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# A Vision for Undergraduate Student Success at John Jay College

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Every student deserves their own success story!



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# **Our Vision for Student Success: Executive Summary**

**We want John Jay to be known as the premier Hispanic and Minority-Serving Institution in the U.S. This means that not only will we attract and graduate a vibrant and diverse student body, but we will also provide students with an excellent justice-oriented education that cements the foundation for post-graduate and career success, as well as civic participation, leadership, and lifelong learning.**

**U**NDER THE LEADERSHIP OF PRESIDENT KAROL V. MASON, John Jay College is proudly dedicated to student success. Ensuring access to an outstanding education, a college degree, and the ability to pursue any post-graduation dream for all of the 15,000 students we are privileged to serve, including those who have been traditionally underrepresented in higher education, is woven into the fabric of what it means to educate for justice and what John Jay stands for as an institution. As a Minority-Serving and Hispanic-Serving Institution with a commitment to academic excellence, we are proud to have established a proven track record of intergenerational economic mobility. But we must also confront the fact that our 30% four-year graduation rate, and less than 50% six-year graduation rates are too low.

Nationally, there is a crisis in college completion, particularly for the students we serve. However, research shows that institutions committed to improving graduation rates for students from low-income households and students of color can achieve this goal, particularly when their leaders are intentional about student success approaches. To address this national crisis in college completion, and to fulfill our goal of educating the next generation of leaders who fully represent the rich diversity of our country, we are determined to do better.

The purpose of this document is to create a shared vision for student success at John Jay and develop common language about this priority. The ideas here have been, and will continue to be, shaped by input from students, faculty, and staff. The process of collaboratively creating this vision has been in some ways as important to our community as the final document itself. This vision for student success will be the foundation for our next strategic plan to be developed in 2020.

## **Our Vision**

We want John Jay to be known as the premier Hispanic and Minority-Serving Institution in the U.S. This means that not only will we attract and graduate a vibrant and diverse student body, but we will also provide students with an excellent justice-oriented education that cements the foundation for post-graduate and career success, as well as civic participation, leadership, and lifelong learning.

## Our Metrics for Success

We have defined student success across three dimensions:

- (1) student learning,
- (2) graduation, and
- (3) post-graduation success.

And we intend to measure progress across all three dimensions, while meeting our goals of raising:

- Four-year graduation rate from 30% to 40% by 2025.
- Six-year graduation rate from 47% to 65% by 2025.
- Four-year transfer graduation rate from 61% to 70%.

Students who graduate from John Jay will have the habits of mind necessary to thrive in the 21st century. They will be critical thinkers, able to reason quantitatively, communicate effectively in person and on the page, use creativity to research and solve problems, as well as produce new knowledge, and be literate in new technologies.

John Jay graduates will also value justice while understanding the challenges to achieving it. They will have a global scope of reference, reason ethically, and know how to lead and how to collaborate successfully in a society of difference.

## Our Roadmap

To achieve these ambitious goals, we will build on and expand approaches we know are working at John Jay such as student cohort, engagement, and support programs; faculty support and development for enriched learning and student research; and integrated academic and career planning. We will engage our alumni in the career success of John Jay graduates and inform students early about the benefits of experiential learning in multiple career sectors.

We will hire, train, and develop a diverse and inclusive faculty and staff who are committed to mentoring, advising, and teaching our students in culturally responsive ways, enriching the inclusivity of the curriculum, and supporting culturally-responsive pedagogical strategies. Additionally, to support all of our students outside the classroom, we will continue to design and implement support services

that meet the diverse needs of our students, and ensure that these supports are institutionalized and mainstreamed across the College. At John Jay, we recognize that student success is everyone's responsibility.

We will also test technologies and strategies to help us scale student support. These strategies include harnessing data to target limited advising resources, building technology-leveraged transfer support models, sending mobile text 'nudges' to advise students to act at crucial academic thresholds, and providing tuition waivers or completion grants to help students struggling to meet credit accumulation milestones or those who are at-risk of stopping out in the final year of their degrees.

While we test new approaches, we will also refine our policies, and use data to ensure that our business and operational processes maximize student success and do not create unnecessary obstacles to student retention and graduation.

## **The Future**

Ultimately, by transparently defining this vision, pursuing these strategies, and publicly tracking our progress, we have an opportunity to amplify our tremendous impact on the lives of our students by serving as a model for others who will follow our path.

This Student Success Vision statement for the College is a rallying cry and an invitation to all members of the John Jay community, no matter what their role, to continue to renew their commitment to making a difference in students' lives and in the national conversation about who can succeed in college.

