# SUCCESS FOR ALL THE NECC STRATEGIC PLANNER



2022-2027

## WELCOME TO THE NECC STRATEGIC PLANNER

This planner is your interactive guide to **Success for All at NECC: Strategic Plan 2022-2027**. This planner is a tool to assist you during the entirety of this strategic plan as it is a living and iterative document meant to be accessed by, and inclusive of, everyone at the college.

Have fun, write notes, doodle, collaborate, be strategic, and let's achieve our goals together. The success of our strategic plan doesn't lie with a committee or any one department, it's what we all do as a collective.

NAME

TITLE

DEPARTMENT



Scan the QR Code to get help on how to use the Strategic Planner



## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Executive Summary	3
Build/Year 1	.19
Year 2	.41
Year 3	.53
Year 4	.65
Year 5	.77
Tools and Information	.89

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	• • • • •
• • • •	

# **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Northern Essex Community College (NECC) is, at its core, an open-door institution. We are deeply committed to ensuring that every student, regardless of background, has access to an equitable, affordable, and exceptional academic experience at every step of their journey with us.

Striving toward equity and accessibility is not only key to our mission; it is also critical to the livelihood of our institution. NECC serves one of the lowest-income student populations of all 106 colleges and universities in the Commonwealth. It also maintains a long-standing status as a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), having been the first college in New England to receive this federal designation. These qualities combined make equity imperative to every facet of our work. We are committed to eliminating equity gaps, and dismantling the structures that inhibit success. Our latest strategic plan, *Success for All at NECC*, reflects our devotion to this value.

### Striving toward equity and accessibility is not only key to our mission; it is also critical to the livelihood of our institution

Threaded throughout this plan is the vision behind the Integrated Student Experience (an NECC initiative which ensures an integrated, structured, and inclusive student experience at every level), along with the ongoing initiatives launched through our Strategic Plan 2020, such as the continued prioritization of our campus' financial health, safety of students and employees, and continuous improvement practices.

In addition, Northern Essex Community College thrives as part of a statewide system of higher education that includes vital community college and university partners. We have played an important role in the creation and leadership of the statewide SUCCESS (Supporting Urgent Community College Equity through Student Services) initiative, which is entirely aimed at closing equity gaps, particularly for low-income students and students of color. Regionally, NECC is an active member of the Northeast Consortium of Colleges and Universities in Massachusetts (NECCUM), a collective of eleven public and private institutions of higher education; and helped create the recently formed Northeast Regional Collaborative, a cooperative effort among NECC, Middlesex Community College, North Shore Community College and Salem State University. Both groups regularly work together toward closing equity gaps, improving student success, and ensuring the most efficient operations of our colleges.

We have played an important role in the creation and leadership of the statewide SUCCESS initiative, which is entirely aimed at closing equity gaps, particularly for low-income students and students of color.

NECC is also deeply interwoven with PK-12 school districts in our region, where we are now home to three state-designated Early College partnerships (with Haverhill High School, Lawrence High School, and Whittier Regional Technical High School), and one of the largest enrollments of Early College students in the state.

The goals outlined here will, alongside our college, regional, and statewide partners, inspire accomplishments that significantly improve the environment and success outcomes of our community. We are proud to outline, in the following pages, the goals, metrics and strategies that have been developed by our entire college community.

# MISSION

At NECC, our mission is to educate and inspire our students to succeed. We provide a welcoming environment focused on teaching and learning—strongly committed to unlocking the potential within each student and empowering our diverse community of learners to meet their individual goals. We are a community college dedicated to creating vibrant and innovative opportunities that encourage excellence and enhance the cultural and economic life of our region.

# VISION

To create a supportive learning environment of cultural inclusion that embraces all identities and inspires initiative and excellence.

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**STUDENT ENGAGEMENT:** We are committed to fully engaging our students as active learners by providing a diverse range of educational experiences.

**COLLABORATION:** We are committed to developing productive, collaborative relationships within the college and among our various constituencies in the greater Merrimack Valley.

**PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL GROWTH:** We are committed to the personal and professional growth of faculty, staff, and students alike. We believe that lifelong learning is essential to the personal enrichment and professional growth of each individual.

**RESPECT:** We are committed to fostering mutual respect that enables faculty, staff, and students to grow and work together in a supportive environment of shared governance, open communication, and fairness.

**CULTURE OF INCLUSION:** Northern Essex Community College strives to be a model of diversity and inclusion; the campus community reflects the layers of cultural and self-identity that proudly make up our region, nation, and world. We respect, value, and celebrate the strengths, characteristics, and perspectives of all and promote an inclusive environment that leverages the unique contributions of each individual, group, and organization into all aspects of our work.

**ACCESS AND OPPORTUNITY:** We are committed to providing affordable access to educational opportunity.

**EXCELLENCE:** We are committed to a high standard of educational excellence in teaching and learning. Nothing less than the best will do for and from our students and ourselves.

STATEMENT OF JUSTICE, EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION Northern

Essex Community College (NECC) is a positive and supportive learning environment of cultural inclusion, which challenges prejudice, celebrates differences, embraces all identities, and inspires all students, staff, and faculty to succeed. As a Hispanic Serving Institution, we place particular emphasis on closing racial equity gaps and ensuring the success of Hispanic members of our college and community.

