Granite
State
College

**Strategic Plan
2020-2023**

Our Mission

The mission of Granite State College is to expand access to *public* higher education for *adults* of all ages throughout the State of New Hampshire and beyond.

Our Vision

Granite State College will be a leader, nationally recognized for meeting the academic needs of adult students, by offering programs and services of the highest quality that address the educational and workforce priorities of our state and region. Our global reach and responsive delivery models will enable the College to serve the evolving needs of a growing and increasingly diverse audience of adult learners, supporting increased educational attainment that contributes to their academic success, professional growth, and personal development.

Our Strategic Goals

There are three overarching goals reflected in Granite State College's strategic plan for 2020-2023. As described concisely in this section and elaborated upon throughout this document, these goals require us to achieve greater efficacy, engagement, affordability, and impact on behalf of our students, our partners, and the University System.

- **Develop high quality academic programs and learning experiences that incorporate the best practices in adult higher education.**
- **Become more engaged with workforce development in New Hampshire and beyond.**
- **Improve the affordability of public higher education in New Hampshire.**

Informing each of these goals is an understanding that our success can only be measured through a lens that respects and reflects the diversity of all of our learners, our colleagues, and our communities. To this end, we acknowledge our responsibility to foster a supportive and inclusive institutional culture and one that effectively engages the diverse communities we have the opportunity to serve.

From the outset, we also acknowledge that the overarching goals and the underlying conditions that are essential to achieving them will not be accomplished simply by good intentions. We recognize that our ability to be successful is predicated on some expertise that we do not have within the organization, but that we must pursue as part of our own journeys as lifelong learners to achieve greater proficiency as culturally competent educators who share a commitment to access, excellence, and equity.

The decision to incorporate consideration of diversity, equity, and inclusion into the initiatives that support each of the three goals—rather than to create a fourth goal with this explicit focus—is intentional and predicated on a belief that this commitment should become so integral to our work as to be inseparable; however, as we evaluate our progress on each of the three goals, we will need to be self-conscious, diligent, and honest about whether this approach is truly effective in fostering the inclusive and respectful community we envision and be prepared to modify our approach based on

both a greater understanding of effective best practices in this domain and measurable performance against our goals.

Goal 1: Develop high quality academic programs and learning experiences that incorporate the best practices in adult higher education.

Why Is It Important?

Providing students with the most effective learning experiences should be the first commitment of every educator. The outcomes of effective learning should be measurable and meaningful to the learners, aligning with relevant disciplinary standards and national benchmarks for professional preparation, and should allow students to demonstrate the knowledge, competencies and intellectual skills associated with the appropriate level of college learning.

Consistent with our mission to serve adult learners, the educational experiences that we provide in support of these outcomes must be accessible to all of the individuals we serve, and these experiences must reflect awareness and sensitivity to each student's unique circumstances as well as appreciation and respect for the broad spectrum of culture and humanity that encompasses all of us. We recognize that prior learning can be an asset, along with concurrent experiential learning, for an education that more effectively supports adult students' personal and professional objectives, and we will work to expand opportunities for students to benefit from such learning.

Granite State College will not be the only institution serving adult learners. However, by pursuing the highest possible standards for teaching and learning, innovating and adapting evidence-based best practices for instruction and support to achieve positive learning and post-graduation outcomes, and exceeding our students' expectations for the learning experience, we will raise the bar and drive improvements in education that will benefit adult students everywhere.

Initiatives[1]

Personalize learning in ways that are responsive to student needs
- *Provide intentional, guided advising that is supportive of students' personal values, interests, goals, and career aspirations and help them to optimize their learning opportunities*
- *Make our curricula available in formats including professional development, credit-bearing courses, certificates, and degrees that meet students' learning needs across the lifecycle*
- *Optimize prior and concurrent learning from external sources*
- *Support the development of culturally competent practices among colleagues across the College that contribute to the success of underserved students*

Deliver the highest quality academic courses and programs.
- *Continuously improve high-quality teaching and learning through evidence-aligned professional development for faculty*
- *Expand capacity to sustain and enhance comprehensive course and program development and review processes that are rigorous and inclusive*

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[1]Although some of these initiatives are most closely associated with one of the three goals, many of them will actually contribute to multiple goals in ways that are intuitively obvious, but these connections are made explicit through the numeric coding that follows each initiative (referencing goals 1,2, and 3).

- *Identify, adhere to, and innovate best practices in instructional design that incorporates available and evolving technologies and research that contributes to equitable opportunities and outcomes*

Use integrated methods of assessment to enhance student success.
- *Build a comprehensive, systematic, and inclusive approach to measuring student learning and engagement to improve student success*
- *Use measures of student learning and engagement to drive continuous improvement*
- *Make indicators of success more visible to students to help them to become better and more engaged and reflective learners*

Goal 2: Become more engaged with workforce development in New Hampshire and beyond.

Why Is It Important?