# **A Vision for All Students' Success**

**As a Minority-Serving and a Hispanic-Serving institution with a commitment to academic excellence and a proven track record of intergenerational economic mobility, John Jay College's mission to educate traditionally underrepresented groups is what makes this commitment both exciting and challenging.**

# The Student Success Priority at John Jay

**Bachelor's degree recipients have better health and employment outcomes and earn almost**

**2x**

**what high school graduates do.**

A college degree has profound effects on an individual's social, economic, and personal success. Not only do bachelor's degree recipients earn almost twice what high school graduates do over the course of their working lives, they experience better health outcomes, spend more time with their children, and are more civically engaged. Societies with higher educational attainment enjoy a wealthier tax base, higher rates of voter participation and volunteerism, healthier lifestyles, and less dependence on public assistance.<sup>1</sup> We at John Jay understand this personally, as our graduates have among the highest social mobility rates in the nation.

But higher education in the United States is distributed unequally along racial and class lines. While the United States at one time had the most educated workforce in the world, currently, the United States ranks 10th in the world in the share of young adults who have completed college. However, this ranking would change dramatically if it were not for equity gaps in college completion: while America's White adults complete college at a rate that would rank the U.S. 4th internationally, its Black and Latinx citizens' attainment would rank 28th and 35th internationally, respectively.<sup>2</sup> But we are not three different nations and these statistics demonstrate a national injustice that we at John Jay work daily to rectify. Our Black and Latinx students graduate at above national averages. In fact, we outperform predicted graduation rates based on student characteristics such as incoming GPA, SAT, income level etc. by the second largest factor within the City University of New York (CUNY).<sup>3</sup>



**John Jay graduates have among the highest social mobility rates in the nation.**

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.luminafoundation.org/resources/education-pays-2013>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/education-postsecondary/news/2018/04/18/449758/good-bad-news-college-attainment-trends/>

<sup>3</sup> See page 42 of the University Performance Monitoring Project 2017-18, Goal 6, available at [http://www2.cuny.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/page-assets/about/administration/offices/oira/institutional/data/current-student-data-book-by-subject/PMP\\_University\\_Data\\_Book\\_2018-Final\\_2018-08-16\\_v2.pdf](http://www2.cuny.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/page-assets/about/administration/offices/oira/institutional/data/current-student-data-book-by-subject/PMP_University_Data_Book_2018-Final_2018-08-16_v2.pdf)

John Jay can be proud of its work with students. Ensuring access to a quality education and college degree for all of the students we are privileged to serve, and particularly for our low-income and/or ethnic/racial minority students who have traditionally been underrepresented in higher education, is woven into the fabric of what it means to educate for justice and what John Jay stands for as an institution. But our overall graduation rates, like the nation's, are lower than we want them to be, and lower than New York State and our nation need them to be. To fuel the demand for more workers with college degrees, New York State has reduced the financial burden of attending college by introducing the Excelsior Scholarship.<sup>4</sup> At the same time, CUNY has committed to raising graduation rates at its senior colleges by 10% by 2025.<sup>5</sup> Recognizing the innate talents and promise of our students, as well as the significant hurdles to be overcome, John Jay College embraces the challenge of raising its four-year graduation rates for full-time students by 10% by 2025.

**John Jay College  
embraces the  
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Under the leadership of President Karol V. Mason and Provost Yi Li, John Jay College is firmly dedicated to student success. As a Minority-Serving and a Hispanic-Serving institution with a commitment to academic excellence and a proven track record of intergenerational economic mobility,<sup>6</sup> John Jay College's mission to educate traditionally underrepresented groups is what makes this commitment both exciting and challenging. Nationally, college dropout rates for Black and Latinx students and for males are far higher than they are for White and Asian students and for females. Equally, college completion rates for low-income students have remained stagnant despite increased access.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-cuomo-launches-new-york-state-excelsior-scholarship-application>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www1.cuny.edu/sites/connected/>. Based on the 2010 baseline of a 55% system-wide six-year graduation rate, CUNY has set a system-wide goal for a six-year graduation rates with an overall senior college average of 65%

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.jjay.cuny.edu/premier-hispanic-and-minority-serving-institution>

<sup>7</sup> <https://nscresearchcenter.org/signaturereport12-supplement-2/> and <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/25/opinion/college-graduation-gap.html>

To increase our graduation rates we will have to beat national odds. In some ways, we already do. But as this document makes clear, with the right combination of internal focus and prioritization as well as external funding, we can do even better.

## **About This Document**

This document's goal is to create a shared and transparent vision of undergraduate student success for the John Jay community and external stakeholders.

We ask and seek to answer the following questions:

- What do we mean by student success?
- How will we measure progress?
- What interventions are working well?
- Where do we need to build evidence about what works?
- What investments should we prioritize with our limited resources based on that evidence?

The vision conveyed here has been, and will continue to be, shaped by input from faculty, students, staff, the Faculty Senate, the Council of Chairs, the HEO Council, Student Council, the President, Vice Presidents, and Deans, the John Jay College Foundation Board of Trustees, community forums, key partners, alumni, CUNY, other stakeholders, and open comment opportunities.

As a vision, this document lays out our beliefs and aspirations. Establishing specific implementation strategies or actions to achieve our vision will commence as part of our 2020 strategic planning process.

