

An aerial photograph of the Rhode Island College campus and surrounding area. The image shows a large green baseball field in the foreground, surrounded by trees and parking lots. In the background, there are several large, multi-story buildings, likely college buildings, and a dense forest. The city of Providence is visible in the distance, with its skyline and the Rhode River. The sky is clear and blue.

**R H O D E
I S L A N D
C O L L E G E**

*Interim Report
for* **The New
England
Commission
of Higher
Education**

August 2025

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INTRODUCTION

Process

In early 2024, Dr. Sara Phillips and Dr. Justin DiLibero were named as co-chairs of the interim report team for Rhode Island College (RIC). Phillips serves as the director of institutional research and planning and is the accreditation liaison officer, while DiLibero is the dean of the Zvart Onanian School of Nursing.

In concert with the interim provost and vice president for academic affairs, the co-chairs created four working groups to support data gathering for this report: two groups combining the areas of emphasis identified by the Commission in response to the last Self-Study with their relevant standards, a group to address Standard Eight and the E-series forms, and a group to address all remaining standards and substantive change-based areas of emphasis. Individuals with particular expertise were approached to co-chair three of the work groups, with DiLibero agreeing to co-chair the fourth group alongside the assistant vice provost for academic affairs.

The members of the work groups were a mix of individuals requested to serve because of their position and volunteers from across campus. Along with Phillips and DiLibero, at least one co-chair from each group was identified to serve as a member of the report steering committee to provide accountability and to promote coordination between the work groups. The names of those serving in each work group and their additional roles in the interim report process are provided below.

Group 1: Areas of Emphasis 1, 3, 4, and Standards One and Two	
Kim Bright, Executive Director, Strategic Initiatives	Group 1 Co-Chair; Steering Committee
Dr. Praveena Gullapalli, Associate Professor, Anthropology	Group 1 Co-Chair
Dr. Sara Phillips, Director, Institutional Research and Planning	Process Co-Chair; Steering Committee
Dr. Melissa Marcotte, Associate Professor, Psychology	
Michael Caine, Technician Support Specialist I, Information Technology Services	
Group 2: Area of Emphasis 2 and Standard Five	
Dr. Jennifer Boulay, Director, Hope Scholarship	Group 2 Co-Chair; Steering Committee
James Tweed, Dean of Enrollment Management (former)	Group 2 Co-Chair
Kathleen Pannozzi, Adjunct Faculty III, Education Studies	
Maria Muccio-Raposo, Director, Center for Scholar Development	
Dr. Giselle Auger, Professor, Communication	
Group 3: Standard Eight and E-Series Forms	
Dr. Jennifer Mead, Professor, School of Social Work	Group 3 Co-Chair; Steering Committee
Dr. Amy Topper, Director of Assessment, Feinstein School of Health and Human Development	Group 3 Co-Chair
Dr. Bethany Petronio-Defanti, Associate Professor, Onanian School of Nursing	
Dr. Quian Liu, Associate Professor, Computer Science and Information Systems	
Dr. Tanni Chaudhuri, Professor, Sociology	

Group 4: Remaining Standards and Areas of Emphasis 5-7	

After work group assignments were made and agreed to, members were called together for an orientation and charge in the late spring of 2024. Each group was asked to complete a template for their standards/areas of emphasis that would summarize major findings from the Self-Study, provide key updates since that time, and recommend strengths and weaknesses to include in the interim report. Co-chairs were permitted to coordinate meetings and division of workload with their group as they saw fit. The groups had until the end of the Fall 2024 term to complete their work; at that time the templates were provided to the report co-chairs who completed the bulk of the report writing.

The draft report was shared back with the Steering Committee, group volunteers, and area leaders for verification, after which it was shared with the campus community for broader feedback.

Structure and Contents

This report is structured following the format described in NECHE’s published procedures. The seven areas of emphasis identified by the Commission, four in response to Rhode Island College’s 2021 Self-Study and three related to substantive changes, are addressed in detail at the beginning of the document, including their impact on and relationship with the relevant Standards. The responses to the areas of emphasis are followed by updates to Standards One through Seven and Standard Nine, the educational effectiveness essay (Standard Eight), and an outline of RIC’s future plans for the time leading up to the drafting of the next Self-Study.

As this report makes clear, RIC has made significant strides in addressing the areas of emphasis identified from the last Self-Study, though work remains. There is now an approved strategic plan, a proposed budget with no structural deficit, strong support from the state, and growing enrollment. The Hope Scholarship, created by the Rhode Island legislature in 2023 to support enrollment and four-year completion at the institution, has brought attention and students to RIC while also putting urgency behind existing priorities, namely providing greater flexibility in the pathways through a degree and making sure all undergraduate programs can be completed in four years, expanding professional advising, and increasing the four-year graduation rate.

The institution also faces challenges, most notably continued turn-over among the staff and leadership, the need to strengthen assessment and evaluation efforts across the College to ensure the success of planning efforts, and continuing need to improve the data infrastructure of the institution, particularly in support of decision-making efforts. There remain several interim appointees at the executive level, and there are newly

appointed permanent hires in key positions including the provost and vice president for academic affairs, dean of enrollment management, and registrar. Efforts to evaluate the academic portfolio and remove barriers to student success have led to many positive steps, but continued focus and follow-through on updating structures and processes will be needed to ensure positive outcomes.

INSTITUTIONAL OVERVIEW

Founded in 1854, Rhode Island College (RIC) is the state's first public institution of higher education and is one of only three public colleges in the state. The college operates under the aegis of the Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE), one of two councils that comprise the Rhode Island Board of Education (RIBOE). The main campus is located on a 180-acre site in the Mount Pleasant section of the capital city of Providence. This location combines a suburban atmosphere with easy access to the benefits and resources of the metropolitan area. Approved additional locations include the Rhode Island Nurse Education Center (RINEC), a facility shared with the University of Rhode Island and located in downtown Providence, and the Workforce Development Hub in the nearby city of Central Falls.

Academic offerings are provided in five schools: the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, the Feinstein School of Education and Human Development, the School of Business, the Zvart Onanian School of Nursing, and the School of Social Work. RIC serves roughly 5,000 undergraduate and 1,000 graduate students (total Fall 2024 enrollment was 6,158) enrolled in over 50 bachelor's degree programs in the arts, humanities, mathematics, sciences, social sciences, education, business, nursing, and social work, and 28 master's degree and certificate of advanced graduate studies programs. RIC also has a doctor of nursing practice (DNP) program. Additionally, the College offers several undergraduate certificates and 27 certificates of graduate study. About a third of undergraduates are enrolled in professional programs with the remaining students distributed between the liberal arts and business. Just under half of graduate students are enrolled in an education major and another quarter in the School of Social Work.

Over 85 percent of RIC's undergraduates come from Rhode Island, and most out-of-state students are from the bordering states of Massachusetts and Connecticut. The student body is diverse; nearly half identify as students of color, and over half are Pell Grant-eligible and/or first-generation. RIC qualifies as a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) and Minority-Serving Institution (MSI), with 29% of Fall 2024 undergraduates identifying as Hispanic/Latino.

RIC's mission and vision center on providing a quality, student-centered education that is affordable and accessible to students in Rhode Island and nearby regions. The institution strives to combine a liberal arts education with professional academic programs attractive to students that also meet the current and future needs of the State of Rhode Island.

RESPONSE TO AREAS IDENTIFIED FOR SPECIAL EMPHASIS

In Response to the Self-Study

During the comprehensive evaluation for Rhode Island College, there were four identified areas of special emphasis to be addressed in the interim report. Those four areas are discussed below.

Area of Emphasis 1

"...continuing to implement institutional strategic planning priorities with emphasis on developing benchmarked outcomes and linking planning and budgeting..."

Rhode Island College's (RIC) self-study from 2021 identified a need to do better in regard to implementing strategic initiatives as one of the principal findings. A strategic planning process had been underway in early 2020, as the three-year plan begun in 2017 was approaching completion. That process stalled in light of the need to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, followed by the arrival of a new provost and vice president for academic affairs in 2020 and the decision of President Dr. Frank Sánchez to leave at the end of his contract in 2022. After Dr. Jack Warner was named interim president, he called together the President's Executive Cabinet (PEC) and deans in January 2023 for a planning retreat. At this all-day meeting, action items for the next year were identified, which PEC then prioritized based on impact, confidence in success, and ease of implementation. Several of the priority items identified as part of that process were implemented, largely those that were near-term efforts to increase yield for the incoming class and reduce identified costs, including reducing the reliance on adjunct faculty, in the next academic year. Many longer-term priorities highlighted by this planning process, including the need to strengthen advising, build institutional informational systems, and reduce barriers to student success, served as the starting point for conversations held as part of a more comprehensive strategic planning process. More about this retreat and planning efforts can be found in Standard Two, below.

After an inclusive and deliberative process, the college revealed a new Strategic Compass in the spring of 2024. The Compass outlines five broad strategic goals with underlying areas of focus, initial action steps, and key metrics for each. "Compass" was used in place of plan for this document to emphasize that it was intended and developed to be a living document that served to guide institutional action, something to be updated as needed, rather than a time-bound plan. At its June 26, 2024 meeting, the Rhode Island Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE), RIC's governing body, approved the adoption of the Strategic Compass. The five identified strategic goals are:

- 1. Student-centered Ecosystem** - Build and nurture a College-wide ecosystem focused on improving pathways for student success, eliminating equity gaps in educational outcomes, and reducing engagement disparities.
- 2. Professional Development** - Increase our internal capacity for institutional transformation by investing in RIC's people and improving the equitability of opportunities and outcomes for all employees to learn, discover, grow, and achieve.
- 3. High Performing and Effective Organization** - Modernize our operational practices and core systems to streamline processes, increase efficiency, improve stability, and provide better service to our community.

4. Hispanic-Serving Institution - Fully embrace the great potential of the College's noteworthy designation as a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) that strives to practice serving-ness.

5. Connections Beyond the Campus - Strengthen and lean into our connections with local communities, external partners, and alumni to better position RIC as a top-of-mind, committed, and fully engaged agent of positive change.

The creation of the Strategic Compass was the end point of a twelve-month-long process by the Committee on College Mission and Goals. The committee is a representative body of college faculty, staff, students, and community members chaired by Kimberly Bright, the executive director of strategic initiatives, and Dr. Praveena Gullapalli, associate professor of anthropology. The committee began with a review and revision of the institution's mission and vision, the outcome of which is discussed in Standard One. The committee then held a series of informational meetings with institutional and outside experts to understand the landscape of higher education and RIC's current position, strengths, and challenges. Bringing together this environmental scan, existing divisional and unit planning efforts, and discussions with the campus community, the committee developed a series of draft goals that were shared at several campus forums for feedback in the fall of 2023 before being finalized and approved by the institution and then by CPE.

Concurrent with the development of the Strategic Compass, the college took steps to address issues of immediate concern relating to the state of the college's budget. At the time of the last comprehensive report, austerity measures had been implemented to address the budgetary strain caused by a significant decrease in enrollment and constraints on state funding. For the 2020-2021 academic year there was a decision to institute an increase in tuition of over seven percent to bring RIC more in line with, but still below, the tuition charged by peer institutions. Since then, RIC has raised tuition each year but has kept the increases between 2.5% and 4.5% to account for inflation and as dictated by budgetary projections. The most recent review of tuition, for the 2024-2025 school year, shows RIC with tuition rates that are the lowest among our New England peers, reflecting RIC's mission to be an affordable educational option for our students.

Along with tuition and fees, the institution has continued to benchmark key indicators, such as graduation rates, enrollment, and average expense per student FTE (full-time equivalent) against the official peer institution list. This list of peers is posted on the Institutional Data and Information Resources webpage on the internal-facing website for all members of campus to access. This list was recently revised, with three institutions falling off the list and three new institutions added in their place. These adjustments came after a full review of the existing list and evaluating many institutions for comparability in size, Carnegie classification, and demographics, among other variables. Three institutions were no longer a fit as one had become a doctoral institution, one had undergone a merger, and one had recently dropped to a headcount below 4,000. Three institutions closer in description and mission to RIC were chosen to replace those institutions and keep the peer list at sixteen. The proposed revisions to the official peer list were reviewed and approved by the President's Executive Cabinet (PEC). The list will be reviewed again to ensure that all the identified peer institutions align well with RIC under the recently revised Carnegie classification system, or as the College is notified of other changes with those institutions.

Between the tuition adjustment and the stabilization of enrollment in 2022 and 2023, RIC began to reduce the large structural deficits that had originally been forecast for those years. The institution used one-time funds to offer two voluntary retirement packages in both the 2023 and 2024 fiscal years. Though voluntary retirements do not allow for strategically targeted reductions in staff, these two rounds of reductions did provide the ability to determine the number of positions that could be affordably replaced and allocate them to areas of the institution with critical need, rather than simply replacing those leaving. In 2023, the president called for the creation of a Workforce Planning Committee, consisting of the college leadership, following the initial round of retirements. The committee was charged with determining how, and if, to fill positions, beginning by reviewing all open job postings, pending position requests, and the initial 25 openings from the retirement package. Some of the positions held by retirees were re-filled after a review of need, some were allocated to prioritized existing postings, and others held for anticipated hirings. Further information about this committee can be found in the discussion of the third area of emphasis, below.

The institution is now working towards implementing the initial action items outlined by the Strategic Compass. As of April 2025, three of the initial 25 action steps had been completed, and the remainder were in progress. Cross-functional groups are being developed to oversee certain action items, such as the development of an institute for professional development which will help guide actions to be taken under the second goal. At a smaller level, many units have established or revised unit strategic plans with goals explicitly aligned with the goals stated in the Compass, notably the entirety of the Division of Administration and Finance. As enrollment and RIC's budget stabilize, the Strategic Compass document and the unit plans aligned with it will guide institutional decision-making and strategic investments.

Area of Emphasis 2

"...implementing strategies to achieve enrollment and retention goals including to reduce barriers for transfer students and to simplify access to student support..."

The institution has made significant changes in the structure and activity of several offices to reduce barriers to enrollment and increase access to supports. The experience for transfer students has improved, with easier processes and increased credit transfer. Several student support offices have been reimaged to better connect students with their services, while an administrative role has been created to increase interoffice collaboration. Many other offices have undertaken reviews to improve operations.

ADMISSIONS

Since the Self-Study and visit in 2021, RIC has transitioned back to regular operations after the disruptions of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Office of Undergraduate Admissions has resumed a travel schedule that connects them with Rhode Island and neighboring northeast communities to engage students, parents, and school counselors. After evaluation determined the existing customer relations management (CRM) product was not meeting institutional need, the college purchased Technolutions' Slate product, which was implemented starting with the Spring 2024 entering cohort. Slate has increased the speed of processing student applications, allowed for increased and more targeted student communications, simplified reporting, and data has also been shared with New Student Programs to facilitate orientation.

In response to recognized difficulties in transferring to RIC, including a large number of community college courses that transferred only for elective credit, several steps have been taken to improve the transfer experience and remove barriers. Firstly, the transfer application was streamlined, and both virtual and in-person application completion assistance was offered to prospective students. The position description for transfer counselors within the Office of Undergraduate Admissions has been expanded to offer applicants a broader range of supports. Formal credit evaluations are now completed at the point of admission, allowing applicants to understand how credits will be applied to RIC's degree programs at an early stage of engagement to facilitate their decision to enroll. This evaluation also permits applicants to view "what if" reports based on the official degree audits for every major to see how their transfer credit will apply based on the major they choose. RIC also invested in CollegeSource's Transferology platform which enables prospective students to see how their earned credits will transfer to RIC.

