

A Commitment to Academic Excellence and Student Achievement: **The Keene State College Academic Plan**

2009-2014

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As New Hampshire's public liberal arts college, Keene State College is a leader in providing a high-quality liberal arts education for New Hampshire residents, New England residents and students from across the country and the world. We are dedicated to achieving our unique mission within the state by providing exceptional programs that meet the needs of our students for an education that will endure in changing times and will serve them well as they embark on successful careers, the pursuit of further study and meaningful lives.

Keene State College's Strategic Plan challenges the College community to work together in "a dynamic progression to a new level of academic excellence." This academic plan provides a comprehensive vision for achieving the academic mission of the institution. This is not a plan just for the Division of Academic Affairs, though Academic Affairs figures prominently throughout. Rather this academic plan touches all corners of campus life, and all members of the campus community should see themselves as active participants in meeting this challenge.

Celebrating Keene State College's historic strengths, current achievements, and vision for the future, the Academic Plan summons the College to continue to define and refine its identity as a public liberal arts college. As New Hampshire's public liberal arts college, Keene State College needs an Academic Plan that will guide us in building upon historic strengths as a public institution serving state needs for teachers and other professionals, while recognizing the excellence in arts and sciences programs and strengthening the liberal arts experience of all students.

Keene State is part of an exciting sector in higher education, the Public Liberal Arts College, that is contributing uniquely to the preparation and motivation of a new and diverse generation of students dedicated to service, to making a real difference in the face of the profound social, economic, and political challenges confronting the world. The need is clear, and so is our focus: on undergraduate education, engaged learning in and out of the classroom, personal mentoring, and a rich campus life. The result is that we will provide a distinctive, unique educational experience that specifically draws on all the region has to offer. Academic structures that support this learning include our new Integrative Studies Program, our new four-credit course model, and our emphasis on engaged learning through undergraduate research, creative projects, capstone experiences, national and international study, and service learning.

What will it mean to create an environment where all contribute to a dynamic progression to a new level of academic excellence as the public liberal arts college of New Hampshire? The College will evaluate constantly evolving public responsibilities and opportunities, partnering as needed with external constituencies and developing institutional resources. The College will continue its commitment to student access and affordability. It will embrace existing strengths in mentoring its undergraduate students and pursue ongoing opportunities for students to develop ethical and social responsibility. In the College's creation of its distinctive liberal arts identity, we will challenge students to know what is and to imagine what may be, to know who they are and to create who they can become. Higher education in a public liberal arts college can prepare students to serve, meet and fulfill current challenges, even as it must free them from the constraints and expectations of the present.

We must also be cognizant that our academic goals require careful allocation of resources that needs to be communicated to various stakeholders. Measuring and communicating our success must incorporate national standards and benchmarks in higher education and analyses that engage each division as partners.

This Academic Plan, covering 2009–2014, draws from the faculty and staff commitment to student success. The plan flows clearly and directly from the strategic planning process established in 2006 by President Helen Giles-Gee and led by the Planning Council. The plan also supports and flows from opportunities for reflection and transformation, such as the New England Association of Schools and Colleges self-study, collective bargaining, College Senate deliberations, University System initiatives, and national dialogues through AAC&U, AASCU and the American Democracy Project. The Strategic Plan calls for nothing less than a transformation of Keene State College into a premier nationally recognized public liberal arts college. This transformation is rooted in the academic mission of the College.

This plan was developed by a community of authors—the Academic Affairs Council, faculty, staff, students and other stakeholders—who contributed ideas and words during the 2008-2009 academic year. Public drafts of the plan were released in March and August 2009, with ample opportunity for comment. This final version incorporates the work of many. Taken together these ideas articulate a vision for academics at Keene State College that is simple but ambitious:

Keene State College will offer a high quality academic environment that becomes a national model in undergraduate liberal arts education. We will offer dynamic programs that set high standards and challenge students to meet those standards through a commitment to learner-centered approaches.

This vision will be achieved through ongoing professional development and support for all members of our community, our shared commitment to student success, and collegial leadership that values and depends on full participation.

The guiding principles for this vision emanate from the mission and values of Keene State College, which ground the academic enterprise of the institution.

Keene State College Mission and Values

Keene State College prepares promising students to think critically and creatively, to engage in active citizenship, and to pursue meaningful work. As the public liberal arts college of New Hampshire, we offer an enriching campus community and achieve academic excellence through the integration of teaching, learning, scholarship, and service.

Values

Our liberal arts mission dedicates us to the development of knowledge and skills necessary to meet the challenges of our changing world. As a public institution, we provide educational opportunities for all qualified students and continue our heritage of service to New Hampshire and the New England region.

