



# RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE

## Strategic Plan at a Glance Vision 2020



### VISION 2020 Goals

#### **DIVERSITY & INCLUSION (DI)**

To establish an inclusive campus culture focused on student success that respects the contributions of all campus stakeholders and builds capacity for understanding the nature and importance of diversity in all its forms across all institutional processes.

#### **CULTURE OF LEARNING (CL)**

Foster an environment that supports intellectual curiosity, growth, and collaboration as a comprehensive and ongoing learning process that occurs in courses, research, experiential activities and internships, student organizations, and in interactions with the community.

#### **COMMUNICATIONS (C)**

Develop and achieve proactive, comprehensive, and collaborative communications to foster a culture of transparent and respectful interaction that advances Rhode Island College as a student-centered, diverse, supportive, and high-quality public institution among its internal and external communities.

#### **FACILITIES (F)**

Optimize and maintain a physical and technological environment that supports teaching, learning, research, and student life, and is welcoming, aesthetically pleasing, sustainable, accessible, and effective for a diverse community of users.

#### **REVENUE & RESOURCES (RR)**

Stabilize existing revenue and resources, develop and implement more cost-effective and efficient usage of revenue and resources, and create and sustain a larger and more diverse set of revenue streams.

#### **IMPACT ON RHODE ISLAND (RI)**

Contribute to the economic development and quality of life – intellectual, social, and cultural – in the greater Providence area, the state of Rhode Island, and the region.

Strategic planning is a systematic approach for developing institutional focus and alignment. At Rhode Island College, planning represents an opportunity to strengthen our commitment to common goals and define institutional priorities every five years. A strategic plan guides both policy and practice at every turn. A plan provides large guiding principles so that stakeholders within and across divisions can then develop manageable action steps to realize these ideals in implementation.

In August of 2014, President Carriuolo convened a committee of 19 members – representative of faculty, staff, administration, students, and alumni from the Rhode Island College community – to embark on the process of reviewing, revising, and reworking the college's strategic plan.

Throughout the fall, the committee read extensively about the process of strategic planning, reviewed research on current trends in higher education, met with key experts in the field of labor and enrollment, and examined myriad reports on the state of the college and Rhode Island. We met with the President and her cabinet to understand administrative priorities for 2015-2020 and solicited further ideas from the RIC community via open meetings and an active email address. Then, with questions, comments and concerns from all parties in mind, we began the process of drafting the goals and objectives you see here.

This plan – Vision 2020 – is also informed by several key issues that will shape the content and context of Rhode Island College over the next five years. First, the composition of our student body is rapidly changing and diversifying. Our students increasingly identify as racial and ethnic minorities, as LGBT, as veterans, as students with disabilities, as students of all ages with work and family commitments. For example, of those who self-identify, nearly 40% of the incoming freshman class of 2014 identified as racial and ethnic minorities. This fact must shape the policies and practices in every element of our institution.

## DIVERSITY & INCLUSION (DI)

To establish an inclusive campus culture focused on student success that respects the contributions of all campus stakeholders and builds capacity for understanding the nature and importance of diversity in all its forms across all institutional processes.

**Rationale:** The formal and informal structures in place at Rhode Island College create the contexts within which students, faculty, and staff operate and through which they understand themselves and the institution. Creating an inclusive campus culture will mean altering these structures in fundamental ways. In the past several years, we have seen a dramatic shift in the demographics of our undergraduate student body, wherein almost 40% of the incoming freshman class of 2014 who self-identified race or ethnicity identified as members of minority groups. We are not serving the same students we were in 2010. Student success at RIC is predicated upon high-quality learning in tandem with effective delivery of services that provide all students with purposeful pathways through college and support student retention and graduation. This principle means acknowledging publicly and at all levels and in all areas of the institution that people have a diversity of backgrounds and needs. In order to reflect and support the changing demographics of our student body, we must intentionally infuse the principles of diversity and inclusion in infrastructure, institutional processes, and student experience. We must welcome personnel from a breadth of circumstances and backgrounds that inform and invigorate both teaching and learning. Inclusive excellence serves internal and external stakeholders, enriches the educational environment for the whole community, and sustains the high-quality education that is our mission.

DI-3. Increase workforce diversity among professional staff, faculty, and administration to ensure that all Rhode Island College students can make comfortable connections, and know that their varied backgrounds and circumstances are understood and valued.

DI-6. Increase course availability during nights and weekends to accommodate the needs of working students, student-parents, and others who require differing schedules.

## CULTURE OF LEARNING (CL)

Foster an environment that supports intellectual curiosity, growth, and collaboration as a comprehensive and ongoing learning process that occurs in courses, research, experiential activities and internships, student organizations, and in interactions with the community.

**Rationale:** As an institution, we have a responsibility to help our students develop the skills to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing society and economy. To be successful learners, citizens, workers, and leaders, Rhode Island College students will need to develop the habits of critical thinking, intellectual flexibility, cultural competency, and community engagement. Current educational best practices indicate that student success, retention, and graduation rates are correlated to student development and growth broadly conceived, encompassing more than only academic courses or grades. An excellent and meaningful learning environment, therefore, requires a commitment to enhancing diversity and inclusion in pedagogy, research, student life, and institutional practices. Rhode Island College will create a culture of learning that involves and supports its students, faculty, and staff in a dynamic and stimulating environment of learning, critical thinking, and inquiry.

