



2018 ACADEMIC PLAN



ISSUED: JANUARY 2019

Preface

Garrett College's first Academic Plan was completed in February 2012, the product of a comprehensive and integrated planning process that had begun 16 months earlier in November 2010. The College had previously conducted academic planning as part of the process of developing its strategic plans; however, until 2010, it had never engaged in a comprehensive academic planning process resulting in the creation of a separate Academic Plan. In higher education planning practice, which involves a range of planning activities and plan types, the Academic Plan is considered the key element because, grounded in the institution's mission and vision, it is the engine that drives all other planning activities (e.g., facilities, strategic, etc.).

Results from the early stages of this integrated planning process were factored into the final version of the College's 10-Year Facilities Master Plan that was submitted to the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) in February 2011. The 2012 Academic Plan served as the source for much of what appeared in the College's FY2014-2016 Strategic Plan. The College began working on a new Academic Plan in 2015, but the resignation of then-President MacLennan in 2016, a presidential search and the arrival of a new president in 2017 delayed development of a new plan. President Dr. Richard Midcap made development of a new Academic Plan to support the 2017-20 Strategic Plan a priority heading into the current fiscal year.

I. INSTITUTIONAL MISSION, VISION, VALUES & GOALS

MISSION

Garrett College recently completed a review of its mission and goals as part of the process of preparing for its upcoming self-study and reaccreditation. This review process started in January 2018 with the scheduling of a half-day event organized for the purpose of conducting a review of the College's mission, vision, and values statements and its strategic goals. During that event, nearly all of the College's faculty, staff, and administrators joined together in pre-assigned teams to review the College's mission, vision, values statements, and strategic goals to recommend changes, if needed. The recommendations coming out of that process were then reviewed (and in some cases modified) by the Executive and College Councils before going to the Board of Trustees for final review and approval.

As a result of this process, some changes to the College's mission statement were made. The revised mission statement, which was approved by the Garrett College Board of Trustees at its April 17, 2018 meeting, appears below with the added wording shown in italics.

Garrett College provides an accessible, quality, and *comprehensive educational experience* in a supportive environment to a diverse student population *in both traditional and non-traditional settings*. We offer associate degrees and certificate programs as well as continuing education to meet the transfer, career, workforce development, and lifelong learning needs of our students and the community. We are committed to the ongoing development of engaging, innovative, and sustainable curricula, programs, and initiatives that are responsive to a changing world. *The College respects and cares for students as individuals and as members of diverse groups, and supports their aspirations for a better life.*

The addition of "*comprehensive educational experience*" and "*in traditional and non-traditional settings*" in the first sentence better describes the scope of the College's mission and emphasizes its flexibility. The addition of a new concluding sentence, "*The College respects and cares for students as individuals and as members of diverse groups, and supports their aspirations for a better life.*" reinforces and better describes Garrett College's commitment to the success and well-being of its students.

The mission review process also resulted in revisions to portions of the College's vision and values statements.

VISION

Garrett College will be a gateway where...

- We are the college of choice for students seeking a quality educational experience.
- Academic excellence and scholarly achievement will be our hallmark.
- An engaged faculty and staff are committed to students' success and real-world preparedness.
- The campus strives to reflect the diversity of the world.
- We exemplify integrity and strong ethical principles.
- We identify, prepare, and adapt to a changing world.
- The needs of local and regional economic development shape programs and services.

VALUES

Garrett College believes that every human being is entitled to dignity, worth, respect, and the opportunity to learn. Therefore, Garrett College commits to...

1. The inherent value of learning by:

- Encouraging a culture of appreciation for the power of knowledge;
- Designing and advancing a curriculum of excellence for student mastery and success;
- Promoting ageless, life-long learning;
- Providing open access to programs and services.

2. The inherent value of the Garrett College community by:

- Sustaining a college focused on student learning and success;
- Fostering innovation and creativity;
- Embracing the concept of the power of people working together in the free exchange of ideas, including respectful disagreement;
- Vesting individuals with the authority and responsibility to participate in shared governance.

3. The inherent value of the Garrett County community, the surrounding region and the global community by:

- Recognizing diversity of people, along with their differing points of view;
- Fostering a sense of belonging;
- Facilitating an understanding of other cultures and beliefs in order to achieve a high level of cultural competence;
- Understanding the intrinsic value of our unique surroundings and of our cultural and artistic heritage;
- Providing opportunities for community awareness;

- Seeking an approach that balances preservation and progress;
- Contributing to the quality of life, economic and cultural vitality, awareness of local issues, and promotion of social justice;
- Promoting environmental awareness and serving as stewards of our environment.

INSTITUTIONAL GOALS

Garrett College has established six Institutional Goals that it considers fundamental and indeed critical to the accomplishment of its Mission and Vision:

Accessibility: Make higher education accessible to a diverse student population through appropriate admissions practices, active recruitment of a diverse student body, affordable tuition and fees, financial aid and scholarship assistance, developmental studies for students who are under-prepared for college-level work, student support services, and delivery of courses at times and via media that are responsive to student needs.

Student Satisfaction and Success: Create and sustain a supportive learning environment that encourages student growth and achievement through appropriate advising and career counseling, transfer and career preparation programs, experiential learning opportunities, and curricular as well as extra-curricular activities that encourage student engagement and responsibility.

Educational Effectiveness: Ensure, through an emphasis on teaching excellence, that graduating students are able to demonstrate mastery with respect to oral and written communications skills, information literacy, critical reasoning and analysis, quantitative reasoning, scientific literacy, and information management; that they have achieved the requisite levels of academic and technical proficiency in their major; and that, through activities focusing on diversity and cultural awareness, they are adequately prepared to live and work in a global society comprised of diverse cultures and beliefs.

Workforce Development: Support the economic development of Garrett County and the surrounding region by creating a skilled workforce through credit programs, as well as non-credit job readiness and workforce preparation courses; Garrett College will also be the provider of choice for affordable contract and customized training in response to the emerging needs of new and growing businesses.

Community Service: Serve, within the scope of available resources, the specific needs of the community through partnerships with local government, businesses, community and arts organizations, schools, and non-profit agencies; and by providing continuing education courses for personal enrichment, lifelong learning, and community need.

Effective Use of Financial, Human, and Physical Resources: Ensure, through the application of “best practices,” that financial, human, and physical resources are managed effectively and efficiently for optimal results.

II. CONTEXT

Overview of the College

Despite its small size, Garrett College offers a comprehensive and diverse range of career and transfer programs. Associate of Arts, Associate of Arts in Teaching, Associate of Science, and Associate of Applied Science degrees are offered as well as certificates for shorter-term career preparation. A list of the degree and certificate programs Garrett College currently offers is shown below in Table 1. The College’s transfer programs are designed to align with programs being offered by nearby Frostburg State University and West Virginia University, the two principal receiving institutions for transferring Garrett graduates. The College’s career programs support the economic and community development of Garrett County and the surrounding area. The College has taken an active role in promoting an information technology sector of the local economy by offering programs in Business and Information Technology and Cybersecurity. It also has been a leader in advancing Garrett County’s adventure recreation industry through creation of an Adventure Sports Management program, the first of its kind in the country. Natural Resources and Wildlife Technology relies heavily on Garrett County’s relatively unspoiled natural environment to serve as an outdoor classroom and hands-on learning laboratory. Three new degree programs were added in fall 2018: The A.A.S. degree program in Sport Management is complemented by a range of internship opportunities available in the College’s Community Aquatic and Recreation Complex, while the A.A.S. degree program in Addictions Counseling is designed to help address the country’s opioid addiction crisis. The A.S. transfer program in Computer Science complements the College’s career programs in Cybersecurity and Business and Information Technology.

TABLE 1
Garrett College Degree & Certificate Programs

Addictions Counseling (A.A.S.)	General Studies (A.A.)
Adventure Sports Management. (A.A.S.)	General Studies (A.A.) – Allied Health Professions
Arts & Sciences Transfer (A.A.)	Natural Resources & Wildlife Technology (A.A.S.)
Business Administration (A.A.)	Sport Management (A.A.S.)
Business & Information Technology (A.A.S.)	Teacher Education (A.A.)
Computer Science (A.S.)	Adventure Sports Management (Certificate)
Cybersecurity (A.A.S.)	Cybersecurity (Certificate)
Early Childhood Ed./Special Ed. (A.A.T.)	Electro-Mechanical Technology (Certificate)
Electrical Engineering (A.S.E)	Paramedic (Certificate)
Elementary Ed./Special Ed. (A.A.T.)	

