Title Page: Onondaga Community College 2025 Self Study

DRAFT AS OF 9.29.2025

Onondaga Community College

Self Study 2025

Middle States Commission on Higher Education

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Onondaga Community College's (OCC) primary strengths are its resilience, adaptability, and the fact that staff, administration, and faculty are all working toward a common goal – student success. The College has weathered many challenges since 2018, but its success in overcoming them is attributable to these three qualities.

Standard 1 makes it clear that OCC stays relevant to the community by adapting to changing needs. It has made substantial progress in student persistence and other success measures. OCC is however still working on attracting new student audiences as it enhances or expands transfer opportunities for students in Liberal Arts Programs.

Standard 2 shows OCC's foundational culture of ethics and integrity with its commitment to transparency and communication in all areas. The administration of the PACE campus climate survey, the audit of student facing communications, and the re-writing of Academic Rule to ensure clarity are evidence of this culture. The College is also working on increasing the diversity of its workforce to better match student and community demographics.

Standard 3 outlines how OCC provides challenging, clear, and connected learning experience across all degrees, certificates, and modalities of instruction, ensuring all learning experiences align with higher education expectations. The College has strong structures and systems in place for assessment across programs, including mechanisms for reviewing and improving programs, as well as developing new ones in response to community need, and the implementation of Guided Pathways and the Schools model has helped all students successfully navigate them. OCC is still working on increasing scheduling flexibility as it continues outreach to new audiences.

Standard 4 illustrates how OCC is becoming more of a "student ready college" via holistic supports at every stage in the student lifecycle. Schools and the coaching/Navigator model provide personalized student support, it has created a Financial Aid Service Center to help students at every step in that process, and can boast innovative, award winning work in developmental education. One way that it can bolster this is by exploring connecting student learning outcomes for some non-academic offices.

Standard 5 shows the maturation of OCC's culture of assessment to its current state of continuous quality improvement. The College has a strong culture of assessment that continues to develop and innovate.

Standard 6 outlines how OCC uses strategic planning, clear budgeting, and ongoing assessment to manage resources effectively and aligns financial decisions with its Mission + Vision and Strategic Plan in an evidenced-based and transparent manner. The College has a strong commitment to student success supported by external funding and partnerships. It must, however, continue to adapt to demographic and funding shifts while enhancing student success, maintaining financial stability, and modernizing infrastructure.

Standard 7 showcases OCC's governance structures and processes that are unified toward the common goal of student success. These structures are regularly assessed and allow for active and engaged collaboration.

Self-Study Introduction

Established in 1961, OCC is an accredited, two-year, comprehensive, community college located in Onondaga County, New York. OCC began instruction in three and one-half floors of the former L.C. Smith typewriter factory located in downtown Syracuse. Initial enrollment in September 1962 numbered approximately 500 students, with the first graduating class totaling 160.

Since then, OCC has grown and changed in myriad ways. What has not changed, however, has been the College's commitment to its students and community. Central New York (CNY) is anchored by its population center, Onondaga County (pop. 476,516) and the City of Syracuse (Pop. 146,103) which has the highest poverty rate (29.6%) of places in New York State with a population of 65,000 or more and the highest child poverty rate (46.5%) in the nation (ACS, 2023). Moreover, poverty in Syracuse is concentrated by race with 39.3% of Black or African American residents and 41.5% of Hispanic or Latino residents living in poverty, whereas only 22.9% of White residents live in poverty (ACS 2023). Educational attainment is the most reliable path out of poverty, and OCC gives all students affordable access to a high-quality education.

2015, however, marked a turning point for the College. OCC joined Achieving the Dream (AtD) after a campus-wide conversation. OCC had always striven to be a data-driven campus, but AtD gave it the tools it needed to effectively use data to drive decision-making. In 2017, these tools and the campus-wide-commitment to using data grew into the adoption of Guided Pathways, redesigning the student experience. This, in turn, formed the foundation of a 2018 Title III Strengthening Institutions Grant, "Guided Pathways to Success." The Title III grant gave the college the resources to accelerate work in three primary areas:

1. Academic program mapping to successful transfer or career entry
2. Acceleration or elimination of developmental education in English, Reading, and Mathematics
3. Implementation of evidence-based coaching (Bettinger & Baker 2011) at scale

Guided Pathways led to the design or redesign of 20 academic programs, 5 certificates, 7 microcredentials, and 5 non-credit certifications to focus on areas of greatest community need, especially healthcare and technology pathways; discontinuance of programs no longer serving community needs; elimination of developmental education in English and Reading (see Choseed, Malkiel, et al. "Developmental Writing Reform at Onondaga Community College […]"); redesigned advising, career services, and academic support for students within "Schools" (meta-majors); and launched the equity-focused "Box of Books" project ensuring every student has access to required, academic materials on the first day of classes.

Despite these innovations and successes, student attrition continued to impact the budget and, consequently, morale. OCC was in an enrollment crisis and needed yet more change and campus-wide support and participation to successfully respond. Change at this scale is difficult. For example, during

a campus presentation by the provost, a faculty member suggested the administration was selectively sampling enrollment data to give a skewed impression of the seriousness of the enrollment situation to justify unpopular decisions. The administration published the College's enrollment every year since inception, demonstrating that then-current enrollment had not been so low since 1976 [add cite to graphs that IPAR will create]. Data transparency and literacy was going to be a necessary component of this campus-wide response.

Leaders from every area of the staff, faculty and administration responded to the enrollment crisis by working together toward student success and ensuring stakeholders understood the economic issues and how each employee, regardless of job title, could make an impact. Through efforts in data sharing and transparency, as well as the renewed commitment to our common goal of serving students, OCC stays relevant to the community and region.

As a result, College enrollment has grown over 14% since 2023, largely due to 10% gains in retention. The original Schools model was redesigned to include both faculty departments and staff serving students in specific majors, and the number of Schools was reduced from 8 to 4. The number of student Navigators increased (reducing staff to student ratios from 1:300+ to 1:181 to the research-based 1:150 by Fall 2025). The College also reached broad faculty use of the EAB Starfish software, a software platform used to streamline communication between students, faculty, staff, and support services (known locally as Lazer Success).

Despite these successes, the budget was still a major concern. In Spring 2023, the union and administration negotiated a voluntary early retirement incentive (VERI) for eligible faculty. This augmented efforts, begun in 2020, to move faculty from departments where they struggled to make teaching loads into administrative roles or, if credentialed, other academic departments with greater needs. This helped ease the budget strain avoid retrenchments/layoffs. The VERI and these voluntary movements gave people a sense of agency in a very uncertain time.

New, industry partners have also joined with OCC to deliver programs responding to local need. Micron Technology, Inc. announced plans to invest $100B in Onondaga County over the next 20 years to manufacture semiconductor memory chips and named OCC its community college partner in the training of the 9000 technicians they anticipate hiring. OCC also has partnerships with Upstate Medical University, Loretto, Amazon, Lockheed Martin, and others.

OCC successfully adapted to its changing environment by enacting sweeping, organizational change facilitated through internal collaboration across all areas of the College with a shared commitment to student success and data driven decision making. While many challenges lay ahead, OCC's commitment to its mission, tradition of shared governance, prudent fiscal planning, engagement of faculty and staff, and culture of assessment are all contributing to a bright future.

The Self Study Process
This document was created through the shared efforts of the MSCHE Re-Accreditation Steering Committee, the workgroups for each standard, and our Requirements of Affiliation and Evidence teams. OCC held several campus-wide events in Fall 24, Spring 25, and Fall 25 to update and educate the campus on the re-accreditation process (cite needed). Diverse student voices were collected via

surveys throughout the process (cite needed) as well as focus groups with the Student Government Association, Unity Day Student Committee, and the Council of Club (cites Council of Clubs minutes from April 23 as example). Drafts were shared with different groups on campus for targeted feedback, and the entire campus community in Fall 2025. See the Self-Study Design for a complete committee structure, lines of inquiry, institutional priorities, etc. (cite Self Study Design).

Self--Study Intended Outcomes

1. Demonstrate how the institution currently meets the Commission's Standards for Accreditation and Requirements of Affiliation (Fourteenth Edition) and provides evidence by Standard in alignment with the Evidence Expectations by Standard.
2. Leverage periodic assessment through each standard, using assessment results for continuous improvement and innovation to ensure levels of quality for constituents and the attainment of the institution's priorities, mission, and goals.
3. Engage the institutional community in an inclusive and transparent self-appraisal process, including analysis of a range of data, including disaggregated data, to ensure students are appropriately served and institutional mission and goals are met.
4. Create, operationalize, and assess tactics to achieve the outcomes of the newly adopted strategic plan.

Approved at College Leadership Committee on Feb. 2, 2024.

Standard 1

Description of the Standard

Standard I: Mission and Goals

The institution's mission defines its purpose within the context of higher education, the students it serves, and what it intends to accomplish. The institution's stated goals are clearly linked to its mission and specify how the institution fulfills its mission.

Executive Summary

Onondaga Community College's Mission + Vision and Values endure by remaining relevant to the community it serves. The current Strategic Plan, focusing on "persistence," recognizes the College must evolve to continue to help students make progress toward their academic and professional goals.

Alignment of Institutional Priorities with Standard Criteria

Institutional Priorities	1. Help students achieve their educational and career goals through responsive academic experiences, innovative teaching strategies, and exemplary learning support services.	2. Foster a student-centered and equitable campus experience where all students feel welcomed, valued, connected, and empowered to succeed	3. Ensure communication systems are consistent, transparent, and designed to promote student success	4. Foster engagement and partnerships with school districts, governmental and community organizations, and businesses.
1. Mission and Goals		✓		✓

Alignment of Lines of Inquiry with Standard Criteria
1. How are OCC's Mission and Goals developed in an inclusive, collaborative, and transparent process that addresses all key stakeholders? C1.a.
2. How are goals and objectives clearly defined, aligned with the Mission, and speak to internal and external stakeholders?   C2
3. How are the Mission and Goals reviewed, assessed, and updated periodically to ensure the College's Strategic Priorities are relevant and achievable?   C4
4. How are the Mission and Goals communicated broadly both internally and externally? C1.f.
5. How well is the College demonstrating its commitment to its Core Values? How do we measure our Core Values?   C4

Analysis

OCC's local context provides the impetus for its Mission + Vision, Values, and Strategic Plan. Many in the community continue to be systematically underserved and OCC provides a chance at economic and social mobility (see Introduction). Originally developed in 2015, the current Mission + Vision and associated Values have remained relevant for a decade. What has changed is the way the College lives

its mission. OCC remains committed to providing a liberal arts education and preparation for university transfer, but it has also diversified its offerings, expanding career and technical programs to meet documented, community needs.

Starting Fall 2014, then President Crabill assigned the Programs and Academic Support Committee (a standing committee of the College Leadership Council, see S7) to review the mission in preparation for the 2016-2021 Strategic Plan. The committee surveyed the campus about the then current statement and reviewed sister institutions' missions and visions. The survey had 433 respondents, representing full time and adjunct faculty, students, staff, and administrators from across the campus. Demographic analysis of the respondents shows the survey was completed by a diverse audience of stakeholders (S1_2_MissionSurveyResults2014). While 72.4% agreed or strongly agreed (increasing to 91.4% when "neutral" was excluded) the then Mission "accurately reflects the College's purpose, essential functions, and reason for existence," a qualitative analysis of open-ended responses showed a strong preference for making the language more accessible to everyone in the community (S1_MissionSurveyQ8Summary). In response, the College Leadership Committee created the current version of the Mission + Vision and Values statement. The statements were formally approved in 2015 by the Board of Trustees (BoT) and were again approved in 2018 and 2025. The BoT approves the Mission + Vision and Values as part of the approval process of a new Strategic Plan.

Mission + Vision
Onondaga Community College is Central New York's partner in education for success. Achieving our mission through:
- Student Access, Retention, Completion, Transfer
- Academic Excellence
- Student Engagement and Support
- Career and Workforce Advancement
- Responsible Stewardship of Resources
- Community Engagement

Core Values

- **Student First** – Keep students at the center of all we do.
- **Learning** – Embrace the lifelong pursuit of knowledge and free expression of ideas in a safe environment to advance the individual and the community.
- **Excellence** – Strive for continual improvement and innovation to seek our highest potential.
- **Diversity** – Enrich learning through an inclusive campus environment that respects human dignity and difference.
- **Community** – Foster active and productive participation in building a mutually supportive environment for members of the campus and broader communities.
- **Responsibility** – Build a culture of integrity and accountability to develop both self and others.

The Mission + Vision underpin all communications with students, staff, and community members (S1_1_2020 OCC EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK final). They are available on the public website in multiple places, e.g. the About page as well as in the Strategic Plan (S1_2_Mission Website, S1_StrategicPlan). Promotional materials, like the Executive Search Profile used in 2021, also feature it (S1_2_OCCPresidentSearch).

Mission + Vision impact everything on campus, explicitly or implicitly. For example, the Center for Teaching and Learning Innovation's travel and training grant requires applicants to connect the funding request to "the College's core mission" (S1_CTLI_TravelForm) (See S3 details). In Liberal Arts 101 (LBL 101), a requirement for all students enrolled in OCC's Humanities and Social Sciences Program, students must define for themselves the value and purpose of a liberal arts education as well as why they have chosen to attend OCC, often exploring OCC's Mission + Vision as part of this work. (S1_Liberal Arts Website and S1_LBL101RCourse2024)

President Hilton arrived in July of 2022 and determined that updating the strategic plan was the most immediate need, allowing the College to maintain progress in key areas. Pres. Hilton established a Strategic Planning Task Force in November 2022 composed of one student, four faculty members (approved by the Faculty Senate), three professional administrators, one staff member, and two Vice-Presidents. The Task Force was charged with crafting a new strategic plan that would be ready for implementation at the start of the Fall 2023 semester. Alla Breve Consulting helped with the process (S1_1_F_Strategic Plan Request for Consultant Proposals.pdf).

The Strategic Planning Task Force examined trends in enrollment, retention, graduation and long-term plans (S1_2_2021-2026 Enrollment Management Plan.pdf; S1_3_2017-2022 Diversity and Inclusion Master Plan; S6_10_OCC Facilities Master Plan - Final.pdf). The Alla Breve team organized a series of focus groups and interviews with various internal and external stakeholders, including students, faculty, staff, and Pre-K-12 leaders and educators, ensuring consideration of a broad range of perspectives (S1_4_Strategic Planning Process Website). The Task Force identified a singular goal of "Persistence" as the primary focus of the Strategic Plan, supported by three, key priority areas: (1) academic success, (2) student experience, and (3) communication. As stated on page 9 of the Strategic Plan, "Persistence was selected as the primary focus […] to ensure the college's systems, processes, and support services […] enable students to achieve their goals despite challenges that come their way." The Plan understands our students as holistic beings with unique strengths and challenges.

Development of the Strategic Plan could not have happened without robust shared governance systems (S1_1_D_Shared Governancev2.pdf). The Task Force presented a draft with goals and key performance indicators to the Expanded Executive Council (EEC) for feedback (S1_4_Strategic Plan Update Expanded Executive Council). An updated draft was presented to the Campus in August of 2023 and discussed in several different venues (e.g. Faculty Plenary, the College Leadership Council, and open Campus forums (S1_4_CLC Meeting materials 9-22-23; S1_4_CLC minutes 9-22-23). An option for anonymous feedback was also created (S1_4_Strategic Plan Feedback Form). The Task Force made its final presentation to the Board of Trustees in September 2023 (S1_4_Strategic Plan Update_BOT), and the *2023-2028 Strategic Plan* was approved that November. See the Strategic Planning Process webpage for a detailed description (S1_4_Strategic Planning Process Website).

Following Board approval, the College communicated the plan to the campus community through its website, forums facilitated by Strategic Planning Task Force members, and at the Spring 2024 Faculty Plenary (S1_4_Strategic Plan FacultyPlenary, S1_StrategicPlanWebsite).

The Strategic Plan was operationalized through the development and implementation of both campus-wide and functional-area initiatives using assessment and data-informed decision making, and Franklin Covey's 4 Disciplines of Execution (4DX), a method to improve an organization's strategic execution, was adopted in Fall 2024 (S1_3_A_Academic & Student Affairs Operation Plan 24-25) (S1_1_F_Dr. Hilton 4DX Communication 10.8.24.pdf). The emphasis on using data and assessment results to drive decision making is seen in all areas, like the 2023-2028 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Master Plan and the intentional recruiting of employees reflecting community demographics (S1_3_2023-2028 DEI Master Plan; S1_3_HR Data) (S1_3_DEIB Council Research Study 2022.23).

OCC's Mission + Vision, Values, and Strategic Plan impact every aspect of the institution, including the budget process. All funding requests and approvals are based upon their connection to these foundational documents (S1_OCC_AnnualBudgetBooks2021-25]. In every case, the goal is to steward resources responsibly while supporting key institutional priorities. See Standard 6 for a detailed discussion of the budgetary process.

Along these lines, the CTLI funds full time and post-probationary adjunct faculty and staff who wish to pursue creative or scholarly activities. Applicants must explain how the results will benefit OCC and be brought "back home" (S1_CTLI_Travel Form). The Faculty Collective Bargaining agreement provides for sabbatical leave of one or two semesters for "study, formal education, research, writing, travel, and/or other experience of professional value, in each instance relating to the applicant's discipline or for the purpose of increasing the recipient's value to the College" (S1_OCCFTA-FacultyCBA_2024-28, page 23). Since 2019, two OCC full time faculty have won the SUNY Chancelor's Award for Excellence in Scholarship and Creative Activity (S1_Chancellors Award). The thread that runs through all OCC's mechanisms for supporting scholarly and creative work is that the College, and ultimately its students, benefit.

Successfully operationalizing strategic goals depends on a comprehensive understanding of students' lived experiences, needs, and aspirations. Demographic data combined with questions on the institutional application for admission (S1_3_OCC Institutional Application) and Register NOW form (S4_1_C_RegisterNOW) provide that information. For example, students are asked if they received extra support in high school (504/IEP), and those who answer "yes" receive outreach from the Office of Accessibility Resources (OAR). The Register NOW form collects information on student availability and preference to create customized schedules, and the information is aggregated and used to adapt the master schedule to better reflect student needs. See S4 for details on Register NOW.

Strategic planning and related efforts led to an 11.3% increase in continuing student enrollment from Fall 2022 to Fall 2024. Matriculated, underrepresented minority students were positively impacted, with a Fall 2022 retention of 40.9% increasing to 44% in Fall 2024 [cite OCC By the Numbers]. Standard 4 contains an in-depth discussion of student enrollment, graduation, and transfer trends. With

projected high school graduates decreasing in OCC's service area and across New York State, future new student enrollment goals will need adjusting. Stronger student retention has kept overall student enrollment stable, allowing the College to fulfill its mission while maintaining fiscal stability, but OCC must attract new audiences, such as adult learners, online students, and non-credit workforce students.

Partnerships That Advance the Mission

OCC has expanded long-standing collaborations with employers, public workforce agencies and programs, as well as community-based organizations, to create stronger career pathways, advancing its mission to serve the community, like the State University of New York (SUNY) HealthCARES Consortium (S1_Health CARES Consortium Website), SUNY Semiconductor education and training (S1_SemiconductorEquipTechDACUM2025, S1_SemiconductorEmployerPanel.pdf), and growing pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs delivered in collaboration with employers, SUNY, and the Manufacturers Association of New York. In addition to these career pathways, OCC has expanded and developed services to meet students' holistic needs. These include:
- establishing OCC's Counseling and Community Care Hub;
- launching the English Language Institute and coordinating services with community partners;
- streamlining access to programs funded through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act via the One Stop System, maximizing community impact for the benefit of job seekers, students, workers, and employers; and
- locating the Syracuse Community Health Center on campus, providing affordable medical care for residential and commuter students, employees, and the Syracuse community. (S1_3_C_SCHC Usage as of 3.27.2025)

Partnerships with local industry influence the development of educational programs and curricula because they represent an unmet, community need. Program Advisory Committees inform curricular and co-curricular decision making in healthcare and technology disciplines, and new partnerships and programs have also developed as a result (S1_3_Healthcare Related Assessments; S1_1_D_MET Advisory Board Meeting Notes 1_24_2024). Examples include Amazon's Career Choice Program, OCC's Supply Chain Management A.A.S., and the new Electromechanical Technology and Mechanical Technology degrees developed in collaboration with Micron (S1_3_C_Amazon's Career Choice Chooses OCC Article) (S1_1_D_2024 FS Final.pdf). Community partners also participated in "Developing A Curriculum (DACUM)" initiatives for the Heavy/Commercial Equipment Technician program (S1_1_D_Heavy-Commercial Equipment Technician DACUM Final). OCC partners with SUNY Upstate Medical University (Upstate), the largest employer in central New York, to create seamless student pathways while filling critical employment needs in the region. It jointly offers the Paramedic, A.A.S. program in which students take coursework at both OCC and SUNY Upstate, combining rigorous academic coursework with hands on training (S_1_3_D_Paramedic A.A.S. webpage). Another example of a seamless transfer pathway is the Health Sciences, A.S. program (S_1_3_D_Health Sciences A.S. webpage), collaboratively built for direct transfer to the Medical Imaging, Radiation Therapy, and Respiratory Therapy programs at Upstate and the Laboratory Science A.S., built at the request of Upstate to help expand biosciences research capacity in Central New York.

In addition to industry and educational partnerships, OCC partners with area secondary schools to support students making the transition to college and the workforce. These partnerships include College Credit Now, Early OCC, OCC Advantage, Pathways in Technology Early College High School, Liberty Partnership Program, SAT Prep, Interactive Video Classroom Program, Smart Scholars, and Success Academy (S1_3_C_Early College Website).

Periodic assessment of mission and goals ensure they are deliverable and achievable

OCC periodically assesses its Mission + Vision and Values statements to ensure alignment with its core principles and priorities. These statements were formally reviewed in 2015, 2018, and 2025. Previously facilitated through mid-point check-ins with Executive Council the College Leadership Council (CLC) assumed responsibility for the periodic assessment of the Mission + Vision in March of 2025 (S1_4_2019 Mid Strategic Plan Check-In) (S1_4_January 2025 CLC newsletter.pdf) (S1_4_March 2025 CLC newsletter). See above for the process by which these statements are assessed. Ultimately, the BoT felt that the Mission + Vision and Values continue to offer appropriate direction to the work of the College.

In an ongoing effort to assess the Strategic Plan, the College has developed Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to track progress toward its Strategic Plan goals (S1_2023-28StrategicPlanKPIs). Beginning with the Executive Council, KPIs were developed using evidence and trend analysis data, achievement data, their connection to the Strategic Plan, and the impact on diversity, equity, and inclusion (S1_IPEDS Summary; S1_3_2023-2028 DEI Master Plan). Reviews of proposed KPIs were completed by multiple shared governance bodies, including the CLC, the Institutional Effectiveness Committee, and the BoT. While the instruments used to measure the KPIs may change over time, the KPIs serve as benchmarks for success across all areas of OCC (IE committee minutes 4.29.25).

To meet KPIs, each department aligns its work with the Strategic Plan by identifying one to three departmental goals using the Strategic Plan Operational Plan template. These goals, developed in consultation with the respective Vice President, include specific actions, trackable progress, and measurable outcomes (S1_3_A_Academic & Student Affairs Operational Plan 20-21; S1_3_A_Academic & Student Affairs Operational Plan 22-23; S1_3_A_Academic & Student Affairs Operation Plan 23-24; S1_Academic&StudentAffairs_OperationalPlan24-25). To maintain accountability, departments report progress and outcomes to their Vice President in January and June of each year. The Institutional Planning, Assessment, and Research (IPAR) team collects and analyzes these reports annually to provide a comprehensive overview of the College's progress in achieving its strategic goals. The Vice President of IPAR reviews the plans and provides feedback directly to the Divisional heads as well as summarizing them in a presentation to Executive Council, Expanded Executive Council, and the College Leadership Council. The President sends the summary report to the campus community.

All of this is part of OCC's robust culture of assessment. As College Policy B2: Strategic Planning, Section VII states: "Stakeholders are encouraged to continually review the College's Strategic Plan, considering whether specific revisions […] may be warranted within their respective areas of responsibility or concern, and to submit suggested revisions for review" (S1_4_OCC College Policy B2-Strategic Planning, S1_StrategicPlanUpdateBOT_May2025). The Strategic Planning Task Force

reconvenes at the mid-point of the plan (Fall 2025 for this plan) to solicit input and feedback on the entirety of the Strategic Plan to date (Need to cite CLC minutes).

In addition to the Strategic Plan and associated KPIs, ongoing assessments of academic and programmatic efforts continue to inform institutional decision-making. These assessments include the current and future needs of our student population determined through enrollment, retention, and completion data [S1_IPEDS Summary; S1_3_Expense Analysis 20-22.pdf; S1_1_D_2024 FS Final, OCC_Enrollment_SpecialPopulations]. In response to these analyses, OCC enhanced services provided by the Counseling and Community Care Hub, developed a cleanroom lab for advanced manufacturing, and remodeled Ferrante Hall to create learning spaces to meet the needs of future healthcare students (S1_1_D_2024 FS Final).

Conclusion

OCC's Mission + Vision and Strategic Plan live beyond the website, reflected daily in the thoughts and actions of the campus community. Transparent communication and campus-wide collaboration ensure the Plan functions as a living framework, guiding both daily work and long-term goals. In short, the Mission + Vision shape the Strategic Plan, and its implementation is delivering results at every level.

OCC has demonstrated its ability to change and will continue to adapt as circumstances dictate. No matter what the future brings, the goal remains clear: to be Central New York's trusted partner in education, empowering students to achieve their highest potential and strengthening the communities it serves.

Current Strengths	1. Demonstrates flexibility and innovation in adapting to a changing educational landscape and the needs of its local community.	C1.a, C1.b
	2. Has made substantial progress in student persistence and, as a result, increased student success metrics.	C3.a
Challenges/Opportunities for Growth and Exploration	1. Enhance or expand transfer pathway opportunities for Liberal Arts programs	C3.a
	2. Attract new student audiences, e.g. post-traditional learners	C3.b

Description of the Standard

Standard II: Ethics and Integrity

Ethics and integrity are central, indispensable, and defining hallmarks of effective higher education institutions. In all activities, whether internal or external, an institution must be faithful to its mission, honor its contracts and commitments, adhere to its policies, and represent itself truthfully.

Executive Summary

Onondaga Community College (OCC) cannot fulfill its Mission + Vision without a culture of ethics and integrity. OCC has long prioritized honesty, fairness, and transparency, delivering on its promises while improving its assessment of policies and practices and making the results visible and comprehensible to stakeholders.

Alignment of Institutional Priorities with Standard Criteria

Institutional Priorities	1. Help students achieve their educational and career goals through responsive academic experiences, innovative teaching strategies, and exemplary learning support services.	2. Foster a student-centered and equitable campus experience where all students feel welcomed, valued, connected, and empowered to succeed	3. Ensure communication systems are consistent, transparent, and designed to promote student success	4. Foster engagement and partnerships with school districts, governmental and community organizations, and businesses.
2. Ethics and Integrity	✓	✓	✓	

Alignment of Lines of Inquiry with Standard Criteria

1. How are contracts honored and monitored at all levels of the College (including third parties and unions) with a demonstrated avoidance of conflict of interest and timely, formal grievance policies for fairness and impartiality? How does OCC demonstrate a commitment to fairness and impartiality in these procedures across all employee classifications?   C2, C3, C4,

2. How and in what ways does OCC demonstrate truth and honesty across all audiences and groups?   C6

3. To what extent does OCC demonstrate a commitment to diversity and inclusion, meeting the wide-ranging needs of its varied constituents, to ensure an authentic sense of belonging for students, faculty, employees, and other campus groups?   C2, C5, C7.a.

4. What mechanisms exist to ensure OCC's commitment to, and the responsible practice of, academic integrity, academic freedom, and the freedom of expression and speech? C1

5. How does OCC demonstrate a commitment to financial responsibility and transparency in its marketing and communication with students, prospective students, and their families? C6, C7.b, C7.c

Analysis

OCC's Mission + Vision state it is "Central New York's partner in education for success." OCC gives the people of this region, many of whom are historically underserved (see Introduction), tools for success

and a way out of poverty through education. The Core Values informing OCC's day-to-day operations and long-term planning are predicated on ethics and integrity. OCC cannot create an environment that puts students first, celebrates diversity, creates an inclusive community, and builds a "culture of integrity and accountability to develop both self and others" without living these concepts at every turn. (S2_About The College Website) OCC has an ethical imperative to serve students and improve the community. This requires giving students tools to act ethically as well as creating an environment that guides ethical choice-making. This can be explicitly seen in OCC's Values as well as in Strategic Plan goal 2, Student Experience, and goal 3, Communication.

Campus services model and practice ethical behavior. For example, Testing Services, which proctors exams for students with accommodations, adheres to the National College Testing Association's (NCTA) professional standards and guidelines, recertified every 5 years (S2_1_Testing Services Process for Cheating & Plagiarism). Similarly, an online proctoring software is used in our competency-based Nursing degree program to ensure that Nursing students earn authentic mastery of critical course content. Effective Fall 2026, SUNY's Information Literacy Core Competency requires students to demonstrate ethical ways to use emerging technologies like artificial intelligence. OCC's English discipline modified the learning outcomes for its first-year composition course to explicitly require this and partnered with Coulter Library to develop modular resources for instructors (cite course form for ENG 103 and D2L outline). In Fall 2024, the Faculty Senate President gave a presentation on academic freedom in the context of the presidential election to reinforce this core principles and give faculty practical tools for the classroom (S2_1_FA24 Plenary Academic Freedom).

Academic freedom is, in part, dependent on the ethical and legal use of materials both in research and teaching. OCC adheres to all copyright laws and regulations, including the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA) and the Copyright Act of 1976. The Centralized Policy Manual, the Faculty Handbook, and SUNY policies all document how OCC protects copyrighted material and minimizes the risk of infringement (S2_1_SUNY Copyright & Faculty Ownership) (S2_1_Faculty Handbook_Section 3_ Instructional Policies). Other policies address issues such as peer-to-peer file sharing, fair use, and copyright ownership of faculty and staff creative works. (S2_1_L2_ Copying Materials Protected by Copyright, S2_1_L3_ Trademark and Service Mark Use, and S2_1_L4_ Compliance with Export Control Laws; S2_1_L1_ Copyright Ownership in Creative Works).

OCC has policies and practices in place to support academic and intellectual freedom both in and out of the classroom. In terms of classroom activities, the Faculty Handbook and the Faculty collective bargaining agreement outline the policy on Academic Freedom (S2_1_Faculty Handbook_Section 3_Academic Freedom). It is OCC's policy

> to maintain and encourage full freedom, within the law, of inquiry, teaching and research. In the exercise of this freedom, the faculty member may, without limitation, discuss his own subject in the classroom [...]

Academic integrity and honesty are inextricably bound to academic freedom in that the two are mutually reinforcing. In 2022, a mixed faculty and administrative committee began revising the Academic Rule to improve documentation of academic integrity issues, revising Academic Rule IV, Academic Dishonesty. This work evolved into a thorough review of all Academic rules through Scholastic Standards, a standing committee of the Faculty Senate, and approval of the new rules for

August 2025 (<mark>CITE senate minutes</mark>). OCC now has a professor-initiated Academic Dishonesty Form, along with a process for students to report other academic concerns to department chairs (General Academic Concern, Academic Rule VI). These new rules aim to standardize reporting and promote transparency. The information resides in a database once submitted, facilitating the identification of trends in these areas as well as simplifying record keeping.

In addition to updating content, faculty were conscious of making the language more accessible. For example, here is part of the original version of Rule VII. Academic Standing, Reinstatement:

> The Academic Standing for all reinstated students is Academic Probation. All readmitted/reinstated students will be subject to catalog and program requirements in effect in the semester of the readmission or reinstatement.

> NOTE: Reinstatement to matriculated status does not automatically reinstate eligibility for Financial Aid. Students must also meet any academic standing or academic progress requirements articulated by individual financial aid programs. Any questions regarding these policies should be directed to the Financial Aid office.

Compare it to the updated version:

> Returning After Dismissal (Reinstatement) Students who are academically dismissed may request to return to the college after they have remained out for the appropriate time period.

> To apply for reinstatement, students must complete a "Returning Student" Form.
> - Upon reinstatement, the student's academic standing will be extended probation. If the student fails to meet the minimum cumulative GPA for good standing or the 2.0 term GPA to stay on extended probation, they will be dismissed again the next time their standing is calculated.
> - Students will be required to follow the program requirements as outlined in the College Catalog in effect for the semester of their return, even if they are returning to the same degree or certificate program they were in prior to dismissal.
> - Reinstatement does not automatically restore a student's financial aid eligibility. In addition to academic requirements, students must also meet separate Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) requirements for financial aid.

All Academic Rules were re-written for a student audience who may not be familiar with academic jargon and may not have a support person familiar with it either.

OCC has written policies and procedures for students in different circumstances, like those who decide that they need to withdrawal from a class, take a leave of absence, or withdrawal from the college (S2_Policy C14 Leave of Absence & College Withdrawal; S2_Return to Title IV Website) It is important to note that OCC attempts to educate its students at every step in the process and help them make informed decisions. The Drop/Withdrawal Request page states, "Before submitting this form, students are strongly encouraged to speak with both a Financial Aid representative and their assigned Navigator

to understand the impacts that dropping a course may have on their financial aid eligibility and academic progress." (S2_Drop Withdrawal Request)

Outside of the classroom, OCC has policies on expressive activity and academic freedom for students, staff, and community members while on campus (S2_1_D10_ Free Speech and Public Assembly Policy; S2_1_Students' Bill of Rights; S2_1_Commitment to Freedom of Expression; S2_1_First Amendment Flyers). OCC wants community members to exercise their rights to freedom of speech and free expression safely and without disruption to student learning or campus operations. To support this, the College created the First Amendment Support Team (FAST) in September 2024; members are trained in relevant OCC policies and procedures and act as liaisons between the College and anyone engaged in expressive activity on campus (S2_1_D26_ First Amendment Support Team).

Creating a Climate of Mutual Respect at OCC
Students

Students from a wide range of backgrounds attend OCC, and the College's works to ensures they feel welcomed and supported. Formal Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) assessments go back as far as 2015, and DEI is an integral part of the College's Values, Mission + Vision, and Strategic Plan. Assessment results disaggregated by demographic are integrated into the Strategic Plan, Enrollment Plan, and the DEI Master Plan. DEI focused assessment results are made available to the campus community via Institutional Planning, Assessment and Research page as well as the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) Council's page (S2_DEI Institutional Assessment Website). OCC has completed internal assessments like "Qualitative Study: The Lived Experiences of OCC Students of Color," as well as instruments like the Diverse Learning Environments Survey (2015, 2019), and the ViewFinder DEI Campus Climate Survey (2024), with participants expressing higher satisfaction with the College's overall services, support systems, physical health resources, interactions with staff and administrators, and classroom experiences than peers at comparable institutions (S2_2_Diverse Learning_Comparison; S2_2_DEIB Council Research_Qualitative Study; Need cite for 2024).