To improve the utility of those credits, RIC's faculty and admissions staff collaborated on a comprehensive reevaluation of course equivalencies with area community colleges, resulting in over 7,000 new course equivalencies being added. There are 31 recently reviewed 2+2 programs mutually approved with the Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI), the two-year institution providing the largest number of transfer students. RIC has taken significant steps to increase the number of these agreements. RIC is developing agreements covering many new programs in artificial intelligence, behavioral health science, biotechnology, and data science and expects new agreements for additional existing programs to be approved in the fall of 2025. RIC and CCRI also approved new articulation agreements that address the RN-to-BSN, early childhood education, and cybersecurity majors.

In addition to expanding agreements, the Committee on Undergraduate Curriculum (UCC) approved increasing the number of allowable transfer credits from 75 to 90 and reducing the number of credits needed for residency to 30. Finally, the Transfer Advising and Transition Workgroup, convened by the Office of the Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs (Provost's Office), has begun to assess current processes and infrastructure, and plan improvements to ensure alignment with best practices in transfer advising. The group's efforts have already led to the implementation of several changes that ensure advisors are assigned to incoming transfer students quickly and permit those advisors to access student transcripts for timely support of incoming students.

In partnership with the Office of Communication and Marketing, the admissions office has worked to amplify the college's brand, efforts which were aided by the Rhode Island legislature's creation of the Hope Scholarship, which provides free tuition via a last dollar state scholarship to qualifying Rhode Island junior and senior students. Using radio, television, billboard, and targeted digital outreach, RIC has focused on educating the local community about the Hope Scholarship and reaching all primary markets with messages regarding the institution's on-going commitment to quality, affordable education and the opportunities provided by higher education. Between these efforts and the boost in enrollment the legislature hoped for with the creation of the scholarship, undergraduate enrollment at RIC increased by 371 students from Fall 2023 to Fall 2024 (4,786 to 5,157), nearly all of which was an increase in the incoming first-time, full-time (FTFT) cohort. Year-over-year tracking of the applicant pool and retention suggests Fall 2025 will also see an increase in headcount.

HOPE SCHOLARSHIP

The Hope Scholarship was introduced in the 2023-2024 fiscal year budget for Rhode Island. Modeled in part on the existing Promise scholarship for the Community College of Rhode Island, the scholarship aimed to increase enrollment and four-year degree attainment at RIC. Those eligible for the scholarship must meet a number of criteria apart from being state residents. Eligible students must start as first-time, full-time students at RIC, maintain full-time enrollment, earn 60 credits by the start of the junior year with a 2.5 or higher cumulative GPA, and be on-track to graduate in four years to receive and keep the scholarship. Over 300 eligible juniors and seniors were awarded their scholarship funds within a month of the scholarship's creation by the legislature.

Upon passage of the scholarship with the state budget, RIC created two work groups to guide the roll out of the new program, one group to focus on implementation and the other on student success. The implementation team handled the development of policy and processes for eligibility determination and awarding, which led to the quick turnaround from bill passage to the first students receiving notification of award. The student success team, made up of key individuals from the academic and student affairs divisions, focused on developing strategies and prioritizing action items aimed at retention and progression to maximize the number of students eligible to benefit from the Hope Scholarship. Top items identified by that committee included the development of pathways within majors, pathways between majors, and keeping majors to 120 credits. These, notably, echoed the major findings of some of the planning activities described in the first area of focus, above. The Hope Scholarship only increased the urgency behind these already-identified issues, as the college had recognized that many majors were too credit-dense for students to navigate successfully, and many could not functionally be completed within four years. As of spring 2025, nine majors have revised their curriculum to meet the 120-credit limit with additional alterations in many concentrations. The institution is also beginning to shift institutional culture to promote students taking 15 credits a semester or having a plan for year-round learning to ensure timely completion.

Data from spring 2025 indicates that the 2024 first-time, full-time cohort, the first recruited to RIC with full awareness of the Hope Scholarship throughout the admissions cycle, is retaining at a higher rate than other recent entering cohorts. The fall-to-spring retention rate for the fall 2024 FTFT cohort was 89.2%, a 3.5 percentage point increase over the previous cohort. However, fall-to-fall retention for the previous cohort, entering in 2023, was flat at 73.4%. Continued monitoring and evaluation of first-year retention for the 2024 cohort will be critical to see if their positive momentum can be maintained and to measure the effectiveness of the strategic actions taken.

After hiring a dedicated director for the Hope Scholarship, the original Hope student success team was transitioned into a Hope Steering Committee, which blended the support committee with the some of the original implementation team members, creating a single group that could provide ongoing feedback and coordination for all aspects of the scholarship, both operational and strategic.

REGISTRAR'S OFFICE

Late in 2022, RIC partnered with the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) to conduct a review of the Records Office, in response to the issues identified by the last Self-Study. There was a recognition that the office was transactional and overly reliant on manual processes, and the review was an initial step towards the goal of increasing efficiency, promoting best practices, and moving

the office to a more strategic stance. The review involved an evaluation of policies, customer service and communication practices, and technology use within the Records Office. Following AACRAO's recommendation, RIC made the decision to transition the Records Office to a Registrar's Office and convert the director of records role to a college registrar. The goals of this transition were to move to a more strategically focused office capable of supporting the institution's scheduling goals and providing streamlined processes. This conversion was completed in the summer of 2024, though the search for the right person to be the inaugural Registrar took a bit longer; a permanent Registrar was hired in November of that year. The office has since undergone other changes in staffing, but now has eight full-time employees, and is considered fully staffed. The Registrar's Office has since implemented on-demand transcripts, and converted multiple paper forms to fillable, online forms.

ACADEMIC SUPPORTS

In terms of academic advising and other academic supports, since the review by the Commission, OASIS (Office of Academic Support and Information Services) has been transitioned into two new entities. The first, the Office of Academic Advising (OAA), oversees the professional advising staff, which consists of six advisors, an assistant director, and director. The office continues to provide advising services to exploring (non-declared) students and first-years in nursing and medical imaging, but as of Summer 2024 OAA has also reached agreement with the schools of business, education, and social work to add all first-year students with intent to declare or declared majors in those schools to their caseload. Professional advisors now work with about 24% of the undergraduate student population, compared to about 3% in 2019. During the 2023-2024 academic year, this expanded role resulted in nearly 4,900 scheduled appointments, mostly for advising and 901 for academic coaching. OAA also oversees and works with students navigating the academic standing process and has plans for a full assessment of their operations under the new model scheduled for next fall to ensure student satisfaction is comparable with the high levels reported in 2023.

The academic development portions of the former OASIS office were shifted to the new Academic Success Center, and a director position was added to oversee the unit. The Academic Success Center provides tutoring services, and programs and activities that support student learning and academic development. Tutoring services include key academic subjects as well as other needs such as executive functioning, study skills, and healthy habits of the mind. The center recently earned Level 1 International Peer Tutor Training Program Certification (ITTPC) through the College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA). The Academic Success Center also includes dedicated math and writing labs to provide virtual or in-person assistance in those areas and coordinate math placement. The office partners with NetTutor, an online tutoring platform that is available 24 hours a day, to provide support for online learners and those needing assistance outside of regular hours. Over the last year, the center worked with departments to offer directed services including offering faculty-led tutoring in physics and PRAXIS exam tips for education students, and collaborating with required RIC 100 (Introduction to College) and first-year writing courses. Over the last few years, the center has seen an increase in the number of appointments and students served.

Along with the creation of these two new offices, a new assistant dean of student services role has been created to provide strategic leadership, vision, and direction for academic and career advising, and increasing integration between the two. The assistant dean has been charged with developing and delivering advising and programming

that will promote decision-making skills and career exploration for students, as well as encouraging internships and other career-oriented opportunities. The need for this role was identified following an external review of the Career Development Center (now the Center for Career and Life Design) by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) in 2023. That review highlighted a gap in career exploration opportunities for students in their early career at RIC, as well as a need to strengthen the connections between career design and the academic experience. The new assistant dean is expected to work with academic deans and faculty to ensure greater integration of career readiness and provide oversight in the assessment and reporting of those efforts. The inaugural assistant dean was named in spring 2025.

The Office of New Student Programs has recently developed a year-round programming model, many parts of which use “anchor” in the name, in reference to a key RIC symbol that also provides the name of the school paper and athletic teams. Student engagement through the office begins upon deposit, initially by using communication plans through the new CRM described above. First-year student orientation has been revamped to cover two days of informative sessions and social activities focused on creating connections within the first-year class and setting students up for success by providing the resources, support, and connections they need for navigating college. During Anchors Away Day, held the Saturday before the classes begin, students meet with the peer mentors embedded in their RIC 100 (Introduction to College) courses who help them review their course schedule for the semester, and students take part in workshops focused on reading syllabi and other essential skills. Participation in the program for Fall 2024 was 98% of all deposited first-year students, a marked increase from 74% a few years ago. The orientation program for transfers, who have different needs, has been streamlined to concentrate on course registration and introduce students to key campus resources.

The support for incoming students provided by New Student Programs continues into the academic year through a series of programs, organized under the name Anchors First, that address community building, goal setting, career design, health and wellness, money management, and academic success. Students are directed to these programs through their RIC 100 peer mentors, as well as a weekly newsletter for first-year students, and participation is further encouraged through the use of awards for students attending at least two. To better promote these critical skills, the Anchors First programs will be revised for Fall 2025, with the content linked to a peer mentor embedded in all versions of the Introduction to College course, including the newer nursing and business-specific versions addressed in Standard Four.

CENTER FOR DISABILITY ACCESS

Along with the changes outlined above, the college’s support office for students facing disability was recently renamed to the Center for Disability Access to highlight the critical role the office plays in supporting students’ access to an equitable education. An additional case coordinator was also hired to reduce the student caseload within the office, which allows greater time allocated to direct student support and partnering with other offices to provide relevant programming. The office was also moved to a more central location off the main campus quad to provide greater student access, and a student has been added to the Accessibility Committee to add a student voice to that advisory body.

Area of Emphasis 3

"...assuring the sufficiency of staffing throughout the College with particular emphasis on the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion..."

Per the Commission's June 2025 decision to suspend the Standards related to diversity, equity, and inclusion, Rhode Island College will address how we have worked to ensure the appropriate and sufficient level of staffing throughout the institution.

Though student enrollment has stabilized and even increased in 2024, and state support has been strong, Rhode Island College (RIC) recognizes the need to ensure the institution is staffed appropriately for its current fiscal resources and operational needs. RIC acknowledges that staffing reductions made during the period of austerity before and during the COVID-19 pandemic were often a result of across-the-board cuts; the resulting reductions in staffing were therefore not always strategic or reflective of need. The institution has made strides in providing greater transparency into the budget and budget-making process, and worked to eliminate projected structural deficits in ways informed by the strategic goals of the institution. This includes adjustments in staffing across the college. RIC has continued to eliminate positions in some areas, through attrition and offering voluntary retirement packages, while increasing hiring in critical operational and growth areas, such as the expansion of the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.

The institution has also worked to reduce the number of employees, particularly those in leadership, occupying interim positions. Unfortunately, some churn among administrative staff continues, though with the installation of Dr. Jack Warner as the institution's 11th president (after a period in which he, too, was interim), efforts to quickly fill key positions with permanent hires continues.

As mentioned in the discussion of the second area of emphasis (above), the college offered voluntary retirements in both 2023 and 2024. In total, 60 individuals accepted the agreements. For individuals who accepted the package offer but who were in key positions or had critically needed skills, the institution retained the right to defer that individual's retirement for one year. This deferment period gave the institution time to complete transition planning and allowed for a robust hiring process. An example of a position where this right was exercised was the assistant controller, as the incumbent had critical long-term institutional knowledge, and the departments reporting to her were in the process of restructuring and needed to fill several vacancies.

The voluntary retirement packages were developed as part of the institutional response to years of structural deficit. Analysis of the budget and an external review of the structure and practice of human resources indicated a need to shift away from the current processes for posting and approving hires to a more centralized process that could ensure prioritization of hires based on current needs and expected future demands. To develop a more data-driven process for this prioritization in response to the voluntary retirements, the president established a Workforce Planning Committee (WPC). The WPC brought together key institutional leaders to review and create prioritized recommendations for allocating positions left vacant to the areas of most critical need. The president retains final administrative approval for the hiring of all positions.

Chaired by the executive director of strategic initiatives, the WPC consisted of all institutional vice presidents, the general counsel, and the chief of staff. The director of budget and financial planning served in a non-voting capacity to help review the budgetary impact of the requests and the committee's recommendations. The committee

was charged with evaluating all existing hiring proposals from across the college for urgency and alignment with the mission and current strategic priorities, taking into consideration the existing and projected budget and the approved employment cap from the college's governing body. The committee also considered alterations to proposed positions or existing filled positions that would meet the functional need outlined within a proposal more effectively, such as converting a proposed assistant vice provost to the current director of academic operations and policy. This change resulted in the creation of a position that combined several key office functions for greater efficiency and ensured accountability. Once a hiring proposal was reviewed, the WPC voted on a recommendation regarding that position. The recommendations were then sent to the president, who gave final approval for the position to be hired, adjusted, or held vacant.

As of June 2025, the WPC has wound down operations as the college shifts towards a more stabilized financial situation and the volume of position postings has returned to more normal levels without the pressure applied by the voluntary retirements and numerous interim positions. Moving forward, the president will use the goals and metrics embedded in the Strategic Compass (discussed in first area of emphasis, above) to review and approve positions, with the input of college leadership and the position's hiring authority. This will continue the focus of aligning hiring with strategic actions and available resources.

The institution remains dedicated to ensuring that all students, faculty and staff can thrive at Rhode Island College. The college has made critical investments in both planning and resources, in support of building a campus that is engaging, welcoming and supportive of all community members. Through this and other efforts, RIC will continue to invest resources, including personnel, where needed to support critical strategic efforts.

Area of Emphasis 4

"...enhancing the collection of data across campus and strengthening its Institutional Research capacity..."

During the last team visit in 2021, the condition of Rhode Island College's (RIC) data systems and the need for increased institutional research capacity were noted as concerns, which were supported by the Commission in the identified areas of emphasis for this Interim Report. Since that time, RIC has expanded the office of Institutional Research and Planning (OIRP) from two staff members to three. The office is now comprised of the director, an associate director, and a research analyst who was hired in 2024. There has also been a transition in the leadership of the office, with a new director named in November 2022, following the resignation of the incumbent.

Since the arrival of the new director, priority has been given to the development of improved data systems and increased reliability and automation in the production of OIRP reports. The creation of new systems and processes for increased automation has been the central job function of the new analyst, creating additional time for the director and associate director to devote to strategic initiatives and requests by stakeholders. OIRP also undertook a redesign of key data reports (e.g., enrollment census) and the underlying data queries to streamline data processing and minimize redundancy in efforts for report production. OIRP was able to produce all the tables and charts for its most recent Fact Book, the office's single largest publication, in Microsoft's Power BI product which allows those tables to be updated annually with minimal additional effort. This work to increase operational efficiency not only helped in the near term for internal

office function but was a key first piece of the development of a new decision support system for the institution as a whole.

The decision support system is envisioned as an on-demand reporting platform based on structured and verified data, the construction of which is in process. The revised reporting queries already developed for OIRP have been loaded into a new on-premises data warehouse server. This new warehouse server will serve as the centralized data storage hub that will eventually be leveraged by multiple institutional users to make the most of existing data resources through OIRP-constructed reports and data customer-designed queries of verified data. As of July 2025, essential data views (institutional census reports, student biodemographic data, admissions, and completion data) have been loaded onto the server. Staff from Information Technology Services and OIRP are reviewing bids for companies who will help build data connections to populate critical live data tables from the student information system (SIS) so the warehouse can support reporting relying on current data as well as frozen snapshots.

