



## December 2022 Leadership Update

Dear Colleagues,

As seems to be the case each year, I'm amazed at how quickly the calendar pages have turned through 2022. Here we are, at the end of another fall term, heading into the holiday season, winter break, and preparing for the new year.

From holding our first in-person commencement ceremony since the pandemic's onset to launching innovative programs to address equity gaps, we accomplished so much this year. In the process, we've transformed the lives of countless students and community members. Thank you so much for your many contributions in helping us to live out our mission, vision and values.

Also, this year, we launched our new strategic plan, ***Vision 2030: Building Just and Thriving Communities***. With strategic commitments including Strengthening Students' Oakton Experience, Enhancing Workforce Readiness and Community Engagement, and Advancing Racial Equity, Vision 2030 is our roadmap for creating opportunities for economic and social mobility and ensuring students achieve their goals.

Many will recall that our strategic plan also lays out strategies and success measures, including first-year goals. And although our work is very much in progress, I'd like to share a few updates.

While there is work to do, I'm pleased to report we appear to be on track to reach several of our goals, including increasing dual credit and concurrent enrollment and improving fall-to-fall retention rates for students from historically minoritized communities, including Black and Latino/a/x students.

Our progress is because of the collaborative efforts of many of you, working together to execute strategies and tactics that will move us closer to realizing our goals.

For example, in collaboration with the Marketing and Communications Team, the Office of College Transitions developed an Early College Catalog outlining opportunities for dual credit and concurrent enrollment for high school students and ensured that every high school freshman in our district received that catalog. Last week, the Enrollment Services team hosted our High School Counselor Workshop, during which 45 high school counselors visited our campus to learn more about our Early College Program. Additionally, the Marketing and Communications team has sent targeted communication to students and parents of high school students in our communities. These collective efforts have led to exponential growth in Oakton's Early College Program.

In seeking to improve retention rates, especially for Black and Latino/a/x students, we continue to see positive results from our nationally recognized Faculty Persistence Project, and faculty continue to take advantage of additional professional development to help them build connections with students.

Additionally, our student affairs colleagues, particularly our Equity Coordinators, Wellness Team, Academic Advisors and Learning Center staff have been intentional in their outreach to students, which we expect will continue to positively impact retention.

We'll have a clearer picture of our progress after the start of the spring semester. It's encouraging to see that as of yesterday, our enrollment for Black students for the spring semester is 7% higher than it was at this point last year. We hope that trend continues. Targeted support through programs like the Emory Williams Academy and the Workforce Equity Initiative are hopefully paying off, and I appreciate everyone's continued support of this critical work to close equity gaps.

We will continue to update our progress and adjust strategies and tactics as needed throughout the life of the strategic plan — as we strive toward realizing our bold vision of Building Just and Thriving Communities.

No matter your role at the College, I challenge you to consider how you can support each of our strategic commitments in your daily work. We each create the Oakton Experience for students. What might seem like small gestures can significantly impact students and can be the difference in them continuing to pursue their goals or exiting their path. Thanks to all of you for the ways you create Oakton Experience moments, especially this month's lifesavers.

Michelle Arredondo	Bruce Hoffman	Camesha Richardson
Dear Aunaetitrakul	Jeff Hoffmann	Matt Robitaille
Gabriela Ayala	Ruben Howard	Joel Rolnick
Svetlana Bayer	Peter Hudis	Julie Rosenberg
Roxana Betka	Alyssa Humbles	Maria Ross
Vicki Bialek	Nana Inkman	Kayla Ruchti
Donovan Braud	Nikol Ivancheva	Paul Sanburg
Karl Brooks	Jesse Ivory	Ahalya Satkunarnam
George Bueno	Leah Kintner	Vinita Shah
Cameron Carrara	David Lewis	Manisha Shah
Gabriel Chacon	Steve Martin	Linda Sloan
Edwin Chandrasekar	Tyler Matulef	Nini Tella
Jennifer Chicas	Kristin McCartney	Danielle Terry
Giacomo Cirrincione	Eilish McDonagh-Hermer	Luz Trejo Camarillo
Chell Coonen	Enas Mualla	Stacey Vanada
Giselle DeVilla	Patricia Muffoletto	John Wade
Rick DiMaio	Henrietta Nigliazzo	Esther Wallen
Yaunie Douglas	Lori Oster	Tara Wesselink
Princess Escudero	Kristine Panopio	Val Westphal
Cecilia Gomez	Valerie Parrilli	Ella Whitehead
Erica Gonzalez	Lou Pierozzi	Juleya Woodson
Julia Gray	Victoria Przybyl	Boguslaw Zapal
Colette Hands	Amanda Reuter	Stefania Zarate-Martine

As a reminder, please save the date for our Spring Opening Day kickoff on Jan. 9, which also serves as our internal transition from Oakton Community College to Oakton College. The evolution of our identity is an opportunity to re-examine who we are as an institution, allowing us to better serve our students and continue our legacy as a trusted and valued community resource. At Opening Day, I look forward to an engaging discussion that will shine light on high-impact practices that allow us to serve as Oakton Ambassadors in classrooms, across campus and in our communities. I hope you will all join us for this in-person celebration to mark this exciting moment in Oakton's history.

As we head toward winter break, I hope you're able to spend quality time with loved ones as you celebrate Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, the Winter Solstice or other holiday traditions. Please take time to relax and recharge so we can return in 2023 as our best selves, allowing us to support one another and continue to create the Oakton Experience for our students.

In community,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Jai', written in a cursive style.