The majority of Garrett College's credit students attend full-time, while the number of students attending part-time has continued to show a slight decline (when dual-enrolled high school students are excluded). For fall 2018, 64% of Garrett's credit students were full-time. Between 40-45% of Garrett's students are first-generation. While its student body is still predominantly Caucasian, the College enrolls a 'non-white' population (22% in fall 2018) that is proportionally far larger than that of its service area. The number of incoming students with developmental education needs remains high, averaging about 81% over the last four years (fall 2014 – fall 2017) (PAR 2018 submittal). While the number of incoming students with a developmental need is reflective of a national trend, Garrett's proportions have been unusually high; accordingly, the College has taken steps to ensure greater accuracy in its placement processes. For example, for fall 2018, the number of incoming students with developmental needs has declined significantly to 52%. The College needs to determine if implementing a floor score for students wishing to live in the residence halls or a new version of the Accuplacer placement test contributed to this lower percentage of first-time students needing developmental courses.

Beginning in fall 2007 and extending through fall 2011 the College experienced a period of significant enrollment growth, with enrollment in fall 2011 reaching a record 902 students. Much of the growth during that period can be attributed to the establishment of the Garrett County Scholarship Program (GCSP) in fall 2006, which provides tuition support for all eligible graduating Garrett County high school students. There was also growth in the number of out-of-county and out-of-state students due to a combination of more aggressive marketing and recruiting, the availability of new on-campus student housing, and escalating costs at four-year institutions.

Since fall 2012, however, Garrett College's enrollment, in terms of total credit hours, has shown a steady decline. Total headcount has also declined except for a relatively sharp uptick that occurred in fall 2016. This spike occurred as a result of significant expansion of the high school dual-enrollment program, but it had virtually no impact on total credit hours given that dual-enrolled high school students typically register for only one or two courses and their tuition is discounted by 50%. Up until fairly recently, most of this decline in enrollment has been in the "in-county" enrollment category and can be attributed to the declining population of local high school students. Unlike a majority of community colleges, most of Garrett College's credit enrollment is made up of traditional-age students who attend full-time, approximately 65% of whom are local. For fall 2018, 658 credit students were enrolled at the freeze date, a 27% decrease from fall 2011. Based on Maryland Department of Planning projections, further declines in the local high school population are expected to continue at least through 2022, although at a somewhat lower rate than the previous five years. Starting in FY2016, however, enrollment in other categories began to fall as well. In the last three years (FY2016-FY2018), both out-of-state and West Virginia Reciprocity enrollment have shown significant declines, and

in the last two years, out-of-county enrollment has dropped sharply after being relatively stable for years. There is no apparent reason for the recent declines in these three categories. It is likely that they are the result of the same combination of factors that have led to enrollment declines nationally, although in certain cases, like the Adventure Sports Management program, competition from other institutions may be the biggest factor.

Thus, maintaining enrollment at a viable level continues to be a major concern, particularly since tuition revenue accounts for about one-third of the College's budget. For the next five years, the College is projecting flat to very modest (<1%) increases in enrollment. In order to maintain and, if possible, increase enrollment, the College will need to continue developing and adding new programs that have potential to attract students from outside Garrett County. Two of the three new programs that started this fall (2018), Sport Management and Addictions Counseling, were at least partially conceived with this goal in mind. In the case of the Sport Management program, out of the 24 students who are currently enrolled, 21 are either out-of-county or out-of-state. (At this point in time, it should be pointed out that while the addition of these programs has not increased enrollment, the enrollment decline for fall 2018 is probably less severe than it would have been had these programs not been added.) In addition, the College needs to continue concentrating on attracting more non-traditional students from within Garrett County, particularly by increasing its noncredit program offerings. Enrollment Management also is working to identify the umbrellas of home school networks and target those students for dual enrollment, and also as prospects for future enrollment in one of the College's degree programs or noncredit workforce development programs.

Over the last six years, the College's enrollment in non-credit workforce development programs has steadily increased, due in part to a gradually improving local economy, and in part to an increase in the number of workforce development programs being offered. The extension of the GCSP to include graduating high school students who wish to pursue postsecondary job training instead of a college degree (about 30% of the local high school population) has likely also been a factor. For FY2018, a total of 4,801 individuals (unduplicated headcount) were enrolled in noncredit courses and programs, which is well above FY2020 MHEC benchmark of 4,500. Annual course enrollments totaled 10,383, which exceeds the FY2020 benchmark of 9000. Annual enrollment in noncredit workforce development courses and programs was 8774, slightly below the FY2020 Benchmark of 9000, while unduplicated annual headcount was 4184, somewhat below the FY2020 benchmark of 4500.

Capacity

When considering capacity, three aspects are involved: (1) capacity in relation to physical facilities both on and off campus, (2) capacity in relation to personnel resources with respect to

both staff and faculty, and (3) capacity in relation to contingency and succession planning within specific departments and throughout the College as a whole.

Campus and Facilities Capacity

Through at least 2022, all segments of Garrett County's population are expected to continue to decline with the exception of the 55-and-over age group, which is projected to grow slightly. Moreover, in the last three years, the College has also experienced significant declines in its out-of-county and out-of-state enrollment, student populations that had previously experienced modest growth or remained relatively stable. At present, the residence halls are only at about 80% capacity, which is cause for concern. With respect to future enrollment, as was noted above, the College is projecting flat to only very modest (<1%) increases in enrollment over the next five years. At the same time, enrollment in noncredit courses and programs has been increasing, due in part to expansion of the number of outreach locations as well as a significant increase in the number of workforce development and job training programs being offered. Actual enrollment for FY2016-2018 and projections for FY2019 through FY2024 are shown in Table 2, which appears on the following page.

With only 1% annual increases in enrollment projected for each of the next 5 years, the College's total enrollment is expected to grow by only about 40 FTE students by FY2024. Existing campus facilities are more than adequate to handle an increase of this size, which is below pre-FY18 enrollment levels. A prior analysis done for the 2012 Academic Plan concluded that the College's main campus had available space resources to accommodate 920 Full Time Equivalents (FTE), which correlates to a headcount of approximately 1200 students. Inclusion of the College's three off-campus sites – Career and Technology Training Center (CTTC), Northern Outreach Center (NOC), and Southern Outreach Center (SOC) increases this capacity by an additional 103 students, based on total square footage and the square footage required per student.

Looking at the available square footage of instructional space as reported to MHEC in the CC Tables (CC Table 3), which we submit annually to MHEC, it is clear that for the foreseeable future (i.e. the next 5-10 years), the potential for further enrollment growth will not be limited by the availability of instructional (classroom) space. However, it should be noted that prior to FY2017, much of the College's instructional space was in need of updating and not always conducive to learning. In 2017-2018, a significant portion of this space was addressed through the Community College Capital Improvement Program (CCCIP) and smaller in-house projects. With funds from the CCCIP, the College was able to renovate the 200 building, which had previously housed Continuing Education & Workforce Development (CEWD), the President's Office, and several classrooms. With the addition of a new laboratory wing, the renovated 200 building was transformed into a new STEM education facility. This renovation created attractive, up-to-date classrooms for mathematics, science, and engineering as well as

sorely needed modern laboratory space. The new building also includes faculty offices, conference rooms, and student study and meeting spaces.

Table 2
Garrett College Projected FTE Enrollment FY2019-FY2024

Actual Enrollment (Audited) for FY16 to FY18 and Projections for FY19 to FY24									
Fiscal Year	Actual FY 2016	Actual FY 2017	Actual FY 2018	Projected FY 2019	Projected FY 2020	Projected FY 2021	Projected FY 2022	Projected FY 2023	Projected FY 2024
In County	325.00	288.69	274.51	274.51	277.26	280.03	282.83	285.66	288.52
Out of County	160.30	135.55	94.53	94.53	95.48	96.43	97.39	98.36	99.34
WV Reciprocity	12.18	12.91	6.08	6.08	6.14	6.20	6.26	6.32	6.38
Border Rate	0.00	0.00	22.25	22.25	22.47	22.69	22.92	23.15	23.38
Out of State	96.98	107.58	87.39	87.39	88.26	89.14	90.03	90.93	91.84
Other (Employees)	0.53	1.70	0.97	0.97	0.98	0.99	1.00	1.01	1.02
Non Credit	242.07	236.85	245.92	245.92	250.84	255.86	260.98	266.20	271.52
Out of State Non Credit	17.19	21.35	23.87	23.87	24.35	24.84	25.34	25.85	26.37
Other Non-Credit	24.43	19.85	20.04	20.04	20.44	20.85	21.27	21.70	22.13
Total Students	878.68	824.48	775.56	775.56	786.22	797.03	808.02	819.18	830.50
Credit Student	594.99	546.43	485.73	485.73	490.59	495.48	500.43	505.43	510.48
Non Credit Student	283.69	278.05	289.83	289.83	295.63	301.55	307.59	313.75	320.02
Eligible Students	739.55	674.00	621.04	621.04	629.72	638.52	647.46	656.54	665.76
In Eligible Students	139.13	150.48	154.52	154.52	156.50	158.51	160.56	162.64	164.74

Source for projected enrollment: Garrett College 5-year Financial Plan-2018

Underutilized space in the 100 building, identified through a space utilization study, has been renovated to house the CEWD classrooms, offices, and meeting rooms displaced by renovation and repurposing of the 200 building. The President's Office, which was also displaced, has been relocated to the 100 building as well. In addition, as part of the renovations to the 100 building, underutilized space in the former SCIF portion of the building has been converted into classrooms/labs and faculty office space for the Cybersecurity program. Relocation of the Cybersecurity program to this area has freed up classroom/computer lab space in the 300 building, which compensates for some of the general classroom space lost from repurposing the 200 building. A majority of the College's remaining instructional space, which is located in the Learning Center (600) building, will be renovated through a CCCIP funded project expected to begin in FY2022.