Findings from these surveys help shape the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Master Plan, and improve current practices to foster a sense of belonging among students. These assessments confirm progress is being made, but practices and policies promoting equity and inclusion are still needed. Programing like Student Conversation Circles and Unity Day, both recognized by the National Conference on Race and Ethnicity and the National Diversity Council, occur every semester and provide opportunities for students to share experiences, challenge biases, and learn from one another in meaningful ways (cite Student Conversation Circles – Student Handout (Fall 2025)) S2_Unity Day Website). Pre- and post-surveys are conducted at the beginning and completion of the Conversation Circles.

Another way OCC is continuing this necessary DEI work is through its Equity Statement, reinforcing its commitment to promoting equitable policies and practices while fostering an inclusive environment (S2_7_A_OCC Statement on Equity). Endorsed by all internal stakeholders and adopted by the OCC Board of Trustees in 2021, it states,

> We are invested in addressing the imbalances of power that contribute to patterns of exclusion and disparities in access to education, retention, and completion […] It is our priority to ensure

our students and employees receive access to the resources they need to thrive and achieve their goals [..] we collectively affirm equity as not only an institutional value, but our promise.

Two notable examples of this promise in action are the Meg O'Connell Center for Social Justice and Community Impact, focusing on community engaged learning, and the Office for Social Justice, Equity, and Inclusion, hosting student events and programming. In terms of professional development, OCC invited Diego Navarro to deliver his "Culture of Dignity" training in Fall 2022 to a cross-section of faculty and staff and offered related, asynchronous opportunities through ACUE's "Culture of Belonging" module in Spring 2023 (S2_1_Culture of Belonging_ACUE_Title III) (S2_Credly Culture of Dignity Badge).

Another aspect of enhancing communication is ensuring institutional responsiveness to student concerns and complaints. As mentioned above, the Academic Rules were revised to increase transparency and understanding, and a new tracking system was also put into place. OCC has an institutional record of all complaints going back at least 4 years for all categories except the "general academic complaints" that were handled by department chairs. As was highlighted in an assessment completed by the Programs and Academic Support committee, a standing committee of the College Leadership Council, in the past, not all Chairs kept consistent records. The new organizational structure ensures that, moving forward, OCC has reliable record keeping a centralized database for tracking concerns (CITE PAS report to CLC). There has been in-depth discussion by Chairs and the Faculty Senate on the process and a renewed understanding that faculty and students are working together to create the best learning environment possible (need cite Faculty minutes), and concerns raised by students require attention and ongoing monitoring if OCC is to create a culture focused on student success.

There are multiple avenues for addressing complaints and grievances, ensuring adherence to fair, impartial, and equitable processes. The college website has a centralized collection of policies and forms available through the student landing page and outlined in the Academic Rules section of the College Catalog (S2_Academic Rules & Policies Landing Page). OCC has an out of state complaint process page with information specifically for those students (S2_Out of State Complaint Process NC-SARA). For academic matters, Policy A4 describes how a student can dispute final course grades (S2_3_Policy A4 - Grade Dispute Procedures.pdf), and Academic Rule IV outlines the appeals process for students facing academic integrity violations (S2_Academic Dishonesty College Catalog). Policy B18, the Complaint and Grievance Policy is the primary mechanism for addressing student complaints related to discrimination and harassment (S2_3_Policy B18 - Complaint & Grievance Policy.pdf). All complaints require VP of Human Resources review, investigation by trained personnel, potential resolution agreements or formal hearings utilizing a preponderance of evidence standard, followed by written decisions and an appeal process. The policy also provides contact information for external agencies, such as the NY State Division of Human Rights. Together, these policies and forms provide documented, distinct pathways tailored to different types of student concerns, ensuring they are addressed fairly and in a timely manner. OCC also established a Bias Response Team (BRT) and reporting mechanism because it recognizes the unique ways in which hate/bias behavior impact the community. When an incident of bias or discrimination is reported by a student, the BRT performs outreach to that student. The BRT does not replace any of the College's formal procedures and

protocols but focuses on supporting students who have witnessed or been subject to such behavior and referring them to campus or other resources (S2_Bias Response Team Website).

Students can always go directly to a Dean if they feel a concern was not handled appropriately within an academic department. Concerns touching on civil rights issues such as Title VI, Title IX, or other legal compliance areas are escalated by the Chair and/or Dean to the appropriate coordinator or forum. A department chair also has the discretion to elevate a concern to the Dean's level in cases of highly serious or recurrent patterns of behavior. From 2021 on, there have been . . 0 hate/bias crimes reported on both OCC's main campus or OCC@Liverpool (S2_Annual Security Report 2024 pg. 39-42). The Annual Campus Security Report only includes those incidents with Campus Safety involvement or notification..
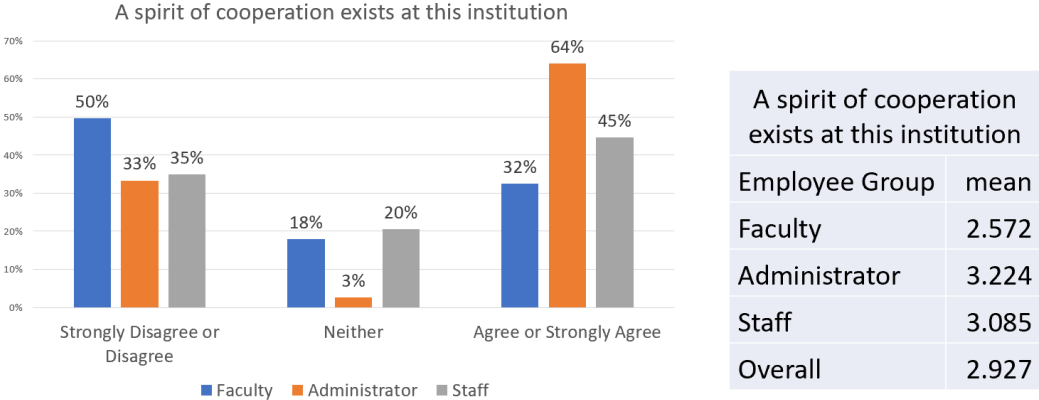
Employees

Clear communication between sections of campus is necessary when facing challenges. Post-Covid, the landscape of higher education was very uncertain, and that uncertainty was felt at OCC every day. The College underwent major structural and curricular re-organizations, departures of personnel, consolidations of job duties, etc. Not all decisions by the administration were communicated with clear rationales, and when they were, there was not always consensus amongst employees. Given the far-reaching campus changes in response to the enrollment downturn, a fair and impartial assessment of the campus climate was necessary. In fall 2022, the President assigned the Assistant Vice President of Human Resources and Professional Development to lead a workgroup tasked to find a vendor to conduct a campus-wide, climate survey. The workgroup included representatives from all campus constituencies, including a student who was, unfortunately, not able to participate. The workgroup presented recommendations, and the Executive Council ultimately selected the Belk Center at North Carolina State and their PACE survey (S2_2_PACE Qualitative Report SP24.pdf, S2_2_PACE Institutional Structure SP24.pdf, S2_2_PACE DEI Report SP24.pdf). The survey, vetted through OCC's Institutional Review Board, was sent to all full and part-time, non-student employees and had a 47.6% response rate (S2_2_PACE Survey Invite Email Sample Communication_1). The Director of Employee and Labor Relations then led the workgroup in its analysis of results and subsequent recommendations. All survey results are published on IPAR's web page with identifiers redacted from qualitative responses. Information sessions about the results were held in person and online for employees in April 2025 (S2_2_CC Post-Pace Climate Survey Presentation).

Overall, employees rated Teamwork highest, followed by Student Focus and Supervisory Relationships, with Institutional Structure scoring significantly lower. This suggests relative strength and trust within immediate work units and a shared focus on students, evidenced by high agreement that supervisors express confidence in employees (around 81%), are open to ideas (around 76%), and that employees have opportunities for creativity (around 78%). Additionally, while the survey showed general agreement that the institution promotes diversity (60% agree/strongly agree), qualitative feedback presented a more complex view, including praise for DEI efforts but also concerns about perceived inequities, the scope of DEI initiatives, and potential gaps between values and practice.

IPEDS data (S2_2_HR) from 2018 to 2023 showing changes in the representation of staff and faculty may provide some context for the concerns around DEI in the PACE qualitative feedback. Gender percentages over time have been relatively even and stable, while racial diversity is minimal and has declined significantly since 2018. OCC experienced considerable faculty attrition during COVID and as part of the voluntary early retirement incentive, including among people of color. Many of these positions were vacated permanently; others are still in the process of being re-filled. Current faculty hiring shows a continuing commitment to diversity (see below for detailed discussion).

Also concerning are the scores from PACE's Institutional Structure category, particularly "appropriate organization" (only 28% agree/strongly agree), "employee influence" (29% agree/strongly agree), "information sharing" (31% agree/strongly agree), and "decision-making" (32% agree/strongly agree). Cumulatively, these showed challenges related to broader institutional climate and trust. Perceptions of institutional cooperation also varied significantly by employee group (S2_2_CLC Climate Survey Presentation).

Employees Have Different Perceptions of Climate

A spirit of cooperation exists at this institution

A spirit of cooperation exists at this institution	
Employee Group	mean
Faculty	2.572
Administrator	3.224
Staff	3.085
Overall	2.927

The survey revealed, however, that some fundamentals are very sound. For example, question 3 "There is respect among employees at the college" had a mean score of 3.096 on a 5 point scale. Question 13 "The college is a welcoming environment for individuals of diverse backgrounds (e.g., gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, age, ability, economic background, sexual orientation, gender identity, or religious beliefs)" has a mean score of 3.869, the highest of all questions. Question 14 "People from all backgrounds are treated equitably" has a mean score of 3.564. Cite PACE Custom report, page 6 and 7

In short, the survey shows OCC's constituents saw it as siloed into administration, faculty, and non-instructional staff. Each group thought it was doing what was best for students but mistrusted the motives of the others. While OCC is now well organized to do its work, the process to get to this current structure was difficult and not always clear to those impacted by it. See Standard VII for an in-depth discussion.

Various stakeholders analyzing the results concluded the primary issue was trust. The workgroup, charged with finding ways to address the issues raised through the survey, recommended "Leading At

the Speed of Trust" by FranklinCovey. The first iteration of the workshop in January 2025 included Executive Council, Expanded Executive Council, College Leadership Council, future training facilitators, and members of the campus climate workgroup. The training presupposes that when trust is high communication, creativity, and engagement improve and provides a common vocabulary to discuss and build trust. OCC staff and faculty have been trained to deliver the training, and all campus leaders, supervisors, and administrators will take the training. Facilitators conducted training with the School Navigators and Specialists, Career Services, Veterans Affairs and Opportunity Programs staff in May 2025. (S2_2_PACE Survey Results Sample Communication_2, S2_2_PACE Survey Results Sample Communication_2, S2_2_Climate Survey Workgroup Minutes, S2_2_Campus Climate Survey Workgroup_Agenda_6.18.24, S2_2_PACE Supervisory Relationships SP24.pdf) (S2_2_Campus Climate Survey Workgroup_Recommendations).

While these efforts will take time to bear fruit, more immediate steps have been taken and will continue or be enhanced. For example, the CFO, presents at faculty plenaries to discuss the College's financial outlook, a concern indicated in the survey results. Additionally, in direct response to the PACE survey results, the President added language to his monthly email updates explaining the importance of communication at OCC. The updates highlight important accomplishments, initiatives, and ongoing projects (*S2_6_President Hilton Monthly Update Sample*). The Core Values of Community and Responsibility (points 5 and 6) that help shape OCC are evident in these and similar efforts to assess the workplace (S2_About The College Website).

When employee complaints or concerns do arise, the OCC Employee Handbook (S2_3_OCC Employee Handbook_2020) outlines different reporting methods. In the case of discrimination or harassment, employees can report verbally or in writing to supervisors, the Title IX Coordinator, or Human Resources, with supervisors mandated to report incidents to HR (S2_3_Complaint Reporting Form.pdf) (S2_Title IX Website)*.* For general workplace concerns, the Open Door Policy encourages discussion first with a supervisor, then escalation if needed, emphasizing openness but not replacing formal grievance procedures. As of Summer 2025, OCC also has a SUNY mandated Title VI coordinator who can receive complaints.

The OCC Federation of Teachers and Administrators, AFT, NYSUT, Local 1845 contract outlines policies for faculty (S2_3_Collective Bargaining Agreement_Faculty_2024.2028) and professional administrators (S2_3_Collective Bargaining Agreement_Prof Admin_2024.2028). The Union grievance committee facilitates the resolution of employee complaints regarding alleged violations, misinterpretations, or inequitable applications of the collective bargaining agreement (S2_3_NYSUT_Sample Membership Meeting Minutes_5.17.24). The Civil Service Employees Association (CSEA) union at OCC has two grievance processes (S2_3_CSEA Contract 2023-2026). For discipline-related grievances, a meeting is held with representatives from both the CSEA union and the college, concluding in a decision by an Onondaga County Employee Relations Officer. Contractual grievances start with a formal grievance filed by the CSEA and culminate in OCC issuing a written decision, which the CSEA can accept or escalate to the next step in the grievance procedure.

Fourteen grievances have been received since 2022, with all resolved in 2022, 2023, 2024, and 2 resolved and 2 pending in 2025. These grievances come from the faculty, professional administrators, and CSEA unions. Grievance records are kept as both secured hardcopy and digitally. 50% of all grievances are appeals of employee discipline (cite Grievance Summary).

Transparency as the key to ethics at OCC

OCC's approach to ethics and integrity is rooted in its goal of transparency which extends to all aspects of the College and its interactions with employees, students, and the larger community it serves.

Students

The College provides detailed information about tuition costs, deadlines, and payment options on its website as well as through direct mail and email contact with prospective students. OCC also provides tuition information for in-county and out-of-county students who provide Certificates of Residence, as well as Out-of-State Residents (S2_7c_Cost of Attendance.docx, S2_7c_Net Price Calculator.docx, S2_7c_Student Refund Policies.docx, S2_7c_Withdrawal Policies.docx).

OCC wants students to have a plan to pay their bill at the point of registration. In 2015, the college developed a custom pop-up screen that detailed a student's financial responsibility at the time of registration (S2_7c_Financial Agreement Images – not correct image). This method proved to be unreliable, however, because the pop-up could be closed without signing and some students experienced issues with pop-up blockers that prevented it from displaying. The pop-up was replaced in 2024 with Colleague Agreements, a newer functionality from OCC's student information system software; students cannot register unless they agree to be financially responsible for their courses.

Once registered, the Student Accounts Office has a schedule for sending out Notices of Payment Due (S2_7c_Payment Due 1 Email, S2_7c_Payment Due 2 Email, S2_7c_Payment Due 3 Email, S2_7c_Payment Due 4 Email, S2_7c_Payment Due Date Email, S2_7c_Payment Due Date USPS Mail, S2_7c_Payment Due USPS Mail, S2_7c_Final Notice Email, S2_7c_Final Notice USPS Mail). The notices are sent out in various formats (text, email, paper) throughout the semester and are in addition to live account details found in MyOCC. Each notice states the semester for which the student owes, the options to pay, the link to payment information on the website, and the main phone number. If a late fee is to be charged to the account, the date it will be added is included. An analysis of all late fee data from Fall 22 to Spring 25 shows no dramatic shifts, but small fluctuations each year. Fall and Spring semesters in this period saw a slight decrease in the number of late fees assessed (cite E Woods spreadsheet).

In 2024, OCC implemented a process to track and analyze general complaints to look for trends and correct issues. Historically, the most common non-academic complaint at the college relates to billing. The number of complaints dropped dramatically from 100 in Sept. 2019-August 2020 to 29 in Sept. 2024-July 2025. This suggests communication efforts and revisions to the website related to the cost of college and student financial commitments are improving student understanding. Revisions to relevant procedures are also being made, e.g. starting in August 2025, all students living on-campus review their financial commitment prior to receiving their residence hall key. (cite Deland email to Malkiel on 9.5.25 for now, **will need to cite tracking document**)

OCC has been making the financial aid process more accessible as well. In the 2016–2017 academic year, the College established the Financial Aid Service Center (FASC), creating a transparent financial aid application and counseling process (S2_7c_Financial Aid Service Center.url, S2_7c_Tuition & FA.url). In April 2022, FASC began using Lazer Success to track student interactions and allow students to schedule appointments, resulting in improved assessment and a streamlined appointment process (S2_7c_2022-23 Financial Aid Lazer Success Data, S2_7c_2023-24 Financial Aid Lazer Success Data). Between Fall 2022 and Fall 2023, student interactions with FASC more than doubled, rising from 3,469 to 6,981. During the same period, FAFSA completion rates rose significantly, from 64% to 75% (source K. Sapio email). This suggests the expanded support services provided through Lazer Success are positively influencing student behavior and awareness of financial aid processes.

The College ensures that financial aid policies are applied fairly and consistently to all students, adhering to federal, state, and institutional regulations (S2_7_B_Dept of Ed Program Participation Agreement). The College regularly reports on the distribution and utilization of financial aid funds, conducting regular internal and external audits of the financial aid office and processes, with mechanisms for addressing any issues or discrepancies. The institution tracks and evaluates loan burden and default rates annually to continuously improve financial advising (See S4 for an in-depth discussion of student debt). As part of ongoing efforts to improve services, Financial Aid is collaborating with Information Technology Services and Institutional Planning, Assessment, and Research to develop interactive dashboards to enhance data accessibility for Financial Aid supervisors to enhance data-driven decision-making and training.

OCC knows that paying for college, even at a college where 68% graduate debt-free, is not easy, and textbook costs have been a barrier for many students. To address this, the College partnered with Barnes and Noble to reduce the cost of textbooks for students and include those costs in the net cost calculator. This first-of-its-kind program debuted in 2019 and sets the cost of required books and supplies to $21.50 per credit hour, reducing the overall costs of textbooks by approximately 50% (S2_7b_Box of Books.url). Costs are billed to the student account and included in financial aid award letters unless a student opts out. This was a collaborative process as faculty had considerable input into the design of the project, conceived of by faculty as part of a Title III Strengthening Institutions grant. The Box of Books program fosters an equitable and inclusive campus, removing barriers to success and ensuring all students, regardless of financial background, have access to the same academic resources on day 1 of classes.

Policies and procedures can only protect students if they know what they are and where to find them, which underscores the importance of the communication efforts outlined in the Strategic Plan. OCC informs students of applicable policies, engagement opportunities, and information predominantly via e-mail and social media and regularly updates the student landing page and messaging in the learning management system, D2L Brightspace. The Office of Student Orientation, Leadership, & Engagement takes the lead on advertising student activities and engagement opportunities through campus posters, the Community Connect app, the management of student clubs and organizations, and Student Government Association (SGA) (S2_SOLE Website) (S2_6_Community Connect.url).

Transparency and alignment with the Strategic Plan guide all marketing efforts, as outlined in the Marketing Master Plan. The redesigned Viewbook outlines outcomes, costs, programs, support

services, and student life. Current students can create content via an internship program in which students create 1 to 5-minute videos telling their OCC "story" in their own words. The videos are completely student generated and shared via social media (S2_6_Socal Media Report_Marketing September – December). External marketing efforts include the use of a marketing firm to provide ad placements (digitally and on billboards, bus tails, radio, etc.) (cite needed). Starting in Fall 2022, targeted messaging has been delivered to specific, student populations, from those thinking about enrolling for the first time to those who could return to complete a credential, through a social media campaign managed. (S2_Motimatic Partnership Review Sp25).

OCC's commitment to ethics and transparency extends to recruiting as well as marketing. The Admissions and Marketing teams collaborate to ensure all materials are clear, accurate, and easy to navigate. Spending on recruitment, marketing, and the user experience have remained stable over the last four years (S2_6_Marketing-Recruitment Analysis). These materials include step-by-step guidance on the admissions process, tuition and fees, and financial aid. (S4_1_Ethical Marketing Practices_J2 Internet Privacy Policy) (S4_Marketing Viewbook) and (S2_7c_Cost of Attendance). The Catalog and student handbook provide detailed information about academic programs, policies, and strategies for success. With nearly 36% of degree/certificate seekers identifying as first-generation college students, OCC recognizes the importance of providing accessible and straightforward information. To help students and their families find important information, the Consumer Information page on the OCC website is organized into the following categories: Academic Information, Financial Information, General Institutional Information, Health and Safety Information, State Student Complaint Process, Student Outcomes Information, and a Contact List for further assistance (S4_1_A_Net Price Calculator), (S4_1_A_Net Price), (S2_7c_Cost of Attendance). The College also redesigned its Financial Aid Offer Letter to be clearer and more transparent (see S4 for more details).

As part of the College's work to enhance effective communication, the Student Success Communication Team audited communication to students (S2_6_Student Success Communications Team Update_Fall 2024). The committee collected communication logs from all student-facing departments across campus in Fall 2024 to evaluate content, timing, and the method of communication with the goal of streamlining student communications. The committee partnered with students in Prof. Costello's Marketing 121 course to design and distribute surveys, reaching over 150 students, to better understand student preferences for receiving information. Students reported they receive too many emails, and there are too many different places to look for important information (email, text, social media, the website, the LMS, etc.). The committee focused on messaging sent to all or most students but discovered many departments send regular messaging to specific populations. A student who participates in athletics and the EOP program, lives in the residence halls, and has been referred to tutoring at the Learning Center, would get all the general "student" focused communication as well as specialized messaging tailored to each of these groups. In light of the decentralized nature of communications with students and the abundance of messaging, the Team came up with three major recommendations for Executive Council. Recommendation 1 is that the Committee become a standing committee with new charges for the Fall 2025 – Spring 2026 academic year, including the development of a style-guide and training for all offices that send out messaging. Recommendation 2 is that the college should explore centralizing student communications through a CRM to ensure consistency and minimize duplication. Recommendation 3 is to create a

Communications Coordinator position in the Enrollment Management Division to chair the committee and implement the recommendations *(S2_Communications Team EC Presentation)*. The communications audit demonstrates that various divisions on campus are comfortable with accountability and improvement, alluding to a positive culture of self-assessment. Silos do exist, but people and offices are working together for the sake of the students.

Students not only receive communications electronically, but 23% of OCC's students take courses online, and 6% of OCC students are fully online (cite SV spreadsheet). Student identity in distance education is verified through mechanisms outlined in Policy J1: Acceptable and Responsible Use of OCC Technology and Information Systems. A single sign-on and multi-factor authentication process, managed through the College's Central Authentication Service, ensures students (and employees) can only access materials they are authorized to use, safeguarding academic integrity in online courses. The Centralized Policy Manual (J.1) explains the requirements and procedures for logging in and maintaining access. Students with difficulties logging in and other security issues are assisted by the OCC Helpdesk. OCC does not assess additional charges specifically for identity verification; standard tuition and fees associated with enrollment cover technology access and course delivery costs (S2_8_E_Acceptable & Responsible Use of OCC Tech & Info Systems -in EI). The Student Computing Info page contains information on cyber-security and protecting ones passwords (S2_Student Computing Info Website).

In addition to distance education, this same oversight extends to OCC's other offerings, like its College Credit Now (CCN) program (offered at seven high schools designated as "additional locations") and the comprehensive services offered at OCC @ Liverpool campus. OCC ensures that the student experience at all additional locations maintains parity with the main campus. OCC @ Liverpool is currently used for non-credit health professions/workforce programs and Community Education classes, including Handgun Safety, Notary Public preparation, SAT Prep, and more (S2_8e_OCC@Liverpool_webpage). For-credit classes have not been offered there since 2021. When for-credit classes were offered at OCC@Liverpool, students had access to essential academic and support services through staff and rotating, scheduled support offices. The CCN program gives high school students the opportunity to earn college credits, is provided at no cost to the student, and may allow for earlier graduation from two- or four-year degree programs. The program is accredited by the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP) since 2005 and most recently reaccredited in 2020 (S2_8_F_NACEP Annual Report). NACEP accreditation ensures that courses taught by high school teachers, in accordance with the faculty Credential Manual, meet the same academic rigor and learning outcomes as those taught on OCC's main campus. NACEP also requires continuous oversight and professional development for instructors, ensuring consistency in educational quality and instructional integrity.

In addition to CCN, the College has other dual enrollment programs that demonstrate its commitment to accessibility, alignment, and academic preparedness for students. For students in and around the city of Syracuse, OCC offers Early College and P-TECH. Through its partnership with the Center for Instruction, Technology & Innovation (CiTi) (formerly the Board of Cooperative Educational Services, BOCES) OCC offers interactive video classrooms, allowing students in rural communities to access synchronous college courses taught by OCC faculty, reducing geographic barriers(S3_4_Early College Program Breakdown, Early College | Onondaga Community College, College Credit Now | Onondaga Community College, S3_3_ELM Implementation Guide). Student privacy is protected under Policy C1:

Compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, outlining student rights regarding their education records and disclosure limitations. This policy is reinforced in communications such as the College Credit Now Student Parent Handbook (S2_8_F_CCN Student Parent Handbook). (S1_3_C_Early College Website) *[, S2_8_F Off-Campus Enrollment most updated version sent to BB for adding]*.

The Centralized Policy Manual outlines all institutional policies related to students and includes a list of reviews and updates (S2_8_Centralized Policy Manual.url). This includes the policy on research involving human subjects and the role of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) (S2_Policy B14 Research Involving Human Subjects), OCC's IRB adheres to federal regulations, requiring training for members and detailed record-keeping for three years post-research). Prior to Fall of 2024, IRB members completed at least one training out of several options. Starting in Fall 2024, new members complete comprehensive social-behavioral-educational trainings, with the training repeated for all members every three years (cite Schlater email/ Gardner cert of completion). The IRB meets monthly to review proposals and ensure ethical practices for any human-subjects research conducted on campus (S2_IRB Meetings Website).

Employees

OCC has fair and impartial employment practices across hiring, evaluation, promotion, and separation, with specific attention to diversity, equity, and inclusion. College policies, Collective Bargaining Agreements, and HR materials govern these phases (S2_5_I1_ Equal Employment Opportunity, S2_7_I2_ Affirmative Action Policy, S2_7_A_Policy I3 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)). All search committees receive training and require diverse representation.

As discussed above, IPEDS data (S2_2_HR) from 2018 to 2023 shows that gender percentages have not changed meaningfully while racial diversity has declined significantly. OCC's staff and faculty do not reflect the student population it serves. The College has developed an Affirmative Action Plan (S2_2_Affirmative Action Plan 24-25) along with other recruiting efforts such as participation in the SUNY PRODiG+ Fellowship initiative (S2_2_Posting_Electromechanical (Mechatronics) PRODiG). Some gaps are the result of minimal hiring outside of expected turnover due to economic constraints. Since the initiative of the VERI in spring 2023 (see below), hiring efforts have increased in Engineering Technology and Healthcare fields supporting partnerships with Micron, local hospitals, assisted living facilities, and other local, industry needs. New student support roles were also developed to meet changing student needs and provide individualized support, fostering space for additional employee positions and diverse recruitment efforts. OCC acknowledges, however, current employee demographics and recruitment efforts for diverse applicants remain an area for growth.

When it hires, OCC ensures faculty possess appropriate qualifications for their teaching assignments through Faculty Credential Guidelines, which outline the minimum educational degrees, relevant experience, and discipline-specific requirements for each course (S2_5_Faculty Credential Guidelines 2024.pdf). New faculty participate in a New Employee Orientation covering essential institutional policies, procedures, diversity and belonging principles, student support services, and safety protocols (S2_2_New Employee Orientation Schedule 11.20.24). The Faculty Handbook, last updated Summer 2025, outlines guidelines as they relate to employment at the College and is intended to supplement OCC's policy manual. To provide quick access to essential documents and information, all faculty have

access to the "Introduction to OCC" module in OCC's LMS (S2_Faculty Handbook Preface; S2_6_D2L_Introduction to Onondaga).

Established evaluation processes exist for all employee groups, and defined pathways support promotion opportunities. Faculty reappointment, tenure, and promotion, follow a process outlined in the OCC Federation of Teachers and Administrators (OCCFTA) union contract (S2_5_Faculty CBA_Reappointment and Tenure.pd; S2_5_Faculty CBA - Adjunct Evaluation 15.1.pdf; S2_5_Faculty CBA - Promotions Committee 14.1.pdf). Professional Administrators undergo an annual evaluation specified in Article V of their agreement, utilizing the PA Annual Evaluation Form (S2_2_PA Evaluation Process.pdf, S2_2_PA Annual Evaluation Form.pdf). CSEA staff evaluations use the Staff Performance Evaluation Form to determine the granting of permanent status (S2_2_Staff Final Evaluation Memo; S2_5_Job Analysis Questionnaire CSEA.pdf). All processes provide transparent mechanisms for consistent performance feedback and assessment.

Analysis of data on hiring and promotion, disaggregated by relevant populations, shows that more females apply to jobs at OCC than males, although the number and percent of male applicants has increased over time. The percent of applicants hired has remained relatively consistent across the years. In 2024, about 14% of female and male applicants were hired. There does not appear to be a consistent gap in hiring rates by gender. In terms of race/ethnicity, the percentage of applicants hired has remained relatively consistent across the years, with some fluctuations in specific groups, although a significantly larger number of White individuals apply to jobs at OCC compared to other race/ethnicity categories. In 2024, about 15% of White applicants were hired, and about 13% of Black /African American applicants were hired. In 2023, the hiring rate for Black/African American applicants was slightly higher at 17%, while the rate for White applicants was about 14%. There does not appear to be a consistent gap in hiring rates by race/ethnicity. [cite Analysis of Data on Hiring by Relevant Populations (Gender and Race/Ethnicity)]

OCC also has established procedures for employee separation to ensure fairness, impartiality, and respect. Standard separation, as outlined in the Exiting Checklist, involves employees providing written notice, meeting with supervisors regarding work projects, returning College property, and meeting with Human Resources for an exit interview and benefits discussion (S2_5_Exiting Checklist for Employee). The confidential Exit Interview Survey gathers feedback on the employee's experience and asks for constructive feedback, including reasons for leaving, quality of supervision, work conditions, compensation, communications, and suggestions for improvement (S2_5_Exit Interview Survey).

An example of managing separation transparently, with grace and dignity for all, occurred during the 2022-2023 academic year, when the College, working with the OCCFTA, implemented a faculty Voluntary Early Retirement Incentive (VERI) as a strategic response to a decade of declining enrollment (S2_6_Voluntary Early Retirement Incentive Press Release 2023). The College issued a comprehensive press release detailing the rationale for the program, eligibility criteria, incentive packages, funding sources, and the anticipated benefits for taxpayers. Twenty-eight faculty took the offer and some additional faculty moved into administrative positions. This offer, and the work of the OCCFTA, helped save jobs and services here at OCC.

The commitment to transparency is evident in the way OCC manages potential conflicts of interest through Policy B22, (S2_4_B22_ Conflict of Interest Policy), which applies broadly to all trustees, employees, affiliated organization directors and employees, volunteers, and contractors. Any known current or potential conflict must be reported to the constituent's supervisor or the President's Office, with specific disclosure procedures mandated for personnel leading externally sponsored projects and for Institutional Review Board members reviewing research proposals (S2_4_Sponsored Project Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement). This policy framework ensures that potential conflicts are identified and disclosed, protecting the institution and its constituents. Principal Investigators and Project Directors working on externally funded projects must annually submit a form to the Office of Government, Grants, and Alumni, affirming that no conflicts exist or disclosing potential or actual financial conflicts relating to the project, including those of immediate family, along with mitigation plans. The form also requires affirmation of an ongoing duty to update the disclosure should circumstances change.

Community

OCC understands the importance of public support and being good stewards of public investment, partnering with federal, state, county, and municipal government with a focus on advocacy for support, capital or operational, and the goal of serving and improving the lives of students, the entire campus community, and the quality of life in the Central New York region; and enhancing the trust and confidence of elected leaders and investors in the College's role in workforce and training. As seen in S1, OCC has many different partnerships with the community that enhance its Mission + Vision.

To promote compliance with applicable laws, government regulations, and MSCHE's policies and procedures, OCC developed a Director of Compliance role in 2015. The Director of Compliance works collaboratively across institutional compliance functions, maintaining a repository of all compliance related campus obligations [Deland spreadsheet to be cited]. This repository ensures continuity in the case of employee turnover in campus offices who rely on and communicate compliance related information (excluding grant compliance, which is handled by the Director of Grants). The Director of Compliance also maintains the Consumer Information webpage (discussed above) (S2_8_A_Consumer Information Onondaga Community College.pdf).

Along these lines, OCC has clear representation of its institutional accreditation by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, access to institutional assessment information, including its MSCHE Self-Study and Compliance reports, outcomes data via the Consumer Information page, and makes required professional licensure disclosures available for relevant programs. Specific academic programs also maintain accreditation from relevant professional bodies, including Health Information Technology (CAHIIM), Nursing (ACEN), Paramedic (CoAEMSP), Physical Therapist Assistant (CAPTE), Surgical Technology (CAAHEP), and the College Credit Now concurrent enrollment program (NACEP). Accreditation documentation is publicly available in the College Catalog (S2_8_Authorization and Accreditation2025.url). The College provides specific public disclosures on its "Professional Licensure Disclosures - NCSARA" webpage, which informs prospective and current students whether specific OCC

programs meet the educational requirements for professional licensure or certification in states other than New York, creating transparency for students planning to practice outside the state.

OCC's official scope of accreditation, including approved credential levels (Associate's Degree, Postsecondary award 1-2 years) and locations, is publicly via the Statement of Accreditation Status (S2_8_f_OCC Statement of Accreditation Status), as is its SUNY and Onondaga County authorization to operate (cite S2_8_F SUNY Resolution 213). This document, along with the College's Eligibility and Certification Approval Report and Application for Approval to Participate in Federal Student Aid Programs, confirms the approved main campus, additional locations (e.g., OCC@Liverpool, various high schools), and other instructional sites (S2_8_f_Eligibilty and Certification Approval Report (ECAR); S2_8_F Application for Approval to Participate in the Federal Student Financial Aid Programs). The College reports substantive changes to MSCHE as required and updates public information accordingly through catalog revisions and website updates. Student headcount data for all locations is maintained and reported as required for state and federal purposes (e.g., IPEDS). The College ensures comparable student learning, support, and academic services across locations through standardized curriculum, faculty credentialing, and access to resources (S2_8_F_NACEP Annual Report). These comprehensive compliance activities, coupled with transparent communication of policies and outcomes, underscore OCC's dedication to ethical operations and continuous improvement based on regulatory standards and institutional assessment.

Assessment as Ethical Practice

The College employs regular assessments and evaluations of policies, procedures, and practices to identify potential areas for improvement, ensuring operations align with ethical principles and institutional values (S2_9_Policies Process). The framework for this assessment is documented in Policy B11: Formulation, Issuance, Amendment and Repeal of Policies. This 'policy on policies' outlines a standardized format and a clear process for developing, reviewing, approving, and distributing all official College policies. Proposals for new policies or substantive amendments are initiated with the relevant Vice President, reviewed by the President, and approved by the Board of Trustees (BOT) when legally required. Policy B11 also mandates an annual review of existing policies by each Vice President to determine the necessity of updates or repeals, ensuring policies remain accurate and relevant. Non-substantive changes, like contact updates, are handled on an as-needed basis, while emergency, interim actions can be taken by the President when necessary. Approved policies are maintained centrally and communicated to the College community via the website (S2_8_Centralized Policy Manual). An example of the policy development and review process is the recent updates approved by the BoT in June 2023, including revisions to existing policies, the repeal of outdated policies, and the creation of a new policy, B20: Institutional Data Policy addressing evolving needs around data reporting, handling, security, and access (cite minutes for BoT meeting).

