

STRATEGIC PLAN 2006-2008

***Tunxis Community College
Farmington, Connecticut***

Table of Contents

Acknowledgement.....	3
Strategic Mission.....	3
Strategic Vision.....	3
Strategic Initiatives.....	4
Strategic Rationale and Action Plans.....	5
1. Increase Student Success.....	5
2. Implement Comprehensive Institutional Assessment.....	7
3. Improve Internal Cooperation.....	9
4. Promote Strengths and Areas of Excellence.....	10
Highlights of the Environmental Scan.....	12
Members of the Institutional Effectiveness Committee.....	15
Appendix A: Strategic Issues Identified by College Work Groups.....	16
Appendix B: Operational Issues Identified by College Work Groups.....	25

Strategic Plan 2005-2008

Tunxis Community College Farmington, Connecticut

Acknowledgement

Thanks to the leadership of Dr. Cathryn Addy, Tunxis is positioned to effect a significant cultural change. This opportunity exists because of the convergence of the work and efforts of a great many members of this community over the last several years.

The Successful Tunxis Learner: A Comprehensive Approach to Student-Centered, Ability-Based Education at Tunxis Community College

Strategic Mission

Focus all decisions, policies, and initiatives on meeting the educational/ co-educational needs of Tunxis Community College students. Moreover, make the goals and purposes of our educational programs and support services explicit and public.

Strategic Vision

Tunxis will become a model of **quality teaching, student-centered learning, and institutional effectiveness** in implementing **outcomes/ability-based education and evidence-based decision making**. Each of the strategic initiatives outlined below is transformational involving a major cultural change designed to significantly enhance **student success** and the **organizational strength** of the College. Building on a deserved reputation for excellence, dedicated and creative faculty and staff, visionary leadership, and the significant progress already made, Tunxis is well placed to fully realize its potential as a preeminent educational and cultural center.

NOTE:

This mission and strategic vision, which are based on the notion of shared teacher/staff/student responsibility, is the focus of the work by many dedicated Tunxis faculty and staff. With the support of the Title III Grant, these faculty and staff are working to create the teaching, interpersonal, and assessment tools we need to implement this comprehensive approach. Our commitment to shared responsibility, which has student learning and development at its center, defines what students should know and be able to do with their knowledge.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

- 1. Increase Student Success**
- 2. Implement Comprehensive Institutional Assessment**
- 3. Improve Internal Cooperation**
- 4. Promote Strengths and Areas of Excellence**

STRATEGIC RATIONALE & ACTION PLANS

1. Increase Student Success

Strategic Rationale

Student success is central to all we do and thus it is the primary strategic objective. As such, it intersects and subsumes several other strategic objectives such as the implementation of outcomes/ability-based education and improving internal cooperation.

Student success is defined by the Core Institutional Outcomes including General Education Learning Outcomes (communication, critical thinking, information literacy, technological literacy, world cultures and perspectives, aesthetic engagement and creative expression, quantitative and scientific reasoning, values, ethics and citizenship), and more traditionally defined Student Success Outcomes (employment preparation and placement, transfer preparation, developmental education effectiveness, student persistence, goal attainment and satisfaction).

Action Plan

NOTE: The following are projects and efforts recommended by the Institutional Effectiveness Committee to accomplish this initiative. Other projects and efforts will be identified and undertaken by the College's work groups as part of the Strategic Planning Process.

- 1. IMPLEMENT OUTCOMES/ABILITY BASED APPROACH TO LEARNING**
(See Goal 2)
- 2. IMPROVE INTERNAL COOPERATION**
(See Goal 3)
- 3. COMMIT TO IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF TEACHING AND LEARNING**

1. Design and implement the *First-Year Experience Program*.
2. Systematically integrate *Center for Teaching* in our work.
3. Encourage life-long learning.
4. Continuously improve the success of students in developmental courses.

- 4. STRENGTHEN COMMITMENT TO STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES**

Strengthen the commitment to the Student Support Services with the understanding that they serve a critical role in helping students meet their academic and personal development goals, both in and out of the classroom.

