

Strategic Landscape Analysis for Career Success

External Consulting Report



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Charge and Process

SUNY Westchester Community College (SUNY Westchester) charged The Career Leadership Collective with a landscape analysis of the institution's overall career success ecosystem. This analysis has resulted in recommendations to help develop strategic priorities that transform the career development ecosystem across the institution, with particular attention on embedding transformational career experiences across the student experience.

THE REVIEW PROCESS INCLUDED THE FOLLOWING:

- A review of strategic plans, reports, and historical documents throughout the process.

- An onsite landscape analysis, including interviews with multiple stakeholders, internal and external to the campus community, was conducted in April 2024 (see Appendix).

- A comprehensive report providing observations of the campus career landscape and recommendations for future practices was delivered in June 2024.

The Career Leadership Collective thanks all members of the SUNY Westchester community who generously contributed their time and insights. The dedication of SUNY Westchester's staff, administration, and faculty to shaping students' futures is admirable.

The landscape analysis process included insights from 50+ Students, Employers, Faculty, & Staff and identified Bright Spots, Opportunities for Growth, and Ideals for the Future.

SUNY WESTCHESTER IS READY TO BUILD AND GROW ITS CAREER ECOSYSTEM

Higher education must increasingly demonstrate a return on Investment. Many institutions struggle to effectively reach all students, serve employers, and garner campus-wide engagement in career development. However, these challenges provide opportunities to clarify vision, innovate and grow, and create a robust environment for career success. The campus leadership at SUNY Westchester has a unique opportunity to craft a vision of career success and create strategic, sustainable partnerships with faculty, staff, and employers. Embracing this opportunity will strengthen an integrated, campus-wide approach that prepares all students for their future careers.

Observations and Interview Insights

Campus Leadership and SUNY Westchester Community



The administration, faculty, and staff at SUNY Westchester recognize the importance of career education in the community college experience. While most people working at SUNY Westchester understand the ways that career education can impact a student's life, those interviewed referenced a lack of coordinated career development effort; this has resulted in gaps and redundancies in work, a lack of understanding about what resources and programming are available to students, and a need for the institution to invest more into creating an infrastructure and staff team dedicated to coordinating and elevating career success at SUNY Westchester.

Career and Student Success Staff



SUNY Westchester's career services staff are to be commended for their work, given the large student-to-staff ratio. A strong foundation has been laid by integrating career services information and career exploration activities into student orientation and first-year experiences and by extending student awareness of career-related support available. However, this is limited to programs for degree-seeking students. In addition to the career counseling services available to all students, career trainings have also been built into many professional programs. While these efforts serve many students, greater synchronization between student services, student affairs, and academic divisions will further extend the reach of career education initiatives. Additionally, investing in scaled and asynchronous approaches to career development will ensure that career success will be a core part of the SUNY Westchester experience, regardless of the type of student or program area. Without additional efforts in career development staffing, students' career success will continue to be fragmented and left to chance.

SUNY Westchester Students



Many students, especially those in vocational and non-credit programs understand the importance of career development activities, internships, and networking; for others, career development is left to chance; dependent on their knowledge of and access to particular programs, personnel, and events. Students expressed recognition of the passion and expertise that many faculty and staff at SUNY Westchester have for career development; however, many students' responsibilities outside of campus, such as existing work and family obligations, prohibit them from engaging in synchronous, in-person career education programming, or to take advantage of the career development resources already available to them.

SUNY Westchester Employer Partners



Employer partners recognize the need to develop long-term relationships with potential future employees. They know that SUNY Westchester students often remain in the region after graduation. Employers can widen their recruitment pipelines through mentorship and internship opportunities by initiating interactions with students earlier in their academic experience or before students transfer to four-year institutions. Many employer partners expressed appreciation for SUNY Westchester's continuing education and workforce development programs, yet expressed a desire for course and program offerings that don't conflict with their employees' work schedules.

Career and Alumni Data Collection



SUNY Westchester collects some data from graduates, but data is limited to the first six months after graduation or transfer. Because of this, the institution has a limited understanding of longer-term student career outcomes, impacting its awareness of graduates' career pathways and career education effectiveness. By widening its collection of career outcomes data beyond the first year and by analyzing that data and comparing it to institutional practices, SUNY Westchester can create more effective, scaled career development programming for its students.

Career Ecosystem Rubric

The rubric below represents The Collective's assessment of SUNY Westchester's campus-wide career success ecosystem and effectiveness in critical areas of career success preparation. The complete rubric is in the Appendix.

	BEGINNING	PROGRESSING	EMERGING SUCCESS	EXEMPLARY
STRATEGIC GOALS AND PRIORITIES FOR CAREER SUCCESS	✓			
LEVERAGING DATA EFFECTIVELY		✓		
HIGH QUALITY CAREER DESIGN THROUGH THE STUDENT LIFECYCLE	✓			
COORDINATED CAREER ECOSYSTEM		✓		
EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY		✓		



Recommendations

The recommendations outlined in this report reflect strategic priorities crucial for SUNY Westchester to move into the next stage of impacting every student's career and professional development. An overview of the strategic priorities is outlined below, with subsequent sections providing additional insights. Additionally, examples, personnel needs, and tactics in support of the strategic priorities are outlined.

Overview of Strategic Priorities for Career Success at SUNY Westchester

1

Strategic Priority 1: Create a Campus-Wide Vision and Framework for Career Success

Establish an institution-wide career success vision and framework that allows for consistent delivery, comprehensive assessment, and coordination of existing and new career development efforts.

2

Strategic Priority 2: Increase Investment in and Coordination of Career Success Personnel and Infrastructure

Create a cross-campus network of full-time staff, faculty, and administrators dedicated to creating coordinated career success at SUNY Westchester.

3

Strategic Priority 3: Cultivate Student Career Success Through Digital Engagement and Leveraging Data Insights

Leverage digital infrastructure and relevant career data to ensure every student can realize their career goals and find future career success.

4

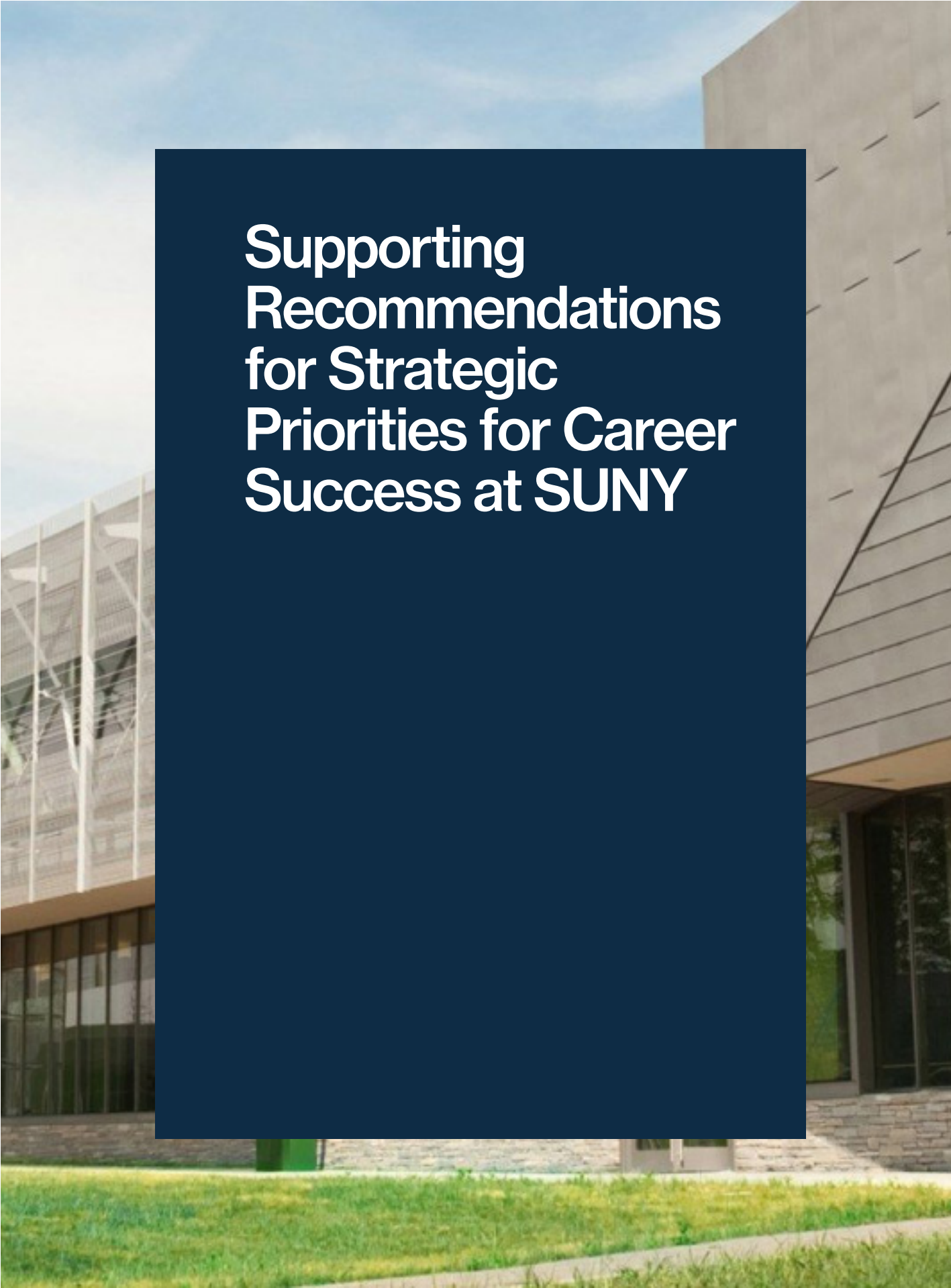
Strategic Priority 4: Establish a “One Westchester” Approach to Alumni and Corporate

Coordinate employer engagement efforts across campus to present a unified, consistent, and integrated face of the institution to external employer partners.

