MISSION
To provide high quality, accessible and affordable educational opportunities and services — including university transfer, technical and lifelong learning programs — that promote individual development and improve the overall quality of life in a multicultural community.

VISION
Cuyahoga Community College will be recognized as an exemplary teaching and learning community that fosters service and student success. The College will be a valued resource and leader in academic quality, cultural enrichment, and economic development characterized by continuous improvement, innovation, and community responsiveness.

VALUES
To successfully fulfill its mission and vision, Cuyahoga Community College is consciously committed to diversity, integrity, academic excellence, and achievement of individual and institutional goals. We are dedicated to building trust, respect, and confidence among our colleagues, students, and the community.
For more than half a century, the mission of Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C) has been clear: to provide high-quality, accessible and affordable education. When I became Tri-C’s fourth president, I sought to build on the work of those who came before me to accomplish that mission for a new generation of our region’s future leaders.

Challenges that threaten America’s competitiveness on the national stage—and, closer to home, the dreams of thousands in Greater Cleveland—can seem daunting. Yet the talented faculty and staff of Tri-C have risen to the challenges.

A heightened spirit of collaboration, a comprehensive approach in and out of the classroom and, most importantly, a strengthened emphasis on the needs of our students have begun to bear fruit. The priorities I established on my arrival have been embraced by the College, growing organically as we tackle these challenges together with imagination and passion.

As a result, this strategic plan does not represent the outcome of an isolated visioning effort operating at the periphery of the College. Rather, it reflects the natural outgrowth of an entire institution refining our commitment to our students and our community.

The variety of initiatives and approaches underway at Tri-C align around six major strategic focus areas:

- student completion, driven not only by our mission but also by national imperatives and innovative changes in our state funding model
- the student experience, which demands a fresh look to meet the needs of today’s learners
- equity in outcomes, to ensure that everyone has a chance to succeed
- workforce impact, continuing to meet the demands of the local economy
- transparency, accountability & communication, recognizing the College’s responsibility to the public
- commitment, continuity & community outreach, ensuring that Tri-C will be ready to meet the needs of the region for years to come

These strategic focus areas affect every aspect of the institution, every department and office. We have already made great strides in our work together for the sake of our students and our community. By sharpening our focus, the path to success is clear.

Alex Johnson
President, Cuyahoga Community College
The urgent need to substantially increase the number of students graduating from community colleges is a national, state and local priority. Cuyahoga Community College will increase the three-year graduation rate for first-time, full-time entering fall students and increase the overall number of certificates and degrees granted annually.

Tri-C has maintained a commitment to student access since opening its doors in 1963. While strategic initiatives have changed over the last 50 years, our focus remains on students and their specific goals – to join the workforce, transfer to a four-year institution, or gain the knowledge desired for the next step in life’s journey. Over the past few years, Tri-C has developed a clear intention to further support students through to completion of a degree or certificate, and evidence indicates that this additional effort is paying off in significant ways.

In Ohio, less than one third of first-time associate degree-seeking students earn a college credential within three years. Ohio also lags behind the national average in freshman-to-sophomore retention rates (first-time, full-time undergraduates who return as either full-time or part-time students), ranking 44th out of 50 states. Tri-C’s freshman-to-sophomore retention rate currently stands at 49 percent, which is only slightly lower than the 53 percent retention rate for students at public two-year institutions nationwide.

In 2009, President Obama’s American Graduation Initiative (AGI) called for America to once again lead the world in college degree attainment by 2020. Affordable, open-enrollment community colleges play a critical role in meeting the goal of an additional five million community college graduates. With a steady increase over the past ten years and structured efforts in place, Tri-C is now on track to meet or exceed its share of the AGI goal, producing 13,000 additional graduates by 2020.
Progress

• Working closely with our K-12 partners to ensure that students are prepared for college coursework through test prep and bridge courses

• Utilizing innovative approaches, both in and out of the classroom, to ensure that students connect with the College, take responsibility for their own education, and have access to the tools they require to be retained from year to year

• Creating intentional support and engagement for our students to keep them on the most direct path to completion through efforts such as priority registration, GradFest, and proactively auditing and granting certificates and degrees