This ongoing work is foundational and at the core of the strategic plan. Our Strategic Plan seeks to remove structural barriers, and create a more equitable, more diverse, and inclusive college that reflects the cultures and identities of the people who are part of the NECC community.

#### JUSTICE, EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION (JEDI) PRINCIPLES NECC

uses the following definitions to guide our understanding and intentions for our equity work.

- JUSTICE recognizing and eliminating structural racism in higher education policies, practices, and expectations for students, faculty, and staff
- EQUITY providing all individuals and groups with the support, resources, and contexts of learning they need to reach their educational and professional goals; equity differs from equality and fairness because equity begins with the understanding that different people have different needs for success
- DIVERSITY intentionally including people who represent different identity groups in our college community; an asset-based perspective that seeks first to recognize the contribution that each different perspective brings to our campus spaces
- INCLUSION ensuring that all members of our college community have access to resources, spaces for participation, and feel a strong sense of belonging

STATEMENT

**STRATEGIC THEMES** We understand these themes to be infused in all 5 of NECC's Strategic Goals.

- Identifying and working to eliminate barriers faced by students, faculty, and staff through intentional actions / initiatives
- Recognizing the value that diversity within our students, faculty, and staff brings to the college
- Identifying the core causes of gaps in equity for students, faculty, and staff then addressing them within our sphere of influence
- Increasing the diversity of our faculty and staff to better reflect the communities we serve
- Implementing successful retention strategies to retain students, faculty, and staff
- Increasing capacity for impactful / intentional JEDI work through professional development and shared experiences

### **TIMELINE AND PLANNING PROCESS**

*Success for All at NECC* was developed through Appreciative Inquiry (AI), a broadly engaging approach to positive change that explores our strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and desired results as a means for determining what we will best achieve for our students and the communities we serve.

The AI process progresses through phases, beginning with "Discovery" (identifying an affirmative topic and engaging as many people as possible in exploring it through an inquiry process); then "Dream" (creatively imagining together what is possible); "Design" (creating specific strategies for evolving into the shared "dream" or vision); and, finally, "Destiny," (implementing the goals and strategies that have been co-created).



### DISCOVERY

The planning process commenced in the spring of 2021 when NECC's All-College Assembly Executive Committee, a representative group of college faculty and staff, met with President Lane Glenn and approved the overall design of the planning process.

During the summer of 2021, the college engaged Cockell McArthur-Blair Consulting, globally known for their AI work with higher education institutions, to work with us, and they helped NECC form a Strategic Planning Core Team which began establishing working groups, reviewing the college's recently completed and approved NECHE 10-year comprehensive evaluation, and outlining tasks, timelines, and events.

The NECHE comprehensive evaluation was foundational to the strategic plan. Among key points in the NECHE evaluation, were the need to strengthen the college's overall assessment and evaluation procedures and to place additional focus on the diversification of representative boards. The committee also considered NECC's strengths highlighted in the NECHE evaluation for continued prioritization, such as our professional development standards and culture of innovation and resilience.

In August of 2021, the Strategic Planning Core Team met with DHE Commissioner Carlos Santiago and Senior Associate Commissioner for Strategic Planning and Public Program Approval Winnie Hagen for "Touch Point 1" to discuss our planning process and the integration of statewide goals, particularly the Equity Agenda.

The strategic planning process was officially announced and launched during the college's September 2021 Convocation, at which time hundreds of members of the campus community were invited to participate in Al exercises using prompts provided by our strategic plan facilitators. This provided an opportunity for common themes to emerge that would later guide our interview and discussion phase.

#### DREAM

Throughout September, the strategic planning committee engaged in formal discussions with both external and internal audiences, interviewing subgroups to analyze themes and discover and design metrics that will positively shape the future of the college. The results of these diverse and inclusive interviews in turn defined the parameters for the next phase of the process: the Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results (SOAR) forums, which narrowed the college's key strategic goals.

McArthur-Blair and Cockell (2018) describe SOAR as "a process that engages people in questions to identify their strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and results in order to build a plan for the future. SOARing into their future energizes people. In resilience work, a focus on strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and results can increase hope and assist leaders in identifying a path forward."

The SOAR forums provided an important opportunity for college community members to attend open discussions, in which a volunteer moderator presented one of the core themes that had emerged from the AI interviews and provide attendees with open-ended questions on the themes to brainstorm the strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and results that applied to each. The responses from these forums, provided in detail in the Appendix, were then curated into recommendations by the core team and Office of Institutional Effectiveness.

Through the creation of the Core Group, and the invitations proactively shared to engage in the subgroups and subsequent SOAR Forums, we sought input from a cross-section of the college including representatives of varying academic disciplines, roles (both in terms of seniority and type of position), races, ethnicities, religions, nationalities, gender identities, sexual orientations, age, disabilities, and more.

### DESIGN

In November and December of 2021, the recommendations from the SOAR forums (included in the Appendix) were turned over to the writing team, which drafted the final strategic goals and focus areas into an outline of the strategic plan. With support and feedback from the All-College Assembly Executive Committee, the Leadership Cabinet, and the core team, the document was broadened into a cohesive narrative and distributed to the college community for final feedback and approval in January 2022.

NECC's Board of Trustees, whose members had been receiving monthly updates on the planning process, discussed and approved the draft strategic plan on February 2, 2022.

