

Bergen Community College

Summary of the Self-Study Report

February 2025

Submitted To The Middle States Commission On Higher Education



Mission

Bergen Community College provides accessible and transformative programs and services to its diverse community. As a comprehensive community college, we are committed to student success, innovation, and inclusivity.

Vision

Bergen Community College will be:

A first-choice option for its community.

A national model for innovation and partnerships.

An institution recognized for its ability to meet the needs of an ever-changing student population in a landscape of evolving employers' workforce needs.

Values

Consistent with Bergen Community College and who we are as a community, these core values guide our daily work:

Commitment: We are committed to providing education in the liberal arts, sciences, technical fields, and a variety of non-credit programs that fosters critical thinking, facilitates upward mobility, and instills a sense of purpose.

Creativity: We are imaginative and innovative in promoting success for our students and in accomplishing our goals.

Collaboration: We emphasize teamwork and acknowledge and take pride in the contributions of others.

Communication: We regularly and openly share what we do with both internal and external community members.

Care: We identify, prioritize, and resolve issues by leading with an ethic of care.

Challenge: We challenge ourselves to improve upon our programs and services.

Celebration: We acknowledge, honor, and take pride in the quality of our work and the work of others.

Institutional Goals

Institutional Goal #1

Bergen Community College serves the needs of a diverse college population by creating a welcoming campus environment where all members of the community are valued. The College adheres to the principles of access, equity, and inclusion.

Institutional Goal #2

Bergen Community College offers educational programs and services that promote success for students of different abilities and economic needs.

Institutional Goal #3

Bergen Community College provides evidence of effective educational experiences.

Institutional Goal #4

Bergen Community College offers programs and services which enable community members to engage in lifelong learning opportunities.

Institutional Goal #5

Bergen Community College cultivates community relationships which support a growing network of partnerships with external organizations.

Institutional Goal #6

Bergen Community College shares its stories of success as a vital resource in Bergen County and the surrounding region.

(Approved by the Board of Trustees on 01/10/23)

Standard I

Mission and Goals

The institution's mission defines its purpose within the context of higher education, the students it serves, and what it intends to accomplish. The institution's stated goals are clearly linked to its mission and specify how the institution fulfills its mission.

Key Findings

- The College has a clearly defined mission and goals that emphasize accessibility, transformation, innovation, inclusivity, and student success.
- The mission, vision, values, and institutional goals were reviewed and updated through a collaborative process involving internal and external stakeholders, including faculty, staff, students, alumni, and community leaders. Feedback was solicited through meetings, surveys, and forums to ensure diverse perspectives informed the revisions.
- Institutional goals were collaboratively developed and strategically linked to the mission. They served as the foundation for the 2024-2029 Strategic Plan and inform all other supporting initiatives.
- The mission is prominently displayed across campuses and integrated into multiple communication platforms, including the website and printed materials.
- Scholarly inquiry and creative endeavors are supported through faculty development opportunities, experiential learning opportunities, and grants.
- The mission and institutional goals guide decision-making, resource allocation, and program development in alignment with the College's strategic priorities.
- Regular assessment of the mission and institutional goals ensures they remain relevant and supports continuous improvement.

Institutional Strengths

1. The College has a clearly defined mission, vision, values, and goals that were developed through a collaborative and inclusive process that included internal and external constituencies and were formally approved by the BOT.
2. The College's mission and goals are widely publicized and known, evaluated through the strategic planning process, support scholarly inquiry and creative activity, and guide decision making related to planning, resource allocation, program, and curricular development, and defining institutional outcomes.
3. The College's goals are realistic, aligned with its mission, and appropriate for a community college.
4. Bergen's goals are aligned with its mission and inform institutional improvement. The goals articulate a clear focus on student learning and achievement and are supported by administrative, educational, and student support programs and services.
5. The College engages in periodic assessment of its mission and goals to ensure they are relevant and achievable.

