



# Unit Strategic Plan: Penn State York

2014/2015 through 2018/2019

## Forward

The nature of strategic planning at Penn State York is easily depicted (see Figure 1.1). The mission of Penn State York in the simplest form is to recruit, support, and retain students. The desired outcomes for Penn State students are expected to result from their many learning experiences. Two strategic channels are instrumental in achieving the desired outcomes: 1) positioning the campus for growth and success, and 2) maintaining academic quality and consistency. The Penn State York Enrollment Management Team (EMT), in devising a strategic enrollment management (SEM) plan, has set a goal of 1,125 FTE for the York campus by 2018. Details of how the campus strategic plan maps to President Barron's imperatives and Provost Jones' pillars can be found in the matrix on the following page.

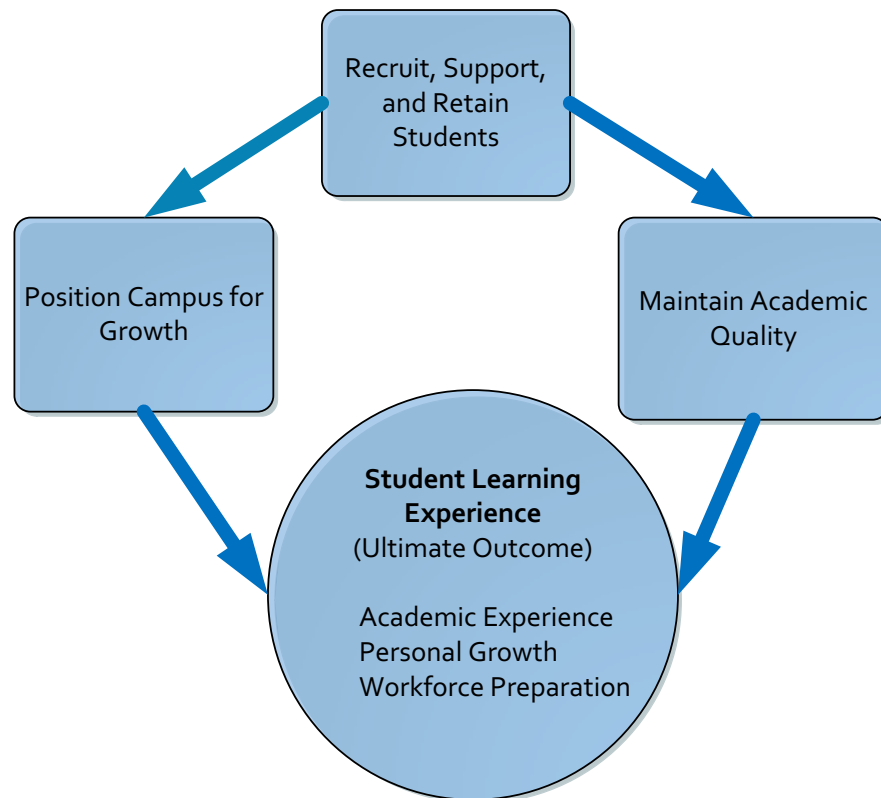


Figure 1.1

Strategic and Goals	Underway	Proposed	President Barron's Strategic Imperatives	Provost Jones' Pillars
<b>Strategic Emphasis 1: Position Penn State York for Growth, Now and in the Future</b>				
<b>Goal 1.1: Strengthen Recruitment and Retention</b>				
Practices to effectively recruit recent graduates	√	√	a,b,c,d,e	2,5
Integrated student engagement program	√	√	a,b,c,d,e	3
Meaningful options for nontraditional students	√	√	a,b,d	3
<b>Goal 1.2: Improve and Expand Academic and Student Support Spaces</b>				
Academic Support/Nittany Success Center		√	a,b,d,e,f	2,3,4,5
Admissions/Welcome Center		√	a,c,e	2,5
Classrooms/Lecture Hall/Engineering Machine Shop		√	a,d,e,f	2,3,4
Graham Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership Studies (Graham Center)/Graduate Office/Development and Alumni Relations	√		a,b,d,e	2,3
Ruhl Student Center Expansion and Renovation	√		a,b,c,e,f	1,2,3,5
Pullo Center Expansion		√	a,b,d	1,2,3,4
Housing		√	a,b,c,e	1,2,3,5
<b>Strategic Emphasis 2: Enhancing the Quality of the Student Experience</b>				
<b>Goal 2.1: Building Penn State York's Academic Future: Strengthen and Expand Penn State York's Majors</b>				
New Majors at Penn State York	√	√	a,b,d,e	2,3
Program Sharing	√		a,b,c,f	2,3,4
<b>Goal 2.2: Building a Strong Student Body: Strengthening Student Engagement and Retention</b>				
Paired Courses for Student Success	√		a,b,c,d,e	2,3
Comprehensive Student Engagement Plan	√	√	a,b,c,d,e	3,5
Diversity Initiatives	√	√	a,b,c,d,e	3,5
Campus Sustainability Initiatives	√	√	a,b,d	2,3
Advising and Learning Support Services	√	√	a,b,d,e	2,3
<b>Goal 2.3: Building a Sustainable Course Model: Expanding Course Modalities</b>				
Face-to-Face Accelerated BSB	√	√	a,b,d,e	2,3
Online Summer Course Offerings	√	√	a,b,d,e,f	3,4