• Developing a robust communication plan and integrated case management approach to support students through to completion

Goals

• Develop a Strategic Enrollment Plan (SEP) to provide a comprehensive and coordinated College-wide roadmap for managing recruitment, enrollment, retention and completion efforts that support the Strategic Plan and improve outcomes for the College and its students

• Continue to utilize a case management approach to supporting and managing students based upon the student taxonomy categories of first year students, sophomores and upperclassmen to encourage retention and completion

• Maximize utilization of Degree Works technology to leverage the College’s ability to keep students on an academic plan, proactively audit student records and award credentials

• Continue to enhance and implement a robust array of completion initiatives to support students through to completion of a certificate or degree

Metrics

• Completion rates for gateway math and English courses

• Fall-to-spring and fall-to-fall retention rates

• Total degrees and certificates awarded

• IPEDS three-year graduation rate
National and local research demonstrates that decreasing time to completion while engaging students in the learning process is essential. The College will provide structured educational pathways and individualized support to track progress and reduce time to college completion for all students.

Community college systems were created more than half a century ago, designed for access and characterized by a right-to-fail approach – weeding out students who were not ready for college rather than working to ensure their success. In the current economy, most jobs require some type of post-secondary education, a trend which is expected to continue. The increased need for post-secondary credentials means that college education is an economic imperative for individuals and for society. As the College continues to identify changing student needs and existing barriers to completion, an effort to transform the student experience has emerged and is now underway, led by faculty and administration working together.

Tri-C is focused on improving student outcomes through an enhanced student experience. Launched in fall 2014, the College’s First Year Experience (FYE) program provides new and prospective students with structured onboarding activities. The One Door – Many Options for Success initiative is redesigning College systems and services to focus on students rather than processes. In addition, the College is reallocating resources, using technology to customize student messaging and access to information, and deploying staff to provide “just-in-time” interventions and support designed to keep students on track toward degree or certificate completion.
Progress
• Engaging students and seeking feedback on their experiences both in and out of the classroom through focus groups and national surveys such as the Community College Survey of Student Engagement and the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory
• Instituted mandatory sessions for all new students, including New Student Orientation, New Student Convocation, and a First Year Success Seminar course as part of their intentional FYE program, which also includes peer mentoring
• Launched the One Door – Many Options for Success initiative, which focuses on realigning relationships with students and external partners, revamping College systems to track individual progress toward completion for all students

Goals
• Create a clear transition into and through the College for all new students that includes connection to support services and an overview of all available options for success (credit and non-credit, certificates and degrees)
• Maximize attendance and student engagement at outreach events, providing an opportunity for students and community members to build valuable skills for success in the community and the workforce by aligning these activities with specific classroom instruction
• Leverage technology and College resources to create comprehensive electronic student records that track interactions with each individual student, enabling student-centered success teams to effectively address individual student needs and support certificate and degree completion
• Create a student experience designed to retain second year/sophomore students, progress them to upperclassman status and connect them with workforce opportunities and/or transfer options to complete four-year degrees upon graduation from Tri-C

Metrics
• Number of students reaching upperclassman status in two years
• Number of students with an academic plan in Degree Works
• Number of students registered for 15 or more credit hours
• Number of students with a faculty mentor, peer mentor, or care team assigned
Closing the achievement gap in student success outcomes requires an intentional focus on the re-allocation of resources to make higher education credentials attainable for all students, regardless of age, race or economic standing.

Tri-C is committed to the concept of equity - giving all students what they need to be successful. Achieving the Dream defines equity as “eliminating achievement gaps and significantly improving outcomes for all students, one learner at a time.” As an ATD Leader College, we must review our internal policies and practices to reduce inequities that can create barriers for some of our students.

The College maintains an open-access admission policy, enrolling students who may not otherwise have the opportunity to earn a postsecondary credential. Students with diverse needs and academic expectations present themselves to Tri-C in many ways—some are pursuing certificates or associate degrees to enter the workforce, while others are preparing to transfer to a four-year institution. Many are unemployed or under-employed and seeking to upgrade their workforce skills for career advancement or to qualify for new jobs.

