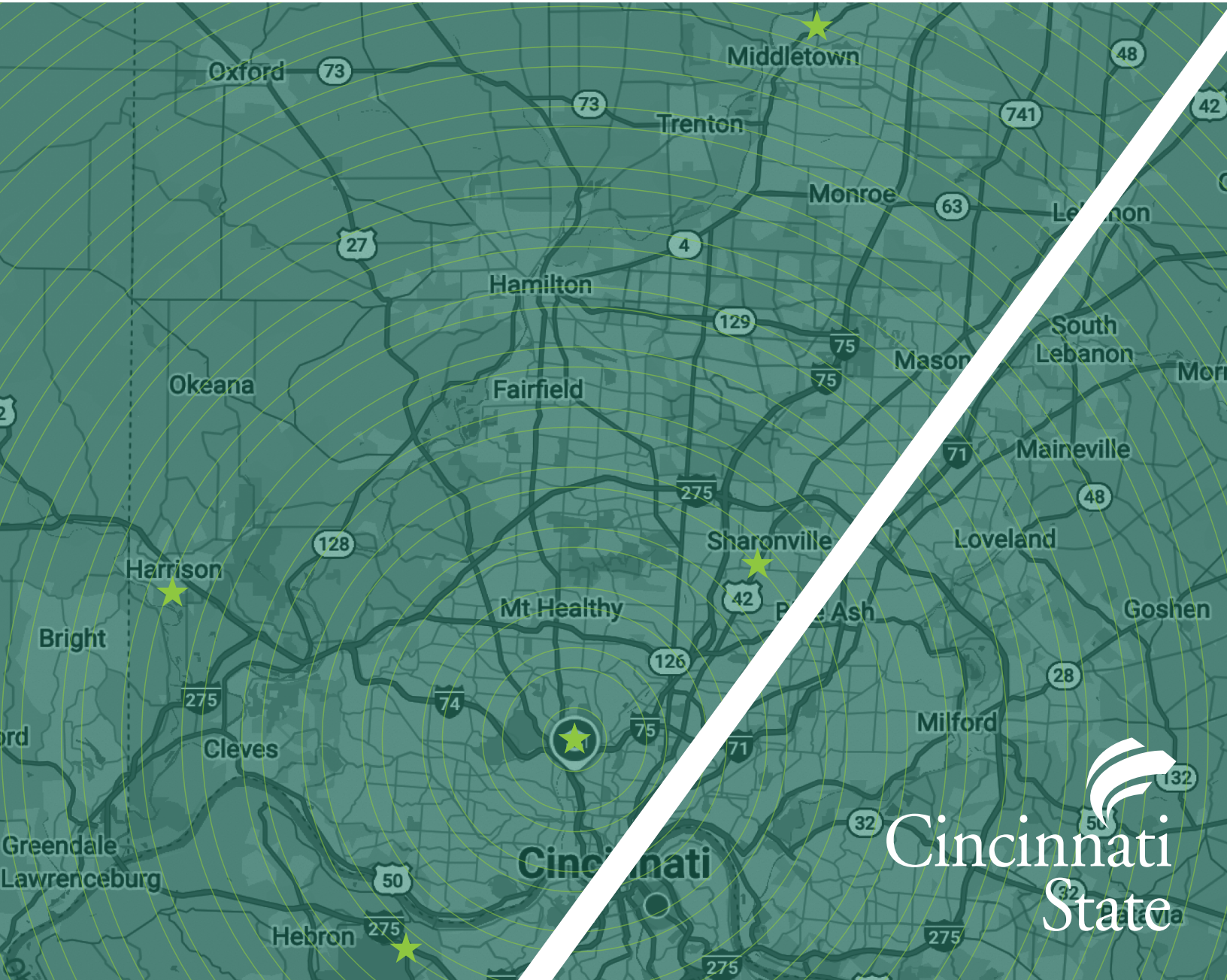



Leading With Foresight & Innovation

STRATEGIC PLAN 2025-2030




Cincinnati
State

MISSION:

Cincinnati State provides access, opportunity, & support in achieving success for individuals seeking exceptional technical, transfer & experiential/cooperative education & workforce training.

VISION:

Cincinnati State advances the educational and economic vitality of our state and region as the college of choice.

Pillar 1:
 Advancing Student Success
 & Economic Mobility for a
 Strong Workforce

Objective 1
 Increase student completion for economic mobility & workforce needs

Strategies

- Accelerate completion & persistence by increasing access to student-centered academic & support services
- Optimize academic delivery
- Reinforce academic supports for teaching & learning
- Strengthen pathways to economic mobility & embed more career connections & industry credentials

Objective 2
 Increase recruitment & enrollment to reflect students' & employers' needs

Strategies

- Shape enrollment for the future; expand access for underserved and growing communities
- Scale enrollment at all campuses
- Align program offering with workforce demand

KPIs:

- Student Course Completion
- Persistence
- Retention
- Success Rate
- State Share of Instruction
- Headcount
- Credit Hours

Pillar 2:
 Enriching Experiences
 for Student &
 Employee Engagement

Objective 3
 Ensure an engaging experience to increase student & employee belonging, well-being, retention & satisfaction

Strategies

- Enhance the student experience; holistic support systems & services
- Empower faculty & staff; invest in professional development, supportive work structures, & recognition systems
- Cultivate internal community & belonging for students & employees

KPIs:

- Noel Levitz Index Score
- PACE Overall Score

Pillar 3:
 Strengthening Operational
 Excellence, Value,
 & Visibility

Objective 4
 Ensure operational excellence & modernize infrastructure to provide capacity

Strategies

- Improve operational capacity through pursuit of innovation
- Modernize for agility; align learning environment systems & operations

Objective 5
 Position Cincinnati State to thrive as a sustainable, innovative, & visible leader in higher education

Strategies

- Prioritize sustainability; diversify revenue, grow external partnerships, & allocate resources toward high-impact programs & operations
- Demonstrate institutional value through economic impact & workforce stories
- Support seamless collaboration with external partners
- Use foresight to guide decisions

KPIs:

- Average Student Wages
- Total Tuition
- Capital Expenditures

CORE VALUES:

Potential for
 Growth & Success

Access

Innovation

Belonging

Collaboration

Experiential
 Learning

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	6
Introduction	8
Mission, Vision, & Values	9
Strategic Contextual Analysis	11
Intro to Pillars, KPIs, Objectives, & Strategies	12
Pillar 1	13
Objective 1	14
Objective 2	16
Pillar 2	17
Objective 3	18
Pillar 3	19
Objective 4	20
Objective 5	21
Appendix A - Implementation Guidance	23
Appendix B - Implementation Timeline	31
Appendix C - Role & Accountability	33
Appendix D - KPI Trends & Targets	34
Appendix E - Information Sources	41
Appendix F - Key Insight Reports	43

Acknowledgements

The following Cincinnati State Executive Team and President's Advisory Council members made special contributions to the strategic plan alongside the Strategic Plan Steering Committee. Their time, efforts, and input are greatly appreciated.

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A Note from the Executive Team

Student success is Cincinnati State's compass. Guided by that commitment, this plan charts a bold course for the next five years, one that is open to change, fosters innovation, and heeds the wisdom of our faculty, staff, and external partners. Together, we will change lives, strengthen our regional workforce, and be a leader in experiential education in Ohio and beyond.

President's Advisory Council

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Introduction

Cincinnati State’s 2025-2030 strategic plan outlines a comprehensive roadmap for advancing student success, strengthening workforce development, and enhancing institutional effectiveness. Guided by our mission to provide access, opportunity, and support for individuals seeking exceptional technical, transfer, experiential, and workforce education, the plan pursues a bold vision to make Cincinnati State the college of choice driving educational and economic vitality.

This plan serves as the strategic cornerstone for the College for academic years 2025-2026 through 2030-2031.

Mission, Vision, & Values

Cincinnati State's mission, vision, and values form the foundation of our identity and guide our growth. The mission defines the institution's purpose and core commitments, articulating why we exist. The vision expresses the College's aspirations for the future, inspiring students, faculty, staff, and stakeholders to work toward shared goals. The values outline the principles and beliefs that shape decision-making, relationships, and campus culture. Together, these elements provide clarity, foster a sense of community, and ensure that every program, initiative, and project plan aligns with the College's overarching purpose and ideals.

Mission

Cincinnati State provides access, opportunity, and support in achieving success for individuals seeking exceptional technical, transfer, and experiential/cooperative education and workforce training.

Vision

Cincinnati State advances the educational and economic vitality of our state and region as the college of choice.

Core Values

Potential for Growth and Success – We respect each student’s background and celebrate their potential for personal growth and career success.

Access – We foster a college environment where all individuals have access to the resources and support needed to succeed.

Experiential Learning – We prioritize work-based learning through cooperative education, clinicals, internships, and other applied learning experiences that prepare students for great careers.

Belonging – We strive to welcome and respect every individual.

Collaboration – We work together on behalf of our students and employers to meet community needs.

Innovation – We support innovative approaches to learning. We anticipate and effectively respond to the changing needs of those we serve.

Statement of Commitment

- 1) The institution declares that it will educate students by means of free, open, and rigorous intellectual inquiry to seek the truth.
- 2) The institution declares that its duty is to equip students with the opportunity to develop the intellectual skills they need to reach their own, informed decisions.
- 3) The institution declares its commitment to not requiring, favoring, disfavoring, or prohibiting speech or lawful assembly.
- 4) The Institution declares it is committed to create a community dedicated to an ethic of civil and free inquiry, which respects the autonomy of each member, supports individual capacities for growth, and tolerates the differences in opinion that naturally occur in a public higher education community .
- 5) The institution declares that its duty is to treat all faculty, staff, and students as individuals, to hold them in equal standards, and to provide them with equality of opportunity, with regard to those individuals’ race, ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

Strategic Contextual Analysis

The strategic plan was informed by quantitative and qualitative data collected from institutional research reports, stakeholder surveys, and community listening sessions. Key sources included enrollment and performance data, student satisfaction and financial wellness surveys, employee climate surveys, and community listening sessions. The process engaged over 650 individuals including students, faculty, staff, employers, and alumni. The process was facilitated by Scale Strategic Solutions and emphasized inclusive participation, data transparency, and understanding of state and national higher education trends. Please refer to Appendix F to view the full key insight findings. An illustration of the key insights is in Figure 1 in Appendix F.



Pillars, Key Performance Indicators, Objectives, & Strategies

In several planning sessions, the Cincinnati State steering committee and expanded cabinet considered the information from the key insights summary to determine the priorities for the next five years. The plan for these priorities is organized into pillars, key performance indicators (KPIs), objectives, and strategies, which outline how Cincinnati State will bring its vision to life over the next five years.