Alternate Course Deliveries/Timing	√	√	a,b,e,f	2,3,4

Key	
<b>President Barron's Strategic Imperatives</b>	
a.	Excellence
b.	Student engagement
c.	Diversity and demographics
d.	Student career success and economic development
e.	Accessibility
f.	Technology
<b>Provost Jones' Pillars</b>	
1.	Promoting our health
2.	Stewarding our resources
3.	Transforming our education
4.	Building our digital future
5.	Valuing and exploring our cultures

## STRATEGIC PLAN

### Strategic Emphasis 1: Position Penn State York for Growth, Now and in the Future

#### Introduction

Penn State York continues to face increased competitive market pressure. However, increased competitive pressures often present concomitant opportunities that can be exploited. Opportunities that have been identified will be presented in following discussions within this plan, including these causes for optimism: a projected increase in area high school graduation rates in coming years, a significant expansion and renovation plan for the Joe and Rosie Ruhl Student Community Center (Ruhl Student Center), a hoped for and much needed expansion and improvement of the Nittany Success Center, and a continuation of the recent trend to add four-year academic majors at Penn State York. Daunting as the enrollment landscape may currently appear, the campus is committed to doing everything possible to achieve the desired enrollment goal(s).

#### Budget Model Implications

The current funding model for the Penn State York campus is derived from enrollments. Stabilization and gradual growth of enrollments is critical to the short-term and long-term financial health of Penn State York. Approaches to growth, however, may be impacted based on potential changes to the University College funding model, which is as yet unresolved. The campus is determined to implement the new funding model as strategically as possible.

#### Strengthen Recruitment and Retention (Goal 1.1)

Enrollment management is, of course, concerned primarily with recruitment and retention of students. Along with identifying recruiting and retention initiatives, Penn State York's SEM Plan specifies three areas of particular emphasis for strategic planning:

- **Practices to effectively recruit recent graduates**

Penn State York competes for students with a significant number of local competitors, some of whom offer a broader array of programming, a residential experience, and tuition levels at or below that of Penn State York. Penn State York needs to develop new strategies to convince students of the value of a Penn State experience within York County – strategies that include an expansion of programming, greater flexibility in scheduling and course modalities, and increased support for students.