In addition to the assessment of policies, OCC assesses and improves ethics and integrity as defined by this standard. Four examples of assessment used to improve ethics and integrity discussed in the standard stand out. The Student Success Communication Team's audit of communication logs across all student-facing departments and recommendations to streamline such communication is an explicit

example of this assessment and illustrates how different areas of the college, including students, can work together on important issues. The tracking of non-academic, student complaints and the College's data driven adjustments to messaging, student billing correspondence, and assistance, like the creation of the FASC, have led to a notable reduction in complaints. The formal assessment of the student academic complaint process resulted in a new system that better tracks and responds to student concerns in the classroom (cite PAS report). Finally, President Hilton's monthly updates to employees directly address transparency and communication.

The College's Third-Party Contract Assessment Policy, effective January 2024, embeds required assessment language into new and renewed agreements, ensuring systematic review via a departmental assessment upon renewal. The review verifies that vendor performance and deliverables meet contractual expectations.

Conclusion

To fulfill its mission, OCC must build and maintain an institutional culture that holds itself to high standards of ethics and integrity, putting into practice its stated Values, Mission + Vision, and goals. The College strives to be a partner the community can trust and rely on through continuous assessment, policy review, and transparent practices and procedures.

Current Strengths	1. Committed to measuring campus climate and building trust between employees (e.g. PACE survey).	C2
	2. Committed to making student processes (e.g. Academic Rules) transparent and clear.	C3
	3. A culture that supports assessment, continuous growth and learning across all levels of the institution (e.g. communications audit).	C9
Challenges/Opportunities for Growth and Exploration	1. Increase diversity of workforce to better match student and community demographics.	C2, C7.a

Standard III: Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience

An institution provides students with learning experiences that are characterized by rigor and coherence at all program, certificate, and degree levels, regardless of instructional modality. All learning experiences, regardless of modality, program pace/schedule, level, and setting are consistent with higher education expectations.

Executive Summary

To become a place where students from all backgrounds can grow intellectually, professionally, and personally, Onondaga Community College (OCC) offers career and transfer paths that allow students to see a future for themselves in Central New York and beyond. OCC provides challenging, clear, and connected learning experience across all degrees, certificates, and modalities of instruction, ensuring all learning experiences align with higher education expectations.

Alignment of Institutional Priorities with Standard Criteria

Institutional Priorities	1. Help students achieve their educational and career goals through responsive academic experiences, innovative teaching strategies, and exemplary learning support services.	2. Foster a student-centered and equitable campus experience where all students feel welcomed, valued, connected, and empowered to succeed	3. Ensure communication systems are consistent, transparent, and designed to promote student success	4. Foster engagement and partnerships with school districts, governmental and community organizations, and businesses.
3. Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience		✓	✓	✓

Alignment of Lines of Inquiry with Standard Criteria
1. How does OCC determine the rigor and coherence of its educational offerings? What evaluation methods are utilized to ensure educational excellence? C8
2. In what ways does OCC support the design and execution of challenging and engaging coursework to foster both personal growth and career readiness among students?   C1.a., C2.a
  a. How is the value of coursework made legible to students?   C1.b
  b. How has OCC responded to the community's needs in both career and transfer program development, such as new programs, credentials, and micro-credentials?   C1.a.
3. How are the academic offerings and student services at OCC designed to support the institution's commitment to cultivating a diverse and inclusive learning environment that supports student retention and success?   C2.d.
4. How is OCC identifying and creating accessible and equitable educational opportunities and resources that cater to the varied needs of its student body? In what manner does OCC provide both sufficient targeted and general support systems and structures to guarantee that all students have equal chances to thrive academically?   C4

OCC regularly administers the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) and the Post Graduate Survey to solicit feedback on student experiences. The CCSSE is sent to students every 3 years to gauge how well the College is serving the student body (S2_IPAR Surveys Website). 85.3% of respondents rated their overall educational experience Good/Excellent. Although a slight decrease from 2022 (85.7%), it is significantly higher than the 2015 (78.4%) and 2018 (72.8%) survey results.

In 2024, 38% of expected graduates completed the Post Graduate Survey (up from 35.5% in 2023), and 98% indicated they achieved or are in the process of achieving their educational goal, and 94.5% of respondents indicated they definitely or probably would recommend OCC to others. In each of the areas relating to the college's Institutional Learning Outcomes, every category received a rating higher than 89.0%, with

- 97.1% of survey respondents strongly agreeing or agreeing that their overall educational experience helped them to acquire a broad general education.
- 97.1 % of survey respondents strongly agreeing or agreeing that their overall educational experience helped them develop effective communication skills.
- 98.5% of survey respondents strongly agreeing or agreeing that their overall educational experience helped them to think critically and solve problems and to conduct themselves in an ethical and professional manner (ILOs on S1_About the College Website).

59.9% of survey respondents had plans to continue education within 12 months after graduation and 37.5% planned to be working or searching for work. 62.5% of survey respondents pursuing further education indicated OCC prepared them to a great or moderate degree for further study. (update cite 2024 Post-Graduate Survey Report.pdf). In addition to assessing OCC's impact on students, these regular surveys represent systemic ways in which OCC is seeking input from students and align with the communication goal in the Strategic Plan.

Diverse Learning Experiences

OCC maintains its liberal arts identity while meeting changing community needs through new or updated offerings of transfer degrees (A.A., A.S.), careers programs (A.A.S.), certificates, microcredentials, and non-credit workforce certifications. OCC's curriculum process and assessment practices ensure that new and existing programs are designed to give students a rigorous and coherent learning experience. OCC does not offer graduate professional education, and all credit-bearing courses at OCC are overseen solely by OCC faculty (and not third-parties).

Well-designed student learning experiences begin with rational programs leading to clear outcomes. Starting in 2018, every program created a Guided Pathway to Success (GPS) map, modeled on the Community College Research Center's work on removing ambiguity from program navigation and increasing student success (S1_3_Title III Submission 4.2024; Sample - S3_3_Cybersecurity, AS GPS; Cybersecurity, AS Catalog GPS). This initiative, combined with OCC's regular program assessments, resulted in reevaluation and revision of program pathways, adjusting to community and industry needs (S3_8_Assessment of Student Learning (ASL) pg. 6, 9-13). Since the start of these efforts, 20 AA/AS/ASS

Programs, 5 Certificates, 6 Microcredentials, and 5 Non-credit Certifications have been significantly revised or created (sample - S3_1_Human Services, AS_Revised Program_2025).

AA	AS	AAS	CERT	Micro-credential	Non-Credit
Creative Writing	Cybersecurity	Architectural Design Studies	Automotive	CNC Machining (fall 2026 launch)	Certified Nursing Assistant
Creative Writing (Online)	Health Sciences	Automotive	Direct Support Professional	Database	Emergency Medical Technician
Liberal Arts & Sciences: Humanities & Social Sciences (Online)	Healthcare Administration	Business Entrepreneurship	Electromechanical Technology	Direct Support Professional 1	FANUC Robotics
	Laboratory Science	Construction Management	Health Studies	Direct Support Professional 2	Home Health Aide
	Social Media & Digital Communication	Electromechanical Technology	Paramedic (Jointly registered with Upstate Medical University)	Microsoft Excel	Licensed Practical Nurse (fall 2026 launch)
	Sound Recording	Health Information Technology (Online)		Networking	
		Heavy Equipment/ Diesel Mechanic (NYS approval pending, spring 2026 launch			
		Nursing (Evening format)			
		Paramedic (Jointly registered with Upstate Medical University)			
		Supply Chain Management			
		Welding			

See Standard 5 for a detailed discussion of how program review, known as Program Mix, has been used to update OCC's curricula and phase out programs no longer meeting these needs.

Program review and, if warranted, revitalization requires the participation of program faculty and impacted academic departments, the faculty Senate, the OCC Federation of Teachers and Administrators, Academic Affairs, and, ultimately, the Board of Trustees (BoT). If the revision involves substantive changes, such as altering program learning outcomes, credit requirements, or core courses, external approval from SUNY may be required. The process ensures revisions maintain compliance with New York State Education Department regulations, which stipulate that curricula must be carefully planned with clearly defined goals, objectives, and assessment methods. The revised program is evaluated for rigor, coherence, and alignment with OCC's Mission + Vision and accreditation standards before implementation (Curriculum Handbook 24.25, pg. 3, 11, 20-30, 33-34).

The deactivation or discontinuance of a program may result for several reasons, such as persistent low enrollment, outdated content, or strategic realignment. Deactivation, limited to no more than three years, is typically used to reassess the program's viability, restructure it, or phase it out. The program must then be either reactivated or permanently discontinued and removed from the college's offerings once all enrolled students have graduated. Discontinued programs cannot be reactivated; similar offerings require a new program proposal (CurriculumHandbook 24.25, pg 31-32).

OCC maintains a close relationship with the community and employers to ensure programs meet their needs and help students transfer or find meaningful employment after graduation. For example, the Department of Engineering, Science, and Technology (EST) was developing a new program for semiconductor technicians when Micron announced a $100 million manufacturing center, naming OCC its education partner. EST adapted the training to Micron's specific needs while also supporting the needs of existing industry partners. The new program, Electromechanical Technology (ELM), was constructed to be both a "stackable" certificate and an A.A.S. program, meaning coursework taken for the certificate will count toward the ELM A.A.S., giving students flexibility and a chance to return to OCC after completion of the certificate.

The evolution of the ELM degree illustrates OCC's curriculum process. The Curriculum Handbook offers the following questions to consider before requesting a feasibility study from the BoT:

- Is the proposed program consistent with the College's mission and strategic plan?
- Is the program likely to be financially sustainable?
- Does the proposed program duplicate curriculum currently being offered at the College or in the region?
- Is there employer and/or student demand for the program?
- Do graduates employed in the field earn an adequate wage?
- For A.A. and A.S. programs, are there transfer institutions in the region to support graduates in pursuit of a bachelor's degree?   (Curriculum Handbook 24.25, pg. 20)

After the feasibility study for ELM was approved, EST faculty worked with OCC's Director of Industry Partnerships and Certified DACUM (Designing a Curriculum) Facilitator to conduct an analysis, bringing together industry experts to identify the skills needed to be successful as a semiconductor technician and in related fields. The faculty built a curriculum focusing on hands-on and skills-based training, following guidelines on course design, instructional modalities, Carnegie Unit requirements, and assessment in the Curriculum Handbook. The Curriculum Handbook ensures rigor, coherence, and adherence to SUNY and accreditor policies (e.g. Credit/Contact Hour) (Curriculum Handbook 24.25, pg. 4-5) . EST faculty worked with colleagues in Mathematics to create MAT 103 Technical Math Fundamentals ~~Basic Tech Math~~ (MAT 103 – NC – Fall 2023), a two-credit course using hands-on activities to bolster skills students use in first semester ELM courses, and MAT 108 Introduction to Statistical Process Control (MAT 108 – NC – Fall 2023), a two-credit course in which students create programs used in industry/manufacturing quality control processes.

Once approved at the departmental level, the complete curriculum package, including planned assessments of program and institutional learning outcomes, was sent to the Curriculum Coordinator for a technical review involving business areas of the college such as Academic Affairs, Financial Aid, and Registration and Records. Technical review focuses on finding errors and compliance issues and working with faculty to make corrections. The proposed ELM program then moved to the Curriculum Committee and Learning Outcomes Assessment Committee (LOAC) for faculty review of curriculum, general education requirements, learning outcomes, and program mapping for assessment purposes (S3_1_Curriculum Committee Minutes 120522 – ELM). Each of the two faculty committees includes non-voting representatives from Registration and Records (Curriculum Coordinator) and Academic Affairs (Dean of Instructional Services) (~~Sample Meeting Minutes~~ S3_1_Curriculum Committee

Minutes 051225). Once approved at the committee level, the curriculum moved to the faculty Senate and then to Academic Affairs for approval by the Provost and Chief Academic Officer. Finally, it was submitted to SUNY and the State Education Department for ultimate approval. This process incorporates multiple levels of checks to ensure the approved courses and programs offer students a valuable education.

Once a program and related courses are approved and active, faculty use the Curriculum Outline as a basis to construct student facing syllabi, which must include the information stated in the Faculty Handbook, Instructional Policies and Procedures, and is supplemented by faculty Senate required elements (S2_1_Faculty Handbook_Section 3_ Instructional Policies; need cite here- use Senate Pres announcement email). Faculty can customize their syllabi to accommodate their teaching style, but all syllabi must contain the same basic elements. A review of syllabi from across the college reveals this (cite samples from ENG 103, SOC 103, MUS 166, ELM 100, BIO 105. BUS 101). All full and part time faculty syllabi are collected by department secretaries by a specified date at the start of the semester, and department chairs review syllabi for adherence to approved content and policies, the chair working with faculty as needed to correct any issues. An issue that has arisen because of the department reorganization, though, is that the number of syllabi reviewed is not distributed equally across all eight chairs, with one having hundreds while another has 40-50. Chairs are doing their best to ensure adherence to policies, but the workload required to do so consistently is a concern. Different chairs approach the work differently. For example, the chair of Humanities and Social Sciences, a "mega-department," completed an exhaustive syllabus audit in Spring 2024, and, since faculty tend to teach the same courses from semester to semester, has done comprehensive reviews only of syllabi submitted by new hires or if someone is teaching the course for the first time (cite DelConte Excell sheet). Possible solutions under review by Chairs group include finding ways to share the workload within the department via discipline coordinators and/or leveraging technology, such as using AI agents to review large batches of syllabi to ensure they have required elements or adapting original software developed by OCC's institutional research office used for analyzing qualitative data to the task (see Standard 5 for details).

As part of a culture of assessment and data use at OCC, program and accreditation reviews are tools used to make change. In Fall 2024, for example, the nursing program completed its 8-year reaccreditation process, which led to revisions at the program and course level (S3_2_Onondaga CC ACEN Self-Report Aug 6 2024). While programs may have run successfully for years, continuous changes in technology, skillsets, and best practices mean every program and course has the potential for revision. These faculty-driven processes account for most programmatic changes, but the collective bargaining agreement does allow for review of a program's viability to be initiated by Academic Affairs (see Program Mix in Standard 5).

The nursing program also offers an example of stackable learning and pathway alignment. OCC offers a stackable credential pathway to Registered Nurse (RN), which includes Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) to Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) (launching in Spring 2026), to RN. The CNA program articulates into the RN program for 3 credits and serves as the first 5 weeks of the LPN program. CNA graduates or practicing CNAs can join the LPN program, bypassing the initial 5 weeks and reducing overall costs. Completing the CNA program awards 3 credits towards the RN degree, while completing the LPN program grants the first semester of the RN degree. Practicing LPNs who did not complete OCC's

program may earn credit for the first semester of the RN program through LPN to RN Advanced Placement courses. Students can also join the RN program at any point if they meet the necessary prerequisites (cite program forms?). The CNA to LPN to RN pathway accommodates students' varying life circumstances, enabling them to earn shorter-term credentials for faster career entry while maintaining a pathway for advancement, all while fulfilling a need in the region. Additionally, the tuition for the CNA and LPN programs is within the allowable Individualized Training Account rate, using federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funding. To increase access, the Phlebotomy program was recently redesigned to deliver a portion of the curriculum online, making it easier for students managing work and family responsibilities to pursue this career program (cite program form?). These healthcare pathways not only foster student success but also serve a vital role in addressing regional workforce shortages, all while providing graduates with in-demand skills and high growth potential careers.

OCC's mission is to meet community needs in the programs and courses it offers as well the way they are offered. Between 2018 and 2020, a joint taskforce consisting of faculty, Academic Affairs, and Registration and Records personnel revised the academic calendar, a demanding process rooted in shared governance and stakeholder input. Implemented in fall 2020, OCC moved from a 15-week semester to a 14-week semester and created deconflicted time blocks to improve student mobility through the schedule. Course blocks were created for one to four day per week classes, taking into account course and lab credit hour and clock hour requirements (Sample Calendar - S3_1_ Academic Calendar Spring 2025 – Student; S3_1_Master Schedule Time Blocks). See Standard 7 for a discussion of how Student Government Association substantially influenced the schedule.

The academic calendar revision led to other innovations as well as better scheduling options for students. For example, the ELM program (discussed above) created new, non-traditional course structures, consisting of a series of one and two credit courses with labs. These smaller, instructional units allowed the EST department to implement more hands-on experiences and minimize facility restrictions, leading to the ability to offer four, complete cohorts of the ELM degree. The calendar revision also allowed the department to create a master course schedule minimizing the number of days per week that students are on campus, allowing them to complete their degrees while more easily attending to family and other obligations common to OCC's student population. This design had the added benefit of making adjunct teaching more accessible to the employees of local engineering and advanced manufacturing companies, strengthening the faculty and OCC's relationships with industry while offering students the opportunity to work with professionals in their fields.

Students and the general public can see the description of the ELM program, as well as all academic programs of study offered at OCC, described in official publications such as the College catalog, website, and advising materials (S3_3_List of All Educational Programs with Enrollment; S3_3_Degree Program Webpages). Degree program sheets and the Catalog describe the course sequence, program description, mission, program learning outcomes, and, if applicable, any additional costs, considerations, and specific graduation requirements, like clinical placements (cite a degree program sheet as example, include catalog pages). These resources provide students with comprehensive, easy-to-understand information regarding degree and program requirements, as well as expected time to completion. OCC's Title III project (2018-2023) brought about the revision of all programs using GPS principles, increasing navigability and alignment with career and transfer pathways. All new programs
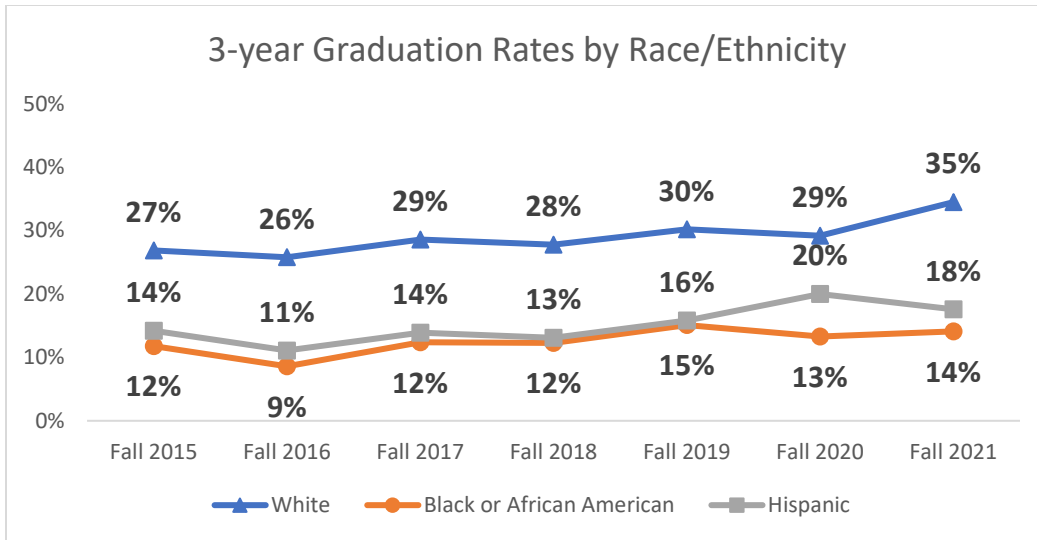
are designed using GPS principles. The college Catalog, which houses all this information, is published and publicly available (College Catalog, Program Page). Beyond traditional degree programs, the college offers a variety of educational opportunities that serve diverse community needs, including Dual Enrollment, Career and Technical Education, Non-credit workforce development programs and certifications, and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) instruction. Students have ready access to this information and can register on their own but are strongly encouraged to work with their School navigator to plan their semesters.

The implementation of GPS design principles has led to average time to degree completion improving across all demographic groups, with total, average time to degree decreasing from 2.66 years in Fall 2015 to 2.19 years in Fall 2021 (S3_3_Average Time to degree Completion by Demographics, S3_3_Average Time to Degree Completion by Program, S3_3_Average Number of Credits Upon Graduation by Program).

	Average time to degree completion 2015	Average time to degree completion 2021
White	2.57	2.15
Black or African American	2.87	2.26
Asian	2.96	2.24
Hispanic	2.94	2.39
Multiple Races	3.15	2.22
Pell Grant recipients	2.81	2.20

The success of GPS to create clearer paths to graduation and navigator initiatives supporting students is evident in that the average number of credits earned by OCC graduates has decreased. In 2017-2018, degree completers earned an average of 71.6 credits, which has steadily decreased to 68.1 credits in 2023-2024 (Average Number of Credits Upon Graduation).

As the Strategic Plan (see Standard 1) states, student persistence is the ultimate goal, both from a mission and financial standpoint. Full-time, degree/certificate seeking Fall enrollment cohorts decreased from 2,293 students in Fall 2011 to 1,290 in Fall 2024. Three-year graduation rates for First-time Full-time Degree/Certificate Seeking students, however, have improved steadily from 23% for the 2018 cohort to 28% in 2021 (the most recent four years as of this writing). During this same period, graduation rates for First-Time Part-time Degree/Certificate seeking students fell from an all-time high of 7% in 2018 to 4% in 2019 and 2020 but have risen to 5% in 2021. Graduation rates for Pell Grant recipients during this period increased from 21% in 2018 to 23% in 2021, with non-Pell Grant students increasing from 26% to 33%. When disaggregated by race, OCC students also show a net increase over the last 4 years of available data, with the dip in 2020 potentially attributable to the Covid-19 Pandemic (see below):

3-year Graduation Rates by Race/Ethnicity

White: 27% (Fall 2015), 26% (Fall 2016), 29% (Fall 2017), 28% (Fall 2018), 30% (Fall 2019), 29% (Fall 2020), 35% (Fall 2021)

Hispanic: 14% (Fall 2015), 11% (Fall 2016), 14% (Fall 2017), 13% (Fall 2018), 16% (Fall 2019), 20% (Fall 2020), 18% (Fall 2021)

Black or African American: 12% (Fall 2015), 9% (Fall 2016), 12% (Fall 2017), 12% (Fall 2018), 15% (Fall 2019), 13% (Fall 2020), 14% (Fall 2021)

Overall, graduation outcomes are improving for all demographic groups except for First-Time Part-time Degree/Certificate Seeking students. All degree/certificate seeking students, regardless of full or part time status, receive access to the same support. OCC's enrollment team suggests the growth in part-time enrollments may be the result of a lack of flexible scheduling options rather than a desire of non-traditional students to be part-time. OCC is currently investigating more scheduling flexibility (e.g. adding more fully online programs or hybrid course options), which should help support these students making progress in their degrees.

Transfer rates for full-time, first-time, degree/certificate seeking students within 150% of normal time have hovered between 17% and 22%, despite cohort sizes steadily decreasing from 2,031 in Fall 2015 to 1,347 in Fall 2020. Female students consistently transfer out at higher rates than males, but the data shows significant variation when looking at race and ethnicity —especially among Hispanic/Latino and underrepresented minority students, whose transfer rates have ranged from as low as 9% to over 24%. These trends highlight the need for continued investment in targeted, equity-minded student support services. OCC is actively assessing and enhancing its advising, academic support, and culturally responsive initiatives to improve retention and graduation outcomes for historically underserved populations (S4_1_Transfer Rates IPEDS). Examples of programs/offices that address this need are the English Language Institute, the DEIB Council and affiliated programming like Unity Day and conversation circles, the Schools model and Navigators with their specialized training, OCC's opportunity programs and the coming ASAP program, and the increase in access and associated success outcomes as a result of OCC's developmental education reforms.

Delivering and Assessing the Curriculum

From fiscal year 2020 to fiscal year 2024, instruction has remained the single largest core expenditure category, reflecting OCC's continued commitment to high-quality teaching and student learning (S3_2_Historical expenses as a % of function):

- $21,584,656 (35.84%) in FY 2024,

- $24,391,147 (40.50%) in FY 2023,
- $24,719,551 (40.13%) in FY 2022,
- $25,333,613 (42.17%) in FY 2021,
- $27,821,986 (44.71%) in FY 2020.

FY 2025 (closing 8/31/25) final expenditures will be presented to the Board of Trustees in February 2026, after all audit adjustments have been made. The decrease between 2023 and 2024 reflects broader enrollment and budgetary shifts, but instructional spending continues to represent over one-third of OCC's total core expenditures annually. Offsetting this decline is a notable increase in the proportion allocated to Student Services, which grew from 10.83% in 2020 to 14.59% in 2024. This rise aligns with OCC's Schools and Navigator model of holistic, non-academic, student support, an approach modeled after the federally funded SSS TRIO program and designed to offer personalized engagement and guidance. Consistent with OCC's institutional profile as a teaching-focused, open-access college, no core expenditures were reported for Public Service or Research between FY 2020 and FY 2024. Public service activities that do occur—such as community partnerships, continuing education, or civic engagement—are typically grant-funded, unfunded, or integrated into other functional categories like instruction or student services. Overall, this pattern of resource allocation underscores OCC's mission-driven focus on instructional excellence and student success, with most expenditures consistently directed toward teaching, academic support, and services directly impacting students.

The faculty OCC hires to teach must meet the criteria specified in each department's credentialing manual, outlining the required education, certification, and skills. Full-time and adjunct faculty are guided by the Faculty Handbook and the Centralized Policy Manual (see Standard 2 for an in-depth discussion of both). Programs designed for areas like Automotive and Heavy Equipment, Electrical, Electromechanical, and Mechanical Technology require faculty with industry experience and certifications a well as traditional academic preparation (S3_2_FT Faculty List & Credentials 2024; S3_2_B_Faculty Credential Guidelines 2024) (S3_2_B_Credentialing MOA). This blend of traditional higher education credentials and skill-based training gives students the best of both worlds.

In addition to excellent faculty, one of OCC's strengths is its class size, averaging 17.6 students. During the 2024-2025 academic year, Academic Affairs, Faculty Senate, and the Faculty Department Chairs collaborated on a course size/ designated limit (DL) analysis, implementing changes in Fall of 2025. The shifts reflected both economic realities and a careful look at pedagogy and outcomes. DLs now range from specialty courses of 1-3 students, up to 36 students for lectures. Lab sections have DLs up to 18 students except where otherwise appropriate, with most labs equating to half the size of the corresponding lecture. Average student to faculty ratios remained consistent over the last 7 academic years, decreasing from 19 students per faculty member in Fall 2018 to 17.5 students per faculty member in Fall 2024, with an average of 18 students per faculty member from Fall 2018 to Fall 2024 (S3_2_E_Student Ratios 2017-2024).

OCC maintained an average adjunct to full-time faculty ratio of 2.25 from 2018 to 2023. A relatively large number of faculty retirements since the VERI (see Standard 2) caused the ratio to increase to 3.4 during the 2023-2024 year. The ratios are beginning to rebound with new faculty lines in program areas experiencing growth. For example, 13 new full-time faculty lines were added to the School of

Technology, Engineering & Computing (TEC) and four were added to the School of Health, Wellness & Human Services (HWHS) (S3_2_Faculty, Admin & Staff Headcount).

High academic standards require professional development opportunities for faculty. The Center for Teaching and Learning Innovation (CTLI) supports faculty and, starting in 2020, staff. CTLI Travel and Training Grants of up to $1200 come from a designated funding source ($28,500 for academic year 2025-2026), and use of these funds must clearly benefit the institution (Travel, Training, & Grants | Onondaga Community College, S3_2_Faculty CTLI Travel and Training Application). The CTLI also has a budget for bringing speakers and trainers to campus, as well as hosting faculty and staff curated events. In 2022, OCC became a member of the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development and partnered with the Association of College and University Educators (ACUE) to offer its full, American Council on Education recognized certification in Effective Teaching Practices. As of May of 2024, 59 full-time and adjunct faculty completed all ACUE micro-credentials to earn the certificate, and 54 earned at least one micro-credential (cite CTLI quality matter tracking). In 2024, OCC joined Quality Matters to provide training and certify faculty to teach online, ensuring all students receive high-quality, consistent learning experiences across all learning modalities (S3_7_Quality Matters Contract) .

The CTLI, overseen by the Dean of Instructional Services, has six dedicated staff (S3_4_Library Academic Svcs Division org chart). An Academic Technology Specialist oversees and provides training for the Learning Management System (LMS) and other academic technology, working with IT and faculty to ensure smooth operation of the LMS. There are two, QM certified, faculty trainers delivering QM's Design Your Online Course (DYOC) curriculum in-house to faculty. The trainers are also QM certified reviewers and approve courses that faculty submit as part of the QM certification. (Add to evidence, S3_4_Online Tracking Document). (See below for details about QM.) A Technical Assistant manages the office and helps with business functions. Lastly, a faculty member serves as Chair of the CTLI Coordinating Committee, overseeing an advisory committee comprised of faculty and staff. The faculty committee chair receives 3 credits of reassigned time (6 hours per week) to coordinate professional development opportunities.

Some faculty, like the Chair of the CTLI Coordinating Committee, are granted re-assigned time for their service to the College. Contractually, full-time faculty must maintain a regular credit load of 15 credits per semester, which may include a combination of teaching and reassignment of responsibilities such as department chair duties, committee work, and grant work. Due to these additional responsibilities, the average full-time teaching load per semester has been 13.31 credits over the last 10 semesters (excluding winter and summer), with a high of 14.52 credits in Fall 2018 and a low of 12.71 credits in Spring 2023. The reduction in average credits reflects the decrease in student enrollment and the number of full-time faculty, while also indicating the substantial amount of reassigned curriculum and grant work related to high-growth areas of the college. (S3_2_Average Credits 18FA-23SP.pdf)

Some areas of college service, such as specific committee roles, require faculty serving in them to be tenured. Tenure, like all faculty evaluation procedures, is outlined in the Faculty Collective Bargaining Agreement (S3_2_Collective Bargaining Agreement (Faculty) 2024-2028). Full-time faculty are evaluated extensively in the minimum five years required for tenure, with at least three classroom observations and student evaluations annually, as well as the completion of a yearly retention packet

outlining teaching and service. These packets are reviewed in the candidate's academic department, then by a faculty committee, which makes recommendations to Academic Affairs and the President's office. Similar procedures are followed for promotion. Adjuncts undergo a comparable process, requiring classroom observations and student evaluations throughout the first six terms of receiving an assignment (CBA Article XV, section 15.1). Assessments for all faculty are formative and summative, promoting teaching excellence.

Assessment of learning experiences at OCC is structured around Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs) and Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs). ILOs define the broad skills and knowledge that all OCC students are expected to acquire and are available to students on the Learning Outcomes section of the Onondaga website (cite needed). The ILOs focus on students' ability to learn, think critically and creatively, and act ethically and responsibly in academic, professional, and personal contexts. Each academic program at OCC has PLOs that are regularly assessed to ensure alignment with institutional goals and to drive curricular improvements (cite Assessment of Student Learning 2024-2030). ILOs and PLOs align vertically, mapping up to each other, allowing program faculty to create authentic assessments of student learning and ensuring every student meets the ILOs as they progress through their program.

Faculty own the curriculum and have responsibility for assessing its effectiveness via the Learning Outcomes Assessment Committee (LOAC), a standing committee of the Faculty Senate. Academic programs are assessed at three- and six-year intervals as per SUNY guidelines (Sample - S3_2_COM Program Review – 2023). LOAC organizes and evaluates program reviews, conducted and submitted by the academic departments. In instances of externally accredited programs, faculty may submit their annual reports and self-study to LOAC for evaluation. Non-credit programs undergo similar reviews but are evaluated by the supporting department instead of LOAC (S3_2_Non-Credit Program Evaluation & Assessment). Academic department chairs and Academic Affairs collaborated on a new, job description making chairs responsible for ensuring consistent oversight and assessment of all curricula within a department. (S3_8_CHairs Job Description 3.9.24)

LOAC also oversees the approval of the General Education Requirements set by SUNY (SUNY-GER) (S3_SUNY General Education Framework). OCC's general education requirements, outlined in its Curriculum Handbooks (cite page 8 of OCC23/24 (most current) Curriculum Handbook https://www.sunyocc.edu/sites/default/files/public%3A//documents/2023-08/Curriculum%20Handbook%2023.24.pdf), are designed to enable "individuals to acquire the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary for responsible participation in society. These include the ability to reason and communicate effectively, a capacity for compassionate inquiry, a framework for intellectual, ethical, and aesthetic growth, and a commitment to the well-being of self and the larger community." As stated on page 6 of the Assessment of Student Learning (need cite but is already in evidence), faculty collect data on all courses that meet SUNY-GER requirements every semester, including summers, and complete a formal review and assessment every two years. OCC's programs have been designed using Guided Pathways, which allows faculty to select SUNY-GER designated courses that align best with their programs.

Between the spring 2022 semester and fall 2023, all SUNY-GER courses were resubmitted to LOAC and approved. During the 2023-2024 academic year, LOAC updated the Assessment of Student Learning document that provides the framework for faculty assessment of student learning (cite Assessment of Student Learning (ASL) in evidence). LOAC and Registration and Records worked together to develop a tracking document for SUNY-GER courses in 2024. The tracking document shows all active SUNY-GER courses, deactivated courses, and courses going through revisions with Curriculum/LOAC. This new document led to revisions of curricular maps to reflect alignment with ILOs and PLOs. See Standard 5 for an in-depth discussion of how OCC successfully overhauled its entire Gen Ed curriculum in 2 years.

OCC's commitment to assessment is part of a campus wide focus on continuous quality improvement. Assessment Day and Assessment Fellowships, also overseen by LOAC, foster a culture of assessment by inviting interdisciplinary conversation (see Standard 5 for details). OCC also utilizes tools like the Community College Survey of Student Engagement to benchmark student perceptions and identify opportunities for institutional improvement (S3_Assessment of Student Learning). All this information is made available to the campus community via the LOAC section of OCC's website (S3_LOAC Website).

A point of pride in instructional excellence at OCC is the Lillian Slutzker Honors College. Starting in Fall 2024, students were no longer required to apply for admission. Instead, any high-achieving student with a qualifying OCC or high school GPA was automatically welcomed into the program. This new, open-access model expanded the Honors student population from approximately 115 students to over 860 across all Schools. The "I am Honors" campaign, initially funded by an internal Student Success Challenge Grant, aimed to build belonging and visibility because, despite their eligibility, many students were unaware or did not identify as "Honors" students. The campaign helped these students recognize their place in the Honors College, encouraging them to engage with those opportunities and services. Comparing 2023-2024 and 2024-2025, the number of students in Honors sections increased 37.8% (from 66 to 91 students) and students with Honors contracts increased 70% (from 27 to 46). In Spring 2025, there were 863 honors-eligible students; 145 of these (16.8%) were underrepresented minority students and 261 (30%) were first-generation [cite Student Success challenge Honors]. The number of students participating in Honors courses or contracts in Spring 2025 (137) is greater than the total Honors population (115) just a year earlier.

Online Learning

In August 2022, OCC became a member of the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA) and, shortly after, Quality Matters (QM) as part of its strategic effort to enhance the quality, integrity, and reach of its distance education offerings (cite NC SARA and QM agreements). 23% of OCC's students take courses online, and 6% of OCC students are fully online (cite SV spreadsheet). The decision to join NC-SARA was driven by the benefits of multi-state reciprocity, allowing OCC to offer online courses across state lines with reduced regulatory burden. Simultaneously, the adoption of QM provided the institution with a professionally recognized platform for faculty development in online teaching and instructional design. This led to faculty deciding to deliver several programs in an online format, including: Health Information Technology A.A.S., Creative Writing A.A., and Humanities and Social Sciences A.A.