The warehouse server can also be used in place of full systems integration, providing the ability to upload previously siloed data stored in software systems outside the primary student information system and allow these various data sources to be joined together. As an example, and based upon a recommendation from an external review brought in to evaluate the operations of the Office of Human Resources, snapshots of employee data will be stored in the new warehouse. Previously, stand-alone spreadsheets were used to capture the snapshots and share them with OIRP for use in federal, state, and other external reporting on faculty and staff. While this worked to meet compliance needs, it did not allow for easy sharing and combining of the data for other uses. The new warehouse will allow these snapshots to be combined and serve as the basis for multi-year trend reports and be leveraged where needed for planning and internal as well as external reporting needs. It is expected that the warehouse will eventually grow to provide similar storage of other data that are stewarded outside OIRP and/or outside the primary SIS and for which regular snapshots are needed to complete institutional compliance and both internal and external reporting needs. Though a plan exists for both the development of the server and an institutional decision support platform, institutional investment via funding and informational technology resources will be required to bring the plan into full fruition between now and the next comprehensive visit.

Along with infrastructure, efforts to address issues of data quality and coordination have also been undertaken in support of a strengthened data culture at RIC. In 2023, the Data Standards Policy was revised to become the Data Governance Policy. This updated policy re-affirmed the need to coordinate changes to data elements and definitions used by multiple offices to ensure all affected parties are informed and allowed to provide input to mitigate any potential negative impacts of the change. The revised policy also enables the Data Governance Committee, co-chaired by the director of institutional research and planning and the chief information officer (CIO), to serve as an arbitration panel to resolve any persistent issues in data quality and process coordination. The Data Governance Committee has successfully intervened in cases where improper and incomplete processes led to the creation of duplicate student records and brought a group of stakeholders together to review and improve coding around less common student types, such as dual high school enrollment and exchange students. The committee has also completed a full review that identified the data trustees, stewards, and managers for major institutional data, and created a data classification policy to categorize data as restricted, confidential, internal, or public and apply appropriate safeguards.

Outside of the direct work of the committee, this new interest in coordination in regard to institutional data has led to multiple departments undertaking collaborative efforts to improve data quality and data-related processes. The implementation of the Slate CRM (see the second area of emphasis, above) provided a chance to ensure data originating with the student application and used by offices outside of admissions was brought into the SIS, work including the mapping of student biodemographic fields between the application and internal systems was completed, and a workflow for addressing instances of duplicate social security numbers between new applicants and existing records was created. A new way of coding dual enrollment (high school students attending classes on RIC's campus) was created to allow differentiation from concurrent enrollment (those taking RIC-designed courses at their high school) and correctly coding students participating in the School of Business' partnership with state's PrepareRI summer internship program for high school students as dual enrollment.

In accordance with the new Data Classification policy (approved in July 2025), role-based security has been applied to the warehouse server to ensure only individuals with the proper clearance, as determined by the appropriate data stewards, can access sensitive data including personally-identifiable information (PII) and information limited by FERPA, HIPAA and other regulations. These same security measures will be applied as needed to the reports generated out of the server.

The institution's new Strategic Compass lists "[e]nhancing the College's student data infrastructure and making it more readily accessible to faculty and staff" as one of the areas of strategic focus. Critical steps have been taken to improve data governance and classification. The earliest phases of the planned decision support system have been implemented, including the development of the warehouse server and increasing efficiency and standardization within OIRP. A request for proposals for a partner to facilitate the inclusion of "live" or current data in the warehouse server has been posted and several proposals were received. The next steps of building an institutional reporting platform are in discussion and should be in place for the next Self-Study.

In Response to the Bachelor of Professional Studies (BPS) substantive change

Area of Emphasis 5

"...achieving its enrollment, persistence, and graduation goals for the Bachelor of Professional Studies program..."

The bachelor of professional studies (BPS) is Rhode Island College's (RIC) first fully online program and is designed as a degree completion program for working adults with some college but no degree. Following institutional and state approval, NECHE approval was obtained via substantive change in July 2021, and the program launched in the spring of 2022. The goal of the BPS program is to provide an affordable and flexible degree-completion option. The program's continued enrollment growth, going from 13 students at the start to 111 in Fall 2024, combined with graduation of over 80 students across two cohorts, demonstrates the program's achievement of this goal.

The BPS has been specifically designed with the adult learner in mind. The BPS program offers an adult-student-friendly admissions process led by the Office of Professional Studies and Continuing Education (PSCE), which coordinates the program. PSCE also provides high-quality student advising by professionals trained in adult and

online education. The program is delivered using a seven-week course structure, instead of the traditional 15, which allows students to take a full schedule while only focusing on a few courses at a time. This structure permits a one-week break between sessions as well. Ninety-nine percent of program courses are offered asynchronously, allowing students to complete work on their schedule. Courses in the BPS program are offered once per year (fall or spring). To facilitate students' advanced planning, a standard rotation schedule was developed indicating when each course is offered. This ability to know in advance when a course will be offered has facilitated more proactive student advising and allowed forecasting of time to complete the program. A BPS-specific student success course, which meets the RIC 100 (Introduction to College) degree requirement but is designed to address the specific needs of this population, has been developed. This course is aimed at improving the outcomes for BPS students, assisting with documenting credit for prior learning, and providing professional and career development for working adults (see Standard Four for further information).

After the initial launch of the BPS program, an evaluation of strengths and opportunities was conducted, which led to improvements in the program components and increased alignment with best online learning practice. Examples of these improvements include the transitioning of courses from a blended to a fully asynchronous format to meet student need, implementing a mandatory online orientation for students, developing a standardized template for all BPS courses in the learning management system, and creating a rubric to standardize evaluation of credit for prior learning. An online synchronous orientation is provided for all faculty teaching in the program, and professional development is provided on topics including instructional design for online environments, pedagogy and active learning for adults, instructional technologies and trends, and how to (re)design a course that works within the seven-week schedule.

Currently, the BPS program offers two concentrations: social services and organizational leadership. In addition to earning the BPS degree, students also earn a certificate of undergraduate studies (CUS) related to the concentration by completing required courses during their first year in the program. Students in the social services concentration earn a CUS in nonprofit studies, and students in the organizational leadership concentration earn a CUS in workplace diversity. Currently, a CUS in management for students in the organizational leadership concentration is underway to offer a more competitive skillset to students. The ability to earn a certificate enhances the BPS's value and marketability upon graduation.

BPS students participate in a recognition ceremony when they earn their certificate, which is intended to enhance motivation, foster community building among students, and lead to increased student persistence and retention. An additional ceremony is held to recognize graduates of the program prior to the college's commencement. The BPS Excellence Award has been created to recognize the graduating student with the highest grade point average and who exemplifies the values of the program. A partnership with Rhode Island's Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner (OPC) to provide financial assistance to students in the program has been developed, which has helped to support student persistence.

Area of Emphasis 6

"...implementing its distance education courses and programs ensuring there are sufficient resources, particularly financial resources, allocated to distance education..."

The bachelor of professional studies (BPS), Rhode Island College's (RIC) first fully online program, was approved by the institution and its governing body, and through a substantive change with NECHE in 2021. It is discussed in more detail in the fifth area of emphasis, above. Since that time, the position of assistant vice president for adult and online education was developed to support online learning efforts, and the institution has developed enhanced policies and infrastructure necessary to better support its online offerings. For example, the faculty-led Committee for Online Learning (CoOL) developed a comprehensive policy to establish standards and expectations for all online programs and courses. The policy was approved by the Council of Rhode Island College in the spring of 2024. This policy sets expectations related to the rigor and quality of online courses, regardless of modality, and requires all online courses meet the engagement hours required by RIC's credit hour policies as codified in the Manual for Academic Policies and Procedures (MAPP). In addition, the CoOL policy requires all faculty teaching online and hybrid courses to have received training to teach in these modalities and demonstrate competency prior to being approved to teach in them. Further, the CoOL policy establishes processes and guidelines for the development, approval, and scheduling of online programs and courses, and sets expectations for course evaluation.

The establishment of policies and processes, coupled with infrastructure improvements, has supported the strategic expansion of online programs at RIC. The college has invested in upgrading the learning management system (LMS) to Blackboard Ultra and offered training on the new system to all faculty. The institution now houses two fully online bachelor completion programs (BPS and RN-to-BSN), the nursing graduate degree programs operate in a hyflex modality, there are two fully online graduate-level education certificates, and online and hybrid courses distributed across the other schools. There are 25 classroom spaces prepared for simultaneous in-person and remote delivery and recording, and the largest auditorium on campus is likewise equipped.

Existing faculty resources in the School of Nursing (SON) have been sufficient to support the hyflex model of delivery, and the school has invested in three OWL 360-degree 1080p HD Smart video conferencing cameras to live stream courses and record them for asynchronous playback. All graduate nursing courses are taught at the RI Nursing Education Center (RINEC) location and 100% of classrooms in this space are hyflex capable.

All online students have access to the student supports available to on-campus students, many of which are outlined in the second area of emphasis, above. Further strategic advancement of select online programs and offerings is a goal for the institution to support the needs of the community. However, an increase in online offerings is limited by the lack of a robust infrastructure that results in an over-reliance on manual process within the academic departments and both the registrar's and bursar's offices to manage the unique aspects of these programs.

THE HYFLEX MODEL FOR GRADUATE NURSING PROGRAMS

The Onanian School of Nursing (SON) launched a hyflex model for its graduate nursing programs in Fall 2023. The hyflex model is designed to provide the highest

quality education with the flexibility and accessibility needed by adult graduate learners. Synchronous class sessions are offered in both in-person and remote formats. These synchronous sessions are recorded and can be coupled with alternative assignments to provide for asynchronous participation as well. This model allows students the flexibility to participate in each class in the way that best meets their needs, including completing as much as 100% of their program online, which expands access to the nursing programs to students from across Rhode Island and the broader region. In the substantive change approval letter from NECHE dated March 28, 2023, the college was granted permission to offer its graduate nursing programs via distance education and granted general approval for the college to offer distance education programs within the scope of its mission.

The graduate nursing programs continue to demonstrate exceptional outcomes following implementation of the hyflex model, including achievement of course and program outcomes. Graduates' performance on board examinations for licensure reflects the high quality of these programs. Recent licensure exam pass rates for nurse practitioners, clinical nurse specialists, and nurse anesthesia exams are over 80%. The 2024 pass rate for graduates of the masters-level nurse practitioner program was 100%.

In October 2023, the nursing programs' external accreditor, the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE), conducted an in-person comprehensive assessment of the SON graduate nursing programs, including its masters-level, doctoral-level, and certificate-level (post-masters) programs. The hyflex model of course delivery was evaluated during the review. All programs received the full 10-year accreditation with no areas for improvement identified. The accreditation decision reflects the high quality of the School of Nursing's programs, including those offered in distance education formats.

Finally, the School of Nursing led a strategic restructuring of its RN-to-BSN program. The previous traditional, in-person program was outdated and no longer met the needs of students. In addition, the institution's high residency credit requirements and rigid general education program were not aligned with the policies of peer institutions and discouraged enrollment in the program by extending the time needed to complete. As a result, enrollment in the in-person RN-to-BSN had declined to minimal levels, and the program was no longer sustainable. However, Rhode Island has one of the lowest percentages of bachelor-prepared nurses in New England, and there was a strong interest among both students and RIC's partner healthcare organizations for a public online RN-to-BSN program in the state. These factors drove RIC to re-launch the RN-to-BSN as an online program and make the curricular changes needed to align with the updated professional standards set forth by CCNE. As well as transitioning to online asynchronous delivery, the revised program follows the same seven-week course calendar as RIC's other fully online program, the BPS. The timing of the changes to the RN-to-BSN program aligned with broader institutional changes to streamline the general education program and reduce the large number of credits required to establish residency for the purposes of graduation. The availability of online general education courses, including some now delivered in the seven-week format, also increased flexibility for students and helped make the program viable.

The RN-to-BSN program has demonstrated early positive outcomes related to retention and progression. Twenty-four students enrolled in the first term (Fall 2024), and 22 (91.7%) have been retained into Spring 2025. All retained students remain on track with the expected program progression, and the first cohort is expected to graduate in

August of 2025, and the second in January of 2026. Because the program is in its first year, formal retention and graduation data will not be available until the Fall 2025 census.

In Response to the Additional Location substantive change for the Central Falls Workforce Development Hub

Area of Emphasis 7

"...provide an update...with particular emphasis on the institution's success in achieving its goals for the site's academic programmatic offerings and assessing student success in those programs."

The Office of Professional Studies and Continuing Education (PSCE) has made progress in working with Rhode Island College's (RIC) academic schools to develop and offer curriculum and labor market demand-driven programming at the Central Falls Workforce Development Hub (the Hub) in a variety of ways. A congressional directed spending grant through the Department of Education enabled additional contextualized ESL (English as a second language) programming offered by RIC's School of Business and Institute for Cybersecurity & Emerging Technologies that prepares non-native English speakers to obtain industry-recognized credentials in cybersecurity and Security+ certification. Two workforce cohorts, serving a total of 41 students, were offered in Spring 2025 to ready students to sit for the Certified in Cyber certificate offered by the International Information System Security Certification Consortium, Inc. (ISC2), a nationally recognized provider of on-demand cybersecurity certifications. Students have also been provided with the opportunity to continue on to additional Security+ training which will culminate with testing for the associated CompTIA certification. The spring of 2025 also saw the Hub open its Pearson VUE Test Center which will expand access to these cybersecurity and other certification exams for both RIC students and the larger community so that they may earn credentials that expand their employment opportunities.

In conjunction with Skills for Rhode Island's Future and the School of Business, accounting and management majors participated in a week long boot camp during spring break to prepare for a paid work experience with Citizen's Bank as Student Lending Customer Advisors working with customers applying for student loans. This hands-on program included work-readiness topics and presentations from Citizen's Bank employees on how to prepare for an interview and secure the job. Once hired, these students will gain valuable work experience and the skills needed to compete in today's job market post-graduation. This boot camp will be offered again in 2025.

A grant from the Rhode Island Foundation to the Central Falls School District gave PSCE the opportunity to engage RIC's Feinstein School of Education and Human Development (FSEHD) to provide professional development opportunities for the community educators involved in the school district's innovative Learning Pod program. Learning Pod leaders are individuals with a personal connection to Central Falls who work with small groups of students from that school district in need of extra support. The pod leaders work with the students to increase their academic skills but also encourage and support students in pursuing their personal interests. The grant allows the pod leaders to gain training in the delivery of academic content areas as well as professional skills like lesson planning. One aim of the Learning Pod project is to connect pod

leaders with an interest in earning an education degree with RIC in order to develop a community-based pipeline providing educators who reflect the communities in which they teach. PSCE and FSEHD are also collaborating on proposals for RIC's Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (which approves curricular changes) to offer PSCE's advanced intensive ESL classes as both continuing education and credit-bearing courses. This will allow adult students a stronger pathway to RIC's degree programs and help them earn credit towards those degrees.

The Hub is able to host occasional meetings for credit-bearing courses generally offered at other locations. The School of Nursing held multiple class sessions of NURS 370 Public and Community Health at the Hub recently, as it was a central location for nursing students who were completing the clinical portion of the course at schools within the Central Falls School District. While third- and fourth-year nursing classes are generally scheduled at the Rhode Island Nursing Education Center (RINEC) in Providence, the faculty and students were pleased with the opportunity to utilize classroom space at the Hub for group work and to discuss their clinical experiences in a space close to their clinical sites. The instructor has already requested space to continue this practice in the Fall 2025 semester.