To this end, the campus EMT has focused on several new and ongoing initiatives:

- Articulation agreements with Harrisburg Area Community College (HACC) are awaiting final approval. Penn State York admissions staff are already working on the HACC campus. Once approval is in place, the overall process will be streamlined.
- International students have proven to be a valuable part of the campus student population, both culturally and academically. To increase the enrollment of this population, Penn State York will focus on internal referrals of international students and work diligently to convert enrollment of these students to the York campus.
- Penn State York's athletic teams have become effective recruiting vehicles for local athletes. Without athletics, the vast majority of these students would not be enrolled at the York campus. The campus will seek to procure ongoing funding to support the acquisition of at least one additional athletic team, with preference for a women's team.
- The new customer relationship management system, Talisma, has been piloted and is in the process of being fully implemented at Penn State York. This allows for enhanced and streamlined communication and tracking of and with prospective students. Additionally, the new project LionPath will allow for opportunities to optimize our communication with current students. Staff and faculty will continue to carefully consider strategies for effective practice with this software.

- **Integrated student engagement program**

Students who are engaged in campus life are more likely to persist and therefore, more likely to be retained. Like many institutions, Penn State York struggles to serve a significant number of underprepared students whose high school grades and/or standardized test scores camouflage weak foundational skills. Of equal importance, Penn State York has a substantial number of under-engaged students, who work a significant amount of hours to underwrite college expenses. Additionally, the campus serves a significant number of students who lack a strong sense of financial literacy regarding concepts such as personal finances, financing the cost of higher education, and budgeting for the future. A comprehensive student engagement plan is critical to serving both underprepared and under-engaged students. This becomes more important as the local student population becomes more diverse both economically and culturally. The campus engagement plan is discussed in more detail in Strategic Emphasis 2.

- **Meaningful options for nontraditional students**

Penn State York's adult population has declined over the years, even as the number of traditional students has shown small increases. It is critical that Penn State York develop and implement programs designed to increase the adult student population. In addition, Penn State York's EMT will focus on developing a comprehensive recruitment plan designed to recruit and retain military veterans and to assist them to successfully make the transition to higher education.

## **Building Penn State York's Future Infrastructure**

Campus infrastructure and technology continue to play an important role in the recruitment and retention of students. Maintaining and upgrading campus facilities, with a commitment to sustainable design, remains critical to create a thriving campus that is prepared to support future housing, and ultimately to attract and retain the 1,125 FTE students that we intend to have on campus by 2018.

### **Improve and Expand Academic and Student Support Spaces (Goal 1.2)**

Renovation and expansion of the following areas is an important part of Penn State York's strategic plan.

#### **Academic Support/Nittany Success Center**

Demand for tutoring services has grown over the last three years; the number of students served increased by approximately 15 percent from 478 students in academic year 2011-12 to 546 in 2013-14. The Nittany Success Center (NSC) has been highly successful in spite of the fact many noncompliance issues exist. A well designed tutoring center, which meets privacy and pedagogical requirements and is in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, is critical to the role a student learning center plays in increasing student retention. The current facility is inadequate and does not meet necessary requirements. In order to be in compliance, the newly designed center must include private office space for instructors and staff to conduct privileged conversations along with collaborative spaces, separate group study rooms, technology rich resources, and an exam proctoring area. The University Access Committee has agreed to provide funding to assist with appropriate renovations to the current space, but given its inadequate size, donors are being sought and the project has already been submitted for consideration for future campaign dollars as well.

#### **Admissions/Welcome Center**

The admissions office at Penn State York is dark, cramped, and a bit difficult to locate. Ideally, a new addition to the Main Classroom Building and admissions area would allow for an easily visible, welcoming entrance for first time visitors and prospective students. This addition would be the entrance to the new home of Penn State York's "Welcome Center;" a one-stop shop providing all necessary administrative services to students including registrar and bursar functions.

