2013 INSTITUTIONAL PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT
HARFORD COMMUNITY COLLEGE

1. Mission

The Harford Community College Board of Trustees approved a new mission statement in March 2013 as part of the approval of the 2013-2017 Strategic Plan. The HCC mission is:

Harford Community College provides accessible, innovative learner-centered educational opportunities. As an open-access institution, the College promotes graduation, transfer, individual goal attainment, and career and workforce development. The College fosters lifelong learning, global awareness, and social and cultural enrichment.

2. Institutional Assessment

QUALITY AND EFFECTIVENESS INDICATORS

Harford Community College, in its recent Strategic Planning process, reaffirmed its commitment to student achievement and excellence in teaching and learning in goal 1: Recognizing the need for more students to achieve their goals, the College will pursue excellence in teaching, learning, and assessment. To those ends, the College has implemented a variety of strategies and activities. Although established benchmarks have been met for PAR indicators 3, 4, and 5, slight drops in the most recent percentages for indicators 3 and 5a and 5c indicate the ongoing need for attention. One initiative is the Reverse Transfer project. In cooperation with Towson University and University of Maryland University College (UMUC), the College registration office identifies students who have the potential to complete their associate’s degrees using credits attained while at Towson or UMUC. To date, the College has identified 79 potential students and awarded 13 reverse transfer degrees. Additionally, the Academic Advising office has identified two groups of students for intrusive advising efforts: those who have attained at least 45 credits, and those who have not yet declared a major. Since this effort began, the College conferred 227 degrees and certificates for August 2012 graduation. 39.6% of the students who were awarded a degree or certificate were from the cohort of students contacted and assisted by an advisor who provided personalized academic, career and transfer advising. The College conferred 327 degrees and certificates for December 2012 graduation; 67% of the students who were awarded a degree or certificate were from the cohort of students contacted and assisted by an advisor who provided personalized academic, career and transfer advising.

Other major initiatives address preparation of new students for the rigors of college. These include a reimagined orientation, advising, placement, and registration process called iPlan. iPlan group sessions target 16-19 year-old students who take the academic skills assessment, meet individually with advisors, learn about financial aid, navigate the online registration system, and register for courses. A flexible option exists for students who prefer to navigate the enrollment steps in a more individual way. iPlan sessions are currently being offered in several county high schools.
While the iPlan program focuses on the enrollment process, PowerUp new student orientation focuses on student success. Topics covered in these full-day sessions include goal setting, time management, Student Services, and financial management. Current HCC students serve as orientation leaders, a role which requires them to continue contact with new students at points throughout the first semester. Preliminary assessment of the initial pilot program was generally positive.

Work continues on retention. Indicators 3a and 3b show a slight decline in retention from fall 2010 to fall 2011. In order to address retention and other key issues, the Student Retention, Engagement, and Completion (SERC) committee was convened in fall 2012. This committee, which included representation from all areas of the campus, was charged with collaborating with areas across the College to develop a three to five year strategic plan for improving student retention and completion, with specific goals and recommended strategies for their attainment. The committee and its subcommittees produced a variety of best practices and recommendations that are being considered for implementation. Initiatives and practices resulting from this work will also affect successful persister rates (indicators 5a-d) and graduation-transfer rate after 4 years (indicators 6a-d). These rates also show a slight decline for certain populations of students. There has been a particular effort to intrusively advise students who are classified as General Studies—Undecided. Advisors contact these students to assist them with major selection and career discernment. In AY 2012-2013, there was a 33% increase in the number of students selecting a major by December and a 16% increase in the number of students selecting a major by April.

Harford has continued its diverse transfer programming, offering two transfer fairs with over 40 participating institutions. The Advising, Career, and Transfer Services office also schedules several instant-admit and information days throughout the year with transfer institutions such as UMUC, Stevenson, and University of Baltimore. Advisors conduct Steps to a Successful Transfer workshops each semester, providing information on transfer planning, transfer resources, and transfer admissions processes. The College also carefully reviews and updates information in the ARTSYRT transfer database.