The dean of the School of Social Work, that school's director of practicum education, and several faculty met to identify short- and long-term opportunities to expand their involvement at the Hub with the goal of providing social work students at both the bachelor's and master's level with experience in identifying and addressing community needs and providing services to the citizens of Central Falls and to Hub students. Around the same time, the City of Central Falls engaged a consultant to assist with developing its next comprehensive city plan and connected that consultant with RIC as a key community partner. Hub staff and the School of Social Work will be actively engaged in the city's planning process to investigate how an increased social work presence at the Hub can serve both RIC faculty and students and the residents of the city. The goal of the planning partnership is to allow for expanded clinical placements for social work students and opportunities for faculty and student research while providing supportive services to community members. The Hub currently serves as an internship site for master of social work (MSW) students who provide case management services to students enrolled in ESL classes and workforce trainings at the site. The goal is to expand this collaboration to include those participating in undergraduate, graduate, and dual high school enrollment courses at the Hub.

STANDARDS

Standard One: Mission and Purposes

Rhode Island College's (RIC) strategic planning process begins with a review and, if needed, revision of the mission and vision for the college. This beginning point is codified through the charter for the Council of Rhode Island College (RIC Council), which is the primary representative and deliberative body of the faculty. For the most recent strategic planning process, the Committee on College Mission and Goals (often referred to as Mission and Goals) was re-structured to be broadly representative, with membership from across the institution, and was charged with the development of the next strategic plan. The result of work by this updated committee was both a revised mission and the new Strategic Compass, described in greater detail in the first area of emphasis, above.

This adjustment in the historic role of Mission and Goals necessitated a revision of the committee's bylaws to expand the membership and the scope of responsibilities. The revised bylaws were approved first by the Council, then by the president in February 2023. The committee now oversees review and revision of the institution's mission and vision statements, creation of strategic plans and monitoring their implementation, and making recommendations for updates to the plan as needed. Centralizing the development and oversight of strategic planning efforts was taken because the lack of a permanent group to coordinate planning and ensure evaluation had resulted in difficulties fully implementing and achieving the outcomes of past planning efforts. Mission and Goals consists of sixteen members: faculty representatives from each of the five schools, key administration members such as the executive director for strategic initiatives, representatives from the staff unions, an undergraduate student, and a member of the public. The committee provides annual updates on its meetings and progress to the Council and keeps the campus community updated on planning and implementation efforts.

The process developed by Mission and Goals to fulfill its responsibilities began with and centered on the institution's mission, vision, and values. The committee began with an environmental scan that included, among other steps, presentations by and discussions with institutional, local, and national experts to understand the current state of the college and higher education. The scan included information about budgeting processes and constraints at RIC, institutional research, the regional labor market, and the role of regional comprehensives and Hispanic-serving institutions as providers of accessible, quality education.

The information gathering and revision of mission, vision, and values took place between the spring and fall of 2023, during which time the committee also began identifying broad strategic goals that would develop into the strategic plan. Initial drafts of the revised mission statement, values, and goals were shared at four campus forums for feedback and discussion that fall. Final versions, incorporating the gathered feedback and information from additional meetings with experts, were presented to the campus in spring 2024 during two open informational sessions. This revised mission statement is:

By ensuring access to an intellectually invigorating liberal arts education and high-quality professional programs vital to our state's future, we provide opportunities for individuals to enhance and transform their lives; contribute to the advancement and wellbeing of families and communities; and bolster the overall quality of life, both in Rhode Island and across wider society.

The Committee on Mission and Goals completed its 2023-2024 academic year by having a full draft of the new Strategic Compass approved by the RIC Council, the president, and finally Rhode Island's Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE). The final approved document included identified areas of focus and initial action steps within each goal, and potential metrics. The committee used 2024-2025 to further finalize the proposed metrics for evaluation and monitoring of the plan's outcomes.

Standard Two: Planning and Evaluation

Standard Two is also addressed in the first and fourth areas of emphasis, above, focused on implementing strategic planning priorities and increasing institutional research resources. As those two updates show, Rhode Island College (RIC) has made strides in re-instituting planning and establishing priorities since the time of the team visit and the Commission's review. The last Self-Study reflected a planning process that had begun in 2020 and stalled in the face of the challenges brought by the COVID-19 pandemic and changes in institutional leadership. Dr. Jack Warner was named interim president in July 2022 and in January 2023 called together institutional leadership for a planning retreat.

At that retreat, 45 action items were identified that spanned five broad priorities: decreasing the structural deficit; growing enrollment; developing a student-centered culture; improving institutional efficiency and effectiveness; and developing an externally facing strategy. Several of the action items, about a third, were near-term items meant to either complete immediate priorities or serve as first-steps for longer-term efforts, including such items as updating the budget projections and scheduling events to connect leadership to the campus community and gather feedback about current needs and future hopes. Some items, such as improving the amount of credit awarded to transfer students, closing equity gaps, improving advising, and encouraging programs to create more flexible pathways, became the focus of strategic efforts for academic year 2023-2024 and were later identified as continuing priorities by Mission and Goals and integrated into the Strategic Compass.

The Strategic Compass was designed specifically with goals, actions, and defined metrics to help the institution track and evaluate the success of planning efforts. The Committee on Mission and Goals is working to finalize mechanisms of data collection and data sharing to track the implementation of planning initiatives and help the institution identify areas off track and those complete and ready for new identified action steps.

Standard Three: Organization and Governance

The college demonstrates strong collaborative relationships with the state and external governing bodies and a strong commitment to shared governance. Rhode Island state law, bylaws of the Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner of Rhode Island, collective bargaining agreements with unions representing various staff constituencies, and the Council of Rhode Island College provide a comprehensive framework for the college's governance structure. The overall governance structure of Rhode Island College has remained relatively unchanged since the last comprehensive report.

External Governance

Rhode Island College is governed by the Rhode Island Board of Education (RIBOE), which oversees the Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE) and the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education (CESE) as described in Title 16 of Rhode Island's General Laws. The independence of the CPE is legally established by its status as a constituent part of the RIBOE, which is a public corporation. All CPE members serve pro bono, and, by regulation, none is allowed to have any financial interest in either of the state colleges under its jurisdiction, a status that is enforced annually through mandatory filings of public conflict of interest forms filed with the Rhode Island Department of Administration.

The CPE is responsible for reviewing and approving the mission and vision of both OPC and the institutions under its purview. The CPE approves new or significantly altered academic programs, as well as monitoring the institution's admissions, enrollment, finances, and staffing. The CPE oversees the Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner (OPC), which provides staff and legal functions for the council. The OPC is directed by a commissioner who administers the policies adopted by the CPE. The commissioner serves as the head of the Rhode Island public higher education system, which currently consists of Rhode Island College and the Community College of Rhode Island. The University of Rhode Island (URI) operates under a separate Board of Trustees that was established by the state in 2020.

An essential role of the CPE is submitting the state budget request for higher education to the RIBOE. The RIBOE budget is then submitted to the Governor for inclusion in his draft budget, which is then sent to the General Assembly for consideration in development of the official state budget. When passed, the approved state budget determines the state's appropriation for higher education. At the time of the last Self-Study, efforts were focused on budget trimming and austerity measures taken in the context of structural deficits driven by declines in student enrollment. More recently, the college has benefited from a significant increase in state support, including the use of COVID relief funds and permanent allocations, further discussed in Standard Seven.

Internal Governance

The president of Rhode Island College serves as the chief executive officer of the institution and is appointed by the CPE. The president reports regularly at CPE meetings and communicates with the college community through listening forums, formal presentations, and as an ex-officio member of the Council of Rhode Island College and the Council's Executive Committee. The President meets weekly with executive leadership and is further supported by the President's Executive Cabinet (PEC), which includes the academic deans and some directors and meets monthly, and the Extended President's Executive Committee (EPEC), which meets quarterly.

Leadership Transitions

In 2022, President Dr. Frank Sánchez resigned from his position to seek other opportunities. Upon his departure, Dr. Jack Warner was appointed to serve as interim president while a national search was conducted, with an initial appointment of one year that was extended to a second year. On February 14, 2024, following that national search, the CPE unanimously voted to name Warner as RIC's eleventh president. Warner's tenure began that July and he was formally installed on November 15, 2024.

Along with a change in leadership at the presidential level, there have been several other changes at the institution. Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA) Dr. Helen Tate resigned from her position in December 2022. Following her resignation there has been a period of transition in the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs (Provost's Office), with two interim provosts appointed to fill the position while succession planning and a national search were conducted. Dr. Manyul Im was appointed to serve as the next provost and VPAA beginning the summer of 2025.

Upon the retirement of the vice provost of undergraduate affairs, positions in the Provost's Office were restructured and expanded, including revision of the vice provost for undergraduate affairs position to create a general vice provost of academic affairs with responsibility for both undergraduate and graduate programs, the creation of a director of academic policies and operations, and restructuring of the assistant vice provost position to expanded responsibilities, including some moved from the old vice provost position. These changes have strengthened operations in the Provost's Office in ways necessary to address the challenges and support the strategic advancement of the Division of Academic Affairs.

Finally, several improvements were made within the Division of Student Success, including creating a new position of assistant dean of student success with responsibility for academic advising and career services. This alignment is intended to enhance the integration of career services into academic advising. More information about this position can be found in the second area of emphasis, above.

Shared Governance

Shared governance consists of administration, The Council of Rhode Island College (RIC Council), and the Student Community Government (SCG). The RIC Council and its 24 standing committees serve as the institution's principal system of shared governance. The Council comprises one member from each academic department, five at-large faculty members, two members of the professional staff, and two students. The president and the provost and vice president for academic affairs serve as ex-officio members. The Council's charter describes the relationship between the Council on Postsecondary Education, RIC's president, and the faculty.

The RIC Council and its Executive Committee both meet monthly during the academic year, ensuring timely action on institutional matters. Collective bargaining also plays an important role in shared governance related to faculty appointments, tenure and promotion processes, duties of department chairs, and working conditions. Two primary examples of outcomes resulting from shared governance processes over the past two years include the development of a policy on online education (discussed in the sixth area of emphasis, above) and revisions to the general education program (discussed in Standard Four). Shared governance also participated in the productivity and efficiency review as described in Standard Four.

Standard Four: The Academic Program

Rhode Island College (RIC) offers 58 undergraduate majors and 29 graduate degrees, including 27 master's degrees, one certificate of advanced graduate study (CAGS), and 1 doctor of nursing practice program. RIC also offers 27 graduate and 23 undergraduate certificates, though some certificates can only be completed in the course of a concurrent master's or bachelor's program.

Since the time of the last Self-Study, the college has undertaken numerous improvements in academic programs and infrastructure that are aligned with the new Strategic Compass and that have arisen from the institutional response to the recently created state Hope Scholarship. These initiatives have aimed to reduce barriers, improve student success, create clearer pathways for progression and timely degree completion, and enhance overall processes. The institution has also worked to remove barriers for transfer students, as discussed in the second area of emphasis. The work completed to date has translated to increased student enrollments, creating a foundation for continued advancement and long-term sustainability.

Program Productivity and Efficiency Review

The college has consistently engaged in a regular review process for academic programs, though the exact process has shifted with the strategic focus of the institution and the changes in academic and institutional research leadership. However, always included is an annual review of programs with low numbers of degree completers, as mandated by the Rhode Island Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner (OPC). This year the college used the OPC-mandated process as the starting point for a deeper look at programs and concentrations falling below the OPC thresholds for annual completion counts. The result was an evaluation of over 40 programs and concentrations, focusing on each program's instructional productivity and efficiency in delivery to determine if the programs would continue to be supported. Programs from across three schools (the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, the School of Business, and the Feinstein School of Education and Human Development) met the criteria established for the review.

The chairs and program coordinators for the identified programs were provided with a standard set of data including faculty counts, faculty FTE, and student credit hour production for the last three years, among other pieces of information. They were then asked to submit a report evaluating their program and describing any corrective actions to be taken to increase their enrollment and graduation counts or increase efficiency in course delivery. Programs were allowed to recommend an outcome up to and including designating their program for closure. The programs' submitted reports were reviewed by the Committee on Program Renew and Reporting, a committee of the Council of Rhode Island College and part of RIC's shared governance structure, which advises the provost and vice president for academic affairs on the process of regular program review. The programs' reports and the committee's feedback were assessed by the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs and recommendations were sent to the president who made the final determination of the program's outcome. This process resulted in the suspension of admission to several programs, starting Fall 2025, with the understanding that the suspension would lead to the eventual creation of a teach-out plan and program closure. The remainder of the programs were informed that they should develop a program improvement plan, the exact structure and timeline for which will be determined in the coming months. As expected, the faculty expressed concerns with the process and outcomes of the review which are being reviewed following existing

institutional processes. The program and efficiency review process reflects the intentional efforts of the college to streamline and right-size its program offerings in order to ensure long-term sustainability and while continuing to meet its mission.

Reduction of Excessive Credits

During the last Self-Study, the institution recognized that barriers to timely student progression and graduation existed within the general education program and major requirements. The general education program at that time required many students to take up to 48 credits, not including the additional credits needed for remedial math when required (see the Educational Effectiveness section for more information). When coupled with high credit requirements in many majors, the large general education program contributed to rigid programs that did not allow for exploration or personalization through electives, and more than 40% of academic plans of study exceeding 120 credits and 25% exceeding 130 credits. Concerted efforts have focused on streamlining the general education program, reducing excessive credit requirements within majors, and creating more flexible pathways necessary to support student progression and timely graduation while maintaining rigorous academic standards.

To address the challenges, the Committee on General Education (COGE) oversaw a collaborative and inclusive process that began by soliciting feedback from students and faculty about what the general education program should look like. Based on this information, recommended design proposals were developed and shared with the campus, ending with a proposed new general education program in 2023. The revised program was first approved by COGE in April, 2024, followed by the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (UCC) later that same month, and the Council of Rhode Island College (RIC Council) on May 10th. The program was implemented for the majority of enrolled undergraduates beginning in the Fall 2024 semester.

Changes to the general education program include removing the second language requirement and instead integrating modern language courses as part of a new literature/language distribution category. Other distribution category changes include the revision of the history distribution to include philosophy, the removal of the advanced quantitative reasoning category, and the creation of a general education elective category. The new program also permits some science courses without a lab section to meet the natural science distribution requirement. These changes ensure that the general education program can be completed in 40 credits for all students and increases flexibility. Courses from the previous general education program were reviewed for alignment with the current learning outcomes. Those approved were rolled into the new program. Courses where the alignment was less clear were asked to submit justification for inclusion, including all of the accepted courses in the connections category. The connections category is one of nine required elements in the general education program and is focused on courses emphasizing comparative perspectives.

In tandem with the changes to the general education program, all academic programs were charged with revising the curriculum to ensure that all programs can be completed within the standard 120 credits for bachelor's degrees. By the end of Spring 2025 this task was achieved with most of the longer programs revised to allow completion within 120 credits. Despite this progress, opportunities remain within several majors from across the institution to further reduce credit density. Improvements in this area are a priority over the next one to two years and will be monitored for their impact on student progression and retention.

