



**CharterOak**  
STATE COLLEGE  
A Higher Degree of Online Learning

# Strategic Plan

**FALL 2023 - SPRING 2028**

**Becoming a Premier Online  
Workforce College**

# Overview of Charter Oak State College

The Connecticut General Assembly created the Board of State Academic Awards in 1973. In 1980, the Board received legislative authorization to designate its degree program as a college. The name chosen, “Charter Oak College,” commemorated an early success in Connecticut’s struggle for self-governance and was particularly suited to a public institution in what is popularly known as the Constitution State. In 1992, the name was changed to Charter Oak State College to facilitate recognition that the College was part of the state system of public higher education. In 2009, the State statute was changed to grant Charter Oak State College authority to offer master’s degrees.

In 2011, it became part of the Connecticut State College and Universities system (CSCU), along with the 12 community colleges and four state universities. The President of Charter Oak reports to the President of the system office. The Board of Regents is the board for all the institutions in the CSCU system.

COSC is unique by having 100% of the courses taught in an online asynchronous format and an average student age of 37. It has evolved from an aggregator of credits to video-based courses to online learning, now offering over 430 unduplicated online courses, 15 undergraduate majors, and three master’s degrees as of the fall 2023 semester.

## Charter Oak State College Mission

Charter Oak State College fosters the potential of current and future working professionals by providing dynamic and industry-relevant online education to advance success in a global society through affordability, collaboration, and learning experiences that can occur inside and outside the virtual classroom.





## Charter Oak State College Educational Philosophy

The Charter Oak State College educational philosophy asserts that:

- college level learning can be acquired anywhere, anytime, and in many ways;
- such learning can be assessed;
- when assessed, it should be accredited via appropriate means;
- learning is effectively enhanced via collaborative interaction with faculty and peers; and
- advisement and academic support is critical to student success.



## Higher Education Environment

### ACADEMIC

The adult education, and all higher education, academic environment is changing rapidly as a result of the global pandemic. Academic programs are increasingly being measured against links to workplace requirements and student demand. Post-bachelor's degrees, certificate programs, and micro-credentials are gaining acceptance and importance. Within this changing context, assessment with a focus on equity will play a more central role in the emerging educational processes. Students will expect a more engaging learning environment that facilitates personalization and mobility.

### MARKET CONDITIONS

The market of adult higher education learners continues to grow. [EAB](#) projects a 21 percent increase in the number of students aged 25-34 by 2022, with more than twice as much growth in master's degree enrollment than bachelors. According to the [National Student Clearinghouse Research Center](#) in 2019, thirty-six (36) million Americans in the NSC database today hold some postsecondary education and training but no completion and are no longer enrolled, also known as the Some College, No Degree population. That number has increased to over forty (40) million nationally according to a [2023 Gallup and Lumina Foundation study](#). In Connecticut, that number is about 400 thousand. Nationally, ten (10) percent of this population are "potential completers" who have already made at least two years' worth of academic progress up until their last enrollment. Potential completers were found more likely than other former students to re-enroll and finish college.

The pandemic has altered the student views on online classes. According to the [Digital Learning Pulse](#) survey in 2021, the majority of students, 73 percent, "somewhat" or "strongly" (46 percent) agreed that they would like to take some fully online courses in the future. Students and faculty members both reported that their attitudes toward online learning had significantly improved in the past year. A majority of students, 57 percent, said they felt more positive about online learning now than before the pandemic.

With this increase demand comes increased market saturation. Even prior to the pandemic, market saturation was increasing but has only accelerated. For example, one recent analysis by the [National Center for Education Statistics](#) reports a 226% increase in cost-per-click for online graduate programs

from 2009-2014. Market saturation and increased marketing costs puts a huge premium on market analytics, campaign metrics, and ROI.

## CAREER MOTIVATIONS

According to [Strada and Gallup](#), 58% reporting job and career outcomes as their primary motivation and this data point cuts across all higher education pathways and demographic subgroups. Only 23% report a general motivation to learn more and gain knowledge without linking it to work or career aspirations. For those that indicate a general motivation rather than career motivation, those students are less likely to complete college. In essence, career motivated students are more likely to complete.

