System-Wide Strategic Priority: Making Sure We Are Organized to Maximize Student Success

Overview
Naugatuck Valley Community College has had a very productive and rewarding year. My third year as president of the College saw enrollment growth, curricular and scheduling innovation, the strengthening of academic support, multiple efforts to support the implementation of our new strategic plan, significant improvement in student retention and graduation rates and engagement on campus and externally with our community partners. Of particular significance, the leadership and engagement of the College produced the coming together of a number of agencies to ensure evening bus service to the College and the City of Waterbury, effective October 1, 2011.

The College continued to manage a budget whose stagnant condition did not match enrollment while continuing to support our mission by earmarking excess tuition revenues to provide scholarships for students and to support renewal and renovation of facilities in support of student learning. We also benefited from Capital Bond Funds allocated during the summer of 2010, used to support the renovation of the Library, laboratories, “smart classrooms” in support of teaching and learning and technology on campus. The meaning of the terms “community” and “student-centeredness” by now has taken firmer root and it is placed at the center of our work in support of our high aspirations for our students. We have established our core values, founded on student success, respect and trust, effective communications, support for human diversity, and civic engagement and accountability. These values have served us well in particular this spring semester as we continued to be engaged and productive in an environment of organizational and budgetary uncertainty.

The Institutional Planning Committee, established two years ago with the merger of the work of the strategic plan which came to an end June 2010 and a new mechanism to ensure that goals are supported and carried through continues to serve as an effective vehicle for communication and in support of goal setting and subsequent follow ups. Additionally, with the support of the IPC and the engagement of stake-holders we transitioned in our new strategic plan “Toward a Splendid College: Naugatuck Valley Community College 2010-2013” and tied it to our Wildly Important Goals (WIGs) or operational plan as it continued its work this year. Beginning with the Management Team and engaging multiple stake-holders, we worked diligently together to ensure that the first year of our new strategic plan would be successful as it integrated system-wide priorities and NEASC accrediting expectations. A Task Force to write our NEASC Self-Study was set up in summer of 2010. Co-Chaired by the Dean of Academic Affairs and a senior faculty member, much work has been done to engage over 100 college members in the 11 standards subcommittees’ work. The president presides over the NEASC Executive Committee made up of the two co-chairs of the Task Force and two senior members of the President’s Cabinet.

Significant curricular development and syllabi revision took place in this “The Second Year of General Education” on campus, generating new vehicles for outcomes assessment of competencies to be acquired as a result of the teaching and learning in our general education courses. Our Danbury Center moved to new quarters, shared with the Northwest Regional Workforce Investment Board and the Department of Labor. Enrollments in Danbury continued to climb to account for a 292.2 FTE and 696 Headcount or 71% growth since Spring 2010 semester. Workforce development activities grew, resulting in a continued significant number of non-credit certificates, the graduation of two welding certificates cohorts and the graduation of our first eight high school students to receive a Manufacturing Certificate. The successful completion of certificates by these eight students has resulted in enhanced support for next academic year for our College Connections program with the WIB, supported by the Waterbury Board of Education. Much effort has also taken place to engage in careful assessment and review of the wide-array of academic programs presently occupying our beautiful and generous campus. Additionally, the College prepared to use the facilities efficiently and in ways that are supportive of students’ needs by offering 6:30 a.m. and Sunday afternoon classes. The Academic Center for Excellence expanded services to include Sunday openings. A new College-wide Advisement Initiative was rolled out in the Fall of 2010. Full time faculty members now have significant advisement responsibilities.
Much has been done to underscore the importance of academic rigor and of supporting an educational experience that goes beyond the boundaries of the traditional classroom. We continued to reconfigure common spaces on campus to support intellectual discourse outside traditional classroom walls and to provide responsive student services, essential ingredients for student success. We were successful in completing the dedication of a number of rooms and laboratories in Technology Hall and four new teaching gardens were completed through grants, student and faculty support and community support: A Japanese garden, a biblical garden, a sustainable garden and a medicinal garden. The grounds sing with love as they provide our students with multiple opportunities to learn, to celebrate community and to commune with nature.