We value:

- All members of our community: students, faculty, staff, alumni, and friends.
- Strong relationships among students, faculty, and staff.
- Excellence in teaching, learning, and scholarship.
- Commitment to learning and cultural enrichment.
- Social justice and equity in our community and in our curriculum.
- Educational challenge and support for a wide range of learners.
- Physical and financial access and support.
- Balanced development of mind, body, and character.
- Diversity, civility, and respect.
- Civic engagement and service to the community.
- Environmental stewardship and sustainability.
- Partnerships that enhance the quality of life in the Monadnock region, New Hampshire, and the world.
- An attractive campus that inspires and supports inquiry, reflection, and social interaction.

Strategic Goals

To support the mission and values of Keene State College, the College community has developed five strategic goals. These goals compel a commitment to a strong academic program that acknowledges our successes but just as strongly require us to be better—to reflect, to improve, and to respond to the needs of our students. They squarely and definitively place responsibility for achieving our mission and values in the academic program.

The strategic goals, in order of priority (each with the primary academic theme emphasized) are:

1. To significantly enhance and become recognized for the **quality of our academic programs and the academic achievements of our faculty and students.**
2. To clearly and continuously **communicate our mission and values** in all that we undertake, and to **foster a strong sense of community** on campus in pursuit of academic excellence.
3. To **invest in faculty and staff** so they can provide leadership for the College's transformation. People will always be the College's most important resource, and professional development opportunities are critical if the College is to be successful. Current efforts to create a human resources master plan will support this strategic goal.
4. To actively engage our students in a learning process that is grounded in **service, citizenship, and ethical awareness.**
5. To provide **high-quality academic programs** that are **affordable and accessible** to a wide range of learners.

While the strategic goals call for academic leadership, each of them goes well beyond the Academic Affairs Division. Academic achievement requires support and investment throughout the campus. As noted above, the Academic Plan must be a vision for the campus, not just Academic Affairs.

The following sections, organized around the five strategic goals, define the fundamental academic questions Keene State College must address if we are to meet the strategic goal. These questions have guided the creation of the academic goals that follow them, but in addressing them we refine and clarify our values as an academic community. The academic goals—some underway, some nearly complete and others to be developed; some narrow and specific and others still conceptual—will allow us to answer the questions and ultimately achieve our vision.

The academic goals articulated in the remaining pages anticipate that, as we move forward to achieve them, Keene State College and the members of this community will do so with an abiding commitment to integrity. The success of our institution, our faculty and staff, and our students depends on it. The reputation of the College requires a commitment to the values and ideals that we have established as a community and that we hold as an institution of higher education.

Our commitment to diversity and multiculturalism is also an overriding value infused throughout the Academic Plan. As the College moves forward in a dynamic progression to new levels of academic excellence, global perspectives, an investment in diversity and a commitment to multiculturalism should inform all that we do: recruiting students, faculty and staff, the development of our programs and curricula, and the way members of the community work with each other. The challenge is great: to embrace the rich diversity of our society and to strive to afford our students an understanding of the multicultural, global society they will inherit. Nothing less is acceptable and nothing less will prepare our students for the world they will enter upon graduation.

Goal 1: Academic Quality and Achievement

To significantly enhance and become recognized for the quality of our academic programs and the academic achievements of our faculty and students.

Keene State College is committed to enhancing and becoming nationally recognized for its academic programs. This is the College's top strategic goal and top priority. Realizing this goal and our collective vision of transforming teaching and learning at the College will require reflective practice and responsive change. The community must set high standards for academic achievement in all programs, and must collectively employ innovative learning environments and pedagogies relevant to today's students that motivate them to achieve those standards. It is our intention that education at Keene State College will be significantly transformed so as to meet the challenges of a changing world.

The faculty is already fully engaged in four very important curricular initiatives to support this goal: the move to a four-credit curriculum, the new general education program, reflective programmatic evaluation, and the service-learning initiative. These are initiatives that—while still in their early stages and in great need of care and reflection—have set the foundation for other initiatives that also require our attention if we are to reach new standards of excellence. To that end, we are committed to building and maintaining strong, high quality academic programs throughout the curriculum that emphasize student success, employ pedagogical best practices, and set clear, high standards for teaching and learning.

Part of our commitment to deeper learning that prepares students for a changing world includes providing experiences that help them identify meaningful questions about the world around them, and cultivating the critical thinking and analytical skills needed to pursue and identify relevant answers. Nowhere is this seen more powerfully than when our students engage in original research or creative endeavors. Undergraduate engagement in such activities demonstrates to students in a very clear way that they will help define the problems of the future, and must embrace their roles as problem-solvers and interpreters of the human experience.

Our faculty can and do make significant contributions to their scholarly, artistic, and scientific disciplines. By including students in their research and scholarly efforts, faculty model the value of a life of inquiry and engaged learning. As we move forward with our curricular transformations, we must support and celebrate faculty and student achievements in original research and creative endeavors. These activities, when woven into the fabric of the curriculum, move us significantly forward in our dynamic progression to a new level of academic excellence.