## DEMOGRAPHICS

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, blacks, Asians, Hispanics and other racial minorities will make up a majority of the population by the year 2050. A new [Pew Research Center](#) analysis of Census Bureau data finds that a majority of 6- to 21-year-olds (52%) called “post-Millennials” are non-Hispanic whites. Non-Hispanic whites are expected to be a minority of the overall U.S. population within the next 20-25 years.

The same post-Millennials are enrolling in college at a significantly higher rate than Millennials were at a comparable age before the pandemic. One of the large drivers of educational attainment are due to the shift by post-Millennial Hispanics. They tend to be second generation Hispanics and a recent [Institute of Educational Sciences](#) (IES) study has shown that second generation Hispanics are much more likely to enroll in college as compared to their foreign-born counterparts. Higher education institutions must shift their policies and practices to coincide with the demographic shift currently underway to create a more inclusive environment for a more diverse student population.

In Connecticut, the overall population is projected to remain between 3.5-3.6 million over the next two decades according to the [University of Virginia Weldon Cooper Center, Demographics Research Group](#). Our northeastern neighbors are expected to have an overall stagnant population (New York, Rhode Island, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine) or minor growth (Massachusetts) over the next two decades. Amongst our target age group of 20-44-year-olds, Connecticut’s population will remain around 1.1 million over the next two decades. Similar to the overall population, 20-44-year-olds are expected to remain stagnant in other northeastern states with modest growth only in Massachusetts projected over the next two decades.



## Charter Oak Strategic Planning Process

The college's strategic planning process began in spring 2022. The Strategic Planning Committee was charged by President Klonoski and included representation of administrators, faculty, staff, students, alumni, and key external partners. The first task was to research and analyze the current national and local higher education environment. The group also examined current data such as accreditation reports, graduation surveys, new student surveys, cumulative course evaluations scores, and market research studies. Based upon that analysis and institutional knowledge, the college developed 5 (five) pillars for the strategic plan.

- **Academic Quality** – Become a model for our innovation, value, and high-quality workforce oriented online offerings by focusing on our faculty and academic programs.
- **Cultivate and Improve Strategic Partnerships** – Leverage Charter Oak's inherent strengths and become recognized by our expanding list of community & workforce stakeholders as the most responsive and nimble college in Connecticut and beyond.
- **Inclusive Excellence** - Build on our culture of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) to eliminate equity gaps, refine our policy and practices through a DEI lens, and become a workforce that is more reflective of our student population.
- **Growth** - Increase enrollment in credit courses, expand program offerings that meet employer/student demands, and enhance avenues to diversify our revenue sources.
- **Student Experience & Success** – Reimagine our policies, practices, and use of technology to produce the highest quality student experience and increase our student success rates while maintaining access through affordability.

The Strategic Planning Committee then divided into subgroups that correlated to each pillar. The subgroups then solicited input and feedback from an expanded list of stakeholders including all faculty, all staff, employers, legislators, alumni, business organizations, and other key stakeholders. The Strategic Planning Committee also contracted with a 3rd party research firm (Corona Insights) to conduct quantitative and qualitative feedback from prospect students that did not enroll at Charter Oak, current Charter Oak students, and students that stopped out of Charter Oak. This comprehensive feedback then guided the detailed development of high-level strategies and assessment measures.

## Charter Oak Strategic Plan Committee Members

**Dave Ferreira**  
Provost

**Michael Moriarty**  
CFO

**Jen Washington**  
Registrar

**Andrew Selig**  
Enrollment Management

**Kegan Samuel**  
Academic Council Rep &  
Dean of Faculty

**Donna Wagoner**  
Student Representative

**Iwona Szydlak**  
Assistant Bursar

**Brooke Palkie**  
Graduate Academics

**Susana Orozco**  
Undergraduate  
Academics

**Wanda Warshauer**  
Student Services

**Amy Feest**  
AVP of Curriculum at  
Connecticut State  
Community College

**Michael Broderick**  
Office of Institutional  
Research

**Carolyn Hebert**  
Director of Marketing &  
Communications

# COSC Strategic Planning Fall 2023 to Spring 2028

## Strategic Direction #1

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### Strategic Direction #1: Academic Quality

*Intent: Become a model for our innovation, value, and high-quality workforce oriented online offerings by focusing on our faculty and academic programs.*

1.1 Enhance the Learning Management System to ensure students and faculty are working within a convenient and flexible digital teaching environment.