# Where Are We Going?

**We want John Jay to be known as the premier Hispanic and Minority-Serving Institution in the U.S. which, by being so, lives its mission of educating for justice. This means that not only will we attract and graduate a vibrant and diverse student body, but we will also provide students with an excellent education that cements the foundation for post-graduate and career success as well as civic participation, leadership, and lifelong learning.**

# **The Goal: A Preeminent and Proudly Diverse College Educating Our Next Generation of Justice-Minded Leaders**

We seek not only equity, but excellence. John Jay has been and continues to be committed to increasing the number of college-educated Blacks and Latinx in New York, and we do so while maintaining high academic standards. We provide a premier, inclusive social justice education founded on the liberal arts to *all* our students so that our graduates can thrive in their life paths and become engaged and ethical citizens of the world.

College is a place that challenges and changes individuals. Educationally, our goal is to engage students in a quest for learning that does not provide them with the answers, but with the tools to ask the questions they will need to solve future problems. Students who graduate from John Jay will acquire the habits of mind necessary to thrive in the 21st century. Lifelong learners, they will be critical thinkers, able to reason quantitatively, communicate effectively in person and on the page, use creativity to research and solve problems as well as produce new knowledge, and be literate in technology and information.

More than just skills, however, we believe higher education should expose individuals to civic- and global-minded values that enhance their understanding of the world as it is, and equips them to reimagine the world as it could be. John Jay graduates will value justice while understanding the challenges to achieving it, have a global scope of reference, reason ethically, know how to lead and how to collaborate in a society of difference, and will understand learning as both process and product, experience and acquisition. John Jay graduates will be agents of change in their own and others' lives.

As a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) with an almost 50% Latinx student population, we join other HSI institutions whose impact on Latinx student college achievement is disproportionately large in our nation. Though only 15% of all U.S. postsecondary institutions are designated HSI, those institutions educate 63% of all Latinx undergraduates.<sup>8</sup> Nationally, John Jay awards the most bachelor's degrees to Latinx students in areas of study related to homeland security, law enforcement and fire science, and ranks ninth in most degrees awarded to Latinx students graduating with degrees in psychology. John Jay is also a top 10 institution for producing Black and Latinx applicants to law school. We will relentlessly pursue Latinx student success as part of our identity and our mission, not at the expense of any other student population, but in the knowledge that when Latinx students thrive, all students can thrive.

We want John Jay to be known as the premier Hispanic and Minority-Serving Institution (MSI) in the U.S. which, by being so, lives its mission of educating for justice. This means that not only will we attract and graduate a vibrant and diverse student body, but we will also provide students with an excellent education that cements the foundation for post-graduate and career success as well as civic participation, leadership, and lifelong learning.

## Student Success Defined

We consider student success to be:

- (1) student learning of the skills and values not only expected of college graduates but also reflecting John Jay's unique mission and values;
- (2) student graduation; and
- (3) attainment of positions in post-graduate careers, professional schools, or graduate programs.

**HSI**  
**HISPANIC  
SERVING  
INSTITUTION**  
with an almost  
**50%**  
Latinx student  
population

John Jay is a  
**Top 10**  
institution for  
producing  
Black and Latinx  
applicants to  
law school.

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<sup>8</sup> [https://www.hacu.net/hacu/HSI\\_Fact\\_Sheet.asp](https://www.hacu.net/hacu/HSI_Fact_Sheet.asp)

