



**Lehigh Carbon**  
**COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

# **Academic Plan**

## **2014-2017**

**April 2014**

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# **INTRODUCTION**

## **PURPOSE:**

The purpose of the Academic Plan is to determine and promote a vision for academic and student development at LCCC. Academic Council, a group with broad representation from the academic and student development areas of the college, is charged with updating the Academic Plan annually. Because the college's vision and goals are truly dynamic, both the Academic Plan and the Strategic Plan have adopted a three-year, "rolling" timeframe. This provides for a longer-term vision while allowing for annual adjustments to the plan. Academic Council gathers input from other groups within the college and, when needed, works with President's Cabinet in a tactical capacity to implement academic and student development proposals.

The Academic Plan considers the mission, vision, and values of the college and sets short, intermediate, and long-term academic and student development goals.

Academics at LCCC should inspire intellectual curiosity, encourage a thirst for knowledge, promote a critical awareness of self and society, and create lifelong learners. The goals set in the Academic Plan outline the steps to achieve and maintain LCCC's vision for academic excellence.

## **DEFINITION OF ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE:**

Academic excellence is mastery of knowledge in a content area and of the analytical, practical, and/or creative skills to use this knowledge effectively.

Academic excellence at LCCC is fostered by exemplary teaching, rigorous curricula, engaging co-curricula, exceptional service, synergistic partnerships, and collective dedication to student learning and student development.

Academic excellence inspires and generates personal, professional, and intellectual growth of learners.

## **GUIDING PRINCIPLES:**

The Academic Plan will

- Be consistent with Lehigh Carbon Community College's vision, missions, goals, and core values.
- Maintain high academic standards.
- Emphasize student success and learning.
- Support diverse teaching and learning environments.
- Support diverse practices in services that cultivate student learning, growth and development.
- Develop credit and non-credit offerings in response to community needs.
- Foster partnerships.
- Inform the college's strategic planning process.
- Be reviewed and revised on an ongoing basis.

## **BASIS FOR CURRENT GOALS:**

The Academic Plan was created from a recommendation from the Middle States 2007 Self-Study. The Academic Plan is intended to inform the Strategic Plan, but due to timetables that were already in place, the first few versions of the Academic Plan were developed concurrently with the college's Strategic Plan. This 2013-2016 version of the Academic Plan is the first to be developed prior to the finalization of the college's next Strategic Plan. As such, it plays a more focused role to inform the Strategic Plan in areas related to academics. The timing of the Academic Plan has also been changed from "annual" to "rolling" to parallel the same change in the Strategic Plan.

An overall, primary focus on student success leads to the first goal and its related sub goals. LCCC's vision for academics involves student support and engagement both in and outside of the classroom. In today's world, well established and well communicated policies and procedures for safety and/or dealing with emergencies is crucial.

Educational research confirms that increasing engagement enriches a student's college experience and improves retention. Repeated CCSSE results show that LCCC ranks at or above the national average in many measures of student engagement. Recognizing and encouraging high impact practices will help LCCC continue to excel in this area.

The current Academic Plan encourages continued involvement with the Enrollment Management Plan. The First-Year Experience program will continue to enhance engagement and academic success. In addition, improving strategies, processes, and programs designed to recruit and retain non-traditional and returning students, particularly in their first year, will contribute to student success.

Managing resources so as to provide the highest possible level of service at each site is a priority. Through more systematic and collaborative planning and scheduling of courses and programs more students will be able to take full advantage of what LCCC has to offer and completion/graduation rates should increase. Special attention will be given to customer service/provision of information, especially for our increasingly diverse student population.

Support for the college's curricula is the plan's second goal. Specific areas of focus are noted including developmental education, distance education, and English as a Second Language (ESL). Under a directive from Middle States, more specific connections will be made regarding assessment of student learning competencies, particularly the collegewide competencies, and their relationship to the general education courses embedded in our programs.

As technology becomes more and more integrated with how we provide education to our students, maintaining and supporting a strong technology infrastructure and support system is a crucial goal. The Academic Plan details how this can be accomplished in areas from HEOA (federal law) compliance to direct delivery of both teaching and support services to students.

Strengthening the college's organizational framework remains an important goal. To ensure a commitment to academic excellence we must strive to provide academic excellence through professional development, effective internal and external communication, and collaborative decision making processes. Added this year, is a subgoal regarding a "greener" campus with a commitment to sustainability.

The last goal addresses outreach and marketing. We continually strive to improve outreach with all stakeholders including prospective students, sponsoring high schools, four-year institutions, and employers.