★ A pillar is a central strategic focus area that organizes and drives the institution's long-term goals and initiatives. Each pillar aligns with the College's mission and vision, providing a framework of objectives and actionable strategies to guide progress, measure impact, and achieve meaningful transformation across the College. KPIs are associated with each pillar to measure progress.

▷ Each objective defines a specific aim to advance the College's mission and address the needs of its students, employees, workforce partners, and community as identified by the key insights. The accompanying strategies are the foundation for high-impact actions informed by institutional data and internal and external input. Together, the strategies form a cohesive roadmap to achieve the strategic plan.

 **Pillar 1:**

Advancing Student Success & Economic Mobility for a Strong Workforce

The Importance of Advancing Student Success and Economic Mobility for a Strong Workforce: Cincinnati State aims to be a regional leader in preparing the workforce of tomorrow—one that reflects the ambitions of students; meets the evolving needs of employers; and drives economic prosperity for individuals, families, and the region. The College is committed to providing a seamless pipeline from recruitment and enrollment to timely completion and career placement. We envision a college where every learner can progress with confidence toward a better future.

KPIs and 2030 Targets:

- Student achievement as measured by the Ohio Department of Higher Education:
 - Student course completion – 75%
 - Persistence (continued enrollment from term to term) – 73%
 - Retention (continued enrollment from academic year to academic year) – 52%
 - Three-year student success rate (percentage of first-time full-time degree-seeking cohort who earned a degree or remained enrolled in a college or university within three years) – 53%
- State Share of Instruction – \$40 million
- Unduplicated student enrollment headcount – 15,000
- Student credit hours – 185,000

► Objective 1:

Increase student completion to support economic mobility and workforce needs.

Strategies

a. Accelerate completion and persistence: Increase access to student-centered academic and support services focused on mitigating financial, academic, and life challenges that lead to stopping out. Invest in retention and persistence efforts so that students graduate prepared for transfer or work, based on lessons from pilot efforts such as CState Complete, which re-engages former students through peer outreach. Prioritize retention of part-time students and those balancing multiple work, life, and school responsibilities through personalized, sustained engagement. Collect insights and monitor shifts in student needs to adapt strategy.

b. Optimize academic delivery: Pursue innovation with flexible delivery of programs. Address student feedback on scheduling conflicts and use national best-practice research by offering courses across modalities (online, hybrid, and in-person), times, and locations. Align with students' work and life responsibilities to increase persistence and completion. Consider which learning modalities are most effective for specific courses and topics. Consider experimentation with course structure and credentials.

c. Reinforce academic supports for teaching and learning: Increase availability of academic support services for students, such as tutoring and writing centers. Enhance instructional design support for faculty to increase implementation of engaging, effective teaching strategies, and make instructional support accessible to full-time and adjunct faculty with an understanding of the unique needs of various faculty roles and departments. Pilot innovative models of instruction, including technology-enabled teaching, and replicate what works.

d. Strengthen pathways to economic mobility: Embed more career connections and industry credentials in the student journey. Deploy innovative lessons and courses in these pathways based on economic, technological, and workforce trends, and align offerings with demand. Provide early-career-connected experiences, including work-study roles aligned with career goals, job shadowing opportunities, and classroom-based employer projects. These efforts build students' confidence in their career direction and establish a foundation for formal co-op experiences. Use the College's well-regarded advising services to increase proactive, early guidance that helps students clarify career goals and align their academic pathway to those goals. The advising process should include exploration of related fields and programs to support better long-term fit and persistence. Ensure that career placement remains strong for graduates. Champion and support upskilling and reskilling of the region's workforce for the economic mobility of incumbent workers.

▶ Objective 2:

Increase student recruitment and enrollment to reflect student and workforce needs.

Strategies

a. Shape enrollment for the future: Expand access for underserved and growing communities. Build relationships with and broaden marketing for growing communities such as new Americans, multilingual families, and adults with some college but no degree. Develop new and creative approaches for attracting high school students and adult learners, considering the impact of the declining high school population. Collaborate with trusted community partners to increase recruitment. Connect enrollment growth to meeting regional workforce and community needs. Continue to create and market seamless pathways for students in early college and dual enrollment initiatives, e.g., College Credit Plus (CCP), to transition from high school graduation into full-time degree programs related to their dual enrollment and early college course taking, reinforcing early engagement and academic momentum.

b. Scale enrollment at all campuses: Revisit long-standing plans to grow enrollment and program presence at sites like Evendale, Middletown, Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport (CVG), and Harrison, based on community demand and access considerations. Continue to test, refine, and implement innovative ideas and approaches for growth.

c. Align program offerings with workforce demand: Regularly evaluate and adapt course and program offerings to align with economic trends and high-demand fields, phasing out or redesigning programs where outcomes fall short. Identify new program development opportunities College-wide that may be beyond the scope of current programs, yet meet a significant workforce need. Position the College as a hub for continual career upskilling and reskilling for the entire community, which can also offset the decline that may emerge from fewer Ohio high school students seeking first-time degrees. Increase efforts to shift from generic outreach to discipline-specific promotion, using student stories and job outcomes to illustrate program value and career pathways. Develop outreach in partnership with regional employers to promote specific degree programs aligned with workforce needs, where employer representatives aid in career and college exposure.

☆ Pillar 2:

Enriching Experiences for Student & Employee Engagement

The Importance of Enriching Experiences: People lead, innovate, and contribute meaningfully to the world around them when they feel valued, safe, and connected. Cincinnati State is committed to creating an environment beyond academics, where every student and employee feels a genuine sense of belonging, purpose, and connection. We believe that learning and working thrive in a culture that values community, well-being, and human-centered support. By building a campus culture that fosters enriching, affirming experiences that nurture relationships and promote personal and professional growth, we engage and retain students and employees.

KPIs and 2030 Targets:

- Noel Levitz Index Score – 80%
- Personnel Assessment of the College Environment (PACE) Overall – 4.0

▷ Objective 3:

Ensure an engaging Cincinnati State experience to increase student & employee belonging, well-being, retention, & satisfaction.

Strategies

a. Enhance student experience: Enhance holistic support systems and services for student well-being, retention, and success. Expand availability and visibility of supports for housing, mental health, and emergency needs, particularly for adult and marginalized student populations.

b. Empower faculty and staff: Invest in professional development and skills improvement, supportive work structures, and recognition systems that attract and retain talent and encourage innovation and excellence. Grow and diversify ongoing professional learning to enhance employee effectiveness in interactions with fellow employees and students, considering people's preferences, interests, needs, and skill levels.

c. Cultivate internal community and belonging for students and employees: Within the College's activities, groups, and programs, foster a vibrant and welcoming culture and create more opportunities for students and employees to engage in college life, service, and innovation.

 **Pillar 3:**

Strengthening Operational Excellence, Strategic, Value, & Visibility

The Importance of Strengthening Operational Excellence, Strategic Value, and Visibility:

The College must be operationally strong and assert its value. By clearly demonstrating our return on investment through student success, workforce outcomes, and community impact, we aim to attract public, philanthropic, and employer support needed to fuel our mission. At the same time, we are building a resilient operational foundation by modernizing systems and processes, investing in talent, and strengthening infrastructure so the College can scale innovation, steward resources wisely, and deliver on its strategic goals with excellence and integrity.

KPIs and 2030 Targets:

- Average Student Wages – \$60,000
- Total Tuition Received – \$47 million
- Capital Expenditures – \$10 million/year (\$46 million total)

► Objective 4:

Ensure operational excellence & modernize physical & technical infrastructure to provide capacity with organizational efficiency.

Strategies

- a.** Improve operational capacity through pursuit of innovation: Build capacity to deliver on high-impact institutional initiatives by modernizing core administrative systems, processes, and services and ensuring projects are resourced for success. Support enhancements to Human Resources to strengthen talent acquisition, improve payroll processes, enhance benefits administration, and elevate organizational effectiveness. Modernize IT systems and optimize the availability of IT staff to improve data access and streamline processes. Simultaneously, ensure implementation of the Facilities Master Plan, the Facilities Mechanical Master Plan, and other cross-campus improvements.
- b.** Modernize for agility: Be nimble in aligning learning environments, systems, and operations and technology innovation. Upgrade instructional labs, classrooms, and equipment in high-demand programs to reflect current and rapidly changing industry practices and technologies.

► Objective 5:

Position Cincinnati State to thrive as a sustainable, innovative, & visible leader in higher education.

Strategies

a. Prioritize sustainability: Diversify revenue, grow external partnerships, and allocate resources toward high-impact, high-demand programs and efforts. Expand external funding sources aligned with Cincinnati State's strategic priorities. Bolster grant development systems, continue to pursue mission-aligned philanthropic partnerships, and position the College as a high-impact investment. Institutionalize knowledge management and innovation for high performance throughout the organization. Develop standardized, accessible systems for institutional documentation and knowledge sharing across operational departments and academic divisions. Promote excellence, improve organizational continuity, reduce inefficiencies, and ensure consistency in processes, policies, and practices. Use data-driven foresight to guide decisions to sustain the College.

b. Demonstrate institutional value: Raise awareness of Cincinnati State's impact and what we do well. Develop a promotion and advocacy strategy grounded in information about the College's local economic impact, its best-in-class implementation of cooperative education and other experiential learning, and student success to secure increased public recognition and investment. Use robust return-on-investment data, including transfer and post-program employment metrics, to demonstrate Cincinnati State's value in driving economic mobility and regional prosperity. Serve as a thought leader on workforce matters, access to opportunities, and innovation in higher education.

c. Support seamless collaboration: Deepen partnerships with employers, K–12, and four-year institutions to strengthen pipelines and shared solutions. Coordinate engagement and collaborative opportunities for partners, offering ongoing transparency with curriculums, advising, mentoring, and experiential learning. Broaden K–12 school relationships within and beyond dual enrollment strategies to include career exploration and career readiness. Collaborate with higher education peers for transfer pathways that keep pace with industry innovation and student needs. Strengthen employer relationships to power the College’s workforce preparation approaches.

d. Use foresight to guide decisions: Anticipate demographic, economic, and technological shifts to position Cincinnati State for future success. Build the capacity to identify emerging trends, assess potential impacts, and adapt strategies proactively. Recognize artificial intelligence as a transformative force that could disrupt traditional models of work and learning and prepare the College to leverage its benefits while mitigating risks.