# **The Data: Where Are We Now?**

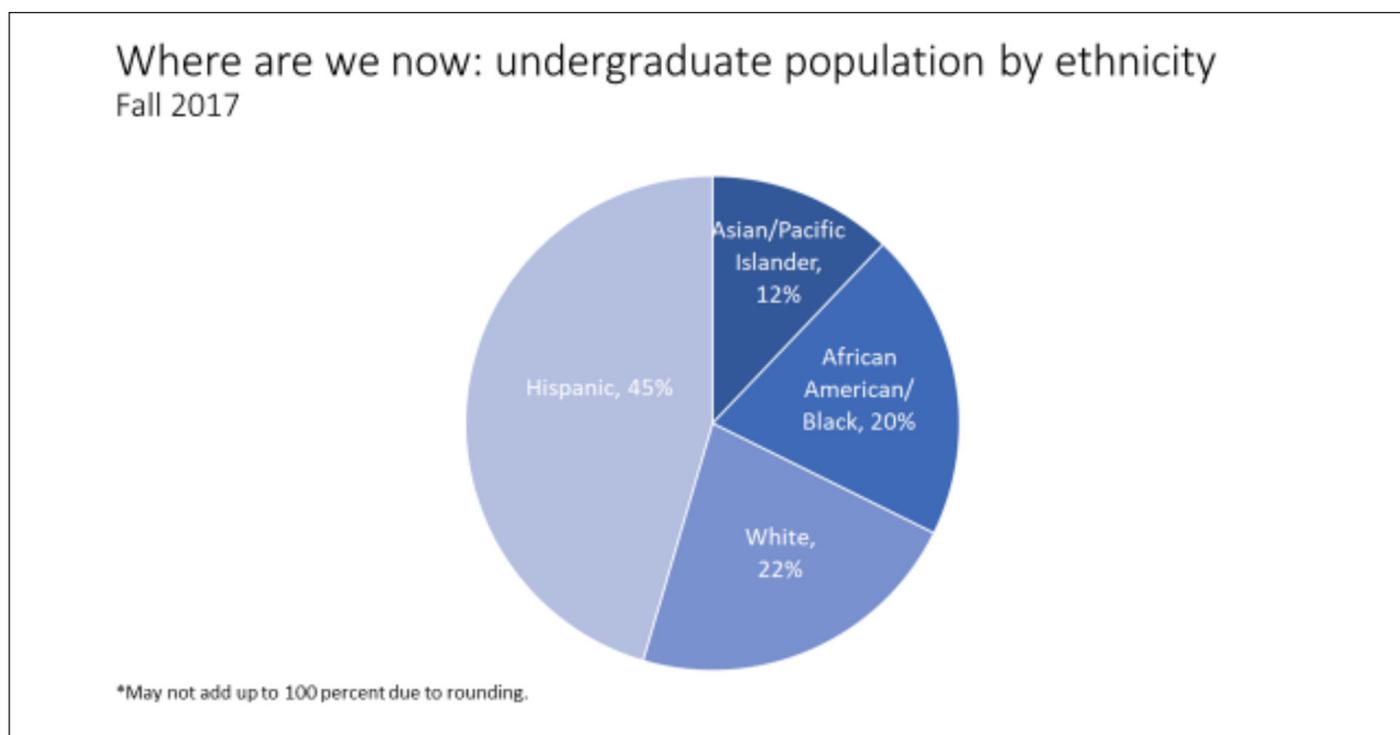
**To fulfill our mission of educating the next generation of diverse leaders in social and criminal justice, we must do better and increase our four-year, six-year, and transfer graduation rates.**

**We define student success across three dimensions—student learning, graduation rates, and post-graduate outcomes—and we also intend to measure progress across all three dimensions.**

## The Students We Serve

Nearly 50% of our students are the first in their family to attend college, more than two-thirds are Pell grant recipients, two out of three students serve as caregivers for others, while 60% work at the same time as attending school. Our students are also diverse—we were ranked by the *Wall Street Journal* as one of the most multicultural and diverse colleges in New York City—with significant numbers of students who are DACA recipients, immigrants representing more than 138 nations, or from other historically underrepresented groups. The racial and ethnic composition of our undergraduate class (Fall 2016) demonstrates our strength in diversity.

Nearly  
**50%**  
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As we move forward, we intend to use data and an equity-driven analysis to ensure that all racial and ethnic groups are making strides. **Appendix A** includes an array of data tables and visualizations reflecting student outcomes and placing those outcomes in context against local and national peer institutions.

# Top 10

institution  
for student  
social mobility

## Great Progress

In the last five years, John Jay has been recognized as a national leader in a number of key areas. We are a top 10 institution for student social mobility,<sup>9</sup> a top five institution for Black student success,<sup>10</sup> and a top 10 institution for minority applicants to law school (LSAC).

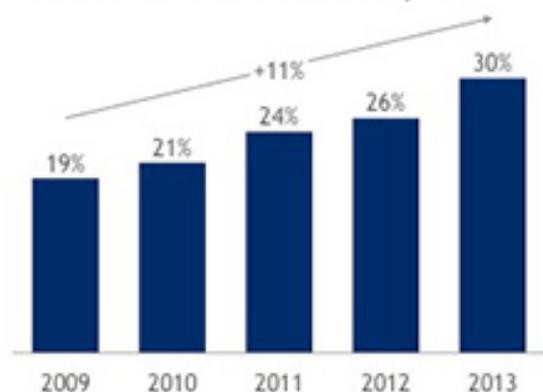
# Top 5

institution for  
Black Student  
Success

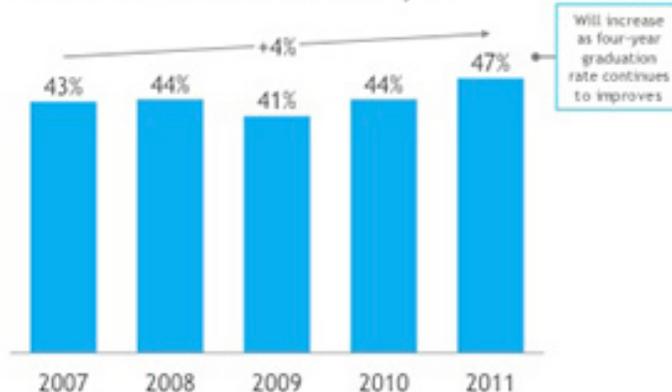
What's more, we are now building on a record of gains in retention and graduation rates totaling an 11% rise from a low-point four-year graduation rate of 19% for first-time, full-time freshmen entering the College in Fall 2009 to a high-point rate of 30% of those entering in Fall 2013 (and graduating in Spring 2017).