#### **Classrooms/Lecture Hall/Engineering Machine Shop**

Penn State York is committed to providing classroom environments that are conducive to quality learning and its classrooms, lecture hall, and engineering machine shop all require continuous improvement/upgrades. Funding from various sources including major maintenance dollars, the University Committee on Instructional Facilities (UCIF), private donations, and capital plan dollars will be used to upgrade these facilities. Elements of sustainable design would be incorporated, as well as the most current technology to address the diversity of program offerings. Funding is still being sought to acquire much needed equipment for a fully equipped engineering machine center to meet the Accreditation Board of Engineering and Technology, Inc. (ABET) requirements.

## **Graham Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership Studies (Graham Center) /Graduate Office/Development and Alumni Relations**

The Graham Center, graduate office, and development and alumni relations offices were recently relocated to their own facility, and are now housed together in the Bradley Building. Students and visitors are now able to have a much more welcoming and personal experience with these departments. The colocation of these activities/offices will allow for expanded opportunities for students seeking internships and professional growth activities.

## **Ruhl Student Center Expansion and Renovation**

The project to expand and renovate the Ruhl Student Center is currently in the final design stages and boasts a \$12 million budget funded through capital plan, student facility fee, and private donor funds. Major construction is expected to begin in early fall 2015, with an estimated completion date of fall 2016. Fitness facilities, a multi activity court, new locker rooms, upgraded food service area, and student lounge spaces are highlights of the project which will assist with both recruitment and retention.

In addition, the newly renovated Ruhl Student Center will be the center for health, fitness, and wellness at Penn State York. With a brand new fitness center, multi-activity court, group fitness room, and a renovated gymnasium, students, faculty and staff alike will have multiple opportunities to exercise healthy lifestyle choices. Additionally, psychological counseling services will be located in this facility, giving Penn State York a new place to improve both mind and body.

## **Pullo Center Expansion**

The Pullo Family Performing Arts Center (The Pullo Center), a 1,016-seat performing arts center, is a unique and valuable asset to Penn State York. Opened in August 2005 as a state-of-the-art theatre, this venue offers opportunities for campus, community, and touring theatre productions and programming that includes national Broadway tours, concerts, comedy, campus events and academic programs, children's programs, lectures, Penn State student group productions, and more.

Although The Pullo Center boasts a beautiful theatre, surrounding support spaces are inadequate for current and future program offerings. The age of the theatre also suggests that upgrades to equipment and physical spaces are required. Several key issues including acquisition of regular annual funding (to assist with programming, operational, safety, and capital needs) and facility upgrades and additions must be addressed. Additions and upgrades to this facility have already been placed on the University's list for future capital plan dollars. Additional space requirements include an enlarged lobby, kitchen, black box theatre, large rehearsal space, backstage production and support spaces to include such spaces as a costume shop, production offices, additional dressing rooms and restrooms, an additional loading dock and more. A connection from the stage left pin rail should be made to the catwalks for safety purposes as well.

## **Housing**

For years, housing has been discussed as a possibility at Penn State York and could be a key lever the campus needs to remain strategic in what has become an ever-increasingly competitive market.

Whether that housing should be residence halls on campus, owned and operated by Penn State, or should be some sort of creative joint venture between Penn State and the local community remains to be determined. It is imperative that, through this strategic plan, Penn State York will commit to doing the groundwork necessary to provide answers to the housing dilemma at Penn State York.

## **Strategic Emphasis 2: Enhancing the Quality of the Student Experience**

### **Introduction**

Penn State York operates in proximity to a number of regional external competitors, many of whom offer their programs at a lower overall cost. As a primarily commuter campus, it competes with its residential sister campuses (e.g., Penn State Harrisburg and Penn State Mont Alto) for students.

Penn State York's ability to compete with internal and external competitors is both enhanced and constrained by its role within the larger University. Many decisions must be made with the consent and cooperation of both its competitor sister institutions as well as other stakeholders within the university. This can create a challenging environment in which to make timely decisions. Nonetheless, as a primarily tuition-driven institution, it is imperative that Penn State York develops strategies to successfully increase the number of students who choose to make Penn State York their academic home. Thus, academic strategies must be driven by the dual imperatives of recruitment and retention of qualified students.