## Chapter 1: Academic/Structure

**Goal: Promote a college-wide culture of student success.**

### **Plans:**

#### **1. Cultivate a safe, supportive learning environment.**

- 1.01 Provide professional development activities for administration, faculty, and staff to engage with each other in learning behavior management strategies for all college settings.
- 1.02 Develop an integrated plan to provide counseling services in a confidential environment for students.
- 1.03 Maintain the college's commitment to safety and emergency procedures.

#### **2. Encourage student engagement with high-impact practices.**

- 2.01 Increase the utilization of high impact practices. High impact practices involve active and/or deep learning experiences that have been shown to be very beneficial for students by "sticking" with them. Examples of high impact practices include: learning communities, research, service learning/community-based learning, internships, capstone courses/projects, e-portfolios.
- 2.02 Create a co-curricular portfolio development program with opportunities for academic, personal, career, and leadership development.
- 2.03 Integrate hands-on and cross-curricular experiences to enrich students' personal and academic growth

#### **3. Provide the highest possible level of services at each site.**

- 3.01 Evaluate the specific academic focus for each site. Coordinate input from all stakeholders to identify the needs of students in order to plan, budget, and distribute resources appropriately.
- 3.02 Establish a systematic process for evaluating services at each site.
- 3.03 Develop a more systematic schedule of course offerings at the sites to complete designated programs
- 3.04 Implement collaborative conferencing to increase options for students to complete designated degree programs at the sites as well as interact with other service areas of the college

#### **4. Enrich students' First-Year Experience - philosophy and programs**

- 4.01 Continue a coaching, advising, and peer mentoring model organized by common career pathways to enhance engagement and academic success.
- 4.02 Assist first-year students with a successful transition to college by providing access to comprehensive resources
- 4.03 Establish a faculty and staff task force to research freshman seminar/student success course design.
- 4.04 Establish a faculty and staff task force to research developmental bridge programs for first-year students.

**5. Develop an outreach and orientation program for non-traditional students**

5.01 Design orientation and ongoing outreach strategies and programs for non-traditional students, organized by common career pathways to enhance engagement and academic success.

**6. Increase “customer service/provision of information” college-wide through implementation of additional human interaction.**

6.01 Increase the number of Spanish language speaker(s) to meet the changing demographic of our supporting school districts.

**7. Increase program completion/graduation rates.**

7.01 Develop a web-based template showing when courses are scheduled in order to facilitate academic planning for students.

**8. Continue to support implementation of the enrollment management plan.**

8.01 Promote a broader understanding of enrollment management collegewide.

8.02 Provide training for college administrators and faculty to continuously improve data analysis to become more familiar with demographics and regional needs, and to forecast needs the college can fill.

8.03 Encourage development and utilization of improved communication processes for faculty and staff to support their role with students.

## Chapter 2: Current Broad Curricular Initiatives

**Goal: Strengthen and support the college's curricula.**

**Plans:**

- 1. Assess the general education curriculum.**
  - 1.01 Meet the Middle State requirement to assess the effectiveness of the General Education requirements to meet college-wide competencies
- 2. Review the developmental education curriculum.**
  - 2.01 Creatively combine or sequence developmental education to facilitate student retention and completion.
  - 2.02 Assess placement procedures and effectiveness for developmental courses in conjunction with a review of practices at other community colleges.
- 3. Promote and support distance education**
  - 3.01 Continue to promote improvements in online education
  - 3.02 Continue to enhance and promote services available to online students
- 4. Ensure a collaborative decision-making process for the scheduling and modality of all courses.**
  - 4.01 Continue to collaboratively review and revise schedule building, ensuring clear multi-directional communication among all stakeholders
- 5. Embrace the changing demographic of our supporting school districts in regard to English as a Second Language (ESL)**
  - 5.01 Develop an authentic approach to multiculturalism across the college
  - 5.02 Create clear benchmarks for entry into ESL credit programs
  - 5.03 Assess influence and develop curricular connections in response to the rapidly growing Hispanic demographic in LCCC's service geography

## Chapter 3: Technology

**Goal: Provide an agile and strong technology infrastructure and support system for academics.**

### Plans:

- 1. Develop strategies to determine academic technology needs and establish ad hoc teams to make recommendations for implementation.**
  - 1.01 Review the Technology Plan and provide input to its development.
  - 1.02 Review HEOA compliance status annually. **(federal law compliance)**
  - 1.03 Determine methodologies and funding sources to encourage grassroots faculty efforts to explore new technologies for use in all aspects of academics, encourage the use of this technology, and locate/provide training resources for adopters (examples include: Google Apps for Education, iTunes University, mobile device adoption and use, etc.).
  