Appendix A

Implementation Guidance

To ensure the strategic plan moves from vision to impact, Cincinnati State will adopt a structured, transparent, and collaborative implementation process. This process will guide how strategies are communicated, resourced, executed, and evaluated over the life of the plan.

Complementary Planning & Processes

The strategic plan and its updates should inform and shape the following complementary plans:

- **Facilities Master Plan for Clifton Campus:** The Facilities Master Plan for Clifton Campus sets the roadmap for transforming the College’s physical environment into a vibrant, efficient, and student-friendly collegiate campus. The new campus design aims to engage people with highly accessible and intuitive spaces. It also provides a place of belonging and innovation, where one can embrace new academic programs and technologies.
- **Completion Plan:** The Ohio Department of Higher Education requires that public colleges update campus completion plans every two years. Completion plans identify and recommend strategies that support more students in earning degrees and certificates. They provide a clear framework for increasing both the number and percentage of students who complete their programs. Completion plans are due to the Ohio Department of Higher Education on June 30, 2026, 2028, and 2030.
- **Enrollment Services Plan:** Enrollment plans focus on student life cycles, from initial contact through graduation and beyond. Plans focus on recruitment, admissions, student success, retention, graduation, and post-graduation supports. The current enrollment plan is in effect through June 2026. The Enrollment Plan Committee will then review and update the plan, aligning it with the 2025-2030 strategic plan.
- **Annual Academic Self-Studies:** The Annual Academic Self-Study survey provides academic program and department faculty an opportunity to reflect on strengths, quality, and opportunities for continuous improvement of the College. The self-study process includes assessment of effectiveness in helping students achieve program and department learning goals, alignment of each unit’s mission and performance targets with the College’s targets, and long-range resource planning. Data provided to programs and departments to initiate the process should include strategic plan KPI metrics. The self-study should also spark opportunities to consider employer and workforce innovation in academic design and delivery for stronger program outcomes.

- **Technology Master Plan:** The Technology Master Plan outlines the institution’s strategic approach to modernizing its information technology services and infrastructure. Some key initiatives in the plan include cloud migrations, updated network infrastructure, cybersecurity enhancements, and a new phone system. The plan supports the College’s strategic goals and accreditation standards while addressing infrastructure and staff training needs.

Aligning Planning & Processes to Strategies

The following table outlines how these complementary planning processes connect to specific strategies in the strategic plan.

Plans and Processes	Strategies
Facilities Master Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4a. Improve operational capacity through pursuit of innovation 4b. Modernize for agility
Completion Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1a. Accelerate completion and persistence 1b. Optimize academic delivery 1c. Reinforce academic supports for teaching and learning 1d. Strengthen pathways to economic mobility 3a. Enhance student experience 3c. Cultivate internal community and belonging for students and employees 5a. Prioritize sustainability 5c. Support seamless collaboration
Enrollment Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1d. Strengthen pathways to economic mobility 2a. Shape enrollment for the future 2b. Scale enrollment at all campuses 2c. Align program offerings with workforce demand 3c. Cultivate internal community and belonging for students and employees 5a. Prioritize sustainability 5b. Demonstrate institutional value 5c. Support seamless collaboration
Annual Academic Self-Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1a. Accelerate completion and persistence 1b. Optimize academic delivery 1c. Reinforce academic supports for teaching and learning 1d. Strengthen pathways to economic mobility 2a. Shape enrollment for the future 2b. Scale enrollment at all campuses 2c. Align program offerings with workforce demand 3b. Empower faculty and staff 4b. Modernize for agility
Technology Master Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3b. Empower faculty and staff 4a. Improve operational capacity through pursuit of innovation 4b. Modernize for agility 5a. Prioritize sustainability 5b. Demonstrate institutional value

Communication Plan & Cycle

The strategic plan and its updates should inform and shape the following complementary processes:

- **Launch and orientation (fall 2025):** Present the finalized strategic plan to internal and external stakeholders through town halls, divisional meetings, the College website, employee newsletters, employee Common Time presentations, and printed summaries. Include strategy overview materials for onboarding and governance bodies. Key groups include the Board of Trustees, Executive Team, Faculty Senate, Deans Committee, and the President's Advisory Council, as well as other operational committees.
- **Annual strategic update:** The Executive Team will provide an annual public update highlighting progress, adjustments, and key milestones. This will be shared across campus channels and at Board of Trustees meetings.
- **Divisional alignment:** Deans of academic divisions and leaders of operational units will align academic studies, operational goals, and work plans with strategic priorities. Implementation liaisons may be designated to support consistent tracking.
- **Feedback loop:** The College's Executive Team and President's Advisory Council will establish feedback channels through their current meeting and community processes. These feedback loops will highlight successes, identify barriers to progress, and recommend mid-course adjustments each academic year. Additionally, both groups will relay plan progress to their aligned college division and department staff and related committees.

Communication with Key Audiences

The communication plan will be intentional in reaching the College's key audiences. Students, employees, and employer partners will be actively engaged throughout the life of the strategic plan. Below are considerations for communication strategies:

- Students may receive updates through welcome and orientation activities; student government briefings; digital screens across campus; and periodic messaging via email, the student intranet, and learning platforms to help them understand how the plan supports their educational journey.
- Employees may be regularly informed through the Faculty Senate, union leadership, the College's Common Time, staff development days, division/departmental meetings, and internal communications such as newsletters and intranet postings—ensuring all teams are aligned and empowered to advance strategic priorities.
- Employer partners, including those offering co-op and clinical placements, training contracts, and graduate hiring, may receive tailored updates via advisory boards, employer convenings, and newsletters that spotlight areas of collaboration and shared progress toward workforce readiness. These touchpoints will help build shared ownership of the plan, highlight mutual benefits, and sustain momentum for implementation across the College's extended community.

Those responsible for implementing the strategic plan should also consider the needs of additional audiences, such as alumni, university partners, community college affinity groups, and elected officials.

- Cincinnati State may engage alumni through targeted communications that highlight progress, celebrate student and graduate achievements, and provide opportunities to support or contribute to initiatives aligned with the plan. Such communications may include alumni newsletters; social media campaigns; recognition events; and invitations to serve as mentors, guest speakers, or advisory board members. The strategic plan and annual progress updates may be presented to the alumni association.

- University partners, the most common transfer destinations for Cincinnati State students, may be engaged through academic articulation discussions, shared data on student outcomes, and joint efforts to improve transfer pathways. Communicating strategic priorities in areas like student advising, field-of-study exploration, and transfer readiness will strengthen alignment and foster academic progress for students continuing their education.
- To build advocacy and public support, elected officials and government partners may receive periodic briefings that connect strategic plan milestones to regional workforce development, economic mobility, and return on public investment. These updates may take the form of legislative testimony, campus visits, policy roundtables, or targeted communications that demonstrate Cincinnati State's leadership in meeting the talent and economic needs of the region.
- Cincinnati State may also share progress and strategic learning with community college affinity groups and professional associations at the state and national levels. These networks provide valuable platforms for peer learning, visibility, and advocacy, and Cincinnati State may engage them to both contribute to and learn from best practices in student success, workforce innovation, and institutional transformation.

Connecting to the Building Process

Strategic plan priorities will directly inform Cincinnati State's annual budgeting cycle to ensure alignment of resources with institutional goals.

The guidance for aligning the budget with the strategic plan is grounded in the College's existing budget structure, in which:

- Directors propose operating budgets and personnel needs for their respective departments and programs to their Deans and Executive Team members. Budgeting tools and templates used by Directors will include prompts that encourage departments to connect their requests to strategic priorities and the organization's values, particularly for innovation.
- The Budget Advisory Team reviews one-third of current and proposed budgets on a three-year rotation and advises the Executive Team on interdepartmental priorities. The triennial budget review template, distributed by the Budget Advisory Team, will feature a dedicated section for Directors to explain how their proposed budgets for the coming year support the organization's values and the strategic plan's pillars and strategies, and how prior budget allocations have contributed to progress in the plan.

The Executive Team, in collaboration with Deans and Directors, formulates and approves the College-wide budget for Board of Trustees review. The Executive Team, Deans, Directors, and the Budget Advisory Team will review strategic priorities, key performance indicators (KPIs), and strategic progress to help inform annual planning and budget resolutions submitted to the Board of Trustees. The Executive Team will also prioritize capital requests, new position proposals, grant-seeking efforts, innovations, and technology upgrades based on their alignment with strategic goals, fiscal sustainability, and the urgency of the request.

To reinforce alignment, budget managers, Deans, Directors, Budget Advisory Team members, and senior leaders will receive orientation and refresher tools that clarify strategic priorities and illustrate how budgetary decisions can advance the College's values and long-term goals while sustaining financial health.



Appendix B

Implementation Timeline

Implementation will occur across six academic years (2025-2026 to 2030-2031), with each phase building on the last.

Academic Years 2025-2026: Plan Tactics

- Provide training and resources for tactical planning
- Develop detailed implementation plans at the division and department levels
- Establish baseline data for key metrics and KPIs
- Create communication schedule for the strategic plan with specific dates and activities
- Launch foundational incentives across all priority areas (e.g., retention, Human Resources enhancements, IT modernization).

Academic Years 2026-2029: Implement & Iterate

- Execute strategic initiatives across all priority areas.
- Monitor progress through annual check-ins and progress dashboards.
- Use stakeholder feedback and outcome data to iterate and refine strategies.
- Adjust timelines and scopes as needed to respond to emerging needs and opportunities.

Academic Year 2030-2031: Assess & Prepare for the Future

- Conduct a comprehensive review of progress toward strategic goals.
- Evaluate impact through student success data, operational benchmarks, and stakeholder feedback.
- Identify enduring practices and areas for continued investment.
- Begin scoping and community engagement for the next strategic planning cycle.



Appendix C

Role & Accountability

An RACI table can serve as a practical tool to guide effective implementation of the strategic plan by clearly defining roles and responsibilities across the College. Specific positions and committees are designated for specific roles and responsibilities through the following framework:

Responsible (R): Executes the task or work.

Accountable (A): Ultimately answerable; owns the success of the strategy.

Consulted (C): Provides input before decisions or actions are taken.

Informed (I): Kept updated on progress or outcomes.

Embedding the RACI model into the strategic plan's governance, communication, and reporting structure helps ensure that each initiative is well-managed, transparent, and collaborative, increasing the likelihood of the College achieving its long-term institutional goals.



