



## **ACADEMIC PLAN 2021-2025**

This Academic Plan provides the guiding principles for examining academic priorities for the years 2021-2025. This plan is founded on our vision to be a catalyst for regional renewal in southwestern Pennsylvania and our mission to provide Penn Highlands students “with affordable opportunities to gain the knowledge and skills they need to be successful in their work, in their day-to-day lives, and in their pursuit of life-long learning in a supportive, student-oriented environment.” The core value of student success will drive all academic initiatives in this plan.

This academic plan will accomplish the following:

- Establish and prioritize initiatives that enhance instruction and student learning, which will drive academic planning and budgeting
- Enhance processes for ongoing assessment of programs and student learning, and improve the documentation of how that assessment is being used
- Implement the Guided Pathways model to promote student success and completion of academic goals
- Grow and align programs and learning opportunities through enhanced community partnerships.
- Align the Academic Plan with the College’s Strategic Enrollment Management Plan and the College’s Strategic Plan.

The goals of the Academic Plan connect directly to the following goals in the College’s Strategic Plan:

Strategic Imperative 1: Advance student access, focus, and success

1.1 Implement the Guided Pathway Model

1.3 Improve and expand traditional and virtual learning opportunities

Strategic Imperative 2: Grow and Align quality Programs and Learning Opportunities

2.1 Align Program Portfolio

Strategic Imperative 3: Enhance Collaborative Partnerships

3.2 Enhance the student academic and environment opportunities

## **Goal 1: Improve the Process for Assessing Student Learning and Reviewing Academic Programs**

Recommendations from the Middle States' Team Report to the College after its last site visit were focused on improving the assessment process, so that will be our priority. These recommendations included improvements to assessment across modalities, integrating assessment of student learning into the program review process, developing and documenting assessment for each general education outcome, and ensuring that data analysis is performed and used to improve student learning and success.

1. Objective: Develop a schedule for the assessment cycle of both general education competencies and program outcomes with goals, targets, and outcomes for both full-time and adjunct faculty.
2. Objective: Use assessment software to demonstrate that findings are discussed, analyzed, and results are being used for curricular improvement.
3. Objective: Integrate the annual cycle of assessment of student learning into program assessment and the program review process for curricular and program improvement.
4. Objective: Conduct formal campus-wide sessions to discuss assessment processes to maximize data use with linkage to plans, budgets and resource needs.
5. Objective: Allocate the necessary resources and professional development to ensure the assessment process at the college is sustainable, to include a faculty assessment liaison for mentoring, and to work with the General Education Committee of Faculty Senate to help faculty with assessment activities.

## **Goal 2: Align our Program Portfolio with Student and Community Needs**

We can continue to use the Program Review Process and information from the Southern Alleghenies High Priority Occupations list, along with county and program advisory committees to assess alignment of Penn Highlands programs to community needs.

1. Objective: Assess current program offerings to ensure that they are aligned with the needs of students, employers, and the community in the Penn Highlands service area.
  - Develop new programs, revise or sunset current programs based on findings.
  - Regularly update course and program content to meet career and transfer needs, and support faculty professional development to grow the changing content.
  - Explore new program possibilities through an annual review of the Southern Alleghenies HPO list.
2. Objective: Work with faculty to develop a process for ensuring quality and consistency in asynchronous online courses.
3. Objective: Develop the College's Honors Program
4. Objective: Work with Workforce Development and Community Education Departments to determine which programming/training should be for-credit, which should be non-credit, and identify pathways between the two.

### **Goal 3: Implement Guided Pathways**

We will work with the Guided Pathways team to implement initiatives to develop meta-majors, identify gateway courses and key milestones, and provide support for students. Several initiatives in academic affairs come under this umbrella.

1. Objective: Restructure the ACP/FYE course to meet career, academic and major engagement needs of each student, and require ACP to be taken in the first term of enrollment.
2. Objective: Develop program maps for each program, showing how the program can be completed in two years (full-time) and nine semesters (part-time). Match the program maps to the course schedule to ensure students can complete; if needed, identify fall- and spring-only start programs.
3. Objective: Explore options for making the best use of irregular sessions (winter and summer) and 7-week sub-terms in fall and spring to increase success and on-time completion rates.

### **Goal 4: Enhance partnerships with our community**

We want to build on already-strong community partnerships with area high schools and businesses to promote enrollments and increase student success.

1. Objective: Collaborate with faculty to determine how best to recruit for their programs; then, engage faculty with prospective students prior to enrollment.
2. Objective: Collaborate with partnering high schools to plan to improve dual enrollment opportunities.
3. Objective: Identify opportunities for students to engage in experiential learning (capstone courses, internships, clinical placements, and other active learning activities).
4. Objective: Share feedback gathered from program advisory committees with Perkins stakeholders to help meet performance indicators.

## Projects within the Academic Plan

### 1. Assessment of student learning

Owner	Action	Comments Spring 2023
Ashley Burkhardt	1. Develop a schedule and process for assessment; document in WEAVE	Schedule developed
Division Chairs	2. Implement PLO assessment annually	½ PLOs being assessed
Gen Ed Committee	3. Implement ILO assessment each semester	Gen ed mapping complete; assessment in FT classes

### 2. Program Alignment

Owner	Action	Comments 2023
Program Review Process	1. Assess programs to ensure they align with career and transfer needs for students and the community	Using program matrix data and Southern Alleghenies HPO
Online Workgroup	2. Develop a process for ensuring quality in online programs	In process
Erica Reighard	3. Grow the College's honors program	In process
Cindy Doherty	4. Identify Credit/noncredit programs and pathways	Not started

### 3. Implement Guided Pathways

Owner	Action	Comments 2023
ACP Workgroup	9. Restructure ACP/FYE course	FYE course under development
Ashley	10. Develop program maps for each program with FT and PT options; connect maps to live schedule	Maps developed; working through schedule alignment
Ashley	11. Explore options for best use of irregular sessions to increase success & on-time completion rates.	In process

### 4. Enhance Partnerships with our Community

Owner	Action	Comments 2023
Cindy	12. Collaborate with faculty to recruit for their programs	Not started
Kay-Leigh and Dane	13. Improve dual enrollment process and partnerships	In process
Erica and Ashley	14. Identify opportunities for students to engage in experiential learning	In process