- 2. Prioritize requests made through the Technology Requests form (in excess of \$20,000) as they relate to Academics and provide prioritization of those requests.**
  
- 3. Provide educational experiences that are efficient and productive for students and faculty**
  - 3.01 Maintain a wired and wireless infrastructure that allows for fast and reliable communication on the campus network and the internet at all sites.
  - 3.02 Provide remote access to the campus network for file uploads and sharing for all faculty.
  - 3.03 Equip classrooms appropriately for wireless connectivity with devices that the faculty utilize in their courses.
  - 3.04 Plan for an increase in electrical outlets for students who have brought their own devices to the classroom.
  - 3.05 Evaluate software for use in classes and collaborate with Information Technology personnel to determine infrastructure and support needs and upgrade requirements.
  - 3.06 Monitor and evaluate the increased use of Cloud computing and its impact on campus services.
  - 3.07 Evaluate collaborative conferencing solutions for use in the classroom, meetings, student services, student organizations, advisory committees, etc.
  
- 4. Promote Universal Design (UD) of courses/curricula and campus environment and ensure compliance with the college's Electronic Information Technology (EIT) Policy.**
  - 4.01 Provide education and training for all relevant college personnel on the concept of Universal Design and the new Electronic Information Technology policy.

## Chapter 4: Organizational Framework

**Goal: Provide an organizational framework that will support a strong academic commitment to excellence.**

### **Plans:**

#### **1. Provide increased opportunity and support for professional development.**

- 1.01 Provide more efficient and effective ways to deliver timely and continuous on-demand training for all instructors.
- 1.02 Provide professional development opportunities to all faculty taking advantage of in-house expertise.
- 1.03 Maintain a consistent mechanism through which faculty members receive recognition for their professional development accomplishments in a timely fashion
- 1.04 Promote the use of the professional development webpage as a centralized location for communication about professional development activities, resources, and related information including Teaching Learning Center, Faculty Instructional Technology Center, Human Resources, and other faculty activities.

#### **2. Improve both internal and external communication.**

- 2.01 Continue to enhance functionality of the portal and the intranet as communication tools.
- 2.02 Continue to revise the LCCC website to facilitate the dissemination of academic information more clearly and effectively.

#### **3. Move toward a “greener” campus**

- 3.01 Encourage a paperless academic environment including the delivery of content, required submission of course work from students, and feedback from instructors.
- 3.02 Implement two-sided printing on all campus printers used for academic work.

#### **4. Provide a mechanism for college-wide input on facilities development during the facilities planning and renovation process by the stakeholders of that area.**

- 4.01 Establish ad hoc committees of stakeholders as renovations or additions are planned on all campuses to provide input and advice.

#### **5. Ensure sufficient administrative support to maintain academic excellence**

- 5.01 Evaluate school, division and departmental support requirements, accounting for different campus and site needs, to inform the budgeting and staffing decisions on an annual basis

## Chapter 5: Outreach

**Goal:** Reach out proactively to many diverse employers, four-year institutions, and high schools to ensure engagement in authentic partnerships that reflect the region's needs and keep LCCC relevant to those needs.

### **Plans:**

- 1. Accredit the Concurrent Enrollment Program.**
  - 1.01 Continue the NACEP process (National Alliance for Concurrent Enrollment Partnership).
  - 1.02 Seek to achieve full accreditation.
- 2. Support full institutional marketing outreach to LCCC constituents regarding our comprehensive offerings.**
  - 2.01 Develop plans to market individual programs of study.
  - 2.02 Develop partnerships with local institutions to offer courses that would be of specific interest to their students (summer, winter sessions).
  - 2.03 Strengthen efforts to market distance education, ESL and STEM programs, etc.
- 3. Create an Office of Transfer and Articulation.**
  - 3.01 Establish an advising and transfer center and resource space, with a work area for transfer students.
  - 3.02 Establish office space for partner institutions to meet with LCCC staff and students.
- 4. Extend invitations to all campus events to college partners.**
  - 4.01 Use existing contacts and continue to establish new ones to develop a planned approach to building strong bridges to the community through campus events.

# Appendix A: HISTORY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ACADEMIC PLAN

## Planning Process

In a parallel activity to the Middle States Self-Study process during spring 2007, recognizing achievement of the principal benchmarks outlined in *2020 Vision: Student Learning Strategic Plan 2004-2013*, the President outlined the framework for the 2009-2014 Strategic Plan. Targeted for implementation fall 2009, the plan was to consider the valuable work which had been accomplished by the Self-Study; assure a direct linkage and guidance between institutional mission, values and goals and the plan itself; and further serve as a guide in program and curricular development and their outcomes. With a theme of *Transformation: Strategic Plan 2009-2014*, the Strategic Planning Steering Committee worked to assure campus-wide collaboration and constituent representation in the Strategic Planning document recommended to the President.