While the College has excess capacity with regard to classroom space, according to MHEC's CC Table 3, we are deficient in terms of tutoring and assembly spaces. However, additional tutoring space has been created by consolidating and repurposing space in the library that was no longer needed for books, now that the library's collection has been considerably reduced in size. The College's lack of adequate assembly space is being addressed through the planned Community Education and Performing Arts Center (CEPAC). This project, which involves renovation and expansion of the 800 building (old gymnasium), is currently in the design stage

and will be funded through a combination of state and local sources, including the CCCIP. These capital projects are described in more detail in the most recent update to the College's 2012 Facilities Master Plan.

Human Resources

Table 3 below shows the number of full- and part-time faculty and staff employed at Garrett College as of fall 2018. (The staff figure includes both professional and support staff.)

Table 3
STAFFING LEVELS, FALL 2018

Full -Time Faculty	20
Part -Time Faculty (includes 14 staff teaching classes)	49
Full -Time Staff	113

While staff numbers have grown, the College's full-time faculty, in terms of overall numbers, has changed very little in the last ten years. The most recent faculty hires have been in Engineering, Teacher Education, English, Adventure Sports, and Cybersecurity, all for the purpose of refilling existing positions that had been vacated. For a variety of reasons, three other full-time faculty positions in speech/theatre, history/cultural geography, and graphic-web design, which had previously been vacated, have been eliminated, although the speech/theatre position was actually replaced by the position in Engineering. The College intends to use a regular cycle of program review along with a comprehensive process for new program development to ensure that our academic programs and faculty resources align with regional employer needs and employment opportunities, particularly given that the College could see a significant faculty turnover in the next 5-10 years due to retirements. The College is already in the process of addressing a critical need, given the College's large population of students with developmental needs, through the proposed addition of full-time faculty positions in developmental math and in developmental English. The College also plans to add a full-time faculty/coordinator position for the new Addictions Counseling A.A.S. degree program. In addition, there is a possibility that enrollment in STEM programs might increase as a result of the state-of-the-art equipment and facilities available in the new STEM building, and while it is unlikely this would result in any significant enrollment growth, it is possible that more faculty in the STEM disciplines might also be needed. On average, well over 50% of Garrett College's courses are taught by full-time faculty. Part-time (adjunct) faculty are hired as demand dictates, although the College has sometimes had difficulty in locating and hiring adjunct faculty in more specialized disciplines.

As part of the strategic objective to attract and retain a competent workforce, the College received Board of Trustees approval this year to undertake a comprehensive compensation study with the assistance of outside consultants. The results of this study are expected by early 2019 and will be used in the preparation of the FY2020 budget. Deliverables from the study include review and revision of the current salary scale and metrics along with a comprehensive review of the benefits we offer. The College is taking necessary steps to ensure that the recommendations coming from the compensation study can be implemented, including a comprehensive organizational review focused on the following:

- Exploring whether open positions need to be refilled or if their duties might be carried out through other means.
- Seeking opportunities to eliminate positions when they are no longer necessary due to changes in technology.
- Examining processes to see if they can be streamlined in order to increase efficiency.

Contingency and Succession Planning

While there are no formal human resource contingency plans in place, College staff in each department have some knowledge of most jobs in the event that regular personnel are not able to perform their duties. The units most at risk, when someone leaves or has a prolonged illness, are the Business Office, Information Technology, and Institutional Research due to the more specialized nature of the skills and tasks required. It may also be difficult to find coverage for faculty who teach in the more specialized disciplines. Many areas of the College have plans and documented procedures to aid in the continuation of business.

Succession planning involves the process of identifying and developing internal personnel resources to fill key leadership positions within an institution. Succession planning is sometimes termed talent-pool planning and it focuses on training and developing human resources up and down an entire leadership pipeline; this is in contrast to replacement planning which focuses more narrowly on having a back-up for a certain job. While the latter has been done on an ad-hoc basis, there is no formal process in place for this aspect of succession planning. That said, the College annually invests in employee leadership development by providing opportunities for staff to participate in Leadership Garrett County, which has been a very positive experience for staff.

Location¹

Garrett County, the westernmost county in Maryland, has long been known for its rural lifestyle and natural beauty. It is the state's second-largest county in terms of area, and is the most

¹ It should be noted that some portions of this section were taken from <http://www.gcedonline.com/data-resources/garrett-county-data-statistics>

sparsely populated county in the state. With over 76,000 acres of parks, rivers, lakes, and publicly-owned land, Garrett County has historically been a haven for outdoor enthusiasts. Unfortunately, the County has also historically been known for its high unemployment (and more recently, underemployment), low educational attainment, low incomes, and relative remoteness.

Fortunately, within the last 30 years, several events have changed perceptions about the County and its residents. The completion of Interstate 68 improved both access and egress to and from Garrett County, making it easier for County residents to access amenities and services available outside the County as well as improving non-residents' access to the County. With the improved access provided with the completion of I-68, tourism-related industries have grown and flourished over the past 30 years. The completion of I-68 changed the demographics of people visiting the county by providing much improved access for people living in Pittsburgh and the Baltimore-Washington, D.C.-Northern Virginia area and, conversely, improved access to those market areas from Garrett County. While tourism is a very important component of the local economy, the County has also made progress in diversifying its business base and reducing unemployment. Figure 1 on the following page shows the relative importance of the County's various economic sectors in terms of total employment. Since 2010, the County's unemployment rate has continued to decrease; however, local employers often experience difficulty in finding skilled employees. Unemployment rates over the last five years are shown in Figure 2.

Garrett County is bordered by only one other Maryland county (Allegany), but shares a common border with three Pennsylvania (Fayette, Somerset, and Bedford) and four West Virginia (Preston, Tucker, Grant, and Mineral) counties. Thus, due to its location, geography, and demographics, Garrett County differs significantly from most Maryland jurisdictions – especially those in the Baltimore-D.C. Metro area – and has more in common with its Pennsylvania and West Virginia neighbors. One of the biggest challenges facing the County, as well as the tristate region, is population stagnation and/or decline. Garrett County's population over the last five decades and estimated population for 2017 are shown below in Table 4. The

Table 4
GARRETT COUNTY POPULATION

1970 Census	1980 Census	1990 Census	2000 Census	2010 Census	2017 Estimated
21,476	26,498	28,138	29,846	30,097	29,233

Sources: https://www.census.gov/searchresults.html?q=2020+projected+population+garrett+county+md&page=1&stateGeo=none&searchtype=web&cssp=SERP&_charset_=utf-8

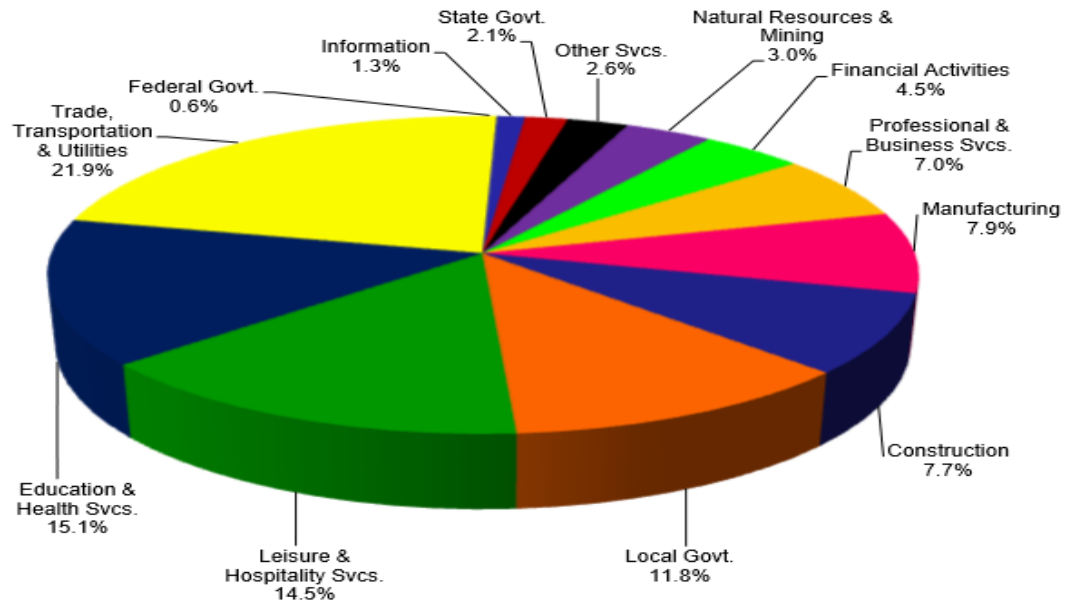
Figure 1



Garrett County Government
Economic Development

Employment by Sector – Garrett County

Annual Averages – 2017



Source: [http://www.gcedonline.com/resources/data-resources/pdf/Employment-by-Sector-\(chart---2017-Annual-Averages\).pdf](http://www.gcedonline.com/resources/data-resources/pdf/Employment-by-Sector-(chart---2017-Annual-Averages).pdf)