Our path to becoming an exemplary institution of Academic Quality and Achievement follows from these principles:

- The development of innovative pedagogy and a commitment to continuous curricular transformation
- The development of critical and creative thinkers who are technologically fluent and information literate and who are able to effectively communicate and act on what they know
- A collaborative environment creating engaged and connected experiences, valuing experimentation and risk taking
- Flexibility that balances and respects our diverse community of scholars, professionals and learners
- An attractive campus that inspires and supports inquiry, reflection and social interaction that attracts and retains able faculty and students

Creating Effective Learning Environments at Keene State College

Ongoing and deliberate progress in the development and sustainability of effective learning experiences and environments are essential to academic success. Our path is guided by current and documented research that calls on today's educators to create learning environments that are:

Learning-centered - A system where there is a clear, shared responsibility for our academic community to create experiences and environments that are reflective of best pedagogical practices and exceptional learning opportunities. We will create academic environments where our students embrace and understand their responsibility to be successful in their own learning. A learning-centered environment must be flexible, offering multiple and varied solutions to meet learning outcomes. It must also be diverse, embracing a range of environmental designs, teaching styles, learning styles, and thought of as a necessary foundation needed to foster the multiple approaches to intellectual work.

Authentic - An applied, multidisciplinary approach that focuses on complex real-world problems and matters of ongoing scholarly attention within our disciplines where the student demonstrates knowledge and understanding in a multitude of ways. The interaction with real world problems helps the student to engage and develop new knowledge and understanding. An authentic learning environment includes engaged and connected learning experiences, embracing the philosophy that education is a public good that excels when it employs pedagogies connecting students to the world and to their personal, intellectual, and professional growth. Effective learning moves beyond the classroom to engage students in community, civic, or professional experiences that integrate classroom concepts to support this connection.

Both physical and virtual - Recognition that learning experiences can transition fluidly among the physical classroom, laboratory or community space, through faculty contribution to their scholarly fields, and virtual spaces in ways that complement each other and support ongoing student learning.

Open – To transform the quality of our academic environment, our community must engage in the challenging discourse necessary both to define and embrace a spirit of openness in the collegiate learning environment. We must ensure that the distribution of intellectual material will facilitate engagement. By design, open learning environments will incorporate open collaboration, transparency and on-going learning. Environments should value and facilitate use, re-use, and redistribution of material among faculty and across institutions of higher education and other communities of learning. We must also acknowledge that effective, lifelong learning transcends an individual's college experience.

Committed to documenting student learning - Intentional design of learning experiences and learning environments to employ reflective methods and responsive practices that align with identified learning goals is essential, utilizing multiple continuous forms of assessment from various sources (peers, faculty, and community) to inform continuous curricular transformation.

These environmental conditions for student learning in which the College commits to a vibrant liberal arts education draw on the national dialogue about higher education. Several initiatives underway advance these principles to establish and maintain a community that supports student learning.

Fundamental Questions

Which curricular initiatives—underway and imminent—will advance the mission of Keene State College and enhance the quality of the undergraduate program?

What does it mean to have integrity in our academic programs?

What steps must the campus take to maintain currency in student learning styles and the maintenance of programs that directly address the needs of current student with the flexibility to address the changing needs of student learners?

How do we continue our commitment to information fluency, by providing experiences that challenge our students to critically consider the evaluation, use and presentation of information in a world that is increasingly information rich?

How can alternative forms of learning, such as engagement in research or creative endeavors, problem-based service learning or co-curricular work, be effectively woven into the academic experience to support deeper learning and prepare students to be competent and confident problem-solvers?

How do we more effectively create an open intellectual environment—a campus community supported and challenged to engage in active discourse about pedagogical best practice, content, learning styles, and learning environments?

How do we demonstrate commitment to lifelong learning and provide the support for our community of learners to be successful?

How does Keene State College best advance its public liberal arts mission with select graduate programs that address the needs of the region and the state, and how do we best administer those programs?

How do we communicate our academic goals and values to our students and provide support for their academic endeavors?

Academic Goals

Undergraduate Curriculum: Complete implementation of curricular reform related to 4-credit curriculum and Integrative Studies Program (ISP).

- Continue to build support for and opportunities for faculty to be involved in ISP. Address ongoing faculty concerns with structure and some departments' limited ability to participate in the ISP.
- Implement and provide on-going refinement of the ISP by assuring a strong relationship among the schools, departments and the ISP in developing and scheduling of a full complement of ISP courses and consistently evaluating the scope of contributions.
- Phase out the transitional general education program (TGEP).
- Explore whether Keene State College should adopt minimum upper-level degree requirements for bachelor's degrees.
- Discuss the continuation or elimination of associate's degrees.
- Complete 3-year review of 20-credit overload policy.

New Program Development: Identify and develop new programs and revisions to current programs that, consistent with Keene State College's public liberal arts mission, respond to students' needs and promote and support academic excellence. Programs will be developed or revised in accordance with the new program review procedures approved by the College Senate.

