



## **SUNY Oneonta Performance Improvement Plan**

### **Section 1: Campus Alignment with SUNY Excels**

#### **Introduction**

SUNY Oneonta is a comprehensive liberal arts and science college located in Oneonta.

SUNY Oneonta's roughly 1,250 campus employees serve over 6,000 students in 75 degree programs at the bachelor's and master's level.

Most of our students are residents of the State of New York. Our student academic profile is strong. In 2014, over half of our incoming freshmen graduated from high school in the top quartile of their class, with high school grades averaging over 91.

#### **Mission/Standing**

SUNY Oneonta's mission is to unite excellence in teaching, scholarship, civic engagement, and stewardship to create a student-centered learning community. Our core values provide the foundation for all that the college does:

- Excellence in teaching, learning, and scholarship;
- Student engagement;
- A liberal arts foundation;
- An inclusive community;
- Global connectedness; and
- Stewardship.

Among our peers, SUNY Oneonta is regarded as a leader in education, economics and business, and biology. Our Cooperstown Graduate Program offers the nation's pre-eminent master's program in museum studies. The college's Biological Field Station has a regional impact through studying and managing Otsego Lake and generating partnerships with environmental organizations and agencies. The college also is recognized for civic service and volunteerism, its commitment to diversity, and sustainability practices.

To remain competitive with its peer institutions, SUNY Oneonta must enhance student engagement, particularly within the first year. The college also needs to grow and sustain higher enrollment by increasing the number of graduate and certificate program offerings. Growth is imperative for our continued financial viability. As graduating high school student cohorts become smaller, we must broaden our thinking about who our students will be and how we serve them. Future institutional success will depend on attracting graduate, transfer, international, and online students in greater numbers.

SUNY Oneonta is a regional economic engine and cultural center. It is the largest employer in the City of Oneonta, and the third largest employer in Otsego County. The college is expected to maintain strong connections with the local business community, nonprofit agencies, surrounding school districts, and its host municipality. SUNY Oneonta's resources and relationships uniquely position the college to support and shape the future of its surrounding area.

## **Program Mix/Centers/Distinct Programs or Activities**

SUNY Oneonta's most subscribed majors are within our Business Economics, Human Ecology, Education, Biology and Communication Arts departments. Our liberal arts and pre-professional majors cover a wide range of disciplines organized in five schools. We are the only SUNY comprehensive campus to offer bachelor's degrees in statistics and music industry, and the only SUNY institution in the region offering undergraduate majors in child & family studies, computer art, gerontology studies and meteorology. We also offer unique graduate programs, such as those in dietetics, museum studies and lake management.

The college is a founding member of the regional STEM Leadership Council and hosts its annual Go STEM Summer Institute for middle school students. SUNY Oneonta also houses the Catskill Area School Study Council, a partnership that has served area school districts affiliated with the Otsego Northern Catskills BOCES and Delaware-Chenango-Madison-Otsego BOCES since 1951.

The SUNY Oneonta Noyce Scholars Program, funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF), prepares talented biology, chemistry, earth science and physics majors for successful careers as middle and high school science teachers in high-need urban and rural schools. Twenty-two students graduated from the initial five-year program. SUNY Oneonta is actively recruiting a second cohort of Noyce Scholars after being one of only a handful of institutions across the country to be awarded a highly competitive Noyce Phase II NSF grant.

Since 2001, the College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP), funded by the United States Department of Education, has met the needs of students from migrant and seasonal farm working families by offering them experiences and support services similar to the Educational Opportunity Program.

## **Post-Graduation Success**

SUNY Oneonta deployed a first destination survey this past year to gather information about May 2015 graduates' career paths and plans to seek advanced degrees. We recognize that SUNY System is negotiating an MOU with the New York State Labor Department so that we will be better able to track the job attainment of our graduates. As reported in the federal government's new College Scorecard, median starting salaries for SUNY Oneonta graduates who received federal financial aid are well above the national average.

## **Alumni/Philanthropy**

SUNY Oneonta completed a comprehensive campaign in June 2015. More than \$13.6 million were raised, over \$1 million more than the goal. SUNY Oneonta's endowment eclipsed the \$50 million-mark this past year and is the largest endowment among SUNY's comprehensive colleges.