### Where we are now: growing graduation rates for first-time freshmen

**Four-year graduation rate**  
Full-time first-time freshmen over 5 years



**Six-year graduation rate**  
Full-time first-time freshmen over 5 years

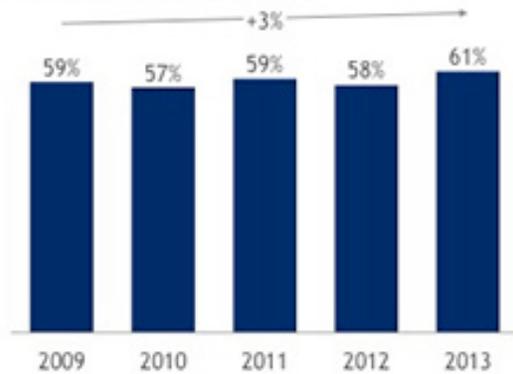


<sup>9</sup> [http://www.equality-of-opportunity.org/papers/coll\\_mrc\\_paper.pdf](http://www.equality-of-opportunity.org/papers/coll_mrc_paper.pdf)

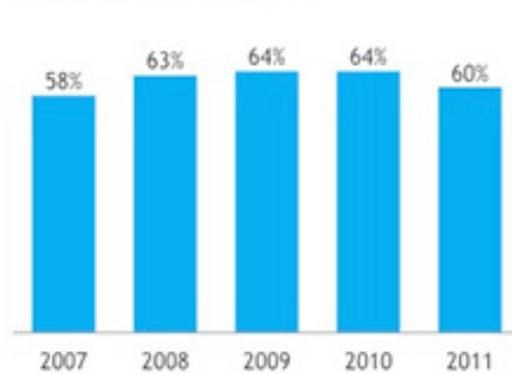
<sup>10</sup> <https://edtrust.org/resource/black-student-success/>

## Where we are now: higher graduation rates for transfer students

Four-year graduation rate  
Transfer students over 5 years



Six-year graduation rate  
Transfer students over 5 years



Source: John Jay student data

2

Significantly, we stand out from peers in that our achievement gaps by race and income are narrow, and the graduation rates of all groups have risen in eight years. But there are shifting disparities between racial and ethnic groups, with notable disparities between male and female graduation rates, and Black, Latinx and White student graduation rates.

## Where we are now: graduation rates improved for all ethnicities and genders, yet there are still shifting disparities

5-year graduation rate improvement by ethnicity and by gender

4-year graduation rate, full-time first-time freshmen



Source: John Jay student data

3

## More Work to Do

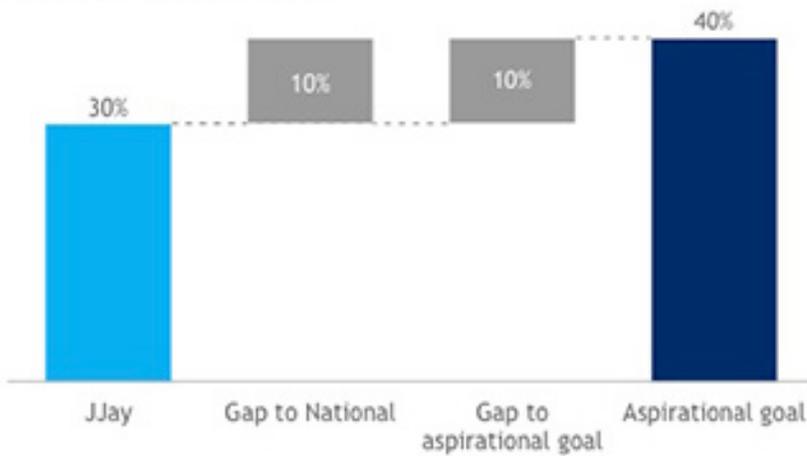
While we can be proud of the progress that John Jay has made to help its students achieve bachelor's degrees, we must also confront the fact that a 30% graduation rate in four years is too low. The national average for college completion in four years at all four-year public institutions is 40%, and our six-year graduation rate of 47% lags behind the national average of 59%. The CUNY senior college average for graduation in six years is 55%.

To fulfill our mission of educating the next generation of diverse leaders in social and criminal justice, we must do better and increase our four-year, six-year, and transfer graduation rates.

We believe it is important to understand our four-year, six-year, and transfer graduation rates in order to capture all different types of John Jay students, including part-time students. But we intend to hold ourselves accountable for improvements to our four-year graduation rate, while recognizing that when we are successful in improving our four-year graduation rate the six-year graduation rate will also rise. Historically our six-year graduation rate has ranged from 50% to 100% higher than our four-year graduation rate.

