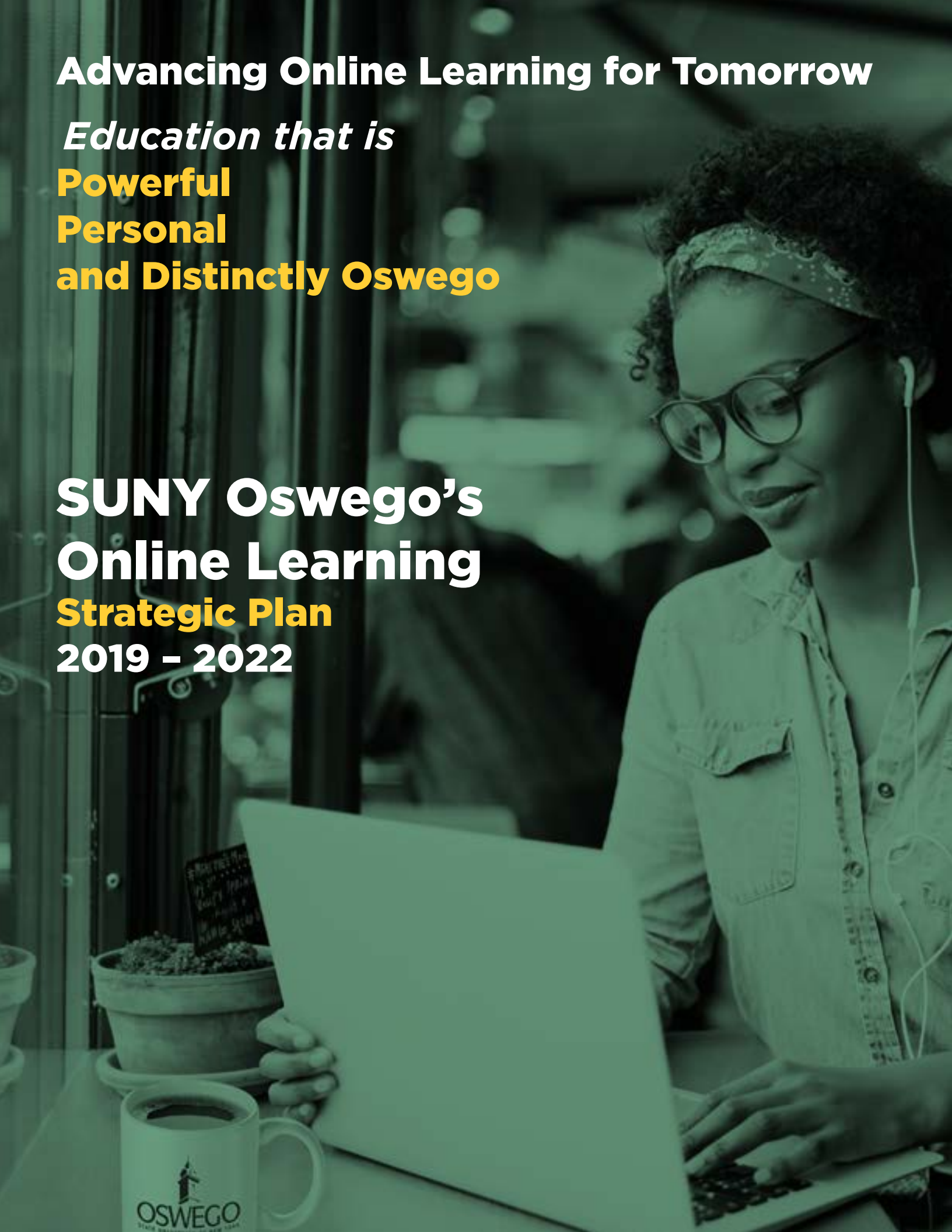**Advancing Online Learning for Tomorrow**

