

**Strategic Plan: 2017-18 to 2020-21**  
**Mid-Cycle Review to Year Seven Comprehensive Evaluation**  
**Highline College**

Highline College's *Mid-Cycle Strategic Plan* expired with the 2016-17 academic year. Under ordinary circumstances, that fall's Mid-Cycle Peer Evaluation would have triggered a new round of planning efforts in preparation for 2020's Year Seven Peer Comprehensive Evaluation. The 2016-17 year, however, turned out to be anything but ordinary. That December, Highline's longtime president, Dr. Jack Bermingham, underwent an emergency open-heart procedure that, after a seven-month recovery attempt, ultimately led him to retire in late-July 2017.

From a planning perspective, the president's extended absence and unexpected departure left Highline at a crossroads. The previous strategic plan's centerpiece had been a set of student-attainment "stretch goals" that Dr. Bermingham himself had set. Further, the document responded to a pair of turning-point events — the launch of Highline's first baccalaureate degrees and a name change from Highline Community College to Highline College — that were unique to 2013-2014's planning context. The late-summer timing of Dr. Bermingham's retirement exacerbated the planning cycle's discontinuity, leaving the college with interim leadership for the entirety of 2017-18 as the trustees undertook a yearlong search for a successor.

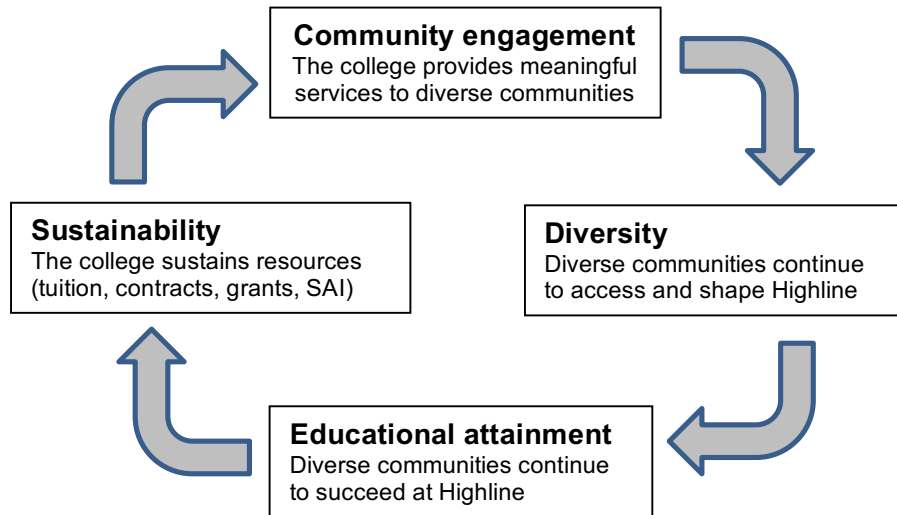
By the time fall 2017 arrived, the college's leadership team and governance groups had little capacity for the large-scale planning initiative that otherwise might have been well underway by then. Moreover, people recognized that a new president might want to reset Highline's plans and processes, potentially limiting the long-term usefulness of any comprehensive planning efforts during the interim year. On the other hand, it was equally clear that Highline needed to maintain an eye to the future while reinforcing the stability of its reassuringly familiar Core Themes.

With the support of the board, Highline's executive staff ultimately took a middle-ground approach to the current plan's development. To build wider involvement in the effort, without overburdening other constituencies and decision-makers, the multi-constituent Accreditation Steering Committee was tapped to help craft and refine the plan, working with executive staff. As part of this approach, executive staff agreed to revert to a planning framework that addressed all four Core Themes, identifying key initiatives based on challenges and opportunities that arose from current *Mission Fulfillment Report* (MFR) data. By balancing *MFR* against achievements that invite further improvement, the proposed plan attempts to foster both data-informed accountability and success-motivated innovation. Though not every *MFR* metric is addressed here, those measures form the plan's foundation.