Undergraduate Education:

- Continue ongoing efforts to provide engaging learning experiences for our faculty and students through service and civic and professional engagement experiences and through the expansion of opportunities for undergraduate research and creative endeavors. This will require continued discussion within our academic community regarding how best to incorporate these activities in our curriculum.
- Continue to develop and strengthen the College Honors Program. Establish measures of success for the College program and department-based programs.
- Continue ongoing review and investigation of the New Hampshire Statewide Nursing Initiative.
- Respond to USNH priorities for program development and system partnerships.

Graduate Education:

- Revise current graduate programs to meet student and College needs by exploring new delivery models.
- Strategically explore new graduate-level program offerings that support our commitment to undergraduate liberal arts education, our mission, and our commitment to lifelong learning.
- Explore potential to generate revenue that offsets expenses through CE partnerships and professional networks that support the undergraduate program.

Assessment: Continue outcomes-based initiatives with regard to both student learning and institutional effectiveness.

- Support ongoing departmental assessment initiatives by:
 - Refining expectations for annual assessment reports
 - Finalizing assessment plans and reporting processes for academic support areas
 - Implementing the 2008 Senate guidelines for academic overview
- Implement data capture and reporting software systems to support assessment and accreditation efforts (TracDat and Tk20).
- Create an Academic Affairs Assessment Steering Committee responsible for supporting activities that reinforce Academic Affairs' commitment to outcomes-based assessment and action taken based on assessment results. The committee will work with departments and CELT in supporting faculty development and in maximizing efficiencies.

Technology: Strategically integrate technology throughout the academic program to enhance student learning and teaching.

- Implement Academic Affairs Technology Plan and provide ongoing review and updates.
- Support ongoing efforts to enhance information fluency. This is increasingly necessary as technology provides access to an information-rich world.
- Build a strong collaborative environment between Academic Affairs and IT Group through the application of technology that supports student learning and helps us achieve our goal of academic excellence.
- Lead and provide support for infrastructure and technology planning through the Information Technology Plan, Academic Affairs Technology Plan, and the IT master planning process.

Diversity and Respect for Other Cultures: Keene State College has made great strides and must continue to do so in diversifying its curriculum with respect to other cultures and diverse perspectives.

- Develop affordable and engaging national and international immersion experiences that will broaden the perspectives of our current students and attract new students to our campus.
- Support faculty to effectively integrate multiculturalism and diverse perspectives into their courses.

Respect for the Environment and Sustainability: Keene State College promotes stewardship of our natural resources as a core institutional value.

- Develop curricular and co-curricular initiatives that promote student investment in the environment.
- Support faculty to create interdisciplinary approaches to environmental issues.
- Create partnerships across campus, particularly with the Council on Sustainable Futures to support learning and teaching.

Undergraduate Research, Creative Endeavors and Entrepreneurial Activities: Keene State College has expanded opportunities for students to participate in undergraduate research and creative work and entrepreneurship.

- Develop opportunities for students in all fields of study to participate in faculty-directed research and creative work.
- Provide opportunities for students to work with primary source materials by making the special collections of Mason Library accessible physically and virtually.
- Explore new ways to support undergraduate research and creative activity on campus.
- Participate in USNH entrepreneurship activities and develop increased campus opportunities for entrepreneurial projects.

Academic Integrity: Implement policies and procedures that value and promote academic excellence.

- Continue review and implementation of Academic Honesty policy and provide ongoing opportunities to educate students about academic integrity.
- Work with the College Senate to review grading policies, with the intent of meeting faculty needs and establishing high standards of excellence that students are motivated to achieve.
- Academic support units will develop and maintain plans to support students as they strive to meet high standards set by the faculty.

Accreditation: Self-study and accreditation give the faculty and staff opportunities to review national standards and to reflect on the extent to which we meet them.

- Finalize NEASC self-study and address issues in advance of site visit in October 2010.
- Provide support for departments wishing to pursue disciplinary accreditations.

Physical Spaces: In partnership with Finance and Planning, we will develop the next generation of learning spaces.

- Plan for construction and renovation of major academic buildings: Visual and Media Arts Center, Redfern, Adams, Butterfield.
- Create and maintain effective, contemporary flexible learning environments which take into consideration:
 - Guidelines and processes for creating such spaces
 - Varying instructional practices (face-to-face, blended, laboratory/studio)
 - Diverse pedagogies and learning styles
 - Technology needs

Student Support: Review and improve support structures for our students as they enter, are members of, and go forth from our community through the use of assessment information from all academic support units. Expand collaborative work between Academic and Student Affairs to ensure student success.

Entry:

- Admissions: Continue refinement of our enrollment planning and admissions processes and procedures to enroll students who are academically prepared and who share the promise of the College's Mission to "Enter to Learn, Go Forth to Serve."
- Orientation: Continue the development of an orientation program that welcomes new members of our community clearly articulates our academic expectations and instills a respect for the campus, host community and natural resources. Establish measures of success and processes for ongoing revision of the program.

