



RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE  
**STRATEGIC COMPASS**

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Prepared and Submitted by

**The Committee on College Mission & Goals  
of the Council of Rhode Island College**

April 2024

## COMMITTEE ON COLLEGE MISSION & GOALS

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**Kimberly Bright** (co-chair)

Executive Director of  
Strategic Initiatives

**Praveena Gullapalli** (co-chair)

Associate Professor  
Anthropology

**Amy Barlow**

Associate Professor and Reference Librarian  
Adams Library

**Lynn Blanchette**

Professor  
Nursing

**Erin Brown**

Director and ADA/504 Coordinator  
Disability Services Center

**Anna Cano-Morales**

Interim Vice President of External Relations and  
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

**Jesse Capece**

Associate Professor  
Social Work

**Christine Connolly** (April-August 2023)

Associate Professor  
Management and Marketing

**Gianna Jade Del Monico** (July-October 2023)

Student  
Class of 2024

**Sherry DiBiase**

Assistant Administrative Officer  
Counseling Center

**Sara Enright** (Appointed November 2023)

Interim Vice President for  
Administration and Finance

**James Geckler**

Assistant Professor  
Counseling, Ed. Leadership, and School Psychology

**Quenby Hughes** (February-April 2023)

Dean  
Faculty of Arts and Sciences

**Cindy Kozil**

Vice President for  
Student Success

**Carolynn Masters**

Interim Provost and Vice President for  
Academic Affairs

**Steve Nedder** (April-October 2023)

Vice President for  
Administration and Finance

**Medini Padmanabhan**

Associate Professor  
Physical Sciences

**Nina Pande**

Executive Director  
Skills for Rhode Island's Future

**Gianna Rose** (Appointed November 2023)

Student  
Class of 2026

**Jiyun Wu** (Appointed October 2023)

Associate Professor  
Management and Marketing

## A MESSAGE FROM THE COMMITTEE CO-CHAIRS

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It is with a sense of great privilege and pride that we share with the RIC community, and all our friends and supporters across the State of Rhode Island, the 2024 *Rhode Island College Strategic Compass*. This critical document was developed by a committee of students, faculty, staff, and a community member who worked tirelessly for more than a year and contributed countless hours to this project.

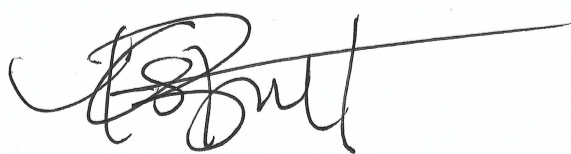
Our journey began in April 2023, when the Committee was charged by then Interim President Jack Warner with producing “an organic, dynamic document that can guide institutional decision making and provide a strategic compass for the College.” It was not lost on us that a standing committee of the Council of Rhode Island College engaging in the strategic planning process was a departure from past practice. This approach reinforced within the committee the responsibility placed on each of us to emerge from our respective silos and approach this work from an institutional perspective and with the best interests of the College always forefront in our hearts and minds. From the outset, the task was not to create an all-encompassing plan, but something that was intentionally targeted and adaptive; something in which all members of the campus community could see themselves; and something that provided direction and guidance which could be implemented while also allowing the institution to respond to potentially changing circumstances.

Committee members worked within a planning model that prioritized engagement with the campus and with local, regional, and national experts in order to revise the College’s mission and vision statements and to identify our institutional values and goals. While the mission statement encapsulates where we are as a college, the vision statement captures where we want to go. Goals are the pathways to achieving our vision. Areas of focus highlight those issues impeding the attainment of a goal, while action steps are what we should do to address areas of focus and thus make progress towards the various goals. The added metrics help to gauge our progress and stay accountable to each other and the broader Rhode Island community. Importantly, our collective values must necessarily animate the entirety of this effort. After all, *how* we do the work of the College defines us just as much as *what* we do.