5

Strategic Priority 5: Secure Financial Resources and Physical Spaces Necessary to Realize Career Success Priorities

Allocate the funds, staffing, infrastructure, and physical space necessary for a comprehensive career ecosystem across SUNY Westchester.



Supporting Recommendations for Strategic Priorities for Career Success at SUNY

Strategic Priority 1: Create a Campus- Wide Vision and Framework for Career Success

Establish an institution-wide career success vision and framework for consistent delivery, comprehensive assessment, and coordination of existing and new career development efforts.

Objective 1.1:

Craft a Vision of career success unique to SUNY Westchester's campus and student experience.

Objective 1.2:

Develop a career success framework by establishing institution-wide SUNY Westchester Career Learning Outcomes (CLOs).

Objective 1.3:

Segment communication of vision and framework for key constituent groups including prospective students, current students, faculty and staff, employer and corporate partners, and alumni and donors.

Objective 1.4:

Establish a Student Career Success Collaborative.

Objective 1.5:

Develop Scalable Solutions and Programming for Career Success.



Supporting Recommendations for Strategic Priority 1:

Craft a vision of career success unique to SUNY Westchester's campus and student experience (Objective 1.1)

Students and families increasingly choose a school based on its career success outcomes and opportunities. For SUNY Westchester to deliver on its promise of preparing students for successful careers, it must cast a clear, unified vision for career success that will attract students and internally guide career education initiatives, efforts, and coordination.

SUNY Westchester does not have a cohesive, college-wide vision for career success. As a result, career development is fragmented and duplicative, with large gaps in career development education existing across various departments, disciplines, and programs. Without a cohesive vision for career, students' career success is largely left to chance, dependent on the type of student learner, choice of major or program, physical location, and a student's knowledge of available resources.

For these reasons, the leadership at SUNY Westchester must establish an institution-wide career success vision and goals that allow for consistent delivery, comprehensive assessment, and coordination of existing and new career development resources. The vision and goals should help ensure that every SUNY Westchester student has access to high-quality career development experiences, employer interactions, and employment opportunities. They should apply to all types of learners, such as part-time, certificate, or non-degree seeking, and to all academic programs. Career success goals should be scaled to reach all students and integrated into existing college advising practices throughout the student lifecycle.

SUNY Westchester's vision for career success should incorporate language that expresses the college's values around the following items:

- Intentional engagement with all students, including first-generation and historically underrepresented students with career development resources.
- The growth and coordination of a network of staff, faculty, and administration that prioritizes a stronger career development culture at SUNY Westchester.
- Commitment to career success for students enrolled in all degree and non-degree programs.
- A college-wide strategy for engaging with corporate partners, regional employers, and alumni networks.

Establish SUNY Westchester Career Learning Outcomes (Objective 1.2)

To realize and achieve this new vision for career success at SUNY Westchester, the institution must implement and assess key qualitative and quantitative measures for career success. To this end, SUNY Westchester should establish campus-wide Career Learning Outcomes (CLO's) that span the student experience from initial enrollment to graduation, transfer, or program completion, noting critical milestones along students' academic and co-curricular journeys. Additionally, CLO's should be established at the provost level and implemented across the college's various offices and academic programs. Initially, development and integration of CLO's can build upon and support the work started by the Guided Pathways model.

The Career Leadership Collective recommends that a campus working group composed of administrators, department heads, and support staff develop SUNY Westchester CLO's. The CLO's should be based on data-driven best practices, such as the High Impact Career Practices identified in [National Alumni Career Mobility Annual Report](#). This will ensure that SUNY Westchester's campus-wide career readiness vision is supported by national data on how colleges and universities impact student career readiness. CLO's can focus on the following themes which intersect with High Impact Career Practices:

- Self-exploration of values and interests and the intersection of those values and interests with opportunities at SUNY Westchester
- Exploration of career opportunities, transfer options, and career pathways informed by SUNY Westchester alumni outcomes
- Development of relevant career planning skills
- Building of experiences, artifacts, and social capital to realize career plans during and after life at SUNY Westchester

The implementation of CLOs will help SUNY Westchester ensure that the campus is utilizing the High Impact Career Practices both at the institution-wide level and within specific departments, majors, and student populations. Individual departments can meet CLO's with existing or new programming since existing plans, programs, and offerings may already meet CLO requirements. Colleges and departments, whether academic or student support services, may also adjust curricular or advising models as needed. The result will be a more holistic and integrated approach to developing student career readiness that provides flexibility for specific departments, programs, and student populations.

As the working group develops Career Learning Outcomes, the Career Leadership Collective recommends the following considerations:

- **Integration of Career Learning Outcomes into the curriculum and co-curriculum.** The Career Learning Outcomes working group should develop guidelines and standards for integrating CLO's into the curriculum and co-curriculum. These guidelines will help to equip faculty and staff to integrate effective, research-driven career education practices into their work. Guidelines should address best practices around experiential learning and internships, connecting classroom learning to students' future career goals, and other high-impact career practices.
- **Mapping efforts, initiatives, and career development experiences across the student lifecycle.** As students explore their career aspirations and the ways that their ambitions connect to their education, they must have conversations about career readiness with staff and faculty and engage in context-relevant career education activities. Since SUNY Westchester is already developing a Guided Pathways model, administration, faculty, and staff should work to incorporate key conversations and experiences into these efforts to ensure that every student engages in career development at every stage of their college career. These experiences should range from career exploration activities as students decide on major and career goals, skills and knowledge acquisition as they take core classes, and networking events and internship opportunities as they consider life after graduation or completion.

Institutional Example: Sierra College (CA), a public community college and Hispanic Serving Institution, has outlined suggestions for college partners to integrate career success throughout a student's journey, regardless of program type. A foundational piece was the development of the Career Development Continuum, which gauges a student's certainty of their career goals. A Student Journey Map also provides guidelines for leveraging activities, assignments, and conversations throughout a student's time at Sierra College. Lastly, Celebrate & Launch focuses on Career Integration Goals of embedding career and transfer-related activities into the curriculum and fostering peer-to-peer relationships so experienced students can help guide new students in career and college planning.

Segment communication of vision and framework for key constituent groups, including prospective students, current students, faculty and staff, employer and corporate partnership, and alumni and donors (Objective 1.3)

Consistent and regular communication of SUNY Westchester's commitment to student and alumni career success is key to ensuring all stakeholders understand the vision and priorities set by the college administration. SUNY Westchester should prioritize the following stakeholder groups as key audiences for this new vision for career success:

- **Prospective and Current Students:** Communicate a narrative about the integrated career development experiences that SUNY Westchester students will engage in throughout their time at the college. Emphasize opportunities students will have to connect to employers, recruiters, and organizations in the greater Westchester County area.
- **Recruiters and Employers:** Communicate to recruiters and employers how a new career education vision will benefit local employers, their current employees, the institution, academic training programs, and students and alumni.
- **Alumni and Donors:** Communicate to alumni and donors the specific ways in which alumni can engage with the college, especially in career

development, including donations of money and time, talent, mentorship, and networking connections.

The SUNY Westchester community: Communicate how faculty and staff are key collaborators to ensuring every SUNY Westchester student can realize their potential and career goals, resulting in strong engagement in the curriculum and co-curriculum.

Establish a Career Success Collaborative (Objective 1.4)

Coordinating holistic career development and creating a culture of integrated career success across all areas of SUNY Westchester demands regular clear communication, input from all major departments and divisions of the college, and ongoing support and evaluation of career education efforts. It also demands empowering leaders to execute the work of career development within their own particular teams, groups, and contexts. The Career Leadership Collective recommends that SUNY Westchester create a Career Success Collaborative composed of key administrators, career services team members, and representatives from important academic departments and divisions such as academic advising, advancement, institutional research, workforce development, and alumni and external relations.

The Career Success Collaborative will foster the development, coordination, and execution of ongoing career development initiatives. This will allow for the synchronization of efforts across departments, divisions, and teams, reducing duplication and redundancies of effort and providing avenues for sharing resources, relationships, and knowledge. The work of the Student Career Success Collaborative will also ensure that career success initiatives correspond with the college's broader efforts toward career development education, especially by relating those efforts to the college's vision for career success and its Career Learning Outcomes. It should also incorporate institutional research and graduate outcomes data to inform its evaluations of the effectiveness of initiatives and efforts, maximizing the efficiency and effectiveness of career development work. This group should be led by the Dean/AVP of Career Success & Applied Learning

Priority 2: Increase investment in and coordination of career success personnel and infrastructure. Additionally, it will serve as an umbrella group which helps to coordinate the work of the following groups:

- The CLO Working Group (Objective 1.2)
- The Experiential Learning & Internship Success Council (Objective 2.2)
- The Career Success Partners Program (Objective 2.3)
- The Council for Employer Engagement (Objective 4.1)

Finally, the Student Career Success Collaborative can oversee institution-wide career success awards. This will signal SUNY Westchester's commitment to career readiness by instituting career development awards for faculty, staff, programs, and employers. The Collaborative can facilitate the awards process, but it is ideal to have these awarded from the president's office, signaling the campus' commitment to career excellence. Some schools have already implemented career community awards. Best practice examples can be found at:

- [Miami University \(OH\), Excellence in Career Development](#)
- [University of Rochester, The Gwennies](#)

a strong career and professional development culture throughout the student experience, ensuring career success is unavoidable. Give strong consideration to implementing asynchronous learning modules, as further outlined in Objective 3.2.