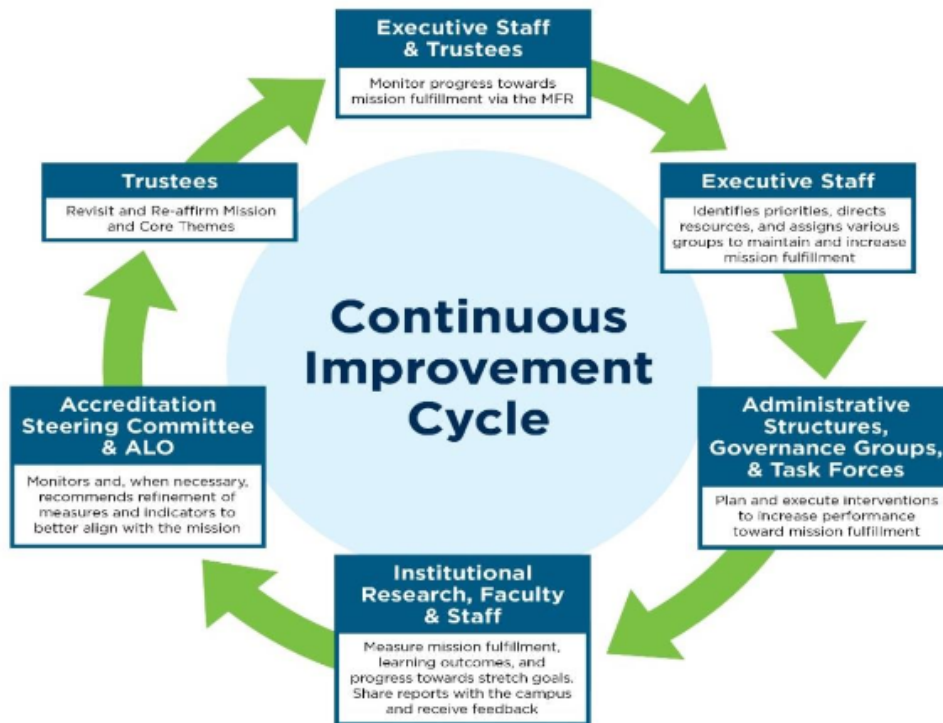
### Implementation

Over the next three years, Highline College will continue to implement its plan in a manner consistent with the institution's *Year Seven Self-Evaluation Report* (pp. 58-62), with each executive staff division taking primary responsibility for a Core Theme and working, from there, in close collaboration with the other divisions. Where possible, the plan's institution-level recommendations will be incorporated into the work plans of individual divisions. Those

recommendations, however, are in no way intended to preclude divisions from establishing additional goals of their own. The president, executive staff, and trustees will review interim progress reports and will provide guidance, as needed, on next steps. As before, the work sustains a cycle of mission fulfillment that integrates all four Core Theme pillars:



The plan’s implementation strategy also aligns with — and supports — broad participation of Highline’s governance bodies in the college’s continuous-improvement process:



## Elements: Strategic Plan for Academic Years 2017-18 to 2020-21

### **Core Theme 1 Promote student engagement, learning, and achievement**

Primary responsibility: Shared between Academic Affairs and Student Services

#### Challenges

► *Basic skills transition:* Though improved over 2015-16 figures, current data reveal that the basic skills transition rate continues to lag 4 percentage-points below our goal.

Key activities and primary accountabilities:

- *Academic Affairs:* Continue to support new Transition Success Center staff, particularly in pursuing connections/plans across academic departments, with student services professionals, and with external referral agencies.
- *Student Services and Academic Affairs* jointly: Support and provide resources for the newly established Transition Team as it studies and works to improve communication, navigation, and funding for basic skills students to transition.

#### Opportunities

► *College math:* Encouragingly, aggregate first-year math completions remain consistently above the *Mission Fulfillment Report* threshold of 25%. They have yet, however, to break the 30% mark. Data suggest that pass rates remain particularly low at the MATH 81 level.