To support the 2009 Maryland State Plan for Postsecondary Education, Goal 1 (Maintain and strengthen a system of postsecondary education institutions recognized nationally for academic excellence and effectiveness in fulfilling the educational needs of students and the economic and societal development needs of the state and the nation), the College modifies and creates academic programming to respond to career and academic demands and to ensure the best possible pathways to completion of students’ goals. Program enhancements include a Photography track within the Art and Design Degree program; an updated Environmental Science degree designed to reduce time to completion and enhance transfer opportunities; modification of the Computer Information Systems and the Engineering Technology degrees; and development of a Public History track in the History program. HCC has added courses such as CIS 229: Python Programming and BA 130: Introduction to Supply Chain Management.

Major changes in the way developmental math and English courses are offered and taught should—if preliminary data is an indicator—have a positive impact on the number of students who successfully navigate their required developmental sequences. In developmental math,
MHEC grant supplied funding for redesigning the sequence of courses and the mode of instruction. Students’ time to credit-bearing math is decreased by up to one and half semesters. Lab time is incorporated into the curriculum, offering students hands-on learning opportunities under the oversight of the classroom instructor. In developmental English, the Accelerated Learning Program, modeled on the Community College of Baltimore County’s program, allows students who have some developmental need to complete the developmental instruction concurrently with their credit-bearing freshman English course. This eliminates one full semester of instruction for these students. In addition, the developmental English faculty undertook an assessment of several elements of the Basic Writing course that resulted in significant changes to testing and evaluation of student work.

**ACCESS AND AFFORDABILITY INDICATORS**

Harford supports the *2009 Maryland State Plan for Postsecondary Education Goal 2* (Achieve a system of postsecondary education that promotes accessibility and affordability for all Marylanders) by maintaining low tuition costs and assuring that admission and enrollment processes are easily accessible to students. The College Board of Trustees has recently approved a modulated tuition and fees increase schedule that provides for minimal annual increases for the next five years. This approach was adopted in order to help students plan costs for education for several years out and to assist the College in its planning and budgeting processes. In spite of this increase, HCC tuition remains among the lowest in the state, and indicator 15 remains below the benchmark. For the 2012-2013 academic year, the Financial Aid office awarded over $870,000 in institutional and private funds to 733 students.

A Strategic Initiative in the College’s Strategic Plan states that the College will “Strengthen [its] partnership with local schools to increase the readiness of high school graduates for college.” To that end, Harford continues its partnership with the Harford County Public School system, maintaining its strong position for indicators 12 (Market share of recent, college-bound high school graduates) and 14 (High school student enrollment) by offering new student iPlan placement testing, advising, and registration sessions on-site at county high schools. Maryland Senate Bill 740 implementation will likely further bolster Harford’s progress on indicator 10 (Market share of first-time, full-time freshman), and indicator 11 (Market share of part-time undergraduates) already exceeds its benchmark. A recent assessment indicates that students in the Harford County Public Schools who complete their developmental math courses on-site at their high schools enroll in Harford at a higher rate than all students. As part of its implementation of the components of Maryland State Senate Bill 740, HCC will continue to offer these courses in six public high schools.

Indicator 16 (Enrollment in continuing education community service and lifelong learning courses) shows a marked decrease in both headcount and enrollments. In a struggling economy, leisure and recreational classes take the largest loss as discretionary income is limited. Furloughs and sequesters at Aberdeen Proving Ground may have affected enrollments. Increased competition from local fitness centers, recreational facilities, and after school programs affect enrollments, as well. In addition, certain institutional changes such as the addition of the auxiliary enterprise Early Learning Center have absorbed preschool and youth camp revenue streams. Limitations on the use by continuing education classes of aquatics and fitness facilities
also affected enrollments. Continuing Education and Training (CET) is focusing on personal and professional development classes that could garner increased enrollments. In addition, new CET marketing techniques may drive students toward easier access to information and registration.