Career Education activities and programming should also be aligned with a scaled model of engagement. This can include partnerships with academic programs, student organizations, and other SUNY Westchester experiences embedded in the student experience. Programming should align with the newly developed Career Learning Outcomes, ensuring efforts can be tracked, assessed, and adapted to better support students. Initial realignment of programming can be focused on the High Impact Career Practices previously outlined in Objective 1.2, which include:

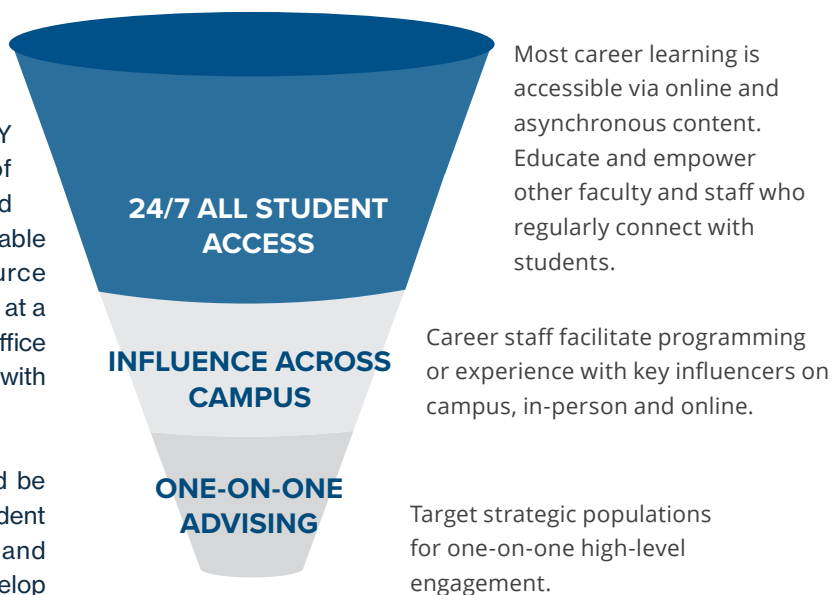
- Self-exploration of values and interests and the intersection of those values and interests with opportunities at SUNY Westchester
- Exploration of career opportunities, transfer options, and career pathways informed by SUNY Westchester alumni outcomes
- Development of relevant career planning skills
- Building of experiences, artifacts, and social capital to realize career plans during and after life at SUNY Westchester

Develop Scalable Solutions and Programming for Career Success (Objective 1.5)

The diversity of students and programs at SUNY Westchester requires a strategic prioritization of career engagement. New scalable solutions should meet the needs of all student populations. Scalable solutions may require an initial upfront resource investment but can reach a high volume of students at a lower overall cost. The scaled mindset should guide office activities, individual work, and students' engagement with career success.

Foundational career development activities should be embedded into multiple points throughout the student experience by leveraging scalable programs and technological infrastructure. This will help to develop

FUNNEL OF ENGAGEMENT



Strategic Priority 2: Increase Investment in and Coordination of Career Success Personnel and infrastructure

Create a cross-campus network of full-time staff, faculty, and administrators dedicated to creating coordinated career success at SUNY Westchester.

Objective 2.1:

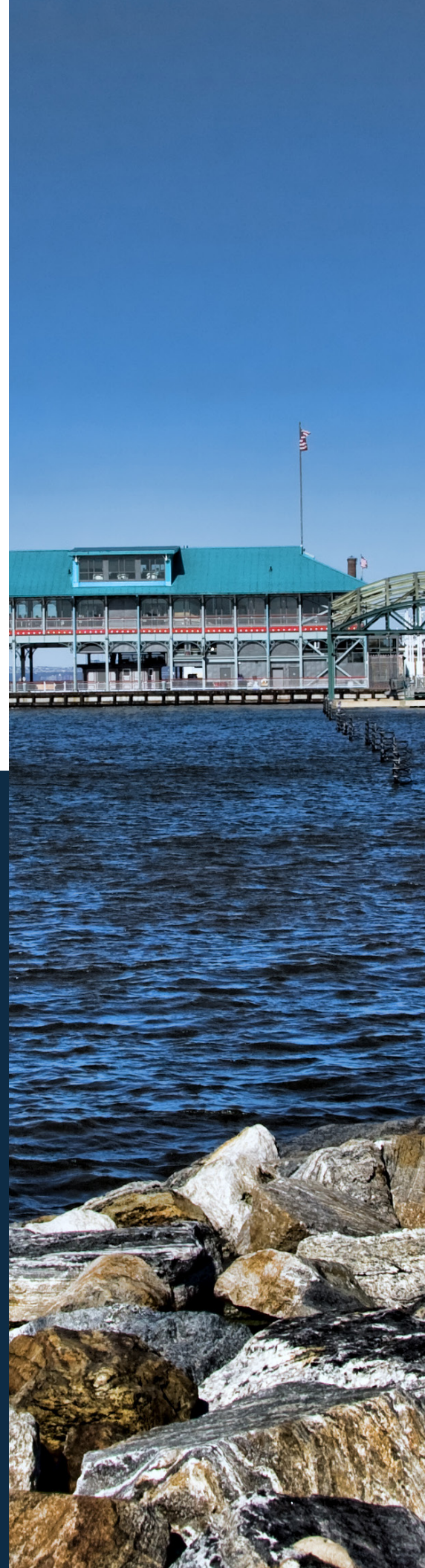
Create a Career Integration Team composed of full-time employees dedicated to developing career readiness across the college and community.

Objective 2.2:

Integrate and coordinate existing career development efforts into the work of the Career Integration Team.

Objective 2.3:

Launch a Career Success Partners program, equipping faculty and staff to influence students' career development.



Supporting Recommendations for Strategic Priority 2:

Create a Career Integration Team composed of full-time employees dedicated to developing career readiness across the college and community (Objective 2.1).

Improving the career success and outcomes at SUNY Westchester will demand the coordinated effort of a team of knowledgeable individuals with training and experience in campus career readiness. Cultivating a career readiness culture among students, faculty, and staff across campus and developing relationships with regional employers, alumni, and other partners is a long-term task that demands the expertise of a highly coordinated team. This team will work daily to coordinate and integrate career development efforts across various departments, divisions, and teams and ensure that career development initiatives are scalable. This team will be responsible for:

- Building relationships across the SUNY Westchester ecosystem to assist with career readiness implementation.
- Creating scalable solutions to meet the career development needs of all students.
- Integrating and assessing Career Learning Outcomes and High Impact Career Practices throughout the SUNY Westchester community.
- Overseeing a comprehensive career curriculum that can be integrated into the curriculum, especially FYE and academic seminar courses and relevant online career modules.
- Proactively engaging with employers and corporate partners.
- Facilitating connections between employers and embedded curriculum engagements.
- Developing data-informed strategies and interventions to impact key populations.

The Career Leadership Collective recommends that SUNY Westchester create a team of full-time employees dedicated to coordinating and fostering career readiness across the college and community. Specifically, we recommend prioritizing hiring the three following positions:

- **Dean/AVP of Career Success and Applied Learning**
The Dean/AVP of Career Success and Applied Learning will be the leader of the Career Integration Team at SUNY Westchester. This position will oversee, coordinate, and influence career development work across campus, managing projects, tasks, committees, and working groups and coordinating efforts between college administrators, department leaders, faculty, and staff.
 - Influencing areas of existing high-impact practice with career success, such as student employment, student organizations, and experiential and applied learning.
 - Integrating career education into every phase of the student cycle, from enrollment to graduation, transfer, or completion.
 - Mapping and assessing the student career success journey across different types of student experiences.

- This position will lead the Career Success Collaborative outlined under Objective 1.4.
- This position will lead the Career Success Partners program outlined under Objective 2.3 along with the Director of Campus Career Engagement.

- **Director of Employer Engagement**

The Director of Employer Engagement will oversee employer engagement efforts across campus regarding career success. This position will involve coordinating efforts between the career success team, academic departments, individual faculty, and administrative staff who work with regional employers and recruiters. While many faculty and staff in various departments, divisions, and locations across campus work with external corporate partners, the Director of Employer Engagement will ensure that those efforts are efficient, coordinated, and without unnecessary redundancies. Their efforts will elevate the existing work at SUNY Westchester and bring new opportunities for engagement with other areas of the institution. The specific efforts and initiatives that this position will manage may include in-person and remote recruitment events, experiential learning programs, employer connections to the curriculum, and other engagements between the college and regional employers. The core responsibilities of this position will include:

- Creating institutional strategies for engagement with regional employers and industries.
- Coordinating employer engagement efforts across campus, such as career fairs and networking events.
- Developing career readiness mentoring initiatives that involve external partners and alumni.
- Tracking first destination, transfer, and alumni outcomes data.
- This position will lead the Council for Employer Engagement outlined under Objective 4.1.