College Profile

Goal I: Create an Environment in which Student Success is Our Expectation

Providing access to support economic renewal and continued opportunities for the communities we serve is our top priority. Our Office of Institutional Research (OIR) reports that the credit enrollment totals in Fall 2010 and Spring 2011 continued to be the highest ever experienced at NVCC. In Spring 2011, enrollment was up 4.5% in FTE and 4.9% in headcount from the Spring 2010 semester. The growth in enrollment at NVCC mirrors system-wide and national trends in community college attendance.

According to NVCC Institutional Research’s most recent report, the Fall 2010 unduplicated headcount was 7195 at freeze date with 4375 FTE, representing 56% female and 44% male enrollments. The average age is 26 years with about 45% of students between 18 and 21 years of age. They attend full-time (45%) and part-time (55%). White (59%), Black (8%), Hispanic (19%), and all other (14%) comprise the College’s ethnic distribution.

Total enrollments for degree and certificate seekers grew about 1500 students over the past two years, increasing nearly 30% since Fall of 2008, my first academic semester as the College president. Most of this growth occurred through student retention, with continuing student enrollment rising 29% from 3415 to 4398 students. Transfers into the institution from other area colleges also rose by about 200 students or 40%. First time student enrollments grew about 10% each year or 20% over the period Fall 2008 to Fall 2010.

As enrollments have risen, some changes have occurred in certain demographic characteristics represented in the total student body of degree and certificate seeking students at NVCC. Specifically, a growing number are male, 44% in Fall 2010, up from 41% in 2008 and 2009. A greater number of students are Hispanic, 19% in Fall 2010, up from 15% and 17% in 2008 and 2009, respectively.

Much work has been done to facilitate student success as measured by graduation rates. OIR reports that based on this year’s candidates for graduation, for the second year in a row, total completions at NVCC will rise. For 2011 candidates, the greatest gains were made in associate degrees. Rising about 25% from 558 awarded in 2010 to 702 awards in 2011. Naugatuck Valley has firmly established a pattern of increasing degrees awarded. The gain at NVCC was the result of a 25% increase in the number of students receiving degrees and certificates. Specifically, the unduplicated number of students awarded a degree or certificate rose 26% from 627 to 770 students. The graduation rate for the 2008 cohort of first time/full time students increased by 33% from the previous year—a truly significant gain.

The campus has engaged in a number of vigorous academic support activities and created instruments to monitor student success in developmental courses. Curricular changes include the alignment of developmental English outcomes in relation to general education guidelines and, in many cases, the complete overhaul/rewriting of department objectives and outcomes. OIR continues to be challenged to create the kind of data that supports an outcomes assessment process that informs both faculty development and curriculum development and reform. Much support, leadership and guidance has produced significant engagement by faculty in the advisement and mentoring of students. Classes are being offered to support students’ schedules as early as 6:30 a.m. and on Sunday afternoons. Additionally, faculty members in the Math Department are participating in the Carnegie Foundation Stat Way initiative and other strategies to create bridges out of remediation for our students. Other initiatives
at the College include extending Library service hours, instituting Sunday hours at the Academic Center for Excellence, and creating a Summer Institute for Developmental Studies.

Based on information from the CEAC, the following curriculum development activities took place during the 2010-11 academic year:

Course and Program Modifications:

Course Modifications: Pre-requisite changes: The prerequisite of “Eligibility for English 101” has been added to the following courses, to be phased in over the next two years: ANT 101, Introduction to Anthropology; HIS*H101, Western Civilization I; HIS*H102, Western Civilization II; HIS*H201, U.S. History I; HIS*H202, U.S. History II; PSY*H111, General Psychology I; SOC*H101, Principles of Sociology

Program Modifications:

Early Childhood Education Associate Degree Program
Visual and Performing Arts Specialized Core

New Courses and Program Name Change Only:

New Courses: Object Oriented Programming Using C#, CSC*H217; Studies in Young Adult Literature, ENG*H269; Statway 1, MAT*HOXX; Statway II, MAT*HIXX; First Year Experience, IDS*H101; Death and Dying, SOC*H225;

Program Name Change Only: From “Human Services Associate Degree” to “Human Services/Pre-Social Work Associates Degree”

The Respiratory Program completed and submitted a self-study in Fall 2010. The Respiratory Accreditation Visit took place in February of 2011 and the program has received full-accreditation.