Decreases in indicator 17 (Enrollment in continuing education basic skills and literacy courses) during FY 2012 have driven the development of aggressive marketing programs designed to increase awareness and thus, enrollment. During FY 2013, HCC developed and implemented a marketing campaign to increase enrollment in basic skills/literacy and inform students about the new computerized 2014 GED® test, which has increased rigor to prepare students for college and career. Increased enrollment in open enrollment Adult Basic Education (ABE) and GED classes from FY 2012 to FY 2013 indicates that the marketing campaign was successful. The follow-up campaign for FY 2014 will focus on "New GED, New Options, New Opportunities." In addition, the duration and intensity of instruction will increase and instructors will develop new curricula with the goal of improving student retention and helping students prepare for the new GED test. The “Certificate to Career in One Year” initiative, implemented in FY 2012, provides financial assistance, advising, and support services to help economically disadvantaged and basic skills-deficient youth between the ages of 16 and 21 complete workforce development certificate programs, improve literacy skills, and obtain employment. While benchmarks for improved literacy and certificate attainment were not achieved in year one, the employment benchmark of 63% was exceeded—90% of the 17 students are employed. This program continued through FY 2013 and is supported with a grant from the Susquehanna Workforce Initiative.

Harford continues to see striking increases in online credit enrollment (indicator 13a). Clearly, this mode of course delivery appeals to HCC students and enrollments will likely continue to climb. New courses continue to be added to the online format; most recently, a popular Communications Studies course was developed as an online course.

Harford also continues to improve its communication to students. Recently, several offices on campus collaborated to enhance the online credit catalog to make it easier to navigate and use. The online catalog directly addresses the College’s efforts to provide information in a format that students will use and find effective. Another technological enhancement is the implementation of Financial Aid TV. This programming includes tutorials for financial aid processes and services as well as other information of interest to students. In addition, master lists of free technology that can enhance student success have been compiled and are available to students in the Disability Support Services office and in the Tutoring Center. A completely redesigned College website will launch by the fall 2013 semester.

DIVERSITY INDICATORS

Harford seeks to create a welcoming learning environment for all students and actively supports the 2009 Maryland State Plan for Postsecondary Education Goal 3 (Ensure equal opportunity for Maryland’s diverse citizenry) with a variety of initiatives. As evidence of this commitment, a key strategy of the Strategic Plan addresses the achievement gap for African American students. Harford’s progress on indicator 21 (Successful-persister rate after four years) continues
to be uneven. Of continuing concern, too, is the decreasing graduation-transfer rate from African American students, indicator 22. These lags continue to be addressed with engagement strategies such as the Rites of Passage (ROP) mentoring program and with intrusive advising. Another strategy aimed at student retention and success is the Satisfactory Academic Progress process. This process, a federal aid mandate, is carried out in cooperation with the Financial Aid office and Academic Advising. Students who fail to meet minimum standards of academic progress and are thus terminated from federal aid must meet with an academic advisor to map out a plan for improving their academic progress. Plans are tracked and reviewed at the end of each semester. To date, approximately 56% of students complete their plans or have their plans continued, thus permitting continued enrollment and greater opportunity for success.

Indicators 21a (Successful-persister rate after four years: African American students) and 22a (Graduation-transfer rate after four years: African American students) continue to lag behind those of all students. Efforts to engage and retain these students include a variety of programs sponsored by the Rites of Passage program. ROP pairs first-time, full-time students with College employees who serve as mentors and who participate with students in a variety of social and cultural events and in academic activities such as campus visits to transfer institutions.

In addition to benefitting mentees, ROP participation involves Peer Leaders. Peer Leaders aid in the mentoring program with planning activities and engaging their peers. A maximum of five students have been employed during a given semester. A qualitative assessment by Peer Leaders of the mentoring program, conducted in fall 2012, indicated a high level of satisfaction with the programming and offered several suggestions for improvement. One planned enhancement will involve expanding the program and targeting Latino and Latina students. In September 2012, a scholarship was established on behalf of the Rites of Passage Mentoring Program through a donation made to the College. The donation allows for two scholarships to be granted to eligible students affiliated with Rites of Passage.

The College continues to focus on professional development for its employees in order to enhance services to all students. Recent professional development opportunities included sessions on Self-Harm and Mutilation, Sexual Violence, Abuse, and Assault, and Clinical Depression.

Progress on indicator 19 (Percent minorities of full-time faculty) continues, albeit at a very slow pace. The human resources department, in conjunction with division deans, continues to employ a variety of strategies to address this disparity, but very low turnover in full-time faculty remains a factor. Progress on indicator 20 (Percent minorities of full-time administrative and professional staff) has stalled, but the College will continue its strategies of targeted advertising using varied media to ensure strong, diverse applicant pools and close monitoring of search committees by Human Resources to ensure a diverse pool of candidates and finalists for employment consideration.