This document and the ideals and goals contained within were created collaboratively – not just through deliberation among committee members but also by engaging with the campus community. A key consequence of this approach is the realization that emerging areas of focus and action steps underscore the need for significant investment in some of the foundational systems of the College. Development of these systems is the crucial first step for RIC to thrive going forward. While the document speaks to some of the fundamentals of our work together, engagement with this strategic compass will be ongoing. The Committee has the responsibility to monitor implementation and make revisions and changes as necessary. This strategic compass is meant to be a living document to be used, revised, and adapted as needed. It is our hope that you will continue to engage with and inform the work of the Committee and the College in the months and years ahead.

Finally, we wish to offer a heartfelt note of thanks to our fellow Committee members. It has been an honor to get to know and work with this group of dedicated community members, all of whom approach this work with integrity, thoughtfulness, gratitude, and selflessness. The document that follows is truly a reflection of all our voices and perspectives – and, hopefully, a testament to what can be accomplished when we commit to true collaboration.

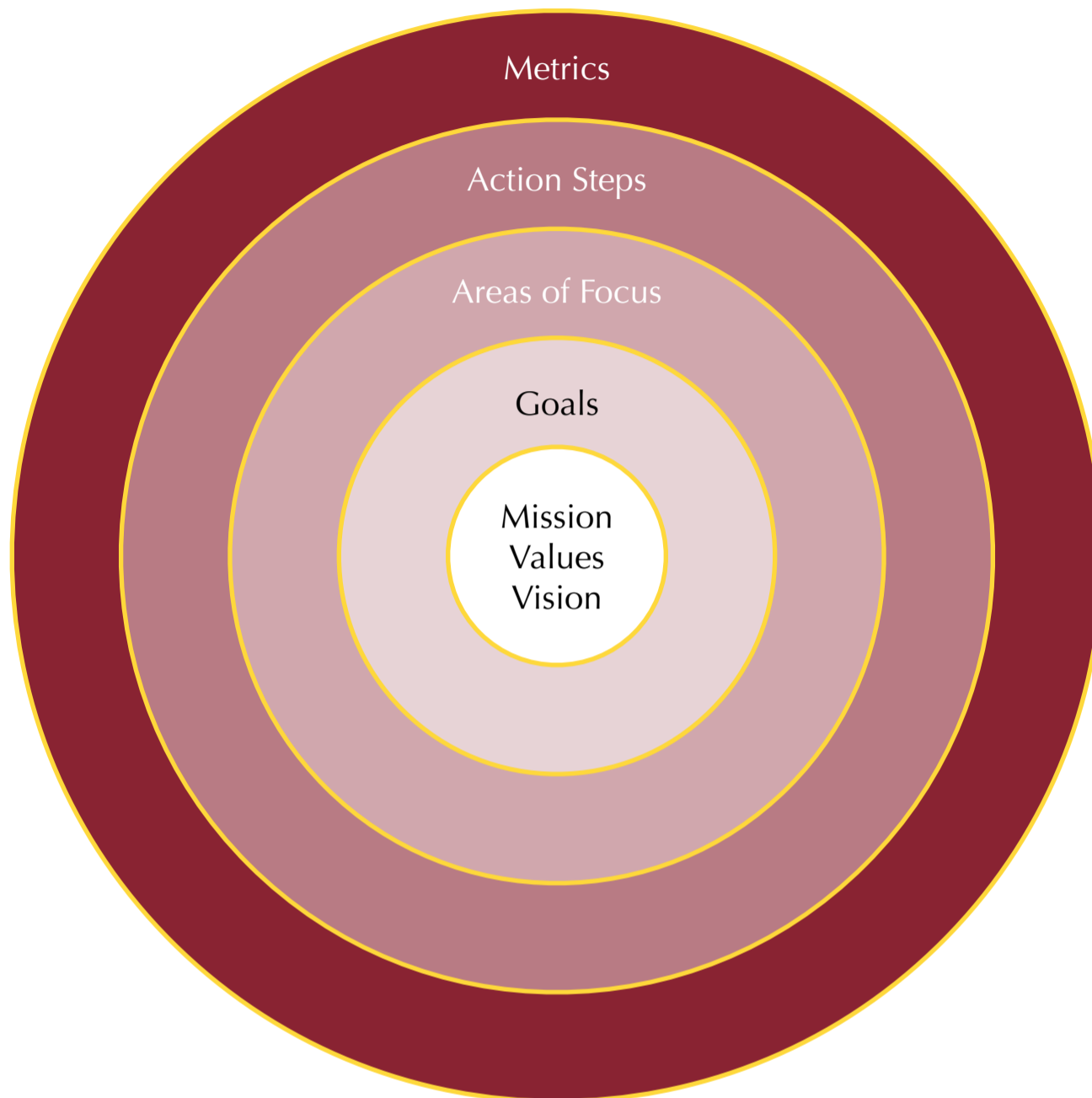
Respectfully submitted,



**Kimberly Bright** (co-chair)  
Executive Director of  
Strategic Initiatives



**Praveena Gullapalli** (co-chair)  
Associate Professor  
Anthropology



### **Mission**

RIC's enduring and unique sense of purpose

### **Values**

Expressions of RIC's attitude, standards, character, and commitments

### **Vision**

RIC's desired future state in which the impact of its mission is maximized

### **Goals**

Organizing themes which serve as the key vectors of RIC's strategic trajectory

### **Areas of Focus**

Sources of imbalance at RIC that demand careful attention

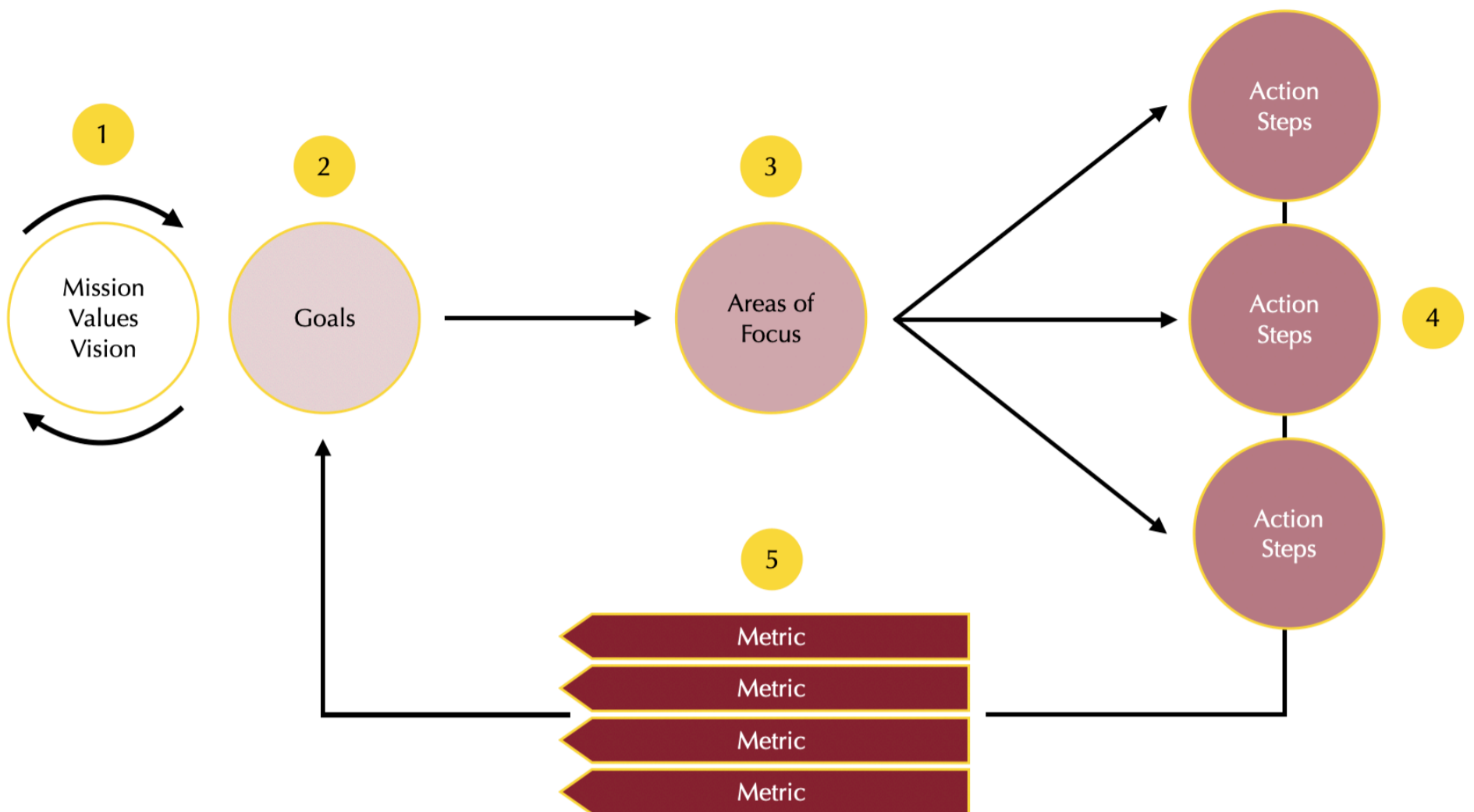
### **Action Steps**

Discrete, achievable steps that propel RIC forward in an intentional way