Goal II: Balance Enrollment Demands and Services with Existing Resources while Maintaining Flexibility to Manage and Improve Efficiency (Planning)

In Summer 2010, NVCC began the implementation of its new Strategic Plan. The results of this first year as reported in the summary are very encouraging: Increased enrollments; increased retention and graduation rates; job satisfaction reported by faculty and staff; students who have participated widely in civic engagement from staffing a soup kitchen to testifying in Hartford on behalf of our budget; faculty assuming responsibility for a new college-wide advisement model; new additional hours of class offerings and academic support for our students; achievement of a far-reaching goal: bus service to the campus beginning F2011; successful move to a new Danbury site and powerful enrollment growth at the Center; multiple cultural and intellectual events to enhance teaching beyond the classroom walls; four new teaching gardens. This has been no easy task, as the times are difficult and the needs are great. In addition to the steering committee of the Institutional Planning Committee, the IPC’s four subcommittees worked to ensure campus-wide consultation and accountability in the following areas: Committee on Responsive Academic Leadership and Programs, Committee on Student Success, Committee on Institutional Effectiveness and Committee on Environmental Scanning. Much work was done during academic year 2010-2011 to support a meaningful operational plan that ensures accountability, academic rigor, responsiveness to workforce needs, support of student success and viability of programs and services at the College.

Goal III: Diversify and Strengthen Resource Development and External Funding

Much preliminary work has taken place to position ourselves for fundraising. The Foundation has made changes in basic software utilized, has brought in six new members and new leadership and a new executive board are in place. Friend-raising events including a number of naming activities have taken place. More importantly, the Office of Community Engagement participated vigorously in strategic planning process for the Board in support of the College’s new Strategic Plan. The College’s First Legislative Breakfast was held in January and meetings with newly elected officials have also taken place. The Regional Advisory Council has seen similar changes in expansion of membership to include
more regional and ethnic diversity. Important activities have come out of new dynamic leadership for the RAC, including a breakfast and campus tour for superintendents and school principals that was very successful. Additionally, the Office of the President’s electronic e-mail newsletter distributed monthly to our community leaders and legislative delegation has grown and is very well-received by multiple internal and external constituencies. The President’s Circle of Student and Faculty Advocates was inaugurated this year, their lobbying efforts contributed to the changes in the proposed budget for community colleges for next academic year.

The results of efforts by the Office of Community Engagement also include funding in the following categories: scholarships for students, including a Latinos in Engineering Grant from the Connecticut Community Foundation; continued funding by Northeast Utilities for students in Engineering; and support for the creation of four new gardens.

Collaborations with the Waterbury Department of Education and other community organizations have resulted in funding for the College Connections program in manufacturing for the third year with the Northwest Regional Workforce Investment Board (NWRIB) and in a partnership on the “Dare to Dream” grant with the Mattatuck Museum. Other collaborations with the NWRIB have resulted in the graduation of two cohorts of students receiving welding certificates, continued funding for our ConnCap program, and a WAVE grant.

Workforce development saw a significant number of grants in support of programs including a Health Investigations Course with Waterbury Hospital where 10 students are completing a three-credit course, and five of these students are enrolled at the college taking other credit courses. We partnered in the following grant efforts to support instruction: Health Bridges DOL, Weatherization, Building Performance analyst, DOE with Hudson Valley CC, CBIA High Growth Jobs Grant (Lean Manufacturing Certificate), SMART grant, Municipal Government Training Academy, CT Clean Energy Fund Grant for Solar Thermal, TANF Grant with CBIA and CCEF for Solar PV, DOL Incumbent Worker Training, the CT Jobs Bill Program, SOAR, and numerous programs with the WIB including welding. A successful year with the CAN program saw 172 students completing nurse aide certification and passing the State Competency and Registry test with a 98% first time pass rate.

