

CECIL COLLEGE

2021-2025 Strategic Plan



CECIL COLLEGE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Process Overview3
Future State5
Our Strategic Priorities7
Strategic Goals.....8
Operational Definitions.....9
Steering Committee 10



STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS OVERVIEW

The Value of Strategic Planning

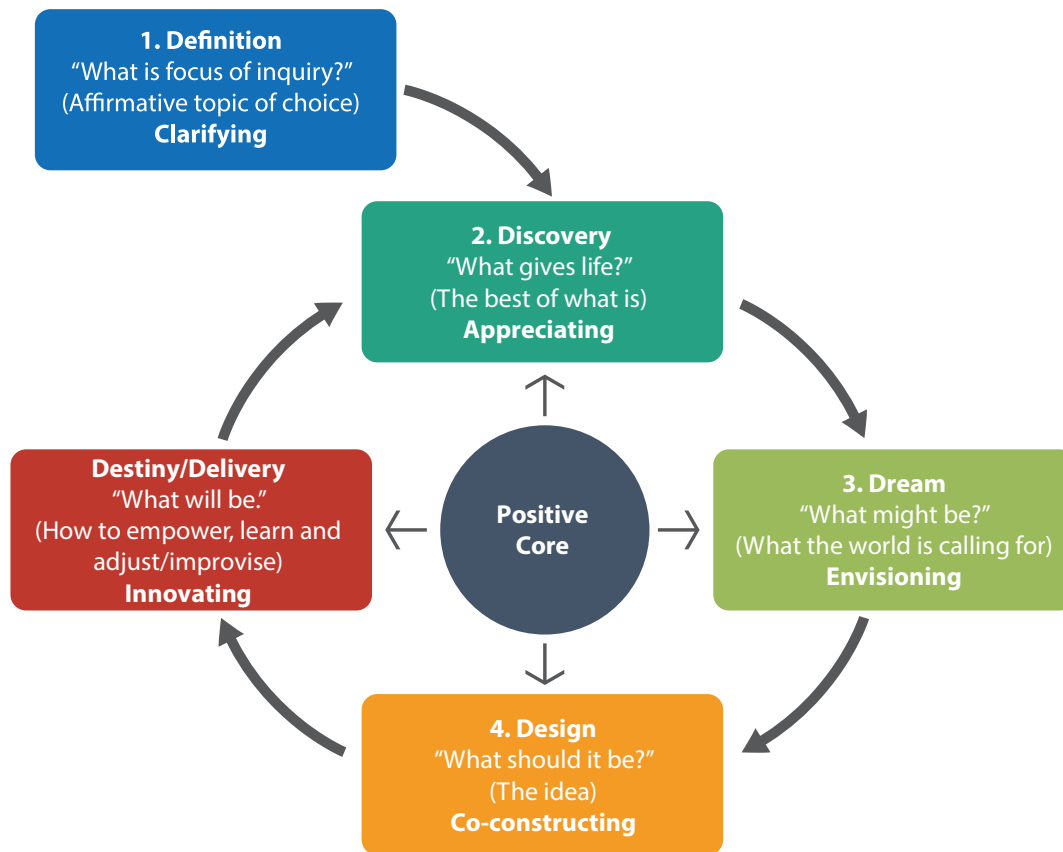
Sound strategic planning is critical for all institutions of higher education today. Public or private. Large or small. Well-resourced or not. Every decision made on campus involves time and money. In an environment characterized by increasing demands and limited resources, setting forth an intentional, vision-based path through strategic planning is essential. But the process must be meaningful. If a campus decides to undertake strategic planning merely to check a box for a regional accreditor or to say they have gone through the exercise, the true value and importance of planning is lost. These plans will likely sit as artifacts on a shelf collecting dust. At best helping to meet a regional accreditation standard while at worst costing the campus valuable resources. Throughout the process, individuals from involved constituencies (faculty, staff, students, alumni, local community members, and others) get excited about future plans and opportunities. When nothing comes to fruition, a sense of deflation can come over campus, impacting future visions along with current performance.

And strategic planning efforts cannot simply align with the current campus climate. Designing a plan so that it builds off areas of strength while failing to identify true market position or acknowledging threats and challenges fails to position a campus for success. Instead, it allows the status quo to continue. While the central facets of many strategic plans will look similar for similar institutions, this should not be an excuse to merely provide boilerplate terminology, failing to describe how—or even why—goals and priorities will be accomplished. The entire process should help to move the entire campus community forward; it should ensure that everyone gets out ahead of emerging trends and changing environmental factors.