FIRST YEAR STUDENT SUCCESS COURSES

In the fall of 2024, two discipline-specific first-year student success courses were introduced: NURS 100 Healthcare Careers: Foundations for Success, in the School of Nursing, and BUSI100 Introduction to Business at RIC, in the School of Business. In addition, the bachelor of professional studies (BPS) program is in the process of developing BPS 100 designed to meet the specific needs of students in that program. These courses fulfill the RIC 100 (Introduction to College) graduation requirement and are designed to build upon the general introductory foundation provided by the original RIC 100 while addressing the unique needs of each discipline. For instance, students in NURS 100 engage in reflections on their interest in the nursing profession and explore various careers within healthcare, while students in BUSI 100 focus on career opportunities in business and gaining exposure to needed soft skills. These courses are designed to foster a sense of belonging among students within their respective schools early in their collegiate career while supporting the development of academic and discipline-specific professional skills. The impact of these courses on broader outcomes such as retention, progression and graduation will be measured over the next three to five years as cohorts progress through the program.

ZVART ONANIAN SCHOOL OF NURSING

Over the past four years, the School of Nursing (SON) has systematically revised its curriculum. Through shared governance processes, the SON has revised its mission and vision, established new program outcomes for the nursing degrees at all levels, and led major revisions to the bachelor of science in nursing (BSN) and RN-to-BSN programs, including the development of new courses for both programs and a shift to online delivery for the RN-to-BSN program which is further discussed in the sixth area of emphasis, above. These curricular changes have been approved by the SON faculty and undergraduate or graduate curriculum committees as needed. Changes to these programs are reflected in substantive change reports submitted to the program's accreditor, the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE), on October 22, 2024.

Curricular changes in the SON have been designed to align with the new accreditation standards established by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing's (AACN) The Essentials: Core Competencies for Professional Nursing Education (AACN, 2021) and adapted by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education in their Standards for Accreditation of Baccalaureate and Graduate Nursing Education Programs (CCNE, 2024). The revised curriculum shifts from a teaching-focused approach to a learner-centered, competency-based, and outcomes-focused approach. This new curriculum elevates educational quality, enhances student support, and fosters improved student outcomes.

Highlights of the revised BSN program include: implementation of the new NURS 100 course described above, streamlining first-year courses to improve alignment with the curriculum of other nursing programs to support entering transfers, strengthening instruction in core areas such as pharmacology and pathophysiology, and improving the scaffolding of core courses to support learning outcomes. These adjustments increase the readiness of BSN graduates to meet the current needs of the practice setting while reducing the major's credits from 125 to the standard 120. The curricular changes also met the desired goal of creating increased pathways for students to achieve four-year graduation.

The SON also launched a hyflex model for its graduate nursing programs in the Fall 2023, as discussed in the sixth area of focus. In October of 2023, the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) conducted an in-person comprehensive assessment of the SON graduate nursing programs, including its three masters of science in nursing (MSN), doctor of nursing practice (DNP), and two post-master's certificate programs. The hyflex model was evaluated during this review. All programs received the full 10-year accreditation with no areas for improvement identified. The accreditation decision reflects the high quality of the School of Nursing's programs, including online and distance education formats.

SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

The School of Business (SOB) has made significant reductions in credit requirements across various majors. For instance, in the health care administration program, the total number of required credits has been decreased, two cognate requirements have been eliminated, and one 300-level management course has been removed. Content from these courses was found to be duplicative; therefore, removal of the courses allowed the curriculum to be streamlined while maintaining quality and achievement of learning outcomes. Additionally, prerequisites for management and marketing courses have been eliminated to reduce barriers in course access, and there is now greater flexibility in electives for the finance program. Furthermore, the number of courses required for the economics major has been reduced, and proposals to incorporate certain economics courses into the general education program are currently under review. If approved, this will enhance flexibility for students within the economics major.

The SOB has also introduced several new programs in emerging and high-demand fields that align with the college's strategic goals and the needs of the Rhode Island community. Recognizing the critical need for cybersecurity professionals, the college has established the Institute for Cybersecurity and Emerging Technologies at Rhode Island College. The institute's mission is to "nurture, educate, and train the next generation of leaders and innovators in cybersecurity," and to "become a hub for research, education, and workforce development." The center is the home for new programs in cybersecurity and artificial intelligence (AI). The AI program was developed with input from business and national organizations to ensure that students graduate with the necessary skills to address the growing AI skills gap in the workplace. Alongside new program development, which includes a program in sports management and those mentioned above, the SOB has launched several initiatives aimed at improving student success. For example, a dedicated student coach position has been established to assist students with study skills, time management, and stress management. A mentoring program pairs freshmen from the SOB with alumni to provide guidance and support. Improvements have also been made in academic advising, including the introduction of a dedicated advising day, extended professional advising hours, and professional development for faculty on best advising practices.

FEINSTEIN SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

The Feinstein School of Education and Human Development (FSEHD) has worked to improve access, flexibility, and support for its undergraduate and graduate students. Specific efforts have focused on reducing credit requirements across programs and refining curricula to create clear pathways to completion within four years. The FSEHD also adjusted requirements for secondary admission to FSEHD programs (e.g., adjusting the grade requirement for the First Year Writing course), to be more consistent with the requirements

at other Rhode Island colleges and universities. At the graduate level, transparent and flexible program pathways have been established to facilitate student progression and timely completion of all graduate programs. For example, the master of arts in teaching (MAT) in secondary education was revised to provide certification options across all secondary education content areas. All approved changes in both undergraduate and graduate programs have maintained program rigor and alignment with accreditation requirements while removing unnecessary prerequisites that hindered student progression.

The FSEHD has enhanced support for students at key milestones across the program such as providing workshops to prepare students for admission to the FSEHD, the student teaching/internship semester, and the Praxis certification exams. Other efforts to support student progression in undergraduate programs included introducing a professional advisor model for all majors in educator preparation programs, fostering consistent use of advising pathway documents, and incorporation of Starfish to enhance advising outcomes. The FSEHD also conducted an external review of their Office of Partnerships and Placements to improve systems for implementing mutually beneficial partnerships with schools and community organizations.

The FSEHD launched several initiatives to address the teacher shortage in Rhode Island and nationwide. The school has revised and are currently refining their graduate degree programs and certificates of graduate studies to make obtaining an initial or second certification more accessible for students. One example is the fully online certificate of graduate studies (CGS) in early childhood education and early childhood special education (ECE/ECSE), designed for busy working professionals and offering dual certification in just 18 months. In addition, FSEHD has met with principals from across the state and will be meeting with superintendents to discuss strategies for addressing the teacher shortage.

Graduate Programs

Enrollment at the graduate-level has remained stable, with approximately 1,000 graduate students enrolled at RIC annually. Until recently, graduate programs were coordinated by a faculty member who worked half-time as the dean of graduate studies. Following the departure of the last dean, a review of the Office of Graduate Studies' governance, policies, and processes was undertaken to determine the needs of the programs and how best to support them. Pending completion of the review, the responsibilities of the dean of graduate studies position were temporarily restructured under the vice provost for academic affairs with support from the director of academic operations and policy. Through shared governance processes and broad faculty participation, a proposal was submitted by the faculty Graduate Committee requesting that the Office of Graduate Studies be structured under a full-time leadership position housed within the provost's area, with responsible for coordinating programs, streamlining administrative processes, improving the processes for application and admission, and supporting graduate students. An additional recommendation made by the Graduate Committee was investment in the promotion and marketing of graduate programs. This proposal is currently under review by the president and will inform significant improvements to the structure for graduate programs in the college.

Standard Five: Students

Several critical changes in the area of student recruitment and support are addressed in the second area of emphasis arising from the Self-Study, above: the adoption of a new consumer relations management (CRM) software to aid undergraduate admissions, the expansion of transfer credit equivalencies and improvements in the transfer admissions process, and the restructuring of critical student support units to improve the student experience and access to resources. These improvements demonstrate Rhode Island College's (RIC) on-going commitment to serve the students and the people of the state of Rhode Island. Continued focus on recruitment to maintain current enrollment levels and work to improve learning outcomes are critical to the institution's future.

With improved operations in admissions and multiple initiatives focused on student retention and progression, the institution was able to stabilize enrollments. In Fall 2022 enrollment was 5,787 students, which dropped just slightly to 5,768 in Fall 2023. This small dip was a combination of an increased freshman cohort balanced with a very large graduating class, as the last of the larger pre-pandemic cohorts graduated. However, with the creation of the state-funded Hope Scholarship in the summer of 2023 and increased efforts in marketing and recruitment, the college rebounded to a headcount of 6,158 in the most recent fall. This was an increase of 390 students, driven largely by in-state first-year students who would qualify to take advantage of the scholarship in their junior year. This enrollment increase brought the incoming freshman class size in line with pre-pandemic numbers. The year-over-year headcount increase for Spring 2025 was even larger at 550 (5,954 vs. 5,404), and fall-to-spring retention rates increased.

RIC's commitment to serving the local population is embedded in the new Strategic Compass, with its call to "embrace the great potential of the College's noteworthy designation as a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) that strives to practice servingness." RIC achieved HSI status in 2020, becoming the first public institution of higher education in the state of Rhode Island to qualify. Unfortunately, the drop in enrollment that the institution experienced during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic included a drop in the Hispanic/Latino undergraduate population such that RIC missed the critical 25% of students needed to maintain the designation in 2021 by a few tenths of a percent. Through the efforts made to improve student enrollment and retention since that time, undergraduate Hispanic/Latino enrollment has increased to meet the HSI threshold in each year since. In 2024, students identifying as Hispanic/Latino were 29% of the undergraduate student population, and all students of color made up 48% of the undergraduate population. This diversity reflects that of Providence and RIC's surrounding community.

Identified action items from the Strategic Compass related to RIC's embrace of its Hispanic- and minority-serving status are already complete or in progress. President Dr. Jack Warner has become a member of *Excelencia* in Education's (*Excelencia*) Presidents for Latino Student Success, a group of college and university presidents committed to making their institutions learning environments where Latino students, and thereby all students, thrive. The institution is also engaging with *Excelencia* to participate in their inaugural cohort guiding institutions through their "journey to intentionally serve Latino students." Key institutional personnel in strategic initiatives, academic affairs, student success, and institutional research have been identified to participate in specialized training and lead the institution through the process to earn *Excelencia's* Seal of Excelencia.

Providing support for RIC's students was also behind actions by the Division of Student Success to offer a robust, increased slate of programming and services to students. For example, services at the Counseling Center were expanded, including evening hours three nights a week and additional staffing. The Student Activities office was re-branded as Student Engagement and Leadership Development to better reflect its mission to foster student involvement across campus. This area hosted a leadership development series open to all students which focused on both increasing leadership skills and career readiness. The dean of students and the Committee on Student Life held a series of focus groups for students on the main campus and at the Rhode Island Nurse Education Center (RINEC) aimed at building on the recent successes from the enhanced offerings and looking for ways to continue to improve.

RIC is also working to address concerns raised by students around the quality and accessibility of student advising. As mentioned in the second area of emphasis, more first-year students are now connected with professional advisors to provide trained support to help them navigate the beginning of their educational career. In response to a survey by the student government, which identified general levels of dissatisfaction with advising that increased with class level from freshmen to seniors, RIC adopted a formal advising mission statement in May 2025. This mission statement will serve as a foundation for RIC to take further steps to standardize and improve the advising students receive across campus.

Standard Six: Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship

Rhode Island College's highly qualified and highly engaged faculty are critical to the advancement of its mission and the achievement of its strategic goals. As such, Rhode Island College (RIC) places considerable emphasis on recruiting, hiring, evaluating, supporting, and retaining its faculty members.

The collective bargaining agreement between the RIC Chapter of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and the Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE) specifies the duties associated with faculty positions at Rhode Island College. The 2018-2021 contract established a new salary system, aligning RIC faculty salaries with national averages from among comparable institutions by both rank and years of experience, and established a system standardizing automatic salary increases. This system, which was retained in the 2021-2023 contract, supports the ability to recruit qualified faculty for open positions.

<i>Faculty Demographics</i>				
	PROFESSOR	ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR	ASSISTANT PROFESSOR	TOTAL/AVERAGE
Number	108	88	66	262
% Female	82%	80%	82%	82%
Average years at RIC	22	12	4	14
HIGHEST DEGREE EARNED*				
Doctorate	93	85	47	225
Master's	15	3	19	37

<i>Faculty Demographics</i>				
Bachelors	0	0	1	1
TENURE STATUS				
# Tenured	108	85	5	215
% Tenured	100%	97%	8%	76%

*Please note that for certain fields of study, a master's degree is considered terminal. Data as of fall of the 2024-2025 academic year.

The majority of full-time faculty hold tenured or tenure-track positions. However, there are also a small number of faculty members who work in non-tenure-track roles under term-limited appointments that can be renewed for a maximum of six years. Additionally, full-time faculty members can occupy a position as instructors, which is a non-renewable, four-year appointment. Faculty who are hired at the instructor rank will automatically advance to a tenure-track assistant professor position upon obtaining their terminal degree.

All full-time faculty must carry 12 faculty load hours (FLH) per semester as defined in the contract. Generally, one course credit hour equates to one FLH. The workload for library faculty is defined separately from the instructional faculty. Faculty load hours are also allocated for administrative duties such as chair or program director/coordinator appointments, certain committee work, and other approved administrative release time. In addition to the specified FLH, faculty are responsible for student advising, participating in department and college governance, program assessment, service to the college community as well as service to the profession, and maintenance of professional competence including participation in creative work or scholarship.

Number of Faculty

The size of the full-time faculty has decreased by 20.8% since 2019 (from 331 to 262). Decreases in the faculty's size have occurred in the context of significant declines in student enrollments over the past decade. As noted in this report, while student enrollment has stabilized recently, it decreased by over 34% in seven years, from 9,391 in 2018 to 6,158 in 2024, following national and regional trends for regional comprehensive institutions. This trend coupled with changing distributions of students across majors required adjusting the faculty size and strategically reallocating faculty resources necessary to meet student needs and advance the college's mission, while ensuring financial sustainability.

To support these goals, two rounds of voluntary retirements were held in 2023 and 2024, resulting in 45 faculty retirements between the two. These retirements, which are further discussed in the first and third areas of emphasis, provided the opportunity for the college to determine the number of positions that could be replaced within the existing budget and to support strategic hiring in areas of need and alignment with college priorities. Due to budgetary limitations, a strategic, but conservative approach to hiring was necessary. As the college's financial position has continued to strengthen, RIC

is now returning to the usual hiring practices as described in the third area of emphasis, above.

	CALENDAR YEAR			
Faculty Lines	2022	2023	2024	2025 (anticipated)
Lines Approved for Posting	34	33	15	35
Total Lines Filled	31	27	12	--
Tenure-Track Lines Filled	27	18	5	22
Term-Limited Line Filled	4	9	7	13

While the number of full-time faculty has decreased, the number of part-time faculty has increased by 17.3% from 301 in 2021 to 353 in 2024. This increase in the number of adjunct faculty was necessary to meet immediate needs. For example, the number of incoming freshmen increased significantly in 2023 and even more so in 2024, requiring an increase in the number of first-year courses. In addition, adjunct faculty were needed to fill vacancies created by retirements in high-demand areas until full-time positions could be posted in areas such as business, education, and nursing.

Faculty Evaluation

Criteria for faculty evaluation are embedded in the faculty contract. Full-time faculty are evaluated annually based on teaching effectiveness and professional competence. Faculty submit a Personal Data Form detailing the previous year's activities to their department chairs. Student course evaluations and peer teaching evaluations are also reviewed by the chairperson, who provides a written evaluation and a rating based on the performance rubric provided in the contract. The evaluation is submitted to the dean who can make additional comments before submission to the provost.