The workforce of the 21st century will experience continuous change. Increasingly, the ability of individuals and organizations to achieve success will rely on the capacity for working adults to adapt to new roles and new technologies. In the State of New Hampshire, the converging demographic forces of slow growth and aging, the latter bringing an imminent wave of retirements, reinforces the need to optimize the human potential of all citizens of this state, facilitating career growth and transitions for older workers and career pathways and opportunities for the next generation of New Hampshire's workforce who are younger and increasingly drawn from diverse backgrounds. Successful individuals will be lifelong learners and successful organizations will foster cultures that support continuous learning and improvement.

As a public institution in the state of New Hampshire, we recognize our responsibility and our capacity to be a resource for the workforce needs of employers across New Hampshire and throughout the region. As part of the University System, we seek to serve our own students well and also to share our expertise in ways that strengthen the work of our sister institutions across USNH, extending our reach as appropriate to also support the work of the Community College System of New Hampshire (CCSNH) in ways that contribute to the well-coordinated delivery of postsecondary education that best meets the needs of the state.

For the College to fulfill its mission, we must facilitate meaningful learning outcomes—knowledge, skills and habits of mind—that are intrinsically valuable and well-aligned with the workforce needs of employers in New Hampshire and the surrounding region. To achieve these results, the College must collaborate with key stakeholders, including the State of New Hampshire, actively solicit input into program development, and demonstrate efficacy in delivering educational programs that are responsive to those needs through effective mechanisms for feedback that support continuous improvement.

These efforts will be reflected in students' enrollment decisions and reciprocated by employers and other stakeholders who actively seek to work with Granite State College as a trusted partner and a resource for educational programs that serve the workforce. These efforts, through the College on behalf of the University System, will further illuminate the value that USNH provides to New Hampshire.

Initiatives

Increase the number of students and employers served by partnerships
- *Expand enrollment partnerships that align with employers' workforce needs and values*
- *Enhance field-based experiential learning to enrich students' education and build stronger bridges between classroom and workplace*
- *Identify and validate employer-provided training—including that provided by the US military and the State of New Hampshire—that reflects college-level learning that is complementary to the curricula of the College, that contributes to the alignment between education and the workplace, and that has the potential for broad impact*

Serve key unmet needs of New Hampshire's employers for education and training programs
- *Create professional development offerings, in collaboration with New Hampshire employers, that strengthen the workforce and organizations*
- *Develop customized learning programs that are responsive to the needs of New Hampshire employers*

Contribute to a well-coordinate system of public higher education that best serves the needs of New Hampshire
- *Contribute to the effective launch of NH Online*
- *Increase collaborations with CCSNH to expand the impact of workplace-based learning*

Build upon the Child Welfare Education Partnership model to develop more programs to serve acute needs of the State of New Hampshire and its communities
- *Engage with key partners (e.g., CCSNH, the Department of Administrative Services and Primex) to identify and address opportunities for collaboration to support targeted education and training needs*
- *Engage with New Hampshire's nonprofit social service and human service agencies to identify and address opportunities for collaboration to support targeted education and training needs*

Goal 3: Improve the affordability of higher education in New Hampshire and beyond.

Why is it important?

Postsecondary education contributes to many opportunities in life. It is required for entry into occupations, valuable for career growth in most fields, and often necessary to support transitions to new occupations and industries that result from changes in technology, the economy, and individual life circumstances; however, these benefits of postsecondary education can only be realized if that education is accessible.

The emergence of online learning has done a great deal to lessen the effects of time and place—two significant impediments to postsecondary education for adults—and it is also contributing to greater affordability; however, it is only one factor and not a complete solution to cost as the most persistent

barrier to postsecondary education. National data[2] illustrate how far New Hampshire (and the New England region) are from true affordability, and if we are going to ensure that working adults in New Hampshire and the surrounding region have real access to higher education, we have to sustain a relentless drive to achieve genuine affordability for our students and to provide real value—the best possible programs at the lowest possible cost—on behalf of our students and all of our stakeholders.

This needs to be reflected in lower cost for a college degree and lower cost of attendance to achieve specific learning objectives, whether an individual course or program. This also needs to be reflected by the College continuing to prioritize and concentrate its investments on those elements of our work—instruction, academic support, and student services—that provide the most direct benefit to students.

Initiatives
Lower the cost of higher education
- *Lower tuition and fee rates for students (initially through partnerships)*
- *Continue to lower the cost of textbooks and course materials through the appropriate use of "Open" resources and other more affordable, academically effective options*
- *Enhance capacity for philanthropic support for student scholarships*
- *Build on the pathways that have been created between the Community College System of New Hampshire (CCSNH) and our degree programs through faculty, advising, and technology channels to help students to more fully leverage the benefits of both systems*

Increase the percentage of GSC expense that is directly invested in instruction, academic support, and student services
- *Pursue opportunities to actively collaborate and coordinate within USNH and CCSNH in order to share appropriate services, contracts, and resources to improve operational efficiencies and reduce costs*
- *Continue to align the College's physical presence with the demonstrated need for space, preserving the capacity to support our instructional needs (including OLLI and CWEP), leveraging non-GSC facilities, where appropriate, to better serve students and to reduce costs*

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[2] Nichols, Andrew Howard, et al. "How Affordable Are Public Colleges in Your State." *The Education Trust*, 17 Dec. 2019, edtrust.org/resource/affordability-gap/.