Institutional Opportunities

1. Bergen should continue its work to formalize its process of reviewing the mission, vision, values, and goals statements as part of the strategic planning process on a five-year cycle.
2. The College should continue its work to refine KPIs for the strategic plan goals to quantify progress, help make decisions and set future goals.



Standard II Ethics and Integrity

Ethics and integrity are central, indispensable, and defining hallmarks of effective higher education institutions. In all activities, whether internal or external, an institution must be faithful to its mission, honor its contracts and commitments, adhere to its policies, and represent itself truthfully.

Key Findings

- The College systematically evaluates the educational and other programs to ensure the institution is achieving its goals.
- Ethics and integrity are embedded in the College's mission, practices, and policies.
- The College promotes academic freedom, respect for faculty, staff, and students, and upholds fair hiring practices.
- The College demonstrates its commitment to truth and accuracy in both internal and external communications.
- The College regularly evaluates academic and non-academic areas to maintain compliance with all regulations and requirements.

Institutional Strengths

1. The College demonstrates a strong commitment to regular and accurate dissemination of information to both internal and external stakeholders.
2. The College has a well-defined process for policy review and documentation, and conflict of interest language is embedded in policies and procedures.
3. The College is deeply committed to fostering an environment of respect and belonging for all its community, contributing to a positive and inclusive campus culture.

Institutional Opportunities

1. The College should continue its work of enhancing the accessibility of policies and procedures by consolidating them into more centralized locations on the portal and the website as appropriate.
2. The College should communicate more clearly the procedures concerning employee promotions, merit raises, and grievance resolution.
3. Bergen should remain committed to reviewing ethics and integrity, ensuring that they are woven into the assessment guidelines for all departments.

Standard III

Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience

An institution provides students with learning experiences that are characterized by rigor and coherence at all programs, certificate, and degree levels, regardless of instructional modality. All learning experiences, regardless of modality, program pace/schedule, level, and setting are consistent with higher education expectations.

Key Findings

- The College maintains a high standard of education, preparing students for transfer, workforce integration, and lifelong learning.
- Full-time faculty spearhead curriculum proposals, guided by established processes, ensuring adherence to the New Jersey Administrative Code and institutional goals. Active faculty committees, including the Curriculum, General Education, and Learning Assessment Committee, ensure academic rigor and coherence.
- Annual course assessments and periodic program reviews, conducted by full-time faculty, are used to evaluate and improve academic offerings. Through curriculum mapping and course blueprints, faculty align program objectives with institutional goals and accreditation standards.
- Faculty-driven integration of General Education requirements emphasizes essential skills such as critical thinking, communication, and global awareness. The robust General Education program incorporates diverse perspectives, fostering inclusivity in the curriculum.
- Comprehensive professional development programs such as Princeton Fellows, New Faculty Mentoring, ACUE training, and Faculty Development workshops support faculty in refining teaching practices and staying abreast of pedagogical advancements, enabling them to enhance instructional quality. Recognition programs, such as the NISOD Award, celebrate faculty achievements in teaching excellence.
- Faculty contributions extend to state-of-the-art initiatives like the Interdisciplinary Simulation Center, STEM Research Center, and Learning Communities, providing enriched academic experiences.
- Advisory boards for professional programs are led by faculty and ensure alignment with industry and workforce needs.
- With 111 academic programs, the College offers diverse educational pathways, including certificates and degrees, driven by faculty-led initiatives. These programs are designed to meet higher education standards, address workforce needs, and promote student success.

Institutional Strengths

1. The College offers a comprehensive array of programs and options to meet the needs of our diverse student body.
2. The full-time to adjunct faculty ratio remains consistent.
3. Student support services, particularly the CLAC, are robust and nationally recognized.
4. Students are afforded excellent opportunities, such as the Judith K. Winn School of Honors, STEM Research Center, and Interdisciplinary Center for Simulation, to excel in their studies beyond the typical community college classroom experience.