While in our Community:

- Ensure integrity in our academic programs so that students can make purposeful progress and timely completion in their degree programs, including curriculum management, and the balance among major, ISP and elective requirements.
- Find effective ways to address our students' academic needs and skills and supporting those programs and offices engaged in this work.
- Provide students with experiences and backgrounds that will set them apart and make them competitive in the world of work: enhance opportunities for undergraduate research and creative endeavors, service and engagement experiences, participation in academic honors programs and study abroad.

Going forth:

- Ensure that our students are well positioned based on commonly recognized program accreditations, certification, or scholarly standards as they graduate.
- Find effective ways to support our students' efforts to pursue meaningful work by developing the skills necessary to secure advanced study, work opportunities or contribute to the greater good.

Goal 2: Communication and Community

To clearly and continuously communicate our mission and values in all that we undertake, and to foster a strong sense of community on campus in pursuit of academic excellence.

Recent campus discussions on priorities and values have demonstrated the College's commitment to strategic initiatives that support Keene State College's mission and reflect its values. Our goal of becoming a national model for student learning requires us to look externally, to participate in national discussions about higher education, to present and publish on key Keene State College initiatives. Communication to our external constituencies—parents, community, government leaders, other colleges and universities—is essential to documenting and promoting our success.

At Keene State we must share successes. We should strive to develop initiatives and practices that can be shared with others on campus and off.

Fundamental Questions

How do we reaffirm that the pursuit of academic excellence is the driving motivator for all units across the campus community?

How does Keene State College foster and support the involvement of faculty and staff in the Keene community, the Monadnock region and the state of New Hampshire? How do we extend our contributions both nationally and internationally?

What are the messages and methods of communication that will best engage those in our region and state with the academic mission?

How do we build a stronger sense of community on campus by addressing issues of communication between the faculty and the staff at Keene State?

Academic Goals

Partnership with Marketing and Communications: We will strive to improve documenting faculty and staff achievements and publicizing them.

- Explore new approaches and mechanisms to collect and share information on faculty and staff achievements.
- Work with Media Relations to promote opportunities for faculty and staff to discuss their work in community forums.
- Consistently highlight academic success in publications and presentations to our constituents.

Leadership Development: Design and promote leadership development opportunities for those in leadership positions on campus or those interested in leadership.

- Partner with Human Resources to develop ongoing workshops and training.
- Provide opportunities for leadership development through off-campus workshops, seminars and programs.

Team Building: Develop and promote opportunities to foster communication between and among faculty and staff.

Community Building: Create new opportunities for members of the campus to engage with each other in social and other community settings.

National Engagement: Continue participation in LEAP, American Democracy Project, Council of Undergraduate Research and other national discussions in which Keene State College has taken a leadership role or demonstrates model practice.

Goal 3: Invest in Faculty and Staff

To invest in faculty and staff so they can provide leadership for the College's transformation.

If we are to accomplish our goal of academic excellence, the College must provide support that encourages personal growth, professional development and achievement in teaching, scholarship and service for faculty and staff. As the Strategic Plan notes: "People will always be the College's most important resource, and professional development opportunities are critical if the College is to be successful."

Keene State College's ability to achieve high standards and address the learning styles of students today depends on a commitment to the personal and professional growth of our faculty and staff. The College is committed to ongoing professional development that provides faculty with the skills and resources they need to be successful in their classrooms, in the library and online. This commitment is not limited to classroom support, however, since some of the most effective student learning occurs at the intersection of teaching, scholarship and service and within the context of the College's non-academic settings.

The staff members at Keene State College play an important role in the education of students. Through their varied contacts they contribute to students' personal and academic successes often by reinforcing some of the key concepts students explore in the classroom. In such roles as advisor, supervisor or problem solver, staff members have opportunities to help students think critically, reason morally or cultivate their maturity and sense of responsibility. In instances such as these, the staff should recognize their opportunity to contribute to the student's overall education. Professional development can help staff to maximize their impact with students and to participate in helping every student—and the College as a whole—in achieving academic excellence.

As Keene State College achieves recognition for its academic program, support for faculty research, creative work and other scholarship is essential. Service obligations must contribute to the success of the institution and be balanced with other obligations. Additionally, professional and operating staff must see their work as integral to the success of the academic mission of the College, and appropriate developmental opportunities must be available.

Fundamental Questions

How can the faculty and administration work together to balance teaching, scholarship and service responsibilities in ways that support faculty and advance the interests of Keene State College?

What professional development experiences must the College offer to assist faculty in offering a high quality, model curriculum? How do those experiences become a part of the regular work of faculty?

How do professional and operating staff participate in the educational process and promotion of academic excellence?

How does Keene State College meet the professional development needs of those not on the tenure track faculty: adjunct faculty, teaching professional staff, professional and operating staff?

What goals should we set for diversifying the faculty and staff?

How do we best manage change in a higher education environment that is continually changing?