We maintain strong relationships with many distinguished alumni. They are the college's most dedicated supporters and ambassadors. Over two dozen alumni return to campus annually to guest lecture and otherwise engage with our students. More than 100 serve on the college's boards, advisory committees, councils or in programs that bring them back to campus at least once a year. Many alumni host our students as interns in their businesses and places of employment.

Business students connect with alumni through programs such as the annual Backpacks to Briefcases networking event in New York City. A similar program is being developed in partnership with theatre and music industry alumni.

### **Strategic Plan/Excels Goals**

SUNY Oneonta adopted its *Strategic Plan 2015: Scholarship, Service, Strength* in spring 2015. This three-year plan includes four goals:

- Increase students' engagement throughout their collegiate experience;
- Promote inquiry, service, and scholarship;
- Broaden access to SUNY Oneonta's exceptional and affordable educational programs; and
- Strengthen the college's financial sustainability.

SUNY Oneonta embraces SUNY's Completion Agenda and SUNY Excels. Our strategic plan reflects this alignment.

As shown in Section 2 of this plan, we have set goals in each SUNY Excels focus area. However, within this broad context, SUNY Oneonta's priorities are to:

- Raise overall enrollment;
- Increase the percentage of minority students;
- Improve retention of first-time, full-time students;
- Increase graduation rates at four and six years;
- Ensure students' financial literacy; and
- Advance scholarship, discovery and innovation.

### **Environmental Factors**

SUNY Oneonta recognizes that the number of prospective traditional-age students in New York State will decline over the next several years, dropping, according to some projections, by 1% per year through 2028. During the same period, the need for workers to fill jobs within the state that require a bachelor degree will increase. We also acknowledge that additional state resources will be targeted and finite.

### **Investment Fund**

SUNY Oneonta submitted seven white papers for initial consideration for support through SUNY's Expanded Investment and Performance Fund. The campus submitted four full applications:

- *Graduate Program Needs Assessment*;
- *Developing and Implementing the aDAC Model of Intrusive Academic Advisement*;
- *SUNY 2020 Round V: SUNY Oneonta School of Economics and Business*; and
- *MAKING CENTS Financial Literacy Program*.

Additionally, the campus collaborated with other SUNY campuses on three applications, including *A Scalable Model for Coordinating and Promoting Applied Learning*, which was initially recommended for individual submission, but strengthened through a pursued partnership with SUNY Potsdam.

## **Section 2: Specific SUNY Excels Priority Areas and Metrics**

### **2.1 Access**

#### **1. Full Enrollment Picture**

SUNY Oneonta aims to increase total student enrollment by 3.6%, from 6,101 in fall 2014 to 6,322 in fall 2020, supporting SUNY's goal of increasing the number of degrees conferred system-wide to 150,000 by 2020. Recognizing that recruitment of traditional-age students will not be enough to meet enrollment goals in a landscape where this population is declining, the college will step up efforts to attract transfer students, graduate students, international students, and working adults.

This year, the college reorganized its efforts to recruit students from beyond the United States and engaged with the agency Big Choice to prequalify potential applicants. This was the first step in collaboration between the offices of International Education and Undergraduate Admissions to increase enrollment of international students by 1.3% percent by 2020.

#### **2. NYS Residents Served by SUNY**

Last fall 96 percent of SUNY Oneonta students were New York state residents. To continue serving New York state residents in an increasingly competitive higher education environment, SUNY Oneonta will implement a strategic enrollment plan to address sustainable enrollment growth.

The realignment of several college offices to form a new Enrollment Services Division will improve recruitment and retention of the college's core enrollment base—high school seniors living within New York state—and position the college to attract more transfer students from New York's community colleges. Parallel to these efforts, the college will work to increase graduate enrollments by adding new master's programs, certificates of advanced study, online degree programs, and programs that support work force needs. Independent research conducted this past year will guide the college's effort to develop its academic portfolio with the goal of enrollment growth.

The college successfully piloted this strategy in 2012, developing a special education master's degree partnership with Springbrook, one of Otsego County's largest employers. As part of the program, Springbrook paid the tuition for teaching assistants in its school for children with autism, and SUNY Oneonta education faculty taught courses based around employees' work schedules and needs, including some classes offered on the Springbrook campus.