Appendix D

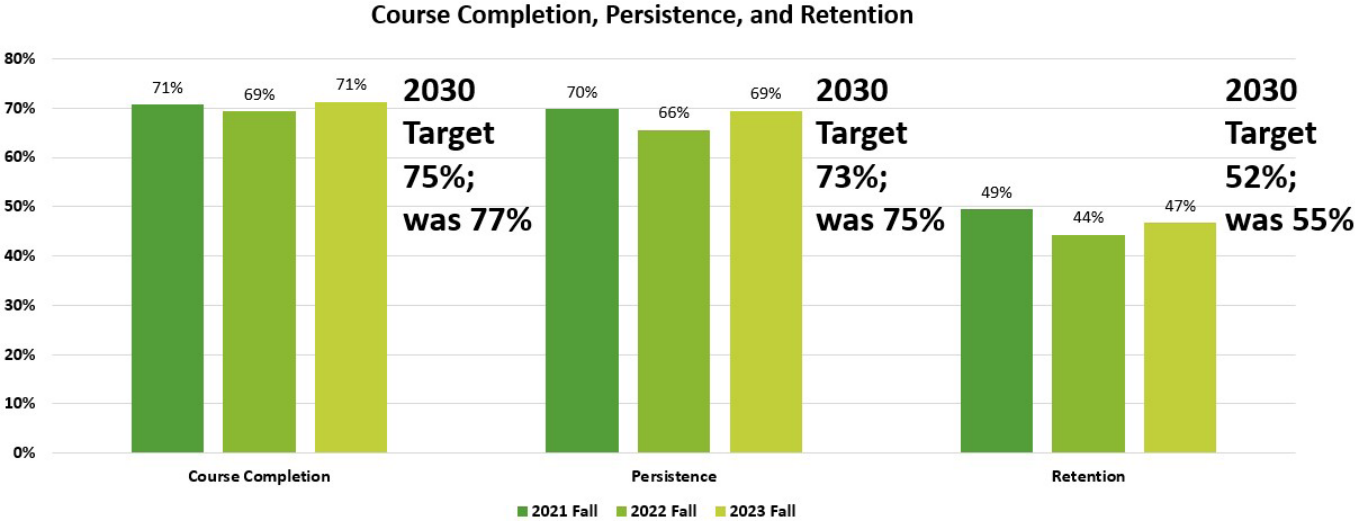
KPI Trends & Targets

Pillar 1 : Advancing Student Success & Economic Mobility for a Strong Workforce

KPIs:

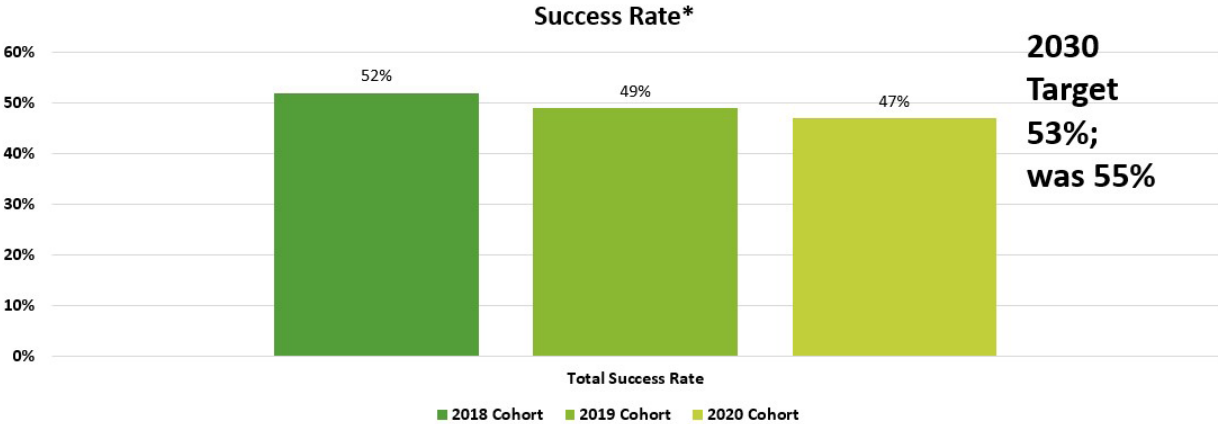
- Student Achievement:
 - Course Completion, Persistence, Retention, 3-Year Success Rate
- State Share of Instruction
- Headcount
- Credit Hours

Advancing Student Success and Economic Mobility For A Strong Workforce – Student Achievement



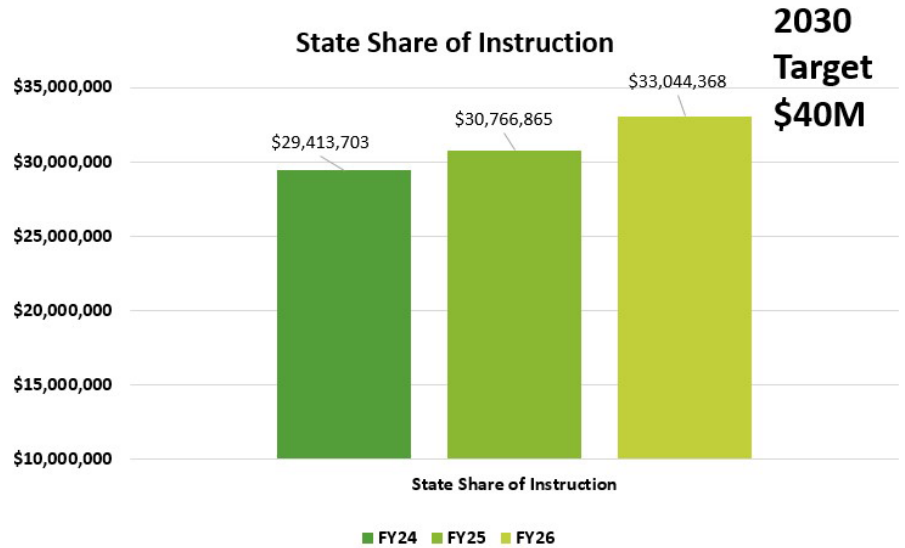
Advancing Student Success and Economic Mobility Increase student completion – Student Achievement

*Includes students who, after three years, are continuing, have transferred, and/or have graduated



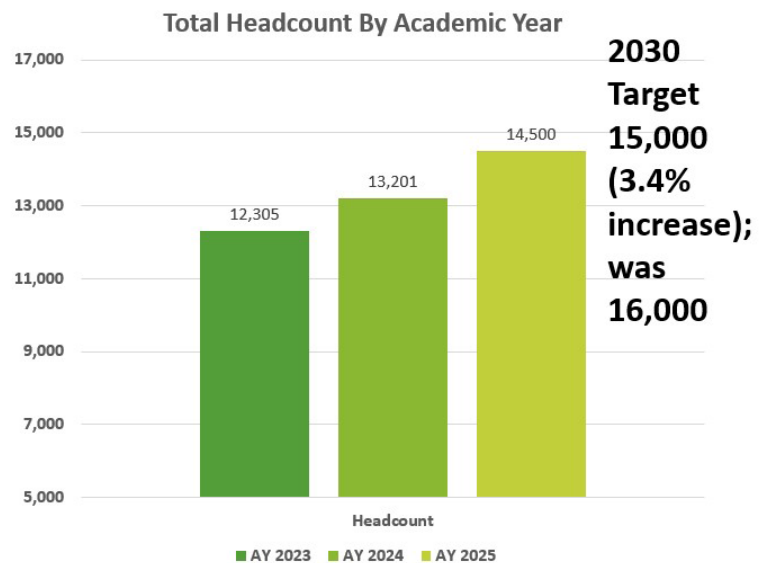
Advancing Student Success and Economic Mobility Funding Support – State Share of Instruction

Historic Perspective	
Year	SSI
FY23	\$28,346,312
FY22	\$28,298,189
FY21	\$28,742,630
FY20	\$28,357,383
FY19	\$28,283,195
FY18	\$28,805,256
FY17	\$29,531,858
FY16	\$29,158,940
FY15	\$28,392,389



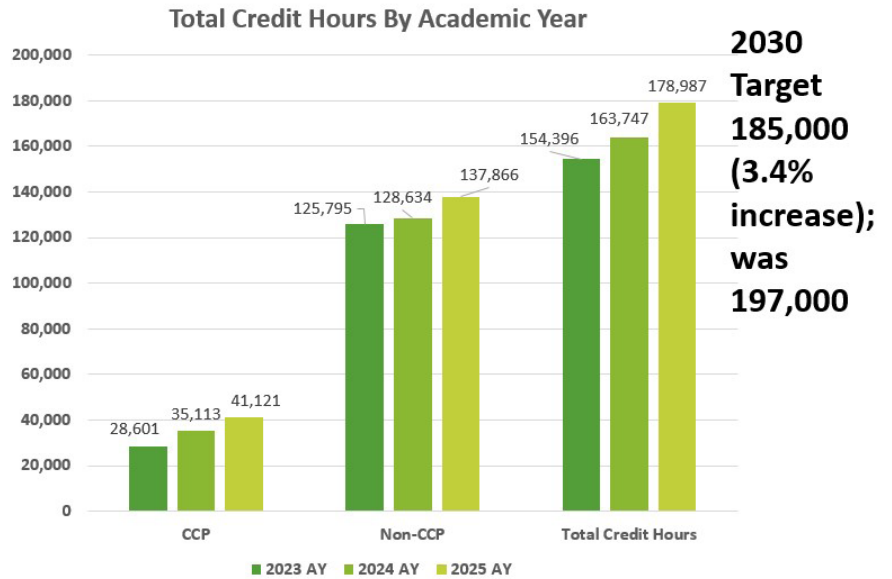
Advancing Student Success and Economic Mobility Enrollment – Headcount (unduplicated)

Division	AY2023	AY2024	AY2025	24-25 YoY
BTD	1,792	1,698	1,753	3%
EIT	1,697	1,724	1,683	-2%
HPS	2,703	2,903	3,342	15%
HU&SC	1,209	1,127	1,215	8%
WDC	18	57	41	-28%
CCP	3,693	4,428	5,262	19%
NDS (non-CCP)	1,193	1,264	1,204	-5%
Total	12,305	13,201	14,500	10%



Advancing Student Success and Economic Mobility for a Strong Workforce – Student Credit Hours

Division	AY2023	AY2024	AY2025	24-25 YoY
BTD	27,895	27,465	29,151	6%
EIT	31,275	32,737	32,252	-2%
HPS	39,117	41,282	49,095	19%
HU&SC	19,750	18,657	19,270	3%
WDC	126	886	544	-38%
CCP	28,601	35,113	41,121	17%
NDS (non-CCP)	7,632	7,607	7,554	-1%
Total	154,396	163,747	178,987	9%



Pillar 2 : Enriching Experiences for Student & Employee Engagement

KPIs:

- Noel Levitz - Administered by Ruffalo Noel Levitz (RNL), this student survey helps colleges and universities assess student satisfaction with various aspects of the campus experience
- PACE - Personnel Assessment of the College Environment (PACE), the employee climate survey is administered by the NC State University. It is a research-driven model that measures organizational climate, which in turn impacts the organizational performance outcomes.