In the Spring of 2022, a series of initiatives, metrics, and implementation plans were also developed that would support each one of the goals and ensure their smooth transition into achievable action plans at the division, department, and individual levels.

As we considered our metrics and target goals for the next five years, we reflected on data from the last five years, analyzing trends from pre-, during, and post COVID-19 periods. We also consulted external data from myriad sources regarding local, regional, and national trends. While we recognized that some of our student success metrics have trended down in the last two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we set bold targets for our metrics. Rather than limiting them to conservative estimates based on the impacts of COVID-19, we confidently set our metric goals to be improvements upon our pre-COVID data.

During the summer of 2022, the final draft of **Success for All at NECC** was shared with Commissioner Santiago and Senior Associate Commissioner Hagen as part of Touch Point II, to ensure alignment with the statewide equity agenda and the BHE's strategy for public higher education in Massachusetts.

Additionally, the draft plan was shared with consultants from EAB, the national education strategy advising group, for their feedback on how well NECC's planned goals, strategies and metrics align with current trends and best practices in higher education strategic planning.

#### DESTINY

While the year NECC has spent on the strategic planning process itself, broadly engaging our campus community and other stakeholders in "Discovery" and in "Dreaming" and "Designing" has been vital to the creation of **Success for All at NECC**, the most important work still lies ahead of us, in the "Destiny" phase of our Al and planning process, as we turn our goals and strategies into action and accomplishment.

During the "Destiny" phase, which begins in the fall of 2022 and extends for the next five years, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness will first develop a landing page on the NECCi website that will serve as a living resource for all strategic planning related activities. Any member, internal or external, of the NECC community will be able to visit this website to access the final version of **Success for All at NECC** and interact with internal and external (PMRS) dashboards that illustrate the college's progress on the strategic planning metrics.

Collegewide strategy implementation teams will be formed, and divisions, departments, and individuals will use the **Success for All at NECC** framework, and the tools of Appreciative Inquiry, to create their own operational plans that roll up to the strategic goals and metrics. Our final strategic plan is built with the understanding that our planned "Destiny" will be successful only as it is shared, chronicled, implemented, and measured at the division, department, and individual level. This cyclical and reflective process empowers NECC to stay innovative, agile and responsive to our students' needs and to our constantly-changing environment.

Five goals form the foundation of *Success for All at NECC:* Community Impact, Academic Innovation, Assessment and Informed Improvement, Student Support, and Employee Excellence.

At the center of each of these goals is the commitment to equity, as the drive for equity stands at the core of every action, every initiative, and every change we make at NECC. In partnership with our peer community colleges, the public four-year institutions in Massachusetts, and our PK-12 partners, we reaffirm the urgency of the Board of Higher Education's Equity Goals, and strive to accomplish those through the five goals articulated in this plan.

At the center of each of these goals is the commitment to equity, as the drive for equity stands at the core of every action, every initiative, and every change we make at NECC.

First, the Community Impact goal provides insight into how we will effectively partner on initiatives that close equity gaps and strengthen economic vitality.

Through the Student Support and Academic Innovation goals, we detail the ways in which we will continue to invigorate our campus' innovative spirit and examine and eradicate the barriers that stand in the way of college success, with a particular focus on closing equity gaps within our institution and community wide.

Meanwhile, through Assessment and Informed Improvement, we will strengthen our evaluation procedures based on quantitative and qualitative research and perform consistent cultural assessments, disaggregating our analysis through an equity lens. Finally, our commitment to Employee Excellence will emphasize the needs of our employees and will commit to and be accountable for NECC's Core Values of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Through all of these, we will strategically and effectively set up the college to build a solid foundation for all students' long-term success.

We are confident that, looking across the next five years, stakeholders at every level of the institution will use this plan to align their work with the college's vision for the future, looking closely at metrics to keep on track with strategic goals.

### At the center of each of these goals is the commitment to equity, as the drive for equity stands at the core of every action, every initiative, and every change we make at NECC.

Assessment and planning tools will ensure clear implementation timelines and expectations at both the department and individual level, allowing everyone in our campus community to see themselves within the plan.

We present this strategic plan as a blueprint for what is possible over the next five years as we build on our strengths and successes. Through the implementation of these strategies, we will together secure a more just, equitable, and accessible experience for our students and community.

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**BUILD/ YEAR 1** 2022-23

**GOAL** WORKBOOK

## GOAL COMMUNITY IMPACT

## Build upon partnerships with community and industry to address pressing societal and workforce needs.

NECC holds a unique position within the local community as an academic institution and professional training ground. We partner on initiatives that close equity gaps and strengthen the economic vitality and social wellbeing of the Merrimack Valley region.

### **STRATEGIES**

## 1. Complete development of the Center for Equity and Social Justice (CESJ) that leverages partnership with community organizations in the Merrimack Valley.

By partnering with community stakeholders, the NECC CESJ will become a force that drives change in the college's service areas. For greatest impact, the college will use an analytical approach when prioritizing initiatives that address well-documented needs. For greatest impact, the college will use an analytical approach when prioritizing initiatives that address well-documented needs. While the full range of the CESJ's goals and initiatives are still being developed, some of the priorities already identified for its inaugural year include a significant expansion of ESOL offerings in Lawrence to eliminate community waiting lists and the expansion of credential validating services to immigrant residents to increase degree attainment in Lawrence and Haverhill.

## 2. Develop new degree programs and expand course offerings, ensure that they align with workforce demand, student interest, and community needs.