#### **3. Diversity**

SUNY Oneonta is committed to moving closer toward a campus community reflective of our state's diversity, and to fostering an environment that is welcoming and inclusive to all. We will strive to increase the percentage of students from underrepresented groups to 20% by 2020, up from 16.9% in fall 2014, and to increase recruitment of faculty and staff from underrepresented groups. At the same time, we will strengthen the cultural competency of our students and improve our campus climate.

Our Academic master plan calls for the college to hire and retain a diverse faculty and staff so that all employees feel valued, comfortable, respected and meaningfully included. Another objective of the Academic master plan is to infuse diversity and inclusion into all aspects of teaching, learning and scholarship.

In 2014 SUNY Oneonta was one of 83 schools nationwide chosen by INSIGHT Into Diversity magazine to receive a 2014 Higher Education Excellence in Diversity award. This national honor recognizes U.S. colleges and universities that demonstrate an outstanding commitment to diversity and inclusion.

In 2010, SUNY Oneonta adopted its first strategic plan, choosing diversity as one of six central principles. This led to a variety of initiatives, including increased investment in the college's Gender and Sexuality Resource Center, the reorganization of institutional efforts to ensure equity and inclusion under the leadership of a new chief diversity officer, and implementation of a three-year initiative to deliver the Anti-Defamation League's "A Campus of Difference" diversity education program on our campus.

Last year the college also began working with the Racial Equity Institute (REI) to create meaningful dialogs designed to continue the development of an inclusive and equitable campus and community and support ongoing affinity groups. Goals of this year's REI programming include:

- Preliminary development of multicultural learning outcomes for graduation requirements;
- Improvement in the campus/community climate related to race/ethnicity; and
- Changes in search and screen hiring processes resulting in increased recruitment and retention of equity-minded faculty and staff.

SUNY Oneonta also is pursuing cluster hiring as a mechanism to further diversify the faculty. Two schools anticipate filling a combined five or six positions through cluster hiring during 2015-2016.

In 2012, the college established an annual Common Read and endowed lecture to infuse cultural literacy into the academic program by asking all incoming freshmen to read a diversity-themed book, which is then discussed across several disciplines. The capstone event of Common Read programming is the Mills Distinguished Lecture, a presentation by the author of the Common Read book, delivered on our campus and open to the public free of charge.

This year, the college sought and received a grant from the New York Council for the Humanities to further extend the Common Read into the Oneonta community. The grant allowed the college to host a second lecture by the author for an audience of more than 1,100 high school students whom we invited to the SUNY Oneonta campus.

SUNY Oneonta is committed to creating an environment characterized by openness, fairness and equal access for all. In partnership with the nationally recognized diversity consultancy Sue Rankin and Associates, the college currently is conducting a campus-wide *Confidential Assessment of the Environment for Learning, Living, And Working*. The goals of the project are to identify successful initiatives; uncover any challenges facing members of our community; and develop strategic initiatives to build on the successes and address the challenges.

#### **4. Capacity**

Our college has adopted a strategic enrollment plan to address sustainable enrollment growth and further diversify the student body. SUNY Oneonta already offers successful online graduate

programs in Nutrition and Dietetics, and Educational Technology Specialist. These programs provide models upon which additional online graduate programs may be developed.

Based on the results of the Online Readiness Assessment completed this past year, SUNY Oneonta has begun identifying areas in which to devote resources that will allow our campus to increase participation in Open SUNY, including the newly created position of distance education coordinator.

Another strategy to increase capacity is rethinking construction of our class schedule. Data collected from students suggested that course availability could be improved. In response, the Division of Academic Affairs is piloting a predictive model for the spring 2016 class schedule and reviewing course section caps for certain classes.

## **2.2 Completion**

### **5. Completions**

SUNY Oneonta is committed to supporting the SUNY system goal of awarding 150,000 degrees and certificates by 2020. We will get more students through the SUNY pipeline by improving our four- and six-year graduation rates (see subsection 7) and our first-to-second-year retention rate, both of which are already well above the average for public institutions.

Our new strategic plan calls for more robust faculty advisement, increased support for mentoring, and new programs aimed at increasing engagement of first-year students. Among these is the implementation in August 2016 of a single orientation session for all new students, held right before the start of the semester, rather than the current model of several orientation programs offered throughout the summer. Our goal is to increase first-to-second-year retention to 90% by 2020, up from 86.7% in fall 2014.