- **Director of Campus Engagement**

The Director of Campus Career Engagement The Director of Campus Career Engagement will coordinate student-facing career education initiatives at SUNY Westchester. This position will be responsible for developing, curating, and scaling career education programming such as online and asynchronous career learning modules, career education events, and onboarding experiences of students. This will be done using the Guided Pathways Model to integrate these initiatives across the student experience, from orientation to graduation or transfer. The position will also coordinate and equip staff- and faculty-facing career education initiatives at SUNY Westchester. This individual will not be focused on serving students in a one-on-one modality but instead will consider strategic ways to influence students at scale. Specific core responsibilities of this position will include:

- Integrating career-related topics into the curriculum and co-curriculum, focusing on the Career Learning Outcomes. Tracking student engagement with the new Career Learning Outcomes.
- Identifying and training faculty and staff partners who can foster a wider culture of career development. Creating, curating, and collaborating to develop LMS career learning modules, such as those outlined in Objective 3.2.
- Planning and coordinating large-scale student-facing career education events such as workshops, networking events, lectures, and career fairs.
- This position can lead the Experiential Learning & Internship Success Council outlined under Objective 2.2
- This position can lead the Career Success Partners program outlined under Objective 2.3 along with the Dean/ AVP of Career Success and Applied Learning

Many of the above positions will be new FTEs created at the college, yet others may be repurposed from existing roles. For each of the above positions, an assessment should be conducted to determine if current positions could be elevated or repurposed, where existing monies already exist that could be utilized, such as key long-term grants, and where new monies will need to be identified, and sourced to realize these efforts.

Future Staffing Needs

After the leadership positions of the Career Integration Team are hired, additional staff will be needed to realize the strategic priorities in the report. The first step will be to assess which existing roles across campus should report to the Career Integration Team, whether through direct reporting, dotted lines, or by serving on committees and working groups. Additionally, whether realigned, repurposed, or newly developed, the following positions are recommended:

- **Assistant Director of Campus Career Engagement (2 Positions)**

These positions will cultivate career integration throughout the SUNY Westchester ecosystem. They will guide the creation of career development content for use with students and faculty and leverage technology to scale impact. The Assistant Directors of Campus Career Engagement will focus on developing profiles and career journey maps for potential student career personae based on factors such as field of study, industry aspiration, and program type. While still serving students in an advising capacity, they will focus on scalable solutions, particularly building out scalable and embedded programming and efforts. They will also regularly connect with faculty and staff to further equip and train the campus community.

- **Assistant Director of Employer Engagement**

This position will primarily be responsible for establishing and cultivating relationships with targeted employers to integrate into the curricular experience of SUNY Westchester students. The position will develop and achieve goals specifically outlined under “Deploy a community-wide strategy to engage employers” (Objective 4.2). They will communicate industry and employment trends to career campus partners. This position would work with the Campus Career Engagement team in strategically developing and maintaining key methods for students and employers to interact and connect (i.e. site visits, lunches, association meetings, conferences).

- **Operations and Communications Support**

A position to support the office's operational needs should be created. Under the leadership team, this role will help manage the job posting platform, coordinate events, support collecting and reporting relevant First Destination and Alumni Career data, and serve as a primary point of engagement for the broader SUNY Westchester community.

- **Peer Career Advisors**

A robust Peer Career Advisor Program is a scalable program that impacts the entire SUNY Westchester community. Such a program allows professional staff to focus on higher-level priorities, build new relationships with faculty, and implement other strategic priorities. A peer advising program will help the Career Integration Team with positive brand awareness, increase its reach, and serve more students more efficiently. The student peers do not need to have the knowledge of Master's-level career counselors. Instead, they should help with basic resume reviews and educate students on career opportunities and pathways. They should also be chief ambassadors of career professionalism and help other students navigate nuances of the internship and job search process external to the institution. The initial program year should have 4-6 peers, with the goal to grow the program to 15-20 peers within three years. Core activities should include the following:

- Front-line advising with students. This should include advising for resumes, internship searches, major exploration, and understanding of career pathways.
- Deliver programming and presentations. This can include presenting to student organizations as well as selected classrooms. Topics can be curated to ensure a high level of quality is maintained.
- Employer engagement. Selected peers can assist in employer engagement, whether approving jobs, promoting opportunities to fellow students, or identifying new employer relationships to pursue.

Research has shown that peer advising on university campuses is one of the most effective ways for students to achieve desired learning outcomes. For additional benchmarks, please refer to the following resources:

- [San Diego Mesa College](#)
- [The University of Iowa Peer Advisors](#)
- Ender, S. C., & Newton, F. B. (Eds.). (2010). Students helping students: A guide for peer educators on college campuses (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Integrate and coordinate existing career development efforts into the work of the Career Integration Team (Objective 2.2).

The Career Integration Team at SUNY Westchester will build partnerships with staff and faculty across campus to carry out career development initiatives and champion career education in all areas of the college. To that end, it will be important for the Career Integration Team to integrate its work with the career development initiatives and existing efforts on campus. There already exist programs around experiential- and work-based learning and an optional first-year experience. Many of these prompt students to reflect on and learn about their career aspirations and ambitions; the Career Integration Team must work with leaders across campus to enhance these initiatives and to increase student engagement with them. They can also take what they learn from the programs to influence other programs, build new efforts, and create holistic engagement across the student experience.

In addition to this work, the Career Leadership Collective recommends the following ongoing priorities as the Career Integration Team interacts with faculty and staff:

- **Identifying gaps in the student journey.** While a distributed approach effectively reaches more students, it is also important for the Career Integration Team to identify gaps in the current student journey, often during hand-offs between staff members of different offices. Many student-facing staff don't have a strong understanding of the various career development resources that SUNY Westchester currently offers its students, whether it's an academic or career advisor or a self-directed learning module. Identifying gaps in the student journey will ensure that current and future efforts are effective and a seamless student experience. When staff are well-informed about the resources, programs, and staff to which they might direct students, they can ensure that students seeking career education and development aren't lost in the complex networks and offices of the institution. The Professional Goals Intake can eventually influence the student journey as outlined in Objective 3.2.

Institutional Example: DePaul University is a four-year private university that enrolls large numbers of adult learners and full-time workers across degree

and certification programs. The Career Center works with the enrollment office to educate parents and families upon entry to the university to increase awareness about practical steps toward student success by providing first-year students with meaningful on-campus career and job skill development experiences. The DePaul University Education and Development Grant for Employability (EDGE) program was created in the fall of 2011 as an enrollment strategy, but has influenced persistence, academic performance, and completion rates; this impact is particularly significant with first-generation and historically marginalized students, resulting in increases of up to 25 percentage points on retention and graduation rates.

- **Launch an Experiential Learning & Internship Success Council.** This council should develop best practices, standards, and processes for internships, work-based learning, and experiential opportunities. Their work should help facilitate campus coordination of efforts, decrease inefficiencies and duplication, and help empower faculty to handle increased participation. This should include regularly sharing applied learning and internship patterns according to organization, industry, and geography. When employer relationships are maximized and shared, companies will gain access to more talent, and departments will have more opportunities for their students. Faculty and staff involved in facilitating internships should determine guidelines and objectives to ensure effective internship experiences for students and employers and maximize intern-to-hire opportunities for students. A campus-wide system of tracking experiences and learning outcomes should be developed to include all experiences, not just those already tracked via credit. This group will be under the umbrella of the Career Success Collaborative.
- **Cross-train academic advisors.** Often, academic advisors are one of the first exposures students have to career education. Their work can directly influence students' engagement with key components of Career Learning Outcomes and other career goals. For this reason, academic advisors should be cross-trained on career development areas that overlap with their existing work, such as major and career pathway mapping. Career-oriented trainings that expand academic advisors' knowledge of how fields of study connect to potential career options can inform advisors' ability to map student pathways through the curriculum and co-curriculum. In addition it's important that advisors

and staff understand that career conversations are developmental, not transactional. Developing a list of open-ended questions that advisors can use in conversations with students can help students exercise their critical thinking toward developing relevant career competencies and aspirations. These efforts can be tracked institutionally via student engagement software. Note that these efforts are separate from the Career Success Partners program due to the unique alignment of academic and career advising.

Institutional Example: Waubonsee Community College (IL) strategically integrates career development and academic advising services to actively engage with students' career development goals from the beginning to the end of their time at the institution, regardless of degree, transfer, or program completion. All professional and faculty advisors are trained in career theory, practice, and resources for career development and academic advising. The integrated model focuses on values, skills, and the decision-making process of academic study and career pathways. New tracking metrics and team goals were created to measure the effectiveness of the efforts, including assessing students understanding of the High Impact Career Mobility practices as defined by the [National Alumni Career Mobility Survey](#). This has resulted in a new partnership with the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) as part of a Title V grant to improve Hispanic and Adult retention.

- **Continuously evaluate cross-campus efforts to efficiently meet the career development needs of SUNY Westchester students.** As career success initiatives grow and develop, it may become necessary to move roles or to create new positions under the Dean or AVP of Career Success and Applied Learning. This will support the scaling and shared ownership of career development and student outcomes across campus. The Career Integration Team may also consider hiring Federal Work Study students to champion programming for students and to build relationships with student organizations, weaving career readiness into every sector of the college community.