- Support and strengthen all services that provide support to students.
- Improve outreach to service area high schools.
- Expand and enhance the Master Advising Program.
- 5. Enhance the capacity and capability of the Academic Support Center.

6. Continue and enhance the year-round programming reflective of student needs outside the classroom.
7. Provide leadership opportunities for students.
8. Reestablish a commitment to co-curricular activities which reflect and enhance the curriculum. Encourage and reward student-centered involvement in the co-curricular and community activities.
9. Develop programs for special students including the at-risk and academically gifted students.
10. Build a student assistance program and a comprehensive referral system to local support agencies.
11. Within all the student support services, develop better data collection systems and determine how we will evaluate the effectiveness of our services in assisting students.
12. Strengthen and expand articulation agreements.
13. Promote/expand existing and consider new programs that prepare students for high growth occupations.
14. Expand Computer Resource Services to meet growing student demand.

5. PROMOTE DIVERSITY

15. Develop relationships with underrepresented groups and the community organizations that serve them.
16. Recruit diverse faculty and staff who will provide a variety of perspectives for all students and strengthen our understanding of the specific challenges faced by many members of our minority student body.

2. Implement Comprehensive Institutional Assessment

Strategic Rationale

Outcomes/ability-based assessment is a more consistent and comprehensive method of assessing learning than the traditional grade-based system. It is the foundational principle in measurement of institutional effectiveness. Properly conceived, this method will allow the College to focus on student-centered teaching and learning, assess the effectiveness of our programs in helping students to learn, substantiate grant requests, fulfill the requirements of accreditation, and foster confidence in our ability to manage and deploy resources.

A formal assessment system for the College will provide evidence of our students' ability to demonstrate facility in specific skills and abilities on a continuing basis. Adequate and reliable decision-relevant information will also enhance our capacity for continuous improvement that assures our ongoing ability to meet student needs. Finally, such information will inform strategic planning efforts by providing data to identify strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities, and also by providing a wealth of data to assess their significance.

Action Plan

NOTE: The following are projects and efforts recommended by the Institutional Effectiveness Committee to accomplish this initiative. Other projects and efforts will be identified and undertaken by the College's work groups as part of the Strategic Planning Process.

(A)

OUTCOMES/ABILITY-BASED EDUCATION

17. Establish and commit to Ability Committees and Levels of Mastery for ongoing assessment of the General Education Outcomes.

Include broad representation in the ability groups with staff from administrative/student services, fulltime and adjunct faculty, deans, and students to foster a more holistic definition and assessment of learning outcomes. Ensure that the work of the ability groups is informed by the mandated 2004 DHE General Education Principles as well as by our General Education Outcomes. Make principles and outcomes explicit and public.

18. Define the role of developmental courses in the work of outcomes assessment.

Establish additional ability groups for developmental education. Mount a concerted effort to increase resources for developmental education.

19. Focus on 'assessment-as-learning' in the work of the ability groups.

Create appropriate departmental and institutional assessment tools.

20. Further develop technology resources for teaching and learning.

Define institutional technology outcomes, increase faculty technology competency levels, and further integrate technology into the teaching/learning process.

21. Enhance student-centered, ability-based professional development for faculty and staff.

Continue exploring various models of ability-based education including that of Alverno College. Compensate adjuncts for professional development.

(B)

EVIDENCE-BASED DECISION MAKING

22. Commit to the use of research data to implement evidence-based decision making in all spheres of the College's activities.

23. Implement assessment of performance on outcomes and utilize results to formulate action plans to address identified weaknesses and exploit identified strengths, as well as to inform strategic and operational planning.

24. Revise and expand, as appropriate, Student Services and Administrative Services outcomes and measures originally developed by the Core Institutional Outcomes Committee and create appropriate tools for measuring performance in collaboration and cooperation with those divisions.

3. Improve Internal Cooperation

Strategic Rationale

Institutional effectiveness requires communication and collaboration across not only the academic disciplines but also among the academic, student services, and administrative services divisions.