Strategic planning for the sake of strategic planning costs campuses the opportunity to make hard choices and set new directions. Inclusive, transparent, and intentional strategic planning should result in campus documents that all parties believe they can meaningfully contribute to. This does not mean the plan must be everything to everyone on campus; instead, it should serve as a realistic rallying point for guiding the institution forward. And not every plan or planning process will look the same. Meaningful strategic planning reflects the culture of the campus and its stakeholders. Expectations that a particular format or approach must be used to ensure success fail to account for the unique characteristics of everyone involved in the process and impacted by its results.

Ultimately, strategic planning could fill any number of roles on campus. Whether the process is geared toward helping the institution find its current identity, setting a long-term vision and direction, or guiding difficult decisions, the entire campus community should see benefits from the entire process—and the plan's ultimate implementation. If we use an inclusive process that includes data collection from a wide representation from campus constituencies, we can help ensure faculty, staff, students, and even the Board of Trustees buys in. This buy-in not only provides political cover but can lead to meaningful marketing and branding opportunities—including donors, grant givers, and other funders. Beyond the ability to help an institution move forward, a well-designed strategic plan serves as the point of integration for all campus planning activities. Annual reporting, academic plans, financial plans, and even facilities plans should connect with the campus' strategic plan. And, while completing a strategic plan to merely satisfy a regional accreditor may not be wise, a well-designed plan and its results can help show these same bodies how campus efforts are concentrated to meet both short and long-term goals.

Overall Approach



Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is a highly regarded, best practice approach to strategic. Utilizing the AI framework, Anthology utilized best practices and processes identified by SCUP, as well as their vast experience in leading and consulting with colleges and universities, to help guide the strategic planning process at Cecil College. The AI approach utilizes four separate phases (along with an initial Defining process)—which align with Anthology’s approach to strategic planning and Cecil College’s expectations.

The strategic planning process began with preplanning. From deciding who will lead the process to the period the new plan will cover, preplanning sets the tone for the upcoming efforts. Anthology helped the campus determine those key components of preplanning, including assessing the current landscape, mandates that must be addressed (such as from accreditors, trustees, or founding documents), and a stakeholder analysis.

Following preplanning is the information gathering stage. Through this process, Anthology worked with the campus to look at the status of components like mission and vision statements, along with core values. Reports and assessments were also reviewed. Internal and external situational analyses played a vital role in ensuring the information gathering stage was as fruitful

as possible. Most importantly, however, was the use of surveys and listening sessions to gain feedback from all relevant campus stakeholders. By speaking with students, faculty, staff, community members, Board of Trustees members, donors, and local employers, those in charge of strategic planning can gain a full sense of attitudes and visions as they begin the process of drafting the new plan.

Once data was gathered, Anthology moved the campus towards the drafting stage of strategic planning. In this phase, the committee worked to determine the format of the plan along with agreeing on language to be used. A first draft built from planning assumptions and based on the data collected in earlier stages was created and shared amongst the committee for feedback and reaction before being publicly shared with other constituencies.

Once a final strategic plan is approved, campus attention will move towards execution. By developing measures, assigning champions, and capturing key performance indicators, the plan will become tangible and action based. Further, required resources can be discussed, along with creating a culture where the expectation is that critical campus activities will directly relate to elements of the newly adopted plan.



FUTURE STATE

What is a Future State?

A clear understanding of the desired ‘future state’ – or what the institution will look like after it implements strategic change – is an important foundation for any strategic planning effort. This includes what services the institution delivers, how it will operate and how its stakeholders will interact. Envisioning the future state helps the institution determine the extent of the strategic change required, the teams that will be needed to enact the change, and the vision that the stakeholders will need to embrace.

Cecil College’s Future State Defined

Strengthening student learning, completion, and employment

- Advancing the social and economic mobility of all members of our diverse community
- Providing excellence in teaching and learning, intentional student-centered support, and commitment to every student
- Strengthening workforce and economic development partnerships and championing lifelong learning
- Inspiring students to explore opportunities, define their educational and career paths, and achieve their personal goals
- Promoting a culture of continuous improvement and data-informed decision making

OUR VISION

Transforming the lives of our students and enriching our community.