Under the current Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA), all faculty not previously authorized to teach asynchronously must complete the QM DYOC training and submit a course for internal review and approval. Currently, 118 faculty and adjuncts are authorized to teach online, with 49 holding QM certification (S3_2_Online Approved Faculty). A Joint Labor Management Committee, established as part of the latest CBA, is creating a plan for recredentialing all non-QM authorized, online faculty.

Analysis of online courses compared to their face-to-face counterparts showed that online course success rates were not consistent with the face-to-face sections. To address this, an ad-hoc committee, working with the Faculty Senate and the Academic Technology Coordinating Committee (ATCC), developed a process to identify online courses that significantly differ in outcomes in comparison to their face-to-face counterparts. These flagged courses are identified annually by ATCC and reviewed by department chairs with the goal of improving outcomes (S3_4_NC-SARA Course Evaluation [fyi- I looked for this and could not find it).

All courses taught at OCC come with a shell in the learning management software (LMS) used at the discretion of the instructor. For online course creation, instructors can rely on the full-time, CTLI and Academic Technology Specialist. For students, OCC's Online Learning webpage provides instructions on how to access the College's LMS as well as tips on how to be a successful online learner (need cite). Students and faculty also have access to the SUNY Online Helpdesk (need cite and to add to website). Students can also work with staff in the Learning Center on accessing and basic navigation of the LMS. All resources available to in person students are available to online students. See below for details.

Learning Experiences Outside the Classroom

Coulter Library has changed significantly in the last few years. For example, it introduced a liaison model, assigning dedicated librarians to each of OCC's four schools to strengthen academic integration and outreach. This shift fostered greater insight into student needs, resulting in the addition of new furnishings to expand quiet, individual and small group study, new study tools for health sciences students, and an expanded inventory of laptop computers and calculators available for loan. The changes also included a new assessment plan (S3_4_Coulter Library Program Review Fall 2017) and the continued refinement of its Collection Development Policy (S3_4_Coulter Library Collection Development Policy 2025), ensuring a relevant, high-quality collection.

The library's website outlines policies for access and use, supported by a staff of 11.2 full-time equivalent and a holdings database managed through ALMA, a comprehensive cloud-based library services platform. The collection includes 75,711 physical items and 653,073 electronic resources. Access and utilization are continually assessed through monthly departmental meetings and participation in surveys like those of the Association of College and Research Libraries. To expand access, OCC has agreements with SUNY Alma Resource Sharing and Empire Library Delivery, allowing students and faculty access to a broad range of materials and reference services across all instructional locations and formats (S3_4_Coulter Library Collection Development Policy 2025). At the request of any faculty member, including those teaching dual enrollment, high school classes, library staff will deliver workshops on using library resources as well as help with integrating information literacy and academic integrity into courses. The School of Liberal Arts and Sciences has integrated library instruction into *Intro to Liberal Arts (LBL 101).* For students in programs such as Health Studies and

Health Sciences A.S., Coulter Library offers *Library Research Skills (LIB 110)*, a one-credit course that satisfies the SUNY General Education Information Literacy requirement (available as an elective to all students).

The English Language Institute (ELI) at OCC was launched in the Fall of 2022 to offer free community education classes that align English instruction with college readiness and workforce goals. Rather than use standardized tests, the ELI offers guided self-placement and aims to build foundational reading comprehension and vocabulary for students preparing for college-level coursework in the pre-credit space. The elimination of non-credit-bearing remedial classes (ESL 087 and ESL 093) and credit-bearing English development classes (ESL 114, ESL 115, ESL 116, ESL 118) removed 18 credits of coursework that represented a significant financial and structural barrier for English language learners. (S3_3_ELI Registration Flyer, S3_3_ELI Presentation, S3_ELI Website). ELI is delivered through a structured sequence—LI-1 (Beginner), LI-2 (Intermediate), and LI-3 (Upper Intermediate)—that supports progressive skill-building. These courses are tailored to meet students at their proficiency level: from basic conversational grammar (LI-1), to expressing complex ideas (LI-2), to applying contextualized language within medical, technical, and liberal arts disciplines (LI-3) (S3_3_ELI Registration Flyer, S3_3_ELI Presentation, S3_ELI Website).

The program, funded almost entirely through philanthropy, has achieved several milestones: transitioning its first cohort into credit-bearing courses, securing Faculty Senate approval for English Language Learner (ELL) testing accommodations, implementing contextualized, technical English through Perkins funding, and integrating with Lazer Success to improve student tracking and outreach. Enhanced placement protocols and expanded walk-in support have further strengthened onboarding processes. In 2025, the college increased its investment in ELL success, restructuring academic support services and launching English for Academic Purposes courses off-campus through a partnership with the Syracuse City School District.

The Learning Center website offers support both face-to-face and online (S3_Learning Center Website). The site offers contact information, instructions on making appointments, hours of operation, and, most importantly for online and non-traditional learners, a link to StarNY, after-hours, online tutoring from 7pm-12am. OCC's Office of Accessibility Resources (OAR) website has contact information and information on the Americans with Disabilities Act (S3_OAR Website). The Helpdesk at OCC and SUNY's helpdesk for Brightspace, OCC's LMS, provide students with technological support (cite helpdesk website and link to SUNY Brightspace help).

Conclusion

OCC continuously seeks new ways to expand learning opportunities, strengthen industry partnerships, and support students from all walks of life. As the landscape of higher education changes, OCC remains adaptable, resilient, and committed to empowering students through assessment and continuous quality improvement.

| Current Strengths | 1. Strong structures and systems in place for assessment across programs, | C8 |

	including mechanisms for reviewing and improving programs, as well as developing new ones in response to community need.	
	2. Effective implementation of Guided Pathways, especially the student support components. Evident by increasing graduation numbers.	C3
Challenges/Opportunities for Growth and Exploration	1. Increase scheduling flexibility for students by expanding fully online programs.	C4
	2. Explore how to reach new audiences (e.g. apprenticeships) in new ways by more effectively communicating the variety and 'stackability' of credentials offered.	C3

Description of Standard

Standard IV: Support of the Student Experience

Across all educational experiences, settings, levels and instructional modalities, the institution recruits and admits students whose interests, abilities, experiences, and goals are congruent with its mission and educational offerings. The institution commits to student retention, persistence, completion, and success through a coherent and effective support system sustained by qualified professionals, which enhances the quality of the learning environment, contributes to the educational experiences, and fosters student success.

Executive Summary

Onondaga Community College (OCC) has adopted specialized tools, programs, and practices to enhance the student experience and better support student success. OCC is becoming more of a "student ready college," seeking to meet its students, with their unique strengths and challenges, where they are at. OCC has embraced holistic supports at every stage in the student lifecycle to better fulfill its Mission + Vision and advance its Core Values

Alignment of Institutional Priorities with Standard Criteria

Institutional Priorities	1. Help students achieve their educational and career goals through responsive academic experiences, innovative teaching strategies, and exemplary learning support services.	2. Foster a student-centered and equitable campus experience where all students feel welcomed, valued, connected, and empowered to succeed	3. Ensure communication systems are consistent, transparent, and designed to promote student success	4. Foster engagement and partnerships with school districts, governmental and community organizations, and businesses.
4. Support of the Student Experience	✓	✓	✓	

Alignment of Lines of Inquiry with Standard Criteria
1. How does OCC demonstrate a commitment to improve student success for all learners?   C1.b, C1.e
a. What programs and strategies enhance students' educational experiences?   C6
2. What practices does OCC use to admit, retain and support a diverse population of students?   C1
3. How does OCC provide programming and resources to support the personal wellness of students?   C1.e, C4
4. What communication systems and processes exist at the College, and how effective are they at supporting students and fostering their success?   C1.a, C1.c
5. How does OCC leverage data to inform the improvement of student services? C6

Analysis

OCC reached its historic enrollment peak in 2011, largely a result of the Great Recession and significant losses within the local manufacturing base. Enrollment subsequently began to decline and accelerated between 2018 and 2024 due to demographic shifts, the global pandemic, and the changing landscape of higher education, prompting refocused efforts on the persistence and retention efforts that had their roots in the College's 2015 Achieving the Dream membership. In response to the decline in enrollment, OCC has both budgeted enrollment projections and strategic enrollment goals (**S4_1_Strategic Enrollment Management Plan** and **S4_1_Historical Expenses and Changes**). Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) track progress toward the Strategic Plan goals (S1_2_SP KPI Internal Audience_4.docx cite needs updating). The strategies discussed in this Standard are part of the annual KPI reporting.

Prospective Students

As an open access institution committed to offering affordable and accessible education to all, OCC welcomes all students (**S4_1_Admissions Philosophy**). Standard 2 contains a detailed discussion of ethical marketing practices, but the April 2025 Spring Open House and Accepted Students Day speaks to the student experience. In the new model, students explore their specific academic interests within the framework of the Schools. The 2025 event saw record-breaking attendance of more than 1,400 students and guests. Day one was reserved for 285 local high school students, and day two hosted more than 500 prospective students and over 600 guests. Compared to the 2023 Spring Open House, the 2025 event increased the number of students who registered by 233, the number who attended by 362, and saw an almost 12% rise in students who both registered and attended (cite for #s?).

Prospective students have multiple onramps to OCC. Early College at OCC consists of multiple dual enrollment programs offering high school students the opportunity to experience college. Students receive tuition waivers and discounts to work toward earning transferable college credits up to an associate degree. During 2023-2024, approximately 325 high school students took classes on campus as part of P-TECH, Early OCC, Spartan Academy, and the SMART Scholars program (S4_Early College Website). More than 3,500 high school students completed OCC credits by taking college-level classes through these programs and College Credit Now (cite for #s?).

OCC accepts a range of credits, including Advanced Placement (AP), College-level Examination Program (CLEP) exams, International Baccalaureate (IB), military credit, and credits earned at other colleges and universities (**S4_2_Equivalency Reports; S4_2_Transfer Credit Policy**). The transfer credit evaluation coordinator reviews all relevant material, and students see results in the Student Planning system. All guides for transfer and AP/IB/CLEP equivalencies are available on the website (**S4_2_AP IB CLEP Combined Chart**). Transfer credits are generally evaluated within 2 business days of receipt of the student's official college transcript. Debuting in Fall 2025, OCC has a process for awarding Credit for Prior Learning (CPL), which can be awarded for certain scores on standardized testing, departmental exams, and military coursework, as well as professional licensures, certifications, and work experience. The process and most current standardized equivalencies, created and approved by the Scholastic Standards Committee and the Faculty Senate, are outlined on the College's website, and more equivalencies are in development (S4_2_Credit for Prior Learning; **S4_2_Credit for Prior Learning**

Request Dynamic Form). OCC is also developing a system to award CPL based on specific professional licensure and/or certification in health care fields as part of the SUNY HealthCARES Consortium.

Post-traditional learners have the potential to benefit most from CPL. As demonstrated by **S4_1_Admissions Profile**, an increasing number of OCC students fit into this category, and OCC is committed to supporting them. In 2022, the Title III grant funded Post-Traditional Learner workgroup made specific recommendations to enhance services for this population in academic content delivery and pedagogy, course scheduling, and outreach and marketing strategies. (**S4_1_D_Post-Traditional Learner Workgroup**). Examples of the projects completed as a result include the Parent and Adult Learner Suite, drop-in childcare at the adjoining YMCA, expansion of fully online degrees, expansion of non-credit workforce credentials and career pathways in healthcare, and becoming the One Stop operator for CNY Works, expanding wrap-around services and access to training for adult learners. OCC is currently developing a two-year academic schedule that will allow adult learners to plan their entire degree path at the outset. Beginning in Fall 2025, a new program known as "SUNY Reconnect" will offer free community college for New York adults ages 25-55 with no college degree pursuing associate degrees in high-demand fields. Additionally, OCC launched a 150-person cohort in June 2025 of the Advancing Success in Associate Pathways (ASAP) Opportunity Program, based on the successful CUNY model, which is expected to provide further support for adult learners (S4_ASAP Website; cite new info Schuhert provided).

Despite the variety of onramps and recruitment efforts, total enrollment of international students has declined since 2011, which is consistent with changes in the region's higher education landscape and OCC's lack of targeted recruitment given its community focus (**S4_1_International Students Enrollment by Program**).

Attending OCC

OCC has implemented different strategies to streamline and personalize student onboarding. For example, One Team, debuting in 2019, provided outreach and support to students from acceptance through their second semester. Now, when a student applies to OCC, they are assigned an Onboarding contact to help them with the admissions process. After registration, students are assigned a Student Success Navigator within their School, who sends weekly outreach during the months leading up to the student's first semester. Students only change navigators if they switch to a major outside of their original School. This change, a best practice which provides students with earlier access to their Navigators, was driven by the development of the Schools. Establishing this connection earlier helps students prepare for their first semester while also fostering a relationship that continues throughout their time at the College, supporting students through the transition to OCC to graduation.

New Student Orientation offers incoming students the opportunity to connect with faculty and staff from their School, other students in their cohort, and representatives from important offices, including Financial Aid and Student Accounts (**S4_1_C_Orientation Schedule**). Approximately 34% of the total cohort attend orientation (average Fall 2022-Fall 2024). Attendees consistently demonstrate stronger academic performance compared to non-attendees, earning a higher average GPA (2.34 compared to 1.91) and completing more credits on average (10.2 versus 8.2). Attendees also experienced a significantly lower rate of unsatisfactory Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) status, with 29.6% falling

below SAP standards compared to 42.0% of non-participants (S4_1_C_Orientation Attendance Data). Although difficult to prove a causal relationship between participation in New Student Orientation and academic performance, "Research supports a positive relationship between orientation and retention" (S4_ProQuest Mixed Methods Study, pg. 1).

Given this given promising research findings like these, OCC revised its orientation process to increase attendance. Beginning in Summer 2025, all incoming students are required to complete an online New Student Orientation and are then strongly encouraged to attend a school-specific, in-person orientation in mid-August (S4_Orientation Website). This online orientation is designed for flexibility and introduces participants to academic expectations and student responsibilities, key campus resources and support services, and terminology (i.e., "college-speak"); it also teaches students how to navigate college systems. How many of the Fall 2025 incoming students participated in the on-line and then in-person orientations?

Given that 36% of degree/certificate seeking students identify as first-generation, OCC partnered with Campus ESP in Fall 2024 to provide resources and support for the families of prospective and enrolled students. Collaborating with families is a proven way to empower students and their support networks and promotes academic achievement and personal growth. OCC now offers family members and supporters online instruction in navigating campus support systems, provides contact information for key staff members, and extends opportunities to connect with campus resources (cite needed).

Taking lessons from Achieving the Dream and the Community College Research Center, OCC developed other, new processes to support students. For example, the Register NOW program begun in Spring 2024, simplifies class registration for new students. When a student is ready to register, an Onboarding Specialist assists them in completing a program specific registration form used by a Navigator in their School to create a personalized class schedule aligning with the student's needs (e.g. work, childcare, etc.). Students receive their schedule via email along with important next steps, such as instructions for accessing OCC email and attending New Student Orientation. If career guidance is requested, Onboarding Specialists collaborate with Career and Transfer staff to help students explore their values, interests, and goals, connecting them to academic programs that best fit their aspirations (S4_1_C_Register NOW).

In Spring 2024, 748 students made their schedule through the Register Now process. The following fall (Fall 2024), 2,441 students did. That Spring 2025, 744 forms were completed, and in Fall 2025, 2,822 forms were completed (cite Jenna email unless there is a better source for #s). In addition to increasing efficiency in admissions and student access, this process allows Navigators to focus discussions on academic goals, course selection, and long-term planning. Sometimes incomplete or inconsistent student information on the forms or limited course availability requires further communication, reducing the efficiency of the process, but the biggest issue of this program is that registering students through Colleague and generating individualized emails is extremely for staff. Plans are in place to transition this process to SLATE, which will improve efficiency and provide a more seamless experience for students and staff.

"Schools," OCC's name for meta majors, were introduced in 2020 to align with the principles of Guided Pathways [Title III cite]. Historical, internal research at OCC confirmed that students in our Opportunity

Programs (impacting approximately 325 students in 2025) persisted and graduated at much higher rates than non-affiliated students, suggesting the personalized support and high levels of engagement in these programs were significant factors in their success. Schools were designed to give *every* student at OCC a similar experience. This model focuses on three key areas: enhancing advising, integrating career and transfer planning, and fostering a sense of belonging. Schools groups academic programs into broad, recognizable categories, helping students select a degree pathway that matches their interests and career goals while minimizing credit loss due to change of major.

The original structure called for eight Schools. In Fall 2023, it was streamlined to the current four: School of Arts, Communication, Business & Entrepreneurship; School of Health, Wellness, and Human Services; School of Liberal Arts and Sciences; and School of Technology, Engineering & Computing.

replace with official 2025 #s when available

5. Headcount by School	Fall 2024	
School	# of Students	%
Arts, Communication, Business & Entrepreneurship	974	11%
Health, Wellness & Human Services	1164	14%
Liberal Arts & Sciences	1377	16%
Technology, Engineering & Computing	941	11%
No School Association		
College - Not in High School	660	8%
Concurrently Enrolled in High School	3421	40%
Overall Total Students	8537	100%

Each School has a team that includes a School Specialist, Faculty Liaison, Assistant Director, Student Success Navigators, Career and Transfer Specialists, and secretaries. Navigators serve as a consistent, go-to support person who helps students make sense of college, whether that's choosing classes, connecting with resources, or working through personal or academic challenges, receiving comprehensive training, covering a wide range of topics, including academic advisement, transfer assistance, coaching methodology, and campus resources (**S4_1_C_SCAN Student Success Navigator Training**).

The coaching methodology used by Navigators is that used by InsideTrack for Academic Success Coaching. The methodology meets the IES What Works Clearinghouse standards without reservation [Bettinger and Baker, 2011, cite T3]. By 2021, OCC staff were trained and certified in coaching, with designated staff able to credential new coaches, creating a sustainable system for support beyond the initial grant funding. Through the coaching methodology, staff members help students explore their knowledge, skills, and beliefs to create a path through college. When asked about their coaching experience, one student replied, "The college has come a long way since I initially attended 20 years ago. Everyone truly wants the students to succeed!"

A five-year, longitudinal Social Policy Research Associates study, commissioned as part of the 2018-2023 Title III grant, quantified the impact of Coaching: students who participated in at least one coaching session completed their English gateway course at a rate of 54%, compared to 46% of students without coaching, difference in proportions test (*** p<.001). This study also measured the impact of OCC's cumulative reforms. For example, the completion rate for the English gateway course among all first-time, full-time students rose from 59% in 2020 to 64% in 2022, while the average total credits earned increased from 14.7 to 15.8. Black and first-generation students demonstrated significant gains in credits earned, from 8.5 to 11.8 and 12.8 to 13.6, respectively. The percentage of first-time, full-time students earning at least 15 credits per semester grew from 50% to 55%. Retention rates also improved, with fall-to-fall retention for first-time, full-time students taking English gateway courses rising from 48% to 53% and fall-to-spring retention for the same group increasing from 72% to 76% (need to cite SPRA study). These outcomes document the success of OCC's holistic student support reforms, designed to meet students where they are and enhance their use of campus services.

All matriculated students are assigned at least one navigator within their school based on academic program, but students who are part of an opportunity program may have an additional navigator. Non-matriculated students go to the Interim Associate Dean of Students for advisement, and a staff member responds to Lazer Success flags. Beginning in Fall 2025, a new navigator is being trained and will be dedicated to this population. Students in Early College Programs (PTECH, Smart Scholars, Success Academies, Early OCC) are supported by a dedicated staff member serving as both navigator and advisor. Early College Programs' staff see Lazer Success alerts and collaborate with high school staff to provide wraparound support.

EAB's Starfish, known locally as Lazer Success (LS), allows faculty to provide direct feedback to students about their performance. Faculty can raise flags about academic or attendance concerns or extend "kudos" as a positive reinforcement. Flags give students direct, timely feedback and are also sent to support teams who perform outreach via phone, text, or email. In fall 2024 alone, faculty raised over 10,000 flags (cite?). Students can also use LS to schedule appointments at the Learning Center, Career Services, Financial Aid Office, Counseling Office, and Office of Accessibility Resources (OAR). Providing an easy to use and integrated referral/scheduling system removes barriers that might otherwise discourage students from seeking help. For example, in Fall 2024, 6,007 tutoring appointments at the Learning Center were made through Lazer Success. The composition of a student's support team varies based on their campus connections and affiliations, such as living on campus, participating in athletics, receiving accessibility accommodations, etc., ensuring students receive personalized support tailored to their unique needs.

For students who need additional support, there is Growth, Progress, & Skills for College (GPS), a weekly workshop series focusing on building academic, personal, and practical skills while fostering a sense of belonging and school pride (S4_1_D_GPS Overview Presentation). GPS workshops are open to all students, but first-year and at-risk students are specifically encouraged to attend. In Fall 2024, the semester the program started, 215 unique students participated in at least one workshop. Of those, 187 registered for the Spring 2025 semester, and 148 completed the Fall semester with a GPA above 2.0. In response to student feedback, the program now includes evening and virtual options and a peer-led session where students share success strategies.

Navigators use communication technology, e.g. targeted text messages, to meet the needs of specific student demographics and groups. Regular outreach campaigns include text "nudges" with information about important deadlines, engagement during academic breaks, contacting students enrolled in courses outside of their program, and providing re-advisement after deregistration periods, such as when students are removed from courses due to unmet prerequisites (S4_1_C_Schools Student Outreach Plan). Messaging strategies have been refined to prioritize students' interests, academic goals, and career aspirations, ensuring communications are relevant and meaningful. Each School gathers student feedback through surveys and its Student Advisory Board (cite needed). See Standard 2 for a discussion of the audit of student facing department communications.

A key member of the Schools' Team is the Career and Transfer Specialist (CTS) who assists current students and alumni with career preparation and transfer. Formerly a separate office, CTS staff joined the Schools in Fall 2023. CTSs host career showcases, resume and cover letter workshops, and transfer fairs, focusing on the needs of students within their specific Schools. They also work with student service offices operating outside the Schools, including the Office of Veterans and Military Services, Office of Accessibility Resources, Honors, and the Opportunity Programs. Working one-on-one with students, CTSs collaborate with Navigators to guide students through the transfer process, helping them understand articulation agreements. Articulation agreements include program-to-program plans, which specify transferable courses, and dual admission (2+2) agreements allowing for transfer as full Juniors (S4_1_Sample Enrollment Agreement MOU SUNY ESF Bridge Program). Schools teams showcase OCC's most popular transfer institutions on campus and also arrange bus trips to those campuses, clarifying transfer requirements, connecting students to staff and faculty at prospective schools, and reducing transition concerns. Including transfer fairs, workshops, individual appointments and other events, approximately 1,450 matriculated students participate each year. The biggest challenges for CTS are raising awareness of services, coordinating event times to fit with student schedules, and limited funding for transportation and travel related expenses.

Student feedback consistently indicates that Navigators using the coaching methodology make students feel supported in ways that go beyond class scheduling and academic advising (cite ?). Navigator turnover is and has been challenging because of the time put into certifying people in the coaching methodology and because coaching skills improve with experience. New navigators need time to reach the same level of effectiveness as their more experienced peers. It has been challenging, especially with staff turnover, to keep caseloads close to the ideal 150 students per navigator. Balancing time and resources across advising, outreach, and follow-up remains an ongoing challenge.

Innovations like Navigators that came with the implementation of Schools have contributed to increasing student success. For example, Fall-to-Fall retention rates for full-time, degree-seeking students have increased since the Schools' implementation in 2021, from 48% in 2021 to 53% in 2024 (S_1_Retention Rates IPEDS).
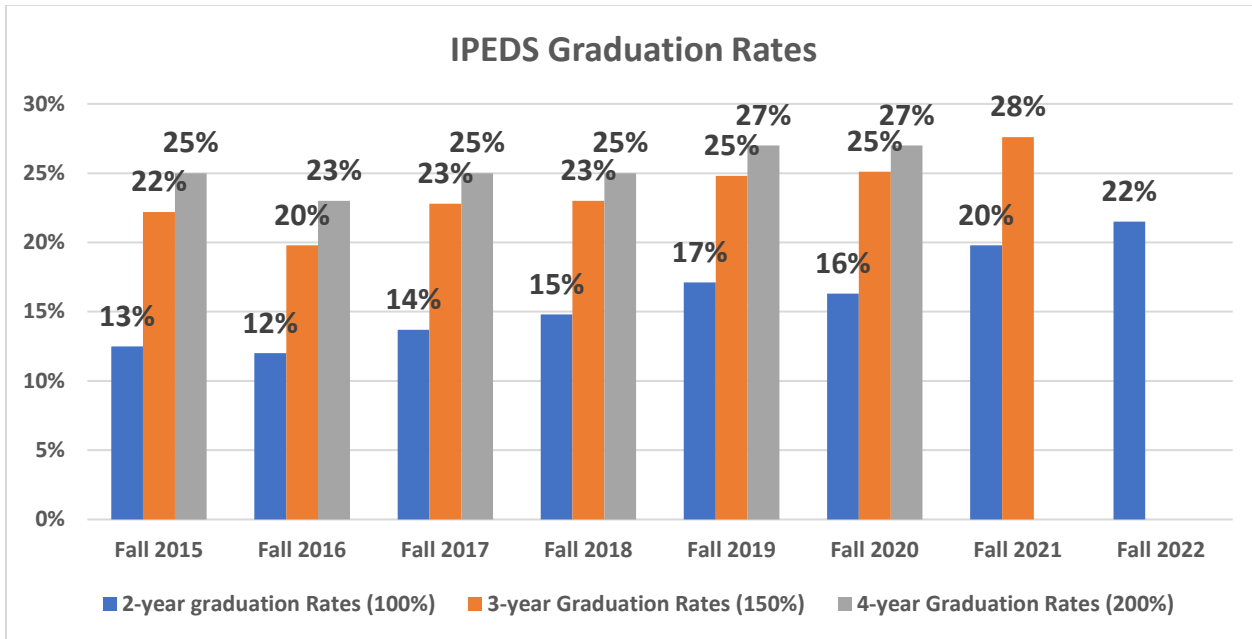
Retention Rate (Fall to Fall, One Year)
(Retention Rate = # retained / total # of students in cohort)
(# retained = # persisted to next fall + # graduated by next fall) ⓘ
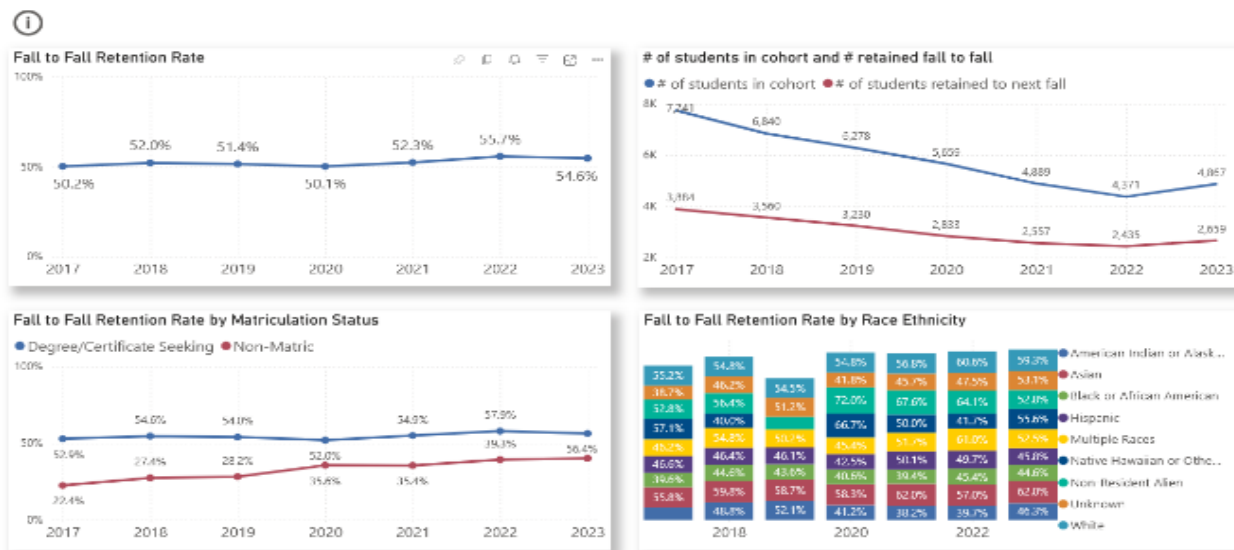
As these dashboards demonstrate, OCC routinely disaggregates and analyzes student enrollment and achievement data, and it is shared at Schools team meetings, Achieving the Dream coaching sessions, faculty and staff meetings, etc. (See Standard 5 for an in-depth discussion of dashboards at OCC.) Enrollment trends in specific programs as well as retention and completion data reveal strengths and areas for improvement (**S4_1_D_Program Enrollment Data**). Programs such as Nursing A.A.S., Surgical Technology A.A.S., and Physical Therapist Assistant A.A.S. demonstrate strong performance, with 1-year retention rates above 84%. The Nursing program licensure examination pass rate is consistently above 88% (**S4_1_E_Healthcare Related Assessments –** Abby please pick one example out of the folder for evidence) (EV will create the program websites as PDFs to highlight pass rates/outcomes). These competitive programs have admission requirements, likely contributing to their success by ensuring students are well-prepared. In contrast, programs like Engineering Science A.S. and American Sign Language A.S. have moderate retention but extremely low enrollment and graduation rates. To address this, some programs are considering admission requirements where appropriate, such as the requirements for Engineering Science, in effect Fall 2025, ensuring students have the necessary math and science prerequisites. Liberal Arts programs overall continue to show declining enrollment and stable retention but often lower graduation rates. The Fall 2025 headcount for Liberal Arts and Science, however, is approximately 3% higher than Fall 2024 as of September 7 (note is based on a point-in-time, year-over-year comparison) (cite Agatha's plenary address from Aug 25). This type of analysis shows the potential need to supplement OCC's structural reforms (i.e. Schools and navigators) with program specific enhancements of advising, degree planning, and support services.

Each of the four Schools creates a collaborative environment between its student success team and its faculty. As a result of this work, graduation rates have steadily improved over time (**S4_1_Graduation Rates IPAR**).

IPEDS Graduation Rates

	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	Fall 2017	Fall 2018	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Fall 2021	Fall 2022
2-year graduation Rates (100%)	13%	12%	14%	15%	17%	16%	20%	22%
3-year Graduation Rates (150%)	22%	20%	23%	23%	25%	25%	28%	
4-year Graduation Rates (200%)	25%	23%	25%	25%	27%	27%		

Supporting Underprepared Students

Many OCC students come with knowledge and skill gaps and are under prepared for the academic rigors of college. Many of these same students have been systemically under-served in area school districts. OCC has been innovative in finding ways to reduce barriers for these students, exemplifying how the College is becoming "more student ready."

In Fall 2020, OCC English and Integrated Learning Strategies (formerly Reading) faculty removed all non-credit reading and writing courses from the schedule. All students, except those who self-identified as ESOL, go directly into college-level, credit-bearing, first-year composition (FYC) courses. The English department redesigned the FYC, incorporating key elements of the former developmental and co-requisite programs, such as holistic student supports. The course now features an integrated reading and writing framework, designed to better support student learning and success (**see Choseed, et al *Teaching English in the Two Year College* article from 2023 and 2024 Instructional Note**). Since this elimination in 2020, student success rates matched and then surpassed those of the previous model. In 2024, OCC received the Diana Hacker Two Year College Association Outstanding Program Award given by the National Council of Teachers of English for this successful reform (S4_1_B_Developmental Writing Reform). See Standard 5 for an in-depth discussion of the role assessment played in this change.

The developmental mathematics curriculum has seen profound change as well. Following years of discussion, experimentation, and investment in classroom infrastructure, student outcomes in Mathematics remained a source of concern. In 2021-22, the College administration removed non-credit mathematics courses from the schedule, citing data that showed students placed in these classes did not make required progress in their majors, even after multiple attempts; an internal study

showed that of 586 STEM students who placed one level below collegiate math in 2019-2020, only 56 were successful in the first credit bearing pathway course, and only 3 were ultimately successful in Calculus 1, the required course for most pathways. Success rates for students placed two levels below collegiate was even worse (see ppt Awuah sent). This decision proved controversial among parts of the faculty, with some seeing it as curricular overreach. Several members of the STEM faculty were skeptical about the ability of under-prepared students (some proficient in math at an 8th grade level) to catch up in a semester, regardless of the innovative pedagogy or curriculum. This decision to remove the non-credit courses created an impasse of sorts, putting the mathematics curriculum into a temporary stasis.

Recently, however, Mathematics faculty have been developing new approaches to support students, creating contextualized mathematics courses to support student success in career and technical degrees (MAT103, 108, 119 and 120), nursing (MAT 110), business (MAT 115 and 116), and education (MAT 121 and 122). They also developed a two-credit, co-requisite course for MAT 143 (pre-Calculus) that started running in Fall 2022 and narrowed the success gap between underprepared students and their more prepared counterparts in STEM (cite MAT-143 Success Rates FA22-FA24). While promising, it is difficult to draw conclusions about the efficacy of the co-requisite course because only two sections per term are offered and students self-select into the course. Currently, faculty are developing a pilot program for students who nearly passed a mathematics course in the prior semester and may be able to "recover" that lost credit with additional support. They are also identifying effective diagnostic tools to help properly place students into STEM pathway mathematics courses. See Standard 5 for more detail on this work. The College supports Mathematics faculty with stipends for additional work and by seeking external grant funding to support redesign efforts.

OCC's Learning Center (LC) offers optional, pre-term academic support workshops, focusing on study and basic math skills designed to complement curricular supports (began when?). Students in STEM fields are made aware of the programming through email via the LC and navigators. 85 students used the program to prepare for Fall 2024 classes. (approx. what % of STEM students is that/ e.g. how many STEM students in '24?). The Math Xcelerator program, for example, is a pre-semester workshop offered both online and in person for students enrolled in STEM pathway Intermediate Algebra and Pre-Calculus (both historically high DFW, gateway courses). The program's impact on course success rates will be assessed at the end of Spring 2026 (cite Ted Mathews SSC proposal added to evidence). Students enrolled in the College's Career and Technical Education programs also have access to McGraw Hill's ALEKS adaptive learning software to enhance math skills prior to the start of their first semester.

The LC provides students with three options for tutoring: traditional one-on-one scheduled appointments; drop-in hours for courses with low pass rates; and online tutoring, offered through a collaboration between OCC and the SUNY STAR-NY consortium of tutors, an online tutoring service providing academic support into late-night hours (S4_5_StarNY). A third-party provider, STAR-NY's work is assessed annually. (S4_5_Third-Party Provider Assessment Form; S4_5_Third-Party Provider Policy). In Fall 2024, the LC saw 1,026 unique students, with 29% attending 5 or more tutoring sessions (cite needed for data?). The optional nature of these supports underscores the necessity of sustained, curricular innovation in these areas if the College wants to see large-scale change.