Launch a Career Success Partners program, equipping faculty and staff to

influence students' career development. (Objective 2.3).

Faculty, instructors, and staff are crucial to creating a comprehensive career ecosystem across the various types of programs at SUNY Westchester. The [National Alumni Career Mobility Annual Report](#) shows that students who receive helpful career advice from faculty are much more likely to identify their institution as one that creates career success. For SUNY Westchester to create an integrated, institution-wide culture of career success, it should create a Career Success Partners program that will educate and empower faculty and staff on how to interact with students around the topic of career success. The Director of Campus Career Engagement will lead this group; additionally, many members of the Career Success Collaborative will be engaged in developing this program.

This program should engage faculty and staff to increase awareness of career pathways and achieve the desired Career Learning Outcomes. The following considerations should be prioritized in the initial stages of the program:

- Develop an initial steering committee to guide the development of the program. Identify potential Career Success Partners by first noting faculty and staff who already have many career conversations with students, then communicate a broader call out to those who wish to participate. Other participants might include academic advisors, student life staff, athletics, and key faculty. This group's work may overlap with the Internship & Experiential Council outlined in the previous recommendation.
- Hold listening sessions and conduct surveys with these staff to ascertain training and resource needs, as well as existing competencies and practices.
- Facilitate trainings that are offered in-person and asynchronously online training via SUNY Westchester's LMS.
- Map a plan to eventually differentiate training for faculty and staff and key academic populations such as humanities and social sciences.
- Identify the engagement model, whether a multi-tiered approach with rewards for each tier completed or a generalist model of training.

Career Success Partners should be trained for the following topics:

- How to have effective career conversations with students
- Understanding online career tools and how students can leverage them for career success
- Designing in-class activities that encourage career reflection
- Integrating employers and alumni into the curriculum via case-based learning, panels, and networking requirements
- Creating dynamic experiential learning engagements with partners in the region
- Disseminating career readiness information
- Advocating for career outcomes collection and dissemination

In support of the above work, an analysis of existing funds through various grants should be identified to support the initiative's funding. This can include funding to develop the training program, stipends for those on the steering committee, and financial awards for continued engagement as a Career Success Partner.

The Career Leadership Collective has worked with numerous institutions to help develop robust training programs. Examples of institutions within our network include the following:

Institutional Example: Ball State University's [Skills Infusion Program](#): Faculty work with career advising staff, alumni, and employers to map and integrate career-relevant information into their syllabi. Faculty are empowered to accomplish this work in a way that aligns with their learning outcomes, which increases buy-in and generates a more significant impact for students. An extension of this program is the Faculty Externship experience. In this paid experience, faculty participate in a work-based experience for 40 hours in the summer; upon completing the externship, they can better integrate career and skill information into their class.

Institutional Example: Centre College's [Career Exploration Communities](#): Multiple faculty from each academic division are paid a stipend to serve as career champions. Faculty engage with students and educate and equip other faculty and lecturers within their programs. Through advising, programming, and training, these faculty help students make purposeful career decisions, provide industry-specific resources for internships, jobs, and graduate school, and integrate guidance to chosen career fields through relevant academic courses.



Strategic Priority 3: Cultivate Student Career Success Through Digital Engagement and Leveraging Data Insights

Leverage digital infrastructure and relevant career data to ensure every student can realize their career goals and find future career success.

Objective 3.1:
Create a unified “front-door” webpage for all career success efforts at SUNY Westchester.

Objective 3.2:
Deploy technology to cultivate an extensive asynchronous environment for career development

Objective 3.3:
Collect and analyze alumni career data to identify career opportunities and needs across campus



Supporting Recommendations for Strategic Priority 3:

Create a unified “front-door” webpage for all career success efforts at SUNY Westchester (Objective 3.1)

In our digital world, it is essential that SUNY Westchester creates a strong digital presence for its career development resources and activities. Hiring and networking activities increasingly occur in online, virtual environments, and students will have much greater access to a much wider range of career options if they have the resources to engage with peers, mentors, and employers via the Internet. The convenience and flexibility of digital resources will give all students greater access to the college’s career services offerings, mentor relationships, employer-partner networking events, and even potential employment opportunities.

A primary way this will be realized is to create a single “front-door” webpage for all career services efforts across campus. This will not be the website of a single office per se but a comprehensive digital portal by which students and other constituents can navigate all of the resources available to them. While SUNY Westchester’s Career Services office has a website, its resources are limited to the scope of the direct office’s efforts. Additionally, a number of programs, grants, and experiential learning efforts across campus are not cross-listed.

Students currently have to navigate multiple office websites and may still not find out about important career development activities. A SUNY Westchester Career Success “front-door” webpage that directs students, staff, faculty, and employers to relevant webpages, resources, and services will enable greater engagement with career education resources and interactions that can lead to student career success. Resources and webpages should be organized and presented simply that reflects the most common audiences and the tools they use most often.

Some institutions have the capability to build a robust digital presence from their current staffing. Other institutions have pursued external partners, such as uConnect, which streamlines career content and information. For more on this, please see The Collective’s blog, [10 Tips For Your Digital Front Door](#).

Deploy technology to cultivate a robust asynchronous environment for career development (Objective 3.2)

Students who wish to engage with SUNY Westchester’s career service offerings face a number of challenges and limitations. Because the college’s activities are distributed across a large geographical area and multiple locations, it is often inconvenient and impractical for students to attend in-person appointments or events with the career services office or with potential mentors or employers. In addition, students at SUNY Westchester often have to balance the demands and schedules of their academic lives with family and work, making it difficult for them to engage with career education resources during normal business hours. By developing a robust asynchronous learning environment, all students will be able to more readily engage in career success from day one of the SUNY Westchester experience.

- **Design a Professional Goals Intake.**
SUNY Westchester students’ career experiences and goals vary greatly, even within specific programs. A Professional Goals Intake should be developed, leading students to reflect on their goals and map their advising experience with faculty and staff. The Intake should connect with established Career Learning Outcomes,

which will guide the work of staff and faculty, provide clear pathways for their student experience, and ultimately facilitate students realizing their career goals. Significant impact will be realized if this is required; however, if not required, strategic design and choice architecture can be leveraged to ensure a high level of engagement. This information can be fed into various student tracking systems, with recommendations on advising or instructing students based on their career goals.

Institutional Example: Western Governors University implemented a customized online Career Goals Intake Assessment for undergraduate and graduate students. The assessment allows staff to map students to the following career personas based on the career goals of students:

- **Career Starters:** Students with limited professional experience.
- **Career Pivoters:** Students with previous work experience pursuing education in search of a new industry or career role.
- **Career Ascender:** Students pursuing education to advance in their current industry and role.

After completing the assessment, students receive curated career resources mapped to their professional goals and career personas. Career profile information resides in the student record system and is accessible to career, academic, and faculty advisors. The program provides prompts for advisors and faculty to facilitate career development conversations. Matriculating students are auto-enrolled into the non-mandatory process, but even though the program is voluntary, over 95% of new students complete the modules.

- **Create asynchronous career modules and experiences.**

Key career development topics and activities can be accessed throughout the student experience by leveraging existing technological infrastructure, particularly SUNY Westchester's current LMS. The LMS should be leveraged to engage students and faculty with career education. A cross-campus assessment of career development activities can identify content relevant to specific populations or areas of study. These activities can be embedded into curricular and co-curricular spaces. Students can access career development information via well-designed modules that they select based on their career needs. Training modules can teach staff and faculty the skills they need to support student career readiness. For faculty in particular, activities and content can be created for them to embed into their curriculum. Examples of other institutions focusing on integration to meet the needs of all students include the following:

Institutional Example: Cornell University has reached over 22,000 students via a Career Toolkit on Canvas. The toolkit automatically appears on every student's Canvas dashboard, and students can opt into specific modules. Over 26 self-paced modules were developed around key career development topics. Alumni and employer partners were engaged to help produce key content, including for Portfolios, Pre-Law, International, Finance, Consulting, and Data Science modules. More information can be found [here](#):

Institutional Example: DePaul University developed [asynchronous methods for resume reviews](#), replacing drop-in services. This service allows students to complete a form and attach a LinkedIn profile or a resume. After submitting, they received a 5 to 7-minute video of a peer advisor outlining suggestions and offering next steps. After the end of an academic year, net promoter scores were significantly higher than the drop-in services, and utilization of on-demand services doubled.

- **Additional career technology needs:**

After hiring the new Dean/AVP of Career Success, an additional review of the technological needs for career success should be conducted. This includes a review of the institution's primary job posting platform. The current program, College Central Network (CCN), is limited in its ability but could be better leveraged across the institution. Consideration should be given to job platforms that curate regional opportunities instead of platforms with a national focus. Platforms that allow for the curation of regional companies include 12Twenty and Symplicity; alternatively, many regional higher education institutions are developing their own job ecosystem within their existing LMS and via Linked In groups. For an example of an institution pursuing this path, please see Sam Houston State University's Career Success Center website.

Other technology considerations include leveraging career pathway mapping tools, such as Forage; AI tools for resume development, such as VMock; and mentoring platforms.

Collect and analyze a set of alumni career data to identify career opportunities and needs across campus (Objective 3.3).