Institutional Opportunities

1. To continue to ensure that programs and curricula are aligned with emerging academic trends and workforce needs, comply with timelines for program reviews, and expand the use of linkage meetings to address stated findings and recommendations.
2. Institutional standards and procedures for resource allocation, such as new tenure-track faculty lines, need widespread communication to ensure all impacted parties are aware of decision-making criteria and processes.

Standard IV Support of the Student Experience

Across all educational experiences, settings, levels, and instructional modalities, the institution recruits and admits students whose interests, abilities, experiences, and goals align with its mission and educational offerings. The institution commits to student retention, persistence, completion, and success through a coherent and effective support system sustained by qualified professionals, which enhances the quality of the learning environment, contributes to the educational experience, and fosters student success.

Key Findings

- The College is dedicated to recruiting and supporting students whose interests and goals align with its mission to provide accessible, transformative education to a diverse community.
- As a comprehensive community college, Bergen emphasizes student success, innovation, inclusivity, and adaptability to meet the needs of its evolving student population and workforce demands.
- The College envisions itself as a first-choice institution for its community, a national leader in innovation and partnerships, and a hub for lifelong learning. Guided by core values of commitment, creativity, collaboration, communication, care, challenge, and celebration, Bergen prioritizes access, equity, and inclusion in its educational offerings and services.
- To foster student retention, persistence, and success, Bergen has established a robust support system led by qualified professionals, enhancing the learning environment and educational experience.
- The College actively builds community relationships and partnerships while sharing its success stories, solidifying its role as a vital resource in Bergen County and the surrounding region.
- The College offers various programs aimed at promoting student success and providing access to affordable, high-quality education. These include a variety of student support services, the EOF Program, Early College, on-site transfer partners, athletics, Office of Multicultural Services and Activities Summer Program, 24-hour personal counseling, student financial information sessions, and the Turning Point program.
- The College has actively pursued grant-funded initiatives, such as the Title V grant, enabling it to support underrepresented and disadvantaged populations in Bergen County.

Institutional Strengths

1. Bergen excels in providing a wide range of support services tailored to meet the needs of its diverse student body. From academic advising, tutoring, and career services to financial aid and personal counseling, the College ensures all students receive the support needed to achieve their educational goals.
2. The College demonstrates a strong commitment to inclusivity and equity through initiatives such as the Office of Multicultural Services and Activities, which provides programming and support for students from diverse backgrounds. Additionally, EOF and other programs are specifically designed to support economically and educationally disadvantaged students.
3. Bergen systematically evaluates its programs and services through a robust framework of assessments, audits, and surveys. This approach ensures that the College not only meets but exceeds its goals for student success and institutional effectiveness.
4. Bergen maintains strong relationships with local high schools, businesses, and community organizations, fostering a seamless transition for students into higher education and the workforce. Initiatives like the Early College Program and various community events highlight the College's commitment to serving its community.

Institutional Opportunities

1. The College should continue to provide resources to support a comprehensive retention strategy that targets at-risk students and improves overall retention rates.
2. The College should expand its investment in technology and infrastructure to support its growing student body and evolving educational programs.

Standard V

Educational Effectiveness Assessment

Assessment of student learning and achievement demonstrates that the institution's students have accomplished educational goals consistent with their program of study, degree level, the institution's mission, and appropriate expectations for institutions of higher education.

