

BERGEN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

FOCUSING ON THE FUTURE

STRATEGIC PLAN 2024-2029



Strategic Themes:

- Student Achievement and Enrollment
- Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belongingness
- Marketing, Communication, and Outreach
- Innovation





Letter from the President

Dear Community Members,

Welcome to what will be the blueprint for the work of the College from 2024 to 2029. Numerous collaborators from inside and outside the College have brought their best selves to this planning effort.

It is immensely gratifying to lead an institution of higher education through both a review of its mission and the development of a new Strategic Plan. I'm honored to be able to say that all of the planning accomplished at Bergen has been collaborative, iterative, and consequential. Our vision to be a first-choice educational option is being realized.

When we launched the Strategic Plan process, it quickly became apparent that our recent efforts to create and adopt a new Mission, Vision, Values, and Goals, as well as our work on the Academic Master Plan (and our first Diversity, Equity, Inclusion Action Plan), shared many common elements. The document you have before you represents the distillation of two years of focused planning efforts in one concise format. We were purposive about avoiding an end product that would be needlessly complex. Our intention was to find the threads that tie the various documents together and to capture the spirit of innovation that resides in the soul of our unique community.

Any good strategic planning effort is a journey. It requires a fearless embrace of change while also honoring those traditional things that work well. I am hopeful that you will embrace the four themes and the 15 goals as you live out the mission at this truly great, American community college.

Bergen's future rests on continuous improvement. We are up to the task and look forward to navigating alongside all of our many partners.

Enjoy the journey!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eric M. Friedman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the name.

Eric M. Friedman, Ph.D.
President

MISSION, VISION, VALUES

BERGEN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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.



Approved January 10, 2023

INSTITUTIONAL GOALS

- #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.
- #2 Bergen Community College offers educational programs and services that promote success for students of different abilities and economic needs.
- #3 Bergen Community College provides evidence of effective educational experiences.
- #4 Bergen Community College offers programs and services which enable community members to engage in lifelong learning opportunities.
- #5 Bergen Community College cultivates community relationships which support a growing network of partnerships with external organizations.
- #6 Bergen Community College shares its stories of success as a vital resource in Bergen County and the surrounding region.



The Planning Process

The 2024-2029 Strategic Planning process began in the Summer of 2022. The first step was a collaborative assessment and revision of Bergen Community College's Mission, Vision, and Values. Two factors considered in the decision to update the mission include changes in college leadership and changes in the College's internal and external environment in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Another outcome of this assessment of the existing statements was the need for institutional goals that define and recognize the college's priorities and activities. The draft of the proposed "new" Mission, Vision, Values, and Institutional Goals (MVVG) included input from internal and external constituents who provided suggestions for revising and improving the statement. These suggestions were incorporated into the final draft, which the College's Board of Trustees approved on January 10, 2023. These newly approved statements served as the foundation for work done on creating this Strategic Plan.

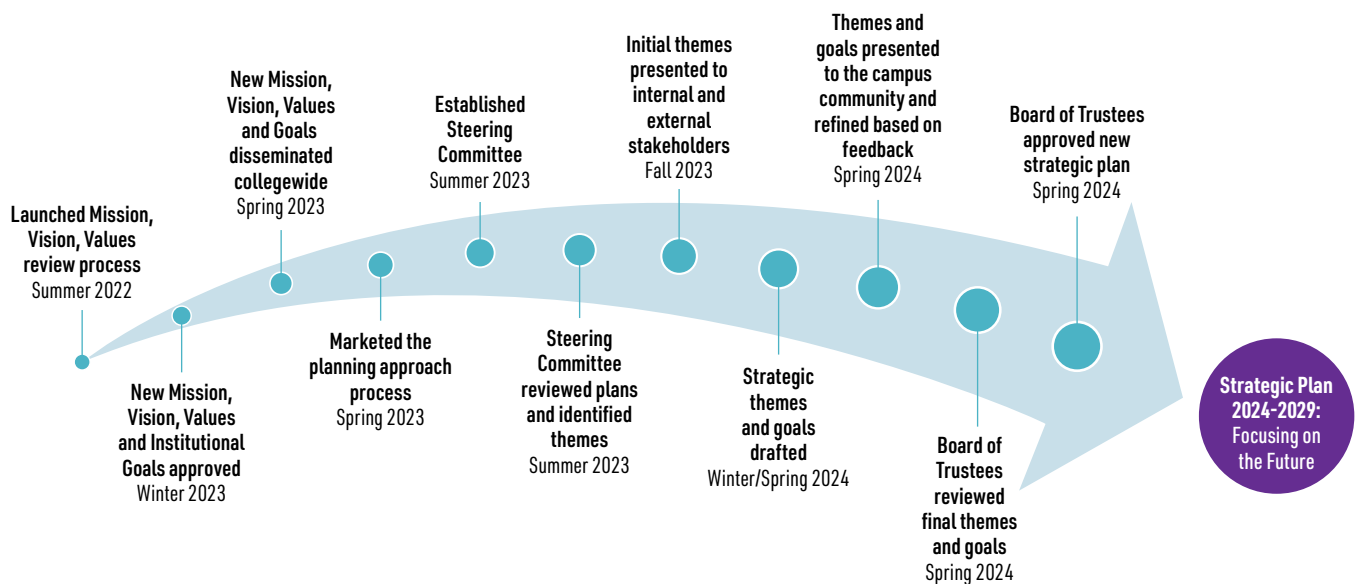
The planning approach employed for creating this plan relied on the well-attended and participatory planning processes that informed several plans developed between 2021 and 2023. These plans included an Academic Master Plan, a Strategic Enrollment Management Plan, the College's first Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan, and a Facilities Master Plan. The creation of each plan included the input of the College's stakeholders on key institutional planning issues. With college-wide participation in the creation of these plans, along with the President's Annual Goals and the MVVG providing additional context, the Strategic Planning Steering Committee embarked on identifying the four themes that were common in the plans. Specifically, the Committee identified strategic themes across the plans and noted any gaps. Through a process of prioritization, the Committee forwarded four strategic themes, which were presented to the College community through a series of open fora and focus groups beginning in the fall of 2023.