SUNY Westchester collects some career and employment data for its graduates. Still, the focus of this data is limited to broad questions about salary and career satisfaction in graduates' first destination after leaving the institution. While this information is important, its scope limits the college's ability to understand long-term student career success and the effectiveness of its curriculum, resource offerings, and career education initiatives. It also limits the college's ability to leverage student career success data in its recruitment efforts, curriculum development, interactions with regional employers, and solicitations for financial support and alumni engagement.

To address these opportunities, SUNY Westchester should expand its alumni data collection and leverage this data to create a narrative of student success at SUNY Westchester. More specifically, the Career Leadership Collective recommends the following actions related to alumni career data collection:

- **Collect Multi-year Alumni Career Data**
Collecting longer-term alumni career data will give college and department administrators an accurate, statistics-based, big-picture view of career readiness outcomes at SUNY Westchester. By exploring correlations between career readiness practices on campus and post-graduate career success and economic mobility, the college can make more effective, data-driven decisions and plans that will ultimately result in greater student career success.

SUNY Westchester should gather, analyze, and leverage 1-, 5-, and 10-year career outcomes data. Current staffing and resources may inhibit the ability to collect this data; if so, then The Collective recommends using the [National Alumni Career Mobility Survey](#) (NACM), a data service originally developed by the Career Leadership Collective, and now operated by Lightcast, to inform career-readiness practices at colleges and universities in the United States.

- **Establish Processes for the Regular Sharing of Career Readiness Data**

The faculty and staff at SUNY Westchester have expressed strong interest in staying informed about student career success. Faculty and staff in multiple sessions expressed willingness to advise students on their future careers. Still, they lack the data to educate students on the highest-potential career pathways and opportunities. By sharing career readiness data with staff, faculty, and the larger campus community on an ongoing and regular basis, SUNY Westchester can better prepare its students for future careers in their particular contexts, communities, and fields of study. The Career Leadership Collective recommends the following ongoing initiatives:

- Annual career outcomes presentations directed to the broader campus community and individual academic departments. Information addressing the question of "Where do our graduates go?" should be curated for each particular audience.
- Asynchronous access for students, faculty, and staff to key career opportunities and pathways data. We recommend embedding this information into relevant websites across campus, such as the websites for career services, academic advising, admissions, and individual department websites. For examples of this, see the following college websites:
 - [Virginia Commonwealth University's Major Maps](#)
 - [Binghamton University's Student Career Outcomes Page](#)

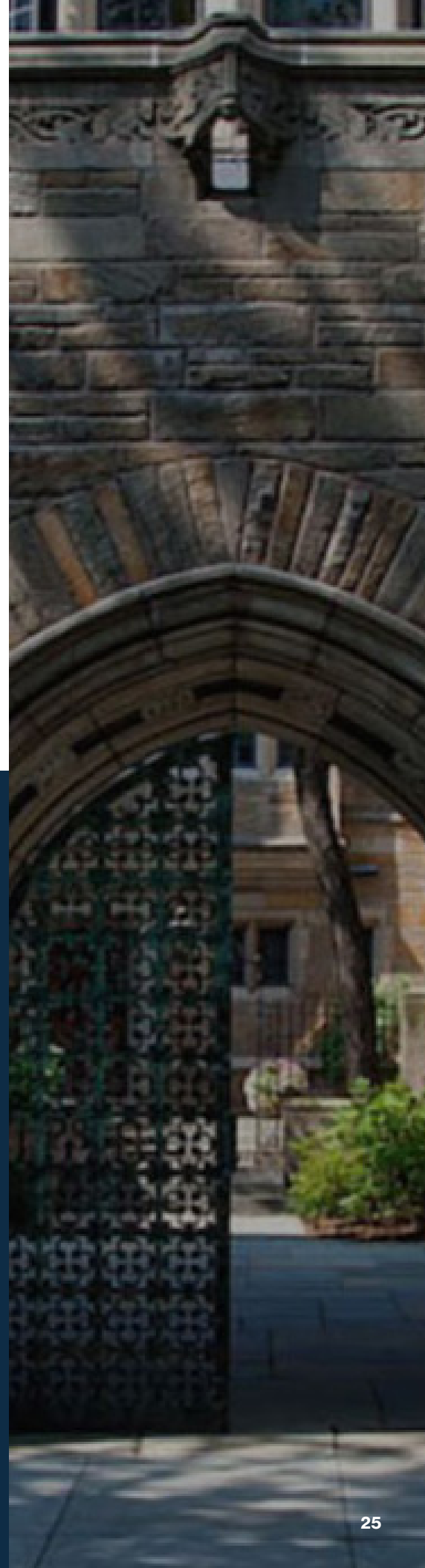
Strategic Priority 4: Establish a “One Westchester” Approach to Alumni and Corporate Engagement

Coordinate employer engagement efforts across campus to present a unified, consistent, and integrated face of the institution to external employer partners.

Objective 4.1:
Create a Council for Employer Engagement to strategically develop SUNY Westchester’s relationships with its external employer partners.

Objective 4.2:
Deploy a community-wide strategy to engage employers.

Objective 4.3:
Increase engagement with alumni, particularly around mentoring.



Supporting Recommendations for Strategic Priority 4:

Create a Council for Employer Engagement to strategically develop SUNY Westchester's relationships with its external employer partners. (Objective 4.1)

While students consider several factors when choosing the college they will attend, one of the most important considerations is the institution's ability to connect them to professional experience and post-college employment opportunities. More than ever, students and families weigh the potential for economic advancement against the costs of choosing one college over another, seeking to maximize return on investment. Because of this, SUNY Westchester must develop a One SUNY Westchester approach to engaging with employer partners in the broader community and region that efficiently and effectively connects student ambition and ability to employer needs.

According to 2022 [National Alumni Career Mobility \(NACM\) Annual Report](#), when 5- and 10-year graduates of public institutions reported that their institution helped them to network with employers, they were 19 percent more likely to report that their institution prepared them for their career and 10 percent more likely to report career satisfaction compared to those who reported that their institution did not help them to network with employers. This suggests that facilitating employer networking for students is essential to an institution's work to prepare students for their careers. In a professional world where personal relationships and social capital can determine a person's career opportunities, a college that provides students with opportunities to build these professional relationships and social capital will better meet its students' needs.

To align the efforts of the different departments and divisions involved in employer engagement, SUNY Westchester should develop a Council for Employer Engagement. This council should comprise the Dean/AVP of Career Success and Applied Learning, the Director of Employer Engagement, and other faculty and staff across campus regularly engaging with external employers. This council should meet at least once per quarter and work to share information and coordinate efforts around employer engagement initiatives and relationships.

Deploy a community-wide strategy to engage employers (Objective 4.2).

The work of the Council for Employer Engagement will be to partner with administrators, faculty, and teams across campus to develop a One SUNY Westchester strategy for engaging with employer partners that will enable the college to build a unified brand to present to regional recruiters, to simplify and align communication between students, faculty, staff, departments, and recruiters, to present students with new opportunities for experiential learning and internships, and to ultimately streamline the hiring process for students and potential employers.

To execute a cross-campus strategy for employer engagement, the Council for Employer Engagement should:

- Identify all employers interacting with SUNY Westchester. This list should include all employers who post opportunities on the College Central Network, attend career events, hire interns and graduates, or give money to the institution.
- Identify employer relations gaps in industries relevant to the SUNY Westchester community.
- Develop a list of the top 25 regional employers and form strategies for how best to engage with them in the

campus's career initiatives. The Employer Relations Council should engage with those employers with invitations to participate in curriculum development by encouraging those employers to post internships and jobs on the job posting platform, to attend networking events and job fairs, and to engage in work-integrated learning.

- Establish best practices for employer engagement processes such as contact sharing, outreach, and new employer leads and implementing trainings for these practices.
- Create new systems where students and employers can meet and interact during the student experience.

In addition to those responsibilities, the Council for Employer Engagement should work with faculty and administration to strategically align curricular and co-curricular education activities to the ever-changing employment needs of recruiters. First-year experience courses and programs, as well as classroom assignments and curriculums, can create opportunities for students to better understand their potential career pathways. Programs such as day-in-the-life video modules and employer engagement in the classroom strengthen the connections between academic learning and future professional application. Exposure to potential career pathways can improve student preparation, clarify expectations for future work, and inspire student ambition.

Institutional Example: SUNY Erie Community College has worked with employer partners to address student concerns about the trade-off between working and attending school. The result has been the development of programs where students can take steps toward their future careers while still earning a meaningful wage to support their economic needs. These “earn-while-you-learn” initiatives allow students to earn money while learning on the job. The model places students in paid internships or apprenticeships with participating employers, who helped to create the curricula that teach in-demand industry skills. SUNY Erie offers one such program that divides instruction between the classroom and paid, on-site training at regional auto dealerships. The program has shown to be particularly beneficial for non-traditional students who frequently have difficulty balancing the demands of classes, potential internships, and other family responsibilities.

Increase engagement with alumni, particularly around mentoring (Objective 4.3).

Interviews with the SUNY Westchester community revealed opportunities to engage the alumni community better. Alumni can be strategically integrated back into the SUNY Westchester community. SUNY Westchester should develop a plan to intentionally and holistically engage alumni in supporting the career development and goals of current students.