What does it mean to be a leader at Keene State College?

Academic Goals

Faculty Workload: Provide support for the faculty by increasing the complement of tenured and tenure-track faculty and by implementing processes and procedures that allow faculty to balance teaching, scholarship and service.

- Approved in 2007, the Faculty Staffing Plan provides for three new faculty lines (above and beyond retirements and resignations) in each academic year. The plan, revisited every year, remains in effect until between 70 and 80 percent of courses are taught by tenure-eligible faculty.
- KSCEA and the Provost partnered in 2007 to provide a year of study on promotion and tenure processes at Keene State College. KSCEA leadership and Academic Affairs Council reviewed the resulting P&T Task Force Report in Fall 2008. Finalize discussion and implementation of agreed upon Task Force recommendations.
- Establish the Faculty Workload Committee called for in the current KSCEA contract.

Center for Engagement, Learning and Teaching: Continue the phased-in establishment of CELT to support faculty and staff

- Fill the vacant CELT staff positions.
- In cooperation with Finance and Planning, develop a program, location, design and timetable to house CELT staff in one location with appropriate facilities.
- Provide ongoing professional development activities for staff and faculty (including adjunct faculty and professional staff who also teach) that support learning and teaching through a variety of pedagogies.
- In collaboration with departments and the Academic Affairs Assessment Steering Committee, build a community of support for assessment on the campus and identify resources to support outcomes-based assessment.

Support for all Faculty: Provide ongoing professional development opportunities for adjunct faculty, teaching PATs, and professional staff who take on teaching overloads.

- Continue and improve the orientation program for faculty who are not tenure track.
- Develop new professional development programs for adjunct faculty.
- Continue ongoing discussions about adjunct workload issues with KSCAA

Support for Professional and Operating Staff: The changing nature of higher education and the Keene State College mission require strong leadership from the professional and operating staff.

- Provide leadership development opportunities for PAT and Operating staff.
- Provide professional development activities that connect the work of the staff to the move toward higher academic standards and the academic mission of Keene State College.

Diversity of the Faculty and Staff: As noted above, diversity and multiculturalism are core values for Keene State College. The College has been unwavering in its commitment to diversifying the faculty and staff, but largely unsuccessful in meeting that goal, particularly regarding racial and ethnic diversity.

- Review policies and procedures that create obstacles to attracting and retaining a diverse faculty and staff.
- Refine search procedures to increase opportunities for diversity.
- Develop mentorship and other opportunities that will support the retention of a diverse faculty and staff.

Faculty Research and Creative Work:

- Support activities that will help reconnect faculty with their passion, and lead to an increase in external grant submissions. Continue to improve support of such activities through the Office of Sponsored Projects and Research (OSPR) via workshops and other mechanisms for faculty at varying levels of grant writing experience.
- Support faculty and staff research through ongoing and evolving library service, including support for research that goes beyond collection holdings, supporting curriculum and research materials, and ongoing review of physical and electronic holdings.
- Explore new ways to value, support and share faculty research and creative work.

Support for Department Chairs: Chairs often articulate a tension between administrative and leadership requirements of their positions. In discussions with chairs and with KSCEA, Keene State College must better integrate these responsibilities.

- Develop better opportunities for chairs to discuss and offer recommendations on issues relevant to their leadership at Keene State College.
- Establish a schedule of standing meetings for department chairs for purposes of distributing information, gathering input, making decisions and professional development.
- On a routine basis, provide department chairs with the data, tools and resources required to support key activities such as course planning and assessment.
- Provide on-going direction and support for the administrative, task and leadership dimensions of the department chair role.

Goal 4: Learning that Leads to Engaged Citizenship

To actively engage our students in a learning process that is grounded in service, citizenship, and ethical awareness.

Framed always by our profound commitment to Academic Freedom, as well as our understanding of different student learning styles, the College is committed to encouraging a broad range of effective pedagogies in a liberal arts education.

If engaged learning is the pedagogy of a public liberal education, it is the creation of habits of mind, practice, and deed that are fundamental to the development of informed, caring, and active local and global citizens. Engaged learning at Keene State College springs forth from a foundation in the liberal arts, disciplinary study, scholarship, and service. We are committed to educating students about their role in our democracy, in our interdependent world, and to promoting active citizenship in its various forms.

Effective pedagogy that promotes the development of our students into engaged citizens takes many forms. From a traditional classroom environment to service learning to co-curricular initiatives that extend learning beyond the class environment, we must affirm our role as faculty and staff in providing a liberal arts education that leads students to engage responsibly as citizens throughout their lives.

Fundamental Questions

How do we create and maintain a campus culture that values and promotes civic engagement and community service as essential in the life of a well-educated person? Should a service experience be required of all students as a hallmark of a Keene State College education?

How do we develop and maintain on-campus partnerships that facilitate student engagement and learning? What role can Mason Library play in these efforts?