Garrett County Government
Economic Development

Unemployment Rates – Garrett County

Annual Averages, 1997-2017

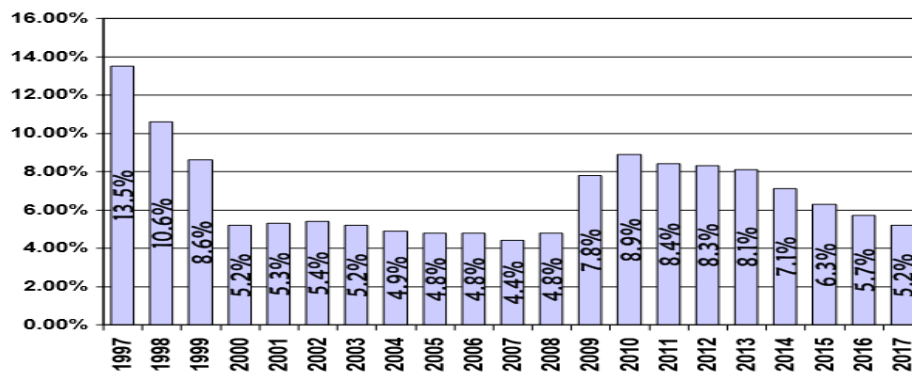


Figure 2

Source: [http://www.gcedonline.com/resources/data-resources/pdf/Unemployment-Rates-\(GC-Chart-1997-2017\).pdf](http://www.gcedonline.com/resources/data-resources/pdf/Unemployment-Rates-(GC-Chart-1997-2017).pdf)

County's population grew at a 6% rate from 1980 to 1990 and by another 6% from 1990 to 2000. However, between 2000 and 2010, the County's population grew by only 0.84%, and between 2010 and 2017, it showed a decline of 2.9% (based on the Census Bureau's population estimate). The Maryland Department of Planning has projected only moderate population growth for Garrett County over the current decade (2010 to 2020), but the 2017 population estimate suggests that this growth may not be realized, and that it is more likely the County will show an overall population loss. The Maryland Data Center's projections for Garrett County show a less than 6% increase in population between 2015 and 2035.

Moreover, the County's population is continuing to age. As table 5 shows, the 55-and-older age group is the only segment of Garrett County's population that has been increasing and that is expected to continue to increase. All other age groups within the population are declining. It is this declining/stagnant population that poses one of the biggest challenges to building and growing the local economy. These demographics present challenges for employers as they seek to attract and retain employees, as many young people leave the area under the assumption that there are no high-paying jobs available locally. It also creates a significant challenge for Garrett College, considering that most of the College's credit enrollment consists of traditional-age students, and that the majority of these students come from Garrett County.

Table 5



Garrett County Government
Economic Development

Population By Age Group
Garrett County: 1990 – 2016 Estimated

Age	1990 Census	2000 Census	2010 Census	2012-2016 ACS	% Change 2010 Census to 2012-2016 ACS
0 - 4	1,951	1,810	1,553	1,428	- 8.0%
5 - 14	4,334	4,291	3,675	3,310	- 9.9%
15 - 19	2,170	2,210	2,281	1,921	- 15.8%
20 - 24	1,786	1,512	1,598	1,768	+ 0.6%
25 - 34	4,415	3,618	3,026	3,060	+ 1.1%
35 - 44	3,978	4,615	3,809	3,465	- 9.0%
45 - 54	3,052	4,066	4,683	4,289	- 8.4%
55 - 64	2,585	3,263	4,241	4,493	+ 5.9%
65 - 74	2,242	2,389	2,988	3,457	+ 15.7%
75 - 84	1,236	1,514	1,596	1,785	+ 11.8%
85+	389	558	647	701	+ 8.4%
Total	28,138	29,846	30,097	29,677	- 1.4%

Data Sources: [http://www.gcedonline.com/resources/data-resources/pdf/Population-by-Age-Group-\(2012-16-ACS\).pdf](http://www.gcedonline.com/resources/data-resources/pdf/Population-by-Age-Group-(2012-16-ACS).pdf)

County and Regional Needs Assessment

Garrett College's outreach to business and industry is accomplished through its instructional programs – both credit and noncredit – with an emphasis on workforce development and career courses, and programs designed to meet local and regional demand. Through participation on The Greater Cumberland Committee (TGCC), the Garrett County Chamber of Commerce, the Garrett County Office of Economic Development, and involvement in business and industry advisory committees, the College seeks to maintain relevance and foster closer connections with its business and industry partners. The College is also working with the County's new economic development director to help ensure that the College's offerings are aligned with employer needs.

The Greater Cumberland Committee, in cooperation with multiple county Economic Development offices in the region, conducted a target industry analysis in 2018 to identify business clusters that best fit and would likely benefit from the community's assets along the Interstate 68 corridor. The study also examined workforce development and re-employment opportunities that will counteract the declining demand for coal within the I-68 region. A report from EMSI Data Analyst shows the top 10 projected areas of growth for Garrett County and the nine surrounding counties (which include nearby Pennsylvania and West Virginia). These growth opportunities include: Heavy and Tractor Trailer Truck Drivers, Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses, Computer User Support Specialists, Paralegals and Legal Assistants, Medical Records and Health Information Technicians, Physical Therapy Assistants, Web Developers, Telecommunication Equipment Installers and Repairers, Medical and Clinical Laboratory Technicians, and Respiratory Therapists. The Maryland Department of Labor Licensing and Regulation cites similar results for Maryland statewide; the projected growth areas for positions requiring an Associate's Degree include: Registered Nurses, Computer User Support Specialists, Network and Computer Systems Administrators, Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses, Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Workers, Therapists, Management Occupations, Financial Specialists, and Architecture and Engineering occupations. Table 6 on the following page shows total employment by industry for Garrett County for 2016-17 and the projected change over the next five years. The industries shown employ 500 or more people. (The numbers shown are approximate.) The projected continued growth in the allied health field provides the College with the opportunity to expand current offerings with respect to both credit and noncredit workforce development. The I-68 region has a robust healthcare sector, with West Virginia University (WVU) Medicine, Western Maryland Health System, and Mon General Hospital being some of the most respected institutions in the Mid-Atlantic region. The healthcare sector functions as both a significant economic driver and a vital quality-of-life asset in the region. The region's strong healthcare sector also provides the opportunity for healthcare-related spinoff businesses in other industries. The College's

Mountaintop Truck Driving Institute serves the tristate region, offering both Class A and Class B CDL training. Garrett College's Computer Science and Cybersecurity degree programs prepare students for careers in information technology.

Table 6
Garrett County - Top Industries Based on Total Employment*
(Ranked According to Number of Individuals Employed 2016-17)

Industry	People Employed	Projected Change 2017-2022
Retail Trade	~1,800	~2,000 (+200)
Healthcare & Social Assistance	~1,750	~2,100 (+350)
Lodging, Restaurants, & Bars	~1,300	~1,400 (+100)
Construction	~1,150	~1,300 (+150)
Education	~1,000	0
Manufacturing	~1,000	~1,100 (+100)
Personal & Other Services	~500	~600 (+100)
Transportation & Warehousing	~500	0

* The industries listed employ 500 or more people.

Data Sources: <http://www.qcedonline.com/resources/about-us/pdf/2018-06-28-Garrett-County-Profile-FINAL.pdf>

Current and Projected Job Market/Employer Needs

Based on Maryland Workforce Exchange Statistics for Garrett County, November 2018, Week 1 data, the private sector industries showing the most job openings by occupation group are: healthcare practitioners and technical occupations, sales and related, transportation and materials moving, and office and administrative support. The top job openings by industry for Garrett County are retail, trade, finance and insurance, manufacturing, professional scientific, and technical services. There are currently a total of 299 jobs available (14 <HS educational requirement, 56 HS or equivalent, and 2 for AA degrees.) Table 7 also shows that local area unemployment is currently below 5%.