Both employers and alumni are an untapped resource for strengthening connections between students and the world of work, particularly with potential mentoring programs. This aligns with two of the High Impact Career Practices of networking with employers and receiving helpful career advice from employers/alumni. The two primary goals for a robust mentor program should be (1) Every SUNY Westchester student will have access to social capital, (2) alumni, and area employers will have opportunities to connect with students using simple and integrated experiences. Tangible ways to increase access to social capital and support alumni mentorship include:

- Build Career Mentoring Communities based on industry segments (K-12, Non-Profit, Higher Education, etc.) for making connections.
- Establish micro-mentoring opportunities, allowing for short duration of engagement between students and alumni.
- Leverage networking tools like Alumni Directories to give SUNY Westchester students and alumni access to the “hidden job market” by building their social capital.

The above can be accomplished in various ways, such as partnering with external groups and technology platforms like the Mentor Collective, Protopia, or People Grove. Once other strategic plan elements have been started, an internal assessment should be conducted to determine which students would most benefit from mentoring; this should include looking at program type, major, career goal, and demographic information. Conversely, mentor relationships can be

built around specific industries based on the regional needs of employers. Similar to other initiatives, mentoring should be scaled to increase student engagement. This strategy will allow for the best deployment of resources and increase impact across the SUNY Westchester community.



SCALED MENTORING: Most Students

Leverage large tech platforms for brief or ongoing connections between students and alumni
Large-scale mentoring integrated into the student experience

[Highland Community College First-Year Seminar Mentor Program](#)



INFLUENCED MENTORING: Many Students

Academic, demographic, or industry-aligned mentoring programs

[Mitchell Community College Mentor Programs](#)

[Volunteer State Community College Pioneer Connections Mentor Program](#)



TARGETED MENTORING: A Few Students

Hallmark programs for selected students based on industry or application

[Rockland Community College President's Society](#)

[Ivy Tech Community College Indy Women's Mentorship Program](#)

SUNY Westchester Bright Futures

Strategic Priority 5: Secure Financial Resources and Physical Spaces Necessary to Realize Career Success Priorities

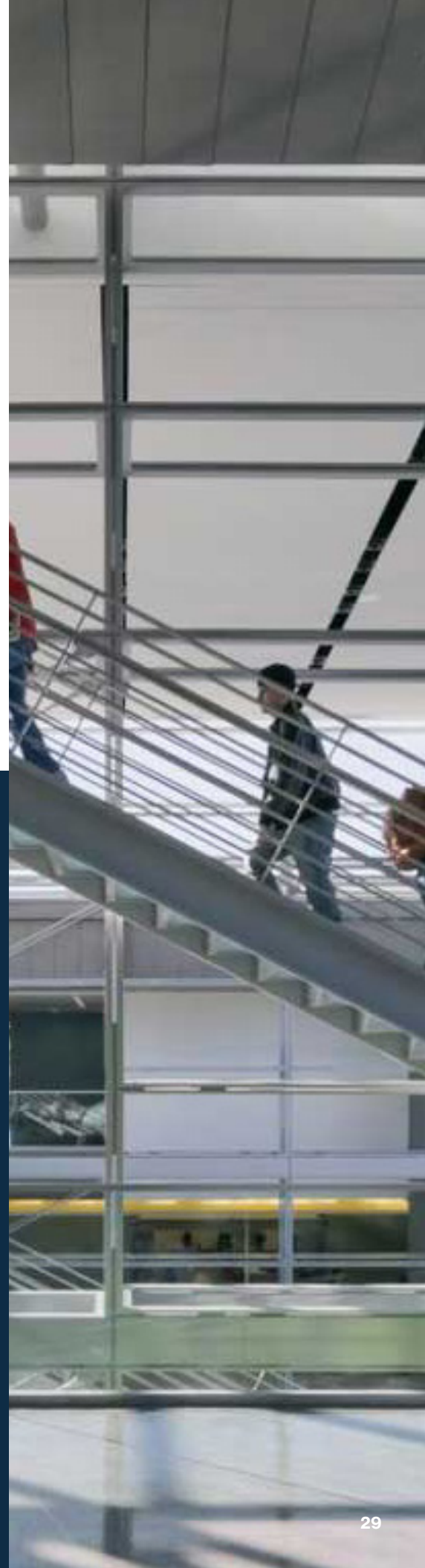
Allocate the funds, staffing, infrastructure, and physical space necessary for a comprehensive career ecosystem across SUNY Westchester.

Objective 5.1:
Identify and allocate appropriate funding
toward career success efforts.

Objective 5.2:
Devote permanent physical space to career
development activities.

Objective 5.3:
Develop a Case for Support for donors and
corporate partners.

Objective 5.4 :
Funding: Determine investment amount to
achieve desired level of transformation



Supporting Recommendations for Strategic Priority 5:

Identify and allocate appropriate funding toward career success efforts (Objective 5.1)

Colleges committed to preparing students for their careers effectively resource their career development efforts. Strategically allocating funding toward scalable initiatives can transform an institution and increase career development return on investment both institutionally and for individual students. For that reason, SUNY Westchester should prioritize funding the strategic priorities outlined in this report. A baseline of non-staff funding needs is outlined below:

- Career Technology: \$35,000-\$50,000
- Operations and Programming: \$25,000-35,000
- Faculty and Campus Supports: \$15,000-25,000

Funding for staff positions should be established based on SUNY's Salary Schedule. The following positions should have salary ranges established:

- Dean/AVP of Career Success and Applied Learning
- Directors (2)
- Assistant Directors (3)
- Operations Admin Support

Additionally, secure funding for an extensive peer advising program. As outlined in the previous staffing section, 15-20 hourly-wage student peers should be employed within the next two fiscal years.

When the total budget needs are determined, map needs to existing and new funding sources. Conduct an analysis of existing funds that impact career, workforce development and job preparation. A percent of existing grants and corporate monies can be leveraged to seed the strategic priorities or provide consistent funding in upcoming years. Once existing funds are identified, additional funds should be secured by repurposing FTE staff positions, new grants, philanthropic gifts, and corporate partnerships.

Potential grants and monies aligned with career development mentioned in interviews conducted with the SUNY Westchester community include the following: Perkins Grant Funding, Bright Futures Grant, National Science Foundation resources, and existing funding that supports faculty managing internships.

Other areas worth exploring, whether new or existing, include the following:

Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions - Title V, Hispanic-Serving Institutions - STEM and Articulation Programs, Minority Science and Engineering Improvement Program (MSEIP), Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act programs, Strengthening Community Colleges Training Grants, new funding from the National Science Foundation, the New York State Career and Technical Education Technical Assistance Center, Empire State Development's Office of Strategic Workforce Development (OSWD), and New York State Department of Labor Grants. Additionally, regional corporate grants should be explored, such as the New York Community Trust and the JPMorgan Chase Foundation.

Devote permanent physical space to career development activities (Objective 5.2).

By devoting a new physical space to career development activities, SUNY Westchester will signal to the campus community a commitment to career development and success. Not only will this space serve as a centralized hub for career education for the college, but it will also function as a flexible space for employer engagement activities such as conferences, networking events, and informational interviews.

SUNY Westchester should design its new career space to be flexible, facilitating all of the different career exploration activities students engage in. The Career Leadership Collective recommends including the following features in the space's new design:

Flexible common spaces: the main reception area and conference spaces should facilitate connections between students, faculty, alumni, and employers. The common spaces should maximize flexible use, from hosting students, staff, and faculty during the day to networking events and student organization meetings in the evenings. These common spaces should include:

- A large common room with capacity for 75 standing individuals
- A conference room with capacity for 15 individuals
- Six to eight multi-purpose interview rooms that can also function as:
 - Video-capable spaces for virtual interviews, virtual career treks, and the production of career education videos.
 - Breakout rooms for on-campus interviews during the day and student organization meeting space during off-peak times.
 - Private space for peer advising drop-ins and advising appointments.
 - Reservable space for student organizations during non-peak times.

Staff workspaces can be a mix of individual offices and shared workspaces. More specifically, these spaces should be composed of:

- Six to eight individual offices with the capacity for 3 to 4 individuals for meetings with 1 or 2 staff members assigned to each office
- One or two shared workspaces with capacity for up to 10 individuals
- Additional storage, staff break room, and office supply space

The office's total square footage depends on the flexibility of the various spaces. Based on benchmarking conducted by The Collective, other institutions have a wide range of dedicated square footage. The low end reported was 1,250 sq ft per 1,000 students, and the high end reported was 3,000 sq ft per 1,000 students.

Institutional Example: Ball State University's [Indiana Connection Lounge](#) has reenvisioned how campus space can build connections between students and employers. The innovative lounge is a strategic space where the university hosts alumni, employers, and students. It facilitates one-on-one and small-group introductions, strategically helping students to grow their career development and build social capital. The lounge is equipped with the latest career technology and serves as an on-campus home for employers spending time at Ball State. This helps create lasting connections with the student body, reflecting the institution's dedication to nurturing fulfilling careers and enabling meaningful lives.

