

# **THRIVE 2024**

## *2021-2022 Annual Plan*

September 2021

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**THOMAS  
NELSON** *becoming* **VIRGINIA PENINSULA  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

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# Introduction

In June 2021, the College adopted a new strategic plan, Thrive 2024, to guide its operations and improvement efforts over the three-year period from 2021 to 2024. Using the new strategic plan as its guide, the College's priorities for the future will center on the following six strategic goal areas:

- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (Goal D)
- Instructional Innovation (Goal I)
- Powerful Partnerships (Goal P)
- Modernized Marketing and Recruitment (Goal M)
- Employee Investment and Development (Goal E)
- Transparent and Authentic Communication (Goal T)

The College sees a bright and dynamic future with this new strategic plan. Under its goals, objectives, and strategies, the College pledges and commits to creating a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive community of learners as it advances the mission and vision, commits to its core values, improves the lives of students, more fully invests in the value of our employees, and partners in new and deeper ways with our community.

This companion document outlines the major priority areas and associated strategies that the College is committed to pursuing in Year 1 (2021-2022) of the Thrive 2024 strategic plan. The document begins with an overview of foundational work that the College is currently undertaking to position itself for success. Subsequent sections include the key performance indicators that the College has established for regular tracking throughout the three-year period of the plan, the specific objectives and strategies that the College will be focused on in the first year of the plan, and the tracking mechanisms that will be used to report out on Year 1 progress in a complete and transparent manner.

## Foundational Work for Success

To help ensure success in reaching its strategic goals, the College has identified several areas of additional focus that will be needed as part of Year 1 of the plan. The first of these is the need to establish College-wide shared definitions for each of the major words and phrases emphasized within the plan. These include words such as diversity, equity, inclusion, and innovation, as well phrases like 'powerful partnerships' and 'authentic communication'. By defining these clearly, and building shared understanding across the institution, the College will be more successful with its engagement and improvement efforts in those areas.

The second area of foundational work is the need to align resources and recruitment/hiring decisions with the goal areas of the strategic plan. Many of the strategies outlined within the plan require dedicated financial and personnel resources, and the College will need to allocate resources wisely and prioritize those that are likely to contribute most greatly to success with its strategic goals.

The third and final area of foundational work is the need to embed and integrate the new strategic plan and its goals across the College and throughout the work of all offices and committees. The College recognizes that it will be successful with its new strategic plan only if

there is cross-institution knowledge and buy-in regarding the strategic goals and related efforts to more fully execute on the College mission.

## Key Performance Indicators

As part of its planning efforts for Year 1 of the strategic plan, the College has identified a set of key performance indicators that will be tracked throughout the three years of the plan and used to evaluate progress in goal achievement. The College recognizes that success in moving the needle on these indicators will depend on efforts from multiple strategic goal areas and related strategies. The most closely aligned goals are listed after each performance indicator.

- **Increasing Applications and Applicant Conversion:** The number of applicants to the College and their conversation rate to enrolled students (Goals M, P, T)
- **Building Enrollment:** The number of full-time equivalent students (FTES) enrolled at the College, in both academic credit and workforce development courses and programs (Goals M, P, T)
- **Increasing Access to Programs and Courses:** The percentage of the College's courses and programs that can be completed through multiple instructional modalities or at multiple locations (Goals I, D)
- **Increasing Retention Rates:** The percentage of entering students that are retained from initial fall to the subsequent fall (Goals I, M, D)
- **Increasing Completion Rates:** The percentage of entering students that earn a postsecondary award within six years of entering the College (Goals I, D)
- **Closing Equity Gaps in Student Outcomes:** The level of consistency in major student outcomes (applicant conversion, course success, retention, progression, and completion) among students of different gender, race/ethnicity, age, and socioeconomic status (Goals D, I)
- **Deepening and Diversifying College Partnerships:** The number of new partners who engage with the College, and the level of investment by partners into College initiatives and programs (Goals P, T)
- **Improving Employee and Student Experience:** The percentage of employees and students who indicate positive responses to key survey questions regarding College services, communication efforts, and matters related to diversity, equity, and inclusion (Goals E, T, D)
- **Retaining Highly Skilled and Capable Employees:** The percentage of employees who are retained through their first three years at the College (Goals E, T, D)
- **Engaging in the Work of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion:** The percentage of College employees engaging in training and professional development around diversity, equity, and inclusion (Goals D, T)