Two recommendations resulting from the Self-Study were:

- Establish a formal Academic Plan that identifies, prioritizes, and coordinates policies and practices, improving student learning.
- Convene a broadly representative task force to discuss and clarify the concept of academic excellence, as it applies to student learning.

In considering an academic plan, the College noted a number of standing committees address elements of LCCC's academic activities. The Curriculum Committee oversees the process through which academic divisions create, revise or delete courses and programs. The Academic Standards Committee reports to the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs and makes policy recommendations to the President regarding academic procedures, including entrance requirements, grading standards, and graduation requirements. A subcommittee of Academic Standards was at that time examining LCCC's general education requirements and the educational philosophy that serves as its basis. The Assessment Council reviews LCCC's collegewide, academic competencies and its process of academic assessment. In addition to these committees, the college has a formal cycle of Academic Program Reviews in which, every five years, each academic program audits its curriculum and use of resources. The college has identified and funded initiatives such as the creation of an Honors Scholars Program, the promotion of interdisciplinary learning communities, the development of the PA Academy (a program of advanced courses for high school students), the expansion of the concurrent enrollment program, and the growth of distance learning. With this information, the institution developed a formal Academic Plan. The plan was intended to unify these activities and those of the individual departments and divisions, clarify long-term academic goals and coordinate activities across the campus. The plan was intended to provide additional guidance in the prioritization of resources in pursuit of LCCC's academic goal achievement.

Development of the LCCC Academic Plan began in the fall of 2007 as a parallel to the strategic planning process. The Community of Practice was identified as the group to follow through with the Self-Study recommendations of developing the Academic Plan and clarifying the concept of academic excellence.

<b>COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE PARTICIPANTS</b>			
<b>Dianne DeLong, Co-Chair</b>		<b>Dr. Barbara Kistler, Co-Chair</b>	
Maryjane Albeck	Joanne Gerken	Cyndi Levis	Jeanette Polizzi
Wendy Barron	Tim Gibbons	Dr. Lori Madiara	Janet Seggern
Marc Bonanni	Jeannie Hause	Ilona McGogney	Jonathan Sponsler
Dr. Christine Bowditch	Valerie Hayes	Linda Mesics	Michelle Strein
John Callahan	Jeffrey Herman	Dianne Melnychuk	Joyce Thompson
Marsha Felsten	Juanita Kaness	Michelle Mitchell	Larissa Verta
Joe Flaherty	Nancy Kelley	David Moat	Pam Weldon
Jake Flyzik	Janet Kirkpatrick	Christine Orban	Melanie Wursta
Jim Garraway	Rebecca Landis	Barbara Platt	

### **Charge to the Community of Practice**

The Community of Practice was directed to:

- serve as both a resource and critical reader for the Strategic Planning Steering Committee and Task Forces;
- remain mindful of the college's vision, mission, value statement and those elements the Institution holds as core, most specifically an outcome based student-centered learning institution, as the foundation of the Academic Plan;
- consider the work of the Middle States Self Study, the strengths which were noted and the recommendations which followed as they pertain to the Academic Plan;
- consider the elements of the Academic Plan which currently exist within the Institution and their integration into the over-arching plan (including: academic standards, assessment of student learning and institutional effectiveness of academic programming, curriculum process, developmental education, enrollment management, general education, learning communities, learning support, partnerships, retention, workforce training, etc.);
- research and examine critically the external environmental factors, related to the Academic Plan, which may impact the college through 2014;
- define academic excellence;
- develop and recommend the Academic Plan based on an established educational model<sup>1</sup>;
- recommend assessment and a cycle of review by which the Institution can measure its progress and the Academic Plan will be achieved.

The Community of Practice was divided into sub-communities to include the four categories identified, based on individual area of interest and expertise. Originally there were six sub-communities identified. As the work of the sub-communities progressed, the categories were further refined and reduced to the four presented. Members from the other two groups continued with their work in the four remaining sub-communities.

Concurrent with the Strategic Planning Process, the groups met and developed definitions of the categories, discussed strategies, and developed action items. Throughout the discussions and upon review, as appropriate, items identified to be strategic in scope were referred to the appropriate strategic planning task force. As the result of numerous group meetings and after review of the findings the sub-communities identified, the initial plan dated October 1, 2008 was formulated.