The reality is this: Tri-C students may receive equal opportunities for education, but they do not all achieve the same level of success, particularly in degree attainment.

We recognize the differences among our students and continue to identify opportunities to be more purposeful with every student in our support of their success. Achievement gaps are evident at Tri-C in many of our outcomes and metrics, including completion of college-level math and English, retention, and graduation. In fact, notable differences in student success exist between races, age groups and genders. Eliminating these differences will require more than just interventions and support services—difficult conversations about equity and outcomes are essential to solidify our commitment to closing existing achievement gaps.

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA #3 – EQUITY IN OUTCOMES
Progress

- Shared information on achievement gaps among students of color with the College-wide community
- Began campus conversations on how to effectively address equity issues
- Launched the Black American Council and its many programs (e.g. Black Scholars Academy, Minority Male Leadership Academy, and Choices: Stepping Stones to Empower Women) to provide mentoring and student support toward success and completion
- The Hispanic Student Council continues to support Hispanic students through scholarships, mentoring and family programs

Goals

- Increase the number of economically disadvantaged students, students 25 years and older and students of color who complete college-level math and English within two years
- Increase the retention rates from fall to spring and fall to fall for economically disadvantaged students, students 25 years and older and students of color
- Increase number of economically disadvantaged students, students 25 years and older and students of color receiving higher education credentials

Metrics

- Completion rates for gateway math and English courses
- Fall-to-spring and fall-to-fall retention rates
- Total degrees and certificates awarded
- IPEDS three-year graduation rate
A skilled workforce is critical to the economic development and competitive vitality of Northeast Ohio. The College must increase its organizational capability and footprint to provide quality training, products and services for all citizens in the region by ensuring that its workforce training programs are closely aligned with high-demand, rapidly changing industry sectors.

Since the 1980s, research has shown that the United States has failed to keep up with the growing demand for postsecondary educated workers and is losing its competitive edge as a result. Although 2.3 million workers were enrolled in non-credit, job-related programs at the beginning of the 21st century, 65 percent of all jobs will require postsecondary education and training beyond high school by 2020. By that point, the United States could face a shortfall of 5 million postsecondary-credentialed workers.

The fastest-growing occupations, including healthcare and STEM fields, also demonstrate the highest demand for postsecondary education and training. Furthermore, the need for manufacturing skills is still strong. In the next decade, the northeast Ohio region will have nearly 50,000 job openings in manufacturing, many requiring additional technological expertise. As part of the national conversation, the 21st Century Commission on the Future of Community Colleges published *Empowering Community Colleges to Build the Nation’s Future*, which details the critical need for a targeted and collaborative effort to close these skill gaps. Community colleges must partner with industry to create coherent career pathways for students.
Progress

- Offering technical training that enables students to acquire jobs in the technical trades, manufacturing, healthcare and public safety industries
- Improving the proficiency of companies and individual employees throughout Northeast Ohio through unparalleled professional development training in business, customer service, health information technology, information technology, leadership, quality/Six Sigma and more
- Providing state-of-the-art facilities for business and corporate events both large and small, specializing in extraordinary service, leading-edge technology and award-winning catering services

Goals

- Retool organizational capability, focusing on six key industry sectors: advanced manufacturing, construction, healthcare, information technology, professional services and public safety
- Increase the number of students who earn degrees and industry credentials, focusing on career pathways and certificates of value that will strengthen outcomes and ensure students are prepared to actively engage in Northeast Ohio’s competitive work environment
- Reposition Tri-C’s workforce division as the Workforce, Community and Economic Development Division, establishing a renewed commitment to cultivating partnerships that will help the College deliver services in key workforce areas
- Establish Tri-C as a center for excellence and innovation in training and business development, both regionally and nationally

Metrics

- Enrollment in certificate programs, contract training and company-paid courses
- Demand-driven degrees and certificates awarded
- Grants secured
- Workforce programs on Tri-C campuses
Tri-C must hold itself accountable as an organization and remain transparent when communicating outcomes and achievements both internally and externally. By doing so, the College will promote good stewardship of resources and showcase student success.

Self-regarding organizations value transparency and accountability. These values are particularly important for Cuyahoga Community College, as an institution supported by taxpayer funds.

