

Strategic Plan 2022/23 to 2025/26

Section 1: Mission, Vision and Ethos

Mission

The College's mission is to provide suitably qualified 16 to 19 year olds wishing to pursue full time academic general education in the Colchester area with a supportive and inclusive environment, in which they are able to acquire the necessary qualifications, talents and skills vital for success in adult life.

Vision

Our vision is to be the first choice for these students and to deliver to them the highest level of quality educational experience, the broadest possible curriculum, and the strongest pastoral and enrichment support that is possible within the resources available.

Ethos

Our vision and mission together set the ethos of our College. We believe them to be both aspirational and achievable. Our ethos establishes the standard of excellence in the student experience we provide. It also creates the working environment for members of staff. We value the quality, expertise and commitment of our teachers. We value the contribution our students make to our College community. We share pride in their achievements and outcomes.

Section 2: Strategic Plan Development

Introduction

In preparing this Strategic Plan we have contacted a range of stakeholders (applicants, their parents/carers, current students, employers, universities, and local schools) to obtain their views on the current and ongoing relevance of our mission and vision statements and the College's delivery and performance. There were two clear conclusions from this exercise: firstly, that the current "offering" in terms of available programmes of study, some of which serve a regional need, together with extensive student support and enrichment possibilities, in a safe atmosphere, meets the needs and expectations of stakeholders. Secondly, the College has a good reputation for delivering on its mission and vision.

This work, and other evidence, for example, higher education retention and results over many years, academic and value-added performance from applicants with broad GCSE profiles, staff and student attitude surveys, and the lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic, confirm the achievement and continuing relevance of the mission and vision statements. Together with the offerings of other 16-19 providers in the locality, the College fully contributes to meeting the needs of the Colchester area in a comprehensive, financially and educationally effective way. The College additionally has an important role in contributing to the long standing needs of the national labour market. In the ongoing furtherance of the Colleges mission and vision, the following strategic aims and objectives have been identified.

Section 3: Strategic Aims and Objectives

The College Offering

3.1 Teaching and learning

Strategic Aim 1: To provide outstanding teaching and learning in all subjects

Our College is proud of the quality, expertise and commitment of all staff. We value excellence in the teaching and support provided for students. This is evident in the results and progression of our students. We are committed to a culture of continuous improvement in teaching and learning, and have launched our new *Improving Teaching and Learning* structure in September 2022. This will continue to promote a culture of continuous professional development for both teaching and support staff to ensure all students continue to be the beneficiaries of an outstanding classroom and curriculum experience.

Objectives:

- 3.1.1. To implement new structures to improve still further the quality of teaching and learning, to enhance students' experience, including making use of expert "lead practitioners" and strengthening our self-assessment and quality improvement plans across departments
- 3.1.2 To engage all departments, cross-College and support functions in a project to demonstrate that "we are outstanding"
- 3.1.3 To embed a culture of continuous improvement in both the development, commitment and wellbeing of staff, and the academic and pastoral support of students

3.2 Academic and pastoral support

Strategic Aim 2: To support our students to achieve their best results and prepare them for successful progression to higher education or employment

Our College provides a wide range of courses and we are committed to continuing the breadth of our provision and the inclusive range of students the College attracts. Our admissions policy and procedures are designed to provide students with access to suitable programmes of study, which we are able to deliver within College resources. Our extensive Additional Studies programme complements the academic courses our students take, and is designed to give them valuable skills and experience to support their successful progression to higher education or employment. The College will undertake regular reviews of how well the education we provide meets local needs jointly with other providers in the locality. In addition, we are committed to supporting the wellbeing of all members of our College community. We are proud of the pastoral support we provide within our College and in partnership with other providers.