### **Current Penn State York Academic Environment**

Penn State York currently offers eight baccalaureate degrees:

- Biology
- Business
- Communication Arts and Sciences
- Electro-Mechanical Engineering Technology
- English
- Human Development and Family Studies
- Information Sciences and Technology
- Science

Existing Penn State York majors currently show broad variability in enrollments. Some of these majors were introduced without a significant investment of early marketing and they have not met their anticipated enrollment goals. Still other majors benefit from the campus' longstanding association with engineering and technology, full ABET accreditation, and a very active and engaged engineering advisory committee.

At this point in time, York's majors are in need of a careful analysis and implementation of strategic enhancements and modifications in terms of offerings and marketing. Additionally, the limited number and breadth of the Penn State York degree offerings serves to reduce the potential population of students who can



be attracted to the campus. In accordance with the Core Council recommendations, Penn State York will also seek to implement new majors that provide evidence of strong demand and that speak to the ongoing strengths of the campus.

**Building Penn State York's Academic Future: Strengthen and Expand Penn State York's Majors (Goal 2.1)**

**New Majors at Penn State York**

Since the submission of the campus strategic plan in June 2014, the campus has already accomplished several of the articulated goals for additional majors:

- (1) delivery of the biology major has been approved
- (2) delivery of the Business Accounting option has been approved
- (3) the P3 proposal for the psychology major (B.A. and B.S) has been fully vetted and is awaiting final approval

Penn State York has received new programming recommendations from the Core Council report and through direct communication from the Office of the Vice President for Commonwealth Campuses (OVPC). Criminal justice has been discussed as one possible addition; however, York College, Penn State York's local private competitor, currently has a thriving major in criminal justice. This, combined with local lack of faculty expertise, creates significant hurdles for the implementation of this major at this time. Current plans to bring other majors and programs to Penn State York, including Health Policy and Administration, Corporate Communication (Strategic Communication option), and the M.B.A., are at varying levels of development.

It is not difficult to envision how the international reputation of the campus would expand, as the enrollment of international students continues to climb, with the implementation of complementary programs such as International Business (INT B) and International Politics (INTPL); these programs are a natural fit, given both our proximity to Washington, D.C. as well as the global perspectives of our faculty. These latter two degrees would complement Penn State York's existing business major and course offerings, and would build on Penn State York's designation as an international campus. Moreover, the campus is starting to look carefully at faculty search candidates whose credentials allow them to teach in more than one discipline.

**Program Sharing**

Penn State York enthusiastically embraces course sharing and shared programming, evidenced by the recent consortium with Penn State Harrisburg to deliver the bachelor of science in Biology, and the numerous courses that we deliver via videoconferencing and asynchronous platforms. Looking ahead, campuses need to have the latitude to define pathways to new programs that fit the character, strengths, and geographic location, even if that program does not lend itself to campus-to-campus interaction, at least not at its inception. The overall process could be streamlined greatly through the implementation of a "fast-track" P3-like approval process as well as standardization of curricula across the University.

## **Building a Strong Student Body: Strengthening Student Engagement and Retention (Goal 2.2)**

As previously noted, underprepared students present an obvious challenge to student success; less obvious (but no less importantly), research has shown that under-engaged students have a lower likelihood of persistence towards a degree. Thus, a student engagement plan needs to both assist students in preparing for college level work even as it assists students in integrating into the institution.

### **Paired Courses for Student Success**

The Core Council report included a strong recommendation to reduce the number of remedial classes offered. Penn State York has made a strong effort to minimize the number of remedial sections. York has met some of this need by offering supporting courses such as PSU 008 or LL ED 005 that can be counted (within most majors) as elective credit. Penn State York has also piloted the use of paired courses – 1-credit elective courses that support challenging freshman courses. For example, the recently approved MATH 010 has been used as an accompaniment to the courses in the calculus series. Student feedback strongly speaks to students' perceptions of the importance of this course to their successful completion of courses within the math series.