Public education in general, and community colleges in particular, have seen increased scrutiny of outcomes and achievements. Institutional accrediting bodies and national initiatives, including the Voluntary Framework for Accountability and Achieving the Dream, have encouraged colleges to track meaningful data on completion, equity and other student outcomes. Local history has underscored the importance of transparency by government and public institutions. Drawing from a model of accountability adopted by the Cleveland Clinic and other major corporations, Tri-C has taken significant steps under enhanced leadership structures to become more open to internal and external stakeholders regarding our performance as an institution.
**Progress**

- Involving faculty leadership in decision-making processes related to student success priorities
- Expanded and formalized internal communication College-wide and at the campus level
- Restructured the Integrated Communications Department to strengthen external communications, including a redesigned public website
- Complying fully with all applicable local, state and federal laws, including Title IX, the Cleary Act and state regulations on the availability of College policies and procedures
- Created a dashboard of student success outcomes, including metrics for each campus and all College-wide units

**Goals**

- Enhance internal and external transparency on progress in key strategic areas by providing access to success metric dashboards, sharing progress updates on student success and increasing efforts to share Tri-C’s achievements in the news media in order to build awareness of and support for the College
- Increase employee accountability through enhanced performance measurement and incentives as well as expanded employee surveys of institutional culture to track longitudinal improvements
- Continue to focus on process improvement through participation in the AQIP model for institutional accreditation and the accreditation of individual programs by their respective sanctioning bodies
- Expand the publication of national journal articles, presentations and other academic communication about innovations at the College by faculty members and administrators
- Build community engagement by increasing awareness, connections and engagement of community members at the College and of students, faculty and staff in the community

**Metrics**

- Usage of success metrics dashboards (i.e. site visits, unique users)
- In-person town hall meetings by college president at Tri-C locations
- Students, faculty, staff and community members involved in community engagement efforts
- Assessments of institutional culture in employee surveys
Northeast Ohio has depended on Tri-C for affordable and accessible educational opportunities for more than half a century. The College commits to maintaining its institutional mission, vision, culture and service in the face of social, economic and political change in order to remain accessible and affordable to the students and community who rely upon us.

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA #6 – COMMITMENT, CONTINUITY & COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Tri-C is the largest community college in the state of Ohio and is looked upon as a leader at both the state and national levels. The College can maintain its status as one of the most innovative and respected community colleges by serving our local communities in a consistent yet forward-thinking manner, giving individual students the support they need to achieve their educational goals. It is our duty to maintain the mission, vision and values that our institution was founded upon so that local communities will continue to prosper as a result of the high-quality education we are able to provide. Today, the College comprises four campuses and a wide variety of learning sites at area schools, community centers and other neighborhood locations. More than ever before, we are able to meet our current and potential students where they are—making a high-quality, affordable education available to every area resident.

Excellent financial stewardship, recognizable and consistent branding and messaging, and a reputation as a workplace that values its employees are all factors in the high level of trust that the public has shown in the College.
Progress

- Passed a 1.2 mill renewal levy in 2014 which included an increase of 0.9 mill to be applied toward student success initiatives in addition to continued accessibility and affordability
- Developed one of the most consistent and recognizable brands in Northeast Ohio and one of the strongest among community colleges in the nation
- Implemented the My Tri-C SMART tool, optimizing accuracy, clarity, timeliness and efficiency of financial reporting and operations throughout the College
- Created a new East Campus master plan and a five-year capital plan outlining priority projects College-wide

Goals

- Maintain public support through continued stewardship of the funding that the community provides, which accounts for more than 50 percent of our yearly operating budget
- Continue to promote the Tri-C brand in local, state and national arenas while maintaining consistency in design and content
- Increase student success and completion rates by increasing the percentage of students completing the FAFSA, thereby removing financial barriers that may impact student enrollment and retention
- Create new/updated master plans for the Metropolitan, Western and Westshore campuses that promote growth while encouraging sustainable space utilization practices

Metrics

- External perception of Tri-C quality
- Student textbook savings
- Student loan default rate by cohort and amount borrowed by students annually
- Overall bond rating and individual financial ratios