FULFILLING THE PROMISE
EXCELSIOR COLLEGE STRATEGIC PLAN
2020 – 2023
IN 1971, NEW YORK STATE EMBRACED AND IMPLEMENTED A NOVEL IDEA—create ways to provide educational opportunity to adult learners through the validation of prior learning, military service, professional development, and life experience. With a continuous commitment to innovation and a steadfast resolve to meet students where they are—academically and geographically—Excelsior pioneered many of the assessment and online instruction practices now standard for distance educators. Nearly 50 years after its founding, the College has enabled more than 175,000 adult learners to achieve their educational goals.

At the same time, we are cognizant that the world is changing. Globalization, increasing competition, changing American demographics, and shifting public perception of the value of a degree pose challenges distinct from any in Excelsior’s history. Fulfilling our mission and promise in this environment requires Excelsior to transcend the past and embrace a new shared vision for the future, one constructed to meet the needs of today’s learners—and those who come tomorrow.

The pursuit of this future manifests in three thematic goals:

1. Create an academic ecosystem that supports innovative approaches to learning that provide high-demand credentials for life, work, and degree completion. Integrate instructor-led and self-paced courses, prior learning assessment (PLA), credit by exam, and stackable credentials with emerging technologies and virtual services to create a personalized and immersive educational experience.

2. Strengthen an agile and sustainable business model and organizational culture in an increasingly dynamic and diverse environment. Maintain financial stability, serve our increasingly diverse students, prioritize inclusive practices, and strategically invest in enterprise systems/pricing models that improve our operational responsiveness, flexibility, and financial stability.

3. Expand the size and diversity of the student body. Target strategic growth and emerging markets to meet student needs and expand market share.

Created through a collaborative process comprising staff and faculty members representing all levels and functional areas of the institution as well as our board of trustees, this strategic plan reflects the collective input and values of Excelsior College. It reflects a dynamic and continuous process and is adapted to meet institutional priorities and emerging opportunities. Our decisions about resource deployment, academic offerings, the student experience, and fulfilling our mission are aligned with these goals and regularly evaluated for effectiveness.

Mindful of our history and our core values, the College’s agenda is set; the work to deliver on its founding promise continues.

Ever upward,

James N. Baldwin, JD, EdD
President, Excelsior College
FULFILLING THE PROMISE
OUR COMMITMENT, WHAT WE VALUE, AND WHAT WE BELIEVE IN HAS ALWAYS BEEN THE SAME: to provide adult learners with a flexible and affordable way to earn academic credentials and move forward in their lives. It is a simple yet powerful focus, one we have maintained for nearly 50 years.

Our institution has grown and evolved to meet not only the opportunities for delivering education but also the changing needs of adult learners. We initially achieved our mission primarily through the assessment of learning and the aggregation of credit earned inside and outside the classroom. Soon after, we added studying independently for credit by exam. Thirty years later, in the 2000s, we were among the first institutions developing and offering online courses.

The higher education landscape has changed since then, with more and more institutions offering online options and an increasing number of learners seeking not only degree completion but also micro-credentials. Our focus on meeting students’ learning needs compels us to create a learning ecosystem that fully integrates all credit-bearing offerings: instructor-led and self-paced courses, independent study for credit by examination, prior learning assessment, and stackable credentials. In addition to offering the traditional associate, bachelor’s, and master’s degree programs, Excelsior College will offer degree pathways and skill-based professional development opportunities developed in partnership with employers.

At the center of this ecosystem is the student. With our generous credit acceptance practices, learners can transfer academic credit from previous college experiences; receive credit for military and workforce training, professional licenses and certifications, CLEP, DANTES, and other approved exams; and undergo portfolio assessments of real-world experience.

Opportunities such as these make the achievement of academic credentials readily available for learners. At Excelsior College, learning opportunities will be available when students need them and in ways that advance their learning goals. This direct link to our founding principles brings our commitment to adult learners full circle. With the implementation of this strategic plan, we again fulfill and strengthen the promise of Excelsior College for the 2020s and beyond.
OUR STRATEGIC GOALS
Excelsior’s academic ecosystem supports innovative approaches to learning that provide high-demand credentials for life, work, and degree completion.