Develop a Case for Support for donors and corporate partners. (Objective 5.3)

At colleges nationwide, sponsorships, gifts, and donations earmarked for career development initiatives are trending upward. Corporate partners and philanthropists view career success and economic mobility as drivers of enrollment, institutional success, and regional workforce vitality. By creating a list of high-priority career education initiatives, SUNY Westchester can attract donors and partners who will invest in high-impact programs that will transform the career readiness of the campus and the wider Westchester County community. This should include securing funds for a new or repurposed space to house career success efforts related to the Career Integration Team. In recent years, many institutions have secured significant gifts designated for developing experiential learning initiatives. Examples include the following:

- Carthage College's [Aspire Program](#), a \$15 Million gift
- Arapahoe Community College's [Sturm Collaboration Campus](#), a \$10 Million gift
- [The EPIC Advantage](#) at Earlham College, a \$7.5 Million gift

SUNY Westchester should also pursue gifts to increase student engagement in high-impact career education initiatives. The Career Leadership Collective recommends pursuing the following types of gifts:

- Expansion of Career Pathways Programs: Employer and industry-sponsored programs that highlight and integrate career pathway information into the student experience, such as the existing Bright Futures program.
- Experiential Projects: Multiple and continuing \$10-50K level gifts to stimulate hands-on course projects related to career education.
- Career Treks: Employer-facilitated trips for students at job sites, offices, and facilities where students learn hands-on about the day-to-day tasks and experiences of workers in various professional fields

Funding: Determine investment amount to achieve desired level of transformation (Objective 5.4)

The strategic priorities and recommendations found throughout the report can only be realized with further investment in career success. The following funding scenarios outline the institution's capacity to support career readiness and success among students. From light annual investments aimed at improving the current state of affairs to full-scale funding that promises to transform the career ecosystem, the options presented aim to strike a balance between cost and impact. Note that 1) funding for physical space supporting career success efforts is not included and 2) scenarios assume existing resources are not repurposed; costs may be further defrayed by repurposing existing funds or realigning current FTE positions.

Scenario A - Light Annual Investment

Estimated \$195,000

This option provides:

- Staffing (\$145,000) - 1 Dean/AVP of Career Success and Applied Learning
- Career Technology (\$35,000)
- Operations & Programing (\$10,000)
- Faculty and Campus Supports (\$5,000)
- Result: Incremental increase in the impact of current efforts

Scenario B - Medium Annual Investment

Estimated \$445,000

This option provides:

- Staffing (\$370,000) - 1 Dean/AVP of Career Success and Applied Learning, 2 New Assistant Directors, 1
- New Operations Admin Support
- Career Technology (\$45,000)
- Operations & Programing (\$18,000)
- Faculty and Campus Supports (\$12,000)
- Result: Greater increase in career readiness and outcomes for many students

Scenario C - Full Annual Investment

Estimated \$825,000

This option provides:

- Staffing (\$700,000) - 1 Dean/AVP of Career Success and Applied Learning, 2 Directors, 3 Assistant
- Directors, 1 Operations Admin Support
- Career Technology (\$60,000)
- Operations & Programing (\$35,000)
- Faculty and Campus Supports (\$30,000)
- Result: Complete transformation of the SUNY Westchester Career Ecosystem

Closing Thoughts:

SUNY Westchester has developed a solid foundation for comprehensively integrating career success into the student experience. To implement the recommendations outlined in this report, the institution must maintain a strong commitment to career success and make the necessary investments of time and resources. This investment will ensure that all students can succeed professionally during and after their time at SUNY Westchester.

SUNY Westchester should prioritize the following report elements in the next six months.

- Objective 1.2: Develop a career success framework by establishing institution-wide SUNY Westchester Career Learning Outcomes (CLOs)
- Objective 1.4: Establish a Student Career Success Collaborative
- Objective 2.1: Create a Career Integration Team composed of full-time employees dedicated to developing career readiness across the college and community.

To support the above efforts, The Career Leadership Collective can further assist and empower the SUNY Westchester community through the following services:

- Lead the campus and career team through Design Days and Training to operationalize strategic priorities
- Offer ongoing change management advisory services via virtual support
- Invest in career success staff development by training staff at Mastermind, Aspire, and Kickstart.

Appendix A: Schedule of Interviews

Thursday, April 18, 2024

9:00	Executive Director, Westchester Community College Foundation
9:15	Miscellaneous Faculty and Students
9:45	Workforce & Extension Centers
10:45	President, Cabinet Members, & Deans
11:30	Student Government Association
12:00	Career & Counselors, Academic Planning, Enrollment/Admissions Facing Staff
1:00	Faculty
1:30	Group 1: Employers Group 2: External Facing Staff
2:00	Executive Director, Westchester Community College Foundation

Appendix B: Career Ecosystem Rubric

Below is the rubric associated with the campus scorecard. As mentioned in the report, the scorecard represents the overall college assessment from The Collective based on their work with hundreds of colleges and comparing the institution's effectiveness in the following key areas of career development and future preparation.

	BEGINNING	PROGRESSING	EMERGING SUCCESS	EXEMPLARY
CAMPUS-WIDE STRATEGIC GOALS AND PRIORITIES FOR CAREER SUCCESS	No current campus-wide plan for career development; few systemic requirements; gaps exist in career exploration, employer relations, and information sharing.	Qualitative career development goals are understood by career staff. Goals and priorities are individually set and not yet connected to broader institutional goals. Campus-level priorities are not broadly understood.	Upper administration, departments, and divisions understand the overall institutional career goals. Key campus partners are aware of High-Impact Career Practices.	Campus-wide goals are clearly articulated and assessed across departments and divisions. High Impact Career Practices are integrated and tracked throughout the student experience.
STRATEGIC GOALS AND PRIORITIES FOR CAREER SUCCESS	Data may be collected and minimally used. Data measurements focus on engagement and usage rates but are not connected to impact.	Limited data use by a few individuals, but most data is inaccessible, particularly to users outside of the office that collected data. Data is not well leveraged in informing overall strategic goals and activities.	Data is used by a core group of people. Sharing of data has begun in some areas. Some career activities are measured and assessed.	Data is consistently shared and used by most internal users and to relevant external users. There are common efforts to measure and assess meaningful career success.
HIGH-QUALITY CAREER DESIGN THROUGH THE STUDENT LIFECYCLE	Career development is largely an "opt-in" activity, leaving career success to chance depending on students' major or demographic background.	Differing levels of quality, methods, and types of career readiness offerings occur depending on students' majors, co-curricular, or demographic background.	Quality and intentional career development exist within most programs, with most students reaching established career development milestones.	Career development and key milestones are integrated through the student journey; key career education content is mapped for first-generation students and minoritized students.
COORDINATED CAREER ECOSYSTEM	Career development activities primarily focus on workshops and advising that occur within the physical office of the career center.	Career development activities are embedded in some areas, such as classroom presentations and programming partnerships with other offices.	Many faculty and staff are highly engaged in career development conversations. Career development content is readily available to the broader college community to use with students.	Career Champions are equipped to impact students. Career development is integrated into key common experiences. CMS is leveraged to embed career development in and outside classrooms.
EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY	Engagement with employers and external stakeholders is reactive as requests are made. Activities are uncoordinated across campus and divisions. Limited staffing support.	Career Fairs and networking take place with some coordination. Some coordination of employer activities with faculty. Potential for much more outreach to employers.	Good communication across the college for employer engagement, but is primarily a sharing of information. Employers report strong connections across the college.	A clear strategy exists for engaging with employers, including a tiered approach toward external engagement. High coordination of communication and events. Employers embedded in activity across campus.

Appendix C: Consultant Information

Nick Cattin

Senior Manager of Consulting & Training
The Career Leadership Collective

Nick Cattin has worked for over a decade in higher education, focusing on liberal arts and undergraduate business education. He was most recently the Director of Career & Professional Development in The Farmer School of Business at Miami University in Oxford, OH. Throughout his career, Nick has expanded the reach of career services, developed new curriculums, launched and led international internships, and consulted with employers about developing and executing their recruitment strategies. He is passionate about solving complex organizational problems, talent development, and community involvement. He has served on the boards of local nonprofit organizations, where he has been integral to their strategic planning and executive search efforts. He received a Bachelor of Science in Business from the Kelley School of Business at Indiana University and a master's in counseling and Educational Psychology from Indiana University. Nick lives in Indianapolis, Indiana, and is an avid hiker, bicyclist, and overall outdoor enthusiast.

Julie Bechtold

Academic and Career Advising Manager
Waubonsee Community College

Julie Bechtold has worked in higher education, focusing on increasing student engagement in career experiences by embedding career development into the student lifecycle. She is currently the Academic and Career Advising Manager for Waubonsee Community College, co-leading the implementation of a case management model infusing academic and career advising into the student life span as part of the college's strategic plan. Previously, she re-engineered 3 career centers for a graduate school, university, and community college. She is a visionary when it comes to building student development plans to increase engagement and retention while focusing on career outcomes. She brings proven experience implementing career development and career management strategies that reach every student while maximizing minimal resources. Julie began her career at a global

consulting firm rising from Senior Consultant to Regional Operations Manager with their National Leadership and Coaching Practice. Julie holds a Master's degree in Education with an emphasis in Counseling. She is a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor in the State of Illinois.

Tyler Toy

Content and Technical Writing
The Career Leadership Collective

Tyler Toy is an educator and writer. He is a faculty member of the English Department at Colorado State University, where he earned his Master of Fine Arts in English and Creative Writing. Tyler's professional interests center around rhetorical theory, cross-curricular writing, diversity, equity, and inclusion in writing pedagogy, and career development classroom integration. Tyler lives in Fort Collins, Colorado, where he regularly skis, runs, and hikes through the Rocky Mountains and writes. His fiction can be found in The Emerson Review and High Desert Journal.