**College Review and Presidential Goals 2010-2011**

As president of NVCC, I have led efforts and worked closely with the Management Team and colleagues on campus to put forward initiatives that support strategic planning, academic rigor, accountability, student success and community and relationship building with multiple stakeholders in the region. The following is a summary of some of the work undertaken as a College community under my leadership:

1. **Successful completion of the first year of the College’s new strategic plan Toward a Splendid College: Naugatuck Valley Community College 2010-2013,** which outlines 5 Strategic Goals; 15 Strategic Initiatives; 10 Anticipated Outcomes. The five goals are:
   1. At NVCC, students achieve their goals.
   2. NVCC faculty and staff make a difference—at the college, in the community, in their fields and in the lives of students.
   3. NVCC programs meet and beat industry standards.
   4. NVCC is an engine of change within Waterbury and the broader community.
   5. NVCC is an effective, performance-based institution.

(See Strategic Planning Document distributed widely to Chancellor, System Office, Board of Trustees, on campus and to multiple community stakeholders.)

2. **Chair ed, NVCC Institutional Planning Committee, and supported multiple initiatives:**
   - Outcomes assessment plan, institution-wide, implemented effective fall of 2009.
   - New website launched Spring 2010.
   - Program Review Plan for cyclical review of programs which do not undergo accreditation by outside agencies amended and in place to begin implementation during academic year 2011-2012. Additionally, academic year 2010-2011 was declared “The Second Year of General Education” at
NVCC, launching an initiative to study and create a compass for our students to navigate core requirements successfully.

- College Connections program in manufacturing in Waterbury moved from Asnuntuck to the campus, beginning in Fall 2009, has had a banner year with eight high school students completing certificate requirements and 223 college credits. Worked with WIB to secure additional funding from Waterbury Board of Education for Academic Year 2010-2011 and have just secured expansion funding for 2011-12.
- Efforts to build enrollments in Engineering Technologies and Manufacturing have produced major curricular revisions and the program is awaiting notification of ABET accreditation.
- A grant from the Connecticut Community Foundation for a project to increase Latino enrollment in Engineering Technologies brought 20 new grant students to campus in Fall 2010.
- The IPC Campus Effectiveness subcommittee has worked successfully with a significant number of programs on setting the foundations for continuous assessment.

3. Expanded Hours for the Academic Center for Excellence (ACE):

In September 2009, the ACE opened its doors to the College community. The mission of the Academic Center for Excellence is to provide students with the resources needed to excel in lifelong learning. Tutorial services and collaborative approaches combine to create a flexible learning environment where students can find assistance and inspiration. The ACE seeks to enable students to meet their courses’ expectations; to help students develop strategies, skills and behaviors required to be self-directed learners; and to support achievement of their academic goals. The center provides academic advisement, counseling, open computer, writing, math and ESL labs, and copier services. Continued evaluations of the program indicate that students taking developmental mathematics who availed themselves of the services offered by ACE twice a week had a 100% pass rate in their course; students taking developmental English who were tutored once a week had a 20% higher pass rate than classmates who did not. The ACE is now operational 66 hours per week, including Saturdays and Sundays.

4. Library Renovations and the Fifth Floor Corridor To Support Student Success:

The fifth floor corridor, the artery of student services and an inviting and welcoming space by virtue of its ampleness and its beautiful windows, has lent itself to the creation of multiple learning commons: spaces that invite students’ engagement in either group conversations or individual work. Also on the fifth floor, the student cafeteria was refurbished and made a more welcoming place for students, using the talents of one of our art graduates who was also a trustees’ medallion award winner in 2009. The installation of Wi-Fi throughout the campus has been a hit with students, especially in the fifth floor. This academic year saw the completion of a welcomed addition to the support offered on the Fifth Floor. Construction in the Library moved its main entrance and circulation desk from the fourth to the fifth floor where all other student services are and produced a state-of-the-art computer lab and a collaborative Media-Scape space where up to six students can work together on the same large-screen monitor using individual lap tops.