# Strategic Goals and Year 1 Focus Areas

Planning for Year 1 work on the strategic plan has also included careful consideration of the objectives and strategies under each strategic goal that are most vital to be addressed early in the work of the strategic plan and must be prioritized. In the sections below, the prioritized Year 1 objectives and strategies for each strategic goal are outlined and described. The objective and strategy numbers from the original strategic plan document are included for easy reference. In addition, each objective is assigned one or more lead areas within the College's organizational structure. By prioritizing this work and assigning clear responsibility for associated tasks, the College seeks to have a highly productive and impactful 2021-2022 year.

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## DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

*The College will create and sustain a culture in which every community member is valued, embraced, respected, appreciated, and treated fairly, and the diversity of our peoples, perspectives, and ideas is celebrated*

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### CONTEXT

Diversity, equity, and inclusion have always been hallmarks of the community college mission to expand access to postsecondary education and the opportunities it brings. The College now finds itself in a time where we can reaffirm our commitment to the ideals of equity and inclusion and serve as a community leader on those topics. To keep ourselves at the forefront on this work, the College sees a need to examine our own policies, practices, and procedures to make sure they support these values. There are also significant opportunities to develop new educational and training courses and programs to help individuals and organizations be keenly aware of issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion, with the intent to make all feel welcomed and appreciated and ensure they are treated fairly and respectfully. To be fully successful in our mission, the College will need to cultivate and maintain a culture that emphasizes the strength that comes from a diversity of peoples, perspectives, and ideas.

### STRATEGIES FOR YEAR 1

For the 2021-2022 academic year, the College will focus its efforts on the following:

- **Objective D.1:** Students will experience diversity and inclusion in every aspect of classroom and campus life, and embrace and appreciate the diversity of their learning community (Led by Student Affairs, Workforce Development, and Academic Affairs)
- **Strategy D.1 B:** Carefully analyze student-focused College policies, procedures, and practices to look for areas of potential bias and revise to make them more equitable and inclusive

- **Objective D.2:** Employees will be effectively equipped to collaborate with diverse groups and be inclusive in their deliberations and decision-making processes (Led by Human Resources)
  - **Strategy D.2 A:** Expand diversity, equity, and inclusion trainings and professional development events, and create systems to provide all employees with equitable access to those opportunities
  - **Strategy D.2 B:** Carefully analyze employee-focused College policies, procedures, and practices to look for areas of potential bias and revise to make them more equitable and inclusive
- **Objective D.3:** The Peninsula Community will see the College as a champion for diversity and inclusion and as an institution that is a true reflection of the diverse, equitable, and inclusive values across the community (Led by Workforce Development, Institutional Advancement, and Academic Affairs)
  - **Strategy D.3 A:** Host workshops, conferences, study circles, and other community sessions regarding diversity and inclusion topics and considerations
  - **Strategy D.3 C:** Integrate diversity, equity, and inclusion considerations into all aspects of the new strategic plan

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## INSTRUCTIONAL INNOVATION

*The College will offer our community guided access to an innovative set of educational and training programs, attendance options, and high-impact instructional practices that provide students with clear pathways to success and high-quality, convenient options for reaching their learning goals*

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### CONTEXT

Instruction has always been at the core of the College’s mission, and quality instruction requires ongoing adaptation and innovation. The needs of our students and community are ever-changing, and urgency for change and differentiation has increased with the COVID-19 pandemic and its disruptions to almost every aspect of the College and the Peninsula community. Now, more than ever, it is vital that the College and our faculty find new and innovative ways to engage with students and promote individualized learning, whether through online, hybrid, hyflex, or traditional face-to-face format. Community colleges have always sought to expand access to higher education, and the necessities of the pandemic, combined with new technologies, have expanded opportunities to meet our students where they are and in formats that meet the diversity of obligations and demands placed on their lives.