Faculty Development

The College enjoys a strong culture of collegiality and a shared focus on teaching and learning. Faculty development is supported through the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning (FCTL), which offers robust programming. As discussed in Standard Four and area of emphasis six, in the summer and fall of 2024, mandatory training on Blackboard Ultra was provided for all faculty to support the transition to this updated learning system. In addition, all faculty teaching in an online, hybrid, or hyflex format were required to complete training offered through the FCTL or approved external training specific to the modality in which they teach, ensuring that faculty are prepared with the knowledge and competence to provide high-quality teaching using these delivery formats.

Another example of the College's strong commitment to faculty and staff development is the RIC Community Development Day, which was launched in the fall of 2024. The inaugural event featured over 20 topics of relevance to staff and faculty and aligned with the college's strategic goals, and there were over 200 attendees. The Community Development Day included both internal and external presenters, ensuring new knowledge and ideas are brought into the institution while providing a forum for faculty

and staff to share their knowledge and ideas across departments. By making professional development a key priority, RIC aims to build a more skilled, motivated, and engaged workforce that is continuously growing both professionally and personally.

Teaching and Learning

Changes to the curriculum are driven at the faculty level, with initial approval occurring at the department and school levels and following a shared governance process through existing committee structures. Changes to the general education program are approved initially through the Committee on General Education. Changes to undergraduate or graduate courses and programs are approved through the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee or Graduate Committee, respectively, before final approval by the provost and president. Advancements in teaching and learning are supported by related academic policies and procedures as outlined in the Manual of Academic Policies and Procedures (MAPP) and through investment in infrastructure. Examples include advancement in online courses and programs (Standard Four and areas of emphasis five and six), an upgrade to the learning management system (LMS), implementation of a policy establishing a universal expectation for the use of that LMS across courses and programs that included training, and implementation of a policy standardizing expectations for course syllabi.

Academic Integrity

Faculty work systematically with the administration to ensure an environment of academic integrity. The academic integrity policy was last modified in 2013 by the Council of Rhode Island College (RIC Council) to create a separation between disciplinary procedures for academic integrity violations and other issues. The policy is currently under review, and updates are expected in 2025. Faculty have access to resources such as plagiarism detection software to support them in upholding academic standards. The Academic Integrity Board is an established committee of the RIC Council that adjudicates academic integrity cases.

The rapid expansion of generative artificial intelligence (AI) has raised important questions as to the role of this technology in the academic setting. Work is currently underway to develop policies necessary to support appropriate and ethical use of AI while mitigating risks to academic integrity. This work has begun at the level of the Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner (OPC), and two members of the RIC community are participating. As of spring 2025, the OPC group has developed a policy proposal to guide appropriate and ethical use of AI in the academic setting, which is currently under review by the commissioner. At the same time, the College has convened an AI taskforce, which has engaged individuals from across the campus in thinking about AI governance at the institution and evaluating current policies that will need to consider AI integration. In addition, two representatives from the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs and one faculty member have been supported to attend several workshops and trainings and are working to develop professional guidance on AI to be available by Fall 2025.

Standard Seven: Institutional Resources

Rhode Island College has made significant improvements in stabilizing its financial position and investing in the administrative and financial infrastructure of the institution to ensure the management of operations. Investments in personnel and systems demonstrate the institution's commitment to long-term financial stability and economic viability balanced with meeting the institution's mission. In April 2024, the College

introduced its new Strategic Compass to the college community with goals and metrics focused on the long-term enhancement of the College's institutional resources.

Human Resources

Rhode Island College (RIC) employed approximately 1,145 employees as of the 2024-2025 academic year, of which 266 were full-time faculty and 393 were part-time faculty. (Please note the number of full-time faculty reported here includes four faculty librarians not reported on the table found in the discussion of faculty demographics.) RIC's employees are governed by separate collective bargaining agreements for full-time faculty, adjunct faculty, classified staff, and professional staff, among others. After faculty, the single largest employee category in 2024 was service occupations (126) followed by student and academic affairs and other education services occupations (84); management (80); office and administrative support occupations (59); community, social service, legal, arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media occupations (44); computer, engineering, and science occupations (34); business and financial (29); natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations (15); healthcare practitioners and technical occupations (8); and librarians, curators, and archivists (6).

In the past few years, the Office of Human Resources (HR) at Rhode Island College has undergone a significant transformation, evolving in response to both the changing nature of the workforce and the broader challenges facing higher education institutions. In the summer of 2024, following a recommendation by consultants hired to evaluate HR operations, RIC hired its inaugural Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO). This position is crucial for driving human resource strategies that align with and support the College's goals. Under the CHRO's leadership, HR will be focusing on talent acquisition, employee engagement, organizational development, and retention to ensure RIC remains an attractive and supportive place to work.

Other changes in HR positions include the 2021 creation of a coordinator position dedicated to talent acquisition and retention. This role streamlines the job posting process and has reduced RIC's time to fill positions from 65 days to 55 days. The office also created a manager for human resources information systems position to support HR's data needs and transitioned a qualified existing staff member into the role.

On the staff development and support side, RIC revamped its employee orientation process in 2023. This process places new hires into cohorts and has provided a more efficient, consistent, and holistic approach to the new-hire employee experience. This new orientation, which also included a supplemental session to serve employees hired in the last three years under the old orientation, marked a commitment to supporting staff from the very beginning of their careers at RIC.

In 2022, a need was identified for career development ladders for entry-level professional positions, providing clear advancement pathways. Defined career ladders are now available in various fields, including information technology, finance, and admissions, where they were determined to be of greatest utility. This initiative supports employee retention and fosters growth and recognition by creating milestones for the recognition and faster advancement of key staff.

RIC launched a Supervisor Training program in 2024 for existing leaders across all employee types. This training covers essential topics such as talent acquisition, compensation, and talent management, ensuring that supervisors are not only equipped with the knowledge they need but also empowered to support their teams effectively.

This initiative was well received by the staff, as it demonstrated a clear commitment to investing in leadership development and organizational growth.

Rhode Island College has continued to prioritize professional development across all levels and types of employees. As a member of the Rhode Island Higher Education Training Consortium, RIC benefits from shared professional development resources, providing employees with access to high-quality training opportunities. This consortium model not only helps institutions streamline training efforts but also offers significant cost savings through economies of scale for personal and leadership development. Additionally, in 2023, RIC received a grant to establish a Staff Professional Development Fund, which was used to support staff attendance at conferences, workshops, and seminars, along with other learning opportunities. The fund also allowed RIC to bring expert speakers and consultants to campus, enriching the intellectual and professional experience of staff members. In turn, employees who took part in these development activities were encouraged to share their learnings with the broader RIC community. This culminated in the College's first-ever Community Development Day (also discussed in Standard Six) in the fall of 2024. This dedicated development day, open to all employees and featuring over 20 different sessions for faculty and staff to explore, allowed employees to share their knowledge and ideas across departments. Community Development Day is expected to remain a standard part of the activities marking the start of the academic year, and the second annual event will be hosted just a few days after this report is due. By making professional development a priority, RIC aims to build a more skilled, motivated, and engaged workforce, one that is continuously growing both professionally and personally.

Financial Resources

At the close of fiscal year 2024, RIC had improved its financial position through improved cash management, increased budgetary controls and overall improved fiscal accountability. These new processes and controls support the long-term fiscal stability of the college. RIC has simultaneously experienced changeover and expansion of the budget and finance area, with a new interim vice president of administration and finance, and a new director of budget and financial planning who is supported by a newly created position of assistant director. Like many regional comprehensive colleges, the College has faced financial challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic, supply chain issues, inflationary pressures, and a decline in enrollment.

Despite these challenges, RIC has created a sustainable financial plan by leveraging federal and state support to take strategic steps in fiscal years 2022, 2023, and 2024 to bring the budget back into balance. For fiscal year 2024, assets exceeded liabilities by \$184.6M, an improvement of \$27.2M over fiscal year 2023. In fiscal year 2024, the College operated with a positive margin for the first time since the pandemic, with revenues of \$160.6M against \$160.5M in operating expenses. The College continues to receive unqualified audits of its financial statements by the College's independent auditor, CLA, meaning the statements are fair and appropriately presented and in compliance with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) and the Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB).

Since 2008, public colleges across the country have struggled with significant decreases in state support. Conversely, the last five years have shown improvement in state support for RIC, with funding increasing to approximately \$70 million per year in fiscal year 2025. With the end of federal pandemic relief funds leading to increasing statewide budgetary constraints, the College is preparing for the possibility of a likely best-case scenario of level

funding or a possible moderate decrease in state appropriations beginning in fiscal year 2026. College leadership is monitoring the state's budgetary process, including actions at the federal level, and making strategic decisions to address potential future funding challenges.

As part of the College's goal to create a student-centered ecosystem, the College continues to maintain affordability by limiting the size of tuition and fee increases after the adjustment made in 2020. Rhode Island College charged just over \$11,000 per year in tuition and fees in 2024-2025, a level that continues to rank below peer New England comprehensive public institutions. With the addition of the newly legislated, state-funded Hope Scholarship, Rhode Island resident first-time, full-time students who complete 60 credit hours within the first two years of college attendance and meet other criteria can attend RIC tuition free for the final two years of their degree. This increases RIC's affordability by making it possible for in-state students to receive a four-year degree for under \$25,000.

Information, Physical, and Technological Resources

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

The College's Information Technology Services department is continuously working to maintain the institution's current IT infrastructure and providing a safe and secure online environment. As a state agency, the College is actively engaged in the State of Rhode Island's enterprise resource planning (ERP) upgrade to Workday. This upgrade will involve human resources, payroll, and benefits processes as well as some changes to the College's procurement and budget procedures. The College will maintain its PeopleSoft ERP system for all student record and non-payroll financial processing and reporting.

As part of the College's creation of a student-centered ecosystem, RIC upgraded the learning management system (LMS) to Blackboard Ultra with full conversion complete in the fall of 2024. This upgrade improves the efficiency of day-to-day tasks for students and instructors with improved management of content and assessment of outcomes. In addition, the College will begin the implementation of the Oracle Student Financial Planning product to provide students with a better financial aid workflow as well as help strategically award and disburse aid to achieve the College's financial and enrollment goals. RIC is also in the middle of a bid process for a new catalog/curriculum management system that will also support the institution in implementing more strategic course scheduling.

In order to ensure the safety and security of all campus systems, the College continues to manage cyber threats and vulnerabilities in consultation with DeepSeas, a global cybersecurity company. RIC works with them regularly to update information security policies and procedures, and to manage security awareness efforts on campus. DeepSeas also operates a managed security operations center for RIC that monitors threats and manages security events helping RIC protect its valuable data and systems.

FACILITIES

Investment in RIC's campus has been critical to ensuring a modern, safe, and suitable learning environment for students. The institution, with significant support from the state, continues to invest in improvements to the physical plant. The College currently receives approximately \$10M per year in asset protection funding from the state to assist with the ongoing need for repairs to roofs and windows, improvements increasing Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance, building mechanical systems, and electrical infrastructure. Development of and renovations to academic space in the past five years

include the following: completion of major renovations to Horace Mann Hall, home of the Feinstein School of Education and Human Development, resulting in a modernized classroom building that was completed in 2023; modernization of the Clark Science Building, which houses the physical sciences, including the expansion of the building's footprint and updates to classrooms and laboratories with an expected completion in 2025. The College is in the early-stage planning of a \$73.5M modernization project for Whipple Hall, the future home of the Institute for Cybersecurity and Emerging Technologies with an expected start in early 2026. These projects represent an over \$150M investment in the College's buildings and infrastructure.

James P. Adams Library

The mission of the James P. Adams Library is to provide students and faculty with access to the sources of information, knowledge and services necessary to support and improve instruction and learning consistent with the objectives of the educational programs of Rhode Island College. Since 2021, the Library has noticed a significant increase in student usage. During the academic year, the Library is open 80 hours per week; hours are reduced in the summer and during non-class weeks. Extended hours are provided during the last two weeks of class and final exams. To accommodate students not on campus, the Library provides chat during operational hours in the fall and spring, and students can request connection any time using the Ask Us feature.

Standard Nine: Integrity, Transparency, and Public Disclosure

While maintaining compliance with state, federal, and accreditation requirements, Rhode Island College (RIC) has invested in a review and refresh of several critical documents. The student handbook was redrafted in 2024 as one of the first projects handled by the new dean of students. The handbook now provides a comprehensive overview of policies, procedures, and regulations for students. The updated handbook added a frequently asked questions section, clear definitions for terms related to student conduct, and step-by-step charts outlining the course withdrawal and academic integrity review processes. Select excerpts from the Manual for Academic Policies and Procedures (MAPP), which is the primary source for academic policies, were also incorporated to create a single location for the most referenced policies and procedures affecting students.

Along with copying certain portions of MAPP to the student handbook for ease of student use, a large-scale review of MAPP policies was undertaken by a dedicated taskforce. While maintenance and updating of the manual belong to the Committee for Academic Policies and Procedures (CAPP), a committee of the faculty Council, a taskforce comprised of individuals from across campus have spent close to two years meeting to review and update a block of the included policies, with recommendations for updates being forwarded to CAPP for final approval and adoption.

This taskforce was initially formed as two separate groups in the spring of 2023 in response to the review of the Records Office by the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO), further discussed in the second area of focus, above. Along with the review of the Records Office's operations, AACRAO was charged with providing guidance regarding effective scheduling practices and improvement of the student experience related to registration. Following AACRAO's recommendations, the first work group was formed to review the policies and processes related to schedule development and recommend changes aimed at meeting student demand and increasing efficiency. The second work group focused on the revision of

academic policies to remove barriers to student retention and progression and ensure consistency between the policies and between policy and practice.

The scheduling group first tackled the MAPP policy directly related to scheduling patterns. The language of the scheduling policy was updated, and standardized course meeting blocks were created and have begun to be implemented. RIC has a request for proposals in progress to purchase software that will support further standardization in the development of the course schedule. Because the membership of the two original groups overlapped, it became apparent that the review of scheduling and the review of academic policies were highly interrelated. Many of the first policies targeted for review related to course grading, course registration, and other functions that would have an impact on the structure and intent of future schedules. Upon that realization, the two groups merged into one taskforce with representation from faculty and professional advising, the dean of students, the chair of CAPP, and the Registrar's Office, among others. As of August 2025, the merged taskforce will be disbanded after reviewing and updating 18 policies including those addressing college withdrawals and leaves of absence, grading, academic forgiveness, and course withdrawals. The final action of the taskforce will be to send recommendations regarding the need for continued and regular systematic review of the entirety of the manual to CAPP.

In addition to updating key publications and policies, the institution made a significant decision to divide its website into two parts. The original page, ric.edu, now serves as an externally facing website dedicated to recruitment and public information while the newly created our.ric.edu is focused on serving the information needs of the RIC community, though it remains a publicly accessible page. The decision to divide the webpage came after years of comments by internal constituencies about the difficulty of finding necessary information on a webpage that had been designed primarily for recruitment, and the inclusion of a web redesign as an action item in the Strategic Compass. The Office of Web Communications collaborated with all internal units to designate web information as internal or external in orientation and built the new pages in test mode over the course of months, refining designs based on feedback and built-in review mechanisms before making the redesigned sites live in December 2024. Some pages, such as those for the Office of Institutional Research and Planning, were left for later in the processes because they presented unique challenges and required greater review. Through collaboration between the web and institutional research teams, a new public information data page was created for ric.edu, which serves as a dedicated place for all public and mandated reporting, while new pages for the institutional research office and internally focused data were created for our.ric.edu.