Objectives

- 3.2.1 To maintain the breadth of curriculum we offer to students, keeping eligibility criteria under review annually to balance access with capacity
- 3.2.2 To enhance our Additional Studies extra-curricular programme as a means of developing skills our students need to thrive in higher education or employment
- 3.2.3 To maintain our high quality pastoral system in support of students' health and wellbeing
- 3.2.4 To maintain and build on strong relationships with local partners, in order to deliver the best possible mental health support to students

3.2.5 To undertake regular reviews of how well the education we provide meets local needs

3.2.6 To maintain the wellbeing of our teaching staff, providing support where required, to enable them to provide an excellent learning experience for our students

3.2.7 To collect stakeholder feedback regularly, including student and parent surveys and employer engagement, in order to inform the range and further develop the quality of our provision

The College Capacity

3.3 Resources

Strategic Aim 3: To provide a physical environment that supports excellence in learning and teaching

Demand for places at our College is consistently high. Our aim is to provide an environment in which our students are able to flourish academically and personally. We are committed to providing a high-quality full week face-to-face learning experience on our city centre campus in Colchester with the likelihood of even further cuts in the real terms level of unit resourcing available to support the achievement of our mission and vision during the period of this strategic plan. In the context of the capital resourcing available, we will aim to develop our current site further in order to maintain the breadth and quality of our provision and also invest in our digital infrastructure to enhance our students experience of learning and personal development.

Objectives:

3.3.1 To maintain our student numbers at approximately 3,300, but dependent on additional external capital resourcing being made available, to expand capacity to 3,500

3.3.2 To secure funds in order to provide additional teaching space through redevelopment of part of the existing estate, providing a new building with a proposed additional ten teaching rooms

3.3.3 To enhance the provision of face-to-face education through review and investment in the use of Information Technology for teaching and learning, and administrative support functions

College Governance

3.4 Leadership and management

Strategic Aim 4: To maintain effective governance, leadership and management of our College

Effective governance, leadership and management enable the delivery of a high-quality student experience, provide an environment in which all members of our College are able to flourish, and support the delivery of our strategic objectives.

Governors provide strategic leadership and hold leaders and managers to account for their roles in implementing the vision, mission, strategy and overall performance of the College. Working in partnership we are committed to providing outstanding teaching and learning, robust financial management, for managing risks and taking opportunities that will support our aim to be outstanding in all respects. Together, we are committed to delivering excellence by embracing a culture of continuous improvement.

Objectives:

- 3.4.1 To engage external reviewers to evaluate the quality of governance at our College and identify potential for improvement
- 3.4.2 To establish a project group of senior leaders and governors to continue to review our College's current status including considering options for academisation or other available options in the context of government policy and the benefits to our students
- 3.4.3 To maintain our 'good' rating for the College's finances and to ensure the correct processes are in place to enable robust financial management in the context of a challenging financial climate
- 3.4.4 To provide regular and challenging review of all the College's policies, but specifically to ensure compliance with all appropriate safeguarding, health and safety and legal requirements
- 3.4.5 To have a robust risk management framework in place that supports the effective identification and management of risks to the College.

Community and Inclusion

3.5 Equality, diversity and inclusion

Strategic Aim 5: To provide an environment that fosters equality, diversity and inclusion, in support of our College and wider community

Our College will place a renewed emphasis on its commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. We will ensure that our recruitment and admissions policies encourage applications from under-represented sectors of the local community. We will ensure that our practices actively foster access to our College and support all our students to attain successful outcomes and progress to higher education or employment commensurate with their ambitions, interests and abilities. We will monitor the engagement and achievement of minority and minoritised groups within our College community, including, but not limited to, all those with protected characteristics. We will identify, analyse and seek to address any gaps or disparities. We understand the potential impact of economic disadvantage on educational opportunities. We will work to redress inequality, seeking to improve the life chances of young people in our community and promote social mobility, by providing our students with opportunities to gain additional skills and experience, alongside the opportunity to achieve high quality, relevant qualifications. We will develop further our partnerships with other education providers, employers, safeguarding partners and community groups and will fulfil our role in our local community.

Objectives

- 3.5.1 To liaise closely with local schools, including ensuring that those from under-represented and disadvantaged groups in our Community achieve fair access to our services
- 3.5.2 To ensure that our communications including the website are accessible and inclusive in nature
- 3.5.3 To strengthen mechanisms within our College to promote equality, diversity and inclusion, including creating new staff and student groups to champion these issues across our College
- 3.5.4 To continue our work with community partners in a full and active way to ensure it plays its part in achieving the broad objectives of the local community. These will include (but not exclusively) such issues as climate change, sustainability, safety and freedom of speech and inclusivity

The Strategic Plan 2022/23 to 2025/26 was approved by Members of the Corporation 12.12.2022