Key activities and primary accountabilities:

- *Academic Affairs:* Encourage implementation of pathway-based remediation curricula; support Math Department adoption of co-requisite, acceleration, and other innovative delivery models for remediation.
- *Student Services:* Continue the Advising Taskforce's use of Highline Pathways to underscore the benefit of early identification of academic/career goals and relevant math courses, through Wayfinder (prospective student) workshops, orientations, and math placement consultations

► *45 college credits:* Encouragingly, aggregate in-year 45-credit attainment rates remain consistently above the *Mission Fulfillment Report* threshold of 30%. They have yet, however, to break the 35% mark.

Key activities and primary accountabilities:

- *Academic Affairs and Student Services* jointly: Continue the Advising Task Force's efforts to incorporate elements of the statewide Guided Pathway initiative into Highline's pathway-based, integrated advising model for all faculty and staff.

► *Academic performance-related attrition:* Thanks to changes in procedures and practices, Student Services has seen steadily improving academic performance among students on academic probation. This momentum offers additional opportunity to develop effective interventions to support probation students.

Key activities and primary accountabilities:

- *Academic Affairs:* Participate in the development and delivery of probation interventions, including efforts from the Academic Intervention and Retention Committee, mandatory workshops, skill-building courses, and online resources.
- *Student Services:* Measure the effectiveness of interventions that support probation students, including a variety of methods to increase their knowledge, self-efficacy, and academic skills needed to become successful; refine interventions as indicated.

**Core Theme 2: Integrate and institutionalize diversity and globalism throughout [Highline]**

Primary responsibility: Shared between Academic Affairs and Student Services, but a common priority of all college divisions

Challenges:

► *African American/Black attainment gaps:* Though improving in early-momentum measures, current *Mission Fulfillment Report* data reveal that attainment rates for African American/Black students lag behind the aggregate, particularly in credential-attainment.

Key activities and primary accountabilities:

- *Academic Affairs and Student Services* jointly: Form a cross-divisional team to study attainment gaps data more fully, conduct focus groups, and invest in professional development resources to determine strategies to increase attainment. Distill and disseminate best practices from Umoja that can be scaled up, while at the same time exploring new interventions for other populations (e.g., professional-technical students) and curriculum areas beyond Umoja's emphasis.
- *Student Services:* The Center for Leadership & Service, Multicultural Services/ Intercultural Center, and 522-funded programs will continue to strengthen and expand events to promote diverse student engagement in the college community, including cohort- and population-specific offerings.

► *Latino completion rates:* Current *Mission Fulfillment Report* data reveal that completion rates for Hispanic students have begun to lag behind the aggregate in recent years.

Key activities and primary accountabilities:

- *Academic Affairs and Student Services* jointly: Form a cross-divisional team to study attainment gaps, conduct focus groups, and determine best practices to increase attainment. Distill and disseminate best practices from Puente that can be scaled up, while at the same time exploring new interventions for other populations and

curriculum areas beyond Puente's emphasis. Form interventions and devote resources to support those interventions.

#### Opportunities:

In addition to addressing the foregoing challenges, the college is encouraged to pursue the following opportunities:

► *Sustain IR momentum:* The appointment of a Data Analyst for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion provides additional IR capacity to determine the impact of our student-success and to share data across campus, encouraging additional engagement and effort among faculty and staff.

Key activities and primary accountabilities:

- *Academic Affairs:* Provide support for the Data Analyst for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion as needed, including resources needed to collect data.
- *Equity plan:* If Highline is to maintain its momentum around diversity, equity, and inclusion, the college should consider an institution-wide set of priorities and goals.

Key activities and primary accountabilities:

- *President's Office/Executive Staff:* Support and provide resources to the Equity Task Force (or its delegated group) so that it may survey existing plans from other institutions to identify best practices, create, and adopt a college-wide plan in collaboration with shared-governance groups across the institution. Reassign the plan's development to a subcommittee, reporting to Executive Staff.

### **Core Theme 3: Build valuable relationships and a meaningful presence within communities**

Primary responsibility: Institutional Advancement

#### Challenges:

► *Post Completion Employment Rate:* Despite King County's historically low unemployment rate, employment rates for Highline completers have begun to lag behind the benchmark. The college should monitor this drop, study it to understand it better, then determine next steps.