Education that is
Powerful
Personal
and Distinctly Oswego

SUNY Oswego's Online Learning
Strategic Plan
2019 – 2022

OSWEGO
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Steering Committee

Sandra Bargainnier	Chair, Associate Professor	Health Promotion & Wellness Department
Eve Benevides-Clark	Associate Professor	Sociology
Kristi Eck	Chief of Staff	President's Office
Kristen Eichhorn	Dean	Graduate Studies
Laura Harris	Online Learning Librarian	Penfield Library
Greg Ketcham	Assistant Dean	Extended Learning Division
Jerret Lemay	Registrar	Registrar's Office
Ulises Mejias	Associate Professor	Communication Studies
Sean Moriarty	Chief Technology Officer	Campus Technology Services
Jill Pippin	Dean	Extended Learning Division
Julie Pretzat	Dean	School of Communication Media & the Arts
Irene Scruton	Assistant Dean & MBA Program Director	School of Business

An Innovative Past
Driving Our
Bright Future

Since the 1990's SUNY Oswego has successfully provided online learning options to students.

An early adopter of online learning, SUNY Oswego has a record of excellence for our online graduate and undergraduate programs.

SUNY Oswego's Hallmarks of Excellence Include:

- 4 undergraduate completion programs, 5 graduate programs and 6 certificate programs offered online and 3 undergraduate completion programs offered in hybrid format

- A comprehensive Online Learning Team of expert Instructional Designers, Online Learning Librarians, and Learning Management Support resources

- Visionary and supportive campus leadership and a reputation for academic quality

- Designation as an Open SUNY Plus campus, one of the first in SUNY, for the highly ranked Online MBA program

- Over 300 courses developed to be taught online since 2013/2014, in practically every discipline

As technology continues to evolve, student demand increases, and new opportunities present themselves. SUNY Oswego is at a pivotal moment for online learning. Guided by the SUNY Oswego strategic plan, Tomorrow - Greater Impact and Success and supported by the Computer and Technology Service's strategic plan, Digital Campus - Technology for an Enhanced Tomorrow, SUNY Oswego has taken the opportunity to chart the course toward an exciting future in online learning by mediating an Online Learning Strategic Plan, led by the Division of Extended Learning.

The Advancing Online Learning for Tomorrow plan is part of a comprehensive approach to college-wide strategic design at SUNY Oswego. President Stanley and Provost Furlong, along with campus leadership, charged Steering Committee members to develop an Online Learning Strategic Plan which clearly outlines the college's intention for online learning, enabling a holistic approach and a clear path toward continued innovation and strategic excellence in higher education.

Factoring in the pace of technological innovation today, the Online Learning Strategic Plan was intentionally designed to span just 3 years. Higher education has been criticized for slow response times to private sector needs and questionable return on investment for students. Acknowledging the necessity to evolve quickly in response to industry demands as well as to be responsive to student needs, it also has flexible themes, meant to be nimble and modified as required.

The effort to create an Online Learning Strategic Plan began with an Online Enrollment Roundtable facilitated by Open SUNY and attended by 23 representatives from across campus. A wide discussion regarding SUNY Oswego's enrollment planning aspirations, the current state of online programs, and alignment with our strategic plan occurred and growth opportunities and occupational projections were reviewed. The Steering Committee then examined the current state of online learning by reviewing enrollment and demographic data and existing plans for online program growth at SUNY Oswego as well as emerging opportunities and challenges across the entire higher education landscape.

To ensure engagement and inclusive input from across campus, which is key to developing a balanced and effective strategic plan, the Steering Committee then conducted a Listening Tour of over 37 constituent groups of students, academic departments, service offices and support units. This effort gathered input from 401 individuals identifying areas of strength, needs for improvement and projections for the future of online learning at SUNY Oswego and provided invaluable campus-wide feedback on the draft plan. As a result, themes are woven throughout the plan, including the need for quality in all aspects of online education, effective and inclusive services for students, faculty and staff, a sound technical infrastructure and sustainable practices that encourages innovation and thoughtful growth.