Enriching Experiences for Student and Employee Engagement – Student Metric

Noel Levitz Key Questions

How satisfied are our students compared with students nationally (from 2024)?

- CS satisfied or very satisfied – 76%
- Nationally satisfied or very satisfied – 68%

**2030
Target
80%**

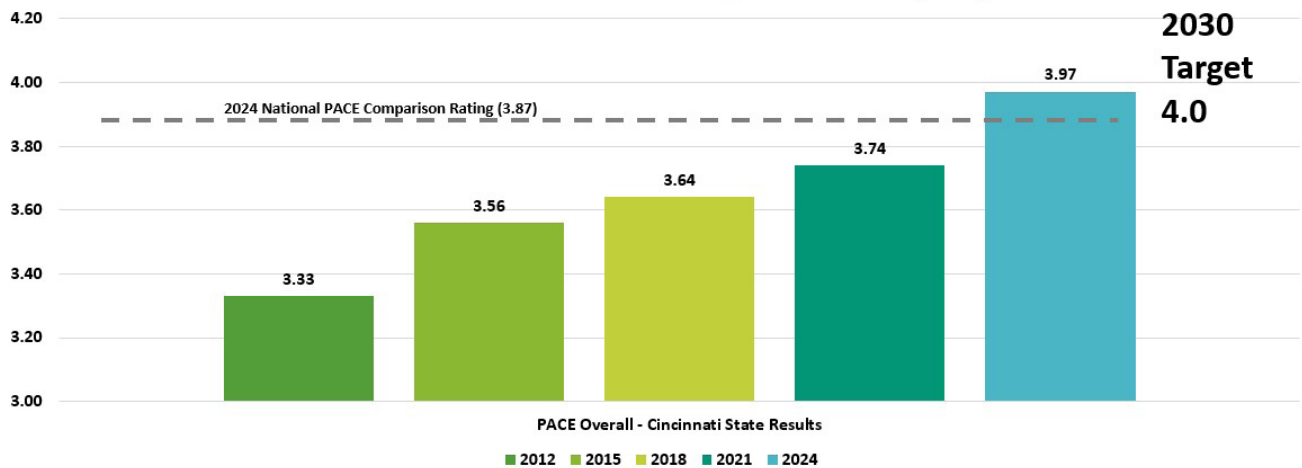
How likely are our students to enroll again if they had to do it over?

- CS Probably/Definitely Yes – 80%
- National Probably/Definitely Yes – 78%

**2030
Target
80%**

Enriching Experiences for Student and Employee Engagement – Employee Metric

Personnel Assessment of the College Environment (PACE)



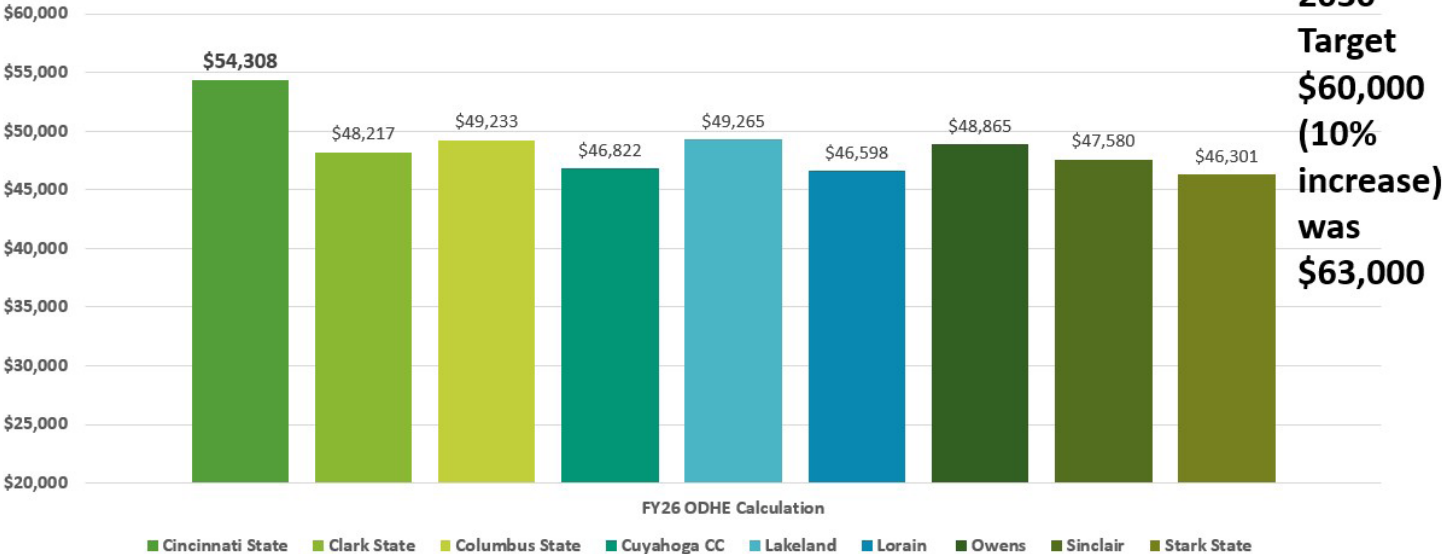
Pillar 3 : Strengthening Operational Excellence, Value, & Visibility ROI – Graduate Earnings

KPIs:

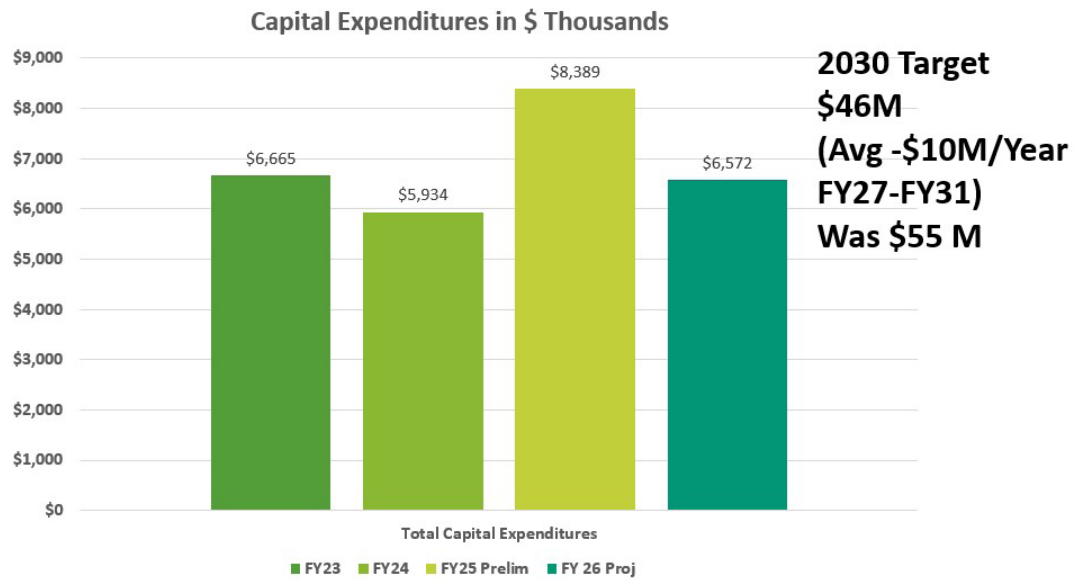
- Student Wages Above Threshold
- Total Tuition
- Capital Expenditures

Strengthening Operational Excellence, Value, and Visibility ROI – Graduate Earnings

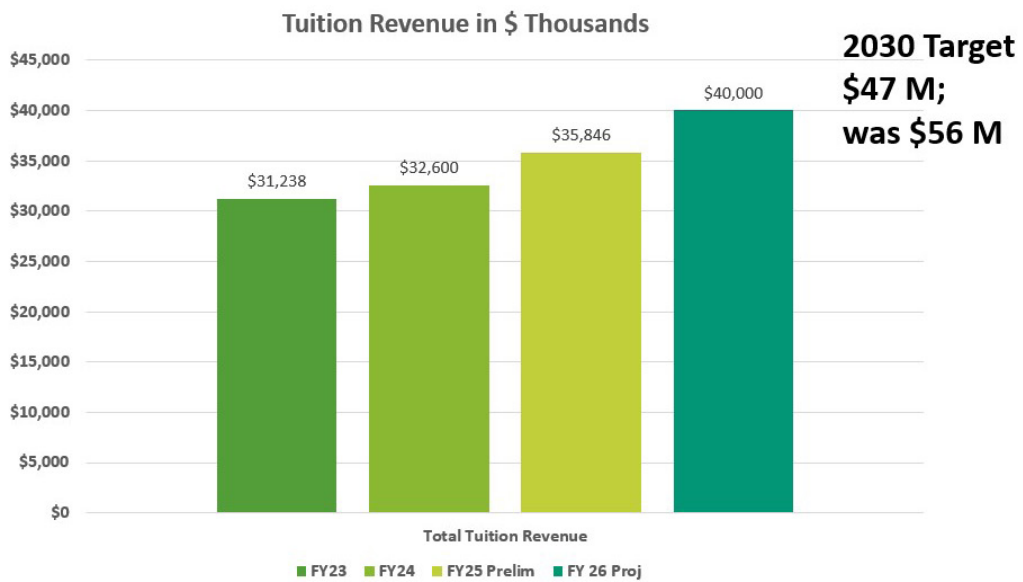
Student Graduate Earnings– Peer Group



Strengthening Operational Excellence, Value, and Visibility Capital Expenditures



Strengthening Operational Excellence, Value, and Visibility Total Tuition





Appendix E

Information Sources

Cincinnati State Technical and Community College is undergoing a comprehensive strategic planning process for the next five years. The College contracted with Scale Strategic Solutions to facilitate the strategic planning process. A current-state analysis was conducted to identify key insights to inform the plan.

Scale Strategic Solutions worked with Cincinnati State's Office of Institutional Research to obtain data on enrollment, persistence, and completion within the College. The analysis also included data provided to the College from other organizations, including the 2024 Ruffalo Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory™, the North Carolina State University Belk Center for Community College Leadership and Research's 2024 Personnel Assessment of the College Environment (PACE) employee survey, and the Trellis Strategies 2023 Student Financial Wellness Survey. The Ohio Association of Community Colleges' data on the State Share of Instruction, the formula and process for allocating state funds to Ohio community colleges, was also reviewed.