Creating additional, sustainable programs will ensure the college's fiscal health and long-term value to the community. Explore opportunities for non-credit to credit pathways. Align programmatic offerings with Northeast Labor Blueprint and similar studies. Continue to invest in college transfer partnerships, workforce development, with a focus on equity such as the Northeast Regional Collaboration. Support the ongoing change and equity work accomplished by the statewide SUCCESS program and facilitate improvements with systemwide community college collaboration.

- 3. Quantify the impact NECC has on the local community to continuously assess the fulfillment of our mission.
- 4. Review, revise, and create new policies that reduce the barriers to entry for community members to begin their academic or skills training path based on their life experience.

### **METRICS**

- Increase the college degree attainment rate in Lawrence by 5 percentage points and in Haverhill by 2 percentage points.
- Based on forthcoming Employment and Wage metrics provided by the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education, determine targets for the following metrics within one Fiscal Year of availability.
  - Pre- vs. Post-Enrollment earnings.
  - Earnings of students who enroll immediately after high school.
  - Enrollment in high-value, non-credit workforce development.
- Reduce unemployment rates in our region to more closely align with state unemployment rates.
- Reduce waitlist for ESOL programs in city of Lawrence by 75 percentage points.
- Create baseline data set to measure Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) credit awards and, working with faculty and advisors, double the number of PLA credit attainment.
- Intentionally align academic offerings and programmatic enrollment targets to national and regional labor data.

## YEAR 1 2022-23 GOAL

## COMMUNITY IMPACT

Build upon partnerships with community and industry to address pressing societal and workforce needs.

**INITIATIVES** (What are you doing to accomplish this goal?)

**PARTNERS** (Who can help you accomplish this goal?)

**BUDGET** (Will this require funding? If so, how much?)

### NOTES

## TO DO LIST

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## GOAL ACADEMIC INNOVATION

Maximize Northern Essex Community College's innovative spirit to create equitable teaching and learning experiences to increase student success.

NECC proactively addresses the needs of students, and a key part of this process is academic innovation. This spirit is evident in the many firsts this college has accomplished, such as offering Competency Based Education, launching one of the largest police academies in the state, and hosting an International Virtual Exchange.

#### **STRATEGIES**

## 1. Use data to inform strategic initiatives aimed at increasing equity and closing racial equity gaps on student success metrics.

Through ongoing commitment to scalable best practices in all disciplines (such as our Academic Centers, First Year Seminar (FYS), SOAR, Student Ambassadors, and Faculty Equity dashboards) we will better engage students and improve their success.

## 2. Integrate the foundational justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion principles appropriately into instruction, course design, and academic program development.

In allowing the flexibility to innovate and prioritize these principles in the classroom, we can ensure academic content is accessible and approachable by the largest number of students. Review all academic policies and processes to ensure alignment with equity goals.

3. Develop new degree programs and expand course offerings, ensure that they align with workforce demand, student interest, and community needs.

Creating additional, sustainable programs will ensure the college's fiscal health and long-term value to the community. Explore opportunities for non-credit to credit pathways. Align programmatic offerings with Northeast Labor Blueprint and similar studies, with particular attention to ensuring access to regional high-skill, high-demand, high-wage jobs for students of color.

- 4. Expand Competency Based Education program options as well as instructional delivery options (including shorter, 7.5 week section offerings) by 50% to enhance course-taking, to improve equitable access to education, meet student demand, and provide quicker degree completion for highly motivated students.
- 5. Develop internship/experiential learning courses for every major at the college in programs where they currently do not exist to encourage an Earn-to-Learn and Learn-to-Earn mindset.
- 6. Institutionalize funding for the International Virtual Exchange program into the annual operating budget of the Office of the Provost to expand multicultural student learning experiences.
- 7. Develop and launch a robust Honors Program on both campuses that meets and exceeds the standards for the Commonwealth Honors Program.

### **METRICS**

- Increase Six-Year Comprehensive Student Success Rate to 67%.
- Eliminate the equity gap between Hispanic and white students, with an emphasis on closing the gap in online courses, particularly for male students.
- Increase Successful Course Completion Rate (SCCR) to 74%.

## YEAR 1 2022-23 GOAL

## ACADEMIC INNOVATION

Maximize Northern Essex Community College's innovative spirit to create equitable teaching and learning experiences to increase student success.

**INITIATIVES** (What are you doing to accomplish this goal?)

**PARTNERS** (Who can help you accomplish this goal?)

**BUDGET** (Will this require funding? If so, how much?)

### NOTES

## TO DO LIST


## GOAL ASSESSMENT AND INFORMED IMPROVEMENT

Develop and implement an iterative approach to assessment that fosters a campus-wide culture of ongoing improvement based on data.

NECC is committed to improvement based on quantitative and qualitative data and to the use of assessment and evaluation to understand the impact of improvement initiatives. We will continue to develop a culture of assessment and better codify the ways in which assessment of student and institutional outcomes will be used for equity and continued improvement.

### **STRATEGIES**

1. Develop a framework that enables consistent assessment of work/ programs that leads to implementation of change. Include a shared language for assessment at all levels of the college.

To be most effective, assessment work needs to be done consistently across the college, with common terms and purpose, to "close the loop" and inform future work. Time, space, and support needs to be allowed to uncomplicate any systems for clear assessment. All assessment should be disaggregated through an equity lens for greatest impact.