The plan incorporates the online learning needs of all stakeholders, including not only faculty, staff and students, but also alumni, industry, our community and potential lifelong learners. It serves as an effective tool to guide decision making, prioritization of resources and innovative emphasis that will enable SUNY Oswego to extend our status as an exemplar of high-quality, student-centered higher education in online learning. It also enables SUNY Oswego to navigate the ever-increasing pace of change in higher education and promotes continuous improvements essential to thrive and continue SUNY Oswego's legacy of leadership in online learning.

Aligned with SUNY Oswego's Strategic Plan

The *Tomorrow – Greater Impact and Success* strategic plan reaffirmed SUNY Oswego's mission and vision and identified the impacts that the college has on our students, broader campus community and the world.

MISSION
SUNY Oswego contributes to the common good by lighting the path to wisdom and empowering every person in the college community to pursue meaningful lives as productive, responsible members of society.

VISION
Inspired by a shared commitment to excellence and the desire to transcend traditional higher-education boundaries, SUNY Oswego will be a premier institution that provides a transformative experience to a diverse body of students, empowering them to live ethical and meaningful lives and build a better world.

IMPACTS
1. Our students and graduates thrive and succeed
2. Our education ecosystem is highly collaborative and engaged
3. Our communities and partnerships are enriched and supported
4. Our institution is highly effective and sustainable
5. Our faculty, staff and students move the dial on grand challenges of our time

In the plan, performance drivers set the direction and key indicators reflect the outcomes of the work done in service to the mission, propelling the institution forward. Online learning is featured as a key component, both overtly as specific key indicators and as an essential component to achieving the success of many of the drivers identified therein.

The *Tomorrow* plan clearly identifies priorities that will help SUNY Oswego continue to thrive not only as a residential campus, but as a leader in the evolving enterprise of virtual higher education. The imperative to create and deliver innovative, rigorous academic programs that match society and student need creates the prime occasion for SUNY Oswego to expand its past success, educating non-traditional students via innovative online opportunities.

The Online Learning Strategic Plan intentionally aligns with the State University of New York system's "[commitment] to [transform] the landscape of post-K-12 education, through a robust, excellent and affordable online / hybrid higher educational experience that prepares students with the skills and experience for the future of work in a highly connected and digital society." SUNY, too, has realized that this is a pivotal moment for online learning and Chancellor Johnson has clearly indicated that scaling online learning is crucial for the future success of the system as a whole. SUNY Oswego's Online Learning Strategic Plan will facilitate these ambitions by outlining a comprehensive approach over the next three years.

SUNY Oswego Online Learning Statistics:

- Approximately 33% of the college's course catalog is offered online every Spring / Fall term

- 9,389 enrollments in 594 sections of 306 different courses were taught online in 2017/18

- 85% of all full time students take at least one online course per academic year

- 34% of all undergraduate & 66% of all graduate students took at least one online course in 2017/18

- 18% of all undergraduate students mixed online instruction into their course load in Fall 2017

Taking Advantage of Today's **Opportunities** for Tomorrow's **Success**

Online learning worldwide has matured over the past 20 years. Initially providing opportunities for students that couldn't attend face to face classes, now over 3 million students in the United States are earning their degrees exclusively online and another 3.5 million take at least one course online. Over 30% of all college students now take at least one distance education course annually nationwide.

Increased and convenient access to higher education, regardless of where a student lives or their family or work obligations, helps to create a strong workforce and to support businesses that provide high-skill, high-wage jobs that drive tomorrow's economy. The number of traditional, residential, undergraduate students at New York institutions is declining due to demographic shifts and the decrease in the number of high school graduates state-wide. 6.9 million New Yorkers have at least a high school education and 3.3 million have an associate degree or some college but no college degree. Concurrently, many professionals are finding that they need to take new courses, obtain new certificates and learn new skills to stay current, get ahead or change their careers. The number of students seeking higher education exclusively online or in hybrid modalities continues to grow in response to these factors, which creates opportunities for higher education institutions to expand their enrollment base and cultivate lifelong relationships with their students.