Through increased enrollment and stronger academic advisement, we will increase the number of degrees awarded annually to 1,650, compared to 1,550 during the 2014-2015 academic year. One component of this effort will be construction of degree-specific pipelines from community college to SUNY Oneonta.

We will also encourage academic departments to propose certificate programs that address the career needs of traditional students as well as regional residents.

### **6. Student Achievement/Success (SAM)**

SUNY Oneonta recognizes that several national education associations are advocating greater use of SAM data and also encouraging the U.S. Department of Education to utilize SAM as its framework for college affordability and accountability. We will work with our “feeder” community colleges to implement reverse transfer options.

### **7. Graduation Rates**

The six-year graduation rate of SUNY Oneonta’s 2008 cohort was 73%. We aspire to raise this to 80% over the next five years while simultaneously closing achievement gaps of minority groups.

During the same timeframe, we will raise the four-year graduation rate from 56%, based on the 2011 cohort, to 60%. This expectation is stated as an objective of the college’s strategic plan.

Improving undergraduate advisement is fundamental to achieving these results. Development of a robust advising system beyond course planning that enhances student completion and success through faculty-student interaction is an objective within our strategic plan. This is detailed in subsection 8 below.

In 2012, the Education Trust singled out SUNY Oneonta for its success in improving graduation rates among Hispanic students, ranking the college No. 11 on a listing of public institutions showing the largest gains from 2004 to 2010. As minority enrollment increases, the college will offer additional programs and services aimed at helping underrepresented groups succeed. In addition to support services provided by the Educational Opportunity Program and CAMP, the college offers an AALANA (African American, Latina/o, Asian, Native American) mentoring program pairing new students with peer mentors to support their transition to college.

SUNY Oneonta also is the recipient of a five-year National Science Foundation grant for “Critical MaSS: Math and Science Scholars,” a scholarship program aimed at enabling students who would otherwise face significant barriers to graduate and enter careers or advanced degree programs in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) disciplines. The program will provide 24 SUNY Oneonta students in various STEM disciplines with scholarships of up to \$5,400 per year and academic support services.

In addition to reducing student debt, the project seeks to improve educational outcomes for students from underrepresented groups. It will provide faculty-student mentoring and advising and multidisciplinary educational experiences, encourage undergraduate research and/or professional travel, and enhance opportunities for scholars to secure internships, careers or opportunities for graduate studies.

## **8. Time to Degree**

A key goal in the college’s strategic plan is development of a robust advising system beyond course planning that enhances student completion and success through faculty-student interactions. As the first step toward more aggressive advisement practices, SUNY Oneonta recently temporarily added two Academic Advisement Office staff members whose priority is assisting students who earned college-bearing credit in high school to understand how the assignment of that credit applies to their degree and affect their time to completion.

The average student on our campus graduates with over 130 credits. More intentional and frequent discussions with students about scheduling and degree requirements will bring this number closer to the minimum, allowing many students to qualify earlier for graduation.

The college is creating curriculum guide sheets that clearly define the paths through each of our undergraduate programs. These tools will help students make informed choices about their course schedules.

## **2.3 Success**

## **9. SUNY Advantage**

Two objectives in our *Strategic Plan 2015* overlay ideally with SUNY Advantage. First, SUNY Oneonta will develop the *Oneonta Degree of Distinction* that recognizes and rewards students for leadership, engagement, and independent learning. Second, we will formalize a Center for

Teaching Excellence to serve as the focal point of activity for advancing teaching, learning and engagement.

SUNY Oneonta's academic master also plan will guide efforts to develop a shared understanding and language for liberal arts education for both external and internal audiences as well as college-wide essential learning outcomes for SUNY Oneonta students. Furthermore, we will ensure that students receive a portion of general education through collaborative and active learning pedagogy in small class sections.

## **10. Financial Literacy**

Increasing students' financial literacy and reducing their loan debt at graduation is another strategic goal. SUNY Oneonta aims to reduce the student default rate to 5% by establishing a financial literacy education program for students and their parents. The default rate in fall 2014, based on a three-year rate, was 7%.