Key activities and primary accountabilities:

- *Academic Affairs:* Study specific programs and types of degrees with lower rates of employment. Engage advisory committees, faculty, and Workforce Education Services staff in those conversations, as well as businesses, organizations, and economic development entities in the region.
- *Student Services:* Secure additional funding for the Career and Student Employment Center to support professional technical program coordinators in preparing students and connecting them with potential employers.

#### **Core Theme 4: Model sustainability in human resources, operations, and teaching/learning**

Primary responsibility: Administrative Services, Human Resources

##### Challenges:

► *Employee development and turnover:* Recent *Mission Fulfillment Report* cycles have shown an increase in new-employee turnover and a decrease in employee satisfaction, particularly with opportunities for professional growth/advancement.

Key activities and primary accountabilities:

- *Human Resources:* Continue to work with executive staff to update the mid-2000s' exempt salary study and to advocate for increases in entry-level wage rates, as well as investing in professional development, building career ladders which incentivize experience and excellence, and creating other incentives for retention, i.e. flexible schedules, telecommuting options where feasible.
- *President's Office:* Support the Equity Task Force's recommendations to conduct a more thorough faculty and staff climate study in 2018-19 as a guide to further professional development and support investments.

► *Facilities:* Though the *Mission Fulfillment Report* addresses Highline's facilities only indirectly, it is increasingly clear that the legislative allocations will fail to keep up with the campus's aging infrastructure and facility needs.

Key activities and primary accountabilities:

- *Administrative Services:* Propose a metric(s) for tracking the college's overall facility condition/needs; update the *Campus Master Plan* accordingly; advocate for a regular, predictable set-aside for reserves.

##### Opportunities:

► *Running Start, Career Start, and Pathway to College options:* The McCleary decision will considerably increase the monetary value of dual-enrollment and K12 contract FTEs, eventually funding them at a full-cost level similar to ISP enrollments today.

Key activities and primary accountabilities:

- *Academic Affairs:* Encourage expansion of high-quality pathway-to-college options; leverage statewide interest in K-14 career-technical options to expand Career Start.
- *Student Services:* Secure additional funding to improve support services/career development specifically for Running Start.

► *Off-campus programs:* Commute-times and scheduling conflicts continue to inhibit enrollment among populations at-distance from Highline, particularly for working adults.

Key activities and primary accountabilities:

- *Academic Affairs:* Leverage the re-establishment of an Extended Learning program and the current community momentum for Federal Way and White Center services to develop a sustainable, responsive set of offerings at both, supplemented by strong weekend, evening, and online/hybrid offerings.

► *Enrollment planning:* While Highline has been successful in continuing to meet its enrollment targets over time, a Strategic Enrollment Plan can help to sustain that success.

Key activities and primary accountabilities:

- *Executive Staff:* Charter a cross-divisional Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) team to review Highline's past efforts, survey existing plans from other institutions to identify best practices, and create a plan for Executive Staff's review and adoption.

► *Applied bachelor's degrees:* Sustain the five established applied baccalaureate programs, and explore new BAS options.

Key activities and primary accountabilities:

- *Academic Affairs:* Conduct program reviews of the four original BAS degrees in 2018-19 and for the teacher-education BAS in 2020; pursue further conversation around new options
- *Student Services:* Market/promote programs through orientations, Wayfinder workshops, transfer fairs, and financial aid information.

► *Transit:* The college's semi-hidden location has lowered its visibility to community passers-by. That challenge will be substantially affected by the redevelopment of 236th St (now College Way) and the transit/light rail center across Pacific Highway South

Key activities and primary accountabilities:

- *Administrative Services and Institutional Advancement (jointly):* Manage interagency relationships so as to minimize fiscal impacts on Highline while integrating transit-related infrastructure into a unified campus gateway.

Approved by Accreditation Steering Committee 3/23/18

Approved by Executive Staff 3/27/18

Reviewed by Board of Trustees 3/29/18