An institution that fuels the economic success of the State and well-being of Delawareans through programs that respond to increasingly rigorous and evolving industry requirements and workforce needs.

• An educational leader in creating and facilitating innovative pathways that advance career and transfer opportunities for students.

• An institution that cultivates and leverages industry, government, donor, and individual partnerships to advance the College’s immediate and long-term priorities.

• An institution committed to an inclusive and diverse workforce supported and retained through equitable policies, professional development opportunities, and competitive benefits packages and compensation structures.

• An institution that effectively harnesses traditional and new media to elevate its reputation for program excellence, value, job-ready graduates, and putting students first.

• An institution driven by a culture of inquiry and innovative, accessible data analysis to inform decision-making.

• An institution in which the organizational, governance, fiscal, and technological structures support flexibility and responsiveness to adapt to changing educational and economic environments.
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