#### Success Measures:

- Implementation of Blackboard Ultra or newer LMS by Fall 2025
- Increase course evaluation response rate to at least 50% by Fall 2024

1.2 Redevelop digital classroom standards that promote fluid and effective communication between Faculty, Students and Administrators.

#### Success Measures:

- Implementation of a system that identifies “red flags” with faculty behavior such as timing of grading and faculty participation in the classroom, and provide structured support for remediation of faculty, by Fall 2025
- The top 75 highest enrolled courses will incorporate UDL approaches within the online classroom by Fall 2025

1.3 Continuously improve program content and instruction diversity to align students with career channels along with program feasibility.

#### Success Measures:

- Routinely measure the placement rates or promotional opportunities of graduates in their field of study by Fall 2024
- Implement a “theory to practice” micro-lecture initiative in targeted courses to contextualize relevant content
- Conduct a feasibility study for all degree programs based on ROI and other program outcome measures and take appropriate actions (invest, close, etc.)

# COSC Strategic Planning Fall 2023 to Spring 2028

## Strategic Direction #2

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### Strategic Direction #2: Cultivate and Improve Strategic Partnerships

*Intent: Leverage Charter Oak's inherent strengths and become recognized by our expanding list of community & workforce stakeholders as the most responsive and nimble college in Connecticut and beyond.*

2.1 Partner with CSCU to have Charter Oak develop Online Program Experience (OPX) opportunities that benefit Charter Oak and other CSCU institutions.

#### Success Measures:

- Increase the human resource capacity of Charter Oak's instructional design department by at least 2 FTEs by Fall 2025 to benefit Charter Oak and CSCU online course developments
- Increase the capacity for strategic CCAP and Credential Reviews by 50% by Fall 2025

2.2 Enhance new and current program offerings that meet employer and student demand using a stackable credential model where applicable.

#### Success Measures:

- Develop at least 3 micro-credentials each year that can be either embedded/stacked into degree programs or stand-alone upskilling opportunities between Academic Year 23/24 and Academic Year 27/28
- Increase offerings and enrollment in new non-credit Workforce Development division to a level of fiscal sustainability by Spring 2025

2.3 Strengthen partnerships & academic pathways with CT State Community College, alumni, employers, professional organizations, and non-collegiate training providers.

#### Success Measures:

- A 10% increase in the number of students utilizing Credit Recommendations at the point of admissions into Charter Oak academic programs by Fall 2025
- Develop at least 5 employer engagements utilizing a tuition disbursement model for student recruitment by Fall 2026
- The number of students enrolling in graduate programs using the alumni discount

# COSC Strategic Planning Fall 2023 to Spring 2028

## Strategic Direction #3

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### Strategic Direction #3: Inclusive Excellence

*Intent: Create a culture of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) to eliminate equity gaps, refine our policy and practices through a DEI lens, and become a workforce that is more reflective of our student population.*

3.1 Develop culturally responsive and accessibility-focused onboarding, training, and professional development opportunities for faculty and staff.

#### Success Measures:

- Provide DEI training for faculty and staff to be mindful and alert of different populations outside of obvious (i.e. age, culture, IT skills, home support, disabled, etc.)
- Utilize possible DEI grant opportunities to develop and implement a DEI framework that may cover topics such as Professional Development training to staff using DEI principles, and reviewing policies and procedures through a DEI lens.

3.2 Develop and maintain a DEI or Inclusive Excellence webpage for Charter Oak State College.

#### Success Measures:

- Completed the new webpage, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion at Charter Oak State College <https://www.charteroak.edu/aboutus/dei/>
- Develop a DEI Website taskforce who will oversee the webpage with providing DEI calendar events.

3.3 Perform a critical assessment of public facing materials, academic offerings, and human resources from a DEI lens.

#### Success Measures:

- Assess hiring trends in alignment with our student population trends.
- Bring in experts to assist Charter Oak in development of DEI goals.
- COSC Strategic Planning Fall 2023 to Spring 2028 – Strategic Direction #4

# COSC Strategic Planning Fall 2023 to Spring 2028

## Strategic Direction #4

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### Strategic Direction #4: Growth

*Intent: Grow enrollment to produce more workforce-ready adults and assist the college in fiscal sustainability. Growth requires increasing the number of programs to attract new students and increasing the persistence rate of existing matriculants.*

4.1. Grow the top of the admissions funnel (prospects and applicants) by generating qualified lead volume, prioritizing high gross programs, and identifying expanded market opportunities.