### **Comprehensive Student Engagement Plan**

Although Penn State York is a commuter campus, roughly 15 percent of York's students reside away from home in local apartment complexes. Despite this near-campus presence, however, students often do not remain on campus for engaging educational activities. Due to family and financial commitments, many Penn State York students work more than the recommended number of hours for full-time students. Even so, because of the research that strongly speaks to the retention benefits of student engagement, Penn State York continues to work towards a comprehensive student engagement program which includes a mentoring component, increased offerings, and also student incentives; all of which are built on recent pilot programs.

Penn State York is also pursuing the development of a mandatory 3-credit First Year Seminar course designed to facilitate both academic performance and personal growth for all incoming students. As faculty and staff continue to work to bring this program to fruition, the campus is currently guiding its most academically vulnerable students into a 1-credit PSU 008 course designed to assist those students in developing basic study and organizational skills. This 1-credit course takes place prior to the start of fall classes and is designed to assist students in getting off to a good academic start.

Additionally, faculty and staff will join students in attending a complementary program designed to facilitate a greater understanding and appreciation of the value of diversity and inclusion. This training is seen as critical in light of the increasing ethnic, economic, and cultural diversity of the campus community.

### **Diversity Initiatives**

Penn State York is in the middle of its second year of participation in the multi-campus Teaching International Initiative, a program that provides campus programming (including classroom experiences) centered on a geographic region and/or a major global theme. This year's theme focuses on Brazil and energy; next year the focus moves to China and gender. The program provides an opportunity to engage

students both in and out of the classroom and creates awareness of diversity as a real concept that shapes individual, socio-cultural, economic and political opportunities within society.

The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute that has been affiliated with Penn State York (OLLI York) will officially become a part of the Penn State structure effective July 1, 2015. As the only campus outside of University Park to host an OLLI site, Penn State York will work to actively integrate OLLI faculty and programs into the undergraduate curriculum and co-curricular program in order to further diversify the student experience. To date, Penn State faculty members have served as volunteer OLLI instructors on a broad variety of topics and human development and family studies (HD FS) faculty have had OLLI faculty and members serve as presenters within appropriate HD FS courses. At least one faculty member is actively engaged in research with OLLI members. Penn State York will seek to expand these collaborations within the future.

Unity Day is the culmination of Penn State York's Unity Week, a campus-wide celebration of diversity, which occurs annually in April. What started seventeen years ago as a one-day event sponsored by the diversity committee on campus, has developed into a weeklong list of activities to celebrate diversity. Annually, art students create T-shirt designs to promote Unity Week, and one is selected to appear on the official T-shirt that is given out free on Unity Day to participants. Penn State York will continue to support and expand this event going forward.

### **Campus Sustainability Initiatives**

In the interests of expanding its sustainability initiatives, the campus will reenergize its Green Team. Faculty, students, and staff members have shown interest in supporting the team and its initiatives. The team is seen as a way to nurture a number of proposed campus projects, including a campus sustainability awareness campaign and a greater collaboration with the local cooperative extension.

### **Advising and Learning Support Services**

No policy exists that requires first-year students to meet with an adviser prior to course scheduling. While it is true that students who attend New Student Orientation (NSO formerly FTCAP) are guided in their selection of courses, it is the registration for second-semester classes that often becomes problematic. To address this issue, Penn State York plans to continue to strongly encourage first-year students (traditional and nontraditional) to meet with an adviser prior to registering for their second semester classes, regardless of whether that occurs in the spring or fall semester. An example of this ongoing effort is the "check in with your advisor week," an event that is strongly promoted across campus.