Data from the Ohio Department of Higher Education, the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce, and the federal Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System were used in the study for context. Publications from research organizations and industry media were also referenced to derive trend information to inform community listening discussions and consider in the key insights report.

Scale Strategic Solutions designed and administered a strategic planning survey for all Cincinnati State representatives between December 12, 2024, and March 12, 2025. An initial analysis was provided to the Cincinnati State strategic planning work group with responses through February 25, 2025. The key insights report provides the final survey results through March 12 based on 669 responses: 344 students, 97 faculty members, 29 staff members, 16 administrators, and 44 alumni. Please note that respondents may have multiple associations with the College (e.g., an alumnus who is also a faculty member) and are thus counted twice in the previous breakdown.

Six community listening sessions were conducted between December 2024 and January 2025: Two sessions gathered perspectives from 10 total students; five representatives from K–12 school districts participated in a session; eight co-op employers provided their perspectives in one session; five alumni joined a community listening call; and the largest listening call; and the largest community listening session hosted more than 50 Cincinnati State employees.



Appendix F

Key Insight Reports

Key Insights Summary

Key themes were synthesized based on the data collected. Scale Strategic Solutions organized the intersecting themes in the following areas, with some concepts overlapping theme areas:

Addressing Juggle/Struggle: Part-time students struggle with persistence (65.7% of part-time students persist, compared to 73.8% for full-time students in the Fall 2023 cohort) and completion (15.9% for Fall 2021 part-time students and 27.7% for full-time students). CState Complete identified that the most common reason students stopped out was work and family commitment. The strategic plan recommends providing more support to students who are balancing school, work, and family.

“We’re off the heels of COVID, but with so much homelessness, the remnants of that is still there. Food insecurities, the co-ops are mandatory. We were founded on experiential learning, which is a beautiful thing. But leaving here, going to the co-op,

coming back here for a night class, getting home pitch black for a young girl is daunting.” — Current faculty and staff listening session participant

Tailoring Modality and Scheduling: In Fall 2024, concerns about course scheduling conflicts and challenges began to surface in the CState Complete messages as reasons for stopping out. Course scheduling conflicts also emerged as a primary area of improvement in the Ruffalo Noel Levitz 2024 Student Satisfaction Inventory™ survey of Cincinnati State students. Listening sessions also discussed the complexity of determining the appropriate modality of courses based on the schedule, nature of content, and academic readiness of students. Some faculty and staff mentioned that students need more learning support, whether they are an adult who has been out of school for some time or a recent high school graduate that experienced learning loss during the COVID-19 pandemic. The strategic plan may consider offering an appropriate mix of online and in-person learning modalities and scheduling options that consider learning styles, nature of content, and convenience for students.

“I see more flexibility taking online classes than in person. But I like taking more classes in person, because me personally, I like sharing, and sometimes the professor asking questions, sharing the activities, and I like going in to school and sitting in my desk and learning.” — Current student listening session participant

Enhancing Academic Delivery: According to the Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory, students are highly satisfied with faculty’s knowledge, but the quality of instruction and timeliness of feedback, though important to students, received lackluster satisfaction ratings. A few voices in the faculty and staff listening sessions suggested that instructors may need more support with instructional design, particularly adjunct faculty who may be new to instruction. The strategic plan may consider enhancing effective academic delivery and increasing instructional design support to effectively teach today’s students. A few students also mentioned wanting more access to academic supports in the classroom and in academic help centers. The plan may also recommend ensuring availability of tutoring, writing centers, and other academic supports.

“Everyone is busy. It is really hard to gather [all the faculty] at the same time and give them all of the tools and resources they need. And so it’s not just about giving them the knowledge, it’s about sustaining the knowledge and what they gather. Sitting through a webinar or a PD [professional development] for two hours is great, but actually sustaining the information you retain and giving them the support to actually

move forward with some of those ideas is where instructional designers become crucial. ... We would have instructional designers to support them to actually carry out their ideas.” — Current faculty and staff listening session participant

Connecting to Careers Earlier: Cooperative education and work-based learning expansion has been identified as the top priority, receiving a 4.27 weighted score on the Scale Strategic Solutions Cincinnati State Strategic Planning survey. Students in community listening sessions were interested in more co-op experiences, including co-ops or job shadows in the initial semesters of enrollment, to understand upfront what a job in their desired field is like. Co-op employers in listening sessions wanted to be more consistently involved in programs to build relationships with students over time and plan for co-op placement cycles. The strategic plan may consider providing co-op and experiential learning earlier in academic programs. The plan may seek to partner with employers to incorporate real-time industry changes in the classroom and to mentor. The plan may also recommend enhancing early advising to help identify career options sooner.

“Just as many people have said, absolutely the co-ops. Those are playing huge roles in students getting jobs and getting experience and also getting familiar with the industry that they’re going to go into. So that’s one of the top things that I would say for meaningful experiences.” — Current student listening session participant

Serving Students of Tomorrow: Nearly half (48%) of participants in the community listening sessions noted “Serving the Population” as a trend that needs to be addressed the most. The discussion of this topic included how to address needs of English language learners, various learning styles, students with varying schedules, and diversity in ages. K–12 educators pointed to the opportunity to use College Credit Plus (CCP) to build relationships and enroll CCP students into Cincinnati State after they graduate from high school. In addition, the number of high school students in Ohio continues to decline significantly although there are large increases in Hispanic, multi-racial, and Asian students. The strategic plan may consider how to reflect the composition of the greater Cincinnati community and to meet all students where they are in their academic preparation and journey.

“How do we meet our students where they are, and in community colleges, what’s the average age ... 28? So they’re more likely to have employment, more likely to maybe have adult parent responsibilities and things like that. So how do we meet the students knowing that they can’t come in at 10 o’clock for an hour?” — Current faculty and staff listening session participant

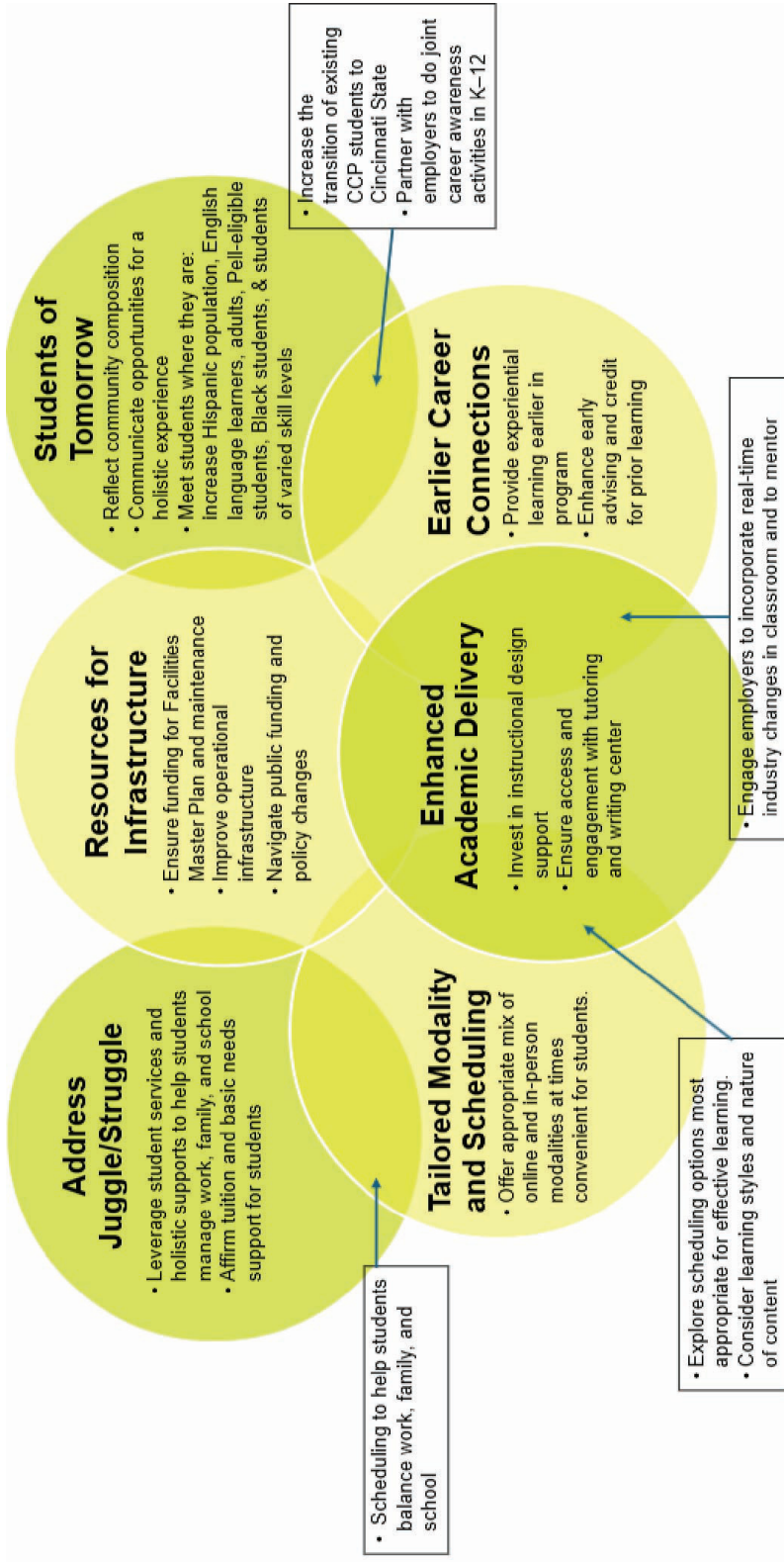
Cultivating Resources for Infrastructure: Facility concerns remain a pressing issue, with students and employees expressing dissatisfaction with aging infrastructure and the disparity in building quality in both the survey and community listening sessions. A Facilities Master Plan is underway for the College, and many are looking forward to changes that improve facilities and bring continuity to the campus infrastructure. Operational structure and processes were noted as areas of improvement in the strategic planning survey. On a scale of 1–5, employees rated Human Resources and payroll processes at an average of 2.43, the lowest-rated item. Alumni mentioned the need to have more alumni contact information. Also, the Trellis Strategies study found that 59% of students worry about having enough money to pay for school. Comments surfaced about federal and state funding that may constrain resources available to support student success. The strategic plan may consider improving operational infrastructure, particularly with Human Resources management and ensuring funding for the Facilities Master Plan and maintenance. The plan can also recommend affirming the availability of financial aid, basic needs supports for students, and the ability to navigate perceived public policy volatility.