Table 7

Area Explorer - Western Maryland Workforce Region - Workforce Information & Performance

Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS)

Western Maryland Workforce Region	Mar 2018	Apr 2018	May 2018	Jun 2018	Jul 2018	Aug 2018
Unemployment Rate	5.8	4.8	4.5	5.1	5.1	4.7
Unemployment	7,159	5,980	5,579	6,409	6,389	5,834
Employment	117,081	117,616	117,549	118,495	119,493	117,646
Labor Force	124,240	123,596	123,128	124,904	125,882	123,480

Note: Data Not Seasonally Adjusted

Published by  MD Office of Workforce Information & Performance

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III. Factors Influencing Development of the Academic Plan

In addition to the College's mission, vision, and values, a number of other factors have influenced the development of this Academic Plan, including the environment in which we operate. This environment includes broad economic and societal trends that impact higher education; state, regional and local trends and existing conditions that impact the College directly; and conditions within the College itself. An extensive environmental scan was conducted in order to identify and assess these factors. The results of this scan are summarized below.

State and National Trends

Economic and Fiscal Stress – States have traditionally played a major role in funding higher education. However, as more and more states face long-term budget shortfalls and structural deficits, the proportion of state funds going to higher education is steadily diminishing. As a result, more of the burden for paying for higher education is being placed on students and their parents through steep cost increases in tuition and fees; this increase is making college unaffordable for a growing segment of the nation's population. At the same time, at both federal and state levels, financial support for higher education is being regarded as less important or less urgent than other budget priorities and this trend is likely to continue. According to the Commission on the Future of Higher Education, "Higher education will need to explore new sources of revenue beyond traditional ones if it is to surmount these fiscal realities."

Demands for Accountability – Higher education faces growing demands from public officials, business and industry, and the general public to provide better evidence of its effectiveness. Public officials and concerned citizens are demanding justification for the high cost of higher education, particularly as those costs continue to escalate, and all constituencies are demanding clear evidence in the form of measurable outcomes that students are learning (i.e., of value-added). Future public support for higher education will likely depend on the ability of higher education to adequately demonstrate its effectiveness.

The 2017-2021 Maryland State Plan for Postsecondary Education: Student Success with Less Debt –The State Plan outlines three primary goals for the postsecondary community in Maryland.

- **Access:** Ensure equitable access to affordable and quality postsecondary education for all Maryland residents.

- **Success:** Promote and implement practices and policies that will ensure student success.
- **Innovation:** Foster innovation in all aspects of Maryland higher education to improve access and student success.

Each goal in the State Plan highlights the current challenges facing higher education in Maryland and provides several strategies as opportunities for addressing those challenges. Current and innovative initiatives that support student access and success are also discussed and recommended “action items” for postsecondary partners to consider. Garrett College submitted a report to MHEC in November 2018 that focused on the alignment of our mission and our institutional, strategic, and operational goals and objectives with the goals and strategies outlined in the State Plan.

Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education – The Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education, otherwise known as the Kirwan Commission, was established by the Maryland legislature in 2016. Lawmakers established this Commission for two reasons. The first was to review the adequacy of funding for Maryland’s public schools. The second task of the Commission was to “provide recommendations on preparing students in the state to meet the challenges of a changing global economy, to meet the state’s workforce needs, to be prepared for postsecondary education and the workforce, and to be successful citizens in the 21st century,” (Senate Bill 905, Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education). To date, the work of the Commission has focused mainly on this second task. In January 2018, the Kirwan Commission released a preliminary report outlining recommendations concerning five key areas: early childhood education, high-quality teachers and leaders, college and career readiness pathways, more resources for at-risk students and governance and accountability. It is the Commission’s recommendations in relation to college and career readiness pathways that would have the most impact the state’s community colleges, and career and technology education (CTE) programs in particular. The most significant among these is the proposal for establishment of a statewide system of early-college programs that would allow high school students to complete an Associate’s degree at the same time they are completing their high school graduation requirements. In other words, they would be eligible to receive an Associate’s degree at the same time they receive their high school diploma.

What Are the College’s Strengths, Weaknesses, Challenges, and Opportunities?

In order to create a plan that moves Garrett College forward in terms of academic quality, student satisfaction and success, and contribution to Garrett County’s economic growth, we need to candidly assess where we stand today. What are the College’s core strengths? Where does it need to improve? What are the challenges that must be overcome? What are the opportunities that should be considered? In order to answer these questions, Garrett College

compiled information from a variety of sources including the College's own campus community through an internal assessment of the College's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT analysis) involving students, faculty, staff, and administrators; a survey of Garrett County high school juniors; a community/business and industry needs assessment conducted by the County/Regional Needs Assessment – Program Alignment Work Group; a series of focus group meetings involving representatives from a number of external constituencies including the Garrett County Board of Commissioners; the Garrett County Chamber of Commerce and Garrett County Economic Development Corporation; the Garrett County Office of Economic Development; the Garrett County Public Schools; members of various women's groups and organizations from throughout the community; and donors to the Garrett College Foundation. Data from the Garrett County Economic Development home page (<http://www.gcedonline.com/>) and the Garrett County Economic Development Strategic Plan, which the College assisted in developing, have also yielded a considerable amount of useful information.

What Are Garrett College's Core Strengths?

Despite its small size, limited resources, and rural location, Garrett College possesses a number of strengths. The College's greatest strength is its people. Its faculty and staff are talented, hardworking, competent, caring, and dedicated. While small size can be a disadvantage in terms of available resources, it can also be a source of considerable strength. With an annual enrollment (unduplicated headcount) of around 5,600 students (835 credit, 4801 non-credit for fiscal year 2018), Garrett College is by far Maryland's smallest community college. However, our small size allows our faculty and staff to know most of our students on a personal level and our "smallness" fosters a close-knit community that heightens our ability to be student-centered. In fact, "friendly faculty and staff who genuinely care about students" and "a small student to faculty ratio that allows faculty and staff to get to know our students on a more personal level" were, by far, the two most frequently cited strengths coming out of the fall 2015 SWOT analyses. Other strengths commonly cited were the College's advising and academic support services (as provided by the Advising and Academic Success Center) and the availability of the Community Aquatic and Recreation Complex (CARC). It is worth noting that the College's advising services had previously been identified as a significant weakness by the Environmental Scan conducted in 2011.

The College continues to enjoy strong support from the Garrett County government, and it continues to benefit from its location in a four-season resort/tourist destination situated in the heart of the scenic Appalachian Mountains. Outdoor and adventure recreation activities abound which are not available to students at our sister institutions. The area's natural resources also serve as outdoor classrooms for students enrolled in the College's programs in Adventure Sports Management and Natural Resources and Wildlife Technology. Both of these programs have been

widely recognized for the strength of their respective curriculum and the quality of their graduates. Data have also shown Garrett College to be strong academically. Garrett College graduates who transfer to four-year institutions typically are among the top performers when compared with students coming from other Maryland community colleges.

How Has Garrett College Improved Since the First Academic Plan?

The College has made significant improvements in several areas that had been previously cited as weaknesses in the March 2012 Academic Plan. Those weaknesses included a poor image among certain segments of the local community, a less-than-effective academic advising process, an insufficient number of full-time faculty to meet enrollment demand, and aging and outmoded campus facilities.

Public Image - By telling its story more effectively and publicizing its successes, increasing its outreach and broader involvement in the life of the community, and improving the effectiveness of its marketing activities, the College has made a concentrated effort directed toward improving its image within the community. Concerns about the transferability of Garrett's courses are still occasionally raised, but these concerns seem to be diminishing, partially due to better transfer advising and partially due to the increased number of transfer agreements being developed between the College and its principal receiving institutions. To increase awareness and improve communications regarding Garrett's articulation and transfer agreements and transfer scholarships, improvements have been made to the College's website to highlight their availability (<https://www.garrettcollege.edu/transfer-services.php>). This section of the website also features student testimonials as well as a listing of the top transfer destinations among Garrett College students.

While the College has offered Garrett County high school students the opportunity to dual-enroll in college-level courses for a number of years, the courses offered were limited to math and English and admission to the program was restricted. However, to further strengthen its visibility and connection with Garrett County high school students and their parents (and with the aid of State legislation designed to facilitate expansion of dual-enrollment programs), the College has partnered with the two high schools to significantly increase its dual-enrollment course offerings and to relax some of the more stringent requirements that had previously severely restricted the number of students who were permitted to enroll in dual-enrolled courses. Currently (for fall 2018), there is a total of 133 high school students who are dually enrolled, as compared with 20 students who were dually enrolled in fall 2012.

Advising and Academic Support Center – Since its opening in fall 2012, the Advising and Academic Success Center (AASC) has played a significant role in helping the College improve the effectiveness of its academic advising and academic support programs. The advising structure at Garrett College is such that staff advisors in the AASC work primarily with students who are

either new to the institution, largely developmental, or in academic difficulty while faculty advisors support students in the advanced stages of working toward their degree.