5. Expanded the role of the grounds as laboratories to support learning and campus quality of life:

The work of faculty and students in the Horticulture program and in the Agro-Biology Club has resulted in the creation of a number of new gardens: a Japanese Garden, a Sustainable Garden, a Medicinal Garden and a Biblical Garden. Funds to support these projects have been secured through Perkins and through private donations. These living laboratories build upon the only Horticulture Medicinal Garden and a Biblical Garden.

6. Community building and “friend-raising” for the College:

The following is a partial list of some of the individuals, institutions and programs we are collaborating with: elected officials representing the College both at the regional and national levels; the Connecticut Community Foundation; the United Way of Waterbury; the Waterbury Chamber of Commerce; the Smaller Manufacturers Association; the Mattatuck Museum; the Waterbury Board of Education Transition program; the Waterbury Mayor’s Office Leadership Team to Develop a Plan to End Homelessness in Waterbury; Police Activity League; Danbury City Center; Danbury High School; St.
Vincent’s Soup Kitchen in Waterbury; principals of high schools in the service regions to include the creation of a Presidential Scholarship to support senior high school students coming to campus to take a course; continuing relationships with the Star-base program of the CT National Guard; the Waterbury Symphony to name a few. Our upcoming June 3rd Community Event continues on the efforts begun at the March 31st Community Event in support of strategic planning which produced 40 Common Community Partnership Offers. Additionally, the College continued hosting the Confluencia series, published the first issue of a reconfigured *Fresh Ink* literary magazine, welcomed the Jane Doe No More Foundation and the Women’s Business Development Center to campus and the door to the first NVCC Women’s Center were opened. As a result of leadership in this area, the campus hosted two conferences for American Council on Education CT. Women Leadership, organized by our new Dean for Academic Affairs, and multiple cultural and educational activities, workshops and events, organized and hosted by the Women’s Center.

**7. Growth of the Danbury Initiative:**

The Danbury Center of Naugatuck Valley Community College has experienced a successful academic year. Danbury credit enrollment grew by 71% as the Center moved to new facilities, shared with the Workforce Investment Board and the Connecticut Department of Labor. Much work continues to take place to support residents of Danbury and to continue to build community. The April Confluencia took place at the Danbury Palace Theater, and the event was co-sponsored by the management of the theater. We are now in the process of securing additional space to accommodate growing needs. Growth is supported by the appointment of a new Director of the Danbury Center, effective this Spring 2011.

**Presidential Goals for Academic Year 2011-2012:**

- Successful implementation of the second year of the new strategic plan for the College.
- Completion of the work by a Task Force and committees and preparation of self-study for NEASC 2012 site visit.
- Successful implementation of a new Freshman Year seminar, full development of a developmental summer bridge program and self-paced and other initiatives to support developmental education; establishment of a solid service learning initiative, development and implementation of assessment models that deepen our understanding of the progress we are making or need to make.
- Expanded services at the Academic Center of Excellence, and the creation of innovative programs to support students’ successful navigation of developmental courses and our general education offerings.
- Aligning the work of Student Services and Academic Affairs to strengthen the continued implementation of a comprehensive Academic Advisement program for the campus.
- Creation of a Job Placement Center designed to redeploy staff, consolidate efforts and maximize impact of services in this area.
- Successful implementation of an Honors Program.
- Full implementation of the proposed plan to expand services in the Danbury area and acquire additional space in an appropriate location.
- Continued strengthening of cultural life on campus in particular in our Arts and Humanities area.
- Full implementation of the Mentoring program and successful launching of General Education initiative, Year 3.
- Continued efforts to expand workforce development programs both on the main campus and at our Danbury site.
- Full implementation of cyclical assessment and program reviews for all departments.
- Creation and full implementation of an active Alumni Association.
- Continue exploration of planning for the construction of a Middle College on campus.
- Fund raising to support campus initiatives.