Five Year Academic Plan

This document, which describes CCSU's academic planning goals and strategies for the next five years, is in four parts:
1. A description of the principles upon which strategic planning can and should guide academic planning, and through which academic planning supports the university's strategic goals.
2. A set of procedures for evaluating and implementing the proposals for new programs and initiatives received from departments and deans in the first stage of academic planning.
3. A set of broader proposals for maintaining, supporting, and enhancing the existing academic program that should be implemented within the current five-year planning cycle.
4. A spreadsheet containing the proposals described in section 2 above.

I. Academic Planning and Strategic Planning

An effective strategy for maintaining and enhancing the academic program at CCSU must not be predetermined and static—a *plan*—but rather flexible, dynamic, and responsive to unpredictable variables including the university's and the state's financial circumstances, changes in enrollment and workforce demographics, and personnel—that is, a *planning process*. At the same time, to avoid being reactive rather than strategic, an academic planning process must be guided by widely understood and accepted principles that tie it to the university's broader strategic planning: academic planning must be at once guided by and a guide for strategic planning. The university's current planning process is based on four objectives—increasing enrollment, diversifying revenue sources, engaging with the community, and maintaining academic excellence—which serve as the basis of the following guiding principles for academic planning.

Increasing Enrollment
- Academic planning, particularly the addition of new programs and especially those requiring new resources, must be guided by realistic, evidence-supported enrollment projections based on employment data and demographics. Given the time required to design and approve curriculum, win CSCU support, and hire faculty, truisms like "students all want X these days" or short-term job market projections are less useful in selecting new programs for development than is documentation of sustainable enrollment in programs that fill gaps in regional offerings or address demonstrable long-term, ongoing needs. Proposals for new programs should include, and decisions to approve programs should be guided by, such data.
- Given the unpredictability of employment trends and other drivers of demand, due consideration should also be given to new programs with less demonstrable enrollment potential and correspondingly less (or no) resource demand, especially when such proposals address disciplinary evolution or the general enhancement of academic excellence (see below).
- Sustaining increased enrollment requires not only attracting students with new programs, but also supporting those students and programs by providing for the requisite academic foundations: basic sciences to support engineering programs, for example, or General

Education to support all students. Consideration must be given to providing additional resources for overstretched programs and departments, and projected enrollment growth must be addressed proactively with resources dedicated to fundamental programs rather than reactively after new students are enrolled and resources found to be lacking.

- Enrollment is increased not only by attracting new students but by retaining students as well. Consequently, academic planning must consider not only creating new programs and providing the foundational support they require, but also maintaining and enhancing those academic programs that have a positive effect on retention—particularly those programs that are broadly required or universal, and contact-intensive, and taken early in students' academic careers—and improving, altering, or (if possible) eliminating those programs that serve as roadblocks to retention.

Diversifying Revenue Sources

- As the university's central mission and function, the academic program is justifiably likely to be a consumer rather than a producer of revenue: revenue enhancement is in support of the academic program rather than vice-versa. Nonetheless, academic planning can contribute to revenue enhancement by being aware of cost as a factor in planning particularly, as noted above, in relation to the revenue-enhancement potential of increased enrollment: costlier programs are easier to accommodate in academic planning if they realistically promise return on investment. That said, cost and revenue cannot be the sole factors in academic planning: an academic plan is not a business plan. Due consideration must be given to forms of value other than financial when building an academic program (see below).

- Academic planning can, however, positively impact the diversification of revenue sources through the creation of entrepreneurial programs. These might include certificate programs designed to enhance professional credentials—and particularly "stackable" certificates or credentials that might draw students into degree programs—or continuing education courses with broad appeal to and value in the communities we serve. If markets for such programs and courses can be persuasively demonstrated, they should be included in academic planning and seed money should be made available where necessary. Revenues from such programs or courses should be reinvested in the university's academic program, with particular consideration for the departments and schools that offer the programs and courses and the departments and schools that support them.

Engaging with the Community

- Community engagement offers a value other than, though not entirely disengaged from, the financial. While community engagement addresses financial diversification by providing programs that connect the university to the local and regional business communities, bringing the university's resources and expertise into the service of the business community and in turn encouraging that community to support the university, community engagement also fulfills the mission of a regional comprehensive university by serving the social, cultural, and educational needs of the communities in which we

reside as a sustained act of good citizenship and stewardship. Academic planning supports both of these aspects of community engagement by supporting courses, programs, and departments that engage students and faculty with the community in genuine, intensive, and sustained ways. Academic planning should prioritize those courses and programs that demonstrably address a significant community need, and those that integrate community-based activity into the academic goals and learning outcomes of the courses and programs in clear and assessible ways, assuring that community engagement produces value for the student as well as the community.