### **Metrics**

Indicators that help RIC to evaluate its progress in advancing each goal

## PLANNING DEFINITIONS & FRAMEWORK



- 1 The RIC community embodies the institution's overarching **values**, creating the necessary energy for the College to advance its **mission** and reach for its **vision**.
- 2 A manageable number of enduring **goals** channel this energy through an organizing structure.
- 3 For each goal, the ongoing identification of **areas of focus** help to prioritize critical course corrections within an ever-changing environment.
- 4 Informed by the areas of focus, **action steps** propel individual goals forward and transform intentions into progress.
- 5 **Metrics** provide a sense of how significant (or not) this progress has been.

## MISSION

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By ensuring access to an intellectually invigorating liberal arts education and high-quality professional programs vital to our state's future, we provide opportunities for individuals to enhance and transform their lives; contribute to the advancement and wellbeing of families and communities; and bolster the overall quality of life, both in Rhode Island and across wider society.

## VISION

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We are tenaciously striving to become Rhode Island's most student-centered institution of higher learning. This intentional focus will galvanize our efforts to: improve outcomes for all students; enliven teaching, learning, research, creative work, and service; and weave the College more tightly into the fabric of our state's distinctiveness.

## VALUES

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### *Consideration & Open-Mindedness*

We treat one another with respect, strive to remain open to new ideas, and acknowledge the importance of considering multiple perspectives.

### *Academic Quality*

We believe the most critical ingredients for a high-quality teaching and learning environment are: sustained, meaningful interaction between faculty and students; ongoing support for faculty to be leaders in their respective disciplines; an emphasis on opportunities for intensive engagement; and adherence to the principles of academic freedom and equitable access to knowledge.