#### 2. Establish a system by which each department and individual create an operation plan with initiatives that roll up to the overarching strategic plan and strategies with measurable outcomes.

With these department and individual plans, create a process to ensure all plans and initiatives have a clear timeline, appropriate resources, and final reporting metrics in place that highlights equitable outcomes before implementation. A commitment to assessment requires financial resources for building capacity, and a clear plan for use of assessment.

## 3. Improve professional development for faculty and staff about assessment and its role in improving teaching and learning.

A commitment by faculty and staff requires knowledge and appreciation of the role assessment plays in improving equitable student outcomes and informing academic decisions.

## 4. Develop shared learning outcomes using current, equity-minded learning models to close achievement gaps.

Integrating shared learning outcomes at the classroom and institutional level will positively impact racially minoritized students.

### **METRICS**

- Create baseline dataset to measure faculty and staff participation in assessmentrelated activities including:
  - Count of Departments / Divisions with annual documented assessment plans
  - Participation in professional development
  - Participation in Assessment Day
  - Count of completed program reviews
  - Participation in non-academic areas of the college in self-evaluation and assessment activities
- Once baseline dataset is created, determine target increases for each metric within one Fiscal Year.

## YEAR 1 2022-23 GOAL

# ASSESSMENT & INFORMED IMPROVEMENT

Develop and implement an iterative approach to assessment that fosters a campus-wide culture of ongoing improvement based on data.

**INITIATIVES** (What are you doing to accomplish this goal?)

PARTNERS (Who can help you accomplish this goal?)

**BUDGET** (Will this require funding? If so, how much?)

### NOTES

## TO DO LIST

## **GOAL** STUDENT SUPPORT

# Improve student support services through a holistic approach that removes barriers to enrollment and achievement.

NECC will examine barriers to equity, college entry and success. The Integrated Student Experience (ISE) sets a foundation on which we will build, focusing on the entirety of the student when on and off campus to ensure equitable outcomes.

### **STRATEGIES**

1. Enhance connections and services between the academic centers and other support areas and increase student use of support services.

Created from the ISE, the academic centers are designed to enhance a sense of belonging for many students.

2. Enhance outreach to students about available college services and resources.

To improve success, students need to have clear direction when navigating the varied college departments and services.

3. Leverage available data to identify and understand enrollment patterns and demographic characteristics of students not entering, persisting, or completing our college programs, especially through an equity lens. 4. Continue to expand and refine targeted student support, outreach, and interventions through our ISE, SOAR, PACE, and Student Ambassador programs.

We will improve coordination across our many support systems to provide a streamlined experience for our students.

#### 5. Reduce barriers to success for students enrolling in online courses by providing intentional advisement, robust support, and additional faculty distance education training.

Emphasis will be placed on making sure students, particularly Hispanic students, have the necessary support to succeed in online courses.

### **METRICS**

- Increase Six-Year Comprehensive Student Success Rate to 67%.
- Eliminate the equity gap between Hispanic and white students.
- ▶ Increase Successful Course Completion Rate (SCCR) to 74%.
- Increase student retention rates from semester to semester by 5%.
- Determine a baseline optimum new enrollment goal based upon a realistic funding model and community statistics and increase it annually at a rate of 1%.
- Formally compile Sense of Belonging Dataset to analyze relationship between sense of belonging, student engagement, and student outcomes within one fiscal year. Determine targets after analysis has been conducted to close gaps wherever they exist.

## YEAR 1 2022-23 GOAL

## STUDENT SUPPORT

*Improve student support services through a holistic approach that removes barriers to enrollment and achievement.* 

**INITIATIVES** (What are you doing to accomplish this goal?)

**PARTNERS** (Who can help you accomplish this goal?)

**BUDGET** (Will this require funding? If so, how much?)

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### GOAL EMPLOYEE EXCELLENCE

#### Strengthen the employee sense of belonging and

#### opportunities for professional growth.

At the heart of NECC's commitment to student success is a workforce that represents a diversity of culture, experience, and expertise. The college will emphasize the needs of its employees, and together the faculty and staff must commit to – and be accountable for – NECC's Core Values to support the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

#### **STRATEGIES**

1. Grow the percentage of employees, volunteers, and trustees of color to better reflect the student population and communities we serve.

Representation matters and it is important for our students to make connections with employees and community members that share similar backgrounds.

#### 2. Assess and increase the sense of belonging among employees and unity between campuses.

By emphasizing NECC as one college with co-equal campuses, we will create a culture that is inclusive and accepting.

#### 3. Expand onboarding, professional learning, and development programs for all employees across all departments.

Employee excellence and retention is achieved and maintained through robust professional development and learning, and maximum gain is realized when programming is done consistently for new and existing employees.

#### 4. Implement comprehensive, ongoing management training based on NECC Leadership Capabilities Model.

#### **METRICS**

- Increase employee and volunteer diversity to more closely reflect the student population and communities we serve.
- Stay within the national average of employee turnover and retention rates +/-2%.
- Launch Employee Engagement Survey to create baseline metrics upon which to act.
- Develop streamlined, comprehensive onboarding and training process by Fiscal Year 24 with the goal of 100% new employee participation.

### YEAR 1 2022-23 GOAL

### EMPLOYEE EXCELLENCE

Strengthen the employee sense of belonging and opportunities for professional growth.