CL-14. Involve students and faculty members in discussions about the policies and practices of student retention and success with the goal of improving student outcomes at Rhode Island College.

CL-22. Explore ways to manage staffing needs and resources more flexibly in order to respond to the changing needs of the institution.

## COMMUNICATIONS (C)

Develop and achieve proactive, comprehensive, and collaborative communications to foster a culture of transparent and respectful interaction that advances Rhode Island College as a student-centered, diverse, supportive, and high-quality public institution among its internal and external communities.

**Rationale:** In order to project and embody the values of a more diverse and inclusive community, communications and interactions between and among all internal and external stakeholders must be clear, transparent, and respectful. Effective communications and interactions facilitate students' academic progress with clear, consistent, and reliable information. Communication policies are also critical to promoting productive and supportive connections among the college's administration, faculty, and staff. In addition, effective communication policies serve a vital role in the effort to enhance the visibility and awareness of Rhode Island College as a dynamic, diverse, and excellent public institution among external stakeholders and with the general public.

C-10. Improve communications that educate students about student success programs and other resources that can reduce the time needed to complete a degree.

C-15. Improve communications about RIC's contribution to the Rhode Island workforce and economy.

## FACILITIES (F)

Optimize and maintain a physical and technological environment that supports teaching, learning, research, and student life, and is welcoming, aesthetically pleasing, sustainable, accessible, and effective for a diverse community of users.

**Rationale:** Improving and modernizing the physical and technological environment positions Rhode Island College as a leading competitive institution of higher education equipped to serve the needs of an increasingly diverse campus community. A modern, welcoming, aesthetically pleasing campus will improve recruitment and retention of students, faculty, and staff. Recent bond measures have funded major renovation plans for Gaige Hall and Craig Lee Hall, which, along with the new Nursing Education Center downtown, will provide up-to-date and effective classroom and gathering spaces that can enhance teaching and learning for all. Executing all facilities projects in an environmentally mindful manner and embracing the principles of sustainability will maintain the beauty of our natural surroundings, maintain a balance between inclusive human design and beauty, and increase our positive impact on the wider environment. Providing a safe and accessible environment for all aspects of campus life will ensure that Rhode Island College is compliant with its legal and ethical obligations and also embraces the spirit of inclusion.

F-1. Design and equip campus facilities – including classrooms, labs, student lounges, and other formal and informal learning spaces – with the most current technology and conveniences to facilitate excellent teaching and learning and meet diverse student and faculty needs.

F-4. Create an efficient, equitable and appropriate system for the allocation of physical spaces on campus.

Second, because of reductions in state allocations for higher education, we are an institution that relies on tuition as our financial lifeline. Rhode Island College faces economic challenges related to the demographic decrease in the number of high school seniors in the state of Rhode Island. Thus, the issue of enrollment management is essential, especially with performance-based funding emerging as a reality in the higher education landscape.

We must pay careful attention to how best to recruit, retain, and graduate a dynamic, diverse, and thriving student body. This effort is not only paramount to our financial livelihood, but it is also true to the Rhode Island College mission as a comprehensive institution that seeks to “foster intellectual curiosity and prepare an educated citizenry for responsible leadership.”

As the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU) recommends, academic excellence requires attention to “diversity and equity as fundamental goals of higher education and as resources for learning that are valuable for all students, vital to democracy and a democratic workforce and to the global position and wellbeing of the United States” ([www.aacu.org](http://www.aacu.org)).

## REVENUE & RESOURCES (RR)

Stabilize existing revenue and resources, develop and implement more cost-effective and efficient usage of revenue and resources, and create and sustain a larger and more diverse set of revenue streams.

**Rationale:** A state and national focus on student retention and completion, the college's rapidly changing student demographics, and difficult economic conditions in the state combine to provide both a challenge and an opportunity. In order to maximize our economic stability and growth, the entire campus community must come together around a shared commitment to student success. Individually and collectively, we must develop new modes of working with and thinking about resources in order to foster collaboration, transparency, data-driven decision-making, and creativity to fulfill the college's mission, development, and long-term vitality.

RR-3. Develop and utilize common metrics and a data dictionary to holistically evaluate and align academic and student support programs, fill gaps, and eliminate redundancies.

RR-14. Expand student marketing and recruitment efforts to target key audiences – including graduate, adult, and international students – based on enrollment management planning.

## IMPACT ON RHODE ISLAND (RI)

Contribute to the economic development and quality of life – intellectual, social, and cultural – in the greater Providence area, the state of Rhode Island, and the region.

**Rationale:** As Rhode Island's public comprehensive institution, RIC has a unique responsibility to serve the public good and improve the quality of life for the state's diverse citizenry. Our state faces serious economic challenges, and the college is well positioned to serve as a key partner in matters of economic growth. With innovative contributions to workforce development, community partnerships, and cultural and intellectual engagement, Rhode Island College will realize the responsibilities and duties of a public institution.

RI-2. Develop a set of indicators to measure the college's impact on the community and Rhode Island's economy and track the college's performance on these indicators.

RI-7. Research and develop degree and non-degree certificate programs in high-demand areas to meet regional economic development needs.

The goals and objectives in Vision 2020 attend to these principled concerns and respect the specific needs and realities of Rhode Island College and the region. Our hope and expectation are that the implementation of this plan will continue and strengthen Rhode Island College's commitment to excellence for the public good.

Sincerely,  
The VISION 2020  
Strategic Planning Committee

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