How do we develop and maintain relationships with external partners that enhance engaged learning opportunities for our students (service, internship, practicum, volunteerism, research and creative endeavors)?

Academic Goals

Student Engagement: Support student learning through curricular and co-curricular activities that engage students in their own learning.

- Catalog current initiatives and increase support for undergraduate research by developing strategies for expanding student involvement in research and creative work.
- Promote citizenship by supporting curricular initiatives that engage students through civic and community involvement, service learning and volunteer work.
- Provide an infrastructure for civic engagement, service learning, professional engagement, undergraduate research and creative work.

Global Education Office: Develop and promote increased opportunities for students to participate in national and international study.

- Enhance students' learning experiences through national and international experiences, including semester study away and other travel-study programs.
- Provide policies and procedures that set clear guidelines for international experiences.
- Develop increased international experiential learning opportunities.
- Explore uses of technology to provide international/global education partnerships.

Campus Partnerships: Create opportunities to engage students through partnerships.

- Seek partnerships that support and model our commitment to engaged learning, particularly those that support the economic needs and the economic development of the Monadnock Region and the State of New Hampshire.
- Create a single, coordinated place (virtual or physical) to coordinate student service learning and volunteer opportunities across Academic Affairs and Student Affairs to facilitate community outreach and ease of access to campus information for community partners.
- Continue ongoing collaboration between the experiential learning coordinator in the Center for Engagement, Learning and Teaching and the community service coordinator in Student Affairs.
- Support current partnerships within the residence halls, such as learning communities, and explore opportunities for new partnerships that will foster academic excellence.
- Create spaces in classrooms and across campus that facilitate opportunities for academic engagement.
- Partner to provide opportunities to engage students through contact with alumni.

American Democracy Project: Catalog and coordinate current initiatives related to civic engagement through participation in the American Association of State Colleges and Universities American Democracy Project. This initiative will help our College to support active citizenship in our students by:

- Creating a familiarity with and understanding of the U.S. Constitution.
- Supporting them to develop and apply of ethical frameworks as they vote for public officials who enact legislation.
- Developing an appreciation for diversity in our citizenry and in the expression of diverse viewpoints.
- Promoting social equality.
- Promoting economic justice.
- Preserving the environment.

Goal 5: Affordability and Accessibility

To provide high-quality academic programs that are affordable and accessible to a wide range of learners.

The “public” in “public liberal arts” remains central to all discussions of Keene State's future. Founded to serve the citizens of New Hampshire, KSC offers access to higher education to many who could otherwise never consider such a step. The College is equally committed to academic quality. While some campus discussions have framed access and quality as competing values, they are not. The College must continue to support access to higher education while at the same time strengthening its academic profile.

The College remains committed to meeting the financial need of qualified New Hampshire students. The traditional funding model that relies almost exclusively on tuition, auxiliary fees and state aid will no longer support our goals of affordability and accessibility. We must develop new revenue streams through partnerships across the community and state and through advancement activities.

We must also look internally to identify opportunities, consistent with our mission and culture, to make the cost of a Keene State College education affordable for our students. Students continually note the near impossibility of completing a degree program in 4 years. Indeed, our 4-year graduation rate, while improving, remains about 40 percent.

Keene State College, with a student body largely composed of traditional-aged, residential students, must also address the needs of non-traditional-age students and students looking for alternative learning experiences. Once again, consistent with our mission and culture, we must explore opportunities to provide online and blended experiences, unique summer opportunities, and programs for adult learners and others in the community looking for lifelong learning experiences.

Finally, our commitment to affordability and accessibility brings with it the commensurate responsibility to fulfill the public trust by supporting the economic vitality of our region. A vital economy will make it more possible for students to afford a college education. It will also create career opportunities for our students upon graduation. State institutions have a compelling responsibility to support the needs of their regions and states, and Keene State College serves its students by helping to make its community and state stronger.

Fundamental Questions

What steps can we take to make Keene State College more affordable for students by rethinking the options to attaining a degree?

How can the College support the needs of students with disabilities?

What are appropriate models for integrating the work of the faculty and staff with the goals of institutional advancement, including fundraising and alumni outreach?

How can Keene State College support the economic vitality of the Monadnock region through partnerships with academic departments and other units on campus?

How does the College promote lifelong learning among the residents of Keene and the region?

As a public institution, when must Keene State College respond to workforce or other market needs and how is it appropriate to do so in curricular and co-curricular endeavors?

How do we assure students recognize both their personal and social responsibility in engaging the challenges facing communities?

What do we mean by providing an accessible education?

How do we assure the public is aware that we are ready to collaborate to meet community needs?

Academic Goals

Admissions: In cooperation with Admissions and Student Financial Services, attract and retain promising students through targeted allocation of financial assistance.

Obstacles to Graduation: Keene State College faculty and staff must engage in a candid, thoughtful review of processes, procedures and requirements that create obstacles to graduation in 4 years, without compromising academic integrity.