Key Findings

- Bergen transitioned its General Education goals into "Essential Learning Outcomes" (ELOs) and formalized them as ILOs in 2023. These goals were aligned with institutional goals and currently serve as a foundation for comprehensive assessment. Two cycles of assessment of the ILOs occurred in Summer 2024 and Fall 2024.
- In 2022, Bergen adjusted its assessment framework, transitioning to a one-year assessment cycle, streamlining data collection, analysis, and the implementation of curricular improvement. The framework continues to evolve, integrating Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) into ILOs, fostering a clearer relationship between curricular goals and institutional objectives, and enhancing the alignment between assessment findings and program review.
- Academic programs are reviewed every five years, incorporating external evaluations, where applicable, and action plans to enhance effectiveness. These action plans and program review recommendations are used to guide curricular changes, pedagogy adjustments, and resource allocation.
- The College has integrated technology into its assessment and reporting processes by transitioning its assessment forms and workflow to Laserfiche. Further, the adoption of Canvas in 2022 enables robust data collection and reporting and is now being used to integrate outcomes across course, program, and institutional levels.
- Bergen assesses how well it prepares students to achieve their goals and uses assessment to inform student support improvements, such as advising redesigns and new student orientation enhancements.

Institutional Strengths

1. The College has strengthened its use of assessment and program review to improve student outcomes and supplement planning and resource allocation efforts.
2. Faculty are engaged in the process and planning of curricular assessment to improve educational effectiveness at the College.

Institutional Opportunities

1. The College should continue to assess and refine the program review process.
2. The College should continue using platforms such as the ACF (see Standard VII) to expand communication and discussion of assessment results to stakeholders.



Standard VI Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement

The institution's planning processes, resources, and structures are aligned with each other and are sufficient to fulfill its mission and goals, to continuously assess and improve its programs and services, and to respond effectively to opportunities and challenges.

Key Findings

- The College is deliberate in its efforts to ethically and efficiently steward its financial and other resources to maximize operational efficiency.
- Resource planning and allocation is guided by a set of core values and objectives that are reflected in Bergen's mission, vision, strategic plan, and the annual Presidential Goals.
- The financial planning process is aligned with the management, utilization, and allocation of financial, personnel, and physical resources to fulfill the College's mission.
- The College is expanding the use of ongoing assessment and data-informed analyses to prioritize programs, services, and initiatives that use limited discretionary funds to pursue continuous improvement.
- Examples of assessment and data-informed tools include annual departmental reviews and academic program assessment used to evaluate overall unit/program performance and related resource needs.

Institutional Strengths

1. Bergen demonstrates a strong commitment to transparency and inclusiveness in its budgeting and financial planning process.
2. The College consistently creates a balanced budget each fiscal year notwithstanding national, state, and local financial pressures.

Institutional Opportunities

1. Bergen should continue to expand automation of the budget development and submission process to further transparency and simplify the planning process.
2. The College should develop an automated process to more effectively manage personnel costs, the largest expense category.

Standard VII Governance, Leadership, and Administration

The institution is governed and administered in a manner that allows it to realize its stated mission and goals in a way that effectively benefits the institution, its students, and the other constituencies it serves. Even when supported by or affiliated with governmental, corporate, religious, educational systems, or other unaccredited organizations, the institution has education as its primary purpose, and it operates as an academic institution with appropriate autonomy.

Key Findings

- Bergen has a clear and transparent governance framework with defined roles and responsibilities for the governing board, administration, faculty, staff, and students.
- The College's participatory and shared governance structure ensures inclusive decision-making and effective communication. With an emphasis on transparency, inclusivity, and accountability, the governance structure ensures that all constituencies contribute to decision-making and institutional success.
- The All College Forum, the College's newest governing body, fosters collaboration among all constituencies and focuses on policy review and specialized areas through dedicated committees.
- The College has a legally constituted Board of Trustees which operates under bylaws outlining fiduciary responsibilities, including policy development, financial oversight, and audits. Committees address critical areas such as finance, student affairs, personnel, strategic planning, and facilities.
- The Board is comprised of twelve (12) voting members. These include the Executive County Superintendent of Schools, eight (8) members appointed by Bergen County, two (2) members appointed by the Governor, and one (1) alumni student representative elected by the student body.
- The College's President was appointed by the Board in accordance with established policy and state law. The President is annually evaluated by the Board to assess performance and progress toward strategic goals.
- Supported by a qualified administrative team, the President has autonomy to lead strategic planning, budgeting, staffing, and daily operations.
- Assessment of the effectiveness of governance, leadership, and administration occurs through annual evaluations, self-assessment initiatives, and feedback and open dialogue in the All College Forum, Faculty Senate, and Student Government Association.
- Increased investment in professional development has enhanced employee satisfaction and retention, and development of new leadership roles has strengthened management capabilities.