The demands and realities of an increasingly globalized economy have reshaped the higher education landscape, leading colleges and universities everywhere to pursue new strategies, services, programs, and innovations to increase retention and success, and meet changes in student preferences and workforce hiring practices.

For Excelsior College, these efforts center on creating an academic ecosystem for students of all life situations and learning styles that flexibly integrates instructor-led and self-paced courses, credit by examination, prior learning assessment (PLA) and short-term, stackable professional development opportunities built in partnership with employers. This equitable and culturally responsive ecosystem will move past traditional notions of credentialing, allowing opportunities for true lifelong learning. Individuals can pursue degree programs, non-credit professional development opportunities, and micro credentials when they need it, how they need it, and at any time to meet their personal and professional goals.

A portfolio of efficient student support structures and self-service options will form the foundation of these diverse educational offerings. Our calculated adoption of artificial intelligence (chatbots, machine scoring, adaptive learning) and other emerging technologies will allow us to deepen our knowledge of our students and to better meet their needs. Serving as the connective tissue between students and their instructors, academic advisors, admissions counselors, and other members of the college community, these technologies will allow for the development of more meaningful relationships and more consistent and personalized interactions across the entirety of the student journey.

Additionally, by 2023, Excelsior will redesign and reposition its pioneering associate degree in nursing program—which has graduated nearly 50,000 students since 1975—to reflect shifting health care dynamics and heightened regulatory and accreditation requirements. The College will provide strengthened student support services and maintain the nursing program’s historical academic excellence to ensure its viability long into the future.

These advancements, coupled with a more inclusive and collaborative self-study process, will ensure the College continues to identify areas for improvement and opportunities for innovation as it pursues Middle States reaccreditation.
Excelsior’s academic ecosystem supports innovative approaches to learning that provide high-demand credentials for life, work, and degree completion.

Revise our academic programs and services to fully integrate credit accumulation and credential recognition in the Excelsior learning environment.

**OBJECTIVE 1**

Academic ecosystem flexibly integrates instructor-led and self-paced courses, credit by exam, Prior Learning Assessment (PLA), and stackable credentials.

**OUTCOMES:**
- Articulated degree pathways.
- Incremental, episodic learning for life.
- Increased retention.
- Increased completion.
- Lifelong, careerlong relationships.

**OBJECTIVE 2**

Rapid (virtual, just in time) CARES* service for students.

**OUTCOMES:**
- Emerging technologies ensure responsiveness.
- Artificial intelligence (AI) maximized.
- Chatbots, machine scoring, virtual services used.
- Personalized educational programs, interaction, intervention as needed and desired.
- Predictive, adaptive learning used to help identify students in need.

**OBJECTIVE 3**

Academic excellence and continuing accreditation.

**OUTCOME:**
- Quality of courses, student engagement and retention, credential completion, and continuing accreditation.

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*Our student service credo: Compassionate, Agile, Respectful, Excellence, Service.*
Strengthen an agile and sustainable business model and organizational culture in an increasingly dynamic and diverse environment.

With economic realities, increased competition, demographic changes, and sector-wide financial pressures and constraints, Excelsior is committed to an improved, more nimble, and sustainable business model.

The realization of this goal requires prioritization in three areas: financial strength, advanced systems, and people.

To expand and maintain a strong fiscal footing, Excelsior will continuously strengthen transparency and accountability in its operations, expanding its capacity to forecast, research, evaluate, and pursue strategic investments and initiatives.

We will explore and pilot new opportunities to achieve flexible and seamlessly integrated enterprise systems. Streamlined business practices and processes will allow Excelsior to maximize automation, improve collaboration and planning, and better leverage data to make informed decisions, enhancing overall operational and academic effectiveness.

Our staff and faculty are a source of strength and vitality for the College. We are committed to enriching the diversity of our staff and faculty, especially in leadership roles, through the expansion of inclusive recruitment and retention practices and policies. We will also strengthen professional development opportunities for our colleagues.
FULFILLING THE PROMISE

Strengthen an agile and sustainable business model and organizational culture in an increasingly dynamic and diverse environment.

OBJECTIVE 1
Achieve an improved, more nimble, and sustainable business model.