In this respect the learning enterprise requires close collaboration and integration of efforts of all divisions of the College (Academic, Student, Continuing Education, and Administrative Divisions) to engage and empower students and integrate all aspects of their learning experience.

Action Plan

NOTE: The following are projects and efforts recommended by the Institutional Effectiveness Committee to accomplish this initiative. Other projects and efforts will be identified and undertaken by the College's work groups as part of the Strategic Planning Process.

- Charge a Task Force with responsibility to recommend initiatives to address the areas identified as needing improvement on the Personal Assessment of the College Environment (PACE) climate study.
- Encourage work groups to identify and implement initiatives that contribute to the improvement of internal civility, cooperation and collaboration.
- Where appropriate, recommend new policies or revisions to existing policies.

4. Promote Strengths and Areas of Excellence

Strategic Rationale

We should adopt a **more comprehensive view of marketing and admissions recruitment efforts**, in which a variety of promotional vehicles are utilized. As part of the marketing strategy, focus should also be given to developing and managing special relationships and partnerships, as well as product (service/program) development and research. These efforts require the collaboration of marketing and admissions with faculty, as well as institutional research, academic affairs, and workforce development and continuing education.

Rather than simply “selling” our programs to potential students, we should continue to increase the **visibility** of the College in the whole community and **address all relevant publics** including business, media, and legislators. Marketing should further increase its focus on increasing resources, in addition to its focus on reputation and enrollment goals.

This strategy includes building upon and **highlighting specific strengths of the College**. Integral to this focus, the College must maintain engagement with its external constituencies with an eye toward developing specific programs in high-growth occupations and supporting state mandated workforce initiatives.

To be effective we must initially concentrate on a limited number of areas. The selection criteria would include the potential for showcasing the program, its visibility, and most importantly, involvement and commitment of all relevant faculty and staff to the project. The strategy would then involve publicizing the selected program, planning and implementing methods and venues for showcasing its value to the community, securing community involvement, measuring effectiveness, and further enhancing its strength.

Action Plan

NOTE: The following are projects and efforts recommended by the Institutional Effectiveness Committee to accomplish this initiative. Other projects and efforts will be identified and undertaken by the College’s work groups as part of the Strategic Planning Process.

(A)

LIBERAL ARTS & SCIENCES

This area has many initiatives which, with a higher profile, could create the perception of Tunxis as a college of “first resort” for students and others--parents, teachers, and guidance counselors among them--who help students to plan for higher education. The associate's degree programs in Liberal Arts and General Studies are the heart of the College's transfer efforts; courses in Liberal Arts are also required in all occupational programs. Given the diversity of offerings, both curricular and extracurricular, Liberal Arts & Sciences is well suited to generate immediate and continuing visibility.

Especially given the changing demographic of our student body toward younger and full-time students, we are likely to be serving a higher proportion of students who intend to transfer and for them Liberal Arts and Sciences may be more relevant.

Specific steps or aspects of this emphasis on Liberal Arts and Sciences include:

25. Create a vibrant **cultural center** responsive to community needs through the library, workshops, field trips, concerts, symposiums, guest speakers, and visiting artists.
26. Inform external constituencies about the innovative extracurricular initiatives that occur regularly on campus.
27. Present the community college as a cost effective alternative for college-level students who wish to pursue a high-quality **LA&S education**.
28. Develop a **Liberal Arts Honors Program** and highlight the *Honors Program: Computer Science/Mathematics Associate in Science* degree.

(B) ALLIED HEALTH

Demonstrate the programs' effectiveness for students and cost effectiveness and make explicit the significance of the College's contribution to these programs.

(C) DEVELOP NEW PROGRAMS IN HIGH-GROWTH OCCUPATIONS

- Through ongoing research, define and implement procedures that will permit the College to generate the evidence that permits quick, creative responses to new opportunities.
- Maintain ongoing contact through advisory boards and similar entities that will allow the College to anticipate and meet needs of employers in high-growth occupations.