#### **INITIATIVES** (What are you doing to accomplish this goal?)

**PARTNERS** (Who can help you accomplish this goal?)

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# **YEAR 2** 2023-24

**GOAL** WORKBOOK

### **YEAR 2** 2023-24 **GOAL**

### COMMUNITY IMPACT

Build upon partnerships with community and industry to address pressing societal and workforce needs.

#### **INITIATIVES** (What are you doing to accomplish this goal?)



*Is my team consistent in supporting the college's efforts to achieve all five of our strategic goals?* 

#### **PARTNERS** (Who can help you accomplish this goal?)

### **YEAR 2** 2023-24 **GOAL**

### ACADEMIC INNOVATION

Maximize Northern Essex Community College's innovative spirit to create equitable teaching and learning experiences to increase student success.

#### **INITIATIVES** (What are you doing to accomplish this goal?)

PARTNERS (Who can help you accomplish this goal?)



How can I redirect current resources to more closely align with initiatives that support NECC's strategic goals?

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### **YEAR 2** 2023-24 **GOAL**

# ASSESSMENT & INFORMED IMPROVEMENT

Develop and implement an iterative approach to assessment that fosters a campus-wide culture of ongoing improvement based on data.

**INITIATIVES** (What are you doing to accomplish this goal?)

PARTNERS (Who can help you accomplish this goal?)

### **TO DO** LIST



How am I going to measure my team's progress towards our goals?

### **YEAR 2** 2023-24 **GOAL**

### STUDENT SUPPORT

*Improve student support services through a holistic approach that removes barriers to enrollment and achievement.* 

#### **INITIATIVES** (What are you doing to accomplish this goal?)

**PARTNERS** (Who can help you accomplish this goal?)

**BUDGET** (Will this require funding? If so, how much?)



Based on my current reality, what can I operationalize right now?

### **YEAR 2** 2023-24 **GOAL**

### EMPLOYEE EXCELLENCE

Strengthen the employee sense of belonging and opportunities for professional growth.

#### **INITIATIVES** (What are you doing to accomplish this goal?)

**PARTNERS** (Who can help you accomplish this goal?)



What obstacles might I face in working towards this goal? How can I prepare for them?

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# **YEAR 3** 2024-25

**GOAL** WORKBOOK

### **YEAR 3** 2024-25 **GOAL**

### COMMUNITY IMPACT

Build upon partnerships with community and industry to address pressing societal and workforce needs.

#### **INITIATIVES** (What are you doing to accomplish this goal?)

#### SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

Remember, there are many ways to show progress towards a goal – not all of them are quantitative! Use the measures and milestones section of the Rubric to map out the different ways you will track your progress.

**PARTNERS** (Who can help you accomplish this goal?)

### **YEAR 3** 2024-25 **GOAL**

### ACADEMIC INNOVATION

Maximize Northern Essex Community College's innovative spirit to create equitable teaching and learning experiences to increase student success.

#### **INITIATIVES** (What are you doing to accomplish this goal?)

**PARTNERS** (Who can help you accomplish this goal?)

**BUDGET** (Will this require funding? If so, how much?)



What additional knowledge or skills do I need to make this change?

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### **YEAR 3** 2024-25 **GOAL**

### ASSESSMENT & INFORMED IMPROVEMENT

Develop and implement an iterative approach to assessment that fosters a campus-wide culture of ongoing improvement based on data.

**INITIATIVES** (What are you doing to accomplish this goal?)

PARTNERS (Who can help you accomplish this goal?)

### **TO DO** LIST



Have I reviewed the Equity-minded decision-making guide recently?

### **YEAR 3** 2024-25 **GOAL**

### STUDENT SUPPORT

*Improve student support services through a holistic approach that removes barriers to enrollment and achievement.* 

#### **INITIATIVES** (What are you doing to accomplish this goal?)

#### PARTNERS (Who can help you accomplish this goal?)



Are there professional development opportunities I should consider for me or my team?


### **YEAR 3** 2024-25 **GOAL**

### EMPLOYEE EXCELLENCE

Strengthen the employee sense of belonging and opportunities for professional growth.

#### **INITIATIVES** (What are you doing to accomplish this goal?)



How would prioritizing these 5 strategic goals affect our day-to-day work?

#### **PARTNERS** (Who can help you accomplish this goal?)

**YEAR 4** 2025-26

**GOAL** WORKBOOK

### YEAR 4 2025-26 GOAL

### COMMUNITY IMPACT

Build upon partnerships with community and industry to address pressing societal and workforce needs.

#### **INITIATIVES** (What are you doing to accomplish this goal?)

#### **PARTNERS** (Who can help you accomplish this goal?)

#### **SOMETHING** TO THINK ABOUT

Are there any projects or tasks that I am currently working on that I could adapt to more closely align with our strategic goals?

### **YEAR 4** 2025-26 **GOAL**

### ACADEMIC INNOVATION

Maximize Northern Essex Community College's innovative spirit to create equitable teaching and learning experiences to increase student success.

**INITIATIVES** (What are you doing to accomplish this goal?)

#### SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

Don't forget to set calendar reminders on a quarterly and annual basis to check in on your progress!