OUR MISSION

Cecil College provides a supportive learning environment that focuses on innovation, student success, academic progress, and workforce development. We are committed to promoting opportunities that enrich the quality of life for the diverse communities we serve.



OUR CORE VALUES

Accountability

We take responsibility for our words and actions, operate with transparency, and hold individuals accountable to those they serve.

Collaboration

We foster a cooperative environment that seeks consensus and builds on the strength of each individual within the College and the community.

Community

We demonstrate compassion for the well-being and success of our students, our community, and each other.

Excellence

We strive for excellence in all facets of our academic enterprise and operations.

Inclusion

We promote respect, inclusivity, and equity, recognizing differences as strengths.

Innovation

We pursue innovative learning environments for our students and community.

Integrity

We commit to ethical and honest conduct.

Stewardship

We honor public trust by being principled stewards of the human, fiscal, and physical resources of the College.

OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

These priorities identify significant focus areas that the institution aims to achieve.

Advance Student Access, Equity and Success

- Providing services and resources that promote student growth and achievement.
- Aiding students in achieving their goals through retention, completion, and successful transitions.
- Enriching the student learning experience through comprehensive and accessible support services and co-curricular activities.
- Providing faculty, staff, and administrators with the tools and training they need to excel in their jobs.
- Recruiting and serving students in a culture of equity, inclusion, and achievement.

Enhance Academic Excellence

- Supporting the pursuit of academic excellence and optimizing student learning to promote equitable outcomes among learners.
- Maintaining high standards in credit and non-credit instructional programs while ensuring currency in career and transfer programs that allow students to explore, define, and achieve their goals.
- Promoting pathways that provide students with seamless and efficient academic progression.
- Maximizing educational quality, student learning, and efficiency of operations through the appropriate integration and utilization of technological resources and infrastructure.

Optimize Workforce Development

- Advancing economic prosperity through local and regional workforce development initiatives.
- Continuing collaboration with business and industry to anticipate, create, and deliver superior education and experiential training that upskills and equips the surrounding counties with an agile and adaptable workforce.
- Supporting continuous industry innovation to ensure each student enters the workforce with the competencies, knowledge, and experience needed for career advancement.
- Achieving regional and statewide recognition as a premier college of choice for workforce development.

Expand Community Partnerships and Engagement

- Extending partnerships with community groups, nonprofit and cultural organizations, governmental entities, businesses, and industries.
- Leveraging partnerships to reach all segments of the greater communities to provide additional educational opportunities and grow scholarship sources.
- Nurturing collaborative relationships with public schools, community colleges, and four-year institutions to develop a cohesive educational strategy that ensures seamless alignment and leads to increased educational attainment.



STRATEGIC GOALS

These goals serve as specific, quantifiable targets which indicate accomplishment of the strategic priorities.

Advance Student Access, Equity and Success

- 1.1 Develop and expand enrollment strategies to attract and enroll students in high demand industries
- 1.2 Build institutional capacity to support diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) through programming, resources, events, and partnerships
- 1.3 Improve retention and completion through the advancement of high impact practices
- 1.4 Expand strategies and practices that support student scholarships
- 1.5 Expand data analytics to track student performance and progress, guide real-time student intervention programs, and provide decision-making tools
- 1.6 Optimize academic advising and career planning that supports students from entry to completion
- 1.7 Accelerate learning pathways with student-friendly structures for prior and direct learning assessment
- 1.8 Enhance resources that support student engagement and success

Enhance Academic Excellence

- 2.1 Expand strategies to meet the needs of diverse learners and reduce achievement gaps
- 2.2 Ensure current programs are appropriately resourced to continue to serve our students, faculty, and education/workforce
- 2.3 Promote professional development opportunities to support innovative teaching as well as the scholarship of teaching and learning
- 2.4 Advance new academic courses, programs and credentials that fulfill regional employment needs, connect to industry certificates, provide greater transfer opportunities, and draw interest of current and future students
- 2.5 Enhance technology integration in the classroom to support instructional practices
- 2.6 Ensure optimal usage of current and planned campus facilities to support academic offerings
- 2.7 Increase curricular and co-curricular opportunities for students to develop the cognitive and professional skills needed for success

Optimize Workforce Development

- 3.1 Strengthen membership and effective utilization of program advisory committees
- 3.2 Expand partnerships with local businesses to create or advance training, programs, and initiatives to support specific industry development and workforce needs
- 3.3 Develop additional industry certification courses that can be configured to complement a variety of professional and workforce needs
- 3.4 Strengthen alignment of competencies and learning outcomes with industry needs
- 3.5 Expand internship, apprenticeship, and skill trade programs that deliver the experiential learning students need to gain employment and career advancement