### *Diversity, Equity & Inclusion*

We are cultivating an inclusive institution that fosters diversity within our community and seeks to continuously improve equity in opportunities and outcomes for everyone.

### *Student Agency*

We work in close partnership with each and every student to honor their individual aspirations, appreciate their unique needs, and do our best to ready them to thrive along whatever paths they choose.

### *Empowerment*

We empower individuals to become increasingly adept at navigating their own avenues for growth and change as they pursue their goals.

### *Collaboration*

We appreciate the inherent value of collaboration and its tremendous potential not only to improve our effectiveness but also to connect people who share a common purpose.

### *Accountability*

We are responsive and accountable to a wider public – and to one another.

### *Community*

We want RIC to be a place that welcomes – and works for – everyone, and to be an institution of which all students, employees, alumni, and the people of Rhode Island can feel proud.

## GOAL 1: STUDENT-CENTERED ECOSYSTEM

### GOAL STATEMENT

Build and nurture a Collegewide ecosystem focused on improving pathways for student success, eliminating equity gaps in educational outcomes, and reducing engagement disparities.

### *Why is this goal so important to RIC's future?*

Each student comes from a unique background which results in unique needs. We recognize that our educational project is built on a series of interconnected nodes with the student at the center, where each member acts as a steward of an environment that cultivates the health and sustainability of our shared community of learning. We aspire to take ownership of the design of this environment and hold ourselves accountable for its consequences. In this supportive ecosystem, we celebrate our rich diversity and develop institutional capacity for the inclusion of all students.