#### **PARTNERS** (Who can help you accomplish this goal?)

### **YEAR 4** 2025-26 **GOAL**

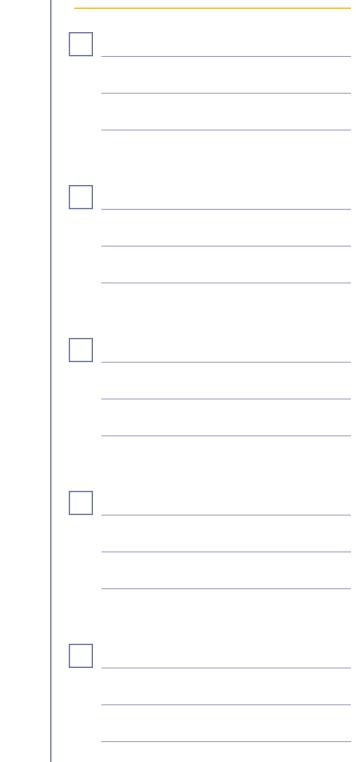
# ASSESSMENT & INFORMED IMPROVEMENT

Develop and implement an iterative approach to assessment that fosters a campus-wide culture of ongoing improvement based on data.

**INITIATIVES** (What are you doing to accomplish this goal?)

PARTNERS (Who can help you accomplish this goal?)

## **TO DO** LIST





Is my team consistent in supporting the college's efforts to achieve all five of our strategic goals?

## **YEAR 4** 2025-26 **GOAL**

## STUDENT SUPPORT

*Improve student support services through a holistic approach that removes barriers to enrollment and achievement.* 

#### **INITIATIVES** (What are you doing to accomplish this goal?)

#### **PARTNERS** (Who can help you accomplish this goal?)



How can I redirect current resources to more closely align with initiatives that support NECC's strategic goals?

**BUDGET** (Will this require funding? If so, how much?)


# YEAR 4 2025-26

## EMPLOYEE EXCELLENCE

Strengthen the employee sense of belonging and opportunities for professional growth.

#### **INITIATIVES** (What are you doing to accomplish this goal?)

**PARTNERS** (Who can help you accomplish this goal?)

**BUDGET** (Will this require funding? If so, how much?)



Based on my current reality, what can I operationalize right now?

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**YEAR 5** 2026-27

**GOAL** WORKBOOK

## **YEAR 5** 2026-27 **GOAL**

### COMMUNITY IMPACT

Build upon partnerships with community and industry to address pressing societal and workforce needs.

#### **INITIATIVES** (What are you doing to accomplish this goal?)



What do I need to think about to ensure we reach our goals?

#### **PARTNERS** (Who can help you accomplish this goal?)

**BUDGET** (Will this require funding? If so, how much?)

## **YEAR 5** 2026-27 **GOAL**

### ACADEMIC INNOVATION

Maximize Northern Essex Community College's innovative spirit to create equitable teaching and learning experiences to increase student success.

**INITIATIVES** (What are you doing to accomplish this goal?)

**PARTNERS** (Who can help you accomplish this goal?)

**BUDGET** (Will this require funding? If so, how much?)

## **TO DO** LIST



What were some of the highlights that you want to share about your area's work over the last five years?

# YEAR 5 2026-27

## ASSESSMENT & INFORMED IMPROVEMENT

Develop and implement an iterative approach to assessment that fosters a campus-wide culture of ongoing improvement based on data.

**INITIATIVES** (What are you doing to accomplish this goal?)

### PARTNERS (Who can help you accomplish this goal?)

### **SOMETHING** TO THINK ABOUT

Are there any projects or tasks that I am currently working on that I could adapt to more closely align with our strategic goals?

#### **BUDGET** (Will this require funding? If so, how much?)

## **YEAR 5** 2026-27 **GOAL**

## STUDENT SUPPORT

*Improve student support services through a holistic approach that removes barriers to enrollment and achievement.* 

#### **INITIATIVES** (What are you doing to accomplish this goal?)

#### **PARTNERS** (Who can help you accomplish this goal?)

**BUDGET** (Will this require funding? If so, how much?)



Have I reviewed the Equity-minded decision-making guide recently?

## **YEAR 5** 2026-27 **GOAL**

## EMPLOYEE EXCELLENCE

Strengthen the employee sense of belonging and opportunities for professional growth.

### **INITIATIVES** (What are you doing to accomplish this goal?)



As we approach the finish line of this strategic plan, are there any changes you think need to be prioritized to ensure we reach our strategic goals?

**PARTNERS** (Who can help you accomplish this goal?)

**BUDGET** (Will this require funding? If so, how much?)

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# TOOLS AND INFORMATION

As part of *Success for All: Strategic Plan 2022-2027*, NECC has committed to rooting all decisions, strategic priorities, policies, and practices in our guiding principles of Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. Please use this guide, based on a resource created by Achieving the Dream, to guide your decisions and ensure that you have considered them from an equity perspective before acting.

### **GUIDING QUESTIONS**

Based on our definitions of equity, we commit to using the following guiding questions as part of the decision-making process for all decisions related to institutional strategy, structure, resource allocation, policies, practices, and culture. This discussion should be embedded into the process at the exploration phase, where data and information are being collected, as well as in review of the final decision being made. This tool may be particularly useful when evaluating the following:

- Institutional policies and practices
- Programs that serve students and/or employees
- Communication mechanisms
- Resource allocation

#### Questions for identifying decisions that need to be revisited:

- What are the aspects of the student or employee experience that affect outcomes?
- What are the differential impacts of this aspect of the student and/ or employee experience on historically underserved individuals at our institution?
- What decisions/actions around this aspect of the student and/or employee experience may reinforce the status quo that leads to current inequities?