## We plan to close the gaps of graduation rates through a set of initiatives by the end of 2025

### 4-year graduation rate gaps Full-time first-time freshmen



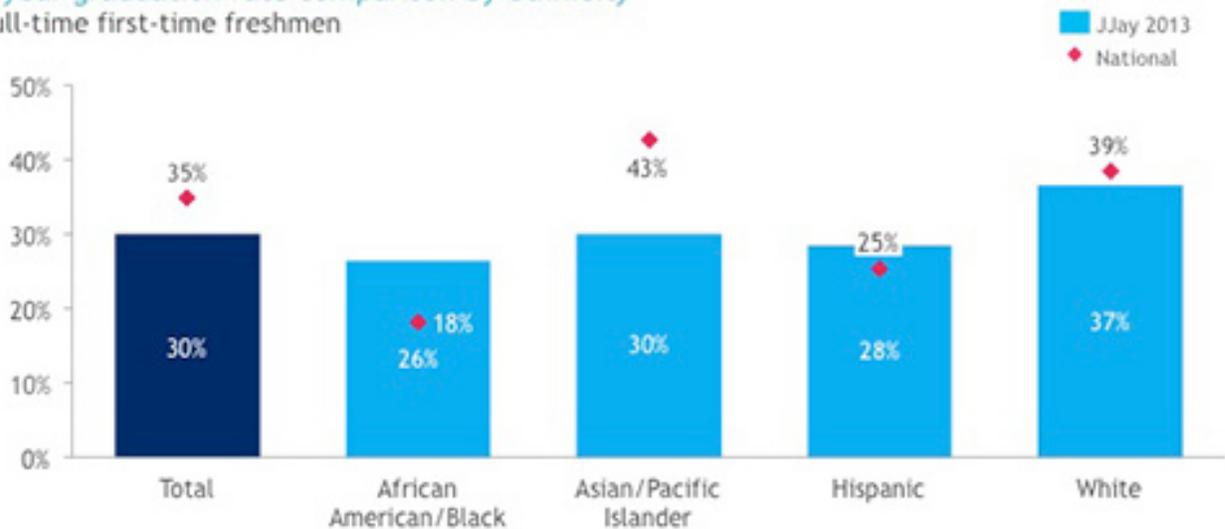
Plan to achieve aspirational goals by the end of 2025

Note: national average 4-year graduation rate not available after 2009 enrollment; used 2009 here as comparison; national average is 4-year graduation rate for public institutions  
Source: John Jay student data, NCES

5

## John Jay aspires to achieve higher graduation rates than national average for all ethnicities

### 4-year graduation rate comparison by ethnicity Full-time first-time freshmen



Source: John Jay student data, NCES

6

## John Jay graduation rates converge towards national average

### 4-year graduation rate

Full-time first-time freshmen



Note: national average 4-year graduation rate not available after 2009 enrollment - assume growth rate continues; National average is 4-year graduation rate for public institutions  
Source: John Jay student data, NCES

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## The Metrics: How Will We Measure Progress?

As we have defined student success across three dimensions—student learning, graduation rates, and post-graduate outcomes, we also intend to measure progress across all three dimensions.

- **Learning** A John Jay education is founded on intellectual skills and civic-minded values that enable students to become critical, independent thinkers who practice lifelong learning and have an awareness of each one's own role in creating a more just society. By 2025, all areas of our curriculum and our co-curricular activities will map onto the following core values and intellectual and practical skills.
  - All John Jay students will graduate having been immersed in the acquisition of the following *core values*:
    - Justice Advocacy
    - Global Learning
    - Ethical Reasoning

— Leadership and Collaboration in a Society of Difference

— Integrated Experiential Learning

- All John Jay students will graduate with competence in the following intellectual and practical skills:

— Critical Thinking

— Quantitative Reasoning

— Oral and Written Communication

— Creative Research, Production, and Problem Solving

— Technological and Information Literacy

- **Graduation Rates** over the next five years will rise:

- Four-Year Graduation Rate of 40%
- Six-Year Graduation Rate of 65%
- Four-Year Transfer Graduation Rate of 70%

- **Post-Graduate Outcomes**

- Within one year of graduation, 85% of John Jay alumni will have a successful career outcome, including full- and part-time employment, military, participation in a volunteer or service program, or attending graduate school.

To develop these skills, cultivate these values, stay on track for graduation, and prepare for post-graduate success, a John Jay student’s academic journey will track key milestones as reflected in the “John Jay Academic Journey Roadmap” included as

### **Appendix B.**

Within one year  
of graduation  
**85%**  
of John Jay alumni  
will have a successful  
career outcome.