“HR needs a complete overhaul. It has been difficult to hire people in key positions ... lowball offers.” — Current employee strategic planning survey comment

“Please pour resources into IT... so the College has the programming and data support needed to make effective data-based decisions.” — Current employee strategic planning survey comment

The key insights are illustrated in Figure 1. Further discussion is needed to consider weight and level of importance and interest among the topics.

Figure 1: Key Insight Themes



SWOT Analysis: Internal Factors

Data were culled to identify the most salient insights in the current-state analysis for Cincinnati State and then organized considering internal and external factors.

Cincinnati State has seen a steady increase in enrollment since 2020. Enrollment patterns vary among comparable Ohio colleges. Among two-year colleges in the region, University of Cincinnati regional campuses saw a spike in 2020 but then ebbed and flowed in enrollment from Fall 2020 to Fall 2023.

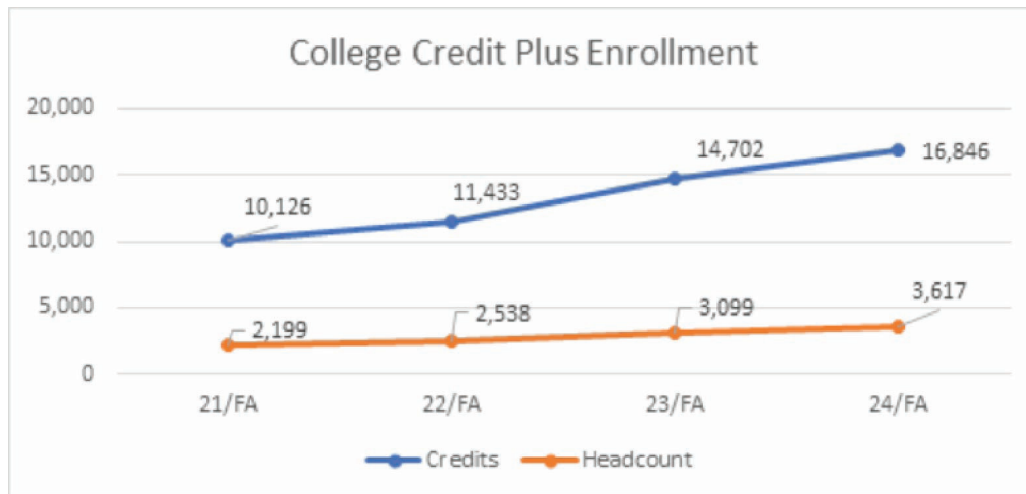
Table 1: Headcount Enrollment by Ohio Comparison Campuses

Sector Campus	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Cincinnati State Tech. & Community College	9,459	8,758	8,485	8,499	8,862	9,050
Columbus State Community College	27,673	28,244	27,837	25,305	25,396	26,900
Cuyahoga Community College	26,408	24,492	21,139	19,416	18,258	19,062
Lorain County Community College	10,651	10,238	10,137	9,536	9,183	9,423
Owens State Community College	9,469	9,319	7,538	7,524	7,570	7,795
Sinclair Community College	18,576	18,967	18,742	18,606	17,677	17,531
University of Cincinnati, Blue Ash	5,288	5,826	7,044	6,127	6,559	7,182
University of Cincinnati, Clermont	6,111	6,290	7,440	6,484	7,415	8,267

Source: Ohio Department of Higher Education

Some enrollment growth is attributable to CCP, the dual enrollment initiative that allows high school students to earn college credit and high school credit simultaneously for a course. CCP enrollments continue to rise, helping to establish a pipeline of students into the College. See Figure 2.

Figure 2:



Many of the community listening session participants were interested in ways to support enrollment growth and offered suggestions to increase recruitment. These suggestions are captured in the listening session summary shared with the strategic planning steering committee.

Cincinnati State has demonstrated resilience and growth in key areas. The data indicate that full-time students have rebounded well from the COVID-19 pandemic, meeting or exceeding KPIs by Fall 2022 (see Table 2). The engineering and IT programs, in particular, have met or exceeded KPIs in credits attempted, credits earned, and overall retention. Despite these strengths, retention and completion rates for part-time students continue to lag significantly behind these rates for full-time students. Large achievement gaps persist for Black students across all KPIs, highlighting the need for targeted interventions.

Table 2: Progress to the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan Key Performance Indicators

	Fall 2019	100%	1,482	74.6%	19.1	14.3	71.9%	51.5%	23.5%	19.7%
	Fall 2020	100%	1,319	72.7%	18.6	13.6	64.7%	46.0%	26.3%	20.7%
	Fall 2021	100%	1,330	70.7%	19.3	13.7	69.8%	49.4%		
	Fall 2022	100%	1,367	69.3%	19.7	13.6	65.6%	44.3%		
Full time	Fall 2019	55%	820	75.3%	23.3	17.5	76.8%	54.9%	23.4%	23.4%
	Fall 2020	49%	640	73.2%	24.6	18.0	72.8%	49.7%	26.3%	26.3%
	Fall 2021	40%	531	78.4%	26.3	20.6	84.6%	59.7%		
	Fall 2022	38%	515	78.4%	27.5	21.6	80.5%	58.1%		
Strategic Plan Goals:				College Pass Rate Year 1	College Credits Attempt Year 1	College Credits Earned Year 1	Persist (Fall to Spring)	Retain (Fall to Fall 2)	3 Year Grad Rate FT	3 Year Grad Rate All
By 2025				79%	24	18	73%	53%		23%
	Cohort	% of Total	N	College Credit Pass % Year 1	College Credits Attempt Year 1	College Credits Earned Year 1	Persist (Fall to Spring)	Retain (Fall to Fall 2)	3 Year Grad Rate FT	3 Year Grad Rate All
ALL	Fall 2015	100%	1,772	75.0%	16.5	12.4	69.0%	48.0%	21.1%	16.0%
	Fall 2016	100%	1,686	74.3%	16.9	12.6	69.0%	47.3%	22.7%	16.8%
	Fall 2017	100%	1,558	75.9%	16.8	12.7	68.4%	50.6%	25.7%	19.9%
	Fall 2018	100%	1,450	75.8%	18.2	13.8	68.8%	48.9%	23.9%	18.8%
	Fall 2019	100%	1,482	74.6%	19.1	14.3	71.9%	51.5%	23.5%	19.7%
	Fall 2020	100%	1,319	72.7%	18.6	13.6	64.7%	46.0%	26.3%	20.7%
	Fall 2021	100%	1,330	70.7%	19.3	13.7	69.8%	49.4%		
	Fall 2022	100%	1,367	69.3%	19.7	13.6	65.6%	44.3%		

Source: Retention summary, February 2024; institutional research

Since the last strategic plan was developed, Cincinnati State launched CState Complete, an outreach initiative to students who left the College before earning their degree via peer-to-peer text messages from current students. Trained Student Connectors manage peer-to-peer outreach via text message, first learning individuals' stories to understand why they left the College. Table 3 lists the most common themes identified in the text messages that Student Connectors receive.

Table 3: CState Complete Outreach Findings on Reasons for Stop Out

Reason Codes	Count of Statements	Percent
Impact of Work and/or Life Responsibilities on Academics	71	26.8%
Financial Constraints and Tuition Barriers	54	20.4%
Personal Health and/or Emotional and/or Mental Health Issues	35	13.2%
Course Scheduling Conflicts and/or Challenges	26	9.8%
Lack of Clarity or Confusion about Academic and/or Career Path	24	9.1%
Dissatisfaction with Academic Support or Institutional Policy	23	8.7%
Academic Performance Concerns	17	6.4%
Waiting for Program Acceptance or Application Process	15	5.7%
Grand Total	265	100.00%

Source: CState Complete Campaigns Spring 2024 and Fall 2024;

The top barriers expressed by students who stopped out are balancing work/life responsibilities with school, financial barriers, and health issues. In Fall 2024, concerns about course scheduling conflicts and challenges began to surface in the messages.

Course scheduling conflicts also emerged as a primary area of improvement in the Ruffalo Noel Levitz 2024 Student Satisfaction Inventory™ survey of Cincinnati State students. Student perception of quality of instruction and timeliness of feedback, although important to students, received lackluster satisfaction ratings. However, the Student Satisfaction Inventory found that the knowledge and approachability of academic advisors was a top strength, followed by the knowledgeability of faculty.

Academic advising has emerged as a strong institutional asset, providing students with essential guidance. Cooperative education and work-based learning expansion has been identified as the top priority in this area, receiving a 4.27 weighted score on the Scale Strategic Solutions survey. Students in community listening sessions were interested in getting more work-based learning experiences including job shadows in the initial semesters of enrollment to understand upfront what a job in their desired field is like. Co-op employers in listening sessions want to be more consistently involved in classes to build relationships with students over time and plan for co-op placement cycles. Comments in the survey highlight that co-ops are an important reason to choose Cincinnati State, such as this statement:

“You can get all the college experiences while having credit and one foot in the door of any career you choose.” — Current student strategic planning survey comment

Working and learning are integral for many students. A 2023 Student Financial Wellness Survey conducted by Trellis Strategies found that 50% of students consider themselves to be workers attending school rather than students who work. Part of this perspective for many students is that they need financial resources. The same Trellis Strategies study found that 59% of students worry about having enough money to pay for school.

Pursuing higher education must make financial sense to students. Cincinnati State provides a strong return on investment: Most former students exceed the minimum economic return threshold, according to 2024 data from the Postsecondary Value Explorer Tool at the Institute for Higher Education Policy. Median earnings for students who started at Cincinnati State ten years ago is \$40,769, which is well above a minimum economic threshold of \$34,280—the net price to attend Cincinnati State, amortized over 10 years, plus the median earnings for Ohioans who only hold a high school diploma. Former students in the top 25th percentile of the cohort are in the top 40% of income brackets for all Ohioans regardless of educational attainment level. However, former students (including those who may not have earned a credential) in the bottom 25th percentile of earnings for their cohort are not seeing a return on investment.

While the academic and technical experience is strong at Cincinnati State, facilities and operations are a concern. Facility concerns remain a pressing issue, with students and employees expressing dissatisfaction with aging infrastructure and the disparity in building quality. A Facilities Master Plan is underway for the College, and many are looking forward to changes that improve facilities and bring continuity to the campus infrastructure.

