

**OFFICE OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS – DRAFT STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES FOR CONSTITUENT REVIEW  
MAY 17, 2023**

**1. STUDENT SUCCESS**

Empire State University provides a positive student experience by valuing our students’ diverse perspectives, respecting their goals and priorities, and connecting them to the institution and each other. Our high-quality academic programs, mentoring, and support services enable learners to meet their academic, professional, and personal goals.

**Supporting Themes**

Every member of the university community is invested in student success. We share responsibility with our students for their success, proactively removing barriers and helping students build connections to the institution and to each other. We value students’ knowledge and experience, deliver outstanding academic programs, and provide comprehensive mentoring, advising, and other support to increase retention and ensure timely degree completion.

*Proposed OAA Strategic Objectives*

1. *Streamline, reduce student costs, and raise students’ academic success and completion (retention and graduation rates) for advising, degree planning, and course tracking.*
2. *Improve the student experience by reducing or eliminating barriers to enrollment.*
3. *Increase access, success, and engagement pathways for all students, respecting their goals and priorities.*
4. *Increase capacity to serve and provide adaptive approaches to the changing needs of students and the challenges they face.*
5. *Reduce equity gaps in student success and increase completion, retention, and graduation rates for students, with focus on those from historically underrepresented and underserved backgrounds.*
6. *Meet students’ social, emotional, and academic needs and connect them to the institution and one another.*

## **2. ACADEMIC AND INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE**

As stewards of SUNY's access institution, our students, faculty, staff, professional employees, and administrators must express our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion in all aspects of the organization for excellence to be achieved. We deliver on the interconnected priorities of academic and inclusive excellence through high-quality academic programs, student services, and employee support.

### **Supporting Themes**

We are committed to strong academic programs and excellence in teaching, service, research, scholarship, creative activity, and professional development. In support of academic and inclusive excellence, we recruit and develop employees from diverse backgrounds. In turn, by recruiting and educating a diverse student population, we expand educational access, enrich the learning experience, and prepare students to work and live in a global society.

### *Proposed OAA Strategic Objectives*

- 1. Recruit and retain professional, administrative, and academic (faculty) staff of color to better reflect the multidimensional diversity of the State of New York, and beyond.*
- 2. Optimize academic programs to meet the career and personal needs of students.*
- 3. Broaden the competitiveness of the university's academic portfolio by strengthening the breadth and currency of degrees, certificates, and digital credentials to meet the personal and professional goals of students.*
- 4. Align academic programs with student and employer needs.*
- 5. Become a national model for effective, innovative, and inclusive online teaching and learning that is adaptive to rapid change.*
- 6. Enhance support for high impact scholarship and artistic activities.*
- 7. Engage in continuous improvement of academic program development and services, infusing DEI, and using evidence-based and progressive pedagogical practices.*
- 8. Increase program offerings that equip students for entrance and success in high demand occupational fields based upon strategic identification of emerging and declining workforce needs.*
- 9. Develop and maintain a disciplined approach to using data and evidence-based assessment as an enabler for ensuring quality and continuous improvement of teaching and learning.*
- 10. Advance a data driven, decision-making culture that incorporates institutional DEI data. [Source: DEI Action Plan]*
- 11. Increase the institutional commitment to and practice of valuing and credentialing learning that occurs outside of the "classroom," optimizing students' learning experiences.*
- 12. Leverage and support innovative, inclusive pedagogies, and related research.*
- 13. Create and strengthen learning environments that demonstrate diversity, equity, and inclusion. [Source: DEI Action Plan]*

### 3. ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

All members of the Empire State University community help improve our organization, climate, and programs so we can best serve our students and each other. We engage in ongoing assessment to improve academically, operationally, fiscally, and organizationally.

#### Supporting Themes

Hallmarks of our organizational effectiveness include fiscal responsibility, continuous improvement, and an inclusive campus climate. All of us contribute to the strength and effectiveness of the university by fostering a culture of inclusion, civility, communication, and support. We work together to ensure that our academic offerings, student services, operational infrastructure, financial resourcing, and campus climate align with our mission, vision, and values.

#### *Proposed OAA Strategic Objectives*

- 1. Fully implement and embrace robust continuous improvement processes and effectiveness tracking across Academic Affairs.*
- 2. Advance a climate that fosters mutual respect, clear communication, as well as engendering an institutional culture that promotes belonging, trust, and inclusivity. [Adapted from the Source: DEI Action Plan]*
- 3. Develop systems, structures, and a work environment that builds and fosters productive and effective relationships, as well as removes any barriers that impede or inhibit our ability to do our work.*
- 4. Improve processes, technology, tools, and facilities to align across the academic and non-academic needs of the institution.*
- 5. Enhance utilization of technology and facilities to realize resource efficiencies and academic excellence.*
- 6. Ensure that the diversity of employees reflects the multidimensional diversity of the State of New York, and beyond. [Source: DEI Action Plan]*
- 7. Recruit and retain a diverse employee population and create an inclusive and supportive workplace environment for BIPOC employees to thrive.*
- 8. Improve organizational effectiveness through culture of assessment - a systematic and inclusive process that supports a university-wide approach to ongoing assessment and evaluation.*

#### **4. RAISING OUR PUBLIC PROFILE**

As a leader in online teaching and learning, individualized instruction, and prior learning assessment, Empire State University strives to be recognized as a distinctive institution that offers high-quality, flexible, affordable education to diverse learners. Employees, students, alumni, community leaders, legislators, and supporters all play a role in elevating awareness of the institution.

##### **Supporting Themes**

Through high-impact teaching, research, scholarship, creative activity, and public engagement, we support our access-driven mission and differentiate ourselves in an increasingly crowded field. We expand our reach by telling our story, leveraging our expertise, promoting program growth, connecting with students and alumni, and building our philanthropic base.

##### *Proposed OAA Strategic Objectives*

- 1. Promote the quality of Empire State University’s teaching and learning practices to academic peers, prospective students, and the community at large.*
- 2. Increase the visibility and impact of Empire State University scholarship and creative activities.*
- 3. Position Empire State University as a SUNY leader in applied scholarship and creative activities that directly impact people’s lives and communities.*
- 4. Nurture existing relationships, increase collaborations, presence, and engagement with leaders, influencers, agencies, and organizations in our respective disciplines and communities.*
- 5. Increase university support and championship of faculty research and scholarship.*
- 6. Increase visibility and optimize internal processes to leverage existing/develop new relationships with partners (companies, unions, non-profit organizations, and state agencies).*
- 7. Further position the university as a leader in online teaching and learning, individualized instruction, and prior learning assessment.*