In spring 2015, 80 students learned about budgeting and personal money management during "Making Cents of Life After College," the first in a series of interactive financial literacy events planned by the college's Student Accounts Office. This fall, SUNY Oneonta was one of 15 institutions across the country selected to receive funding for financial literacy programming through the Higher One Financial Literacy Counts grants program. The grant will allow the college to expand programming aimed at helping students and their families better understand and navigate the education loan process from application through repayment.

## **2.4 Inquiry**

### **11. Total Sponsored Activity**

In 2014-2015, expenditures on sponsored activity totaled \$5.8 million. The largest portion of funding is attributed to a small number of federal and state contracts. We will work to raise this amount to \$6.5 million annually and increase the proportion of faculty-generated grants in the total. A key strategy in boosting external support will be providing incentives to successful fund seekers, including returning a portion of administrative overhead to faculty members who secure grants.

### **12. Student hands-on research, entrepreneurship, etc.**

Strengthening and growing student/faculty research and creative activity is an objective of the SUNY Oneonta Academic master plan. We propose to raise the percentage of seniors who have participated in faculty-supervised research to 35% from 28% in 2014. One objective of the college's strategic plan is to increase opportunities for students to be mentored. The expansion of student mentoring and applied learning must be supported by recognition of the associated increase in faculty workload.

The Office for Academic Programs is leading this effort, which is scheduled for completion in by fall 2016. A complementary strategic plan objective is to develop essential learning outcomes including creative, critical and ethical thinking. These are the foundation for inquiry and exploration outside of the classroom.

### **13. Scholarship, Discovery and Innovation**

Research was one of four priorities of SUNY Oneonta's successful "Possibilities Full of Promise" comprehensive campaign, which exceeded its goal by more than \$1 million. To



encourage scholarship, discovery and innovation, the college will continue to increase financial support for student research and travel to academic conferences.

The college's Committee on Research sponsors a competitive Student Research Grant Program for research and Creative Activity, funded by the College at Oneonta Foundation and the Alumni Association. Funds available for student grants have increased by more than 75% in five years, from \$32,200 in 2009-2010 to \$56,550 in 2014-2015.

Students have the opportunity to present their work in professional format at the annual Student Research & Creative Activity (SRCA) Day; grant awardees are required to present. The 2015 SRCA Day featured 124 presentations with 160 student presenters and 71 different faculty sponsors. The College at Oneonta Foundation also supports the annual Awards for Excellence in Student Research & Creative Activity, which provides monetary prizes through an adjudication process of nominations made by faculty sponsors of SRCA Day student presenters.

Many students also have the opportunity to co-author publications and attend regional, national, and sometimes international conferences with their faculty sponsors. In addition to departmental and faculty external funding, support for students to travel to academic conferences is provided through the College's Student Travel for Excellence Program, which makes available \$15,000 each year.

Another continuing source of support for scholarship-related student travel is the D'Antonio Student Travel for Excellence Fund. A donor has contributed \$30,000 to the fund annually since 2012 with a commitment to supporting it at this level through 2018. The same donor contributed an additional \$70,000 to endow the student travel fund; and additional designated gifts and pledges will bring the endowed fund to over \$200,000.

Faculty and professional staff members also have access to funding through the Research Grant Program and Creative Activity Grant Program. These programs award up to \$3,000 per project to support research and to enhance the presence of art, literature, music and other creative activity on campus. Available funds have varied since the program's inception. A total of \$50,000 per year has been allocated to the programs in the last three fiscal years.

## **2.5 Engagement**

### **14. START-UP NY**

SUNY Oneonta received approval for its START-UP NY plan in May; 19 companies have expressed interest in working with the college; four are refining their proposals.

The college is represented on the regional economic development committee within the Mohawk Valley region, and has hosted the Regional Economic Development Council on its campus.

### **15. Alumni/Philanthropic Support**

The college seeks to increase funds raised to \$3.3 million annually. The total raised in 2014-2015 was \$3,047,937. One goal of the recently completed comprehensive campaign was to reach and sustain \$3 million in receipts annually.

Plans are underway in the Division of College Advancement to implement customer relationship management (CRM) software to improve its ability to identify and appropriately engage prospective donors. This acquisition is central to enhancing efficiency in seeking external support. The CRM also will help ensure that the College at Oneonta Foundation maintains its 4-

star rating from Charity Navigator, the leading independent charity evaluator in America, which affirms the Foundation's positive reputation as a responsible steward. The Foundation's endowment and net assets, now totaling \$50.2 million, will continue to increase and support institutional priorities and strategic initiatives.