### **Building a Sustainable Course Model: Expanding Course Modalities (Goal 2.3)**

At this point, it has become clear that there is no *single* course modality that is able to meet the needs and preferences of all students. While online courses can frequently serve adults with prior college credits well, online courses are not necessarily appropriate for the entering freshmen with little or no college-level experience. Some courses can be implemented as seven-week programs without loss of quality; for others, seven-week deliveries would significantly hamper the achievement of course goals. Thus, Penn State York's goal is to produce a balanced portfolio of classes that are presented in the modalities that are most

appropriate for the intended audiences and for the critical content. Additionally, Penn State York will seek to provide all faculty with the resources and professional development activities needed to ensure academic success in all modalities.

### **Face-to-Face Accelerated BSB**

Penn State Brandywine has been offering an accelerated program of Saturday course offerings for adult students who already hold the associate in science degree in Business (or equivalent credits). This program has been offered using the Outreach supplied technology. Given the limited number of offerings that can take place with this technology, Brandywine will not begin a new cohort until fall 2015. To maximize potential enrollments, Penn State York has initiated a local face-to-face cohort of the program to serve its adult population. York will continue to receive broadcasts from Penn State Great Valley for students who are already in the program. Therefore, Penn State York will offer two tracks of accelerated courses for returning adults who intend to complete their Penn State business degree. Assuming that the face-to-face accelerated programming is likewise successful, it will become part of the standard curriculum.

### **Online Summer Course Offerings**

Many Penn State campuses have seen a decrease in the number of summer enrollments over the past five years. This has been postulated as occurring for many reasons – cost concerns, migration to World Campus, and lower-priced competitors (e.g., Harrisburg Area Community College). Nonetheless, the summer sessions remain an important part of the campus budget.

Like many campuses, Penn State York has lost a significant number of students to the World Campus. Students completing World Campus courses are taking a broad array of courses primarily focused in the areas of arts/humanities/social sciences. Many of these course offerings are not offered by Penn State York in any form, and York lacks the resources to develop a significant number of quality online courses. Penn State York is therefore seeking to maximize its online offerings by providing local offerings of online courses developed by Penn State York faculty through the World Campus (and used by permission). Secondly, the campus will seek to develop an online offering of courses that are unique to the summer schedule and/or that represent the highest enrolled online courses across the University (e.g., ENGL 202). Online courses will serve as a complement to Penn State York's face-to-face offering of science and math courses. Course enrollments for these technical topics remain strong in the face-to-face mode. Indeed, summer 2014 enrollments were the strongest in recent years.

### **Alternative Course Deliveries/Timing**

It is important to match the appropriate course delivery mechanism to the student and program. Some programs and courses may well be most effective when offered in the current face-to-face, fifteen-week delivery mode. Others may benefit from a strategic reworking of timing (time of day, number of weeks) and modality (e.g., online).

The campus is currently exploring a variety of platforms and modalities for course delivery while waiting for further input from the University College regarding possible course sharing platforms. The campus is also working to enlarge and diversify its asynchronous (online) course offerings using the World Campus design

model for course content delivery. Over time, the strategic implementation of online courses could lead to the development of entire degree programs that could be completed without ever coming to campus, an approach that could be advantageous for adult students, particularly those interested in degree completion. That said, this latter effort is complicated by the lack of local instructional design resources for online course development. It has been difficult to secure the services of the University College “floating” instructional designers. Further, it is difficult for the campus to compete with the salaries currently offered by the World Campus.

### **Conclusion**

Effective implementation of this strategic plan will be critical to Penn State York’s success over the planning period, and will be especially crucial in the upcoming academic year. This year will mark a watershed moment as the campus undertakes its most ambitious, and potentially disruptive, capital project to date with the renovation and expansion of the Ruhl Center, which is in many respects the heart of the campus. The Penn State York campus community is poised to continue its tradition of excellence in student support and engagement, while also strengthening policies, practices, and programs, as set forth in this document, for the benefit of the students and the community.