On the spring 2018 Student Opinion Survey, 90% the students who responded indicated that the College's academic advising processes provided them with the information they needed in order to achieve their educational and/or career goals. On that same survey, 96% of respondents with a basis to judge indicated that the college's tutoring services (provided by the AASC) helped them improve study skills and 94% indicated that the college's tutoring services helped them improve their understanding of course material and content. With assistance from the AASC, the College also has worked actively to establish, validate, and market formal transfer and/or articulation agreements to insure that Garrett students are able to transfer with minimal or no loss of credit.

The AASC remains co-located in the newly rebranded Library and Learning Commons. In a joint movement toward a learning commons model appropriate for the institution, all tutoring services have been moved to the central and highly-visible area of the library, beginning in the fall 2017 semester. Tutoring services have also been integrated to include a wider variety of subjects, the use of peer tutors, online tutoring, and expanded hours. As a result of these efforts, student use of the tutoring center has increased 90% between fall 2016 and fall 2017. In addition, a Tutor-in-Residence program has been established for the residence halls. AASC and Library staff work collaboratively to integrate and expand services such as student success workshops and new student advising. Further demonstrating that the Learning Commons movement is academically engaging students, the Library and Learning Commons has experienced a 17% increase in reference stats from fall 2017 to fall 2018. All Learning Commons efforts are focused on the institutional and strategic goal of student success.

In 2014, AASC advisors developed the College's prototype "Early Alert" system in which faculty report students who are exhibiting behaviors that puts them at risk academically. Advisors then execute intentional, and sometimes intrusive, interventions with these students in hopes of helping the student connect with resources needed in order to be successful. The Early Alert system has since been integrated into the Jenzabar student information system which allows for better student data and effectiveness tracking. On average, 36% of alerted students show some measure of improvement during the alerted semester, 33% are assigned the status of good academic standing at the end of the alerted semester, and 61% are retained in the semester that immediately follows.

Full-Time Faculty – Motivated in large part by growing enrollment that had reached a peak just prior to the release of the Academic Plan in spring 2012, the College added three new full-time faculty positions; these included a second full-time position in math, a second full-time position in biology, and a third full-time position in English. Three additional full-time faculty positions were added due to the expansion of network administration from a certificate to an area of

concentration under Business and Information Technology and the introduction of new degree programs in Electrical Engineering and Cybersecurity. With the exception of Electrical Engineering, all of these new positions were funded through increases to the academic budget. The engineering position was funded by the elimination of a full-time faculty position in Theatre/Speech which had been vacated due to a faculty retirement. A decision was made to eliminate that position due to chronic low enrollment in the College's theatre program and courses.

Campus Facilities - The 2012 Academic Plan stated that, apart from a relatively new library and the recently completed Community Aquatic and Recreation Complex (CARC), Garrett's campus as a whole failed to create an environment that was conducive to learning. Almost all of the College's instructional space (i.e., classrooms, laboratories, etc.,) was located in aging buildings that had seen only minor renovations or improvements, and student spaces, apart from the areas outside of the library and at the front of the 300 building, were almost non-existent. In addition, HVAC and electric systems in most buildings were inadequate and inefficient. In recognition of this situation, the College's 2012 Facilities Master Plan, which was completed in February 2012 (and subsequently updated in 2016), called for the renovation, in phases, of almost all of the campus' major buildings, beginning with the 200 (formerly, Continuing Education) building. The renovation of the Continuing Education building into a STEM education building containing classrooms, labs, faculty offices, and student spaces was completed in time to open for the fall 2018 semester. As part of this project, some renovations were also made to the 100 building to accommodate Continuing Education and Workforce Development and the President's Office, which were displaced as a result of the STEM project.

The second project outlined in the 2012 Master Plan was the renovation and expansion of the old gymnasium (800 building) to become a combined continuing education/performing arts facility. The new Community Education and Performing Arts Center (CEPAC) is currently in the design phase, with construction scheduled to begin in FY2020. This project will be followed by renovations to the Learning Center (600 building), which in addition to the old gym is one of the College's three original buildings; renovation and build-out of the Student Center (400 building), and, finally, renovations to the Administration (700) building, which is the third of the College's three original buildings.

Where Does Garrett College Need to Improve?

A candid assessment of its strengths and weaknesses is necessary before an institution can begin to move forward with respect to achieving its vision. Based on results from the Environmental Scan and SWOT analysis that were conducted in FY2016, as well as more recent observations and analyses of data, there are several areas where Garrett College needs to improve.

- The College continues to be dependent on the use of adjunct instructors in order to meet course offerings. However, because the supply of qualified and experienced instructors who are available locally is limited, the College has sometimes been forced to rely on instructors who possess the necessary academic qualifications but have little or no teaching experience. The College hired an Associate Dean of Academic Affairs this year whose portfolio includes responsibility for adjunct hiring, training and evaluation; a plan for the professional development of both full- and part-time faculty also is being developed.
- The number of entering students who are academically under-prepared for college-level work, as evidenced by more than 80% of entering students needing developmental course work*, continues to be a concern especially because of the effect it has on student retention and success, and ultimately on students' ability to adequately prepare for transfer and/or careers. The 2012 Academic Plan pointed out weaknesses in the College's developmental math, reading, and English programs, both with regard to curriculum, which should have as a goal getting underprepared students into college-level classes as quickly as possible, and with regard to the lack of full-time faculty with developmental education experience who could provide leadership to these programs. The College also needs to improve the effectiveness of its processes for determining incoming students' placement in order to ensure that students are not unnecessarily placed in developmental courses, or at a lower developmental level than what they actually need. In FY19, the College hired an Associate Dean of Academic Affairs with responsibility for developmental education. Funding for two new full-time faculty positions, one in developmental Math and one in development English/Reading, has been identified as an institutional priority in the FY20 budget cycle. The College also reduced the high school grade-point average threshold that qualifies students as "college-ready" from 3.0 to 2.8 to reduce the number of students unnecessarily required to take developmental coursework.

**(In recent years, the percentage of incoming students with developmental needs has averaged about 81%. For fall 2018, however, that percentage fell to 50%. This drop in the percentage is largely the result of a corresponding drop in the population of incoming students residing on campus, which has generally had a disproportionately large number of students who are underprepared for college-level work.)*

- As Garrett College's student population has become increasingly more diverse, the College has had to provide a growing number of support services in order to address the wider range of needs coming from a student population that includes veterans, international students, minorities, students with special needs, students from lower socio-economic backgrounds, first-generation college students, students who are under-prepared for college-level work, and students who may be experiencing mental and/or

emotional difficulties. In some cases, due to limited resources, the services that are being provided may not be adequate. In particular, given the number of students who either are or may be experiencing mental and/or emotional difficulties, some members of the faculty and staff have voiced concern about our students' lack of access to on-campus counseling services.

- Garrett College has been very successful with respect to attracting and enrolling minority students. In fall 2017, minority student enrollment was 27%, which far exceeds the minority representation of Garrett County, which is less than 3%. However, the College has had little success with respect to attracting, hiring, and retaining minority faculty and professional staff. Garrett County is rural, relatively isolated, and sparsely populated with an overwhelmingly white population, an environment that is not particularly attractive to many minority applicants. Moreover, consistently tight budgets have hampered the College's ability to offer competitive salaries. Taken together, these factors have posed a significant challenge to the College's ability to recruit and retain minority faculty and professional staff. Nevertheless, the College needs to continue to focus on the development of strategies for increasing minority representation among its faculty and staff.
- While there is evidence to show that Garrett College's faculty and staff value and support diversity, some cultural and ethnic differences and/or differences regarding gender identity or sexual orientation are not always recognized or fully understood, nor do faculty and staff always know how to appropriately respond to or accommodate such differences. For example, faculty should have a greater awareness of some of the particular socio-economic issues that face many minority students and how those factors may affect their ability to learn or otherwise be successful. Such knowledge can help faculty devise strategies for helping these students to overcome such challenges. These issues include, but are not limited to: the feelings of isolation that are often felt by Black/African-American students on campuses where they are in the minority; lack of college readiness, due to some students having not been properly prepared for the rigors of college coursework; the lack of being able to identify with individuals on their campuses (i.e., faculty/staff) as role models, because those individuals do not look like them. Activities and training designed to increase the faculty and staff's cultural competency could help them to communicate more effectively when dealing with diverse student populations and to respond more appropriately when faced with challenging situations. However, not until very recently has the College taken any definitive action toward developing a plan for providing faculty and staff with cultural competency training; this is being done with assistance from a team of administrators from Prince George's Community College. They will be providing a report to the College

which will outline a comprehensive plan for the provision of cultural competency training for faculty and staff.

- Garrett College differs from most community colleges in that a large majority of its students are traditionally aged. These students attend full-time and take most of their classes during the daytime. Enrollment of part-time and adult students has continued to decline as a proportion of the College's overall student population (with the exception of dual-enrolled high school students who are counted as part-time). The College offers a relatively small number of courses at night and most of these are offered at the McHenry campus. Few credit courses are offered at the College's other instructional sites in Oakland, Grantsville, and Accident. These practices may be limiting access for adult students who have work and/or family responsibilities. The College also needs to increase the range of its online course offerings as a way of better serving the County's adult population.