*Erin Brown  
Medini Padmanabhan*

### KEY METRICS



QUANTITATIVE  
INDICATOR

#### **graduation rates**

total and disaggregated  
(% annual)



DUAL  
INDICATOR

#### **National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) data**

total and disaggregated



QUANTITATIVE  
INDICATOR

#### **graduates**

total and disaggregated  
(% annual)



QUALITATIVE  
INDICATOR

#### **health of student success ecosystem assessment**

community survey; to be developed



QUANTITATIVE  
INDICATOR

#### **retention rates**

total and disaggregated  
(% annual)



QUANTITATIVE  
INDICATOR

#### **students on track to graduate in four years**

total and disaggregated  
(% annual)



QUANTITATIVE  
INDICATOR

#### **enrollments**

total and disaggregated  
(% annual)

## GOAL 1: STUDENT-CENTERED ECOSYSTEM

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### GOAL STATEMENT

Build and nurture a Collegewide ecosystem focused on improving pathways for student success, eliminating equity gaps in educational outcomes, and reducing engagement disparities.

### AREA OF FOCUS 1-1

Fostering an institutional culture that breaks down silos, encourages collaboration, shares best practices, and builds a common understanding of key challenges, opportunities, and solutions relevant to RIC students

### INITIAL ACTION STEP

*Convene a RIC Summit for Student Success open to as many members of the College community as possible – and consider making it an annual opportunity for the campus to come together.*

### AREA OF FOCUS 1-2

Enhancing the College's student data infrastructure and making it more readily accessible to faculty and staff

### INITIAL ACTION STEP

*Increase the granularity of student data (e.g. by program, sub-cohorts, etc.) to better understand equity gaps and improve the efficacy of remediation strategies.*

### AREA OF FOCUS 1-3

Intensifying the development, application, and integration of student support and advising systems to boost retention and completion

### INITIAL ACTION STEP

*Formulate an institutional plan for optimizing the use of the Starfish platform to better coordinate student interventions and close referral loops among faculty and staff.*



## GOAL 1: STUDENT-CENTERED ECOSYSTEM

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### GOAL STATEMENT

Build and nurture a Collegewide ecosystem focused on improving pathways for student success, eliminating equity gaps in educational outcomes, and reducing engagement disparities.

### AREA OF FOCUS 1-4

Providing regular opportunities for a diversity of students to share their invaluable perspectives and inform institutional decision making

### INITIAL ACTION STEP

*Host regular listening and learning sessions with students (perhaps by school, student type, and/or seniority) and encourage faculty and staff participation.*

### AREA OF FOCUS 1-5

Reviewing and refining policies and practices that unintentionally hinder student progress

### INITIAL ACTION STEP

*Launch an institutional success campaign around the Hope Scholarship to clearly identify areas in need of immediate attention, raise awareness across the community, and create opportunities for collective action.*

## GOAL 2: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### GOAL STATEMENT

Increase our internal capacity for institutional transformation by investing in RIC's people and improving the equitability of opportunities and outcomes for all employees to learn, discover, grow, and achieve.

### *Why is this goal so important to RIC's future?*

Faculty and staff are pivotal in RIC's transformation and success. Continuous professional development nourishes a culture of learning and discovery, fosters innovation and creativity, and most importantly, nurtures professional excellence and pride. RIC will be a stronger institution because of its deliberate and inclusive support of its faculty and staff's professional development. A robust professional development program evaluates the current needs and establishes priorities that are aligned with RIC's mission, vision, and values. Overall, a well-planned and well-executed professional development program makes individual and institutional growth and excellence possible.

*Sherry DiBiase  
Cindy Kozil  
Jiyun Wu*

### KEY METRICS



QUANTITATIVE  
INDICATOR

**institutional investment  
in professional development**

(\$ annual)



QUANTITATIVE  
INDICATOR

**institutional investment  
in CFS&D grants**

(\$ annual)



QUANTITATIVE  
INDICATOR

**employees able to participate  
in at least one professional  
development opportunity**

(% annual)



QUALITATIVE  
INDICATOR

**professional  
development assessment**

employee survey; to be developed

## GOAL 2: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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### GOAL STATEMENT

Increase our internal capacity for institutional transformation by investing in RIC's people and improving the equitability of opportunities and outcomes for all employees to learn, discover, grow, and achieve.