**STUDENT-CENTERED LEARNING INDICATORS**

Harford continues to prepare students well for performance at transfer institutions as evidenced by its consistently high achievement on indicator 23 (Performance at Transfer Institutions).
Performance on indicators 25a and 25b (Associate degrees and credit certificates awarded: Career degrees and Transfer degrees) has improved substantially, with the number of transfer degrees awarded exceeding the benchmark by 125. After a dramatic increase between FY 2010 and FY 2011 in the number of certificates awarded (indicator 25c), FY 2012 saw a drop to just below the benchmark. While it is impossible to pinpoint a single cause for this decline, there are indications that the wide availability of free or low-cost skills training in areas such as interior decorating coupled with certain curricular adjustments in other programs may have affected the number of students seeking certificates.

Instructional and support activities at Harford directly address the 2009 Maryland State Plan for Postsecondary Education Goal 4 (Achieve a system of postsecondary education that promotes student-centered learning to meet the needs of all Marylanders). Harford continues to pursue partnerships with four-year institutions in order to meet the needs of students. With the planned opening in fall 2014 of the Towson building, located on the Harford West Campus, students in the local community will have the advantage of a seamless transfer—of credits and of location—to a local four-year institution. In addition to the availability of six programs in new building—Business Administration, Information Technology, Integrated Early Childhood Education/Special Education, Integrated Elementary Education/Special Education, Psychology, and Sociology/Criminal Justice concentration—Harford and Towson have agreed to four new articulations in the areas of sociology, history, general studies, and English.

Further support of Maryland State Goal 4 is evidenced by Harford’s focus on student-centered assessment of learning at the course, program, and institution levels. This goal meshes with the College’s Strategic Plan Goal 1, Recognizing the need for more students to achieve their goals, the College will pursue excellence in teaching, learning, and assessment. Academic divisions continue to assess program outcomes by infusing assessment throughout courses within a program. Academic Affairs leadership, along with the faculty, has undertaken an ambitious review of the general education core in preparation for the development of a comprehensive, sustainable plan for assessing general education.

ECONOMIC GROWTH AND VITALITY INDICATORS

Beginning in fall 2014, Harford will no longer be the county’s only institution of higher education. While Harford Community College has been central to the county’s growth, the addition of Towson University will add measurably to the economic vitality of the region. This initiative, begun several years ago as a cooperative venture between Harford and Towson, will allow students to complete bachelor’s degrees within the county. The close proximity of upper-level classes may encourage an even higher level of college enrollment than existed previously. This effort directly supports the 2009 Maryland State Plan for Postsecondary Education Goal 5 (Promote economic growth and vitality through the advancement of research and the development of a highly qualified workforce). The College continues to seek means to increase indicators 28 (Percent of full-time employed career program graduates working in a related field) and 29 (Graduate satisfaction with job preparation) including implementation of a variety of career preparation strategies, career and job search workshops, and infusion of job search techniques into curricula. One example of this type of activity is employment readiness.
workshops for students in the nursing assistant program. The workshops included resume building, interviewing skills, appropriate dress, and mock interviews.

Market conditions, coupled with an increase in credit enrollments in certain workforce development programs, may account for declines in indicator 30 (Enrollment in continuing education workforce development courses). Continuing Education and Training continues to increase offerings for both online and face-to-face programs, as well as increasing in-house multi-course certification programs. Declines in indicator 31 (Enrollment in continuing professional education leading to government or industry-required certification or licensure) may be accounted for in part by the regional decline in residential and commercial construction markets, leading to fewer construction-related certifications and licensures. Although Harford contracted with an increased number of business organizations in FY 2012 (indicator 32, Number of business organizations provided training and services under contract), the number of employees trained declined due to reduced training budgets thereby decreasing enrollments (indicator 33, Enrollment in contract training courses). To help increase these numbers, Harford staff attended additional networking events, implemented a sales letter campaign, and attended numerous contract training webinars emphasizing sales.

The completion of the APG Federal Credit Union Arena in fall 2012 further solidified the College as a regional force not only for education but for community, commercial, and cultural events. The Arena, at 3300 seats, is the largest indoor arena in Northeast Maryland. A full-time manager and his support team work to assure that the Arena serves its community by booking events such as job fairs, concerts, a family fun day, and athletic events.