Students Supports Outside of the Schools

The Schools model is designed to provide students with a network of integrated supports focused on academic pursuits, but OCC recognizes that maximizing student success depends on supporting the whole student. The Counseling team provides individual and small- group counseling. Their solution-focused approach includes support for issues including academic struggles, self-identity, domestic violence, crisis intervention, telepsychiatry, and community referrals. The Community Care Hub (CCH) complements these efforts by offering referrals and guidance on accessing support for housing, food, transportation, public benefits, child and family care, legal and financial matters, and physical and mental health. For example, in Fall 2024, there were 159 referrals from various campus offices to services that are part of the CCH (62 coming through LazerSuccess). There were 1,289 attended appointments for mental health services, including support groups, in Fall 2024. The CCH also houses a food pantry, which had 1,831 visits from 5/20/21 to 5/21/25. Expanding options for food and personal care items is a long-term goal for staff. Cite CCH and food pantry 2020-2025 Appointment Snapshot

Along these lines, the Office of Veterans and Military Services (OVMS) exists to support military-affiliated students and their dependents. In Spring 2024, the OVMS was selected as one of 23 SUNY institutions to host a paid internship for a student veteran in the admissions process. The intern partnered with the Assistant Director of OVMS to attend college fairs and share their experiences as an OCC student, aiming to support military-connected families and encourage more veterans to pursue a college education. OVMS currently serves about 180 individual students, including veterans and their dependents, using GI Bill benefits (**source J. Alexander email**).

The Office of Accessibility Resources (OAR) reflects the institution's commitment to holistic student support through its approach to student academic and personal success. OAR uses innovative technology, like Glean, an AI-powered notetaking system, and Equatio, a software that reads math for students with dyslexia. The office also trains navigators to advocate for students and students to advocate for themselves, ensuring compliance with ADA standards. During the 2023–2024 academic year, approximately 6.2% of students received academic accommodations through OAR, an increase of 3.9% since Fall 2022 (cite?). OAR's biggest challenge is when students do not self-identify as qualifying for services prior to the start of their first semester. This is addressed by a specific question about previously receiving services on the application (see Standard 1 for detail). New software is being used to improve scheduling and record keeping.

The Financial Aid Service Center (FASC) was established in 2016 as part of Student Central and became part of the Financial Aid Department in 2018. Initially created to help students complete their FAFSA applications, FASC has grown into a fully staffed service center addressing all financial aid-related inquiries and functions. Considering approximately 85% of full-time, first-time students at OCC receive financial aid, the FASC plays a vital role. FASC offers personalized, one-on-one support to both current and perspective students and families through walk-in services and scheduled phone or in-person appointments. Since 2022, the FASC has held approximately 12,360 appointments (**S4_1_A_Financial Aid Year Over Year Meeting Information**). See Standard 2 for a detailed analysis of the impact of FASC.

To further improve communication and transparency, the Financial Aid Department—working in collaboration with FASC—redesigned the financial aid offer letter to make it easier for students and their supporters to understand. The updated letter includes an estimated financial aid package with a breakdown of tuition and fees, scholarships and grants, loans (subsidized versus unsubsidized), and work-study. For students planning to live on campus, estimated residence hall costs are also included. A glossary is provided to explain key terms used in the letter (**S4_1_A_Financial Aid Offer Letter**), (**S4_1_A_Financial Aid Brochures and Publications**).

The "Financial Aid" module in MyOCC, powered by Ellucian, gives students easy access to real-time updates about their financial aid status. Students can view their financial aid checklist, track required documents, review award offers, and check for anything impacting their eligibility. The number of Pell recipients dropped significantly between 2016 and 2021 but has started to rebound, rising from 1,832 in 2021 to 2,049 in 2023. This increase may indicate a growing financial need among students or improved outreach and support in helping students access financial aid goals (**S4_1_Student Financial Aid Survey-IPEDS**). (**S4_6_CCH End of Year Data-Support Services**).

The average student debt for all graduates increased from $4,955 in 2010-2011 to a peak of $6,091 in 2017-2018, dropped to a low of $3,263 in 2021-2022, and has recently risen to $5,324 in 2023-2024. Of note, 68% of graduates in 2023 graduated with no student loan debt. The expiration of federal emergency aid has likely contributed to the recent uptick in student borrowing. Additionally, broader inflationary pressures have increased the cost of living, requiring some students to rely more heavily on loans to meet both educational and personal expenses (**S4_1_A_Average Student Loan Undebtedness**). Cohort default rates have remained within federally acceptable limits. Only 1% of students utilized private or non-federal loans, a testament to the college's effective guidance in promoting safer, more manageable borrowing options (**S2_7_C_(%) Students with Loans (Institution).pdf**).

Assessments in this area focus on outcomes, and adjustments are made as a result. In some ways, these are indirect measures of students learning about the financial aid process. The College is considering ways to connect explicit student learning outcomes to some non-academic offices/services, where appropriate, like Financial Aid.

Whether it is financial aid or other types of information, OCC is committed to protecting the privacy and security of all students. The College complies with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), safeguarding student records and personal information and has a policy for records retention (**Need to cite B9: Records Retention Requirements**). Each year, enrolled students receive an email outlining their FERPA rights and can complete a FERPA waiver through their MyOCC account or by visiting Student Central. New employees receive FERPA training during orientation to ensure they understand their role in maintaining student privacy (S4_3_Compliance with FERPA and Privacy Act; B9: Records Retention Requirements, S4_3_Compliance with FERPA and Privacy Act; C11: Authorization to Release Students' Education Records, J1: Acceptable and Responsible Use of Computing Technology, S4_1_Ethical Marketing Practices_J2 Internet Privacy Policy; S2_Student Computing Info Website)

OCC also prioritizes the physical safety of its students through its Campus Safety educational programs and student discipline procedures. Operating 24/7, Campus Safety provides comprehensive security services across campus via peace officers (state certified law enforcement), campus security officers, emergency alerts, and safety protocols. Although the Annual Security and Fire Safety Report show that crime on campus maintains a consistent pattern/frequency of incidents, student discipline recidivism rates have decreased over the last 4 years (cite Conduct Recidivism Rates chartS4_6_Conduct Recidivism Rates 2020-2025). . Campus Safety and Residence Life staff work together to ensure a safe and supportive living environment for the approximately 750 students who reside on campus, and safety/security is a mandatory topic of discussion at each resident assistant's first floor meeting. Within the residence halls, however, there has been an uptick in drug abuse violations, correlating to the 2021 legalization of marijuana in NY State and the increase in local availability, with the first cannabis dispensary in the area opening in 2023. Programming focused on the effects of cannabis is offered to residents during the first weeks of each semester. Throughout the semester, programming focuses on increasing knowledge about the dangers of substance misuse as well as campus policies regarding alcohol and other drugs; this includes: one large scale program, four RA facilitated programs (one per Residence Hall), Passive Programming (e.g., bulletin boards, mailbox stuffers, door knocking, etc.), mandatory alcohol and other drugs programming, and Title IX education for student athletes (cite page 6 of Biennial). If students have a pattern of alcohol or other drug violations, or a serious violation such as transport, they are required to complete two sessions with the Assistant Director of Student Health and Wellness, which are based on motivational interviewing, harm reduction and discussing a student's current and future educational goals [Cite Page 10 of OCC Biennial Review 23-24]. In spring 23-fall 24, there were 385 total alcohol or other drugs cases. When compared to other regional, community colleges, OCC has a slightly higher number of disciplinary cases (S2_Annual Security Report 2024) (cite Department of Education data 6.20.25), The Biennial review assesses for strengths and areas needing improvement. For example, the most recent review found that there is an "Organization-wide, top-down message of zero tolerance," but a concern is that "Due to the conclusion of the OASAS College Prevention grant, there is not currently a budget for a lot of prevention activities." The review also notes that the Assistant Director of Student Health & Wellness will continue to conduct no or low-cost programming and work with the Grant's Office to identify potential grant funding page 21 Need to cite OCC Biennial review 23-24.

Consistent with OCC's emphasis on student safety and well-being, all incoming students receive essential information about Title IX during online and on-campus orientation. These sessions educate students about their rights and responsibilities under Title IX, how to recognize and report incidents of sexual harassment, assault, discrimination, and how to access on-campus and community support resources (S2_Title IX Website). Additionally, specific populations such as student-athletes and members of the Student Government Association participate in enhanced training sessions designed to provide a deeper understanding of Title IX policies, bystander intervention strategies, and the importance of fostering a culture of accountability and respect in their roles as student leaders. All perspective and current students have access to these materials through the public website and the centralized Policy Manual, which includes guidance on academic integrity, student conduct, equal opportunity, non-discrimination, and grievance procedures (S4_3_Centralized Policy Manual-website).

Engaging with Campus Life

Student Orientation, Leadership and Engagement (SOLE) serves as the hub for fostering vibrant campus life, promoting student leadership, and facilitating transitions for new students into the OCC community. Comprising four key areas—new student orientation, leadership development, campus events, and supporting students—the office is dedicated to enriching the collegiate experience, building connections, and empowering students to thrive academically and socially (**S4_4_SOLE March Event Calendar**). Their leadership development initiatives offer training, mentorship, and experiential learning opportunities to cultivate skills like communication, teamwork, and decision-making. According to the SOLE 2024-2025 End of Year Report, at least 11,098 non-unique students attended 94 distinct SOLE events, ranging from study breaks, crafts, community involvement, and meet ups with navigators and Schools personnel (cite EOY report). An ongoing issue is that not all student groups are consistent about tracking attendance or distributing satisfaction surveys at events, but the biggest challenge for SOLE is students not being aware of events, despite emails, stall signs, posters and the engagement platform (SOLE does not text students). SOLE staff are deliberately placing events in high traffic areas to draw students in.

As is made clear through its statements of Philosophy, Mission, and Vision, OCC Athletics are designed to complement a student's classroom education by providing growth and leadership opportunities (**S4_4_Athletics Mission Statement; S4_4_Athletics Statement of Purpose**). In addition to OCC's own policies, the department adheres to the guidelines outlined in the NJCAA Handbook, governing eligibility, conduct, and academic standards for all participating student-athletes (**S4_4_NJCAA Handbook_Ethics in Athletics) (S4_4_Student Athlete Scholarships**). OCC has 20 intercollegiate NJCAA teams and approximately 400 student-athletes, in addition to its numerous club and recreational sports activities (**S4_4_Athletics Student Headcount by Sport), (S4_4_Student Athlete Expectations and Responsibilities**). OCC's teams have achieved remarkable success, earning 17 NJCAA team national championships and 22 NJCAA Division III individual, national championships. Athletics are also a tool for student success, with student athletes outperforming non-athletes in success metrics: a Fall 2023 mean GPA of 2.606 compared to 2.195 for non-student-athletes; Fall-to-fall retention rate of 4.4 (last 3 cohorts) of 69.03% compared to 51.53% for non-student-athletes; and a three-year graduation rate (last 2 cohorts) of 41.35% compared to 24.5% for non-student-athletes (**S4_4_Average GPA by Sport; S4_4_Athletics Academic Standards**).

Student Affairs is committed to using assessment to drive continuous improvement and determine budgetary priorities (**S4_6_CCH End of Year Data-Support Services**). For example, while full-time student enrollment dropped from 5,686 in 2020 to 4,266 in 2024, spending on student services rose from 10.83% to 14.59% of the total budget. This increase points to a greater investment in services that directly support students, such as hiring additional Student Success Navigators in 2023 to reduce caseloads and increase individual attention (**S4_1_C_Historical Expenses as a % function**). OCC is seeing increased persistence, retention, and graduation (see Standard 3 for details), but also increased student satisfaction. The 2025 Community College Survey of Student Engagement (page 5) shows that the 13 categories associated with student services average 93.02% of respondents are "somewhat or very satisfied," with eight of the categories improving over the 2022 survey, one staying the same, and, of the four categories decreasing, three were of 3 points or less. The "Job placement assistance"

category fell by 10.5, although "Career counseling" increased dramatically from 57.8% responding "somewhat or very satisfied" in 2022 to 95.7% in 2025, which makes sense given the staff increases in that time period. Page 18 of the 2024 Post-Graduate Survey shows increases across the board in its assessment of student services, including "Career/job-related services," increasing from 43.4% reporting "satisfied or very satisfied" in 2022 to 60.2% in 2023 to 71.7% in 2024. The 10.5% drop may be the result of students not fully understanding the role of career services here at OCC, as it focuses on education and preparation and does not offer "job placement." Career staff will continue to clarify expectations with students and review communication strategies. (**S2_2_CCSSE 2025 Report Card MC changed this – make sure new one is in evidence CCSSE 2025 Report Card_9-13-25-1.pdf**).

Student Success Beyond OCC

Associate degree awards have declined over the past five years, corresponding to the decline in enrollment, dropping from 1,175 in 2017-18 to 887 in 2021-22. Conversely, the *percentage* of graduates has increased over this same period. Inequities, however, do persist. White students remain the largest percentage of associate degree recipients, followed by Black or African American and Hispanic/Latino students. Certificate completions, while smaller in number, have fluctuated but show an increase in female recipients, especially in recent years (**S4_1_Degrees Awarded by Credential Level Annually-IPEDS Completions**). See S3 for an in-depth discussion of graduation and transfer rates.

While it is challenging to get students to respond to post-graduation surveys, according to the Class of 2024 Post-Graduate Survey, 75.4% of AA and 75.8% of AS respondents are pursuing transfer degrees, and 60% of respondents with AAS degrees reported entering the workforce. Trends in Post-Graduate Surveys show that between 2018 and 2024 (excluding 2021 because of a data error), 73% of AA holders and 75.5% of AS holders pursued transfer while 66.5% of AAS students entered the workforce (**needs cited - Grad Survey trend analysis**). OCC is investigating why 33.4% of AAS holders pursue transfer and not the career they trained for.

In 2024, the five most frequently mentioned transfer destinations were SUNY Oswego, Syracuse University, SUNY Cortland, SUNY Upstate, and Le Moyne.   The top five employers of OCC alumni are SUNY Upstate Medical University, Wegmans Food Market, National Grid, Syracuse City School District, and Syracuse University (**cite National Institute for Student Success report**). These employers reflect the wide range of industries that OCC graduates enter, including healthcare, retail, utilities, education, and higher education. Many of these organizations are also among the largest and most stable employers in Central New York, offering a variety of career pathways for graduates with associate degrees or those who transfer to complete a bachelor's degree. The data suggests that many OCC alumni are staying in the region after graduation and successfully entering the workforce in roles that align with local labor market needs.

Earnings data for graduates demonstrate positive, long-term economic outcomes and strong workforce alignment. One year after graduation, 85.2% of completers were employed in New York State, with a median wage of $33,234. Wage progression over time is clear, with median earnings increasing to $36,966 at two years, $42,430 at five years, and reaching $48,893 ten years after graduation (in 2021

dollars). These outcomes suggest that the College equips students with skills that translate into sustained earning potential and employability within the state. (**S4_1_E_SUNY Graduate Wages**).

OCC values strong relationships with community partners and alumni. The college hosts employer showcases, alumni panels, and employer site visits, among other initiatives. For example, Electrical Technology students recently met with the Lead Shift Supervisor at National Grid's Power Distribution Control Center, a 2012 alum. Career & Transfer Services works with alumni to host events such as Women in Media, Artist panels, the Future Entrepreneurs Series, and transfer panels. Both current and previous students (regardless of graduation status) have access to Career & Transfer Services, which include job search assistance, career exploration, resume building, and practice interviews.

The OCC Foundation also connects with students after they leave OCC. Events like *Alumni Faces*, which honors alumni for their professional achievements and contributions to the college, and OCC's *Day of Giving*, which encourages donations to support current students, help foster ongoing alumni engagement.

Conclusion

Onondaga Community College is committed to supporting the student experience through a range of programs, services, and initiatives that promote academic success, personal development, and timely degree completion. Evidence shows that students have access to comprehensive advising, support services, and co-curricular opportunities designed to meet their diverse needs. While the college continues to refine its approaches based on student feedback and data, the existing framework reflects a coordinated, student-centered effort that upholds the mission and supports student learning and achievement.

Current Strengths	1. Innovative, award winning work in developmental education	C1.b
	2. Schools and coaching/Navigator model provides personalized student support.	C1.d
	3. Financial Aid Service Center	C1.a
Challenges/Opportunities for Growth and Exploration	1. Explore connecting student learning outcomes for some non-academic offices, where appropriate, like Financial Aid. (keep?)	C6

Standard 5

Description of the Standard
Educational Effectiveness Assessment

Assessment of student learning and achievement demonstrates that the institution's students have accomplished educational goals consistent with their program of study, degree level, the institution's mission, and appropriate expectations for institutions of higher education.

Executive Summary
Onondaga Community College's (OCC) culture of assessment has matured over time from simple compliance with external accreditors, to integration of assessment into institutional culture, to using assessment to drive needed change, to the current state of continuous quality improvement. Assessment (and assessing that assessment) is central to the way OCC improves its practice.

Alignment of Institutional Priorities with Standard Criteria

Institutional Priorities	1. Help students achieve their educational and career goals through responsive academic experiences, innovative teaching strategies, and exemplary learning support services.	2. Foster a student-centered and equitable campus experience where all students feel welcomed, valued, connected, and empowered to succeed	3. Ensure communication systems are consistent, transparent, and designed to promote student success	4. Foster engagement and partnerships with school districts, governmental and community organizations, and businesses.
5. Educational Effectiveness Assessment	✓	✓		

Alignment of Lines of Inquiry with Standard Criteria
1. How and in what ways is OCC assessing student success after OCC (jobs, pay, graduation from transfer institution)? In what ways would qualitative assessment supplement the College's quantitative assessment of students post-OCC?   C3, C5
2. How does the current Institutional Effectiveness Plan and administrative review meet the College's needs? C5
3. How does OCC assess Institutional Learning Outcomes and First Year Learning Outcomes?   C2
4. What is the process for analyzing general education assessment data, and is it used to improve student learning?   C1, C5
5. How are course-level success rates and related assessment issues communicated to stakeholders, and how do they respond to them? C2

Analysis

All OCC students, regardless of program, share the Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs). The ILOs are not only the basis for a student's educational experience at OCC, connecting to OCC's Mission + Vision and Values, but they map to and integrate with LOs on the degree, program, and course level. ILOs are found on the website (S2_About The College Website) and in the catalogue. Program level outcomes are available in the catalog, linked to individual programs (S5_MRS.AS Catalog PLOs). Student learning

outcomes are present in the official course outlines (S5_MUS-166 Course Outline) as well as student facing syllabi (S5_MUS-166 Syllabus). Faculty and staff can also see how all levels of assessment at OCC are integrated through Curriculum Maps (S5_MSR.AS Curriculum Map 2024_25).

ILOs were first introduced at OCC in 2009 and were segmented into the areas of Aesthetic and Ethical Growth, Analytical Reasoning and Critical Thinking, Global Awareness and Inclusion, Effective Communication, Technological Literacy, and Personal Growth and Wellness. Designed primarily around the needs of transfer programs, the number of ILOs and their wording meant that workforce or career technical education courses often struggled to meet them. In 2017, then President Crabill charged LOAC to revise them, with a goal of creating ILO's that, "are the common thread of expectations around which faculty build their curriculum." (S5_2_Institutional Learning Outcomes Memo to LOAC 3.17). The committee sought to simplify and clarify the language of the ILOS as well as ensure that extra- and co-curricular areas like Residence Life and Student Development would play a role in students meeting them. This was a move away from "box-checking" to an intentional practice designed to address institutional goals and needs. These new ILOs are mapped to every curriculum and available to students and the public on the "About the College" webpage (S2_About The College Website).

Institutional Learning Outcomes

Learn	Skills and acquire knowledge that will benefit them in their academic, professional, and personal lives
	Responsible ways to gather information and use technology
	Effective ways to exchange ideas with others
Think	Critically about problems and creatively about solutions
	Carefully about their own ideas and the ideas of others
	Earnestly about how they relate to other people and the world around them
Act	In ways that demonstrate and promote good citizenship
	Ethically in their academic, professional, and personal lives

Academic Assessment

As OCC's culture of assessment grew, more formal assessments were layered on top of existing assessments because of new mandates but also because there was not a comprehensive understanding of how these assessments connected to one another. By the Spring of 2021, the Learning Outcomes Assessment Committee (LOAC), a standing committee of the faculty Senate, determined the method faculty use to complete and track their assessments was not consistently leading to meaningful change. The Provost supported a faculty ad hoc committee, led by the Chair of LOAC, to redesign the academic assessment process. In Spring 2022, the Assessment Redesign Committee issued a White Paper summarizing recommended changes, which the Senate endorsed in its entirety (S5_5_Assessment Redesign White Paper). Per the White Paper,

> OCC is ready to move our assessment procedures and activities to the next level. Our "just do something" mentality has helped us satisfy Middle States and SUNY, but not all programs are
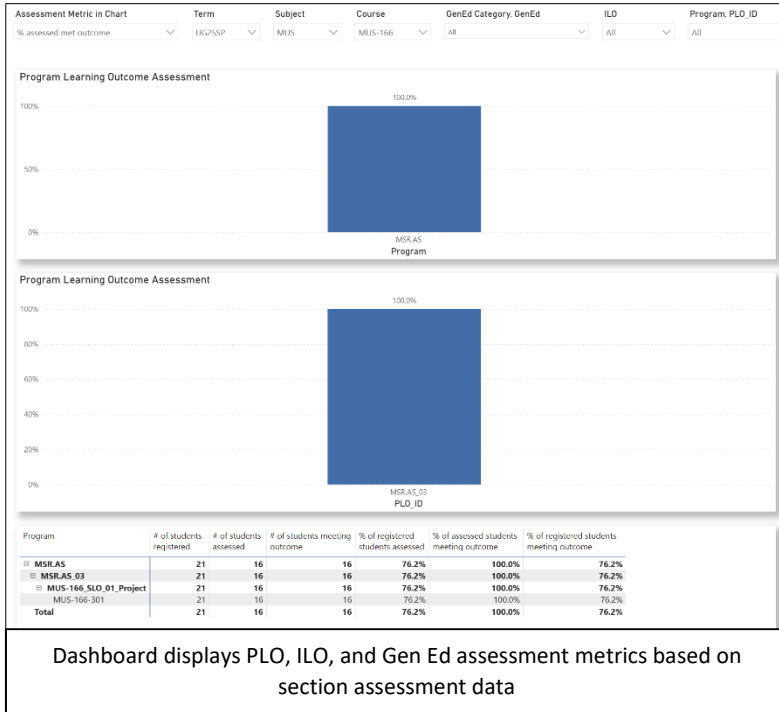
optimizing assessment procedures and activities to enhance their students' learning. Curriculum maps will ensure that students are meeting the learning outcomes and reveal any gaps that need to be addressed. A streamlined six-year review process will engage a program in productive conversation about methods and opportunities for improving student learning. Assessment Day will help foster an environment where faculty analyze assessment data with their colleagues. This process will lead to meaningful analysis and decisions to improve student learning. (page 4)

Programs would use curriculum maps to clearly outline how their individual courses measured the effectiveness of the program, and the College could use the assessment of the programs to measure the educational effectiveness of the institution. To enable this, the office of Institutional Planning and Research (IPAR) has developed a method of linking course level learning outcomes to program learning outcomes (PLOs) and ILOs using custom, in house developed software and database systems that allow faculty to input data on individual sections, aggregate it, and create comprehensive reports. A working model of the software debuted in Spring 2024. Below (and right), the reader can see screen shots with explanatory text.

Department Chairs map each course SLO to Gen Eds, ILOs, and PLOs.

MUS-166: Music of the African Diaspora provides an example of the how this redesigned assessment process works. Students are required to take MUS-166 in the final semester of the Sound Recording AS (MSR) program. The course's first Student Learning Outcome (SLO 1) reads "Demonstrate knowledge and

Instructors enter assessment data for each section.

understanding of the distinctive features of at least one non-Western culture," assessed through a required project. This SLO maps directly to the MSR PLO 3, "Understand various styles of music and the unique attributes of recording those styles." This PLO, in turn, directly maps to the ILO category "Think," subsections 2 and 3 (see above). It also maps to SUNY Gen Eds in Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Social Justice and World History/Global. Once course level data is entered, the software aggregates all data along with data from other courses that meet a particular PLO, ILO, or SUNY Gen Ed. Using the interactive dashboards, the user can see immediately what percent of program students are meeting the various-leveled LOs (S5_MSR.AS Curriculum Map 2024-25).

Program	# of students registered	# of students assessed	# of students meeting outcome	% of registered students assessed	% of assessed students meeting outcome	% of registered students meeting outcome
⊟ MSR.AS	21	16	16	76.2%	100.0%	76.2%
⊟ MSR.AS_03	21	16	16	76.2%	100.0%	76.2%
⊟ MUS-166_SLO_01_Project	21	16	16	76.2%	100.0%	76.2%
MUS-166-301	21	16	16	76.2%	100.0%	76.2%
Total	21	16	16	76.2%	100.0%	76.2%

Dashboard displays PLO, ILO, and Gen Ed assessment metrics based on section assessment data

(captured 9.28.25)

This type of multi-leveled LO assessment, along with assessments of community need, student enrollment, and economic forecasts for the region, may lead to curricular changes (the process for which is outlined in Standard 3). For example, in the Fall of 2020, OCC administration identified nine programs and one certificate in need of revitalization because of shrinking enrollment, dwindling job opportunities, or curricular concerns. A faculty study recommended discontinuing four of the nine programs (Alcohol and Substance Counseling AAS, Computer Forensics AS, Nuclear Technology AAS, and Photography AS) and one certificate (Law Enforcement). The remaining programs, American Sign Language AS, Architecture AAS, Environmental Technology AAS, Health Information Technology AAS, and Interior Design AAS, were recommended for revitalization. (S5_Program Revitalization Process BOT Presentation 2020)

Computer Forensics exemplifies the impact of these revitalization efforts. Whereas the other programs marked for discontinuation saw five-year declines in enrollment of over 40%, Computer Forensics saw only a 19% decline. Moreover, Burning Glass (now Lightcast/EMSI) software indicated there were few local jobs in those areas, but the outlook for Computer Forensics was significantly better. The faculty study noted the program was too focused on computing forensics and criminal investigation while the field had shifted to the larger scope of cybersecurity, recommending Computer Forensics AS be discontinued and a Cybersecurity AS degree be added. Cybersecurity had an enrollment of 96 students in Spring of 2025, more than double the 42 students Computer Forensics had in Spring 2020 (S5_CFS Program Revitalization Memo 2020).

Similarly, to better meet community and employer needs, Architecture AAS and Interior Design AAS were discontinued in Fall 2022 and combined into a single Architectural Design Studies AAS program. Faculty also created a new Construction Management AAS in response to community need. American Sign Language AS and Health Information Technology AAS are currently undergoing revision to attract new students and better serve current students. See S1 for a list of new or revised programs.

Environmental Technology AAS illustrates OCC's use of assessment to determine how or if it serves the community. Faculty recommended the program be revised (rather than discontinued) to offer more opportunity in the growing area of wastewater treatment and transfer options. Analysis of workforce data, however, revealed extremely limited opportunity in the region for that specialty, with non-Baccalaureate graduates in wastewater operations more typically earning a credential through non-

credit NYS Wastewater Operator courses. Given this information, the Board of Trustees followed the recommendation of President Crabill and discontinued the Environmental Technology AAS in May 2021. (S5_ENV Program Revitalization Memo 2020)

Some academic programs at OCC must partner with third party providers for components such as clinicals (see Standard 3 for details). Third-party provider assessments include the Physical Therapy Clinical Instructor self-evaluation form, the Assessments in Physical Therapy Education (APTA) student evaluation form of clinical site / clinical site evaluation, the OCC nursing student evaluation of clinical site, and the OCC nursing faculty evaluation of clinical sites. Each program with a clinical has developed evaluations to ensure students are meeting specified learning outcomes. All academic assessments, however, are completed by OCC faculty, and not the third-party providers. (S5_4_ APTA Student PTA Evaluation, S5_4_Clinical Site Evaluation, S5_4_OCC Nursing Faculty Evaluation, S5_4_Nursing Student Evaluation, S5_4_PTA Clinical Instructor Self Evaluation). These programs use this evaluation data as evidence of student learning for external accrediting bodies (S5_4_Health Field Survey Data-needs to be added).

For other third-party providers, the College has adopted a universal assessment form to verify the providers are meeting student needs (S5_4_3rd Party Providers Assessment Form) to be used in conjunction with its Third-Party Provider policy (S5_4_B23 Third Party Provider Policy). This policy outlines what basic requirements should be in every Third-Party agreement and when/how the Third-Party Assessment Form should be completed and reviewed. OCC has one, non-credit program delivered by a third-party, the Cleveland School of Cannabis (CSC). The CSC offers non-credit, self-paced, online cannabis education and training certificates. As of this writing, one student is enrolled in the program (S5_Cannabis Hub Website).

As evidenced above, OCC is committed to creating meaningful academic assessments and using the results to spur change. In 2021-2022, SUNY revised the categories and criteria for each of their General Education courses (Gen Eds) and knowledge areas, charging each SUNY college with recertifying its courses. LOAC decided the best way to ensure a meaningful, rigorous assessment and outcome was for all programs to resubmit each course for SUNY Gen Ed status, essentially providing the entire College with an assessment reboot. LOAC's goal was to ensure assessment plans and tools authentically measured LOs and were organic to the curriculum, working with faculty to move beyond indirect measures of LOs, like overall averages and final exam grades. Examples of authentic assessments used in courses at OCC include reflective essays, service-learning projects, a lab on Newton's 3rd Law, a persuasive argument speech, and select questions from exams. Each Gen Ed course was approved, in turn, by its academic department, LOAC, and the faculty Senate.

Institutional Effectiveness Redesign

In the recent past, administrative area assessments were modeled after academic program assessments, data was to be collected annually with a formal assessment scheduled every five years. The assessment practice, however, was paused during the pandemic and inconsistently resumed after the return to campus. As new directors and supervisors joined the organization, the necessity of annual

data collection was not always communicated, was often without context, and easily deferred. In Fall 2024, IPAR and the Institutional Effectiveness Committee (IE) brought in Dr. Nasrin Fatima, Associate Provost for Assessment and Analytics and the Accreditation Liaison Officer at Binghamton University, who provided two days of training and consultation for IPAR staff, members of IE, and those administrative units scheduled for assessment. Dr. Fatima recommended shifting to an annual assessment cycle for all administrative units, rather than the rotating five-year assessment cycle. The IE Committee proposed the change to the College Leadership Council (CLC), and the change was approved in 2024 (S5_5_Institutional Effectiveness Plan 3.24). Administrative units assess through annual operational plans which are used to help track Strategic Plan KPIs as well as internal, area KPIs (requiring that trends of up to 5 years be discussed if data exists). The assessments are integrated and mutually support one another (S5_5_Assessment 101_OCC_NF, S5_5_Guidelines for the Use of Assessment 101, S5_5_Institutional Effectiveness Plan 3.24). This structure ensures that all administrative units are not only setting goals tied to the Strategic Plan but are also engaging in ongoing assessment on an annual cycle.

Some offices at OCC also routinely perform internal assessments in addition to their annual operational plans. The OCC Community Care Hub's (CCH) most recent end-of-year report is an example of this type of assessment. The report gives an overview of the office's accomplishments, strengths, barriers, and recommendations. Significant strengths and accomplishments include getting the CCH fully staffed in December of 2023 and continuing to develop partnerships with community agencies. Identifying housing insecurity as a barrier for students, OCC responded by partnering with NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance to allow income-eligible, housing insecure students to use emergency housing funds (when financial aid is not available) to remain in the residence halls over breaks. This partnership addresses a significant problem wherein housing insecure students were accruing larger bills to remain in the residence halls (S4_6_CCH End of Year Report 23-24).

Other, internal assessment examples include Student Affairs' 2021-2022 assessment of the Schools model, which indicated that Schools are effective in creating coaching interactions with students over the year (1,165 total). The assessment also suggested decreasing the number of Schools and developing School-specific gathering places for students to increase a sense of community and belonging (S5_2021-2022 Schools Assessment). (See Standard 4 for an in-depth discussion of Schools.) Likewise, the Learning Center regularly assesses usage data to inform scheduling and recruitment. In spring 2024, this type of analysis prompted expanding and restructuring drop-in tutoring, which increased student use of the service (S5: Learning Center assessment report-Justin- needs to be added).

When necessary, the College also uses external consultants to help with administrative assessment. In 2019, OCC enlisted the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers to review its Registration and Records office. As a result, Registration and Records increased staff from 3 at the time of the review to 6 in 2025, updated and documented all procedures, created an operational calendar for the office, established better oversight of articulation agreements, and implemented curriculum management software (S5_AACRAO Report needs to be added). Student Affairs was reviewed by the National Institute for Student Success in October 2024 and is prioritizing improvement to orientation and career planning (S5_NISS report – needs added?). See Standard 4 for how

orientation has been changed as a direct result of this.

Case Study of Assessment in Action

One of the best examples of assessment's ability to enact change at OCC is the revision of its developmental reading and writing curriculum. By Spring 2017, OCC was offering 100% of its developmental education (dev ed) in English/writing as a co-requisite with first-year composition (FYC). Organizations like the California Acceleration Project and the Community College Research Council considered this best practice. OCC saw significant gains in student completion of FYC in their first year and an increase in success rates in FYC over all. In response to this success, OCC was named the lead college in a 2018 SUNY, multi-year, system-wide community of practice based on the co-requisite model (S5_Faculty Council Matter Vol7 Issue2).

More nuanced assessment of the co-requisite (co-req) program, however, raised concerns despite course level successes. Three year graduation rates of co-req students, while greater than those in stand-alone sections, still significantly lagged behind those who did not take developmental composition.
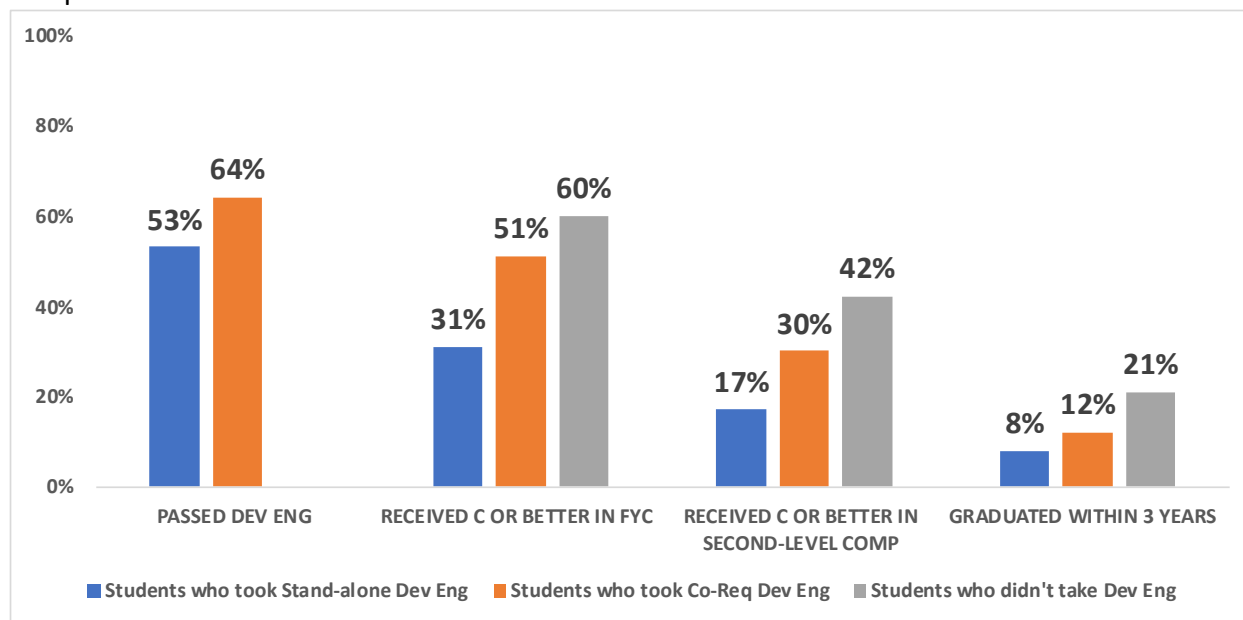
References a snapshot of data points from Spring 2019. Recreation of Figure 2, Choseed, et al publication.