Maintaining Academic Excellence
- As a value that stands on its own at the heart of a university apart from (though not independent of) financial and other instrumental goals, maintaining academic excellence requires that academic planning engage all areas of the academic program regardless of their contributions to other strategic goals lest the university lose sight of its primary educational mission in the pursuit of other priorities.
- Consequently, all academic planning should first and foremost address academic excellence, and all planning proposals must demonstrate their commitment and contribution to academic excellence regardless of their contributions to other strategic goals. That is to say, to be included in academic planning, a proposal must demonstrate academic value and rigor through appropriate learning goals and objectives.
- To the extent allowed by resources, academic planning must support programs and proposals that allow departments to reflect developments in their disciplines and that introduce ideas, courses, and fields that keep the university's academic program intellectually current. Departments should be entrusted, encouraged, and empowered to create or expand programs that reflect the present and future state of their disciplines.
- To maintain academic excellence, an academic plan must also be an assessment plan, and must emphasize the importance of (and make available resources for) "closing the loop" of assessment by addressing its findings. Academic planning must make use of assessment and other forms of feedback to prioritize proposals that address demonstrable areas of student need as well as areas that are meeting their goals and objectives and could make still more progress with additional resources.
- Maintaining academic excellence requires attention not only to new programs but to existing programs, especially those that address the academic fundamentals at the heart of the university's overall academic program and in so doing meet the needs of a broad range of students and disciplines. Academic planning must consequently include the development, maintenance, and/or enhancement of foundational programs like First Year Experience, General Education, Honors, college writing, and college math.
- Maintaining academic excellence also includes particular attention to the university's established areas of excellence and/or uniqueness, for example STEM or International Education. To maintain our excellence in these areas, however, relevant proposals must still be subject to the consideration and assessment of goals and objectives described above.

II. New Programs and Initiatives

The current academic planning process began in 2017 with the gathering of proposals for new academic programs, certificates, initiatives, and activities from the academic departments by the four undergraduate deans. These proposals were assembled and divided into three levels of priority by the Interim Provost in spring 2018. Each proposal includes an indication of the resources needed for its implementation. The result was a list of proposals for more than 40 new programs (including graduate degrees, undergraduate majors and minors, concentrations and tracks, and a variety of certificates) that call for over 40 new faculty positions as well as considerable facilities requirements. This list—and any subsequent proposals received—can be divided into three categories, which can be addressed in three different ways.

1. Proposals that are within the administrative and financial means of the proposing departments to accomplish without further approvals or resources, or proposals that can be accomplished with minimal additional resources (as for advertising or minor material purchases) that can be provided by the undergraduate deans. This includes proposals that require Faculty Senate approval through the established curricular or academic policy procedures but nothing further. While including such proposals in academic planning is valuable as an indication of activity within the departments and schools, departments are and should remain empowered to act within their own existing authority to implement such proposals, or to work with the appropriate deans and/or existing faculty governance processes to implement them.

2. Proposals that require administrative approval beyond faculty governance procedures— for example, proposals for new programs that require approval by the university's Integrated Planning Council and the Board of Regents—but no or very few additional resources. Such proposals will be evaluated for academic soundness through existing Faculty Senate procedures, and vetted through the Integrated Planning Council's procedures to confirm that no personnel, IT, or facilities resources are required or that any required resources are available or can easily be made available. Once these evaluations are successfully completed—and BoR approval attained, if necessary—such programs shall be implemented, based on the presumption that departments and faculty governance bodies know best which programs will enhance the university's academic program.

3. Proposals that require significant additional resources in the form of new faculty lines, new facilities, or significant new IT, lab, or other material resources. Because it is unlikely that the university will have the resources to support all such proposals, in addition to going through the evaluative processes described above these proposals will have to be prioritized. Because full proposals will not all be available at the same time and such weighty decisions cannot be made on a "first come, first served" basis, prioritization must take the form not of a single ranked list but of an ongoing process that establishes the merits of a proposal with an eye to the larger academic program and financial situation. This will be done by the Integrated Planning Council with significant input from the faculty via the Faculty Senate and Academic Affairs via the Provost who will consult with the deans and other relevant individuals and offices. The IPC will make use of the guidelines concerning the university's four strategic objectives laid out in the

first section of this document to evaluate a proposal's demonstrable, assessable (not merely asserted) contribution to one or more of the four objectives. The IPC will also consider detailed data provided by the proposers concerning anticipated costs and revenues associated with the proposal, though with an awareness that net cost cannot be the sole or even the chief driver of academic planning decisions.