#### Questions for the exploration phase of decision making:

- How does the current reality differentially impact historically underserved students and/or employees at our institution? Consider their experiences, academic and career outcomes, social mobility, etc.
- ▶ Reflecting on the current reality around the topic we are deciding on:
  - Why was it designed that way?
  - What criteria led to the decision to go with this design?
  - What assumptions were/could have led to this decision?
  - Who was it designed for?
  - What are the defining characteristics and experiences of those individuals?
  - What differences exist between those who the current reality was designed for and those we serve today?
- What are the contextual factors affecting our students and/or employees that are relevant to the decision we are discussing? (Consider social/ societal biases, historical inequities and biases, power dynamics, and historical resource allocation).

- Consider how the following contribute to inequitable outcomes related to this decision:
  - Institutional policies and practices
  - Programs that serve students or employees
  - Communication mechanisms
  - Strategic goals/direction decisions
  - Resource allocation decisions

#### Questions for evaluation options and making the final decision:

- What alternative decisions/designs could produce different outcomes
- How will those options impact the experience and success of historically underserved students and/or employees at our institution?
- How will each decision impact the college's ability to achieve our definition of equity?
- Could there be any unintentional disparate impact along lines of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, class, ability, access, or power as a result of this decision? Consider both active and passive ways inequities could be perpetuated by this decision?
- If so, what steps could be taken or what needs to change to make sure this decision supports students and/or employees equitably? Might there be resources we can allocate differently?
- What forms of feedback or ways of holding individuals accountable can we build into our existing practices to make sure this decision stays equitable?

#### Questions for individuals participating in this process:

- How does my cultural perspective impact my understanding of the decision point and its potential impact on students?
- How does my role at the institution, and the power that comes with it, impact my understanding of the decision point and its potential impact on students?
- What assumptions am I making about our students and their experience?

#### Agreed Standards for entering decision-making discussions:

- > Enter the discussion with an open mind to others' contributions.
- Challenge ideas, not people, thoughtfully and with grace.
- Embrace and give constructive criticism and ask "why" to uncover the root concern.
- Listen with humility, knowing that one person does not have all the information to make the right decision alone.
- Try to make space and time for the discussion to occur in full.
- Build in time for reflection for those who need it.
- Establish and use mechanisms to get input from key stakeholders who will be affected by the decision.
- Understand that designing for equity is about intentional planning and practices at the college.





Race Forward's Racial Equity Impact Assessment



Center for Urban Education (CUE)'s Equity Minded Indicators

# 2022 —

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14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

#### **SEPTEMBER**

S	Μ	Т	W	Т	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

S	Μ	т	W	т	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

#### JANUARY

S	Μ	т	W	т	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

#### APRIL

S	М	т	w	т	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

#### JULY

S	Μ	т	W	т	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

#### **OCTOBER**

S	Μ	т	W	т	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

#### **FEBRUARY**

S	Μ	т	W	т	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28						

#### MAY

S	Μ	т	W	т	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

#### AUGUST

S	Μ	Т	W	Т	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

#### NOVEMBER

М	т	w	т	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6
8	9	10	11	12	13
15	16	17	18	19	20
22	23	24	25	26	27
29	30				
	1 8 15 22	1 2 8 9 15 16	1       2       3         8       9       10         15       16       17         22       23       24	1       2       3       4         8       9       10       11         15       16       17       18         22       23       24       25	M         T         W         T         F           1         2         3         4         5           8         9         10         11         12           15         16         17         18         19           22         23         24         25         26           29         30

### MARCH

S	Μ	Т	W	Т	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

#### JUNE

S	Μ	т	W	т	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

#### **SEPTEMBER**

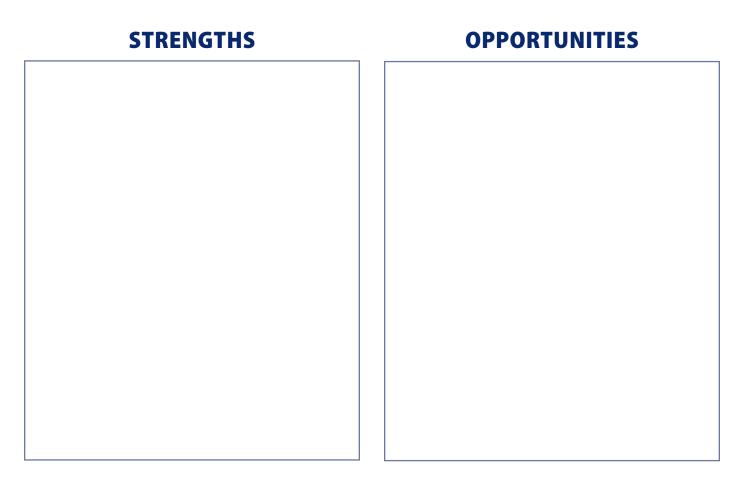
S	Μ	Т	W	Т	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

#### DECEMBER

S	Μ	Т	W	Т	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

99

Notes in preparation for the upcoming SOAR forums for Strategic Plan 2028-2032



### **ASPIRATIONS**

### RESULTS