Non-traditional audiences seek higher education but have constraints on their time that often precludes them from traditional collegiate study. In order for these students to participate in higher education programs, they seek:

• online / hybrid & accelerated programs

• flexible hours and access to services

• understanding of schedule / time commitments upfront

• affordability

• academic quality

• a clear link to the workplace

• prior learning assessment / ability to transfer credit

Therefore, in order to have a quality online program, attractive to non-traditional students, significant capabilities must be embedded to provide a seamless experience, including student support and engagement, faculty support, course development and instructional design, technology support, and a targeted marketing / recruitment strategy. Also, online program efforts must be assessed for key performance and quality indicators and refined to ensure student success.

While SUNY Oswego and other SUNY schools offer more than 800 online-enabled degree and certificate programs across the system, only 26,000 students are learning exclusively online, lagging far behind competitors in other states. Recent IPEDS data states that 45,000 students are choosing to take online programs from colleges outside of New York, suggesting that there is significant demand for online programs, particularly with in-state tuition rates.

An Online Portfolio Analysis and a Feasibility Study were conducted by UPCEA for SUNY Oswego. The Analysis reflected that the portfolio of programs currently offered online and in hybrid modality is strong. It also pointed out clear opportunities for new online programs, many of which were reflected in the Open SUNY analysis as well. In Onondaga and Oswego counties, 29% adults (117,000) have completed either an associate degree or some college which represents a substantial target market. This percentage is 24% (3.3 million) statewide.

Over a quarter of both first-time students (30%) and non-first-time students (27%) who enrolled at SUNY Oswego in 2008 enrolled at a different institution within 8 years, suggesting that these "stop out students" are seeking a place to finish their studies, or aren't finding a pathway at SUNY Oswego currently. Nationally, nearly a third (31.4%) of students who enrolled in college in the fall of 2011 were no longer enrolled and had not completed their degree after 6 years, reflecting a clear market for online completion programs.

The research conducted on behalf of the Online Learning Strategic Plan clearly shows that SUNY Oswego is well positioned and has a significant and distinct opportunity to grow the online portfolio and expand its enrollment base. This will result in increasing enrollment and revenue, which in turn, supports the delivery of high-quality education that will meet the needs of today's learners as well as the future workforce of tomorrow.

GOALS

Goal 1:

Online and blended programs are sustainably created, offered and grown, effectively preparing and advancing students for tomorrow.

Continual research into emerging workplace needs, innovative best practices in online learning and close financial stewardship ensures the ability to reinvest in and sustain efforts to refine the online portfolio.

Objective 1

Use data to research, develop and offer online programs responsive to industry and community needs

Initiatives

1. Establish new online and blended programs required by future employers informed by data (market analyses, federal/state labor data, SUNY Online, Community College graduation data, transfer paths, industry intelligence)
2. Cultivate relationships with employers to create direct connections between online students and jobs
3. Develop 100% online undergraduate programs, including a range of general education courses at 100 / 200 level and a comprehensive selection of upper division electives
4. Capitalize on strong history of military / veteran education relationships with Fort Drum and others
5. Investigate student / industry demand for complimentary online programs (degree program clusters, minors)

Objective 2

Design and offer flexible options, providing students choice when pursuing their educational goals & serving their lifelong educational needs

Initiatives

1. Create new blended programs for Oswego and Syracuse campus students, integrating new modalities (cohort based, weekend, accelerated, HyFlex, and synchronous/beamed course models)
2. Establish online undergraduate completion degree in Interdisciplinary Studies (see also 3.2.1)
3. Develop adult-friendly educational programs aligned with workforce needs enabling students to skill up or change careers (skills / competency based, stackable credentials, micro credentials, non-credit training, etc.)
4. Install non-credit to credit pathways incorporating Prior Learning Assessment and Transfer Credit

Objective 3

Implement financial and business models that support sustainable online program growth

Initiatives

1. Use data informed decision making and a model of reinvestment to create sustainable funding for online efforts
2. Invest in faculty and staff resources necessary to scale online programs (Instructional Designers, Faculty)
3. Underwrite targeted marketing campaigns for student recruitment
4. Allocate resources to establish student services and student engagement activities designed for online students
5. Enact targeted efforts to extend online audience outside of CNY & NYS (work with SUNY Online to intentionally address state-wide gaps, determine aligned educational needs and implement efforts to extend market reach to the wider NYS and Mid-Atlantic region, capitalize on NC SARA membership, implement marketing campaign highlighting reduced out of state tuition rate and military accommodations, etc.)