## **16. Civic Engagement**

Community service is a central part of the SUNY Oneonta experience. The college has earned the Carnegie Classification in community engagement and is a member of the President's Higher Education Honor Roll for Community Service. Many courses incorporate service-learning activities, and the college is in the process of revising more courses to qualify for the *Service Learning* designation. Our academic master plan calls for increasing participation in course-related service learning. Under our strategic plan, the college will offer at least 50 *Service Learning* courses by May 2018.

More than 20 percent of the student body volunteers through the Center for Social Responsibility and Community (CSRC), which coordinates community service activities worth \$1.3 million annually; in the spring, the CSRC hosts its signature event, "Into the Streets," a day of service bringing more than 600 students together with community volunteers to collaborate on projects at local schools, parks and nonprofit organizations.

In addition to volunteering, SUNY Oneonta students support a variety of causes through club activities. The annual American Cancer Society Relay for Life, co-hosted by the Colleges Against Cancer chapters at SUNY Oneonta and nearby Hartwick College, raised a record \$67,000 in 2014.

## **17. Economic Impact**

SUNY Oneonta last completed an economic impact study in 2003; planning for a new study is underway.

The creation of a new internship coordinator position within the Career Development Center has allowed the college to expand partnerships with local and regional employers that benefit from offering internships to our students. We will continue to seek out new internship partners in the region. We will improve the quality and quantity of internships offered to students through implementation of our academic master plan.

Similarly, the college created an economic development coordinator position in 2014. This has given us a single point of contact for state programs, such as START-UP NY, and local organizations, such as the Otsego Chamber of Commerce and Destination Oneonta.

### **Section 3: Conclusion and Expected Impact on Your Campus**

Consistent with SUNY Excels, our strategic plan and this performance improvement plan aim to direct resources toward student success. Our goals under the SUNY Excels measures will strengthen community partnerships, add to our state's intellectual capital, and broaden students' opportunities for success.

SUNY Oneonta's greatest investments will result in gains in:

- Overall enrollment;
- The percentage of minority students;
- Retention of first-time, full-time students;
- Graduation rates at four and six years;
- Students' financial literacy; and
- The advancement of scholarship, discovery and innovation.

Progress in these priority areas will make SUNY Oneonta a more dynamic institution in 2020, better prepared to serve an increasingly diverse student population.

#### **Summary of Goals**

SUNY Oneonta will increase student headcount to 6,322 by 2020, when one in five students will be from an underrepresented minority.

The college will begin closing the achievement gap between underrepresented minority (URM) students and their non-URM peers.

First-to-second-year retention will reach 90%. Time to degree will diminish. The six-year graduation rate will reach 80%, and the four-year rate, 60%. We will award 1,650 degrees annually.

SUNY Oneonta's students will report higher levels of engagement as demonstrated by survey (e.g., SOS, NSSE) results.

To address changing student demographics, SUNY Oneonta will expand online coursework, and develop additional master's degrees and certificates of advanced study.

Every SUNY Oneonta student will have the opportunity to earn an *Oneonta Degree of Distinction* that incorporates leadership, engagement and independent learning into their curricular and co-curricular experience.

SUNY Oneonta will pursue opportunities available through START-UP New York and continue building relationships across the region through internships and community service.

We will implement a financial literacy education program for students and their parents that will lower the student default rate to 5%.

#### **Projected Outcomes**

Meeting the goals outlined herein will advance SUNY Oneonta by:

- More fully engaging students in their first years and supporting their success and development throughout their college careers;
- Decreasing time to graduation and total cost of attendance;
- Serving a broader cross-section of New Yorkers; and

- Contributing to our region's economic renewal.

SUNY Oneonta will further strengthen areas, such as retention and graduation rates, in which we have excelled as compared with similar institutions nationwide. The college will move thoughtfully and aggressively into markets, such as graduate education, creating new programs based on their potential for growth, and need within the state's economy. Our successes will serve as the foundation for further progress that defines the overall experience of students as being characterized by academic quality, engagement in community and experiential learning, and attention to timely degree completion. These outcomes will address our objective, stated in our strategic plan, to craft a distinctive identity that highlights our values and achievements.