What Are the Challenges the College Must Overcome?

In order for the College to continue to meet its mission and realize its vision for the future, there are certain challenges it must overcome and potential threats for which it should prepare. The College's greatest and most serious challenge right now is declining enrollment. Multiple factors have contributed to the ongoing decline in enrollment which initially began in fall 2012. However, the most significant among these has been and continues to be demographic shifts in Garrett County's population, which is both aging and declining in numbers, with some of the sharpest declines occurring among the school-age population group. This trend is particularly disturbing considering that for the last 20 years or more, graduates from Garrett County's two high schools have accounted for approximately two-thirds of the College's credit enrollment. Between 2010 and 2018, Garrett County's overall population decreased by 2.5%, with only the age-55-and-older population segment showing any increase. Unfortunately for the College, these local population trends are projected to continue through at least 2022. Other factors contributing to the enrollment decline include the increasing cost of attendance, particularly for out-of-county and out-of-state students where state mandated tuition increases have exceeded the consumer price index; competition from other colleges and universities, particularly in the case of programs like Adventure Sports Management; and that throughout the country, fewer high school graduates are choosing to attend college.

Given that a third of the College's funding comes from tuition revenue, the negative impact falling enrollment has had on the College's budget has been significant. Altogether, since the enrollment peak of fall 2011, the College's enrollment has fallen by 27% (calculated based on fall headcount). The financial impact of such a decrease becomes even more apparent when one considers total credit hours instead headcount, in which case the total decrease amounts to 34.6%. (When tuition revenue is being considered, this difference in percentages (27%

versus 34.6%) emphasizes the importance of evaluating enrollment changes based on total credit hours rather than on headcount as the latter can be misleading. For example, of the 659 students enrolled in fall 2018, 133 were actually dual-enrolled high school students (20%). Most of these students take only one or two classes, and those at a 50% tuition discount.) Declining enrollment can also impact the College's state funding, which is FTE-based, but those impacts are more incremental due to "hold-harmless" provisions in the state funding formula. It is clear that in order to remain financially viable, the College must do everything it can to attract more students from outside the local area as a way of offsetting the declining population of in-county students.

At the same time that enrollment continues to fall, operating expenses continue to escalate, despite efforts to contain costs. For example, since 2012, the net assignable square footage of campus buildings has increased by almost 40%, which has led to significant increases in operating costs. Adding to the burden of meeting these increased operating costs are non-mandatory transfers to cover shortfalls in the costs of operating the Community Aquatic and Recreation Complex (CARC), the ASI Equipment Rental Center, and the two residence halls, with the latter accounting for the largest of the non-mandatory transfers. The situation with regard to subsidizing the operation of the two residence halls has been further exacerbated by a significant increase to the debt service on Laker Hall and the fact that for the last three semesters, the residence halls have been operating at less than full occupancy. Thus, the College faces the dual challenge of balancing falling tuition revenue against the combination of increasing operating costs and ever larger non-mandatory transfers.

With West Virginia University, Frostburg State University, Allegany College of Maryland, and Potomac State College all being located within a 40-plus-mile radius of our main campus, together with the continual increase in the number of courses and programs available online, competition from larger and better resourced educational providers will continue to be an ongoing threat. As a case in point, our once high-enrolled Adventure Sports Management program has suffered a significant decline in enrollment due to competition from similar programs now being offered at other institutions.

Proposals put forth by the Kirwan Commission concerning the establishment of early college programs in the high schools, if adopted by the State, could have a significant impact on the College's future. The establishment of early college programs in the high schools could be a serious threat or a potential opportunity, depending on the particular form these programs might take, since several different models exist.

The College faces other challenges and threats, including uncertainty with regard to the future of state and local funding, despite recent modest increases (taken together, these two sources account for two-thirds of the College's revenue); rising costs associated with federal and state mandates such as the Affordable Health Care Act and the Maryland part-time sick-leave bill,

and proposed increases to the minimum wage; overruns with respect to the amount of Garrett County Scholarship dollars awarded in relation to the spending cap established by the County; the need to replace an aging vehicle fleet; the necessity of keeping technology current with industry standards and of addressing IT security issues; and the College's inability to pay competitive salaries coupled with the relatively high cost of housing in Garrett County, which makes it difficult for the College to hire for some positions.

What Opportunities Should We Pursue?

The College has limited resources to explore opportunities that currently exist or are likely to exist in the near future. As a result, the College should ensure that new opportunities it pursues (1) address strategic objectives; (2) meet community and regional needs, and/or provide new or expanded funding streams; (3) are critically evaluated using internal and external data; and (4) include evaluation and, where applicable, reduction or elimination of programs and services that are no longer necessary and/or are not fiscally sustainable. Based upon those criteria, opportunities the College should pursue include:

- Regular and systematic evaluation of current credit and noncredit programming to ensuring their currency and continued viability, which will allow the College to reduce and/or phase out programs that aren't fiscally sustainable to provide the resources necessary to fund new opportunities;
- Expansion of online programs with clear pathways and adequate support services (online registration, online tutoring, online advising, etc.);
- Development of new academic programs employing a new program development process that includes data-driven decisions in the development of these new programs;
- Specific exploration of STEM-related opportunities that can take advantage of the new STEM Building and its state-of-the-art technology, possibly including STEM-based summer camps and enrichment opportunities that can provide much-needed revenue streams;
- Exploration of corporate training and team-building activities, similar to the fire academy that the College's Continuing Education and Workforce Development (CEWD) Division acquired in 2018, which could also generate additional revenue.
- Continued expansion – based upon development and analysis of data that support the fiscal viability of such expansion – of the College's intercollegiate athletic program, with the process which resulted in the creation of the wrestling program as a model for such initiatives.
- Exploration of potential pooling opportunities, such as we already have with the County and public school system for healthcare, for the procurement of other goods and

services, as well as the possibility of sharing certain services with other institutions or agencies.

Strategies and Initiatives

The strategies and initiatives outlined below link to and directly support one or more of the institutional goals Garrett College considers fundamental to the accomplishment of its Mission and Vision: Accessibility; Student Satisfaction and Success; Educational Effectiveness; Workforce Development; Community Service; and, Effective Use of Financial, Human, and Physical Resources. (The College's six institutional goals are stated in their entirety in Appendix A.) The process that led to the creation of these strategies and initiatives was informed and guided by analysis of an extensive volume of information and data that have been gathered from a wide array of sources, both internal and external to the College. Most of these sources have already been identified, but also include the College's Office of Institutional Research and input from faculty, staff, and administrators as they have reviewed draft portions of this updated plan.

Enhance the Quality of the Teaching and Learning Environment

Garrett College's Mission is diverse, but it is first and foremost an institution where teaching and learning is to take place. Thus, the quality of the teaching and learning environment goes to the very heart and essence of the institution. It is therefore crucial that the College strive to continually improve the quality of the instruction it provides and the programs it delivers. It must also work to create a physical environment that supports and is conducive to the learning process. The following initiatives are designed to improve and enhance the quality of the teaching and learning environment.

- Improve and sustain instructional quality. Examples include:
 - Ensuring that the number and quality of full-time faculty and their qualifications and training are adequate to meet educational and program needs.
 - Implementing an ongoing faculty development program, including the expanded use of instructional technology.
 - Sustaining a student learning outcomes assessment program that regularly assesses student learning at all levels (i.e., course, program, and institutional) and which employs comprehensive use of the Taskstream software acquired to support this effort.
 - Upgrading instructional facilities, beginning with bringing them up to current standards, through the updating and implementation of the College's Master Plan, its Deferred Maintenance Program, and the community college

infrastructure funding that will become available to GC in odd-numbered fiscal years beginning in FY21.

- Create and maintain appropriate environments that promote learning. Examples include:
 - Ensuring faculty, staff and administration are held accountable for meeting high professional standards through regular and comprehensive evaluations.
 - Refurbishing classrooms to make them more attractive and functional.
 - Upgrading instructional equipment and replacing outdated classroom furnishings with furniture that is attractive, comfortable, and functional.
- Initiate a process of continuous program improvement with respect to the College's existing programs. Examples include:
 - Regularly reviewing curricula and learning outcomes and revising them if needed.
 - Adhering to the current formal program review schedule.
 - Ensuring that the curricula for career programs remains current with industry standards and expectations. For example, identifying additional applicable industry-recognized certifications and ensuring that students are adequately prepared to pass the tests to receive these certifications.
 - Ensuring that the facilities and equipment used by career programs are adequate and up-to-date with respect to industry standards.
 - Identifying appropriate performance indicators and establishing peer and aspirational benchmarks as appropriate.