- Continue College Senate review of balance among program requirements.
- Review recommendations of AACRAO report on scheduling and implement appropriate suggestions.
- Promote ongoing review of policies and procedures that needlessly interfere with progress to graduation.

Students with Disabilities: The College is committed to ongoing improvement of services to students with disabilities so that they may succeed in their academic programs and participate in all aspects of campus life.

- Provide ongoing support for faculty in their work with students with disabilities.
- Review and implement recommendations of consultant's report on assistive technology.

Development/Advancement/Cultivation: Embrace new partnerships between the Advancement Division and Academic Affairs that put faculty and staff and the academic program at the center of advancement efforts.

- Increase role of deans and schools in cultivation and development, with clear support from Advancement.
- Involve faculty and staff in cultivation efforts that will result in support for their departments, schools and the College.

Admissions Standards and Enrollment Management: Keene State College will review admissions standards and policies to ensure they are aligned with the College's mission and values.

- Continue ongoing refinements to application review processes.
- Review alternative admissions criteria that value a range of applicant attributes over test scores.
- Review and refine retention data to allow for more targeted interventions and better decision-making related to student retention and attrition.

Economic Development Initiatives: Keene State College fulfills its public mission, in part, by supporting the economic development and vitality of the Monadnock Region and the State of New Hampshire. These economic development initiatives advance the academic mission through partnerships, student learning opportunities and faculty and student research opportunities, and revenue generation.

- Continue phased-in establishment of Office of Economic Development and Business Outreach.
- Coordinate partnerships between academic units and local and state businesses.
- Pursue increased internship opportunities for students.
- Establish standard policies and procedures for credit-bearing internships, co-ops and other practicum experiences.
- Continue Keene State College/Regional Business summits that bring together business leaders with the campus community.
- Link curricular entrepreneurship with regional economic development initiatives.

Continuing Education: The Continuing Education Office provides core opportunities for access to higher education. The office serves people of all ages in a variety of credit-bearing and noncredit-bearing programs. CE also serves non-matriculated students throughout the year and matriculated and graduate students through summer session.

- Create a CE Master Plan that charts a comprehensive direction for CE, establishes revenue targets, and clarifies its leadership role in lifelong learning programs at Keene State College.
- Increase summer offerings by implementing alternative models (online and blended opportunities, shorter sessions) to meet student needs.
- Continue to increase the variety of non-credit experiences (CALL, OSHA, summer conferencing) available to adult learners.
- Community Access: As a public institution, the College should promote partnerships with Keene that provide learning experiences for residents and access to campus resources. Our notion of "access" as it relates to learning goes beyond the classroom experience.
- Maintain joint catalog with Keene Public Library and pursue new opportunities for partnership.
- Provide robust and challenging community programming, consistent with our mission, through Redfern Arts Center, the Thorne-Sagendorph Art Gallery, Putnam Theater and the variety of public lectures. Build bridges to the Keene and regional community through planned hybrid off-campus downtown art gallery co-op.
- Strengthen off-campus programming for Music students and faculty throughout New Hampshire, including Manchester and Concord.
- Continue initiatives to share resources like the shared database for the Thorne, the Historical Society of Cheshire County and the Horatio Colony Museum.

Conclusion

The success of any academic plan depends on the continued commitment of the College community to the vision, mission and values of the College. In turn, the vision, mission and values must be rearticulated and renewed through a continuous dialogue among all members of the community who are dedicating their time and energy to make serious, positive and thoughtful change happen in our curriculum, programs and learning environment. Given the challenges that any institution of higher learning faces in the 21st century, the goals and strategies of this plan must be continuously assessed to ensure accountability, encourage creativity, and maximize available resources.

Also essential to the success of the plan is a commitment to clear and timely communication with the campus, since everyone, not just the Academic Affairs division, is invested in achieving the goal of making this College the very best of public liberal arts institutions. Regular updates and opportunities to participate in these discussions must be provided through a variety of channels.

Considerable energy and invention must be used to ensure our steady progress with this plan. We must maintain the momentum that has already brought about transformation on our campus. To accomplish our goals, the resources necessary for truly collaborative endeavors must be and are being made available. We must honestly face the challenge of keeping all members of the community informed and invested in our successes and our challenges.

The assessment of our outcomes must be reliably conducted and the findings used to update and revise this plan with the same boldness of thought that went into its original development. The aspiration to involve the whole community in this endeavor naturally creates challenges for accountability and coordination to which we must continuously pay attention. The variety of processes—strategic planning, program development, enrollment management, community outreach, and others—create both opportunities and complexities as we move to achieve our goals.

Our stakeholders—students, parents, community, system and legislators—are demanding evidence of real educational outcomes, which is captured best in one overarching College strategic goal—achieving academic excellence. The institutions that rise to this new challenge will succeed and prosper, while those that do not will languish. While the Division of Academic Affairs at Keene State College has primary responsibility for meeting this challenge, our success will depend on the creative energies and hard work of the entire College community.