Institutional Strengths

1. The College demonstrates a strong commitment to participatory and shared governance, ensuring transparency, accountability, and active participation from all segments of the College community.
2. The establishment of the ACF has significantly enhanced the College's governance model by centralizing diverse constituencies and broadening participation in decision-making processes.
3. The BOT remains deeply committed to supporting the College's mission, goals, and strategic plan, while also contributing positively to the campus community through active involvement in key initiatives and events.
4. The President has expanded opportunities for open dialogue and improved communication channels through public venues and participatory forums.
5. The President's Cabinet plays a pivotal role in leading and participating in forums, committees, and other venues that promote collaboration among faculty, staff, and students.

Institutional Opportunities

1. The College should continue developing the newly established participatory and shared governance structure of the ACF while maintaining a continuous feedback loop that ensures alignment with the Faculty Senate and the SGA.
2. To continue fostering a culture of collegial collaboration and continuous self-improvement, the College would benefit from periodically surveying members of governance bodies to assess the effectiveness and climate of governance on campus.



Bergen Community College was founded in 1965 to address the region's need for a convenient, affordable, and comprehensive higher education destination. Over the years, the College has expanded its main campus in Paramus to include a library, theater, student center, and, most recently, a new state-of-the-art Health Profession Integrated Teaching Center. In 1970, the Ciarco Learning Center (Hackensack, NJ) was founded to provide non-credit education, including GED and adult ESL courses. Expanding its offerings to the southern portion of Bergen County, Bergen Community College at the Meadowlands began offering courses in 2008. The College continues to invest in virtual and distance education with the development of the Center for Online Learning in the spring of 2023. As of Fall 2024, Bergen Community College enrolled over 11,000 students in its credit offerings. In Fiscal Year 2024, Bergen enrolled over 5,400 students in continuing and adult education programs.

Board of Trustees (Fall 2024)

Dorothy L. Blakeslee, *Chair*
 Adam Silverstein, *Vice Chairman*
 Patrick Fletcher, *Treasurer*
 Louis DeLisio
 Damon Englese
 Howard Haughton
 Mark Longo
 Ana Marti
 Ritzy Morales-Diaz
 Sheetal Ranjan
 Kaylie Quezada, *Alumni Trustee*

College Executives (Fall 2024)

Eric M. Friedman, Ph.D., *President*
 Cinzia D'Iorio, *VP, Continuing Education and Workforce Development*
 Ellianne Gallardo, *VP, Human Resources and Organizational Development*
 Tonia McKoy, Ed.D., *Dean of Research and Institutional Effectiveness*
 Nathaniel Saviet, *VP, Facilities*
 Ron Spaide, *Chief Information Officer*
 Wilton Thomas-Hooke, *Chief Financial Officer*
 Andrew Tomko, Ph.D., *VP, Academic Affairs and Provost*
 A.J. Trump, Ed.D., *VP, Student Affairs*
 Suzanne M. Wetzel, *VP, External Affairs*

Accreditation and Degrees

Bergen maintains accreditation by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. Twelve individual programs are accredited by specific associations and commissions. Bergen offers programs in Associate of Arts (A.A.), Associate of Science (A.S.), Associate of Applied Science (A.A.S.), Associate of Fine Arts (A.F.A.), and certificate programs.

Mission

Bergen Community College provides accessible and transformative programs and services to its diverse community. As a comprehensive community college, we are committed to student success, innovation, and inclusivity.

