

Strategic Plan 2022–2025

VISION 2030:
Building Just and
Thriving Communities



Aashi Prajapati
Student leader



Message from the President and Chair of the Board of Trustees

In 2016, when we set out to craft a plan for Oakton's future, we had no idea how much the world would change between the launch of the plan in 2018 and its conclusion in 2022.

From a global pandemic that caused enormous loss to a nationwide call to break down barriers for historically minoritized groups, we have all experienced disruption on an unprecedented scale.

What hasn't changed at Oakton is our steadfast commitment to empowering and transforming our students in the diverse communities we serve. As we plan for the next phase of our future, we're more determined than ever to be a force for positive impact—to help create a more equitable world, support more students in charting pathways to work, and to catalyze success in our neighboring communities and beyond.

Our new strategic plan, Vision 2030: Building Just and Thriving Communities, builds on those ideals of inclusion, career pathways and workforce development to set a course for the next three years. Together, we can achieve our most ambitious goals.

Sincerely,

Joianne L. Smith, Ph.D.
President

Paul Kotowski
Chair, Board of Trustees



Ben O'Reilly
Student playwright

Mission

Oakton is the community's college. By providing access to quality education throughout a lifetime, we empower and transform our students in the diverse communities we serve.

Vision

Dedicated to teaching and learning, Oakton is a student-centered college known for academic rigor and high standards. Through exemplary teaching that relies on innovation and collaboration with our community partners, our students learn to think critically, solve problems and to be ethical global citizens who shape the world. We are committed to diversity, cultural competence and achieving equity in student outcomes.

Values

A focus on Oakton students is at the core of each of these values.

We exercise responsibility through accountability to each other, our community and the environment.

We embrace the diversity of the Oakton community and honor it as one of our college's primary strengths.

We advance equity by acknowledging the effects of systemic social injustices and intentionally designing the Oakton experience to foster success for all students.

We uphold integrity through a commitment to trust, transparency and honesty by all members of the Oakton community.

We cultivate compassion within a caring community that appreciates that personal fulfillment and well-being are central to our mission.

We foster collaboration within the college and the larger community, and recognize our interdependence and ability to achieve more together.

Adopted by the Board of Trustees on March 21, 2017, and reaffirmed on September 21, 2021.

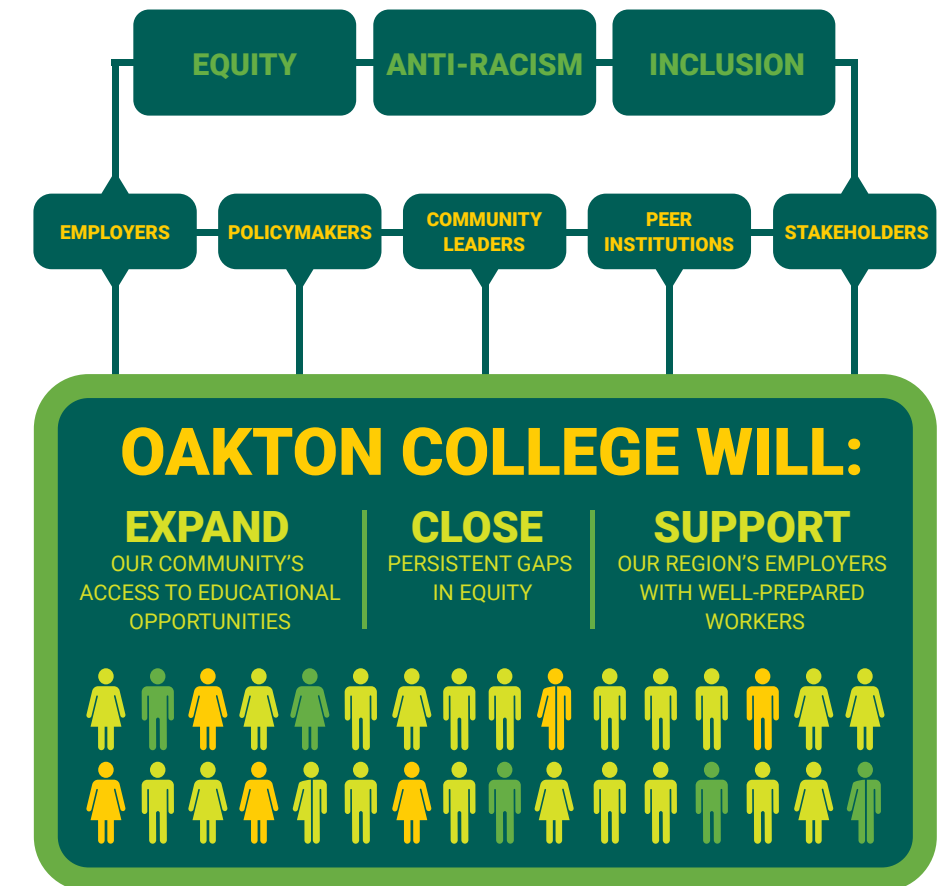


Strategic Planning Context

As the community's college, Oakton and its future are closely tied to the circumstances of our local community and the broader economic environment. We are guided in our actions by insights from employers, policymakers, community leaders, peer educational institutions and other stakeholders.