## STRATEGIES FOR YEAR 1

For the 2021-2022 academic year, the College will focus its efforts on the following:

- **Objective I.1:** Students will have ready access to consistently high-quality courses and programs, regardless of the type of course or the manner in which it is delivered (Led by Workforce Development and Academic Affairs)
  - **Strategy I.1 A:** Guide students to their most beneficial credential/degree by communicating both workforce-focused and degree-seeking opportunities through advisors and the College website
- **Objective I.2:** Employees will be empowered to innovate and find new solutions to increase student access and supporting student learning (Led by Student Affairs and Academic Affairs)
  - **Strategy I.2 B:** Maximize the effectiveness of course instruction modalities/modes offered at the College by supporting ongoing and continuous professional development for employees
- **Objective I.3:** The Peninsula Community will have increased access to higher education and be able to more fully engage with the College regardless of technology or transportation limitations (Led by Workforce Development, Academic Affairs, and Finance and Administration)
  - **Strategy I.3 B:** Build academic schedules that prioritize the needs of our community and expand access to all, regardless of their geographic location or socioeconomic status

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## POWERFUL PARTNERSHIPS

*The College will have flourishing relationships with education, industry, locality, and other community partners that rise to new levels of engagement and generate clear, demonstrable benefits for our students and our Peninsula community*

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## CONTEXT

As a comprehensive community college, we recognize the need to be an engaged partner with all sectors of our community in order to fulfill our role in enhancing the civic and economic vitality of the Peninsula community. While the College already has many valuable relationships with our regional partners, there is room for growth in both the number of partnerships and the depth of those relationships. To best serve our students, the College must build and maintain deep, high-quality relationships that result in demonstrable outcomes and positive impacts for all involved.

## STRATEGIES FOR YEAR 1

For the 2021-2022 academic year, the College will focus its efforts on the following:

- **Objective P.1:** Students will have new and expanded opportunities to participate in work-based learning opportunities and innovative educational partnerships (Led by Workforce Development, Academic Affairs, and Institutional Advancement)
  - **Strategy P.1 A:** Actively engage business and corporate leadership in a Business Advisory Group for the College that provides input and insight into current business practices, innovations, and requirements to ensure that curricula remain updated and reflect leading edge practices
  - **Strategy P.1 B:** Conduct a comprehensive and thorough review of all College curricula with a committee of faculty, staff, workforce development, advisory, and business practitioners who are recognized as experts in their fields to ensure all current and future written, taught, and assessed curriculum, instruction, and experiences prepare students with 21<sup>st</sup> century skills to meet regional economic needs
- **Objective P.3:** Employees will be better connected with the community and empowered to foster new and deeper relationships with community partners (Led by Workforce Development, Student Affairs, and Academic Affairs)
  - **Strategy P.3 D:** Engage regularly with all local Chambers of Commerce and Regional Workforce Development Authority leaders to remain current and updated on regional workforce and employment trends and needs
  - **Strategy P.3 E:** Engage in regular and focused meetings with school division superintendents, career and technical education (CTE) directors, curriculum and instruction leaders, and Governor's School leadership in the region to focus on workforce certification programs and student needs, as well as dual enrollment courses, in an effort to increase the number and variety of courses offered to high school students
- **Objective P.4:** The Peninsula Community will leverage the College as a centralized hub for community partnership and civic and economic growth (Led by Workforce Development and Institutional Advancement)
  - **Strategy P.4 B:** Identify and define levels of partner engagement that communicate the needs of the College and the degrees of engagement it is seeking from its community partners across time, talent, and treasure

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## MODERNIZED MARKETING AND RECRUITMENT

*The College will more fully connect with our community and clearly articulate the value inherent in attaining one of its credentials, so that residents of the Virginia Peninsula will consider the College as their preferred option for postsecondary education and training.*

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### CONTEXT

To be successful in achieving its mission, the College must be visible within our community and valued by our community for its contributions to education and training, partnership, and community enrichment. As the College emerges from the COVID-19 pandemic and pursues a new name for the institution, there are fresh opportunities to market the value of the College in new and innovative ways. There are also strong prospects for the College to appeal to an even broader and more diverse set of potential students and partners. Through this work, the College seeks to reaffirm its significant role in the community and re-emerge as a leading voice within the Peninsula Community that speaks to the values, attitudes, and prevailing feelings of our community.