#### Success Measures:

- Sustain or improve the number of applicants in existing markets.
- Year-over-year gains in applicants in new markets.

4.2. Increase the number of deposits who matriculate and the number of continuing students who successfully enroll in courses by improving services and reducing barriers.

#### Success Measures:

- Year-over-year gains in the number of new and readmitted students.
- Year-over-year gains in the number of continuing students.

4.3. Identify new populations to recruit based on market research in-state and nationally.

#### Success Measures:

- Initiate at least 1 new bachelor's degree program offering each year by Fall 2026.
- Year-over-year gains in prospects and applicants from targeted markets.

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## Strategic Direction #5

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### Strategic Direction #5: Student Experience and Success

*Intent: Provide continuous improvement for a quality digital learning experience to maximize student support and success for online learning.*

5.1 Establish a Center for Academic Excellence to improve course and instructional quality and maintain a consistent student experience.

#### Success Measures:

- Increase faculty/program director support for onboarding and training on best practices for online teaching.
- Review and modify course expectations and faculty responsibilities for a consistent student experience.

5.2 Provide career-relevant and contextualized course content with sources, webpages, and data from recent societal/historical events.

#### Success Measures:

- Increase student success in gateway courses.
- Increase course evaluation satisfaction (very good) to an average of 75% in course surveys by Fall 2024.

5.3 Enhance Career Service offerings for students.

#### Success Measures:

- Track student usage of career service offerings at the college and see an increase year over year
- Establish baseline data for career services student satisfaction.

## Strategic Plan Alignment With CSCU Board of Regents Key Areas of Focus & Goals

### STRATEGIC DIRECTION & OBJECTIVES

	Student Success	Innovation and Economic Growth	Affordability and Sustainability	Systemness
<b>Direction #1: Academic Quality</b>				
1.1 Enhance the Learning Management System to ensure students and faculty are working within a convenient and flexible digital teaching environment.	✓	✓	✓	
1.2 Redevelop digital classroom standards that promote fluid and effective communication between Faculty, Students and Administrators.	✓	✓		
1.3 Continuously improve program content and instruction diversity to align students with career channels along with program feasibility.	✓	✓	✓	
<b>Direction #2: Cultivate and Enhance Strategic Partnerships</b>				
2.1 Partner with CSCU to have Charter Oak develop Online Program Experience (OPX) opportunities that benefit Charter Oak and other CSCU institutions.	✓		✓	✓
2.2 Enhance new and current program offerings that meet employer and student demand using a stackable credential model where applicable.		✓		✓
2.3 Strengthen partnerships & academic pathways with CT State Community College, alumni, employers, professional organizations, and non-collegiate training providers.		✓	✓	✓
<b>Direction #3: Inclusive Excellence</b>				
3.1 Develop culturally responsive and accessibility-focused onboarding, training, and professional development opportunities for faculty and staff.	✓	✓		
3.2 Develop and maintain a DEI or Inclusive Excellence webpage for Charter Oak State College.		✓		
3.3 Perform a critical assessment of public facing materials, academic offerings, and human resources from a DEI lens.	✓	✓		
<b>Direction #4: Growth</b>				
4.1. Grow the top of the admissions funnel (prospects and applicants) by generating qualified lead volume, prioritizing high gross programs, and identifying expanded market opportunities.		✓	✓	
4.2. Increase the number of deposits who matriculate and the number of continuing students who successfully enroll in courses by improving services and reducing barriers.	✓	✓	✓	
4.3. Identify new populations to recruit based on market research in-state and nationally.		✓	✓	✓
<b>Direction #5: Student Experience &amp; Success</b>				
5.1 Establish a Center for Academic Excellence to improve course and instructional quality and maintain a consistent student experience.	✓	✓		
5.2 Provide career-relevant and contextualized course content with sources, webpages, and data from recent societal/historical events.	✓	✓		
5.3 Enhance Career Service offerings for students.	✓			

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