<sup>1</sup> LCCC's original 2008 Academic Plan was based on Vermillion Community College's model. LCCC wishes to acknowledge Vermillion Community College for their permission.

## **Appendix B: DERIVATION OF THE DEFINITION OF ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE**

Academic excellence was first identified as one of the collegewide goals by President Snyder in fall 2000. The Strategic Plan, *2020 Vision: Student Learning Strategic Plan 2004-2013*, defines academic excellence as a “commitment to academic standards, faculty professional development, and innovative course offerings.” Several measures have been used by the various academic planning teams to identify the achievement of academic excellence, these include: increases in graduation rates, students’ satisfaction with their college experience, and opportunities for service learning or civic engagement. In addition, the college supports various accreditation and certification opportunities, which demonstrate key student learning program outcomes.

During the October 2002 faculty meeting, the faculty was asked to share markers of excellence which were relevant to their programs. Several markers were identified; (1) transfer to bachelor programs, articulation agreements, acceptance of courses “as is,” transferability; (2) satisfaction/feedback (employer, student, graduate); (3) national exam pass rate, industry certification, national recognition, first-time pass rate; (4) job placement, advancement, industry demands, internship, post-graduation employment retention; (5) accreditation, approval, certification, certification as training site; (6) increase in graduation rates, graduation, high completion rate; (7) retention and success in next level courses (persistence). While the discussion was beneficial, it has been several years since the conversation occurred. The Middle States Steering Committee began an online discussion of academic excellence that was open to the whole by additional discussions in the 2007-2008 academic year resulting in a more universal and operational definition of academic excellence.

It was further noted as a recommendation from the Self-Study:

- Convene a broadly representative task force to discuss and clarify the concept of academic excellence, as it applies to student learning.

As a result of the Self-Study recommendation, and in conjunction with the strategic planning process (*Transformation: Strategic Plan 2009-2014*), further defining of academic excellence has taken place. The Community of Practice was given as one of their charges to define academic excellence; members discussed during their meetings several working definitions. In addition, the definition was presented in February 2008 at a faculty meeting where group discussions took place for continued refinement of the definition.

Based on the group discussions, the first definition of academic excellence emerged. Further revisions to the definition have been made through subsequent versions of the Academic Plan.

# **Appendix C: MISSION, VISION, VALUE STATEMENT, COLLEGEWIDE STUDENT LEARNING COMPETENCIES, AND COMPONENTS OF A COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

## **MISSION:**

Responding to the community by providing affordable, accessible, and high quality education.

## **VISION FOR EXCELLENCE AT LCCC:**

National prominence and academic excellence as a comprehensive community college.

## **VALUE STATEMENT:**

As a student-centered learning institution, Lehigh Carbon Community College values:

- **LEARNING** - the development of foundational knowledge, critical thinking skills, and self-awareness, that advance intellectual, ethical, and social responsibility.
- **STUDENT DEVELOPMENT** - best practices that engage and challenge students; foster individual growth, leadership and service; and intentionally support holistic development.
- **INSTRUCTIONAL EXCELLENCE** - an environment of best practices that engages and challenges students, advances intellectual curiosity; fosters lifelong learning with quality teacher-student contact and use of current technology.
- **DIVERSITY** - differences, open dialogue and increased understanding of diverse thoughts and experiences.
- **OPEN ACCESS** - opportunity for students to pursue learning in an environment that supports identification and achievement of goals within their ability.
- **PARTNERSHIPS** - relationships that provide innovative and entrepreneurial solutions to meet the demands of the community and region's economic development and workforce needs
- **EMPLOYEES** - contributions, capabilities, collegiality, teamwork and professional development of our employees.
- **CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT** - decision-making based on assessment, solid planning, and effective management of resources.

## **COMPONENTS OF A COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY COLLEGE:**

Lehigh Carbon Community College seeks to offer to those individuals who have the ability to benefit, programs and services related to the following components:

- career programs;
- developmental and remedial education;
- lifelong learning and community education; and
- transfer programs.

## **COLLEGEWIDE STUDENT LEARNING COMPETENCIES:**

### 2009-2010 Student Learning Competencies

- Think critically
- Apply quantitative reasoning
- Communicate effectively
- Participate cooperatively within a team
- Use current technology effectively
- Apply information literacy skills
- Observe and analyze the diverse human experience
- Apply scientific reasoning
- Evaluate ethical aspects of decision making

It is the college's belief that in acquiring these competencies students will develop confidence in their academic potential and recognize their own strengths and limitations.