Moreover, disaggregated data on placement showed that OCC had decreased the numbers of students placing into dev ed, but the percentage of Black/African American students in non-credit, co-req composition increased from 23% in fall of 2011 to 37% in fall of 2019, despite the fact that Black/African American students account for around 10% of total enrollment in any given year (Choseed et al 206). This deeper assessment revealed an equity gap: OCC disproportionately placed Black students into a course costing time and money but not helping to significantly increase graduation rates. OCC's co-req dev-ed was not working as intended.

To better meet the needs of all incoming students, FYC was revised to make it an integrated reading and writing (IRW) course, and faculty were given extensive pedagogical training to incorporate the best practices of college-level composition (IRW, active learning, just-in-time remediation, explicit scaffolding of writing assignments, and support for non-cognitive barriers). Through the revision, 10 non-credits of developmental composition and reading were removed from the curriculum. As of Fall 2020, every entering student goes directly into FYC and there is no non-credit reading coursework. This work, outlined in the Choseed et al. publication "Developmental Writing Reform at Onondaga Community College: From Corequisite to IRW, Eliminating Dev Ed while Supporting All Students," has been a resounding success. In fall 2023, enrollee success rates rose 66% from a 2019 rate of 61%. Under-represented minority student enrollee success in FYC rose from 47% to 55% over that same period. The enrollee success rate, which tracks the success of all students on the roster from day one rather than just completers accounts for drops and withdrawals, providing a more complete picture of student performance.

Similar reforms in developmental Math are also underway. Internal assessment revealed placement into developmental Math (as with placement in developmental writing) was not helping students progress through their program. Still, STEM students needed certain skills early in their programs. Drawing from evidence-backed, developmental reforms, OCC now splits Math students into STEM and non-STEM majors. Students in non-STEM majors go directly into credit-bearing Math courses, and STEM students enter an algebra, pre-calculus, calculus pathway. The Math discipline has tried many different approaches (such as Emporium and co-req models) with varying levels of success. Currently, the discipline is investigating screening tests for STEM majors that target individual topics students can remediate without requiring a pre-requisite math course disrupting degree progress. The College continues to support research and revision in Math to boost overall student success (S5_3_NEW Title 3 Application). (See Standard 4 for more details.)

OCC's history of developmental reform builds toward a culture of continuous improvement rooted in assessment. Moreover, these changes show the value of disaggregated assessment data to recognize curricular spaces in need of revision. At OCC, curricular reform and revision have become an iterative process, steeped in a data-driven culture of continuous improvement.

Tools for Communication and Effective Use of Data

To routinize the use of data in its assessment processes and develop data literacy on its campus, OCC developed a range of tools: assessment fellowships, Assessment Day, and data dashboards.

The assessment fellowship program, mentioned in Standard 3 and highlighted in OCC's 2017 Middle States report, has undergone significant changes. In 2017, OCC used the fellowships to incentivize assessment, but now OCC staff and faculty are accustomed to working with outcomes assessment at all levels, prompting the College to refine the program. Adopting a best practice from the 2022 Aspen SUNY Community College Senior Leaders Workshop, the President revised the Assessment Fellowship program into Student Success Challenge (SSC) grants focused on increasing the success of first-

generation and under-represented minority students. The grants require proposals to be rooted in data and work toward specific KPIs aligned with the strategic plan. The 2024—2025 Student Success Challenge fund was set at $200,000, and charged projects to "increase retention and graduation of first-generation students by 5% and URM students by 7.5% by fall 2026" (S5_3_Student Success Challenge Fund). The SSC process supports work formerly associated with Achieving the Dream (ATD). OCC's ATD liaison meets twice yearly with all SSC project leads, consults on progress and assessment, and provides the President with written reviews of all project progress (S7_5_ATD Letter 1.24). Each project lead is also required to present to EC on deliverables and how they were met.

SSC grants require a sophisticated, well-articulated use of assessment practices that would have been difficult before the original assessment fellowship program. The College awarded twelve SSC grants in areas ranging from the Math Xcelerator Program, designed to provide math support to struggling students in college algebra and pre-calculus, to the Financial Aid Initiative project to increase financial aid literacy among the student body (S4_Student Success Challenge 2025 - Math Xcelerator, 2024-2025 Onondaga Student Success Challenge Honors one-pager, cite SSC apps and reports). In Spring of 2024, the Provost charged the Senate and LOAC to re-visit the original model of Faculty Assessment Fellows and focus on projects addressing curricular issues that come to light through three- and six-year review self-studies (S3_LOAC Website).

The evolution of Assessment Day is evidence that a greater swath of the college community is knowledgeable about and engaged in assessment. Assessment Day began in 2012 as a gathering of faculty and staff to discuss large- and small-scale assessment projects on campus. Faculty that completed Assessment Fellowships presented their projects, and a key-note speaker addressed campus-wide assessment initiatives. Assessment Day was paused during Covid, and the Assessment Redesign Committee used this time to revise it, debuting in its new form in Spring 2024: it is now primarily a working meeting where department chairs and curriculum coordinators actively plan and work on assessment projects. Assessment Day 2025, for example, invited individual departments and programs to review assessment results and explore ways to 'close the loop' with the help of curriculum maps and recently redesigned, authentic assessment tools.

The College encourages assessment by making disaggregated student success metrics readily available through interactive data dashboards, which the Institutional Planning Assessment and Research (IPAR) office and the Director of Data Insights and Visualization have been instrumental in developing. These user-friendly assessment tools are rooted in another significant shift in OCC's assessment process: increased and democratized access to assessment data. Requests for information and analysis can still be made to IPAR, but the tool allows authorized users immediate access to different assessment data. The bar of entry to access and explore this data has been dropped, making use of assessment data much more sustainable.
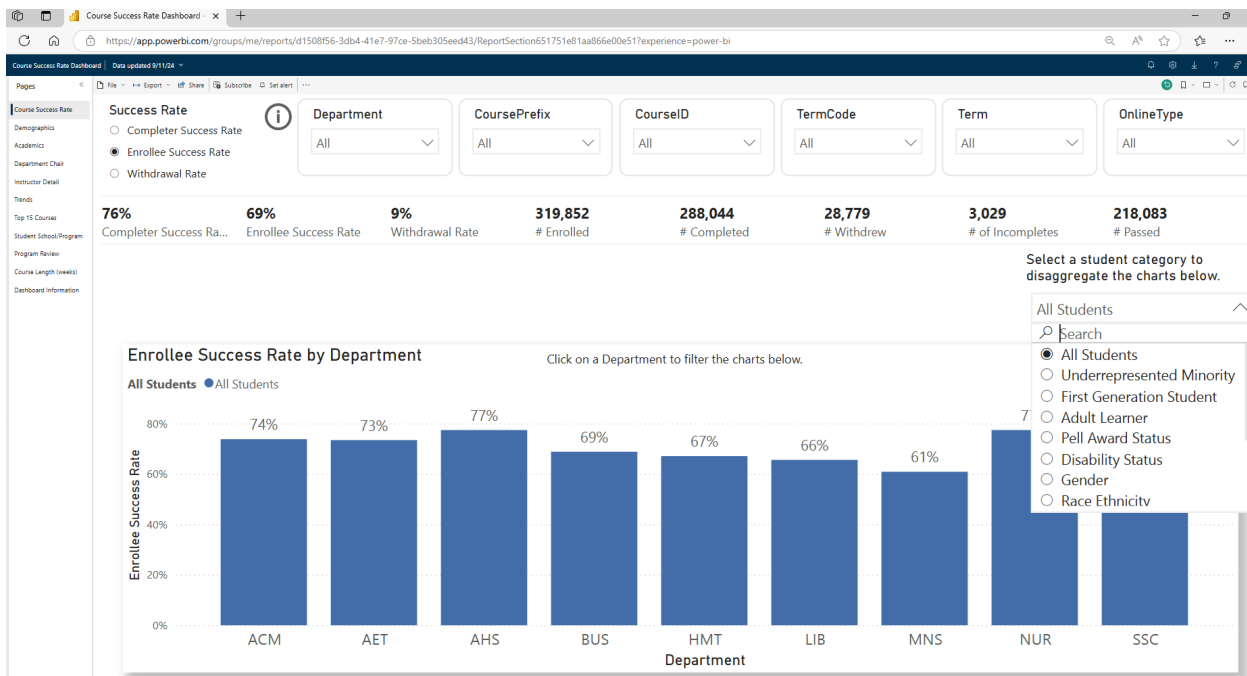
By including drop-down menus that allow users to filter data according to different variables, the dashboards are powerful tools for disaggregating data. For example, when using the "Course Success" dashboard above, a user can filter data along demographic lines such as race, ethnicity, and gender as well as Pell grant eligibility, first generation status, adult learner, and disability status. By using the filter to focus on students in a single program, users can find specific courses that are barriers to student success in a program, a tool that has already led to the revision of MAT-121 and MAT-122 for Childhood Education students. Additional filters allow users to disaggregate by full or part time status, course modality, course length, year offered, and instructor details. With these capabilities, the dashboard is a powerful tool of analysis that can be used to drive reform, assess the efficacy of previous reforms, and help the College focus on equity in outcomes.

Data privacy has been discussed at length at OCC, and, in terms of the dashboards, users are granted different levels of access depending on their role. For example, Department chairs and program coordinators can see section-level course outcomes, but general users may only see aggregate outcomes. This protects the privacy of individual faculty members, allows Chairs and coordinators to better do their jobs, and provides the general college community the ability to explore big picture data. Importantly, immediate access to this data, coupled with the increasing expectation of its use, has meant that faculty leaders can use data as a regular part of their daily work.

The IPAR website contains information germane to all members of the campus community, such as retention and graduation rates. This data is available as an aggregate as well as disaggregated by program, year of entry, and student demographics such as race and gender, disability status, Pell Grant eligibility, age, and first-generation status, including multiple years of trend data. Members of the college community have access to data dashboards for enrollment numbers and early momentum metrics like credits attempted vs earned, first year math and English pass rates, etc.

IPAR has set a goal of increasing data literacy on campus as part of its annual operational plan, and increased access and understanding has resulted in increased communication of assessment results to our stakeholders across the campus and beyond (e.g. external accreditors). For example, the dashboards are used to prepare internal and external program reviews, with Department Chairs and Program Coordinators easily accessing student success metrics, such as enrollment and admissions trends, retention and graduation rates, early momentum metrics, and course success rates. The development of these dashboard demonstrates OCC's commitment to sustaining assessment and communicating the results, as well as using disaggregated assessment to improve student learning outcomes. (S5_OCC Dynamic Data Dashboards). For external audiences, the College's website has a Consumer Information page that provides links to the National Center for Education Statistics College Navigator page for detailed breakdown of enrollment, retention, graduation rates, and other key factors, as well as disaggregated data in a section labeled "Student Outcomes Information." (S2_8_A_Consumer Information Onondaga Community College) Additionally, links to placement rates for flagship Health science programs are also available.

Additionally, OCC has been increasing its ability to track and communicate employment outcomes for students, such as employment in field of study and wage rate. These are used by programs for assessment, planning, and meeting federal Gainful Employment Reporting requirements, as well as reporting requirements of select grants. The College's graduate survey served as the primary method of collecting data on employment outcomes from students, but, despite great effort, outcomes from many students are not captured each year. OCC uses commercial software for workforce analysis and SUNY's graduate wage dashboard, which shows New York State Department of Labor (NYSDOL) unemployment insurance data which can be filtered by campus (S5_SUNY Grad Wages Dashboard). Together, these tools give a fairly comprehensive picture of employment outcomes for students. Because OCC does not have the raw data, however, it is limited in its ability to disaggregate using all the descriptors it may want or need (e.g. first generation).

Starting in February of 2025, OCC has access to NYSDOL employment data for graduates within specified periods of time. This access will allow OCC to create dashboards that use its own, specific degree program names and degree types as well as disaggregate in whatever ways are needed. Campus leaders, department chairs, and program coordinators will be able to construct dashboards for their specific programs and not have to "translate" from SUNY's generic naming conventions. This is another example of OCC working to make data accessible and understandable to campus stakeholders, e.g. giving faculty student employment data using the exact degree program naming conventions and with the type of disaggregation they want or need as they revise curricula to align with community need and student goals.

The dashboards, discussed above, allow any employee to access retention and graduation data for every program on campus through the employee website portal. Retention data can be tracked back to 2017, and 3-year graduation rates go back to the 2016 cohort. Academic Department Chairs are leading intra- and inter-departmental curriculum review and assessment to better understand the variable retention and graduation rates across programs. For example, when disaggregating data along student demographic lines, it is apparent that, for most programs, the characteristics most likely to change success rates are race/ethnicity and first-generation status. School teams can be purposeful in

hosting events aimed at the needs of these populations, such as the Growth, Progress, & Skills for College weekly workshop series focused on building academic, personal, and practical skills while fostering a sense of belonging (see Standard 4).

Likewise, programs have relied upon this data to make curricular changes. For example, the recognition that retention and graduation rates in Humanities and Social Science were lagging for first-generation college students and underrepresented minority students led to the addition of a first-year, seminar-style course rooted in an "enduring questions" methodology designed to help students more quickly develop the skills needed, and excitement for, a Liberal Arts curriculum. This course, LBL-101, began in Fall 2021, and the 3-year graduation rate for first-generation college students taking the course increased from 17.8% in the Fall 2020 cohort to 33.3% in 2021. The gains were equally impressive for underrepresented minority students, with 3-year graduation rates of students taking LBL-101 rising from 20.4% in 2020 to 27.0% in 2021. Fall-to-fall retention rates for first-generation college students who have taken LBL-101 have not increased as dramatically, from 48.4% in 2020 to 51.1% in 2023. Underrepresented minority students, however, have increased fall-to-fall retention rates from 40.3% in 2020 to 48.0% in 2023. (need a cite for info- I suggest someone make these dashboards and we take pictures of them)

Dashboards also allow faculty to track course level success going back to Fall 2017, filtering by course modality, semester, School, and academic program. This ability helps faculty identify where students in each program are struggling and take action. For example, Music and Art programs discovered that their students often struggled in SUNY Gen Ed, Natural Science courses. Students were successful in SCI-100 (Meteorology) and BIO-131 (Ecology) with an 81% success rate in both, but BIO-105 (Exploring Biology) and SCI-103 (Introductory Astronomy), had success rates of 42% and 61% respectively. In response, the Music and Art coordinators worked with OCC's Physics faculty to create PHY-102, The Physics of Light and Sound- a course designed to explore Physics as it relates to the Arts. Since its inception in Fall of 2023, PHY-103 has had a success rate of 72%. Music and Art students now have more Natural Science options with a greater chance of success.

Another extremely exciting advance for assessment at OCC is the in-house development of software by the Institutional Planning, Assessment, and Research office that will help with qualitative analysis (S5_OCC Local AI for NLP-need to create). The time and expertise needed in analyzing large amounts of qualitative data has been a barrier to this type of research, e.g. student opinion surveys, even though there has long been a desire to do it. The advent of commercial generative AI offers a possible resource, but privacy concerns require the data be scrubbed, requiring human time and effort. This program has the potential to give the College an efficient and secure way to assess this incredibly important data.

Conclusion

One of OCC's greatest strengths is the care and diligence it takes in assessing student learning and using that assessment to drive innovation in curriculum and the assessment processes themselves. OCC's

continuous and iterative process of curricular revision rooted in assessment ensures that it continuously track how well it meets student's learning needs and intervene in places where there is need for improvement.

Current Strengths	1. Strong culture of assessment that continues to develop and innovate, e.g. software that integrates course, program, Gen Ed, institutional LOs.	C1
	2. Data dashboards allow for wide use and understanding of data.	2C, C3
Challenges/Opportunities for Growth and Exploration	None	

Standard VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement

The institution's planning processes, resources, and structures are aligned with each other and are sufficient to fulfill its mission and goals, to continuously assess and improve its programs and services, and to respond effectively to opportunities and challenges.

Executive Summary

Onondaga Community College (OCC) uses strategic planning, clear budgeting, and ongoing assessment to manage resources effectively. By aligning financial decisions with its Mission + Vision and Strategic Plan in an evidenced based and transparent manner, OCC has been able to navigate limited funding, improve program quality, and meet the diverse needs of local students and communities.

Alignment of Institutional Priorities with Standard Criteria

Institutional Priorities	1. Help students achieve their educational and career goals through responsive academic experiences, innovative teaching strategies, and exemplary learning support services.	2. Foster a student-centered and equitable campus experience where all students feel welcomed, valued, connected, and empowered to succeed	3. Ensure communication systems are consistent, transparent, and designed to promote student success	4. Foster engagement and partnerships with school districts, governmental and community organizations, and businesses.
6. Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement	✓			✓

Alignment of Lines of Inquiry with Standard Criteria

1. How well-defined and inclusive are decision-making processes? How are responsibility and accountability clearly assigned to achieve institutional and unit effectiveness?   C2, C9

   a. How are new initiatives determined and launched, and how are initiatives assessed for their effectiveness?   C3, C5, C12

2. How does OCC assess the effectiveness of planning and resource allocation, and subsequently, how is OCC utilizing assessment results in planning and resource allocation? C12, C13

3. How does OCC effectively and sustainably steward its resources (financial, capital, and human)? C6, C7, C8

   a. How does the institution utilize its resources to promote and foster diversity, equity, and inclusion? C4

Analysis

OCC's Mission + Vision and Strategic Plan drive planning and resource allocation (S6_3_Strategic Plan v9.1 23-28; S6_Strategic Plan Website). All academic programs and some administrative divisions, where appropriate, have mission statements that link their program or division to the college's mission and goals. (See S1 for a detailed discussion of the Strategic Plan and its connection to Mission + Vision and the connection between it and Annual Operational Plans. See S5 for a discussion of KPIs and data dashboards.) Each unit/division supports the Strategic Plan through its own objectives and allocates personnel to this end (see Organizational Charts (S6_1_Org Charts)). OCC has multiple standing

committees, ad hoc committees, and workgroups contributing to institutional goals and objectives. Governance bodies, such as the Faculty Senate, OCC Administrator's Council, and College Leadership Council review assessment results and make recommendations related to mission and goal achievement. OCC's Planning, Assessment and Resource Allocation Timeline displays the connectedness of, and annual process related to, operational plans, capital project development, academic assessment plans, academic program review, and budget development (S6_1_Planning Assessment and Resource Allocation Timeline).

Using a template that aligns the division/department's work to the College's strategic goals, each department completes an annual operational plan, approved by the division and the College President (S6_1_Academic & Student Affairs Strategic-Operational Plan 24-25; S6_1_Strategic Plan Operational Plan Template). In the plan, a department indicates actions/tactics, who is responsible, needed resources, timelines, and the plan's connection to the 4DX goal (if any – see Standard 1 for a discussion of 4DX), all of which contribute to meeting Strategic Plan goals via Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) (see Standard 5 for a discussion of outcomes reporting for annual operational plans). KPI updates are shared with the Board of Trustees (BoT) and discussed at regular faculty and staff meetings, as well as special events such as yearly, campus-wide Data Summits (cite OCC Data Summit Information 2025). The College updates KPI progress to the campus community through its website (S6_3_2023-2028 Strategic Plan Update Fall 2024).

For example, the Academic and Student Affairs Strategic Operational Plan lists the three goals of the Strategic Plan and details its individual approach to meeting these goals. Goal 2, "Foster a student-centered and equitable campus experience where all students feel welcomed, valued, connected, and empowered to succeed" is linked to Strategic Priority 2.3: "Foster student belonging, engagement, and wellbeing," and this is linked to KPI 2.3.1, the percentage of students who feel a great sense of belonging at OCC. The desired outcome that will impact this KPI is to increase the number of at-risk students attending the GPS series, with a target of 30 at-risk students attending at least 1 during Spring semester (see Standard 4). The action/strategy identified to make progress on this outcome is "Each week, School staff will engage with at least fifteen at-risk students and encourage their attendance at upcoming GPS events." The plan designates milestone, persons responsible, timeline, needed resources, etc. (cite Academic and Student Affairs Strategic Operation plan). ." All functional areas have Strategic Operational plans, and this structure gives individual offices and departments a process to document connections to Mission + Vision and the Strategic Plan as well as assess outcomes and act on results.

The increase in Navigators exemplifies how the Strategic Plan's primary focus of Persistence and Goal 1: Academic Success drive spending. Hiring more personnel was a significant expense, but it enabled coaches to reduce their loads and get to the evidenced-backed ratio of 1:150, allowing for more individual attention to students. The spending, aligned with the Mission + Vision and Strategic Plan, has directly contributed to the increase in student persistence and retention (see Standard 1).

OCC documents and communicates planning processes in multiple ways. The President's office distributed the 2023-28 Operational Plan Template and Strategic Plan Key Performance Indicators 2023-28 to the campus community via email in October 2024 (S6_2_2023-2028 Strategic Plan Key Performance Indicators). Annually, the Chief Financial Officer sends a budget memo to divisions that includes a high-level overview of the budget process (S6_2_25-26 department memo). The BoT Finance

and Education Committee meetings include reports by division heads on progress toward strategic and operational goals, assessment results, and proposed adjustments that the College and individual areas have identified as a result of assessment (S6_2_December 3 2024 FAC Meeting Minutes and S6_2_ December 3 2024 EDU Meeting Minutes). By integrating strategic planning with performance tracking, OCC ensures that institutional goals remain at the forefront of decision-making and resource allocation.

Resources to Support Operations

Over the past five fiscal years (2020–2024), instruction has remained the College's largest spending category (S6_6_Historical expenses as a % of function). While the percentage of total spending on instruction decreased—from 44.71% in FY2020 to 35.84% in FY2024—spending per full-time student increased, rising from $4,893 to $5,059, with a high of $6,006 in FY2023. This reflects OCC's commitment to quality instruction, even as enrollment dropped from 5,686 to 4,266 full-time equivalent (FTE) students and the budget tightened. The College continues to support small class sizes, access to faculty, and strong academic programs, aligning budgetary decisions with its Mission + Vision (specifically points 1, 2, and 3) and staying focused on students.

Given that personnel costs make up approximately 82% of the college's operating budget, effective staffing management is a key component of institutional sustainability. Between Fall 2018 and Fall 2024, the number of college employees decreased from 1,355 to 1,014 (S6_4_IPEDS Faculty, Admin & Staff Headcount), which corresponds to a similar decline in student enrollment (S6_4_IPEDS Fall Enrollment-AW). The reduction in employees was achieved through deliberate, cost-saving measures over the past several years, including:

- **Position Review Process**: Executive Council reviews vacancies and new position requests. Decisions on whether to fill vacancies are guided by factors such as the potential to redistribute or automate tasks, the department's anticipated future needs, and the overall budget impact.
- **Voluntary Early Retirement Incentives**: The most recent program led to 28 faculty retirements, with most positions either left unfilled or replaced by adjuncts or assistant professors, resulting in significant cost savings (see Standard 7 for details).
- **Staff Reductions (2014–2024)**:
  - Faculty: Decreased from 195 to 114 (down 81 positions, a 41.54% reduction).
  - CSEA Staff: Decreased from 222 to 163 (down 59 positions, a 26.58% reduction).
  - Management Confidential: Decreased from 48 to 40 (down 8 positions, a 16.67% reduction).
  - Professional Administrators: Slight increase from 127 to 129 (up 2 positions, a 1.57% increase), due to the addition of Navigators as part of the Schools (See Standard 4).

Collectively, these measures streamline operations and reduce personnel costs, while preserving student support services, represented in the charts below. The College remains committed to student and academic support, dedicating 61% of its human resource allocation to instructional and student services, linking directly to Mission + Vision points 1 and 2 and Strategic Plan goal 1.
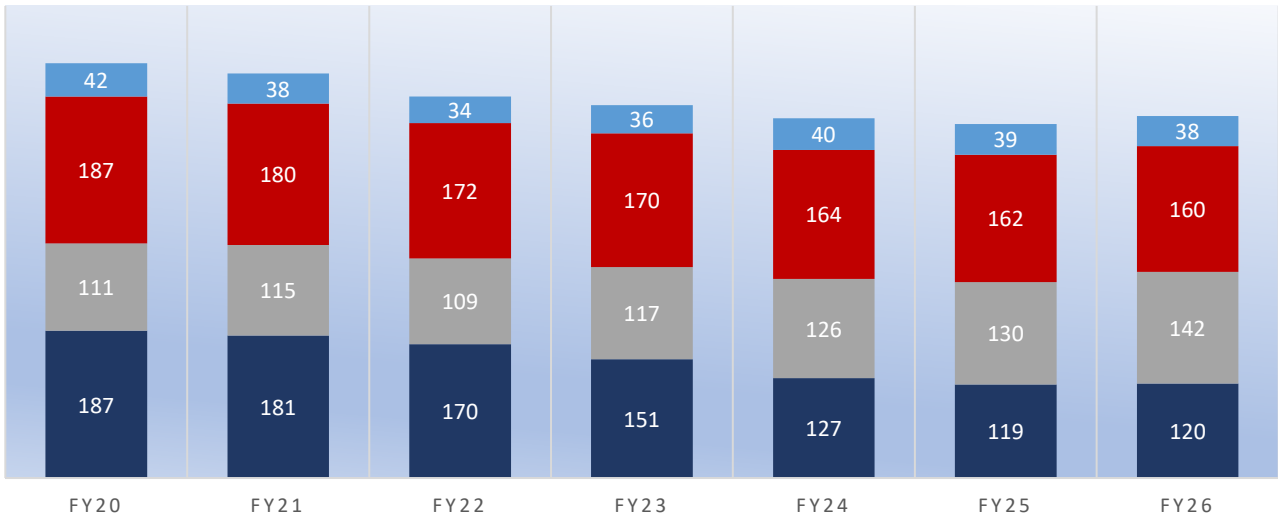
FY25 BUDGET - FULL-TIME POSITIONS

Instruction/ Student Services/ Academic Support
284

Institutional Support
76

Plant Operations
100
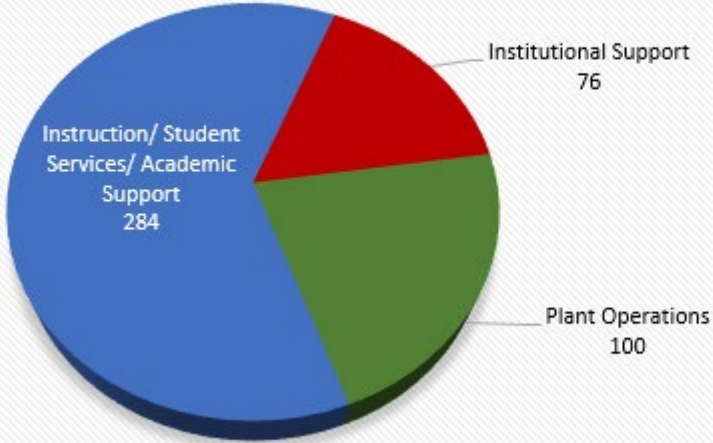
Source: 2025-26 Annual Budget Book-Final

BUDGETED POSITIONS - PERMANENT FUNDED ONLY

■ Faculty ■ Professional Administrators ■ CSEA Staff ■ Management Confidential

	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26
Management Confidential	42	38	34	36	40	39	38
CSEA Staff	187	180	172	170	164	162	160
Professional Administrators	111	115	109	117	126	130	142
Faculty	187	181	170	151	127	119	120

Source: 2025-26 Annual Budget Book-Final

Detailed documentation of OCC's financial resources is available in the 2025-26 Annual Budget Book (S6_12_2025-26 Annual Budget Book-Final).

SOURCES OF REVENUE
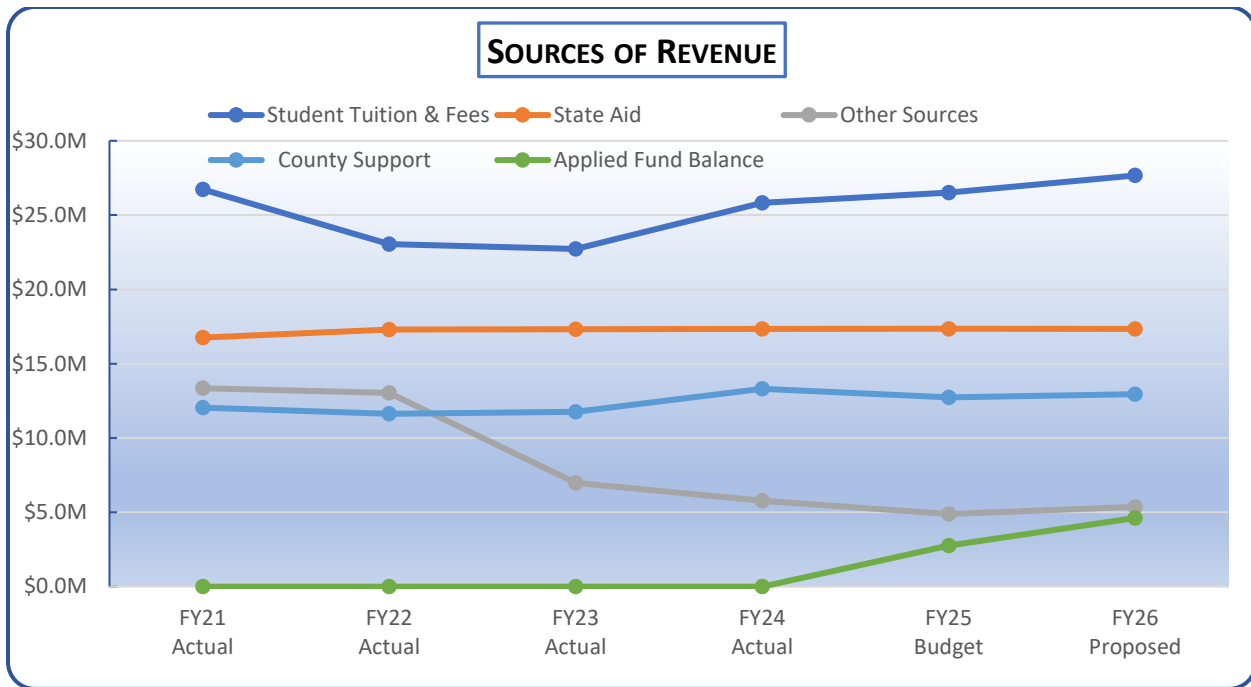
Source: 2025-26 Annual Budget Book-Final

Prior to the budgeting process, the Executive Council establishes expected part-time credit hour and full-time headcount levels by analyzing historic annual enrollment trends. Fees assessed to students include, but are not limited to, a technology fee for each student, lab fees for applicable courses, third-party credentials, and course-related materials and supplies. Revenue is forecasted by analyzing historic annual enrollment trends, and the BoT sets tuition rates for the fiscal year (cite the two pdfs CFO sent 6.19.25). This is another example of how OCC uses data to make decisions.

The Financial Aid Service Center (FASC) at OCC helps students understand and comply with all aspects of Financial Aid (S6_Financial Aid Service Center Website). The FASC also educates Navigators and faculty about financial aid rules impacting course registration and future, financial aid qualifications. Through the FASC, OCC maintains its eligibility and approval to participate in various programs under the Higher Education Act of 1965, including Title IV (S6_11_Eligibility and Certification Approval Report (ECAR) 12.26.24; S6_11_Program Participation Agreement through 9.30.2030). OCC was rated Financially Responsible by the US department of Education's Key Financial Ratios and Indicators during the years evaluated (S6_7_Composite Score - 2020-2024). In compliance with federal regulations, the College designates a qualified individual, the Director of Financial Aid, to be responsible for administering all Title IV programs and coordinate those programs with the institution's other federal and non-federal student, financial assistance programs (S6_11_Final Program Review DOE).

OCC's budget is prepared in accordance with New York State Education Law and the Code of Standards and Procedures for the Administration and Operation of Community Colleges under the program of the State University of New York (SUNY). The College's budgetary and accounting systems are organized and operated on a fund basis and conform to basic fiscal and accounting reporting practices used in higher education. All financial statements and reports are prepared on an accrual basis in accordance with the principles of fund accounting and as prescribed by the Uniform System of Accounts for

Community Colleges issued by the Office of the Chief Financial Officer of the State of New York. Accounts that relate to specific activities or objectives are segregated into fund groups. The cost of land and certain buildings and improvements used by the College are borne by Onondaga County (who also holds title to the asset) and SUNY. All fixed assets are included in the College's financial statements per the Chief Financial Officer's rules and regulations. Previously, debt obligations were also included in the College's financial statements until SUNY requested that they be removed in cases where they are also recorded in the State's financial statements.

New York State provides capital support and operating support to all its community colleges. Historically, this was based on Full Time Equivalent (FTE) enrollment (30 credit hours = 1 FTE) with an annual, base aid, rate established. In 2021-2022, the State changed the funding model to provide base aid at either what each community college received from the prior year (referred to as the "funding floor") or the calculated base aid based on the FTE model, whichever was greater. All 30 community colleges have been funded with the funding floor since 2022-2023. The funding floor is not part of state legislation so may change in the future. OCC has received $17,264,534 in base, state aid since the fiscal year 2022-2023 through the current fiscal year 2025-2026 (last 4 budget years), , representing approximately 25% of its operating budget.

As the College's local sponsor, Onondaga County is obligated to assume responsibility for three major costs related to College operations: operating support, debt service, and tuition chargebacks. Each year during the budget process, OCC requests funding from the County to help with annual operating costs. Costs for the College's capital projects (debt service) are shared equally between Onondaga County and New York State. In addition, the County incurs all bonding costs associated with its share of capital projects. "Tuition chargebacks" refers to NY counties paying tuition chargebacks for residents attending community colleges in other counties. **.**

Adequate fund balances (i.e. the difference between assets and liabilities) are maintained to mitigate risk due to unforeseen events, including loss of revenue or unanticipated expenditures, and to maintain a strong financial position to support daily operations. The fund balance may be utilized in response to unforeseen events or emergencies that significantly disrupt normal operations or pose risks to students, staff, and institutional assets. Examples of such events or emergencies include: 1.) natural disasters and weather events that damage campus facilities or infrastructure, 2.) public health emergencies like a resurgence of COVID-19 or flu pandemic , 3.) utility or infrastructure failures, 4.) cybersecurity breaches involving a data breach or ransomware attack, 5.) enrollment and revenue shortfalls, 6.) legislative or regulatory compliance such as unexpected mandates or legal settlements, and 7.) emergency equipment or facility needs that cannot be deferred to the next budget cycle.