### STRATEGIES FOR YEAR 1

For the 2021-2022 academic year, the College will focus its efforts on the following:

- **Objective M.1:** Students will be engaged across digital platforms in a more intentional and thorough manner (Led by Institutional Advancement, Student Affairs, and Academic Affairs)
  - **Strategy M.1 B:** Ensure that faculty and staff are trained in the use of identified/selected platforms to increase connectivity opportunities with their students regarding advisory sessions, office hours, tutoring, instruction, lab, research, internship, externship, and partnership opportunities that they sponsor and oversee
  - **Strategy M.1 D:** Review and redesign the current College website to ensure that all social media and digital communications platforms are directly linked to the system and offer ease of access and communication in a systemic fashion
- **Objective M.2:** Students will experience a 'Culture of Caring' throughout all messaging and outreach (Led by Student Affairs and Workforce Development)
  - **Strategy M.2 A:** Provide ongoing, meaningful, and differentiated professional development in cross-cultural understanding and cultural competency to faculty and staff to identify and support student needs and understand the unique cultural identities and experiences of each student
  - **Strategy M.2 B:** Identify and eliminate specific barriers in the application and enrollment processes that lead to equity disparities and develop onboarding processes that reduce equity gaps for all students

- **Strategy M.2 F:** Provide leadership training and professional development for student support services staff and leadership that emphasizes equity and student success
- **Objective M.3:** Employees and students will more fully serve as ambassadors in the community and faces of the College (Led by the President’s Office)
  - **Strategy M.3 C:** Intentionally increase the presence of College faculty, staff, and leadership throughout the community through participation and presence/membership in civic organizations, local boards, parent teacher associations, civic and faith organizations, military support organizations, and business and professional organizations as representatives and ambassadors of the mission and vision of the College
- **Objective M.5:** The Peninsula Community will experience a new annual marketing approach that saturates messaging across all media platforms and groups and engages everyone in the work of the College (Led by Institutional Advancement)
  - **Strategy M.5 A:** Establish a Communications Committee for the College to work with all divisions and leadership levels, as well as marketing consultants, to develop a comprehensive, system-wide communication plan
  - **Strategy M.5 B:** Identify social media platforms that inclusively and universally connect and resonate with community end-users to push out marketing information, registration reminders, event dates and times, and other identified information that is vital to College life and programming
  - **Strategy M.5 C:** Work in partnership with Special Events, Communications, Admissions, and all divisions at the College to develop a comprehensive, ongoing, and confirmed calendar of all College events to ensure that all public information is timely and current
  - **Strategy M.5 E:** Review and redesign the College website and social media platforms to ensure that all access barriers, including those related to Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance, are eliminated, and that layouts and information remain available to a global audience
  - **Strategy M.5 F:** Include and communicate all elements of the renaming process for the College, ensuring that the decision regarding a new name for the College is a process that is communicated through the marketing plan to engage, involve, and gain input from all community stakeholders and is inclusive of all considerations for rebranding and marketing the College once a decision is rendered
- **Objective M.6:** The Peninsula Community will benefit from the College reconnecting with and enhancing relationships with the school divisions, their superintendents, and their counselors (Led by Student Affairs)
  - **Strategy M.6 A:** Organize and commit to regular and consistent meetings throughout the academic year with school division superintendents and School Board leaders, school principals, and school counselors that highlight the services that the College provides to PK-12 students, emphasize the value and benefit of community college coursework and programming, and listens carefully to the needs, programming, and initiatives of each regional school division to provide

support, professional development, and partner opportunities that strengthen PK-12 education across the Peninsula Community

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## EMPLOYEE INVESTMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

*The College will be a thriving community of personal enrichment and continual learning – one where all employees feel valued and can see how their personal and professional growth contributes to the success of the College and our students*

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### CONTEXT

At the core of the College's mission is a desire to change lives. While this is most often interpreted as a student-focused aspiration, it also applies to employees of the College. To be successful personally and professionally and to help the College remain competitive and resilient, employees need to have access to high-quality, ongoing professional development opportunities. Excellent service is directly correlated to strong employee development and training. By focusing on employee experience, development, and retention, the College can better empower our students to succeed.