Harford Community College Response To Commission Question

Regarding indicator 19, percent minorities of full-time faculty

The Commission requested more information on the College’s plans to address this goal in the face of a low full-time faculty turnover rate and other challenges. The College has decided to retain this high target of 18% in spite of very slow progress because it is important for the faculty to reflect the surrounding service area. Academic Affairs and Human Resources will continue to work to recruit highly qualified minority candidates whenever there is an opening, including recruitment outreach to graduate degree programs with significant minority populations. Further, the College has recently announced a retirement incentive that could encourage several senior full-time faculty to retire in June 2014. The Cultural Diversity Committee continues to work generally to address the College’s Strategic Plan Goal 3 Strategy 2, Recruit and retain highly qualified, diverse employees.

3. Community Outreach and Impact

Harford Community College remains a vital resource to its community, and students directly benefit from community collaboration. Harford continues to collaborate closely with local employers in ways that enhance curriculum development and student learning. Academic divisions rely on curriculum advisory committees comprised of local experts to review curricula and suggest enhancements. College Central Network allows participating employers to post job
opportunities and requirements for students. Cooperative education and internships provide invaluable learning opportunities for students and qualified student employees to employers. Last year, 17 students earned credit for cooperative education and 10 students interned. They worked for businesses such as a local title firm, several law offices, an engineering firm, and a golf club. The Student Engagement, Retention, and Completion committee made several recommendations in 2013 for enhancements to a variety of programs, including cooperative learning and internships, to further strengthen the relationship between the College and local employers.

Students also participated in subject-specific community activities. For example, students in the Interior Design program decorated a room in the Baltimore Symphony Decorators’ Show House, and students in the Honors program conducted an ethnographic research study of Welsh traditions in nearby Delta, Pennsylvania, and Harford County. The College also worked with the Aberdeen Proving Ground Federal Credit Union to provide information about financial literacy for the new student PowerUp orientation.

The Hays-Heighe House, a historic farmhouse located on the campus, was the venue for several exhibitions and programs including “Beauty in Sport: Celebrating Horse Racing in Harford County,” “Campus Memories: Celebrating 50 Years of HCC at Prospect Hill,” and “Manifold Greatness: The Creation and Afterlife of the King James Bible.” All of these programs were open to the community. College employees volunteer at a wide range of community events, including Seasons of Recovery presentations and Chamber of Commerce expos.

Harford is a center for the arts in Harford County. With four performance venues, the College hosted 49 performances serving over 19,000 patrons. The Susquehanna Symphony Orchestra, the Harford Choral Society, and the Bel Air Community Band continue to provide opportunities for Harford Community College students to perform alongside community members.

Harford Community College collaborates closely with Harford County Public Schools (HCPS) on a number of initiatives, including:

- Hosting young male students from a local middle school for a viewing of a documentary and discussion with Rites of Passage mentoring students;
- Expanding services for students attending the Alternative Education High School;
- Increasing the number of high schools in which Harford’s developmental math courses are taught on-site;
- Meeting regularly meetings with high school guidance counselors;
- Participating in the public schools’ Transition Programming for high school students with disabilities; and
- Expanding the iPlan new student enrollment program to several county high schools.

Collaborations with other colleges and universities, in addition to the Towson University on-campus building, include a partnership with the University of Delaware in a National Science Foundation Cybersecurity grant and expanded articulation agreements with both Towson University and York College of Pennsylvania. The College continues to partner with six
universities to provide bachelor’s and master’s degree programs at its University Center, Northeastern Maryland.

4. Cost Containment

The following significant cost containment actions were adopted by HCC in FY 2012:

Temporary Actions:

- Reduction in part-time adjunct non-credit salaries $64,000
- Reduction in electric utility expenses $62,000
- Reduction in natural gas charges $80,000
- Reduction in bad debt expenses $26,000
- Negotiations on purchases $17,969
- Surplus sales $1,720

Permanent Actions:

- Operating lease reduction (copiers) $80,000
- Reduction in custodial services charges $17,860

5. Accountability Indicators

See attached HCC 2013 Accountability Indicators Table.