Objective 4

Guarantee students a regular and reliable rotation of online courses, taught by qualified faculty

Initiatives

1. Department Chairs and Deans design and document online course scheduling rotation and ensure appropriate faculty resources to develop and deliver necessary online course offerings
2. Faculty Liaisons work with Extended Learning and their department to advocate and optimize schedule, enabling students to plan ahead and complete within defined period
3. Determine and respond to student need for year round and/or full-time programming online

GOALS

Goal 2:

Education delivered online remains distinctly Oswego, reflecting core values and standards of academic rigor, student success, and curricular engagement.

Quality, Interaction & Achievement – these are SUNY Oswego's tenets of online learning. With invested full time faculty, high quality curriculum and engagement in the SUNY Oswego experience, programs are offered to students at all stages of their educational journey, appropriate to their needs and consistently Oswego.

Objective 1

Establish comprehensive development and implementation policies for programs and courses, incorporating academic governance to ensure online students engage in high quality educational experiences

Initiatives

1. *Install a formal program / course planning and approval process for new online programs and innovative modalities of instruction, including a procedure to address cross-departmental impacts*
2. *Formally apply instructional design standards to ensure academic quality*
3. *Ensure faculty teaching online and hybrid courses have training resources needed to develop accessible online materials available*
4. *Investigate opportunities to approve alternative course methods that are aligned with the College's mission (MOOC, Micro Credentials, PLA, Accelerated formats, etc.)*

Objective 2

Cultivate a robust community of practice that continually assesses, innovates and strengthens the academic quality, and student and faculty engagement in online courses and online programs

Initiatives

1. *Propagate active learning strategies in online courses (inquiry based, collaborative learning) to create opportunities for student / faculty and student / student engagement*
2. *Assess key performance and quality indicators (student success, learning outcomes, student satisfaction, etc.) and implement data informed refinements*
3. *Research, adopt and expand faculty and staff access to emerging tools, pedagogical approaches, educational modalities, etc. via CELT, Online Learning Team and other community building efforts*
4. *Actively participate in and continue to be a leader in system-wide efforts to advance, improve and grow online learning as part of SUNY Online*
5. *Seek out and apply for grants that support innovation of online and hybrid education (SUNY PIFs, IITGs, OER, and Lumina, Gates Millennium Foundation, etc.)*
6. *Engage in professional groups and grow industry contacts to learn best practices that may be adopted*

Objective 3

Provide readily accessible educational supports and services to online students promoting increased retention, engagement and success

Initiatives

1. *Provide training, orientation, student readiness preparation, self-motivation strategies to assist post-traditional students and "stop outs" to be successful online learners*
2. *Intensify proactive retention methods for online students (Starfish/Blackboard alerts/ AP Advising efforts)*
3. *Expand customized / intrusive advising practices / concierge advising for online learners*
4. *Investigate and establish faculty / online student engagement guidelines to foster regular personal interaction*

GOALS

GOAL 3:

Students learning online succeed in the pursuit and attainment of their unique educational goals and are actively engaged participants in the SUNY Oswego community.

Success is measured individually by each learner according to their own goals. SUNY Oswego designs programs, integrating services and opportunities for each student to engage in an inclusive and productive learning experience.