In the Fall of 2023, input was solicited from internal and external stakeholders. This process began with a presentation to adjunct faculty at the Fall 2023 Adjunct Conference, during which participants were invited to share their feedback on the themes (and suggestions on initiatives that align with the themes). On September 6th, during the Faculty/Staff Conference and Professional Day of Development, multiple presentations on the four strategic themes were made throughout the day. One presentation was made during the morning, where an overview of the Strategic Themes was shared. In the afternoon three workshop sessions were held where the strategic themes were discussed in greater detail. Input at all sessions was collected in an online survey. Participants accessed the survey via a QR code shared at the end of the presentation.

Also in September 2023, separate presentations were made to the Student Affairs Division. In November, events were held to solicit student input: a presentation was held at the Student Government Association Meeting, and a presentation was made at the well-attended “Pizza with the President” event. At all sessions, input was collected via an online survey. External stakeholders representing K-12, four-year institutions, business and industry, and non-profit organizations were invited to a special meeting in November 2023 to share their perspectives on the College’s strategic directions and to offer suggestions on how the College can position itself for the future.

After the series of open fora, the Strategic Planning Steering Committee met in December to review and prioritize the feedback collected from the stakeholder groups. Following this review and prioritization process, the Committee revisited the themes' descriptions and drafted strategic goals to address the vision outlined in each strategic theme. A small writing team refined the language and scope of the themes and goals in the Winter and early Spring of 2024. The president and cabinet members reviewed the final themes and strategic goals, which were then presented to the college community and the College’s trustees through a series of presentations in March and April. The 2024-2029 Strategic Plan, Focusing on the Future, was adopted and approved by the Board of Trustees in May 2024.

The Strategic Plan Timeline



Strategic Themes

Strategic Theme 1: Student Achievement and Enrollment

Fostering and improving student achievement during all phases of a student's educational journey is vital to achieving the College's Mission. Increasing access to higher education must be supported by an equal commitment to promoting and facilitating student success. The College is committed to providing programs and services that meet the unique needs of its students in inclusive and equitable ways, including comprehensive advising and counseling services, scholarships and other forms of financial assistance, and holistic mental health and wellness services.

Strategic initiatives that focus on all aspects of enrollment, persistence, and degree completion are critical to the success of students and the College's financial stability. Initiatives will positively impact all stages of student enrollment and success, from recruitment through persistence and culminating in graduation, transfer, and career success. The goal of these initiatives should also be to stabilize and increase a sustainable enrollment model while being mindful of the varying needs of Bergen students.

Goals:

1. Improve graduation rates by one percent annually for the next five years.
2. Develop and implement a comprehensive plan to improve retention rates by one percent annually for the next five years.
3. Strengthen the College's partnerships with four-year institutions. Develop new collaborative opportunities to increase students' attainment of associate and bachelor's degrees and career success. This should include reverse transfer agreements, 3+1 agreements, and innovative on-site bachelor's degree completion programs.
4. Ensure the current inventory of programs meets the evolving needs of the workforce and expand stackable credentials in key areas.

Strategic Themes

Strategic Theme 2: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belongingness (DEIB)

Bergen Community College aspires to be a national leader in promoting diversity, equity, inclusion, and belongingness. The College celebrates the rich diversity of its communities and is committed to fostering belongingness and engagement. Bergen has been recognized as a college community that accepts and values everyone for their unique backgrounds, perspectives, and talents.