Tunxis Community College
Institutional Effectiveness Committee

Highlights from the Environmental Scan

September 30, 2005

1. Institutional Effectiveness Outcomes and Data: Student Success and Institutional Measures:

- The percent of new students successfully completing developmental courses in their first semester in math increased from 39% to 50%. In English and reading, the rate remained the same at around 60%.
- The percent of new developmental students who successfully complete college math and English courses after three years dropped from 30% to 22% in math and 60% to 49% in English between the Fall 2000 and Fall 2001 cohorts.
- There is a highly significant difference between the first year GPA's of students who do not need remediation and those need it in three skill areas (2.8 vs. 2.06). Two skill areas needed, 2.26; One, 2.45.
- Fall to Fall retention rates for minority students lag significantly behind white students in most cases.

2. Service Area Population

- In the New Britain schools, 63.2% of the students are economically disadvantaged; 50.2%, Hispanic; 17.5%, black.
- The New Britain schools appear to have over a 50% drop-out rate between the freshman and senior year.
- In Bristol, 25.5% are economically disadvantaged; 17.3% minority.

3. CCBenefits Studies

Hartford County jobs

- Among the jobs most in demand in our area for which TCC prepares workers are computer support specialists, dental hygienists, physical therapy assistants, medical secretaries, and legal secretaries.
- Technicians in a number of different fields (radiological, medical records and health information, electrical and electronic engineering, industrial engineering) are also in high demand.

Tunxis Socioeconomic Benefits

- When higher lifetime earnings for students and social savings from lifestyle changes are considered, Tunxis returns \$22 to the state for each dollar the state invests.

4. PACE (faculty and staff) and SACE (students) surveys

- Items on the PACE survey most in need of improvement are Marketing, the College website, institutional communication and interdepartmental

cooperation, decision making at the appropriate level, and impact of the Title III grant.

- Results of the SACE survey place the College well above the national average in most categories. Instructional Services received the highest ratings, but Student and Administrative Services showed the most positive differences from the national averages.

5. 2004 Tunxis Student Survey (Marketing)

- Notable changes since the 2002 student survey tabulations include a shift in what students perceive as the number one important pre-enrollment factor in their decision process. Affordability/cost savings was the top deciding factor in 2004, whereas in 2002 it did not fall within the top eight mentions. Factors influencing satisfaction after enrolling at Tunxis were similar to the pre-enrollment factors with a few exceptions: courses for college/university transfer and improve financial status dropped off and were replaced with variety of classes, and reputation of the College.
- The medium with the highest recall rate for Tunxis is direct mail. As timing is essential, it is important to note that the lead-time for decision-making prior to enrolling shortened significantly from the 2002 survey tabulations. In 2004 the tabulations were split between students who took three months or less to review their options prior to enrolling in Tunxis and students who took three to six months and over six months to do so.
- Student recall of having seen/heard some type of Tunxis advertising/communications prior to enrollment was 41% (up from 22.6% in 1999); however, 70% recalled seeing such materials from our competitors. Effect of news coverage and advertising about Tunxis on decision to enroll increased from 10.4% to 16.1% between 2002-2004.
- Students indicate that they would prefer to receive regular updates from the admissions office and want a general information brochure giving brief overviews of available programs.
- Thirty percent would like to receive regular email updates about opportunities the College offers

6. New Student Survey:

- “Affordable tuition” and “close to home” have remained for four years (2002-2005) the top reasons why students choose Tunxis. A close third is “courses/programs offered”. Also significant are “times classes are offered” and “transferability of courses/degrees”. The percent of students who indicate that “college reputation/image” was a reason to choose Tunxis has dropped from 11.6% in 2003 to 4.3% in 2005.
- “Friend/family member” has remained for four years (2002-2005) by far (over 50%) the number one way students have heard about Tunxis. There have been dramatic decreases in the number of students who heard about the College from school teachers (15% to 7.9%) and school counselors (21% to 15.8%). Also showing dramatic decreases are internet/online search/webpage (17.2% to 13.7%) and College publications (24% to 12.9%).