### AREA OF FOCUS 2-1

Devising mechanisms to identify and prioritize Collegewide professional development needs and determining the most effective methods to address them

### INITIAL ACTION STEP

*Launch an Institute for Professional Development at RIC led by a representative group of current faculty (full-time and adjunct) and staff (PSA, AFSCME, and NUNC).*

### AREA OF FOCUS 2-2

Deepening our understanding of existing capabilities and proficiencies within the College community and making the most of them

### INITIAL ACTION STEP

*Develop an institutional skills inventory, both for incumbents and new employees (as part of the onboarding process).*

### AREA OF FOCUS 2-3

Removing inherent barriers to fair and widespread participation in professional development activities

### INITIAL ACTION STEP

*Collaborate with the College's collective bargaining units to establish a common set of MOUs allowing for the designation of at least one shared professional development day per year.*

## GOAL 2: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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### GOAL STATEMENT

Increase our internal capacity for institutional transformation by investing in RIC's people and improving the equitability of opportunities and outcomes for all employees to learn, discover, grow, and achieve.

### AREA OF FOCUS 2-4

Bolstering supports for faculty to excel both as outstanding teachers and leaders within their chosen fields

### INITIAL ACTION STEP

*Expand funding for the Committee for Faculty Scholarship and Development (CFS&D) to award mini and major grants for faculty scholarship, professional development, and training.*

### AREA OF FOCUS 2-5

Creating opportunities for employees to learn from one another as colleagues, build trust, and celebrate shared achievements

### INITIAL ACTION STEP

*Create an end-of-year symposium on teaching, learning, and student-support services with incentives for faculty and staff to share innovations, best practices, and lessons learned.*

## GOAL 3: HIGH PERFORMING & EFFECTIVE ORGANIZATION

### GOAL STATEMENT

Modernize our operational practices and core systems to streamline processes, increase efficiency, improve stability, and provide better service to our community.

### *Why is this goal so important to RIC's future?*

Rhode Island College will transform into a high-performing institution by modernizing operational practices and core systems. Right now, the entire College community must invest too much time navigating homegrown, antiquated systems and slow processes. This current state makes the day-to-day experience of faculty, students and staff slower and more inefficient than it needs to be. In the future, RIC will learn from national best practices, include stakeholders in decision making, and build modern, sustainable systems. These systems will enable the RIC community to focus more time, energy and resources on supporting students, delivering the best possible education, and broadening faculty scholarship.

*Lynn Blanchette  
Sara Enright*

### KEY METRICS



QUANTITATIVE  
INDICATOR

**employee FTEs**  
(# annual)



QUANTITATIVE  
INDICATOR

**institutional investment  
in core systems**  
(\$ annual)



QUALITATIVE  
INDICATOR

**operational assessment**  
community survey; to be developed

## GOAL 3: HIGH PERFORMING & EFFECTIVE ORGANIZATION

### GOAL STATEMENT

Modernize our operational practices and core systems to streamline processes, increase efficiency, improve stability, and provide better service to our community.

### AREA OF FOCUS 3-1

Utilizing digital workflows to automate routine tasks, improve the consistency of procedures, and reduce frustration

#### INITIAL ACTION STEP

*Procure enterprise application software (EAS) for digital forms/electronic signature, offer training across the institution, and explore possibilities for state financial support.*

### AREA OF FOCUS 3-2

Convening stakeholders to review external assessments, evaluate findings, and prioritize practical steps to implement recommendations for improvement

#### INITIAL ACTION STEP

*Formalize an institutional process for soliciting outside reviews, organizing the resulting suggestions, and keeping the broader community informed of next steps.*

### AREA OF FOCUS 3-3

Strengthening internal communication channels and improving access to commonly used information and tools

#### INITIAL ACTION STEP

*Construct a College intranet to help employees collaborate, communicate, and easily access essential workplace resources.*

**GOAL 3: HIGH PERFORMING & EFFECTIVE ORGANIZATION**

**GOAL STATEMENT**

Modernize our operational practices and core systems to streamline processes, increase efficiency, improve stability, and provide better service to our community.