OUTCOMES:

- **FINANCIAL STRENGTH**
  - Stability, transparency, and accountability expanded and maintained.
  - Capacity for strategic investment and calculated risk-taking expanded and maintained.
  - Opportunities aligned with strategic plan and positive ROIs identified and pursued.
  - Foundation support for innovative models and student retention and completion initiatives.

- **ADVANCED SYSTEMS**
  - Interoperable, flexible enterprise systems, applications, and staffing provide robust support, nimbleness, and competitiveness.
  - Simplified tuition and fee model piloted.

- **PEOPLE**
  - Strengthened capacity of staff and faculty to serve increasingly diverse* student populations.

*Understanding that diversity can be demographic, psychographic, programmatic, or others—identify emerging diverse needs.
GOAL 3

Expand the size and diversity of the student body.

Ensuring Excelsior’s mission endures for generations to come requires the College to grow student enrollment through increased brand awareness, targeted marketing, and high-impact partnerships.

**Excelsior will focus brand-related activities on the College’s value proposition—maximum credit acceptance—while researching and identifying opportunities with populations in need of degree completion.** Excelsior will employ data-informed marketing strategies and robust diversification tactics to retain and serve these growing populations.

The College will continue to pursue high-impact partnerships in strategic and in-demand niches—collaborating with corporations; educational institutions, including high schools; associations; governments; veterans groups; and others with aligned missions—to develop customized content and services to meet contemporary and future workforce needs.
**FULFILLING THE PROMISE**

**Expand the size and diversity of the student body.**

Target strategic growth in emerging markets to meet student needs and expand market share.

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<th>OBJECTIVE 1</th>
<th>Strengthened brand awareness and expanded business development in targeted areas.</th>
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<td><strong>OUTCOME:</strong></td>
<td>• Positive increase in enrollments in targeted areas and with strategic partners.</td>
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<th>OBJECTIVE 2</th>
<th>Identify and target potential growth areas and establish new markets: A) consistent with market demand, and B) to underrepresented populations in higher education.</th>
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| **OUTCOME:** | • Increased enrollments and increased diversity of enrollments.  
Continue to develop strategic and/or niche partnerships based on market demand and alignment with Excelsior's mission and values.  
**OUTCOME:** • Increased number of viable strategic partners.  
Expand marketing diversification tactics to focus on identified target markets and programs of study.  
**OUTCOME:** • Increased enrollments.  
Increase conversions from inquiry through enrollment.  
**OUTCOME:** • Improved enrollment process to readily engage students in credit-bearing activity sooner. |
MISSION
Excelsior College provides educational opportunity to adult learners with an emphasis on those historically underrepresented in higher education. The College meets students where they are—academically and geographically, offering quality instruction and the assessment of learning.

VISION
Excelsior College is a provider of choice for adults seeking access to higher education and academic success, and it is a model for addressing societal and workforce needs.

Excelsior College (and under its former name, Regents College) has been continuously accredited since 1977 by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, 3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104, 215-662-5606. Middle States is an institutional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA).

The associate, bachelor’s, and master’s degree programs in nursing at Excelsior College are accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN); 3343 Peachtree Road NE, Suite 850, Atlanta, GA 30326, 404-975-5000. The ACEN is a specialized accrediting agency for nursing recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA).

The bachelor’s degree programs in electrical engineering technology and nuclear engineering technology are accredited by the Engineering Technology Accreditation Commission of ABET, www.abet.org. The bachelor’s degree program in information technology is accredited by the Computing Accreditation Commission of ABET, www.abet.org. ABET is a specialized accrediting agency recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA).

Excelsior College has received specialized accreditation for its business programs through the International Accreditation Council for Business Education (IACBE), 11374 Strang Line Rd., Lenexa, KS 66215. The business programs in the following degrees are accredited by the IACBE: Bachelor of Science in Business with concentrations in: Accounting, Finance, General Business, Logistics Management, Management of Human Resources, and Marketing; and the Master of Business Administration (MBA) with concentrations in: General Track (no concentration), Accounting, Health Care Management, Human Resource Management, and Leadership.

All the College’s academic programs are registered (i.e., approved) by the New York State Education Department.