UNRESTRICTED FUND BALANCE ($) AND RESERVES AS A % OF REVENUE
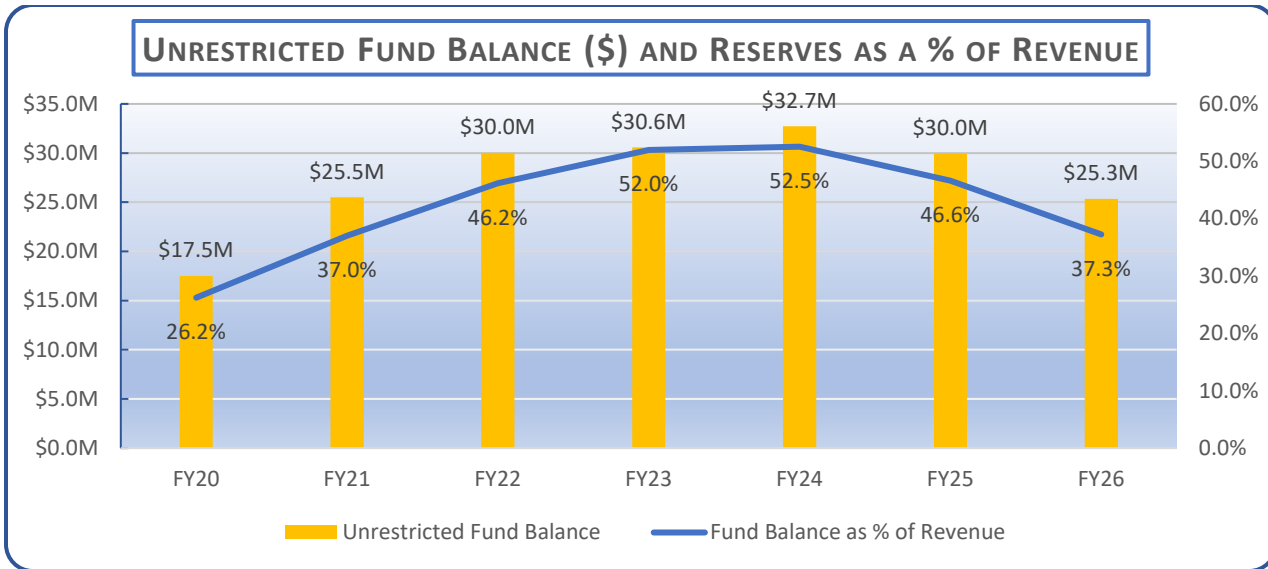
Source: 2025-26 Annual Budget Book-Final

Note: HEERF stimulus funds received from the federal government totaled $21.32 million from the period 2020 through 2023. This resulted in a net increase in fund balance of $15.71 million for that same period.

Funding from tuition, state aid, and Onondaga County primarily support delivery of programs and services, but funding for program development, innovation, major lab equipment upgrades outside of the capital budget process, and resources to develop, enhance, or expand services and partnerships from these sources is limited. To support initiatives that advance the College's Mission + Vision and Strategic Plan, OCC pursues external grant funding from federal, state, and private foundations. Specific initiatives are identified through the college's strategic planning process, master plans, shared governance committees and work groups, divisional operational planning, and through program reviews and other assessments. Over the past five years, annual grant expenditures have ranged from $5M to $5.5M (S6_7_Grant Expenditures by Funding Source). OCC's grant awards fall within the following broad categories (1) Capacity-building projects that support program, pathway development, partnership development; (2) Service development and delivery, including supplemental support for students; and (3) partnership programs, all summarized in the Onondaga Community College List of Grant-Supported Projects and Programs (S6_7_OCCActiveGrantList_Jun24nf – NOTE will be updated to include 2025, but does not impact narrative).

In 2018, OCC received a five-year U.S. Department of Education TIII Strengthening Institutions Program grant ($2.98M) to support OCC's "Guided Pathways to Success" (GPS) initiative with the overarching goal of increasing college completion rates, linking to Strategic Plan goal 1 and Mission +Vision point 1 and 2. This initiative was informed by the previous strategic planning process, Middle States self-study (2017), and shared governance committee reports. The grant funded faculty and staff across the college in a multi-year process to develop, pilot, assess, and refine project components. Faculty mapped over 50 programs and restructured or eliminated remedial coursework (see Standard 5); the college integrated advising, career services, and student success coaching/navigation into "Schools"

and implemented an evidence-based coaching method (Bettinger and Baker 2011) and an early alert student success platform (see Standard 4) (S4_1_SCAN Lazer Success Data; S1_3_OCC Title III Outcomes Study 1.24).

OCC received federal and state grants to develop and expand programs that meet regional needs in Health, Wellness, and Human Services pathways (HWHS), linking to Mission + Vision point 4 and Strategic Plan goal 1. In 2022, OCC received a $5M U.S. Department of Labor grant as part of the SUNY Community College Health CARES Consortium, a coalition of 11 SUNY community colleges working to increase the number of people entering and completing healthcare pathway programs, building credentials leading to healthcare employment, and effecting sustainable systems change through activities such as agreements to accelerate healthcare pathways. OCC HWHS also received a $2M Health Resources & Services Administration grant to help purchase equipment needed to complete OCC's hospital simulation lab and training center.

Similarly, OCC has received grants to expand program development, delivery, and innovation in applied technology, engineering, computing pathways, and related fields. For example, with funds from a NYSDOL grant ($469K), faculty designed and integrated portable training stations that have increased the number of industry-aligned, applied learning activities in courses, increased the amount of time students spend engaged in hands-on learning, and increased the flexible use of classroom and lab space. With support from a $1.8M SUNY Future of Work Center grant, OCC is collaborating with Cayuga Community College and regional industries to create employer-driven, stackable, short-term, training programs for job seekers, workers, and current students to support employment and advancement within production, processing and industrial maintenance and repair, as well as other high demand, technical, occupational pathways. An NSF ATE grant, Pathways Leading to Advanced Semiconductor Manufacturing Across New York (PLASMA-NY) ($649K), supports the development of industry-validated, semiconductor-focused content that can be integrated as a stackable credential within OCC's existing programs and lead to careers in the semiconductor manufacturing industry in CNY. All the grants in this area link to Strategic Plan goal 1 and Mission + Vision points 3 and 4.

Moreover, students in Liberal Arts programs benefited from a Teagle Foundation planning and implementation grant ($300K), linking to Mission + Vision points 1 and 2 and Strategic Plan goal 1. Faculty developed and implemented Liberal Arts 101 and Enduring Questions course sections that use common curricular and co-curricular experiences across core, General Education courses in multiple degree programs, introducing students to classic texts that transcend academic disciplines and address enduring questions about the human experience. Additionally, a SUNY High Needs Teaching Pathways grant ($75K) supported the development and piloting of Teaching Assistant pre-apprenticeship (non-credit) program and the development of credit-bearing micro credentials supporting the Teaching Assistant Apprenticeship Pathway (TA Level II and Level III). This collaboration with the Syracuse City School District (SCSD) assist TAs in their current work and gives them a pathway toward teaching positions at SCSD and throughout the region. The TA program links directly to Strategic Plan goal 1 and Mission + Vision point 4.

Grants have also helped OCC remove barriers to enrollment and completion for students, in particular student parents and students with economic barriers to enrollment and completion, supporting Mission + Vision point 1. External grant funding helped OCC establish its Counseling and Community Care Hub, delivering counseling and wellness programs and services to students, coordinating the food

pantry and other, supplemental, basic needs support, and facilitating referrals to community partners on- and off-campus. A 2020-2022, SUNY Family Empowerment grant ($270K) provided supplemental support to help meet the needs of single parents enrolled at OCC, and Child Care Access Means Parents in School grants of $511K (2019-2022) and $824K (2022-26) provided childcare subsidies to enable student parents to enroll their children in OCC's Children's Learning Center, facilitating these student parents' subsequent enrollment at OCC.

OCC offers several opportunity programs and experiential learning programs supported in part by federal and state funding. The Collegiate Science and Technology Program (CSTEP) ($230K/year), Student Support Services (SSS) ($262K/year), and SUNY Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) ($225K) provide cohort-based services to eligible students. These services include orientation, navigation/coaching, academic support, workshops, supplemental career exploration, experiential learning opportunities, and transfer and career entry support. OCC also has developed expanded experiential learning and undergraduate research experiences for students. For example, the NSF-supported μSURE program (micro–STEM Undergraduate Research Experiences) ($189K) was developed by OCC's School teams to create new, short-term, authentic, research experiences in collaboration with four-year institutions. These grant-supported initiatives advance OCC's strategic goals of helping students achieve their education and career goals and fostering a student-centered and equitable campus experience, directly supporting Mission + Vision points 1, 2, and 3 and Strategic Plan goal 2.

OCC receives significant support from its three affiliated corporations, the OCC Housing Development Corporation (OCCHDC), the OCC Association, Inc. (OCCA), and the OCC Foundation (OCCF) (See Standard 7 for a detailed discussion of these entities.) In terms of finances, OCCF awarded $483,454 in scholarships in the 2024-2025 academic year and contributes annually to the CCCH's food pantry, emergency aid, and other initiatives to help meet students' basic needs. OCCF also supports campus events, student leadership, enrichment, and experiential learning programs. Donors and foundation partners contribute to scholarships and sponsored programs, such as the Meg O'Connell Social Justice Scholars Program established through a $1M gift (S6_Meg O'Connell Scholars Website). Corporate partners such as Micron, Inficon, and Lockheed Martin have sponsored scholarships and lab equipment, including the new Micron Cleanroom Simulation lab, supported in part through a $5M commitment from Micron (S6_The Big Reveal). OCCF also manages an endowment fund that supports annual professional development programming for faculty and staff. This support comes from alumni, faculty, staff, board members, businesses, and community partners. OCCF is preparing to launch a fundraising campaign which will support future student scholarships, basic needs, and community partnerships. The goal is $7 million over 5 years.

Overall, OCC is in good shape financially. The US Department of Education uses the Composite Score Rating to gauge the financial strength of an institution (S6_7_Composite Score - 2020-2024). It is a composite of three ratios derived from an institution's audited financial statements (S6_8_FS Financial Audits), and an institution is considered financially responsible when the composite score is between 1.5 and 3.0. OCC's Composite Scores are:

    2020 – 2.53
    2021 – 2.59
    2022 – 2.55

2023 – 2.51
2024 – 2.53

Long Term Planning

The 2018-2026 Facilities Master Plan (FMP) aligns with OCC's strategic goals and mission in several ways (S6_10_OCC Facilities Master Plan – Final). The FMP aims to revitalize areas on campus, implement additional academic programs, and explore opportunities to help the College meet the needs of the surrounding community (linking to Strategic Plan goals 1 and 2 and Mission + Vision points 2, 3, and 4). In addition to improving the student experience, ensuring responsible stewardship of resources, and strengthening community engagement, the FMP seeks to

- Foster a student-centered campus community that emphasizes academic excellence and spaces for student use
- Embrace the diverse student body, creating environments that respond to and integrate multi-cultural aesthetics into campus space and life
- Create educational facilities that are inviting and accessible to underserved populations (page 12)

The College leases additional space to support satellite instruction, with agreements managed by the CFO and Management Services. Leases (S6_10_Lease Agreements) are regularly assessed to ensure they align with enrollment trends, academic program needs, and strategic priorities, while also cost efficient and low risk. Similarly, insurance coverage for property, liability, and business interruption is reviewed annually by the CFO and Management Services, in coordination with the College's broker, to ensure alignment with current property values, facility usage, and institutional risk exposure (S6_10_Insurance Polices).

OCC engages an architectural firm that uses feedback from faculty and staff to help develop the Facilities Master Plan (FMP), forecasting large scale needs for physical assets, such as buildings and property, as well as future physical resource allocations (S6_10_OCC Facilities Master Plan – Final). The plan outlines multi-year expenditures including anticipated budgets and potential impact to existing buildings, campus roads, parking lots and open spaces as detailed in the Capital Projects section of the 2025-26 Annual Budget Book-Final (pg. 33; S6_12_2025-26 Annual Budget Book-Final). FMP are normally produced on a 5-year cycle, but the most recent one was delayed due to the pandemic and the hiring of a new president.

Once the Board of Trustees approves the FMP, the Administration, in conjunction with the Facilities Department, prioritizes projects to submit for County and State approval. From the current FMP, the college has been approved for $112,750,000 of projects that are funded equally between Onondaga County and New York State (NYS), which means capital projects are done without the use of college operating funds or borrowing. Typically, County approval is obtained first and then NYS approval in the following annual budget process. Of the $112,750,000 that has been approved, the College has awarded contracts for approximately $50,000,000 worth of design and construction costs. These services are procured through Requests for Proposals to design firms, and the construction is publicly

bid through the Onondaga County Purchasing Department. Quarterly reports and forecasts are coordinated with both Onondaga County and NYS. In essence, the FMP documents how the College will actualize the entire Mission + Vision, but especially point 5, Responsible stewardship of resources, and the physical aspects of the Strategic Plan.

OCC's current Strategic Enrollment (SEM) Plan covers 2021-2026 (S6_5_2021-2026 Enrollment Management Plan). In accordance with the plan, programs were re-designed or, in the case of Welding, Sound Recording, and Physical Therapy Assistants, developed to best fit community needs (see S5). OCC also invested significantly in Facilities such as constructing a Clean Room for training technicians and the remodeling of the School of Health lab spaces for Nursing and other Health Science degrees, supporting Mission + Vision point 4.

OCC's 2023-2028 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Master Plan (S1_3_2023-2028 DEI Master Plan 5.9.23) focuses on closing equity gaps and improving the retention and graduation of OCC's diverse student population and outlines strategies to engage students and staff/faculty, as well as increase the diversity of its workforce, supporting Strategic Plan goal 2 and Mission + Vision point 3 (see S2 for details). OCC has an outcomes equity gap along both gender and race. IPEDS data shows that as overall enrollment shrinks, the percentage of students who self-identify as underrepresented minority students increases (S6_4_IPEDS Fall Enrollment-AW; S6_4_IPEDS 12 Month Enrollment). Data also reveals a trend of slightly more female students than male students (although certain majors skew more heavily in one direction or the other e.g. technology for males and education for females). Following the DEI Master Plan, the College will continue to monitor this data, looking to reduce outcomes disparities through projects such as the Student Success Challenge Grants (see S5 for details). See S2 for a detailed discussion of how hiring practices at OCC continue to show a commitment to diversity. See S2 for a detailed discussion of assessment related to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

The 2025-2027 Information Technology Services Master Plan (ITSMP) establishes a comprehensive, phased approach to modernizing the College's technology infrastructure and aligns with strategic goals by prioritizing student success, operational efficiency, and equitable access. Specifically, it addresses device lifecycle refresh, server upgrades, migration to Informer 5, and evaluating the feasibility of transitioning from the Colleague to Banner ERP & SIS as a campus-wide administrative software system (S6_10_ITS Master Plan connected to Strategic Plan – 2025-2027). With a detailed staffing plan, clear budget estimates, and a robust communication strategy, OCC is well-prepared to achieve its ITSMP objectives by the end of Year 3. The result will be a fully modernized IT environment that supports responsive teaching, seamless operations, and an inclusive and secure campus experience (S6_10_SUNY IT Contracts).

The 2023-2028 ITS Expenditure and Replacement Cycle Plan (S6_10_OCC – ITS Expenditure and Replacement Cycle Plan 2023-2028) outlines how the organization will spend money on and replace IT assets over time. The plan applies to all IT assets, including hardware, software, and infrastructure. The IT department in collaboration with OCC's finance department, is responsible for developing and maintaining this plan, which undergoes a detailed review cycle at least once a year. This review proposes necessary updates addresses emerging issues or changes in technology. Should any significant changes occur outside the annual review cycle (such as critical technology updates or

regulatory changes), the IT department will expedite the review process to incorporate these adjustments. The 2025-26 Budget is requesting County and State funding for IT upgrades, based on a technology review by the IT department.

To enhance Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act compliance and strengthen its cybersecurity posture, ITS has partnered with DeepSeas to implement a structured, multi-year security enhancement initiative (S6_10_DeepSeas Program). This program is designed to address immediate security risks and strengthen internal cybersecurity. A virtual Chief Information Security Officer (vCISO) has been assigned to work with the College, providing strategic guidance and helping OCC develop stronger internal capabilities over time. This program ensures long-term, cybersecurity resilience, regulatory compliance, and proactive risk management. More importantly, it is designed to empower OCC's internal teams to sustain and evolve its security posture independently in the future.

All the technology master plans combine to support goals 1,2, and 3 of the Strategic Plan as well as points 2 and 5 of the Mission + Vision.

The BoT receives assessment reports in January and June to systematically review progress on the Diversity Master Plan, Facilities Master Plan, Strategic Enrollment Management Plan, and College's Strategic plan, including KPIs (S6_2_Assessment Recommendations BOT 2024-2026; S6_2_February 11 2025 BOT minutes).

The Budget

The annual budget development process determines how resources can best be allocated to fulfill the mission and strategic priorities of the College (S6_5_Budget Development Calendar). Beginning in the Fall semester, the College's Executive Council meets to agree on preliminary revenue and enrollment assumptions needed to prepare the upcoming budget. The Budget Template, Budget Reference Manual, and Budget Instructions are provided to each department within the college (S6_12_26budget-template; S6_12_Budget Reference Manual; S6_12_25-26 Budget Instructions).

The budgeting process begins with department heads, who are best positioned to understand their department's needs in relation to both their annual operational plans and OCC's Strategic Plan, both developed to support the Mission + Vision. They complete detailed budget requests outlining the purpose of each requested fund, which then go through a review process.

For academic departments, deans review these budget requests in meetings with department heads, ensuring requests align with strategic priorities and compare them to previous years' actual expenditures, particularly for recurring costs such as classroom supplies, software subscriptions, and membership dues. After making necessary adjustments, deans submit the revised requests to the Provost, who, along with her team and Financial Services, then meet with the deans to review and discuss the requests. These meetings consider alignment with strategic goals, grant-funded projects, and departmental performance assessments. Adjustments may be made or additional follow-ups identified during this stage. Once all concerns are resolved, the budget proposals move forward for review by Financial Services and the CFO.

For example, under Classroom Supplies in the 2025-2026 budget request from Culinary Management AAS program, there is a request for $3,800 for classroom supplies for the Advanced Culinary Skills and Advanced Bakery Skills. The justification states:

> The Culinary curriculum has developed 2 new 2 credit advanced Culinary & Bakery skills course to replace the 7 old 1 credit skills courses that were expensive to run. FSA-203C Advanced Culinary Skills course is 7 weeks long taught once in the fall 2024 semester and FSA-203B Advanced Bakery Skills course is 7 weeks long taught once in the spring 2025 semester. This way a student enrolls in the 2 credit skills course instead of picking 2 separate 1 credit skills courses. This will also increase enrollment in these 2 courses by not letting a student choose from 7 (1 cr.) courses. cite sample budget docs for CUL Manning email from 8/11/25

For non-academic departments, department heads submit budget requests to their respective Vice Presidents (VPs), who conduct a comparable review to the deans. The VP-reviewed requests then move on to Financial Services and the CFO, where they undergo the same scrutiny as academic budgets, including further adjustments or further inquiry. For example, the office of Student Engagement's 2025-2026 budget requests $1,000 for "Training for Coordinator, Deputy Coordinator, and Investigators. SCI (paid for by conduct budget) provides the minimum required training under TIX regs ([…]to ensure compliance) but it does not address more advanced topics: investigative technique, parents/pregnancy accommodations, athletes, advisers, students w/disabilities, etc." (cite sample budget Student Engagement) Manning email from 8/11/25. In both examples, the requests were approved because they support not only the necessary work of the College but also the Mission + Vision and Values (points 1 and 4 of the Mission and Values 1, 3, and 6).

Funds are also set aside within the President's budgets for campus-wide initiatives that support the current Strategic Plan and Mission + Vision, like the Student Success Challenge grants (see Standard 5 and below) and administration of the PACE survey (see Standard 2).

Once the budgets have gone through the full review process, they are returned to each person involved in the process for review so that any concerns or questions can be addressed and any additional changes made. The conversations that occur throughout the creation and review process ensure transparency and that the experts in the respective areas have the resources and support needed to continue their work supporting the Mission + Vision and the Strategic Plan. After all revisions and clarifications are completed, Financial Services and the CFO compare the finalized expenses with projected revenues to determine whether additional actions are needed to guarantee a balanced budget or appropriate use of fund balance. This information is then presented to Executive Council as well as the BoT at their annual budget retreat for input, questions, and thoughts. The BoT approves the budget at the May meeting.

OCC then formally submits its operating budget and capital plan to the County Legislature's Joint Facility and Ways & Means committee for review. After a public hearing, the College presents the budget for approval by the full County Legislature in June. The adopted budget is reviewed and approved by the SUNY Board of Trustees during its September meeting. The final budget is loaded into the College's student information and enterprise resource planning system (Ellucian Colleague) before the start of the new fiscal year on September 1. Revenue and expense projections are done throughout

the fiscal year to see where they are trending compared to the approved budget (S6_12_2025-26 Annual Budget Book-Final).

Upon approval, each department manages their budget expenditures and can propose re-allocations as necessary through the budget transfer process. Funds representing their specific department needs are broken down into detailed categories, including duplicating and laboratory supplies (pg. 18 of S6_12_2025-26 Annual Budget Book-Final). Budgets are monitored in real time through a portal in MyOCC (S6_5-Budget Monitoring Instructions).

OCC's annual operating budget for FY25 is just over $64 million. This represents a 15.1% decrease from FY19, when the budget was $75.7 million—a decline that aligns with a drop in enrollment over the same period. At the same time, OCC's unrestricted fund balance increased by $21.1 million, largely due to $15.7 million in Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds (HEERF) stimulus. Between 2020 and 2023, OCC received a total of $21.3 million in HEERF funds, resulting in a net fund balance increase of $15.7 million. At the end of FY24, the College's fund balance stood at $32.7 million. Strong fiscal management has enabled OCC to establish financial safeguards during a time of declining enrollment and rising costs. To support the FY25 and projected FY26 budgets, OCC anticipates using approximately $5.0 million from its fund balance (S6_5_rev-exp_trend). It is projected that approximately $384,000 will need to be drawn from the fund balance for fiscal year 2024-2025 to support the operating budget, rather than the budgeted amount of $2,782,584. The draw down arose primarily from the one-time contractual payments for faculty, professional administrators, and management confidential employees and a higher-than-expected 5% salary increase (originally budgeted at 3%) for faculty and Professional Administrators under their collective bargaining agreement. Prior to the 2024–25 fiscal year, OCC maintained its operations without utilizing fund balance.
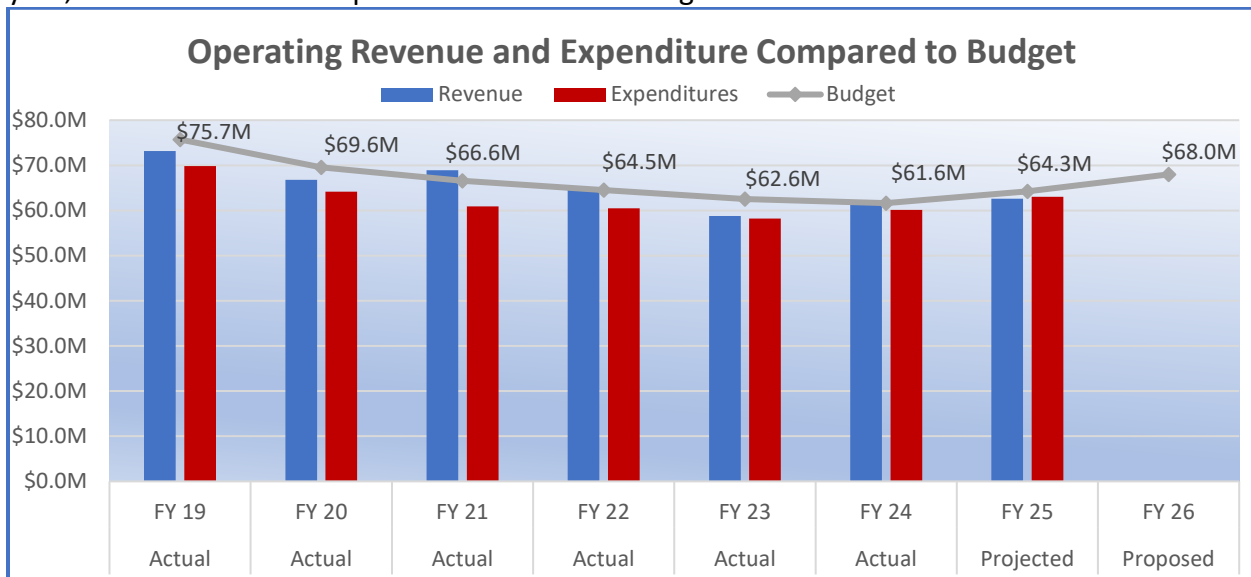
OCC's long-term financial goals rely on a few, important assumptions. The following summary (S6_5_Longterm Financial Assumptions) outlines the key financial assumptions under two planning scenarios—Baseline and Aspirational—to support long-range forecasting and strategic decision-making.

FINANCIAL ASSUMPTIONS OVERVIEW

Baseline	Aspirational
Enrollment Growth — 2% annually through 2026-27; flat thereafter	**Enrollment Growth** — 5% annually through 2026-27; flat thereafter
Tuition Increases & Contributions — 0% (2024-25), then 1%, 2%, 1%, 2%	**Same as Baseline** — ±3% (2024-25), then 2% annually
State Aid — Funding floor; Rental Aid reduced after 7/31/26	**State Aid** — Funding floor; +$3M/year; same Rental Aid adjustment
	Operating Costs — Increases for salaries, food, utilities, etc.

Under the Baseline Scenario, enrollment is projected to increase at a rate of 2% annually through 2026–27, after which it stabilizes. Tuition rates remain flat in 2024–25, followed by modest increases in subsequent years (1%, 2%, 1%, and 2%). State aid is assumed to remain at the funding floor, with a reduction in rental aid due to a lease expiration in mid-2026. Sponsor contributions are expected to remain level. Revenue from chargebacks will grow based on an established formula linked to fund balance, while interest income is projected to decline by 50 basis points annually. Operating cost increases are expected at 3% across most categories, including salaries, food, IT, marketing, and communications. Operating costs for utilities are expected to increase by 6%. Additional expense categories such as fees, retirement contributions, workers' compensation, and health insurance premiums also reflect annual growth in line with inflation and wage increases.

In contrast, the Aspirational Scenario retains all baseline expenditure assumptions but anticipates more favorable revenue conditions: enrollment is projected to grow at 5% annually through 2026–27; state aid includes a $3 million annual increase above the funding floor; and sponsor contributions grow by 3% in 2024–25, then 2% annually thereafter.

Overall, the aspirational model reflects a more optimistic outlook, emphasizing proactive investment in enrollment growth and expanded public funding support, while maintaining fiscal discipline across operating and personnel costs. Under the Baseline scenario, without making any changes to staffing levels or looking at areas to reduce expenses, a significant use of fund balance is projected ($4.8 million in 2025-26 growing to $9.7 million by 2028-29). A lower amount of fund balance is projected to be used under the Aspirational scenario ($1 million in 2025-26 growing to $4.9 million by 2028-29).

OCC takes a very conservative approach to its budget with the goal of having actual revenues come in higher and expenses come in lower than budget. Over the last decade or so, the College has always ended its fiscal year with actual results coming in more favorable than budget. For 2024-2025, OCC budgeted the use of fund balance in the amount of $2,762,584, and, based on the most recent forecast as of March 31st, 2025, it is projecting to use only $384,489 (S6_5_Budget Projections). For 2023-2024, OCC budgeted the use of fund balance in the amount of $4,562,940 and added $2,137,495 to the fund balance due to significantly higher than anticipated enrollment, as well as expense savings attained

with the Voluntary Early Retirement Incentive. For 2022-2023, the use of fund balance was budgeted in the amount of $4,720,586, but OCC added $562,074 to its fund balance, a portion of which was attributable to $1,852,600 of HEERF stimulus funds. For 2021-2022, OCC budgeted for a balanced budget without the use of fund balance and added $4,507,292 to its fund balance. This was primarily driven by receipt of $7,049,737 of HEERF stimulus funds.

As mentioned earlier, OCC's 2021-2026 SEM Plan (S6_5_2021-2026 Enrollment Management Plan) outlines strategies to increase enrollment and improve student success. Fall trends show OCC has experienced some enrollment recovery following significant declines during the COVID-19 pandemic, with most of the growth in STEM and direct to career programs and a decline in liberal arts, transfer programs. Data also shows that OCC's greatest enrollment gains are among non-matriculated students (S6_5_Fall Enrollment Trend by Full-time Part-time Status). The non-matriculated population reflects growth in early college high school program as well as part-time learners, especially working adults.
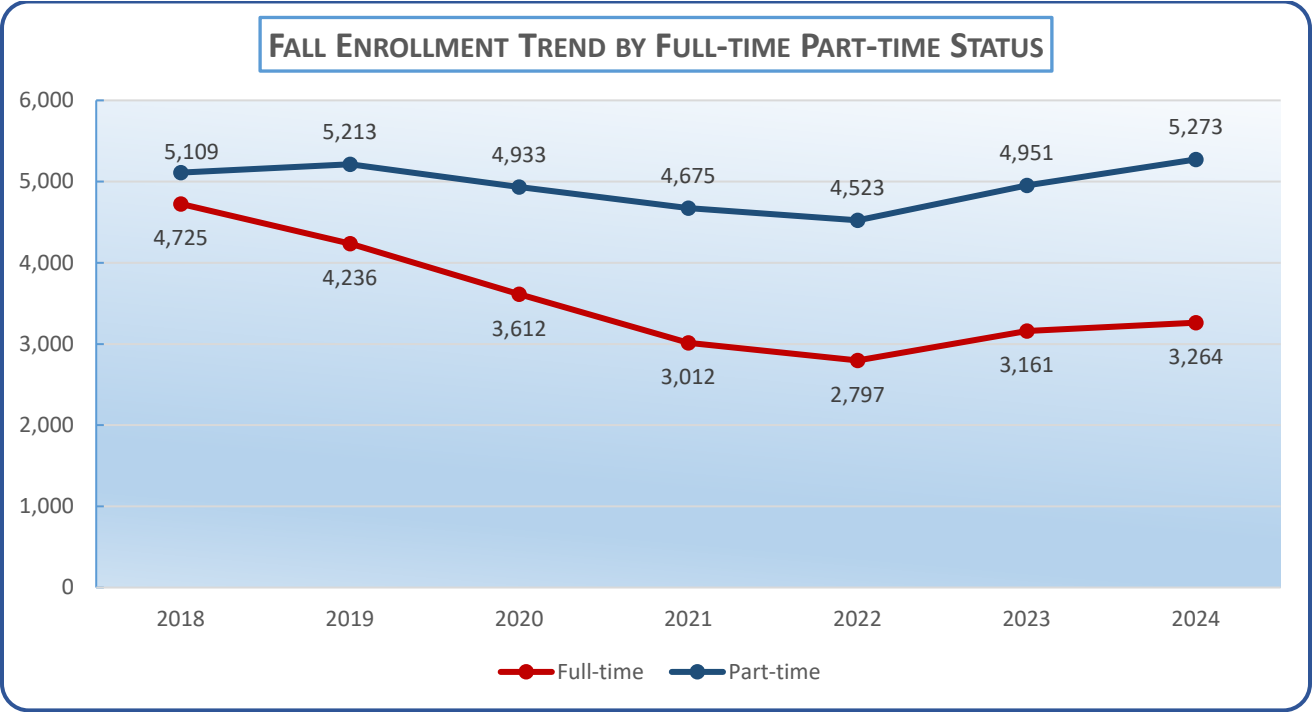
Source: OCC Historical Enrollment Trends Dashboard

Achieving baseline projections depends on increased retention of all populations and increased recruitment and retention of adult learners. Aspirational projections are supported by the baseline plan plus the additional, albeit modest, growth in population projected in the area because of Micron's chip manufacturing plant. High school graduate numbers are decreasing in OCC's service area and across New York State, and the overall population is projected to decline over the next 25 years as well. OCC's increase in student retention has kept overall student enrollment stable, allowing the College to meet its budgetary requirements. Fewer new students, however, means there are fewer students to retain. Even if OCC maintains or increases its retention rates, enrollment will decrease over time. While the full picture will be composed of many variables, the College anticipates it will face

budgetary challenges in the future, and the types of strategies used in the past (e.g. reorganizations and the VERI) as well as novel strategies will be considered to address them. OCC continues to closely monitor its economic situation and consistently communicate with stakeholders.

Responsible Fiscal Management and Assessment

OCC has several strategies to measure and assess the adequacy and efficient utilization of institutional resources required to support its Mission + Vision and Strategic Plan and periodically assesses the effectiveness of planning, resource allocation, institutional renewal processes, and availability of resources. Approximately 82% of the budget is allocated for salary and benefits, and there are other, non-discretionary expenses such as utilities, insurance, facilities maintenance and fees for services that are required to operate the College, leaving a modest amount for expenses such as classroom supplies and equipment. As stated above, vacant or new position requests must be justified and approved by EC. Examples of institutional resources allocated to support the Mission + Vision and ongoing assessment of that allocation include increasing budget for navigators based on OCC's mission as well as ongoing assessment results (see Standard 4), and the Student Success Challenge (SSC) grant process (see Standard 5 for a detailed discussion of assessment). Projects with proven success, like the School's Growth, Progress, & Skills for College workshops (see Standard 4) are added to the annual budget request for that office (cite SSC grant app for GPS). Additionally, administration of the original PACE Survey ($5,100 from the General Institutional President's budget) will be budgeted for by Human Resources going forward.

Renovation of the College's physical space also supports its Mission + Vision and Strategic Plan. For example, the Ferrante Hall renovation will result in a cutting-edge training facility that meets the evolving needs of the School of Health, Wellness & Human Services as well as the broader community (S6_Alumni Health Programs Article). Along these lines Whiteny has seen several renovations to support OCC's growing technical and career programs (e.g., the ELM program, see Standard 3 for details), including the Micron Cleanroom Simulation Lab, an HVAC lab, a welding lab, an expanded CNC lab, a Heavy Equipment Mechanic lab/addition, and existing classrooms remodeled into lecture/lab spaces to support the ELM curriculum, including W118 for tools and mechanisms, W119 for robotics/ computer lab, and W102 for the fluid lab and other classes (cite pages 69 and 80 of the FMP). Even though the direct cost of projects like these is underwritten by Onondaga County and the State of New York and/or grant funding, OCC must budget and account for maintenance, upkeep, and the specialized staff needed to support and teach in these programs.

The Board of Trustees (BoT) annually contracts with an independent firm to audit the college's financial statements (S6_8_FS Financial Audits). The auditors examine the college's financial statements and supporting documentation to determine if the statements comply with generally accepted accounting principles and relevant federal and state regulations. Appointing an independent audit firm begins with a multi-step process, led by the BoT's Finance, Audit, and Compliance Committee, with final approval from the full Board. The auditor reports directly to the committee. For the fiscal year ending August 31, 2024, no management letters were issued, and the College was determined to be a low-risk auditee

(S6_8_FS Financial Audits). Final audit documents from 2019-2024 show that no audit management letters were issued for those years.