**AREA OF FOCUS  
3-4**

Expanding the array of services offered in the evening and on weekends while recognizing RIC is no longer a 9-to-5, Monday-through-Friday campus

**INITIAL ACTION STEP**

*Commission a comprehensive needs assessment to identify shortcomings and prioritize action steps to help RIC evolve.*

**AREA OF FOCUS  
3-5**

Broadening our understanding of best practices by studying exemplary colleges and universities and actively seeking external input

**INITIAL ACTION STEP**

*Assemble 3-5 fact-finding teams of faculty and staff to travel to nearby institutions in RIC's mission class, study select best-practice operations, and share newfound perspectives with leadership and the wider community.*

## GOAL 4: HISPANIC-SERVING INSTITUTION

### GOAL STATEMENT

Fully embrace the great potential of the College's noteworthy designation as a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) that strives to practice servingness.

### *Why is this goal so important to RIC's future?*

The Hispanic community significantly contributes to Rhode Island's social, economic, and political achievements. Rhode Island College is just one of the many beneficiaries of these contributions. We are therefore honored to be the only public four-year, degree-granting institution in Rhode Island to have the designation as a Hispanic-Serving Institution. We do not take this designation lightly. We are committed to ensuring that Hispanic students are treated with respect and have equal access to the many opportunities that Rhode Island College offers. We recognize each individual's uniqueness and we strive to support all who enter our institution. We further recognize that higher education is not a zero-sum game where honoring and supporting one population of students inherently ignores the contributions and needs of other populations of students, specifically other students of color. Whether you are a Hispanic student or not, you are a valued and worthy member of the Rhode Island College community.

*Jesse Capece  
Carolynn Masters  
Gianna Rose*

### KEY METRICS



QUANTITATIVE  
INDICATOR

**Hispanic enrollment**  
(% annual)



QUANTITATIVE  
INDICATOR

**employees identifying  
as Hispanic**  
(% annual)



QUANTITATIVE  
INDICATOR

**employees identifying as  
at least partially bilingual**  
(% annual)



DUAL  
INDICATOR

**connectivity with  
external HSI organizations**  
(# annual)



QUANTITATIVE  
INDICATOR

**external funding to support  
HSI initiatives**  
(\$ annual)



REFERENCE  
INDICATOR

**all goal 1 metrics**  
(Hispanic student population)



## GOAL 4: HISPANIC-SERVING INSTITUTION

### GOAL STATEMENT

Fully embrace the great potential of the College's noteworthy designation as a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) that strives to practice servingness.

### AREA OF FOCUS 4-1

Defining the core considerations of a sustainable HSI strategy that engages and inspires the entire institution

#### INITIAL ACTION STEP

*Charter a permanent, institutional committee responsible for ongoing HSI strategic planning and assessment.*

### AREA OF FOCUS 4-2

Tapping into the strengths of our current faculty, staff, and students and empowering them to be catalysts for positive change

#### INITIAL ACTION STEP

*Design and fund a student training and employment program to translate family- and student-facing messages and materials into Spanish.*

### AREA OF FOCUS 4-3

Steadily diversifying the employee population to more closely reflect the College's student body

#### INITIAL ACTION STEP

*Recruit additional bilingual and bicultural staff to work in the Offices of Undergraduate Admissions, Financial Aid, and Bursar.*

## GOAL 4: HISPANIC-SERVING INSTITUTION

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### GOAL STATEMENT

Fully embrace the great potential of the College's noteworthy designation as a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) that strives to practice servingness.