Vision

Bergen Community College will be:

- A first-choice option for its community.
- A national model for innovation and partnerships.
- An institution recognized for its ability to meet the needs of an ever-changing student population in a landscape of evolving employers' workforce needs.

Values

Consistent with Bergen Community College and who we are as a community, these core values guide our daily work:

- Commitment
- Creativity
- Collaboration
- Communication
- Care
- Challenge
- Celebration

Student Financial Aid (2023-2024)

Federal Grants: \$22,036,116
 Federal Loans: \$12,080,037
 State Grants: \$9,993,877
 State Loans: \$116,452
 State Awards: \$14,278
 Institutional Funds: \$451,131

Operating Budget (FY2025)

Projected Revenues: \$159,948,309

Tuition/Fees: \$71,387,902
 State Funding: \$13,187,248
 County Funding: \$24,233,700
 Other NJ Counties: \$239,605
 Other Sources: \$2,599,854
 Student Aid and Grants: \$48,300,000

Tuition per Credit (FY2025)

Bergen County Resident: \$157.45
 Out-of-County Resident: \$323.35
 Out-of-State Resident: \$340.15
 Student Fees per Credit: \$45.86

Noncredit Enrollment (FY2024)

Number of Open Enrollments: 11,848
 Unduplicated Student Headcount: 5,464
 Customized Training Registrations: 2,404
 Number of Business Clients Served: 766

Credit Enrollment (Fall 2024)

Total Headcount: 11,720
 Fall Student FTE (IPEDS): 7,836
 Degree-Seeking students: 10,558 (90.1%)

Enrollment by Gender (Fall 2024)

Male: 5,036 (43.0%)
 Female: 5,967 (50.9%)
 Unknown: 717 (6.1%)

Enrollment by Age (Fall 2024)

21 years and under: 7,018 (59.9%)
 22-24 years: 1,832 (15.6%)
 25-34 years: 1,875 (16.0%)
 35 and older and unknown: 995 (8.5%)
 Average Age: 23.2 | Median Age: 20.0

Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity (Fall 2024)

American Indian/Alaska Native: 12 (0.1%)
 Asian: 1,043 (8.9%)
 Black/African American: 822 (7.0%)
 Hawaiian/Pacific Islander: 17 (0.1%)
 Hispanic, all races: 5,104 (43.5%)
 Two or more races: 223 (1.9%)
 White: 2,973 (25.4%)
 Nonresident: 652 (5.6%)
 Unknown Race/Ethnicity: 874 (7.5%)

Enrollment by County (Fall 2024)

Bergen: 8,629 (73.6%)
 Passaic: 1,122 (9.6%)
 Hudson: 439 (3.7%)
 Essex: 434 (3.7%)
 Other NJ County/Out-of-State/County Unknown: 665 (5.7%)
 Nonresident: 431 (3.7%)

Top 5 Non-U.S. Countries of Citizenship (Fall 2024)

Dominican Republic: 173
 Colombia: 163
 Turkey: 158
 Ecuador: 142
 Republic of Korea: 134

Enrollment by Att. Status (Fall 2024)

Full-Time: 5,873 (50.1%)
 Part-Time: 5,847 (49.9%)

Enrollment by Reg. Type (Fall 2024)

First-Time Students: 3,561 (30.4%)
 Transfer Students: 866 (7.4%)
 Stop-Out Students: 1,407 (12.0%)
 Continuing Students: 5,886 (50.2%)

Degrees/Certificates Awarded (GY2024)

Total Degrees/Certificates Awarded: 1,776

Associate of Arts (A.A.): 167
 Associate of Science (A.S.): 1,145
 Associate of Fine Arts (A.F.A.): 12
 Associate of Applied Science (A.A.S.): 413
 Certificates: 39

Outcomes

Fall Retention Rate (Fall 2023 FTFTDS): 64%
 3-Year Graduation Rate (Fall 2020 Cohort): 24%
 3-Year Transfer Rate (Fall 2020 Cohort): 17%