Develop Instructional Programs that Define Garrett College as One of the Region's Premier Institutions for Postsecondary Education and Lifelong Learning

Part of Garrett College's Mission is that *"We offer associate degrees and certificate programs as well as continuing education to meet the transfer, career, workforce development, and lifelong learning needs of our students and the community."* and that *"We are committed to the ongoing development of engaging, innovative, and sustainable curricula, programs, and initiatives that are responsive to a changing world."* Moreover, given the County's aging population and the concomitant decline in the number of high-school-age students, which is expected to continue at least through 2022, the College is becoming increasingly dependent on attracting out-of-county and out-of-state students in order to keep enrollment at a viable level.

The College also desires to distinguish itself through newly developed non-credit courses and programs that provide opportunities for lifelong learning as well as workforce development. The following initiatives involve development of new programs for which there is either a

demonstrated need or for which the College is uniquely equipped to deliver, in large part because of its location and the surrounding natural environment.

- Use the availability of the new state-of-the-art STEM facility as an opportunity to improve and expand the College's programs that involve science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), as well as an opportunity to develop training programs (both credit and noncredit) leading to the acquisition of advanced technical skills or directed toward the application of new and emerging technologies, which in turn might lead to the formation of new businesses.
- Create new programs employing a new program development process that includes data-driven decisions that quantify the likely viability of these new programs.
- Explore the feasibility of offering other educational programming opportunities such as corporate training, STEM camps, and various experiential learning activities/camps that could be set in the context of the region's (County's) natural environment and complement its tourism/adventure sports industry, possibly taking advantage of the synergies that could result from existing programs such as Adventure Sports Management and Natural Resources and Wildlife Technology.
- Monitor the outcome of the Kirwan Commission's recommendations relating to the establishment of early college programs so that the College is in a position to work with the Garrett County Public Schools to implement a program appropriate for Garrett County.

Better Serve the Student Body

The ultimate measure of an institution's effectiveness with respect to carrying out its educational mission is the success of its students. Student success is usually considered to be graduation (i.e., completion). However, in some cases, it may consist of a successful transfer to another institution either prior to or after graduation. A number of processes, programs, and support services are needed in order for students to be successful, particularly the growing number of students who are considered at-risk. The initiatives that follow are aimed at improving and/or expanding the support services that the College needs to provide in order to ensure that a greater number of students succeed in completing their programs of study or are otherwise successful in achieving their educational and career goals.

- Develop and implement strategies specifically aimed at increasing the number of students who successfully complete their programs of study (graduate) or who successfully transfer to other postsecondary institutions either before or after graduation, depending on their particular educational goals.
- Continue to enhance an academic advising program that, taking into account students' educational and career goals, moves them from initial registration (course selection)

through graduation as efficiently as possible (including any developmental studies that may be required), provides guidance to undecided students to help them establish more specific educational and career goals as early as possible, and facilitates transfer for students wishing to pursue further education at another college or university.

- Enrich academic support services offerings to address the growing academic needs of a diverse student population. Expand the Early Alert system with regard to faculty and staff engagement and the number of students supported, and encourage a more wide-spread application of this system. Develop and implement a program of online student self-registration appropriate for Garrett College while maintaining high-impact academic advising.
- Explore options for restructuring and improving the developmental studies program (i.e., developmental math, English, and reading) to ensure that students are ready for college-level courses. Determine the best curriculum and instructors for developmental courses.
- Improve and expand the full range of academic and other student support services to match enrollment demand, giving particular attention to the provision of the support services needed by under-prepared and other at-risk students (such as those who are in academic difficulty), as well as students with special needs.
- Ensure that the enrollment targets and retention goals outlined in the comprehensive Enrollment Management Plan are sustainable and in balance with the College's available resources with respect to instruction and student support services.
- Continue to pursue and establish relationships with other postsecondary institutions to facilitate transfer and articulation, broaden educational opportunities both locally and remotely, and open up opportunities for mutually beneficial cooperation.
- Implement the strategies recommended by the Student Success Committee as part of the effort aimed at alleviating barriers to student success.

Improve Access and Support a More Diverse Campus Community

Despite Garrett County's rural and relatively isolated location, and a population that is more than 97% white, the fact that a quarter of Garrett College's student population is non-white represents a significant achievement with respect to creating a more racially or ethnically diverse campus community. With regard to age diversity, however, as was pointed out earlier, Garrett College is unlike most community colleges in that a large majority of its students are traditional age and attend full-time. Enrollment of part-time and adult students has continued to decline as a proportion of the College's overall student population.

With most of the College's focus on its traditional-age population, it is possible the County's adult population is not being as well served as it should be, at least where credit courses and

programs are concerned. Apart from online course offerings (which have increased somewhat), relatively few face-to-face courses are being offered at times or locations that are convenient for adult students. This pattern has become even more of an issue as the course schedule has contracted in the face of declining enrollment. While there is some question as to the actual size of the adult market for postsecondary education in Garrett County, the College must do what it can to capture as much of that market as possible. Clearly, though, the College's Division of Continuing Education and Workforce Development is better equipped to serve the needs of most of the County's adult population.

While the Garrett County Scholarship Program and other forms of aid have provided opportunities for greater numbers of local students to access higher education, there is still a relatively high number of incoming students who are academically underprepared for college-level work. For fall 2018, about 33% of the entering Garrett County students and 78% of first-time residence hall students tested into one or more developmental courses. Statistics, both internal and external, have shown that students needing developmental course work are much less likely to successfully complete their academic programs. The following initiatives are planned to increase and improve opportunities for all students to access higher education:

- Actively collaborate with the Garrett County schools to assist in helping students prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and to access a broader spectrum of educational opportunities, including dual-enrollment, receipt of articulated and/or transcribed credit, etc.
- Improve access by ensuring that course schedules and the locations where courses are offered are responsive to the needs of part-time and adult students, and by increasing the number of distance learning courses and programs the College offers.
- Continue to refine and carry out the Cultural Diversity Plan which the College submits each year to MHEC. Follow the recommendations in development by the team from Prince George's Community College for providing cultural competency training to faculty, staff, and administrators.

Help Build Garrett County's Future

Workforce Development is a central component of Garrett College's mission, involving both the credit and non-credit divisions of the institution and linking the College's role as an education and training provider to its role in the promotion and support of economic development within Garrett County and the surrounding area. Thus, workforce development is a key element of both this Academic Plan and also the College's FY2017-2020 Strategic Plan, as is evidenced by the latter's Goal 1.1: *"To provide credit and noncredit programs and other learning opportunities which align with local and regional labor market needs and provide a sustainable competitive advantage."* Garrett County's Economic Development Strategic Plan also focuses

on workforce development and envisions using the College's Career Technology Training Center (CTTC) as a centralized hub for workforce development, providing training to encourage the growth and expansion of local businesses, and preparing an exemplary workforce that will attract new businesses. The County's stagnant population growth and declining public school enrollment further illustrate the necessity of retaining our existing workforce and developing new strategies for growth. Through innovative partnerships, the development of responsive curricula to address employer needs, and provision of leadership on County-wide initiatives, Garrett College can make a positive impact on the economic health and growth of Garrett County. The initiatives that follow address training needs for business leaders and entrepreneurs, short-term job training programs leading to licensure and/or certification, and preparation of under-prepared adults to enter, re-enter or move up within the local workforce.

- Develop training opportunities that support economic development through the creation of new businesses, which can provide jobs for County residents; the further development of existing businesses that are poised for expansion and growth; and the preparation of a competitive workforce, including an Adult Basic Education program that provides under-prepared adult with the basic skills to succeed in the workplace.
- Provide short-term training, predominantly leading to licensure and certification, to address ongoing local and regional employment needs (e.g., health care, construction, tourism and manufacturing), while responding to emerging and cyclical employment trends.

Facilitating Actions

Facilitating actions describe other activities that need to be carried out or changes that need to be made if the College is to successfully implement the strategies and initiatives outlined in this Academic Plan.

- Organize institutional resources (i.e., human, fiscal, physical) as needed to facilitate the implementation of the strategies and initiatives outlined in this Academic Plan.
- Identify the College's staffing needs with respect to faculty and professional and support staff, taking into account falling enrollment, increasing operating costs, and attrition due to retirement, giving particular attention to the desired balance between full- and part-time faculty. Then, allocate the resources necessary to achieve the desired staffing levels, taking into account the findings of the recent Compensation Study.
- Eliminate barriers that exist between the Academic and the Continuing Education and Workforce Development divisions in order to make more effective use of our instructional resources and to be able to provide a fuller range of educational, training,

and experiential learning programs and opportunities for both credit and non-credit students, including opportunities for “career laddering.”

- Explore ways in which the Garrett College Foundation might help to support the strategies and initiatives outlined in this Academic Plan.
- Develop and submit to the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) a 10-Year Facilities Master Plan that is designed to support the strategies and initiatives outlined in this Academic Plan.
- Continue to actively participate in the Maryland Association of Community Colleges (MACC) and the various statewide affinity groups so that the College is aware of emerging issues and able to respond strategically.
- Maintain a strong relationship with Garrett County Government.