Objective 1

Ensure that the student experience is paramount in the design and delivery of inquiry, enrollment, advisement, and instructional services

Initiatives

1. *Provide students clear expectations about their online experience and their part in the process of online learning*
2. *Deliver customized services to each student resulting in an individualized experience from inquiry to completion (Slate CRM, Concierge Advising Model)*
3. *Establish readily available and widely known experiential learning opportunities for online students (internships, study abroad, assistantships, etc.)*
4. *Provide academic support services readily available to online students (Writing Center, Tutoring, Accessibility Resources, Library Services)*

Objective 2

Provide online education designed to enable enrollment growth, student retention, completion and lifelong learning

Initiatives

1. *Create and offer an online completion program enabling traditional students, "Stop Outs" and post-traditional students that have earned credits to complete an undergraduate degree (see 1.2.2)*
2. *Offer online courses that serve the needs of traditional (residential / commuter) students that provide them online course offerings for completion, scheduling and other needs.*
3. *Stack and embed credentials and establish pathways from non–credit to credit, micro credential to degree*
4. *Cultivate lifelong relationships with students in partnership with the Alumni Office and offer programs attractive to alumni to remain their first choice for present & future educational / professional development needs*

Objective 3

Feature students in online programs as part of the vibrant fabric of SUNY Oswego

Initiatives

1. *Anticipate and serve online students with college services in ways that are accessible (Student Accounts, Registrar, Career Services, Student Life, Financial Aid)*
2. *Integrate online students into signature SUNY Oswego student events, allowing them to easily participate in the SUNY Oswego Experience (Commencement, Honors Convocation, Torchlight, Quest, Media Summit, I Am Oz Speakers, Finals Week Study Snacks, Oz Fest, etc.)*
3. *Actively represent online students in the institutional profile and campus news features*
4. *Extra-curricular social experiences are available virtually for online students (clubs, organizations, forums, esports, etc.)*

GOALS

Goal 4:

Faculty and staff succeed in their efforts to design and implement educational experiences and engage with online students in virtual settings.

The value of serving online students and developing and teaching online courses is fully recognized and integrated into the fabric of SUNY Oswego and support is readily available to those engaged in such activity.

Objective 1

Provide faculty comprehensive pedagogical support in order to create and offer rigorous and engaging virtual learning experiences

Initiatives

1. Professional development is widely available for faculty interested in teaching online or furthering skills
2. Establish Online Teaching Faculty community of practice to share best practices, provide mentorship and facilitate pedagogical discussion
3. Widely communicate processes and roles involved in designing, creating and formally approving online / blended programs
4. Document formal online / hybrid course development policy detailing required steps and timelines in proposal design, development and delivery stages
5. Faculty and Online Learning Team collaborate to incorporate appropriate educational activity and appropriate technology options to the modality

Objective 2 – *Equally value and codify faculty involvement in online activity for course development and delivery within the personnel structure*

Initiatives

1. All faculty are expected to be able to teach online and online teaching is integrated into faculty load calculations
2. Faculty, as appropriate, have a regular online instruction load to promote a full time faculty experience for online students
3. Faculty hold virtual office hours and engage with online students in meaningful ways outside of instruction
4. The college recognizes and reinforces excellence in online teaching (considered in promotion / tenure evaluations, via an annual award)

Objective 3

Effectively and equitably provide services to fully online students and implement targeted policies, procedures and engagement initiatives

Initiatives

1. Refine and provide easy access for online students to administrative campus offices and services with online student friendly policies / procedures
2. Evaluate online student fees and assess as appropriate (Registrar, Student Accounts, Financial Aid)
3. Provide comprehensive Career Services easily accessible by online students
4. Engage with online students and provide access to events held near them (such as Alumni Events in NYC)

Objective 4 – *Comprehensively represent and promote online programs and services via marketing and digital media*

Initiatives

1. Implement frictionless recruitment & admissions processes for online students, fully integrated with the campus CRM (Slate) for all online programs
2. Display easily accessible information about online programs and courses on the website and OpenSUNY.edu
3. Represent and engage online students in marketing efforts regularly (View book, campus news features, annual reports, presentations)

GOALS

Goal 5:

Students, faculty and staff have access to intuitive technology enabling them to collaboratively succeed.

The Campus Technology team that supports the technical infrastructure evaluates, implements and supports the best and most appropriate tools for teaching and serving online students to ensure the learning experience is transparently enhanced by technology.