Expand Community Partnerships and Engagement

- 4.1 The Cecil College Foundation will develop strategic initiatives to increase alumni support of Cecil College's mission and vision
- 4.2 Enhance community outreach efforts that further economic and cultural development in the region
- 4.3 Identify external funding opportunities that support initiatives benefiting the College, the community, and the regional economy
- 4.4 Establish partnerships to help the College provide services that promote equitable outcomes
- 4.5 Lead and strengthen relationships with additional community colleges and universities to expedite successful completion, transfer, and entry into the workforce
- 4.6 Leverage institutional services and facilities to support innovation, entrepreneurship, and culture within the community



OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

Core Values

The basis for what an institution considers important which usually drives how it behaves. Values determine just how the institution conducts its educational business. They are deeply held ideals and priorities; their underlying assumptions influence the institution's day-to-day behaviors. Above all, the values should declare, "These are the characteristics we believe are important in how we do our work."

Future State

A clear understanding of the desired 'future state' – or what the institution will look like after it implements strategic change – is an important foundation for any strategic planning effort. This includes what services the institution delivers, how it will operate and how its stakeholders will interact. Envisioning the future state helps the institution determine the extent of the strategic change required, the teams that will be needed to enact the change, and the vision that the stakeholders will need to embrace.

Goals

Goals are specific, quantifiable, lower-level targets that indicate accomplishment of a priority.

Key Performance Indicators

A Key Performance Indicator (KPI) is a measurable value that demonstrates how effectively an organization is achieving an objective.

Mission

The primary business or purpose of an organization. The mission can be clear, concise, and briefly states, "This is what we are here to do." It explains what the institution seeks to accomplish, why it exists, and what ultimate result should be expected.

Strategic Priorities

A priority implies a significant milestone or focus area that the organization aims to achieve, evolving from the institutional discovery and diagnosis. Priorities should be meaningful, measurable, and manageable.

Vision

One of the most important components of a strategic plan, the vision statement is an organization's clear description of what it intends to become within a certain timeframe. The vision statement defines the institution's strategic position in the future and the specific elements of that position with relationship to the mission statement. The vision is used to motivate, inspire, and is understood to be achievable.

STEERING COMMITTEE

The primary function of the Strategic Planning Steering Committee (SPSC) is an ad hoc group responsible to the President serving as the central coordinating group to guide the Cecil College Strategic Planning process. SPSC worked with relevant campus constituencies to lead an inclusive process that provided all campus and regional stakeholders with opportunities to contribute to the development of the institutional strategic plan.

Committee responsibilities were carried out through the following functions:

- Work collaboratively to ensure an equitable, comprehensive strategic planning process for Cecil College
- Serve on relevant subcommittees to foster meaningful, deep conversations on relevant topics
- Review the college's current vision and core values statements and provide feedback for modifications as appropriate
- Review the findings from Anthology and Cecil College's discovery to help identify emerging priorities from research findings, environmental scan, and listening sessions
- Review and provide feedback to Anthology and other administrative groups to develop the final 2021 – 2025 Strategic Plan, including strategic priorities, goals, and key performance indicators
- Review the communication strategy and plan for engaging campus and external constituencies
- Serve as a champion of the efforts of the SPSC throughout the strategic planning process

Committee Members

Kim Joyce, Vice President of Student Services & Enrollment Management (Committee Chair)
Tracy Bakowski, Institutional Research
Miles Dean, Dean of Career & Community Education
Christy Dryer, Vice President of Academic Programs
Anne Edlin, Professor of Mathematics
Lauren Fleck, Executive Director of Human Resources
Colleen Flewelling, Associate Dean, Academic Assessment & Development
Amy Henderson, Director of Marketing & Communications
Jenel Jones, Assistant to the Vice President of Student Services & Enrollment Management
Tre' Miller, Student
Trustee Mark Mortenson, Board Liaison
Susan O'Neill, Foundation Board member
Joanne Owens, Admissions Counselor
Chris Ann Szep, Vice President of Community Relations & College Advancement
Autumn Taylor, Student
Maurice Tyler, Chief Information Officer
Candace Vogelsong, Associate Professor of Business
Alesha Walker, Executive Assistant to the Vice President for Community Relations