# The Student Success Toolbox

**Institutions can and do produce vastly different outcomes with the same student populations, and colleges that succeed do so specifically when their leaders are intentional about student success.**

**Access to faculty, especially when doing research, not only increases student persistence, but benefits historically underserved students even more than their advantaged peers.**

# The Research: What Are Key Ingredients and Intervention Points to Student Success?

## INSTITUTIONS MATTER

The most significant challenge facing higher education today is a mounting completion crisis for the nation's fastest-growing demographic groups, which will contribute to widening income inequality. White and Asian students complete their degrees at far higher rates than Black and Latinx students;<sup>11</sup> students from high-income families far outpace students from low-income families in degree completion. Some will argue that differences in graduation rates are caused by differences in student preparation and other factors outside an individual college's control. However, data shows that this argument is wrong: Institutions can and do produce vastly different outcomes with the same student populations, and colleges that succeed do so specifically when their leaders are intentional about student success.<sup>12</sup> For instance, Cal State Fullerton graduates 52% of its Latinx students within six years, whereas the University of Texas at San Antonio graduates only 33.7% in the same time span. The two institutions have many similar characteristics such as size and student populations, but they are doing business differently and student achievement rates show it. To close the achievement gaps for minority and low-income students, colleges require appropriate policies and practices, culturally responsive curricula and support services, in addition to outstanding faculty who are committed to teaching its students.

Institutions committed to improving graduation rates for students from low-income families and students of color can make it

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<sup>11</sup> The equity gap at John Jay is smaller than the national average, and African-American and Hispanic graduation rates at John Jay surpass national averages.

<sup>12</sup> A Look at Latino Student Success 2017: <https://edtrust.org/resource/look-latino-student-success/> A Look at Black Student Success 2017: <https://edtrust.org/resource/black-student-success/>

happen, and research along with John Jay's own data and experience inform key strategies for doing so.

## KEY ELEMENTS FROM RESEARCH AND EXPERIENCE

### ■ Access to Faculty

Study after study confirms that the amount of time students spend interacting with faculty is correlated with positive educational and personal outcomes including academic skill development, social self-confidence, academic and social integration, altruism/social activism, leadership ability, occupational values, gains in educational and degree aspirations, college satisfaction, and retention.<sup>13</sup> The publication on *High-Impact Educational Practices* (Kuh 2008, Association of American Colleges & Universities) verifies that access to faculty, especially when doing research, not only increases student persistence, but benefits historically underserved students even more than their advantaged peers. As a recent analysis of student performance in our largest major found, students taught by full-time faculty demonstrated significantly better academic performance (grades and marks) than students who completed sections taught by part-time faculty.<sup>14</sup>

### ■ Intrusive Advising

Intrusive, or proactive, advising is an action-oriented approach to involving and motivating students to seek help when they need it. Intrusive advising strategies have proven to be effective for at-risk student populations and can significantly improve persistence and completion for all students. Whether through a sophisticated predictive analytics system of alerts that tracks student at-risk behaviors and tells advisors when to contact students,<sup>15</sup> or through basic one-to-one relationships

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<sup>13</sup> Astin, 1977; Astin 1993; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Smart, Feldman & Ethington, 2000; Kuh and Hu, 2001; Sax, Bryant & Harper 2005; Quaye & Harper, 2014.

<sup>14</sup> Students taught by the full-time faculty in this analysis achieved GPAs .3 higher, and D, F & W grade/mark rates almost half the rate of students in the sections taught by part-timers.

<sup>15</sup> See the success of such an approach at Georgia State University <https://success.gsu.edu/initiatives/gps-advising/>

between advisors and students, advising students can shorten the time to graduation through timely interventions that help students avoid taking excess credits or interventions to ensure that students take the sufficient number of credits to graduate. John Jay's successful ACE program with its 1:125 advisor-to-student ratio has demonstrated the effectiveness of this approach. Advising is not just efficient; because intrusive advisement demonstrates care for students, it helps students feel connected to and engaged by the College.

### ■ **A Focus on Writing**

Writing fosters deep learning because it is a higher-order skill. Ensuring that students are writing at all levels of instruction and across the curriculum is an Association of American Colleges and Universities approved high-impact practice associated with persistence for underserved, first-generation and transfer students.<sup>16</sup> Frequent writing assignments engage students in the concepts and analysis of their course content, whether in a psychology course or a criminal justice management course. Students learn by writing; equally, instructor feedback creates significant student-faculty interaction, thus simultaneously feeding another key element of student success. Writing also enhances post-graduate success; it is routinely one of the top three skills employers seek in college graduates. College-wide assessment has shown that John Jay's first-year writing program has improved research and writing outcomes for first-year students, and these outcomes are directly tied to other student success indicators: student retention, credit accumulation, time to degree, and graduation. The next step is to expand the time-to-degree focus on writing to all levels of the curriculum.

### ■ **Student Research**

Known to engage students in their own learning and increase retention, student research experiences have proven to

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<sup>16</sup> <https://www.aacu.org/resources/high-impact-practices>; Finely and McNair, 2013; Kinzie 2012.