Objective 1

Incorporate immersive instructional technology in the online and hybrid classroom that enhances and democratizes the learning experience

Initiatives

1. *Guarantee students and faculty have access to robust, intuitive tools by monitoring effectiveness and determining future directions in learning management systems and NGDLE (Next Generation Digital Learning Environment)*
2. *Ensure students have access to software and technology that will support immersive learning by exploring and adopting virtual reality / augmented reality environments as appropriate (virtualized labs, virtual field experiences)*
3. *Explore and adopt artificial intelligence / adaptive learning as appropriate*
4. *Research and embrace mobile learning opportunities as appropriate*
5. *Investigate and implement online test proctoring and student identity management systems as appropriate*
6. *Support reduction in the total cost of education by integrating open educational resources as appropriate*

Objective 2

Incorporate technology that improves the student experience

Initiatives

1. *Ensure campus technology initiatives implement processes that support online students (intake, enrollment, advising, course scheduling, academic progress, learning goals)*
2. *Enable students and faculty to focus on learning and teaching by ensuring systems provide individualized learning support where possible*

Objective 3

Ensure that the Online Learning Team fosters and encourages the adoption of instructional technology support systems that benefit students and faculty

Initiatives

1. *Maintain an inclusive environment by integrating Accessibility First design principles into each online course*
2. *Guarantee the campus technical infrastructure is strong by supporting and integrating affordable and inclusive access to technology*
3. *Provide online faculty & staff access to anytime, anywhere technical support services via a 24/7 Help Desk and access to dedicated campus support professionals*
4. *Ensure the Library provides digital resources and research support enabling equitable student and faculty access*

Timeline Of Activity

Summer 2017 ▶ Extended Learning Online Learning Analysis & SWOT Exercise

Fall 2017 ▶ Presentation to President's Council

Spring 2018 ▶ Formation of Steering Committee
Open SUNY Enrollment Roundtable
Steering Committee Meeting #1 – Review Current Status
Listening Tours Begin
Steering Committee Meeting #2 – Approval of UPCEA Market Research & Assessments

Summer 2018 ▶ Listening Tour Continues
Steering Committee Meeting #3 – Initial Themes Emerge & Data Is Reviewed

Fall 2018 ▶ Listening Tour Concludes
Steering Committee Meeting #4 – Thematic Review of Listening Tour Input/UPCEA Studies
Initial Plan Drafted
Steering Committee Meeting #5 – Review of Goals & Initiatives

Winter 2019 ▶ Revise Draft Plan

Spring 2019 ▶ Share Draft Plan & Request Feedback from Campus Community
Review Feedback on Draft Plan
Steering Committee Meeting #6 – Final Review of Draft Plan
Presentation to President's Council to Formally Propose Plan for Approval
Faculty Assembly Presentation

Summer 2019 ▶ Finalize Online Learning Strategic Plan & Create in Print & Digital Format

Fall 2019 ▶ Disseminate Final Online Learning Strategic Plan in Print & Digital Format

Goal Alignment

Advancing Online Learning for Tomorrow - Tomorrow – Greater Impact and Success

	Impact 1: Our students and graduates thrive & succeed	Impact 2: Our education ecosystem is highly collaborative and engaged	Impact 3: Our communities and partnerships are enriched and supported	Impact 4: Our institution is highly effective and sustainable	Impact 5: Our faculty, staff and students move the dial on grand challenges of our time
Goal 1: Online and blended programs are sustainably created, offered and grown, effectively preparing and advancing students for tomorrow	✓	✓		✓	✓
Goal 2: Education delivered online remains distinctly Oswego, reflecting core values and standards of academic rigor, student success and curricular engagement		✓	✓		
Goal 3: Students learning online succeed in the pursuit and attainment of their unique educational goals and are actively engaged participants in the SUNY Oswego community	✓		✓		
Goal 4: Faculty and staff succeed in their efforts to design and implement educational experiences and engage with online students in virtual settings	✓	✓			
Goal 5: Students, faculty and staff have access to intuitive technology enabling them to collaboratively succeed			✓	✓	✓