The web team, institutional research, and strategic initiatives offices also collaborated to combine two public pages, the consumer information page and the disclosure pages, into one comprehensive page covering all mandated public disclosures. During the discussion that resulted in the merger, it was recognized that the consumer information page was missing certain pieces of information regarding student grievance policies and those elements were subsequently added in advance of this report. To address a finding by the NECHE visiting team in their 2021 report, the division of academic affairs has reviewed the public directory information for faculty, significantly increasing the percentage of profiles

providing complete education credentials. Work to update the few full-time faculty profiles still missing information and update those of adjunct faculty is underway.

EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

The first goal of Rhode Island College's Strategic Compass is "[b]uild and nurture a College wide ecosystem focused on improving pathways for student success, eliminating equity gaps in educational outcomes, and reducing engagement disparities." This primary goal, along with the college's core value of academic quality, demonstrates the college's commitment to providing a quality education that serves students.

At Rhode Island College (RIC), assessment of student learning within academic majors is coordinated by each of the five academic schools for their respective programs. Oversight and design of the undergraduate general education program is provided by the Committee on General Education (COGE) and its parent committee, the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (UCC). Therefore, this report will discuss the institutional perspective followed by a review of the educational effectiveness of the general education program and each school in turn. The schools are: the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS), the School of Business (SOB), the Feinstein School of Education and Human Development (FSEHD), the Zvart Onanian School of Nursing (SON), and the School of Social Work.

Institutional Learning

Courses and programs go through a rigorous shared governance approval process coordinated through the undergraduate and graduate curriculum committees. New program proposals require a listing of the program's learning goals. For courses, either new or those undergoing revision, course learning outcomes must be provided, and the proposal must indicate how student performance will be evaluated.

All academic majors at Rhode Island College are described in the college's online catalog and major-specific web pages, both of which are available to the public. Other degree requirements, such as the general education program elements, are likewise described. RIC programs have defined program learning outcomes that are publicly posted on the major's designated webpage under "program specifics" alongside the course requirements of the major. Web pages for undergraduate programs also provide a curricular plan, referred to as a "Rhode Map", which lays out a recommended pathway for completion of all degree requirements within four years.

Institutional Outcomes

The Office of Institutional Research and Planning (OIRP) provides institutional data on graduation and retention rates. Graduation rates are disaggregated by race/ethnicity and Pell Grant and Stafford (direct subsidized) loan recipient status and are posted on the institution's website as required by regulation, the link to which can be found on the consumer information and disclosures page. The office also generates files tracking the fall-to-fall retention and progression to graduation of both first-time and transfer cohorts and shares those reports with the campus community. These shared reports provide outcome data on the full cohort as well as critical disaggregations, such as sex, race and ethnicity, and Pell Grant eligibility. OIRP also conducts a survey of graduates at the one-year post-graduation mark to ask about their employment status and their experience at RIC. Starting in 2023, the office of Career and Life Design began conducting the National Association of Colleges and Employers' (NACE) first-destination survey to more recent graduates. More select surveys of current students and

graduates are run by the schools and sometimes individual departments to gather feedback on student experience and outcomes.

RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE 6-YEAR GRADUATION RATES FOR FIRST-TIME, FULL-TIME COHORT	
Sub-Cohort	Graduation Rate
All First-time, Full-time Students	46%
Males	37%
Females	50%
US Non-Residents	75%
Hispanic/Latino	41%
American Indian or Alaska Native	11%
Asian	30%
Black or African American	33%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	--
White	56%
Two or More Races	26%
Unknown	41%
Pell Grant Recipient	40%
Direct Subsidized (Stafford) Loan Recipient	59%
Non-Recipients	52%

Retention and Graduation

First-year retention for entering first-time, full-time students has been generally flat for the last several years, dipping slightly for the Fall 2021 cohort before rebounding. Current first-year retention rates of around 74% are also competitive with peer institutions, though lower than the institution would prefer. Looking across cohorts, the rates of first-year retention for Pell Grant-eligible students have varied, but are often near to, or even higher than the rates for non-eligible students, but the rates for students of color, notably Black/African American students, are lower than the rates for other groups of students.

Looking beyond the first year, retention for Pell-recipient students and students of color show that gaps in retention rates tend to appear or grow as students progress into later years, with graduation rates at both the four- and six-year mark generally highest for White students and Pell/Stafford non-recipients, though Stafford Loan recipients fared best among the socio-economic disaggregations in the 2018 entering cohort.

Post-Graduation Outcomes

The first-destination employment survey conducted by the Office of Career and Life Design (then the Career Development Center) for the 2022-2023 academic year graduates shows that 51% of bachelor's degree recipients were employed and another 25% were pursuing further education. For those earning a master's degree in that time, 69% were employed at the time of the survey and an additional 10% were seeking further education or additional qualifications. For 2023-2024 graduates, again, a total of 75% are employed or continuing education.

One full year from graduation, OIRP's survey finds that 72.4% of recent baccalaureate recipients report being employed full-time, a further 7% are employed part-time and 9.3% are enrolled in further education. The average reported salary of recent baccalaureate graduates is around \$55,000. Because of the recent adoption of the first-destination survey and the new financial value transparency requests from the federal government, OIRP has recommended that the institution discuss the future of the one-year-out survey, which has been suffering from declining participation. Tracking outcomes for graduates is important, but RIC should endeavor to make the best use of limited resources and find an option that provides the most comprehensive and inclusive data possible, including looking at outcomes further from graduation if possible.

General Education

The undergraduate general education program for Rhode Island College was redesigned in the 2023-2024 academic year. All active degree-seeking students were transitioned to the new program beginning in Fall 2024. A very small number of students were kept within the old general education plan based on a review of their particular circumstances, but the new general education program was found to be beneficial to nearly every student in simplifying the path to graduation. This new design reduces the general education program to 40 credits and adds greater flexibility and choice by restructuring the distribution elements and creating a general education electives category. Additional details about the creation and content of the new general education program and its relationship to other efforts to decrease credit density can be found in Standard Four.

Briefly, RIC's general education requires students to complete a first-year seminar and first-year writing course, a course from the "connections" list of classes emphasizing comparative perspectives, and one course each from the six distribution areas of arts, history or philosophy, literature or language, mathematics, natural science, and social and behavioral science. Beyond these nine required elements, students may take any approved general education course to meet the remainder of the program's 40 required credits. Students may take only two general education courses in the same subject prefix within the 40 credits, however.

As mentioned in Standard Nine, RIC recently created a second, internal-facing website to serve campus constituents. Detailed information on the requirements of the institution's recently revised general education curriculum, including the learning outcomes for the program, can be found there for enrolled students, faculty, and advisors, while a more general overview of the program is placed on the externally oriented webpage for prospective students.

The general education curriculum is overseen by the Committee on General Education (COGE), a sub-committee of the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee which is responsible for the approval and oversight of all aspects of the undergraduate curriculum, including designing assessment of the stated learning outcomes. COGE is

faculty led, though there is also a voting student member, and certain administrative leadership are ex-officio members.

Outcomes

There are 11 expected outcomes of the general education program at RIC: written communication, critical and creative thinking, research fluency, oral communication, collaborative work, arts, civic knowledge, ethical reasoning, global understanding, quantitative literacy, and scientific literacy. Any approved general education course is expected to address at least one of these stated outcomes. In practice, many of the approved courses address multiple general education outcomes, giving students ample ways to meet each outcome.

These outcomes rolled from the prior general education program to the current, but COGE is undertaking work in subcommittees to review and revise these outcomes and ensure alignment with the required elements of the program, including the adjusted distribution requirements. Working versions of the learning outcomes are drafted; currently there are nine proposed, down from current number of eleven. COGE will use the upcoming academic year to do rubric setting and develop formal assessment plans once the new learning outcomes are finalized.

Faculty of Arts and Sciences

Assessment of learning outcomes within the School of Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS) is coordinated at the department level, with each area establishing its own processes for collecting and analyzing learning outcomes data annually. Oversight is provided by a faculty member who serves part-time as Arts and Sciences Assessment Coordinator, and who has been in the role since 2021. This coordinator leads an assessment committee for FAS that structures the assessment reporting process and provides input to the coordinator on needs for evaluation. During 2021-2022 this group established reporting deadlines and supported the various departments of the school in conducting assessments of their learning outcomes. The next year they focused on the development of a standardized template that allows the reporting of both quantitative and qualitative assessment data annually. Submitted reports from each department are placed on a shared drive each year for review by the committee, dean, and provost.

Although departments must submit a report each year, they are allowed to alternate between a more comprehensive report and a shorter “update” report on an annual basis. In the full report, departments must list their program learning outcomes, describe their program-level assessment method(s) and timing of evaluation, discuss results, and provide evidence of their commitment to addressing and assessing all outcomes across the program. The review of assessment results should address the expected level of achievement for each outcome, the actual level of achievement, the analysis and interpretation of data, actions taken based on that analysis, and provide a timetable for reassessment. The Arts and Sciences Assessment Coordinator then follows up with each department to provide guidance aimed at improving both the assessment process and the achievement of learning outcomes.

An example of a cycle of improvement can be found in the reports of the Sociology department. Feedback given to the department in 2021 indicated some concern with their assessment approach that relied on a review of senior seminar papers. Both the feedback and the analysis by the department’s own faculty suggested the method was providing less actionable insight into student learning than had been hoped for, and

the department designed and piloted a new approach in 2022. A three-person faculty committee developed an instrument consisting of 10 multiple choice questions and one open-ended question that was designed to assess the degree to which students had attained two of the program's learning outcomes. That instrument was deployed to students at three levels of the curriculum, introductory 200-level courses, 300-level writing-in-the-discipline courses, and the senior capstone course. This instrument has since produced data that made it clear there was learning loss occurring between courses, with some concepts not being fully carried through the program into the capstone. The department is now actively engaged in consciously building supports into their curriculum to address this concern.

In addition to regular internal review of program and course outcomes, departments engage in comprehensive external reviews on a staggered cycle, although the cycle was disrupted by the COVID pandemic. Since 2021, several departments have been externally reviewed, including Film Studies and Political Science. In the upcoming year, plans are in place to conduct external reviews of Mathematical Sciences and Anthropology.

There are also several externally accredited programs within the Faculty of Arts and Sciences. The art programs are accredited by the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD), chemistry by the American Chemical Society, and music by the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM). The medical imaging program, which is a contractual program with Brown University Health's School of Medical Imaging, is overseen by multiple accreditors who address the various concentrations and certificates: the Joint Review Committee on Education in Radiologic Technology (JRCERT) for magnetic resonance imaging and radiography; the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP) for diagnostic medical sonography; and the Joint Review Committee on Education Programs in Nuclear Medicine Technology (JRCNMT) for nuclear medicine.

FAS Future Plans

In the past two years, under the leadership of a new dean, the Faculty of Arts and Sciences has embarked on a strategic planning process. Along with a new mission and vision, the plan will establish broad curricular goals for the school. This includes a focus on interdisciplinarity through facilitating double majors and major/minor pairings, and the addition of experiential learning in all FAS programs.

School of Business

RIC's School of Business is externally accredited by the International Accreditation Council for Business Education (IACBE). Per that accreditor's requirements, the SOB provides an annual Interim Quality Assurance Report identifying the learning outcomes for programs, the method for assessing those outcomes, and student achievement of them. More general outcomes metrics, such as first-year retention and six-year graduation rates for SOB students, are posted annually on the school's website as IACBE requires.

The most recently submitted quality report, from the fall of 2024, shows that targets for most student learning outcomes are being met. For the SOB generally, the target is 80% or more of program students rated as "meets" or "exceeds" on the assessment rubric for the key assignment within each outcome criteria. For undergraduate students, these key assignments are frequently capstone projects that are structured to include a demonstration of all learning outcomes; for graduate students the learning outcomes

are measured through the master's thesis document. Only one program missed its target for some outcomes, notably a program in which some outcomes are assessed in places other than the capstone. The bachelor of science in computer information systems found that fewer than 80% of students were able to explain fundamental concepts, with 75% able to meet expectations in explaining fundamental theories of information systems, and 68% demonstrating the expected familiarity with networking fundamentals. For both outcomes, the majority of students are still meeting the stated learning outcome, but the overall program target was rated as "not met."

As mentioned elsewhere in this report, the School of Business developed their own version of the RIC 100 (Introduction to College) course, BUSI 100. This course was designed to provide early and additional exposure to competencies business students were assessed as needing improvement in, namely communication, oral presentation, and teamwork. The BUSI 100 Introduction to Business course uses role play, problem-solving scenarios, and other pedagogical approaches to bolster student learning in these areas. The course also provides additional instruction in the basics of Microsoft Excel to support students in finance, accounting, and economics in their later course work. Along with the development of this new introductory course, assignments targeting the identified skills are being encouraged across the business curriculum, such as integrating more oral presentation assignments and group projects.

School of Business Future Plans

The School of Business will assess the impact of the new BUSI 100 course to ensure it is supporting learning outcomes as intended. Additionally, the school's curriculum committee has been working to refine the core curriculum shared by all the programs in the school. One of the recommended changes will be requiring an internship experience for all SOB graduates to provide real world, experiential learning.

Feinstein School of Education and Human Development

The Feinstein School of Education and Human Development (FSEHD) houses RIC's professional educator preparation programs, the graduate-level programs offered by the Department of Counseling, Educational Leadership, and School Psychology and other human services programs including youth development, and wellness and exercise science. The school identifies six common learning outcomes for all school graduates that focus on ensuring they have the professional dispositions, expertise in culturally responsive practices, critical reflection, and proficiencies needed for their chosen field. These outcomes are in addition to the specific learning outcomes defined for each program within the school.

Assessment of these outcomes is embedded in the school's continuous quality improvement plan that tracks five key metrics for all programs and is central to the school's process for data-informed improvement. Among the metrics are measures of quality for the educational experience, but other metrics revolving around success in admission to the undergraduate educator programs, retention measures, internship exit surveys, external partnerships, and program resources are also included. The quality improvement plan is overseen by the FSEHD's full-time director of assessment, the Dean's

Leadership Committee and Cabinet, and its Assessment and Program Improvement Committee, all of whom collaborate to establish and implement quality improvement goals across the school's programs.

Educator Preparation

The undergraduate and graduate educator preparation programs at RIC are accredited by the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE). All programs approved by RIDE must meet the Rhode Island Standards for Educator Preparation. Along with expectations for program quality and oversight, these standards include several areas of expected professional knowledge that the program should provide to its students. Each of the education programs at RIC align their program learning outcomes with those expectations. Assessment of those outcomes is completed through instruments that are validated and normed to ensure consistency of scoring. Inter-rater reliability is 80% or higher for all shared assessments.

Students in the education preparation programs are evaluated at multiple points. Students accepted to RIC with an interest in pursuing an education major are not accepted directly into a program, though they follow a plan of study for intended education majors. These intended majors are evaluated for full admission into the program starting between the sophomore and junior year. Those successfully meeting defined measures, including the successful completion of key portions of the general education curriculum and lower-division education courses, minimum cumulative GPA, and benchmark scores on standardized tests and the FSEHD's Anchored Disposition Instrument (ADI), are granted full admission to their chosen program. The ADI is a 20-item behavioral scale measuring dispositions towards critical reflection, communication, social emotional skills, and professional work habits.

Education majors are further evaluated for their readiness for student teaching or internship placements at the appropriate point in their program. Prior to being approved to participate in student teaching, the education majors are evaluated based on their grades in program courses and performance on key embedded assignments, their growth on the ADI, Praxis subject test scores, and the completion of community service experiences meant to gain cultural competency that prepares them for the context of the students they will teach in Rhode Island. Candidates for student teaching also prepare a mini work sample to demonstrate their knowledge of lesson planning, delivery, and evaluation of student learning.