The disruptions of the pandemic and the ensuing economic slowdown have caused a variety of challenges for Oakton—as they have for most institutions of higher education.

At the same time, a long-overdue national reckoning has put the spotlight on issues of equity, racism and inclusion. We have responded to these ongoing challenges with a renewed determination to expand our community's access to educational opportunities, close persistent gaps in equity and support our region's employers with a steady stream of well-prepared workers.



Our Process

Our strategic plan is based on a comprehensive, inclusive process that engaged stakeholders across the Oakton community using surveys and large and small community conversations throughout the process. Learning Day in October 2021 brought together more than 500 employees and members of the Board of Trustees to learn about and provide feedback on the strategic plan's proposed Big Ideas.

We also engaged the Board of Trustees, Student Government Association, administrators, orientation week presentation attendees and other committees and departments across the College. Reaching beyond the campus community, we gathered input from high school superintendents, local legislators, donors, alumni and the board of the Oakton Educational Foundation.

The insights from this outreach focused on several broad themes that helped us refine our strategic priorities and key performance indicators. Those themes include the importance of engaging adult learners, the need for stronger partnerships with industries and businesses and the clear and pressing need to maintain our focus on equity.



Maria Gutierrez
Accounting student



Stephanie Erner
Artist and graphic design student

Strategic Commitments



Strengthen Students' Oakton Experiences

We will change lives by creating clear educational pathways and reducing barriers to access and for success for students, with particular attention to serving adult students.

Rooted in equity, the Oakton Experience supports students as they embark on an individualized path, navigate college, grow academically and socially and transition to their desired next step.

By fully implementing the Oakton Experience, we will:

- Improve access to Oakton through intentional recruitment and outreach, particularly in communities underserved by Oakton.
- Reduce barriers and provide relevant support for adult students so that they can reach their educational goals.
- Expand and clarify transfer pre-majors and career pathways so that students can make informed decisions to reach their goals.
- Encourage innovation and ensure high-quality classroom and co-curricular learning experiences.
- Tailor student services for the changing needs of our students, with a particular focus on accessibility and on culturally responsive and trauma-informed lenses.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Increased enrollment in Early College programs

Increased enrollment and graduation of adult students

Reduced number of "undecided" students and increased number of students with educational plans

Increased completion of gateway courses, retention, and graduation rates

Improved post-completion outcomes

Enhance Workforce Readiness and Community Engagement

We will improve economic and social mobility by equipping students with skills for the workplace and becoming a key partner in the economic development and civic life of the district.

By building and strengthening broad-based partnerships, we will:

- Ensure that programs, degrees, and credentials align with employer needs so that students, including those with differing abilities, are prepared to participate in the local skilled workforce and support the growing economy of the district.
- Increase opportunities for students to earn degrees and credentials through short-term and stackable credentials to serve the quickly shifting labor market.
- Strengthen opportunities for work-based learning, internships and apprenticeships.
- Foster civic engagement through curriculum and co-curricular offerings.
- Improve internal and community awareness of the opportunities to gain workforce-relevant skills in credit and noncredit programs and the paths between them.
- Provide avenues for entrepreneurship and small-business development in partnership with community organizations.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Increased student participation in internships, apprenticeships, clinicals, service learning and civic engagement

Increased number of students who complete stackable credentials

Increased number of students moving from noncredit to credit coursework

Increased number of workforce partnerships with businesses, unions, nonprofits and other district employers

More credentials and degrees mapped to skills, employment demand, workforce outcomes and livable wages

Increased number of strategic partnerships with key community-based organizations



MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Increased enrollment and retention of minoritized students

Reduced equity gaps in key student success metrics

Greater sense of belonging for minoritized students

Increased number of courses with an equity-minded syllabus and culturally relevant pedagogical practices

Higher number of policies and practices audited in an equity framework

Increased hiring and retention of minoritized employees

Expanded community partnerships around racial equity

Advance Racial Equity

We will improve economic and social mobility by equipping students with skills for the workplace and becoming a key partner in the economic development and civic life of the district.

As our district becomes increasingly diverse, we will:

- Advance a shared understanding of equity that reflects our commitment to ensuring access to educational success and eliminating barriers that have prevented the full participation of some students.
- Assess our strategies, policies, curriculum and operations through a racial justice lens.
- Foster diversity among our students, staff and faculty to better reflect the district we serve, with particular attention to the impact of intersectional identities.
- Build an inclusive campus climate that promotes a sense of belonging for all community members.



Implementation

All members of the Oakton community have an important role to play in achieving the objectives outlined in the strategic plan. The Strategic Planning, Accountability, and Resources Committee will continue to oversee college-wide work on the goals, together with working groups of employees who have the expertise to implement our strategies.

For each goal, a set of specific strategies will help us achieve our objectives. We have also outlined specific metrics to track our progress and measure our success.

Finally, our plan is a living document. The three Big Ideas will remain at the center of our efforts, but strategies and nuances may shift as new opportunities and challenges unfold.

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