### AREA OF FOCUS 4-4

Increasing bilingual language proficiency among current and future employees, particularly those working in frontline roles

### INITIAL ACTION STEP

*Pilot a language-training program for employees wishing to become bilingual or those seeking to improve their fluency.*

### AREA OF FOCUS 4-5

Cultivating lasting, mutually beneficial relationships with local and national organizations to build momentum, share resources, and expand our thinking

### INITIAL ACTION STEP

*Join Presidents for Latino Student Success (P4LSS) as a critical first step in seeking the Seal of Excelencia certification for intentionally serving Latino students and for demonstrating positive student outcomes.*

## GOAL 5: CONNECTIONS BEYOND THE CAMPUS

### GOAL STATEMENT

Strengthen and lean into our connections with local communities, external partners, and alumni to better position RIC as a top-of-mind, committed, and fully engaged agent of positive change.

### *Why is this goal so important to RIC's future?*

Strengthening and leaning into community engagement is important for Rhode Island College. Programs have existing relationships with community agencies that provide mutual benefit to our students' learning and service for the community. Individuals and groups provide outreach support and community engagement. These relationships build trust and demonstrate our commitment to improving community and helping all of Rhode Island flourish. Fostering these community connections and building further connections ensures we are responding to all of Rhode Island and providing the education necessary to bolster who we are as Rhode Islanders.

*Amy Barlow  
Anna Cano-Morales  
James Geckler*

### KEY METRICS



DUAL  
INDICATOR

**instances and diversity of internships, practica, clinicals, and student teaching placements**  
(# annual)



DUAL  
INDICATOR

**instances and diversity of service-learning projects**  
(# annual)



QUANTITATIVE  
INDICATOR

**visitors to RIC campuses**  
(# annual)



DUAL  
INDICATOR

**connectivity with Rhode Island organizations, businesses, and agencies**  
(# annual)



QUANTITATIVE  
INDICATOR

**donations made to RIC Foundation/Alumni Affairs**  
(\$ annual)



QUANTITATIVE  
INDICATOR

**grants secured through Office of Sponsored Programs**  
(#/\$ annual)



QUALITATIVE  
INDICATOR

**alumni connectivity assessment**  
alumni survey; to be developed

## GOAL 5: CONNECTIONS BEYOND THE CAMPUS

### GOAL STATEMENT

Strengthen and lean into our connections with local communities, external partners, and alumni to better position RIC as a top-of-mind, committed, and fully engaged agent of positive change.

### AREA OF FOCUS 5-1

Building more robust systems to better coordinate, catalog, and promote the impactful work that is already happening

#### INITIAL ACTION STEP

*Deploy a master calendar platform to raise awareness of institutional events and engagement opportunities; articulate clear protocols for content input and approval.*

### AREA OF FOCUS 5-2

Developing stronger networks among faculty, staff, and regional employers to improve students' career readiness and better understand changing workforce needs

#### INITIAL ACTION STEP

*Allocate new resources to expand the core functions of the Career Development Center and improve its capacity for building connective tissue among all key stakeholders.*

### AREA OF FOCUS 5-3

Investing in the Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) to support faculty research endeavors and expand meaningful, service-learning opportunities for students

#### INITIAL ACTION STEP

*Infuse the department with fresh resources to improve its post-award management capabilities and affiliated support systems for principal investigators.*

## GOAL 5: CONNECTIONS BEYOND THE CAMPUS

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### GOAL STATEMENT

Strengthen and lean into our connections with local communities, external partners, and alumni to better position RIC as a top-of-mind, committed, and fully engaged agent of positive change.

### AREA OF FOCUS 5-4

Showcasing faculty, student, and alumni achievements and the role they play in advancing both the quality of life in Rhode Island and the greater good

### INITIAL ACTION STEP

*Introduce a regular digital digest of RIC “success snippets” to be shared with alumni, regional leaders, members of the campus community, and anyone else who wishes to receive it.*

### AREA OF FOCUS 5-5

Ramping up the College’s capabilities for attracting private philanthropy, new external revenue streams, and grants

### INITIAL ACTION STEP

*Produce a periodic “impact report” to tell the ongoing story of student, faculty, and community achievements and reinforce the critical importance of state support, alumni donations, Foundation investments, and external grants.*

# R H O D E I S L A N D C O L L E G E

600 Mount Pleasant Avenue  
Providence, RI 02908

[www.ric.edu](http://www.ric.edu)