### STRATEGIES FOR YEAR 1

For the 2021-2022 academic year, the College will focus its efforts on the following:

- **Objective E.1:** Students will experience streamlined services that achieve better efficiencies and improve the overall student experience (Led by Student Affairs and Workforce Development)
  - **Strategy E.1 A:** Engage each division and administrative area in efficiency training that produces process maps of each service across the College, with a focus on improving efficiency and decreasing the amount of time, steps, and cost of each identified service or process
- **Objective E.3:** Employees will have access and be expected to participate in comprehensive diversity and inclusion training (Led by Human Resources)
  - **Strategy E.3 B:** Provide cultural competency training for all employees
  - **Strategy E.3 C:** Engage faculty discipline teams in an equity-driven review of curriculum content for cultural responsiveness and representation to make learning experiences connected, equitable, diverse, and inclusive for everyone
- **Objective E.4:** The Peninsula Community will be served by a College that is better prepared for the future and able to build leadership capacity throughout its organization (Led by the President's Office)
  - **Strategy E.4 A:** Engage College leadership, faculty, and staff in training and development designed to promote good listening, discourse, shared governance,

and consensus-building in an effort to build better inclusive and shared decision-making processes and authentic and transparent communication channels

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## TRANSPARENT AND AUTHENTIC COMMUNICATION

*The College will foster a rich culture of information exchange and idea sharing that focuses on clear, timely, and repeated dissemination of the key information for our employees and students, as well as generous avenues and opportunities for conversation, collegial discourse, and feedback*

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### CONTEXT

Communication is a challenge for many organizations and institutions – especially for those with a multitude and variety of stakeholders and constituencies. As a comprehensive community college, we must always pursue new and improved methods of sharing important information with our students, employees, and community partners and expanded opportunities to understand and value their ideas, feedback, and concerns. Communication has become even more important during the COVID-19 pandemic, as organizations and institutions have been forced to quickly adapt and ensure that new and ever-changing information is shared quickly and effectively. The College firmly believes that addressing communication challenges and promoting the generous sharing and exchanging of ideas will bring about broad, positive impacts for our students, employees, and community.

### STRATEGIES FOR YEAR 1

For the 2021-2022 academic year, the College will focus its efforts on the following:

- **Objective T.1:** Students will have clear channels of communication with the College to ask questions, resolve issues, and receive the information they need to be successful and feel valued (Led by Student Affairs, Academic Affairs, and Workforce Development)
  - **Strategy T.1 B:** Utilize newly-adopted technologies to host virtual town halls and forums that provide broad and transparent updates to students and allow time for questions, feedback, and conversation
- **Objective T.2:** Employees will be more fully engaged in College initiatives and upcoming changes that will impact their work, and will be able to plan ahead and share their ideas and expertise for the betterment of all involved (Led by the President's Office)
  - **Strategy T.2 B:** Hold all employees accountable for communicating comprehensively and openly with students, faculty, staff, and administrators on topics within their area of responsibility and expertise
  - **Strategy T.2 D:** Utilize newly-adopted technologies to host virtual town halls and forums that provide broad and transparent updates to students and employees and allow time for questions, feedback, and conversation

- **Strategy T.2 E:** Integrate the principles of shared governance and shared leadership into the decision-making fabric of the College
- **Objective T.3:** The Peninsula Community will hear from the College more regularly and have access to information about major changes and opportunities to benefit from the College's programs and services (Led by Institutional Advancement)
  - **Strategy T.3 A:** Identify and implement new means for communicating broadly with the Peninsula Community and its diversity of residents
  - **Strategy T.3 B:** Identify and publish, in a single location, sets of official communication and feedback channels for community members

## Reporting and Transparency

As the College moves forward with implementing the strategies outlined in this Year 1 annual plan, it will be reporting regularly on progress that it has made and efforts that are still underway or need additional focus. Reporting will occur quarterly throughout the year, and reports will be distributed widely throughout the College community and posted on the College website.

Once initial data on the key performance indicators are available, they will be similarly disseminated and updated at least annually as new data become available.