The College maintains well-defined and inclusive decision-making processes that incorporate financial data into institutional planning. A comprehensive expense analysis is conducted annually, with data disaggregated by functional categories such as instruction, student services, and institutional support (S6_6_Historical expenses as a % of function). The College has a clearly defined reporting structure, with up-to-date organizational charts readily available on the college website (S6_9_Org Charts). In addition, the College Leadership Council (CLC) (S6_9_CLC meeting schedule for 2023-24 academic year) serves as an advisory body to the President with representation from across campus. College Standing Committees (Programs and Academic Support, Student Success Council, Data Governance, and Institutional Effectiveness) report to the CLC, as do any College Ad Hoc Committees. Meetings are open, and a newsletter summarizing each meeting is sent via email the following week.

As outlined above, OCC submits its Annual Budget Book (S6_12_2025-26 Annual Budget Book-Final) to the Onondaga County Executive and County Legislators for review, approval, and allocation of requested County support for the upcoming year. The county reviews and approves the budget through a resolution (S6_12_County Resolutions Nos. 63, 64, 65, 66) 6.3.25 Leg Session). The Planning Assessment & Resource Allocation Timeline (S6_01_Planning Assessment and Resource Allocation Timeline) summarizes the annual process for resource allocation. Academic Assessment and Program Reviews can have a financial impact on future budgets, so continuous assessment of every area allows for the best resource allocation.

As stated above, every department has an annual operational plan connecting its work with the College's Strategic Plan and outlines budget and resources requirements as well as ongoing assessment. The Financial Management and Services 2024-25 Operational Plan Summary shows all the various projects undertaken by offices in this area, the connections to strategic goals, specific KPIs, etc, but also a timeline for implementation, the percent completed at time of publication, and a review of outcomes (cite summary). Human Resources' annual operational plan also illustrates the assessment process. Using Strategic Plan Goal 2, Strategic Priority 2.2, and KPI 2.2.1 as touchstones, HR wants to "Increase the number of diverse applicants for job openings from an average of 2 applicants per position to an average of 5 per position." To do this, they will "Increase outreach with minority organizations, educational institutions, job fairs, targeted advertising" by "Increas[ing] advertising budget for posting vacancies on diversity job boards and additional websites. Under "Assessment results," the plan states:

> To date HR has added 29 new recruitment sources, including partnerships with organizations such as Mmilitaryjob.com, Diverseducation.com, HispanicsinSTEM.com. These additions have enhanced our outreach to underrepresented groups and broadened the applicant pipeline.

> Progress has been behind, with 29 total sources added vs. a cumulative target of 40 at this point in the year. Efforts to track source effectiveness including applicant diversity, interview conversion, and hiring outcomes are underway and will be critical to evaluating ROI and refining future outreach strategy.

The Institutional Effectiveness (IE) committee, a standing committee of the College Leadership Council co-chaired by one faculty member and one staff member, helps OCC improve student success outcomes through assessment of past, current, and future efforts (S6_Institutional Effectiveness Website). Recently, the IE Committee recommended that the College adopt a more focused approach to administrative reviews through incorporating departmental operational plans, streamlining the operational planning process by submitting reports directly to IPAR, and proposing that the College utilize the MSCHE Evidence Inventory as a tool for institutional assessment, improvement, and preparation for future accreditation visits (S6_13_IE Plan_February 2025 revised (add CLC or EC minutes for when they approved).

Other means of assessing resource allocation are through grant work and special projects (S6_13_Faculty Reassigned Time & Stipends), monitoring student enrollment in degree programs, the ongoing investigation of class sizes through the Designated Limit (DL) conversations (S6_13_Designated Limits Memo 10.2024), Degree Program Reviews, student success initiatives including tracking flags through Lazer Success (S4_1_SCAN Lazer Success Data) and tracking classroom usage and classroom sizes in buildings across campus (S6_10_Campus Rooms Sept 8-14, 24).

Continuous assessment results in low enrollment degree programs being deactivated and discontinued, such as the Nuclear Technology (NET) Program in 2021 (S6_13_NET deactivation), but also in redesign of programs, such as Architecture Design Studies (ADS) in 2022, to meet the local need (S6_13_ADS_creation).

Conclusion

OCC maintains clear processes for allocating resources and has been successful in establishing reserves sufficient to withstand short-term fluctuations in enrollment and other funding streams. The College also has well-established processes and consistent practices for assessing academic programs and services and making change to achieve its mission and, thereby, contribute to the institution's fiscal health and stability.

Current Strengths	1. Transparent and clear planning and resource allocation that directly ties to Mission + Vision and Strategic Plan, i.e. annual operational plans.	C1,C3, C5
	2. Strong commitment to student success supported by external funding and partnerships.	C10
Challenges/Opportunities for Growth and Exploration	1. Continue to adapt to demographic and funding shifts while enhancing student success, maintaining financial stability, and modernizing infrastructure.	C7

Standard 7

Standard VII: Governance, Leadership, and Administration

Description of the Standard

The institution is governed and administered in a manner that allows it to realize its stated mission and goals in a way that effectively benefits the institution, its students, and the other constituencies it serves. Even when supported by or affiliated with a related entity, the institution has education as its primary purpose, and it operates as an academic institution with appropriate autonomy.

Executive Summary

Onondaga Community College (OCC) is continually working to strengthen its governance structures, and its successes in a rapidly changing and difficult landscape are, in large part, due to the fact that all parts of the institution are working toward the common goal of student success.

Alignment of Institutional Priorities with Standard Criteria

Institutional Priorities	1. Help students achieve their educational and career goals through responsive academic experiences, innovative teaching strategies, and exemplary learning support services.	2. Foster a student-centered and equitable campus experience where all students feel welcomed, valued, connected, and empowered to succeed	3. Ensure communication systems are consistent, transparent, and designed to promote student success	4. Foster engagement and partnerships with school districts, governmental and community organizations, and businesses.
7. Governance, Leadership, and Administration			✓	

Alignment of Lines of Inquiry with Standard Criteria
1. How does OCC define shared governance and how does the college effectively communicate the role and work of our governance bodies to the college community?   C1
2. How does OCC determine what public interests should be served by the governing bodies? C1
3. How does OCC determine what constitutes integrity and accountability in relation to the governing body, CEO, and administration?   C5
4. How does OCC effectively and proactively prepare for future challenges and opportunities? C1
5. How does OCC effectively assess governance, leadership, and the administration and apply results for continuous improvement?   C5

Analysis
OCC operates under a governance structure that prioritizes education, works towards its stated Mission + Vision and Values, and upholds the institution's autonomy. The governance structure is clearly articulated, transparent, outlining stakeholder roles and responsibilities, and supported by detailed policies and active participation from the governing body, administration, faculty, staff, students, and affiliated entities. OCC has refined robust governance practices over time, reflecting a

commitment to continuous improvement, transparency, collaboration, and accountability for inclusive decision making, giving the institution strength and resiliency.

Shared Governance Structure

Shared governance at OCC is a collaborative framework embracing collective input on decision-making. The College community participates in governance in a number of ways: i.e. the College Leadership Council; the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Council; the Faculty Senate (S6_1_Faculty Senate Members, S6_1_College Leadership Council Members, S6_1_OCCAC Members); the Student Government Association; the Administrators' Council; and the Staff Association (representing classified staff) (S7_1_A_Shared Governance Org Chart.pdf). Weekly updates on the college website, monthly newsletters, and regularly scheduled meetings between governance representatives and the President contribute to the processes' transparency (S7_1_March 2025 CLC Newsletter.pdf, S7_1_January 2025 CLC Newsletter.pdf).

Shared Governance Organizational Chart

- **Faculty Senate**

  Policy Formulation Committees
  Curriculum Committee
  Learning Outcomes Assessment Committee
  Scholastic Standards
  Student Affairs

  Service Committees
  Academic Support Initiatives Team
  Academic Technology Coordinating Committee
  Arts Across Campus
  Budget & Planning
  Community-Engaged Learning
  CTLI Advisory
  Faculty Appreciation Awards
  Faculty Scholarship Committee
  Handbook Committee
  Honors Committee
  Nominations

  Contractual Committees
  Promotions Committee
  Reappointment & Tenure Committee
  Sabbatical Leave Committee

- **Board of Trustees**
- **President**
- **Student Government Association**
- **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging Council**
- **College Leadership Council** — OCCAC / OCCSA / Faculty Senate
  - **Data Governance Committee**
  - **Programs and Academic Support Committee**
  - **Student Success Council**
  - **Institutional Effectiveness Committee**

The College Leadership Council (CLC) is an advisory body to the President (S7_1_CLC Bylaws). It serves as the central, cross-campus, governance body responsible for advising the President on strategic issues, projects, and proposals with significant cross-institutional impact. CLC has four active committees within its structure: Institutional Effectiveness; Student Success Council; Data Governance; and the Programs and Academic Support Committee (S7_CLC Website). CLC is comprised of representatives of the College's recognized associations and the heads of the College's divisions. Depending on the nature of the issue under discussion, the CLC may conduct deliberations itself or refer the matter to the appropriate governing body or its committees. For example, a purely curricular matter would be referred to the appropriate faculty committee, while a campus-wide initiative would be considered by the CLC itself.

A cornerstone of OCC's shared governance structure, the Faculty Senate focuses on curriculum development, academic policies, and faculty engagement (S7_1_Faculty Senate Bylaws.pdf). To provide transparency and promote participation the Senate meets on the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Mondays of the month during each semester, holds divisional town hall meetings on the 1st Monday of each of the same months, a mid-semester faculty wide meeting, and schedules plenaries at the beginning of each semester and at the end of Spring. Regular Senate meetings take place during College Hour, an hour when no classes are scheduled. The Senate is comprised of Senate Officers, representation from Humanities, Social Sciences & Fine Arts, Natural & Applied Sciences, Health & Community Services, adjuncts, and Ex Officio members (representation is based on academic divisions that pre-date OCC's Schools model). Senators are elected to two-year terms, with approximately half of seats up for election each year. Senate also has designated policy formation, service, and contractual committees. Agendas are distributed to all full-time and adjunct faculty prior to each in-person meeting, with an option for virtual attendance. A Faculty Senate SharePoint, open to all faculty, contains by-laws, committee documents, agendas, and meeting minutes. In addition to conducting curricular business, Senate also collaborates on policy reviews, recently providing extensive feedback on the BoT's Student Success Policy (**as per LW -CLC minutes and Board resolution and/or Student Success Policy, B17= needs adding to evidence**). Because the proposed policy concerned academic success, the Senate held discussions and ultimately proposed revisions, which were eventually incorporated into the final version approved by the Board of Trustees (BoT) in 2024.

The Faculty Senate has changed significantly since its inception in 2017 (S7_1_2017-Faculty Senate Bylaws.April2017.pdf). Several of these changes, such as the Divisional Town Hall meetings and mid-semester, campus-wide, town hall meetings, were a response to feedback from the faculty wanting more interaction (need to cite page 28 of Nina's 2020 senate assemment – is this it, bc MC can't find in evidence S7_5_Senate Assessment 2020.pdf). More recently, the Senate bylaws were revised to maintain effective representation and reflect the changing size of the full-time faculty, reducing the ratio of senators to permanent faculty members from one per eight to one per six, ensuring all departments and divisions are adequately represented (S7_1_Faculty Senate Bylaws.June 2024). To further strengthen the governance structure, term limits were introduced for Senate and faculty committee members, encouraging broader participation. The establishment of an ex officio, non-voting seat for the "Chair of Chairs" – the leader of the academic department chairperson group - has improved coordination between academic departments and the Senate. Other changes have included the addition of a Senate Executive Committee and refinements to the election process. These structural changes have enhanced the Senate's ability to address challenges and contribute meaningfully to institutional decision-making.

OCC Administrators Council (OCCAC) is an organization comprised of Professional Administrators (unionized employees), college affiliates, and Management Confidential (non-unionized employees). The OCCAC's open forums allow participants to exchange information and ideas to advance the College's mission and strategic plan (S7_OCCAC Website). Each spring, members elect an 8-person steering committee that serve rotating, two-year terms, providing continuity and institutional knowledge for incoming representatives. Steering committee members present information on current events and topics and gather feedback from members (**cite agendas**). OCCAC is represented on College Leadership Council (CLC), and representatives meet with the President at least three times per year. While not primarily a decision-making body, the OCCAC facilitates bidirectional communication and

informs the work of members serving on the CLC. **(cite survey on mission and vision statements and comments on the student success policy)**

OCC Staff Association (OCCSA) is an organization comprised of all support staff. This body's mission is to facilitate communication and promote fair treatment and opportunities for staff and is also represented on the CLC (OCCSA; S7_1_OCC Staff Association By-laws.pdf). Members of the OCCSA include all Civil Service Employees Association members and those staff who are not represented by a bargaining unit. A committee comprised of three officers, five delegate members, and four alternates is elected to lead the OCCSA. Like the OCCAC, the Staff Association is not primarily a decision-making body but facilitates bidirectional communication with the CLC.

The Student Government Association (SGA) serves as the governing body representing students (S7_SGA ByLaws 24-25). SGA is dedicated to broadening the educational, cultural, and social experiences of all OCC students by offering leadership opportunities and skill development. It serves as the central organization for all student groups on campus, supporting activities organized by it and the Student Orientation, Leadership & Engagement (SOLE) Office. SGA conducts annual elections each Spring. . and officers must hold seven office hours per week and attend trainings as well as weekly Executive Board Meetings, providing easy access for students. In addition, Student Government Association officers sit on various campus committees and affiliate organization boards: Board of Trustees, College Leadership Council (CLC), Onondaga Community College Association Board (OCCA), Housing Development Cooperation Board (HDC), Campus Safety Committee, and Onondaga Community College Foundation Board (OCCF). SGA representation can also be found on the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Council.

. . .

SGA also holds bi-monthly meetings, referred to as Council of Clubs, for the 15+ recognized student clubs on campus. To form a student club, students must apply to the SOLE Office, draft a constitution and create a list of 15 interested students. The approval process involves a presentation to the student body, a vote by the Council of Clubs, and final approval by the SGA Executive Committee. Once approved, clubs must register their officers and advisor(s), submit meeting minutes, follow club policies, and attend Council of Club meetings. Clubs must have at least three officers, participate in Open Houses, and host two events per semester. Council of Clubs is a space where students can solicit and share ideas and give feedback to the SGA officers who then communicate it to college offices as needed. For example, students expressed concern about the lack of knowledge on the part of cafeteria workers regarding cross contamination and allergies. In response, an SGA member created a survey and presented the information to administration (**cite SGA allergy survey spring 2025**). As a result, information about procedures and policies was collected and shared with SGA to disseminate to the student body (placeholder for SGA email/graphic/etc via Schuhert).

SGA regularly surveys the student body, seeking feedback on the SGA itself, events, and ideas for programming. As with voting, all surveys are done electronically. In some cases, these surveys can substantially influence major policy decisions, such as smoking and tobacco use, which culminated in the 2020 adoption by the BoT of a campus wide Smoke and Tobacco-Free policy. SGA was similarly decisive in determining the scheduling of College Hour, an hour-long time-block midday on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays when classes are not held to create time for campus events and meetings.

The placement of College Hour at midday caused scheduling challenges for some classes, and Faculty Senate requested that the CLC explore whether the mid-day College Hour was helpful to students. In response, SGA wrote and conducted a survey of student opinion including several alternative scheduling models; the survey demonstrated overwhelming support for the preservation of the existing structure, providing a clear and definitive answer to the question raised by the CLC on behalf of the Faculty Senate (S7_1_College Hour Survey – SGA). SGA surveys in past years have also identified a desire for a centralized listing of campus events, resulting in the OCC's 2024 investment in a centralized web and app-based student engagement platform, locally branded as Onondaga Community Connection (S7_Presence Platform Homepage).

The Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging Council (DEIB) is a representative forum, comprised of students, faculty, administrators, and staff from across campus, charged with carrying out assigned activities, like organizing workshops and presentations on DEI issues, and advising the President on ways to fulfill the College's mission and improve college operations through greater inclusion of diverse perspectives (***DEIB Council By laws, Amended 01/01/2022***). The Council is co-chaired by the College's Chief Diversity Officer and a member elected by the Council. DEIB Council bylaws state it must be broadly representative of the diversity on campus, have a minimum of 10 to 12 members, including at least one student representative, three representatives from African, Latino/a, Asian, and Native American demographics, and three representatives from the Faculty Senate. Typically, the Council has an average of 40 to 50 members, including five to ten students, each year. All members serve a one-year term and are appointed by the President. The DEIB Council employs a collaborative approach when making recommendations. For example, when leading the initiative to establish the College's Equity Statement (S7_1_Council on Diversity & Inclusion 2020-2021 Charges.pdf), a working group of DEIB Council members developed a draft statement and presented it to governance bodies for input and eventual endorsement. The statement was then forwarded to, and accepted by, then-college president, Dr. Crabill in Dec. 2020 and adopted by the OCC BoT in January 2021 (Evidence Documents Missing?).

In addition to The State University of New York (SUNY), OCC has three associated boards; the Onondaga Community College Association Inc. (OCCA; S7_2_G_OCCA By-laws.pdf; S7_2_G_OCCA Services Agreement.pdf), the Onondaga Community College Housing Development Corporation (HDC; S7_1_HDC By-laws.pdf; S7_1_HDC Operating Agreement), and the Onondaga Community College Foundation (OCCF; S7_1_Foundation Operating Agreement.pdf, S7_1_Articles of Incorporation Foundation). The boards work with the College to advance its mission. For example, HDC is required to meet a set debt service coverage through its financing agreement. The ability to meet this coverage is directly tied to occupancy in the residential facilities, which was significantly lower than needed during the global pandemic. By working with OCCA and the College, HDC was able to reduce expenses and provide housing to groups outside of their main market. This allowed them to stay in compliance with their financing agreement. Moreover, OCCF has allocated over $400,000 in scholarships and academic support for OCC annually. Annual support will grow to over $600,000 in 2025-2026 as a result of prudent investing, favorable market conditions, conservative spending, and recent fundraising, including a bequest for $1.8 million that will allow the College to create scholarships supporting students in technology, health, and education programs.

An example of shared decision making having a profound impact on the College occurred in mid-March 2020, when campuses closed statewide. Then-President Crabill expanded Executive Council to include the presidents of the Faculty Senate and the union (OCCFTA) to represent faculty and staff. Meetings shifted from weekly to daily. This open communication and cooperative decision-making facilitated implementing new modalities of instruction, shifting the remainder of the spring and summer semesters to 100% remote learning, and developing additional modalities for reduced-density, in-person classes beginning Fall 2020. OCC was one of the first SUNY campuses to re-open in-person, enabling it to better support students who felt a need for in-person options and academic programs requiring hands-on training. The masking, distancing, disinfecting, screening, and testing protocols developed at OCC became a model for many peer institutions.

OCC's newest challenge for shared governance is addressing demographically driven, declining enrollment. Under the leadership of the then-Provost, OCC began a comprehensive review of academic programs in 2018, looking not only to strengthen existing programs but also to find opportunities for new program development. Faculty governance systems were integral to this design process, and the Board of Trustees contributed insights and feedback. These efforts ultimately led to the addition of approximately 25 new programs (S7_1_Board of Trustees September 2022.pptx, S7_1_Board of Trustees September 2023.pptx). See S3 for details.

While new and revised programs helped enrollment, by fall of 2022 it became clear that enrollment had fallen to a point that required substantial reductions in the number of full-time faculty. Working in conjunction with the OCCFTA union and the Board of Trustees, Pres. Hilton shepherded approval of a Voluntary Early Retirement Incentive (VERI) plan, inducing 28 full-time faculty to retire (S7_4_D_2023 Faculty VERI.pdf). See S2 for details. Further action, however, was necessary, and in January 2023, the administration announced a plan for a major reorganization, consolidating academic departments from 15 to 9 and the number of Schools from 8 to 4 (S7_4_D_Academic Reorganization.pdf). The re-organization proposal, intended to create economies of scale and to better align academic departments with the student support offered through the Schools, was reviewed by both the OCCFTA and the Senate (S7_4_D_Federation Response to Academic Re-org Proposal of Jan. 25 2023; S7_4_D_Senate Reorg Response.Final.pdf). A Senate poll indicated that the vast majority of faculty did not believe the College effectively conveyed the reasoning behind the reorganization, it was not the best way to respond to the fiscal challenges, and 81% of those polled would support a "no confidence vote" in the reorganization (S7_4_D_VoNC Motions on 4.17.23.pdf). This was not an easy conversation to have, but OCC's strength lies in the fact that it was able to happen in an open and honest manner (S7_4_D_Senate Minutes 4.24.23.pdf).

Based on feedback from OCCFTA and Senate, the administration revised the reorganization plan. This was a seismic shift for those impacted, as it included redeployment of nine full-time faculty members from departments where enrollment had declined substantially (including what are now the Department of Humanities & Social Sciences and the Department of Mathematics & Natural Sciences). Depending on their credentials and interests, some faculty moved to different, understaffed, academic departments (such as Library and Applied Engineering Technology), while others moved into administrative roles (S7_4_D_Academic Reorganization April 2023; S7_4_D_Academic Reorg May Update). While it was difficult in the moment, all moves were voluntary, and, in many cases, senior

faculty members chose to move to protect more vulnerable colleagues. A total of 40 full-time faculty retired, moved to a non-faculty role, or resigned. No faculty retrenchments occurred in 2023 or since.

Ultimately, it was shared governance that enabled ideas to evolve through discourse, resulting in a stronger outcome than would have been achieved without dialogue. It was not an easy time to work at OCC, however, and the results of the Fall 2022 PACE Campus Climate Survey related to sufficient communication (47% disagree – strongly disagree) led to increased communication as a pillar of OCC's Strategic Plan and a sustained effort by leadership to address campus climate. This has been put into practice through newsletters and updates from across campus and the President's office, as well as OCC's investment in strategies to increase trust (e.g. the FranklinCovey's Leading at the Speed of Trust workshop) S7_3_Dr. Hilton Monthly Updates; S7_2_B_CLC Climate Survey Presentation.pdf; S7_2_B_Climate Survey Recommendations.pdf). PACE will be conducted every 3 years to measure progress. See standard 2 for details about PACE.

Board of Trustees

Pages 34-37 of Community College Regulations lay out the roles and responsibilities of the local sponsor (Sec. 604.1), the responsibilities and duties of the college trustees (604.2), the responsibilities and duties of the president (604.3), and the role of student members of boards of trustees (604.4) (S7_3_D_NYS Ed Law).

The BoT provides strategic oversight and ensures that OCC's policies and practices align with its Mission + Vision and Values (S7_3_C_BoT Bylaws Revised 1-30-24 Final.pdf). According to state law, the BoT is comprised of ten-members: five appointed by the Onondaga County Legislature; four appointed by the Governor of New York; and a student elected annually by the student body (S7_2_K_BOT Member Address List 2024-25 with Appt Notes; S7_2_Board Bios; S7_2_A_BOT Appointment Letters) (S7_NYS Open Legislation). Trustees serve seven-year terms (except for the student who serves a one-year term) and meet six times per year, including two scheduled retreats, where Trustees focus on items such as audit, budget, and progress toward goals outlined in the Strategic Plan and other master plans. Member bios, meeting schedules, minutes, resolutions, and other pertinent information are publicly available via the website (S7_BoT Website). Agenda items for the meetings vary and are chosen for relevance and timeliness, such as asking for updates on cybersecurity and academic program level outcomes. The BoT gets regular updates regarding the Strategic Plan KPIs (cite 2023-2028 SP Update.ppt). Importantly, the faculty Senate president has a standing opportunity to address the BoT at every meeting, which is not the case at every college; the BoT wants to know what the faculty are working on. Along these lines, faculty presentations occur throughout the year, updating the BoT about ongoing projects such as Guided Pathways, specific grants, etc., and the BoT has a history of passing resolutions of appreciation for outstanding faculty work as well as student achievement (cite someone other than Choseed)

Committees of the BoT include the Finance, Audit & Compliance; Education; and Nominating committees. Information about current and past Board members, meeting schedules, minutes, and assessment information is available to the public online (S7_BoT Website).

One of the BoT's responsibilities is to appoint a president and annually review the president's progress toward stated goals; the Board fulfilled this duty in the appointing a president through a defined selection process, as demonstrated in the appointment of Dr. Warren Hilton in 2022 as OCC's 9th president and his annual evaluation (is there an annual evaluation of Pres? Is this the self evaluation? Is this missing contract extension? Cite DOCUMENT NEEDED: CONTRACT EXTENSION?) (S7_3_BOT Presidential Appoinment.pdf). Another BoT responsibility is policy approval, which happens every June, although policies may be brought to the BoT as needed throughout the year. For the annual review, all existing policies are reviewed by the relevant department for accuracy, proposed policies are vetted (as appropriate) through College Leadership Council, Faculty Senate, Student Government Association, and OCC Administrator's Council before going to Executive Council and the BoT for final approval. The Student Success Policy, mentioned above, is an example of the BoT overseeing at the policy level the quality of teaching and learning. Under section VII. Procedures, it states:

To work toward improvement in student success, OCC will develop:

- Comprehensive strategic planning that sets success goals and measurements, including implementation measures, for improving student outcomes.

- Organizational structures, policies, and practices that support student success, student equity outcomes, and student personal well-being and mental health.

- Professional development that empowers faculty to adopt instructional practices that incorporate sound principles of teaching/learning theory that enhance learning outcomes.

- Program-level learning outcomes that are aligned with the requirements for success in employment and further education in a given field and that the results of learning outcomes assessment are applied to improve the effectiveness of instruction across programs.

In this vein, the BoT also approves all new programs as well as discontinuation of the same through the administrative review (see Standards 3 and 5.) The BoT is heavily involved in the Strategic Planning process and approves all master plans, including the Academic Affairs plan (presented Fall 2025). In brief, the BoT approve structural changes (e.g. the Schools model and academic reorganization), policies, and set priorities by reviewing enrollment and retention data (e.g. rightsizing the faculty through the VERI) as well as approve new programs or the discontinuance of programs, and review and approve policies.

In addition to planning, the BoT is intimately involved in resource allocation. This is evidenced through the annual operating budget process, as well as the review and approval of master plans at OCC. See Standard 6 for details. The BoT reviews the compiled annual operating budget at its retreat and works with the College's CFO to review revenue projections, expense projections, and any other factors related to fiscal oversight. Finances are reviewed in detail at the Finance, Audit and Compliance committee meeting which convenes before the start of every full BoT meeting, with the committee chair summarizing the discussion at the start of the regular meeting. The results of the audit are discussed in detail at an annual retreat every January focusing solely on the audit. The February full board meeting is reserved for further discussion of the audit before it is either accepted or rejected by the BoT. The BoT also reviews the affiliate audits.

Office of the President

OCC's Chief Executive Officer has the appropriate credentials, as outlined in the posted job description, consistent with the mission and priorities of the college (S7_3_Dr Hilton Bio.pdf; S7_3_Dr Hilton CV.pdf; S7_Pres. Position Profile). According to NYS Education Law, the Board of Trustees has oversight of the College, and then delegates responsibilities to the President, in accordance with New York State Education Law, SUNY regulations, and the Trustees' bylaws. The selection of the President follows guidelines provided both SUNY and New York State Education Law. In the event of a presidential vacancy, the BoT appoints an Interim President with approval by SUNY. If an Interim is not needed, the process begins with an RFP for a search firm to provide assistance. A job description is then developed and a search committee formed. Once finalists are named, the BoT selects the next President pending final approval by SUNY. The BoT also has a succession plan, presented each year in January, that outlines the continuity of leadership should the president become unable to perform their duties (S7_3_C_BoT Bylaws Revised 1-30-24 final.pdf).

As stated in NYS Education Law (section 604.3) "The president of the College, as the chief executive officer responsible to the College trustees, is responsible for providing general educational leadership and for promoting the educational effectiveness of the Institution in all its aspects." OCC's president has the authority and autonomy required to fulfill the responsibilities of the role, with authority extending to his role in developing and implementing the strategic plan, hiring personnel (section 604.3 of NYS Education law), identifying, and allocating resources (section 604.3), and directing the institution and its employees toward the goals of the strategic plan. Annual reports from President Hilton to the BoT demonstrate how elements of the strategic plan are being implemented and resources being allocated according to strategic plan priorities [cite example of Hilton BoT report-needed]. The President completes an annual self-evaluation in advance of the June annual BoT meeting to be shared with all the Trustees. Meetings take place with the Chair of the Board over the summer to review the self-assessment and to determine goals for the upcoming year. Those goals are shared at the September meeting and updates are given monthly on progress towards those goals.

The President meets weekly with the Executive Council (EC), consisting of the Senior VPs and VPs, to get guidance on strategic planning, operational priorities, tasks such as ensuring policy proposals align with OCC's mission and long-term objectives. EC members participate in professional development opportunities around diverse topics such as campus psychological safety, creative problem solving, and crisis communications (cite 3 handouts/notes). Administrative oversight is further enhanced by a monthly meeting of Expanded Executive Council (EEC), which consists of additional campus leaders, department managers, and deans. EEC serves primarily to share information, including updates on the MSCHE Self-Study, compliance reports, student success initiatives, etc. Members of EEC also participate in select professional development.

Members of the College administration have clearly defined reporting relationships (cite Org Charts) and the expertise, experience, and qualifications needed to perform their jobs (cite CVs for all EC members). Senior administration regularly engages with faculty and students to advance the College's goals and objectives through bodies like EEC and CLC, as well as through other venues like

informational presentations at Senate meetings, meetings with SGA and Council of Clubs, and participation on various committees (evidence = meeting minutes and agendas- need a couple specific examples). The most recent survey that was used for evaluating the administrative structure and determining future professional development needed to enhance the operation was the 2023 PACE survey (see Standard 2). Previous survey instruments included the SUNY Student Success Survey (S2_IPAR Surveys Website) and Sexual Violence Prevalence Campus Climate Survey Report (S7_SUNY SVP Reports OCC 2023). All supervisors and staff undergo yearly performance reviews (S7_PA Annual Evaluation Form).

All levels of OCC leadership have been conscious of improving communication and made concrete strides in this area (e.g. Dr. Hilton's monthly messages, the faculty Senate arranging the schedule so senators can have dedicated time to meet with constituents, etc.), but the need for communication comes up time and time again with employees and students. Part of this issue is related to trust. Do staff and faculty feel communications are truthful and transparent? Does the leadership feel its constituents are truly engaging with the content of the messaging? As trust between different campus groups is maintained and expanded, the communication concern should lessen (see Standard 2 for a discussion of the PACE campus climate survey). Additionally, more targeted forms of communication responding to the needs of specific groups might help with this concern. Strategies focused on increasing engagement with communications also need to be explored.

Assessment and Closing the Loop

Governance, leadership, and administration are assessed periodically, both internally and with the support and guidance of consultants, such as that provided through OCC's membership in Achieving the Dream (S7_5_ATD Letters.pdf [four documents). The President is formally assessed through the annual review process (can we cite a record of this or a BoT statement saying he is re-appointed?). CLC completes a formal self-assessment every two years but regularly surveys the campus community, which has resulted in changes to practice and policy, as when the governance chart update in March 2025 (cite January 30, 2025 and March 28, 2025 CLC newsletter and minutes (S7_5_CLC Survey Results; S7_5_CLC 2018 Survey Recommendations.pdf; S7_2_B_College Leadership Council Recommendations for 2023-26.pdf). An example of changes made as a result of the 2024 self-assessment is the development of standing committee "plans," similar to those in the Institutional Effectiveness plan, that make explicit the connection between the work of the committees and the Strategic Plan and provide charges for the upcoming academic year (S7_2_B_College Leadership Council Recommendations). The next CLC assessment is scheduled for the end of academic year 2025-2026. Assessment results are reported on at CLC as they come in, with a final recap at the May meeting.

A comprehensive assessment of the Senate was conducted by the then-Senate President in Spring 2020 using a rubric developed by the Faculty Council of Community Colleges, a SUNY-wide body (S7_5_Shared Governance Assessment 2020). In addition, she conducted surveys regarding representation and communication of the Senate, as well as awareness of curricular functions (a key governance responsibility). Based on the findings, several changes were made, including the formation of a Budget Committee, the expansion of electronic access to Senate information to all faculty, and the introduction of mid-semester all-faculty Town Hall meetings. The Senate voted in Fall 2025 to

completes a similar assessment every two years (the most recent one took place in Fall 2025) (cite senate minutes from sept. 8 I think).

The BoT also completes a self-assessment every two years (S7_2_B_Assessment Recommendations BOT 24-26 Campus Climate Survey FILE IS MISNAMED). Meeting agendas are developed with those recommendations in mind, and updates on how it is meeting the recommendations generated from their self-assessment are presented to the Board every January and June (S7_BoT Website; Assessment results 2024.pdf; Assessment Recommendations BOT 2024-26 final.pdf.). In recent years, however, the BoT has taken steps to improve transparency and engagement with the larger college community to foster trust and encourage broader participation in governance. Assessment activities, along with minutes and resolutions, are made public via the website. The Board of Trustees cycle of assessment allows for more transparency with the campus but also creates a sense of ownership for the trustees as they ensure they are meeting the assessment recommendations.

The many assessment processes described in this section, along with the numerous feedback channels described earlier in the Standard, are consistently used to improve governance, participation, and transparency for stakeholders. Notable examples of reflection and responsiveness on assessment included in this Standard are the faculty Senate making changes to allow for more faculty interaction, the extensive work done by various stakeholder groups in response to the PACE survey, and the direct impacts on College practice and policy exerted by the SGA through their numerous surveys.

Conclusion

OCC's organizational framework reflects a strong commitment to transparency, inclusivity, and accountability. Our systems of governance, shared governance, leadership, and administration are appropriately constituted, actively engaged, and committed to working together to respond to challenges and prepare for the future, all in support of our mission.

Current Strengths	1. Governance structures that are regularly assessed and allow for active and engaged collaboration.	C1, C5
Challenges/Opportunities for Growth and Exploration	None	

Self-Study Conclusion

Onondaga Community College (OCC) meets all Middle States Commission on Higher Educations Standards, Requirements of Affiliation, policies and procedures, and applicable regulatory obligations. OCC maintains a relevant Mission + Vision and Values serving as touchstones for the College community in fulfilling a Strategic Plan focusing on highest priorities, ethical decision making, transparent sharing of data, and routine assessment.

Using these touchstones, faculty designed and re-designed academic and workforce programs and delivery modalities to serve documented, local needs. Guided pathways implementation resulted in new organizational structures focused on individualized student advising, acceleration or elimination of developmental education, and coordination between faculty and staff of retention-focused strategies, including Register NOW, new student orientation, the Box of Books project, and Lazer Success (EAB Starfish). These research-supported strategies led to significant gains in student retention and graduation across all groups.

Both academic and administrative areas of the College have well-developed assessment practices resulting in changes to better serve students. Strategic planning and assessment guide resource planning and deployment, including institutional strategies to maintain reserves sufficient to withstand the considerable disruption occurring across higher education. The work of the College is implemented through well-functioning, shared governance processes that demonstrate resilience, adaptability, and a collaborative spirit when confronting new situations and working through differences.

Undoubtedly, the College will continue to be tested, but as this self-study demonstrates, OCC has invested in the capacity-building activities (professional development, policy review and redesign, development of enterprise-wide procedures for data sharing and analysis, external fund-raising) that will support OCC long into the future. OCC is proud of its work and will continue to serve the community by helping create and support new, developing opportunities in Central New York.