The College endorses and supports goals and initiatives that bolster academic success, lead to career success, and promote civic engagement. We are committed to taking actionable steps that provide a sense of being accepted, valued, included, and encouraged. Bergen is committed to continuing to build partnerships that enrich its DEIB efforts and contribute to the success of its students and community members.

A key focus of these efforts is the increasing acceptance and celebration of all forms of diversity on campus and in the community. The College will expand its efforts to integrate diversity, equity, inclusion, and belongingness into recruitment and hiring practices, community and cultural events, curricula, and professional development for faculty and staff.

The College urges leaders at all levels of the organization to collaborate on developing plans that expand upon current practices and contain measurable outcomes.

Goals:

1. Establish structure on the organizational chart to centralize multicultural services and activities and support the expansion of inclusive and equitable practices.
2. Continue to improve students' sense of belonging and inclusion through the implementation of the DEI Action Plan.
3. Assess the current diversity requirement in the General Education program. Identify and implement improvements that focus on diversity and inclusion.
4. Expand professional developmental opportunities for faculty and staff that improve awareness, enhance pedagogical strategies, and lead to more inclusive environments.

Strategic Themes

Strategic Theme 3: Marketing, Communication, and Outreach

Higher education's marketing and communication strategies have evolved in recent years. Bergen combines traditional communication strategies with new technologies to ensure its messages are targeted, aligned with audiences' needs, and delivered through methods that produce results.

Strategic Initiatives within this theme will focus on improving how the College centralizes information and simplifies access to that information for internal and external constituents. To enhance outreach and communication, the College will craft targeted marketing and messaging that supports and attracts new students, donors, and partners.

Goals:

1. Develop a modern, user-centric website to transform our online presence into a dynamic information hub.
2. Use innovative techniques to market our programs and services, tell our story, and cultivate new partnerships that align with our mission.
3. Establish a robust internal communication plan with seamless cross-departmental collaboration.

Strategic Themes

Strategic Theme 4: Innovation

Experiential learning is an essential component of providing impactful and innovative programs for Bergen's students. The STEM Student Research Center, Lyndhurst Innovation Center, and the Center for Online Learning are examples of the College's success in identifying the needed resources to support new initiatives and facilitate change. Bergen will continue to seek new and expanded funding sources and partnerships to support innovation, institutional growth, and student success.

To launch transformative initiatives requiring robust strategies, innovation, and collaboration, leaders at all levels of the College will be called upon to provide leadership to evaluate and enhance existing programs and services. This work will be done within a framework built upon partnership and inclusiveness that encourages all members of the College community to share ideas and lead new initiatives.

Goals:

1. Promote continuous improvement through innovation in academic and administrative programs and services.
2. Support an environment and revise the structures that facilitate idea generation and follow-through.
3. Review relevant data to identify new and existing funding sources in support of innovative initiatives.
4. Create and implement a technology plan that includes emerging technologies, expanded process automation, learning space improvements, and technology-enhanced pedagogy both online and in the classroom.

Links to Current Mission, Vision, Values, and Institutional Goals

Strategic Theme 1: Student Achievement and Enrollment	
Vision	Institutional Goals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A first-choice option for the community. (#1) • An institution recognized for its ability to meet the needs of an ever-changing student population in a landscape of evolving employers' workforce needs. (#3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer educational programs and services that promote success for students of different abilities and economic needs. (#2) • Provide evidence of effective educational experiences. (#3) • Offer programs and services which enable community members to engage in lifelong learning opportunities. (#4)

Strategic Theme 2: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belongingness	
Values	Institutional Goals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Care: We identify, prioritize, and resolve issues by leading with an ethic of care. (#4) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serve 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. (#1) • Offer educational programs and services that promote success for students of different abilities and economic needs. (#2)

Strategic Theme 3: Marketing, Communication, and Outreach		
Vision	Values	Institutional Goals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An institution recognized for its ability to meet the needs of an ever-changing student population in a landscape of evolving employers' workforce needs. (#3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication: We regularly and openly share what we do with both internal and external community members. (#3) • Celebration: We acknowledge, honor and take pride in the quality of our work and the work of others. (#6) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultivate community relationships which support a growing network of partnerships with external organizations. (#5) • Share its stories of success as a vital resource in Bergen County and the surrounding region. (#6)

Strategic Theme 4: Innovation	
Vision	Values
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A first-choice option for its community. (#1) • A national model for innovation and partnerships. (#2) • An institution recognized for its ability to meet the needs of an ever-changing student population in a landscape of evolving employers' workforce needs (#3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenge: We challenge ourselves to improve upon our programs and services. (#5)

Steering Committee

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Director of Campus Planning and Improvements

Cinzia Diorio

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Jian Falcone

Managing Director, Financial Administration

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Dean of Adjunct Administration and Facilitator, President's Advisory Council on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

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