“I truly believe that our facilities need attention, and I say that because I get two different types of feeling walking in from the garages. With the new building facilities, it’s ... new, fresh and a little more state-of-the-art, more welcoming. However, coming in from the main building, you get a completely different sense. Also, our mechanical ... status and resources are lacking, so we get a lot of breakdowns. So, I do want to see in the next five years a true investment in our facilities.” — Current faculty and staff listening session participant

There were a few mentions about the Middletown campus growth plans and concerns that plans have not materialized in a meaningful way for the location.

Additionally, operational structure and processes were noted as areas of improvement in the strategic planning survey. On a scale of 1–5, employees rated Human Resources and payroll processes as 2.43, the lowest-rated item. Some faculty and staff expressed frustration in listening sessions and surveys over a lack of transparency in administrative decision-making and financial resource allocation, making it difficult to advocate for institutional investments.

“I think that part of our challenge for those below the Executive Team level is understanding how the College makes decisions and what are the metrics. ... How do we show and demonstrate that a project is worth making an investment? We don’t know the metrics, and so it’s hard to demonstrate or prove that a project is willing to take a risk for.” — Current faculty and staff listening session participant

However, scores are on the rise in 2024 for the PACE Climate Survey for Cincinnati State employees, administered by the North Carolina State University Belk Center for Community College Leadership and Research. There are statistically significant increases in satisfaction with institutional structure, supervisory relationships, and teamwork (see Table 4). This is a sign of progress in the campus climate and culture.

Table 4: 2024 PACE Survey Climate Factor Mean Composite Results

Climate Factors	2012 Rating	2015 Rating	2018 Rating	2021 Rating	2024 Rating	2024 National PACE Rating
Institutional Structure*	2.85	3.17	3.32	3.41	3.70	3.54
Supervisory Relationships*	3.43	3.67	3.69	3.78	4.04	3.96
Student Focus	3.79	3.87	3.91	4.05	4.22	4.11
Teamwork*	3.42	3.71	3.77	3.92	4.12	4.03
TOTAL OVERALL*	3.33	3.56	3.64	3.74*	3.97	3.87

Source: Belk Center for Community College Leadership and Research (Scale 1–5, *statistically significant improvement from 2021 to 2024)

Allocation of the State Share of Instruction (SSI) also shows great signs of progress. Cincinnati State has seen an increase in early momentum indicators and certificate awards as they factor into the SSI, according to the Ohio Association of Community Colleges’ February 2025 analysis. Cincinnati State has doubled its certificate awards since 2020. Course completion and full-time enrollments are up by 6.1% over the past three years and up 5.7% over the previous year, with large jumps in non-access student course completion and a slight increase in 1 student course completion, evaluated as part of SSI, are up 2.7% from 2020 to 2023 and 6.1% from 2022 to 2023, with an increase in math success, English success, and the 12-hour credits earned milestone. However, associate degree award counts and transfer completions have declined by 22.4% and 23.3%, respectively, since 2020.

Cincinnati State’s internal strengths and challenges considered in the strategic planning process are summarized in Figure 3.



Figure 3: Cincinnati State's Internal Strengths and Weaknesses

SWOT Analysis: External Factors

The current-state analysis by Scale Strategic Solutions examined trends and issues from higher education and workforce research and from participants in the community listening sessions and strategic planning survey. Trends in community populations, industry and technology, and ways of learning are critical to crafting a relevant strategic plan.

From 2006 to 2023, Ohio public school enrollment declined overall by 10%. Yet, public school enrollments among Hispanic, multiracial, and Asian/Pacific Islander students have more than doubled according to the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce. Adult learners and an increasingly culturally and racially diverse population are likely to represent a greater proportion of the Cincinnati State student body if it reflects the composition of the community.

Community colleges across the nation have experienced steady increases in retention according to the National Student Clearinghouse, with rates rising by 3.7 percentage points over the past decade. While retention rates are improving, students of color continue to face significant challenges. Nationally, retention rates for Hispanic (56.6%), Black (52.8%), and Native American (52.8%) students remain well below the national average of 68.2%.

The increasing demand for online education provides an opportunity for expansion and flexible course delivery. According to an Inside Higher Education article, 40% of two-year college enrollments nationally were fully online in the 2021-2022 academic year, with another 30% incorporating some level of online coursework. The article elaborates that online students often require additional support and engagement strategies to persist in their programs.

Technology is changing not only education delivery, but also industry and careers. According to the Georgetown University Center for Education and the Workforce's *The Future of Good Jobs: Projections through 2031*, artificial intelligence and automation will soon perform 28% of all tasks associated with current jobs. Change may happen rapidly.

The strategic planning community listening sessions and survey conducted by Scale Strategic Solutions discussed key trends to consider for the next five years. In the community listening sessions, participants were given a poll to select the trend that most needs to be addressed among the following choices: Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Automation; Rapid Change of Skills; Serving the Population; Ways of Learning (e.g., online and hybrid learning); and Other. The online strategic planning survey offered an open-ended question, “What trend or issue should Cincinnati State keep an eye on for the future?” The key themes in the survey responses were:

- **Artificial intelligence:** This was the most frequent open-ended response in the online survey, but only 6% of community listening session participants listed it as a priority. The listening sessions discussed AI as it relates to workforce and curricular content. In the survey comments, it was referenced regarding not only learning and careers but also the institutional policy on use of AI and academic integrity.
- **Justice, access, inclusion, diversity, and equity (JAIDE):** This topic relates to the topic of serving the population, particularly in consideration of equity. It was the second most frequent theme in the survey comments. Most survey respondents championed JAIDE, but a few challenged the principles. Many noted safety concerns, particularly for individuals in the LGBTQ+ community. Some responses mentioned alarm about emerging federal and state policy regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion as well as academic freedom.
- **Ways of learning – hybrid and online learning:** Twenty-one percent of the community listening session poll respondents marked this as a significant topic. It was also the third most common theme in the survey responses. Instructional design was discussed in the faculty and staff community listening session as an important way to help instructors deliver effective course content in multiple modalities. Listening sessions also discussed the complexity of determining the appropriate modality of a course based on the schedule, nature of content, and academic readiness of students. Some faculty and staff also mentioned that students need more learning support, whether they are an adult who has been out of school for some time or a recent high school graduate that experienced learning loss during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- **Rapid change of skills:** 21% of community listening session poll participants also selected rapid change of skills as a key trend. The employer listening session discussed vivid examples of how positions and job roles were changing and the desire to work closely with instructors and students to adapt to change for the future and incumbent workforce. In the survey, several respondents noted desire for more programs in a variety of fields and the need to keep up with industry changes and in-demand careers.
- **Increased interest in technical education:** In the listening sessions with co-op employers and Cincinnati State employees and in survey comments, participants said people are increasingly appreciating technical education and may prefer it to a liberal arts and sciences baccalaureate degree. Many mentioned it as an advantage for community colleges.

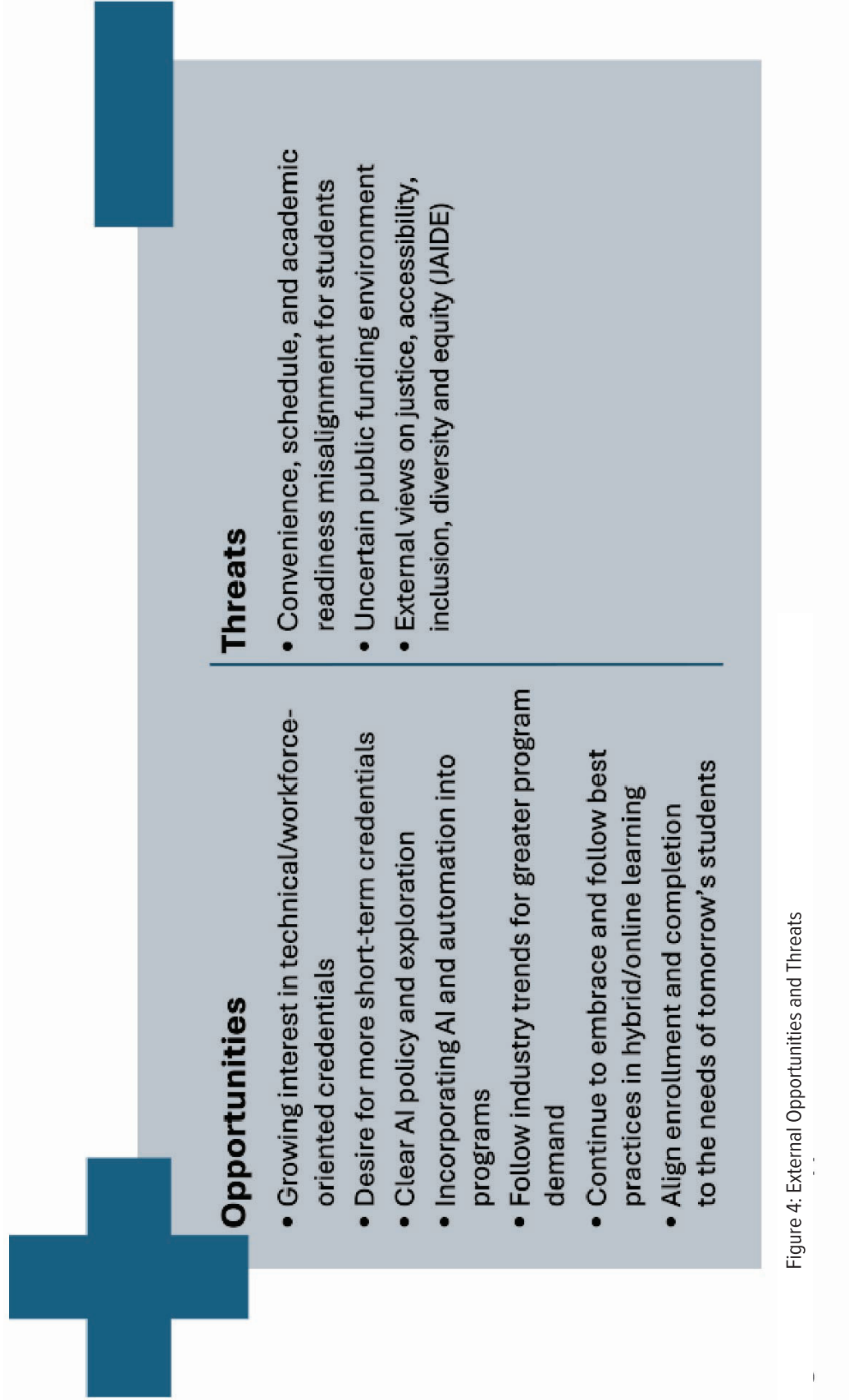


Figure 4: External Opportunities and Threats



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