7. “Demographic Trends in Enrollment” Study:

- Total enrollment has remained relatively stable, although the Fall 2005 enrollment (3,894) is a 3.5% decrease from the all time high reached in Fall 2002 (4,035).
- New student enrollment has dramatically decreased (20%) from 985 in Fall 2001 to 791 in Fall 2005.
- In minority new student enrollment, the number of African Americans has decreased by 35% (78 to 51) while the number of Hispanics has increased by 9% (100 to 109).
- White new student enrollment has decreased by 20% from 720 to 573.
- The full-time/part-time ratio of new student enrollment has dramatically changed, from 38% full-time/62% part-time to 63.6% full-time/36.4% part-time.
- The percentage of new students that are less than 20 years old has dramatically increased from 50.7% to 72.7%.
- Other age groups in new student enrollment show dramatic decreases: 20-24, down 39.3% (188 to 114); 25-29, down 54.2% (83 to 38); 30-34, down 74.1% (58 to 15); 35-39, down 60.3% (58 to 23); 40-49, down 65.6% (61 to 21); and 50-59, down 81.8% (22 to 4).

8. Successful Outcomes and At-Risk Student Characteristics Study

- The student success rate (graduated, transferred, retained, or left with a 2.0 GPA or better) for new Tunxis students after three years is 76.7%.
- By far, Central Connecticut State University is the most popular with our students that transfer. University of Connecticut is a distant second.
- Student most at-risk at Tunxis have skill deficiencies in three areas and are male Hispanics <25 years of age. However, all students under 25 with three skill deficiencies are moderately at-risk.
- The top five courses in which unsuccessful students are most often unsuccessful are English 083 and 101 and Math 075, 095, and 137.

7. Connecticut's Dilemma (from the Office of Workforce Competitiveness)

- Large proportions of tomorrow's available workforce are living and learning in poverty.
- Our students are not mastering the disciplines and skills required by the 21st century workplace nor are they entering fields of study in high demand programs.
- Large disparities exist between white and minority student high school graduation rates.
- From 1990 to 2000, Connecticut's population increased by only 3.6% while the percentage of individuals living in poverty increased by 19.4%.
- Connecticut tuition rates for two-year colleges rank 43rd; four-year universities, 34th.
- Sixty-two percent of the new jobs in Connecticut 2004-2010 will pay less than \$40,000 per year; 36%, less than \$25,000. Most will be in the service industry.
- The estimated cost of supporting a family of four in the Hartford area is \$44,000.

MEMBERS OF THE INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS COMMITTEE

Aldi, Michael	Director of Institutional Advancement (ex officio)
Bencivengo, Mary	Allied Health/Science
Blaszczynski, Andre	Business/Computer Information Systems
Brown, Bob	English
Cenet, Jean-Marc	Mathematics
Cleary, Chuck	Acting Dean of Administration (ex officio)
Dantino, Susan	Associate Dean of Strategic Planning and Institutional Effectiveness (ex officio)
Ducharme, Maggie	Counseling
Dwyer, Francena	Academic Assessment Planner
Edwards, Richard	Social Sciences
England, David	Director of Institutional Research
Ersinghaus, Steve	Arts & Media
Keyes, Colleen	Dean of Academic Affairs (ex officio)
Knopf, Leigh	Director of Marketing & Public Relations (ex officio)
LaGanga, Donna	Dean of Workforce Development & Continuing Education (ex officio)
Markiewicz, Judy	Library
McCluskey, Peter	Admissions
Miranda, Carolyn	Director, Child Development Center
Mitchell, Victor	Workforce Development and Continuing Education Division representative
Peters, Kirk	Dean of Student Affairs (ex officio)
Schwager, Kathy	Academic Support Center
Wahl, Rob	Information Technology
Welsh, Dave	Acting Director of Human Resources (ex officio)
Witt, Melissa	Marketing & Public Relations
Woolford, Sean	Student representative