Key assignments that are used to demonstrate student achievement in the expected learning outcomes are saved in the student's electronic portfolio along with a work sample document that serves as the basis for the school's recommendation that a student earn the state's certification for teaching. The most recent accreditation evaluation by RIDE, in 2023, praised FSEHD's programs for their redesigned assessment system that focuses on demonstrated teaching performance for progression from full admittance to the program through to certification. The RIDE evaluation also found that all educator preparation programs at RIC met expectations for collection, analysis, and use of data for assessment of program quality.

Clinical Mental Health Counseling and School Psychology

Along with participation in the continuous quality improvement process common to all FSEHD programs, the master of science in clinical mental health counseling is accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Educational Programs (CACREP). The

student learning outcomes for the program are mapped to relevant CACREP standards and to the course in which they are addressed. All outcomes are measured at multiple points throughout the program through the use of associated assignments. Program outcomes addressed by each class are provided in the course syllabi. Students in this program also participate in a supervised semester-long clinical practicum, followed by 600 clock-hours in a supervised internship. The most recent CACREP accreditation visit occurred in 2024, and the program was continued in accreditation until 2033.

The certificate of advanced graduate study (CAGS) in school psychology is accredited by the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP), in addition to accreditation by RIDE. Program outcomes are aligned with the standards established by NASP for professionals in the field. They are assessed at multiple points in the program. During coursework, outcomes are assessed through course grades and questions on the comprehensive examination taken after students have taken 30 credits in the program. Students completing the practicum portion of the program are evaluated by field supervisors at the mid- and endpoints of the experience using a rubric aligned with NASP standards. Finally, those completing the required internship keep a performance portfolio with artifacts reflecting the various program competencies, three case studies, proof of passage of the Praxis exam and other items demonstrating their readiness to graduate the program. In the last full review of the program, NASP's Accreditation Board commended the program for "systematic, performance-based evaluation and accountability procedures used to improve the quality of the program." The review also noted that 100% of recent candidates passed the Praxis II exam above NASP's required minimum score for state licensure exams.

FSEHD Future Plans

In the past year, FSEHD has focused its quality improvement efforts on supporting student persistence and graduation. This included the development of a new progression tracker for all graduate and undergraduate programs. This tracker will be discussed regularly by school leadership as part of the assessment of programs and to help programs identify areas of concern and intervention. At the most recent data retreat, FSEHD program faculty reviewed available data on student success, identified desired metrics, and shared ideas for ways to continue to center data in the program improvement and education effectiveness processes. The focus on improved data collection and analysis, along with continuing presentations in the school's "A Guide for Staying On Track for Graduation" series, are the key first steps in the school's efforts to ensure students succeed.

Zvart Onanian School of Nursing

The Onanian School of Nursing (SON) offers a bachelor and master of science in nursing (BSN and MSN), as well as a doctor of nursing practice (DNP) program. In addition, the SON offers two post-masters certificates of graduate studies, and two post-bachelor's certificates of graduate studies. With the exception of the two post-bachelor certificate programs, all School of Nursing programs are accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE), and the BSN-to-DNP with specialization in nurse anesthesia concentration is additionally accredited by the Council on Accreditation on Nurse Anesthesia Educational Programs (Council on Accreditation or COA).

The School of Nursing engages in robust assessment of educational outcomes at multiple points from pre-admission to the program through post-graduation. This

assessment is designed to provide a holistic understanding of each program's strengths and weaknesses and to inform continuous quality improvement. The school administers routine surveys of students, faculty and employers to support evaluation of its programs from various perspectives. These include an annual Student Satisfaction with Educational Resources survey, Annual End-of-Program Survey, annual One-Year Graduate Satisfaction Survey, Annual Three-Year Graduate Satisfaction Survey, Annual Employer Satisfaction Survey, and an Annual Faculty Satisfaction Survey. Survey results are incorporated with other data in a comprehensive annual evaluation of the school, a report known as the Performance Improvement Plan.

SON Performance Improvement Plan

The SON Program Improvement Plan (PIP) report maps specific assessment measures to each intended student learning outcome for each program and sets the minimum expected target for student achievement of the outcome for each measure. The expected targets for each measure range from a goal of 85% (on most measures) to 100% on some measures (such as demonstrating the critical clinical behaviors in each clinical course). Actual student performance for each measure is reported as a percentage of students considered to have met the outcome, but the counts for both students evaluated and students considered to meet the outcome are also provided. Performance on each outcome is analyzed for strengths and opportunities for further improvement in instruction. The final PIP report for the preceding year is approved by the entire SON faculty in the fall, and results are used to drive continuous improvements across the school.

The PIP report includes outcome measures associated with students, graduates, faculty, and operational outcomes for the school. Student outcomes are provided for each SON program depending on level, including baccalaureate student outcomes, master's student outcomes, and DNP student outcomes. Along with student learning, the PIP includes measures of student satisfaction, retention, and progression through the program. Graduate program outcomes include measures such as first-time pass rate on the respective national board certification exam for each program (if applicable), employment outcomes, employer satisfaction, and graduate satisfaction. Faculty evaluations are based on peer and student course evaluations, faculty participation in service activities, faculty participation in scholarship activities, and faculty satisfaction. Operational outcomes include an annual review of the SON mission and vision, evaluation of RIC committee assignments for faculty, student satisfaction with educational resources, faculty satisfaction with published materials (e.g., handbooks, websites, catalogs), and adequacy of program admission rates and enrollments.

In 2023-2024, the vast majority of the SON's intended PIP outcomes were met. One area in which target outcomes were not met included certain measures associated with performance on the Health Education Systems Incorporated (HESI) exams, a standardized exam incorporated as graded assignments across the program and used to assess students' ability to apply concepts to related to specific clinical nursing areas and readiness for the NCLEX-RN licensure exam. Specialty-specific exams are integrated across all clinical courses, and a comprehensive HESI exit exam is integrated in the final semester nursing course. A score of 850 on the HESI Exam has been associated with a greater than 90% likelihood of passing the NCLEX-RN exam, and best practices include establishing a standard benchmark score across specialty-specific exams and the comprehensive HESI exit exam. While student performance on HESI specialty and exit exams have historically remained high, the performance target was changed in academic year 2023-2024. The previous target was a mean cohort score of 850 or higher. Because

a mean score can be impacted by outliers, both high- and low-scoring, the target was changed to 85% of students achieving a score of 850 or higher. This change provided more detailed information to inform areas of opportunity for improvement. For example, while the historic target of a mean cohort score was met in 2023-2024, only 72% of students (85 out of 118) individually met the expected score of 850 on the exit exam. Based on this finding, a faculty workshop on best practices for the incorporation of HESI exams for learning evaluation was provided. In addition, course faculty adjusted the timing of the HESI exit exam to allow students the opportunity to remediate and retest before the end of the semester, and support was continued for a three-day live review course for students. HESI exam performance under the new target will be reassessed in Fall 2025.

Operational areas in which target outcomes were not met include enrollment and retention in the BSN program, RN-to-BSN program enrollment, and undergraduate nursing faculty participation in scholarship. Although the enrollment target of 150 new BSN students was not achieved in the 2023-2024 academic year, evaluation of trend data showed a significant reduction in enrollments between Spring 2022 and Fall 2023, making achievement of the 2023-2024 goal difficult. These enrollment trends were in-line with those observed nationally following the COVID-19 pandemic. The SON implemented a number of strategies to enhance enrollment and student success to increase the program's headcount. These included the launch of the new BSN curriculum, streamlining first year courses, and implementation of the NURS 100 course as described in Standard Four. Headcounts for the SON in Spring 2024 and Fall 2024 have increased significantly, and the SON is expected to exceed its enrollment target for the 2025-2026 academic year. Similarly, the revised online RN-to-BSN program, which was launched in the Fall 2024, has resulted in a significant improvement in enrollments, with 24 incoming students in the 2024-2025 academic year.

Although the target outcome of 100% of SON faculty participating in scholarship was not met in the 2023-2024 academic year, the target was met by all graduate faculty, and significant progress has been made among undergraduate faculty. Their participation went from 76% in 2021-2022 to 88% in 2023-2024. This improvement has been supported by strategies such as incorporating reminders during faculty meetings and connecting faculty with financial resources to support scholarship goals. Academic year data for 2024-2025 indicates that the goal has now been met with 100% faculty participation in scholarship activities.

Aside from measures associated with the HESI exam assessment, nearly all other student outcomes were met. Even when student learning outcomes were met, however, the PIP supports continuous improvement efforts across the SON. For example, although 100% of MSN students met their program's competency in organizational and systems leadership, measured through their score on a course-embedded assignment, the most recent review of student performance indicated the assignment could be better aligned with the program's accreditation outcomes, and the assignment was revised.

An important program outcome measure for nursing student performance on national certification exams. This is an area where the SON has excelled. In 2023-2024, the pass rate for the National Council Licensure Exam (NCLEX-RN) for BSN graduates in was 95.5% (106 out of 111), the pass rate for the Adult-Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner (AGACNP) exam for MSN grads was 89% (17 out of 19), and the pass rate for the National Board of Certification and Recertification of Nurse Anesthetists (NBCRNA) exam for MSN-level graduates was 90% (9 out of 10). The nurse anesthesia program has since transitioned to a doctorate-level (DNP) degree. Only the pass rate for the Adult-

Gerontology Acute Care Clinical Nurse Specialist (AGACCNS) exam for clinical nurse specialist certificate graduates did not meet expectations. The most recent pass rate was 67% (2 out of 3); however, the low pass rate was due to a single student failure and reflects the smaller size of this program. Historic pass rates for this program have remained high, and the three-year pass rate for the program remains above the target of 85%. To enhance success of DNP and clinical nurse specialist students, additional certification practice exams were incorporated into the program, and support was provided for students to attend review classes. The 2024-2025 pass rate for the AGACNP exam was 100%. Final pass rates for the other programs are pending.

As previously stated, SON's programs are accredited by CCNE, and the BSN-to-DNP nurse anesthetist concentration is additionally accredited by COA. The most recent CCNE review of SON's graduate programs, from fall 2023, included an evaluation of the school's educational assessment practices. Following this visit, all programs were continued in accreditation for 10 years with no findings for improvement. The CCNE review team's final report found the Performance Improvement Plan to be "comprehensive" and supportive of improved effectiveness. They also praised the SON for faculty involvement in educational assessment practices and the extent to which the faculty work to identify and implement areas for improvement.

School of Social Work

The School of Social Work is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). For both the bachelor and master of social work (BSW and MSW) programs, students are assessed in two ways, through a final field evaluation and a comprehensive knowledge test. Student achievement in nine identified competency areas is assessed using both artifacts, with the program setting a target of 80% of students meeting the established performance expectations in both. These levels are the same for both the graduate and undergraduate programs. Data collected during the 2023-2024 academic year shows the BSW program exceeded the 80% target for students meeting all nine of the CSWE competencies. For the ninth competency, "evaluate practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities", 88% of students met expectations. This was the lowest achievement among the competencies, with Competency 6, engagement with those same groups, performing highest at 96% of students meeting expectations. Performance on all metrics varied between those two levels, and more than 90% of students met the benchmarks for six of the nine competencies.

The students for the MSW's various concentrations performed even better, with greater than 90% of students from all three program tracks meeting the performance expectations for all nine competencies, with one exception from the generalist degree track. In that case, 87% of students met the benchmark for the ninth competency. Students in the macro practice track fared best; 100% of them met eight of the nine competencies, and 97% met the remaining one. Data on the achievement of competencies for both the BSW and MSW program are posted on RIC's website.

Graduates from the MSW program can sit for a licensure exam offered by the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB). The ASWB report on their exam pass rates for 2023 test-takers shows 100% of first-time master's and 73.2% of first-time clinical test takers from Rhode Island College passed.

Assessment at RIC

As mentioned in other portions of this report, the new Hope Scholarship created

additional urgency behind actions meant improve the undergraduate experience that the institution had already identified through planning and reflection. Most critically, the institution seeks to improve four-year graduation rates. This work will focus on actions that lead to a larger percentage of potential Hope recipients reaching junior year on track for the scholarship and then graduating on time, as the scholarship will only cover tuition for the third and fourth years and not beyond.

The institution has already taken several critical steps in redesigning the general education program and working towards having all undergraduate majors within the traditional 120-credit limit. While these steps help to make four-year graduation more attainable structurally, the institution recognizes the need to also ensure equity in outcomes, as mentioned in the new Strategic Compass. As shown in the institutional learning section, above, White students and those not receiving Pell Grants or Stafford loans have tended to do better in terms of retention and graduation rates.

Over the next several years, the institution will continue to take steps to assess outcomes in the classroom and at the institution and work to increase degree attainment for all cohorts of students. Under new provost and vice president for academic affairs, RIC hopes to use a period of stable academic leadership to continue to focus on improving the four-year graduation rate, while continuing to meet the needs of students whose circumstances require alternate pathways.

INSTITUTIONAL PLANS

As this interim report shows, Rhode Island College (RIC) has made significant strides in addressing the areas of emphasis identified in the last Self-Study. Planning efforts, stabilizing the budget and enrollment, and aligning departmental plans and budgets with institutional priorities are all moving in a positive direction. RIC understands that many of these positive trends are in early stages still, and dedicated time and attention will need to be paid to ensure the positive momentum is sustained through the next Self-Study in 2030.

The newly approved Strategic Compass was envisioned as a living document, rather than a static plan meant only for a pre-defined period of time. The Committee on Mission and Goals has transitioned from developing to tracking current initiatives, and RIC expects to have concrete planning successes to share in our next comprehensive report. The College will also be looking to define a stable periodic process for review of the plan to allow for adjustments in goals and action items as needed.

The Hope Scholarship created a wave of positive change for the institution, providing urgency behind efforts to review and streamline existing majors and focus on increasing the number of students retaining and graduating from the institution. This push was well-timed in light of the revision to the general education plan, which was implemented with the Fall 2024 entering class. However, now that the institution has taken steps to review the general education and major programs, the institution must shift to create a sustainable and robust assessment of educational effectiveness to support student success. The strategic planning processes should likewise drive a sustainable process for operational evaluation and tracking impacts.

Rhode Island College will build upon the improvements, both completed and in progress, outlined in this report and looks forward to reporting on their development in our next comprehensive report.

RIC-SPECIFIC ACRONYMS

BPS	Bachelor of Professional Studies
CAGS	Certificate of Advanced Graduate Studies
COGE	Committee on General Education
COL	Committee on Online Learning
CPE	Rhode Island Council on Postsecondary Education – governing body
CUS	Certificate of Undergraduate Study
EPEC	Extended President’s Executive Cabinet
FAS	Faculty of Arts and Sciences
FCTL	Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning
FLH	Faculty Load Hour
FSEHD	Feinstein School of Education and Human Development
MAPP	Manual for Academic Policies and Procedures
OAA	Office of Academic Advising
OASIS	Office of Academic Support and Information Services
OIRP	Office of Institutional Research and Planning
OPC	Rhode Island Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner
PEC	President’s Executive Cabinet
PSCE	Office of Professional Studies and Continuing Education
RIBOE	Rhode Island Board of Education
RIC	Rhode Island College
RIDE	Rhode Island Department of Education
RINEC	Rhode Island Nurse Education Center – approved additional location
SOB	School of Business
SON	Zvart Onanian School of Nursing
UCC	Undergraduate Curriculum Committee
WPC	Workforce Planning Committee