STRATEGIC PLAN 2017–2020

Excelsior College
In 1971, the Board of Regents of the University of the State of New York founded the Regents External Degree Program — the forerunner to Excelsior College — to provide educational opportunity to adult learners. The program was initiated with a deep commitment to those historically underserved by higher education institutions.

Over the years, the Regents External Degree Program was transformed to a state institution called Regents College, specializing in credit aggregation and assessment, and then to Excelsior College, a not-for-profit online institution with a global reach.

To date, more than 170,000 adult learners have taken advantage of Excelsior’s unique value proposition — a liberal transfer policy accepting credit earned at accredited institutions, the assessment of prior learning, and online instruction and self-study options — to achieve their educational goals.

As the College has evolved, so too has the world around us. This 2017–2020 Strategic Plan establishes the foundation for future growth and success by maintaining a diverse and inclusive environment, building on our strengths, and elevating our capacity to meet the challenges facing higher education in a rapidly changing environment.

This plan requires us to achieve excellence and continuous improvement in three core areas:

“We will reclaim our place as a leader and innovator in higher education based on Excelsior’s mission and Excelsior’s values.”

James N. Baldwin, JD, EdD
President of Excelsior College
Inaugural Address, July 14, 2017
1. ACADEMIC QUALITY AND STUDENT SERVICES

Improvements to our academic programs, courses, and student services will support and engage our students every step of the way.

2. OPTIMIZED AUTOMATION

Investments in technology and automation will improve financial management and business processes, enhancing our ability to collaborate, solve problems, and deliver excellent services to students, quickly and effectively.

3. STRATEGIC MARKETING

A strategic marketing program will build a brand to spur future growth and ensure Excelsior no longer remains the “best kept secret” in higher education.

This plan emerged from a deliberate, collaborative planning process involving stakeholders from across the College community. It is dynamic and will be reviewed, assessed, and updated as appropriate over the coming years.

Additionally, the College’s leadership will identify critical in-process measures of performance and key performance indicators to inform the Board of Trustees and stakeholders of the College about progress throughout the implementation phase.

The adoption of this plan sets a course for future success. Cognizant of our legacy, we are guided by our core values, a shared commitment to the strength of our mission, and the resolve to always put students first.
ACADEMIC QUALITY AND STUDENT SERVICES
Excelsior College will create and sustain a culture of innovation in the provision of academic programs and student services. This will be achieved by continuously improving the student experience.

The consolidation of academic programs and student services under the Provost, refinement of policies and procedures in support of academic achievement, and devolution of authority to frontline staff will enable admissions counselors, academic advisors, and success coaches to effectively and readily identify and resolve student issues and problems. Additionally, self-service solutions will be available for students who seek such services.

Leveraging market research and development, Excelsior will diversify and elevate its portfolio of programs and introduce flagship offerings. Degree programs that are no longer serving an educational imperative or market demand will be eliminated.

We will recruit and retain faculty with a rich background of academic and work experience. With their help, we will leverage innovative academic technology and practices to foster robust learning communities that stimulate critical thought and inspire curiosity.

By mapping curricula to career-ready competencies and offering opportunities for skill-development through virtual internships, graduates will leave Excelsior prepared for advancement in their chosen fields and with the confidence to affect change in their communities.
Defining Objectives:

1. Improve the student experience from first contact through degree conferral
2. Create a diverse portfolio of high-quality market- and mission-driven programs
3. Be explicit about career readiness and professional advancement learning outcomes
4. Implement policies and practices consistent with our intention to provide high value and excellent service
5. Recruit, develop, and retain high-quality faculty
Excelsior College will optimize processes and information systems to be more agile and adapt to changing student needs. We recently launched projects to replace our financial, student information, and reporting systems with an industry-leading enterprise resource planning and data warehouse.

The forthcoming information systems and data warehouse enable delivery of new services. The services include enhanced instructional, web, and mobile apps ensuring a significantly improved student experience. College staff will work within a unified data environment where students will receive consistent and responsive support when communicating with the College. Furthermore, leadership will apply analytics to inform decisions and improve operations to encourage student success and increase degree completion.

**Defining Objectives:**

1. Improve business and financial systems (FIS)
2. Deliver an agile student information system
3. Inform decision making through data analytics and reporting
THEMATIC GOAL 3

STRATEGIC MARKETING
Excelsior College will create a strategic marketing program that increases brand recognition and builds qualified inquiries that convert to enrollments.

We will create a brand identity tied to Excelsior’s mission and values that reflects our commitment to guiding adult learners in their journey to fulfill their potential and improve their quality of life. Staff, faculty, and alumni will serve as brand ambassadors, allowing us to attract and retain students, talent, donors, advocates, and supporters.

High-impact partnerships will broaden the reach of the College, provide career opportunities within students’ companies, and enable Excelsior to leverage students’ prior training to help with degree completion.

Excelsior will embrace a content-driven community and engagement framework to achieve sustainable growth, building on positive word-of-mouth and peer-to-peer recommendations. We will have more direct mail and geographically targeted campaigns that focus on Excelsior as a completion college.

**Defining Objectives:**

1. **Raise brand awareness**
2. **Increase qualified inquiries**
EXCELSIOR: FUTURE STATE

We have a diversified portfolio of market and mission-driven degree programs.

We have a career readiness component integrated into every degree program.

We have positioned Excelsior as an institution of choice for quality faculty.

We have removed barriers to academic progress and student success.

We have informed decision making through data analytics and reporting.

We have improved student services through technology and training.

We have a fully integrated enterprise resource planning system and automated business practices.

We have an effective alumni engagement program.

We have a fully developed College brand.

We have a fully implemented strategic marketing plan.

We have increased qualified inquiries.

We have reclaimed our place as a recognized innovator and leader in adult higher education.