The attached spreadsheet divides the list of proposals into these three categories, with an additional fourth category of proposals for which resource needs are unspecified or unclear. Within each category, the proposals are ordered not by priority but alphabetically by school and department.

III. Maintaining, Supporting, and Enhancing the Existing Academic Program

While the institution's academic planning must respond to disciplinary developments, student interest, economic pressures, and regional employment needs with new programs and initiatives, it is also necessary to plan to maintain and improve our existing academic programs and skills lest growth at the peripheries collapse for lack of foundations. To that end, in the next five years CCSU will undertake the following initiatives.

1. Conduct a systematic analysis of existing programs in which the maintenance of existing standards of excellence and/or the potential for growth, supported by demonstrable existing demand, is hampered by lack of resources. In the distribution of new or reallocated resources, including faculty lines, due and informed consideration must be given to extant as well as proposed new programs. A first step in doing so is a determination of need, including the maintaining, upgrading, or replacing of specialized equipment, the filling of unfilled faculty lines, and the allocation of additional lines.

2. Improve our ability to predict accurately the number of sections of required and in-demand courses needed each semester and to assure the provision of those sections without unduly expanding our reliance on part-time faculty and without over-enrolling courses to the detriment of academic quality. The timely provision of necessary courses is important to retention and to students' academic progress and development. Doing so will require a cooperative effort involving admissions, enrollment management, and the academic deans and departments.

3. Encourage the development of interdisciplinary programs. Improved communication and cooperation between departments and colleges will eliminate redundant or competing proposals, maximize existing resources, facilitate the enhancement of existing programs as well as the development of new ones, and expand students' exposure to a variety of ideas and disciplines. Due consideration, encouragement, and support—including financial support as well as innovative thinking on the allocation and evaluation of load credit—should be accorded to interdisciplinary proposals.

4. Convene a committee comprising faculty, students, and personnel from Academic Affairs and Student Affairs to consider the university's First Year Experience program. A strong

FYE program is essential to student success and retention, and our current program is not meeting student needs. The committee will consider the strengths and weaknesses of the current FYE model, evaluate the model currently being piloted, explore other models and best practices, and propose an FYE for CCSU that may include, but need not be limited to, a credit-bearing course or courses.

5. Create a standing committee of the Faculty Senate to oversee General Education. The Gen Ed program is at the heart of the university's commitment to a well-rounded liberal arts education for all of its students. At present the Curriculum Committee's General Education subcommittee is charged with considering curricular proposals concerning Gen Ed and the Academic Assessment Committee is charged with overseeing the assessment of Gen Ed, but no body is charged with the overall maintenance, evaluation, and development of the general Education program. The new committee, broadly representative of the four schools and the disciplines involved in Gen Ed, will be charged with oversight of the content and structure of Gen Ed, Gen Ed goals and outcomes, and the analysis and use of Gen Ed assessment data, and other relevant tasks. Proposed changes to the existing Gen Ed program will either be initiated by this committee or presented to it for evaluation.

6. Create a working group to develop a proposal for a Writing in the Disciplines program at CCSU. Writing is a core academic and professional skill, but our students lag behind national averages in writing ability according data from our participation in the Multistate Collaborative. A cornerstone of writing pedagogy is continual writing instruction and practice and the transfer of skills from first-year composition to more advanced courses. Yet CCSU, unlike its sister CSUs and other peer institutions, requires just a single writing class. The working group, broadly representative across schools and academic disciplines, will develop a proposal for a second required writing course offered by each major and designed to meet the discipline-based writing needs of its students.

7. Charge the Faculty Senate's Diversity Committee with exploring the development of a diversity pedagogy, including the possibility of a diversity requirement, at CCSU. An understanding of diversity is an essential professional and cultural skill and has become increasingly important to both faculty and students, having been singled out by the Student Government Association as a curricular desideratum. The FSDC will explore ways of enhancing the inclusion of diversity in the curriculum.