# 40%

of students who have participated in PRISM have enrolled in graduate programs.

enhance students' critical thinking, creativity, problem solving, intellectual independence, and teamwork. At John Jay, students who do research as undergraduates are more likely to go to graduate school and to be career-ready. For example, 40% of those students who have participated in John Jay's Program for Research Initiatives in Science and Math (PRISM) have enrolled in graduate programs, whether medical school, Ph.D. programs, or law school. Of that group, 45% are underrepresented minorities.

## ■ Engaged Students

The more we help students feel connected to, and excited about, their academic journeys at John Jay, the more likely they are to persist. This student engagement can be measured by the amount of time and effort students put into their studies as well as other educationally purposeful activities outside of the classroom, such as club membership. Student engagement is also represented by how well we as an institution deploy our resources, curriculum, and programs to get students to participate in academic, social, and career development activities that decades of studies show are linked to student learning. Every member of the John Jay community has a role to play in encouraging, supporting and engaging our students.

We recognize from experience at John Jay that students who participate in academic or co-curricular programs where they engage actively with John Jay faculty and staff—whether SEEK, Apple Corps, Athletics, or ¡Adelante!— are retained and graduate at higher rates than those who do not. We must find ways to ensure each student is engaged in some way at the College.

## ■ Inclusive Community and Diverse Faculty and Staff

Campus climate and a sense of belonging are also critical to student success. As one of the most diverse colleges in the

northeast, John Jay must continuously affirm its commitment to diversity and inclusion for all members of its community. Including students' cultural identities in all aspects of learning (Culturally Relevant Teaching) is a proven method of validating the legitimacy, belonging, and therefore engagement of all students, and is particularly important for Black and Latinx students who have historically been underrepresented in higher education.<sup>17</sup> We must increase faculty development on inclusive teaching practices, institutionalize training for hiring a diverse faculty, train staff in cultural competency, and implement policies and procedures across the campus that are mindful of students' varying needs.

### ■ **Credit Accumulation**

The number of credits earned in the first semester of college, as well as the first year, can positively or negatively affect a student's academic momentum. Studies and our own experiences at John Jay repeatedly confirm that when students take 15 credits per semester they are more likely to graduate, they earn a higher GPA in their courses, and as a result they save both money and time. Encouraging students, especially first-year students, to enroll in 15 credits per semester is becoming part of our College culture through the CUNY-wide Academic Momentum Campaign.

### ■ **Alleviating Financial Need**

A leading reason students leave John Jay is financial need. When students work while taking classes, the opportunity costs are significant. Students must work instead of investing time in research and study, taking internships that lead to careers, and participating in student clubs and activities that can boost their engagement and persistence. In other words, students frequently forgo what it means to be a student in order to pay

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<sup>17</sup> Pappamihel, N. E., & Moreno, M. (2011). Retaining Latino students: Culturally responsive instruction in colleges and universities. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*, 10(4), 331-344.

their bills to be students. To retain students and ensure the quality of their educational experience, we must help students address their financial needs as much as possible.

### ■ **Contextualized Student Learning and Curricular Experiences**

Contextualized Learning engages students in active learning while assisting them to make meaning out of the information they are obtaining. Students report higher levels of engagement and learning at institutions where faculty members use active and collaborative learning techniques, interact with students, and emphasize higher-order cognitive activities.<sup>18</sup> Whereas traditional classroom instruction is predicated on the instructor as the initiator and the passive role of the student as recipient, there is a large body of research which makes clear that active, experiential, and problem-based learning that engages students in the creation of knowledge benefits all students, and in particular benefits Black, Latinx, and first-generation students.<sup>19</sup> Students do best when professors become facilitators of learning rather than dispensers of knowledge and when students themselves become peers and partners in learning rather than passive, silent audiences.

Further, given our HSI and MSI status, we must embrace the findings of numerous studies that document the extensive benefits to students who participate in curricula that are culturally responsive.<sup>20</sup> To become engaged and adept thinkers about the world around them students must see themselves, their experiences, and their cultural frameworks in their courses.

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<sup>18</sup> <http://www.acenet.edu/news-room/Documents/Instructional-Quality-Student-Outcomes-and-Institutional-Finances.pdf>

<sup>19</sup> Kuh, G.D. et al. (2007). Connecting the Dots: Multi-Faceted Analyses of the Relationships between Student Engagement Results from the NSSE, and the Institutional Practices and Conditions That Foster Student Success. Final Report for Lumina Foundation for Education, Grant #2518.

<sup>20</sup> See for example, Muñoz, E., Jaime, A. M., McGrill, D. L., & Molina, A. H. (2012). Assessment of student learning: Estudios Chicano/s cultivating critical cultural thinking. *Teaching Sociology*, 40, 34–49; Carter, D. (2008). Achievement as resistance: Development of a critical race achievement ideology among Black achievers. *Harvard Educational Review*, 78, 466–497; see also e.g., Pappamihel, N. E., & Moreno, M. (2011). Retaining Latino students: Culturally responsive instruction in colleges and universities. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*, 10(4), 331-344.

# **How Do We Get There? Expanding What Works, Testing Innovations, and Building Evidence**

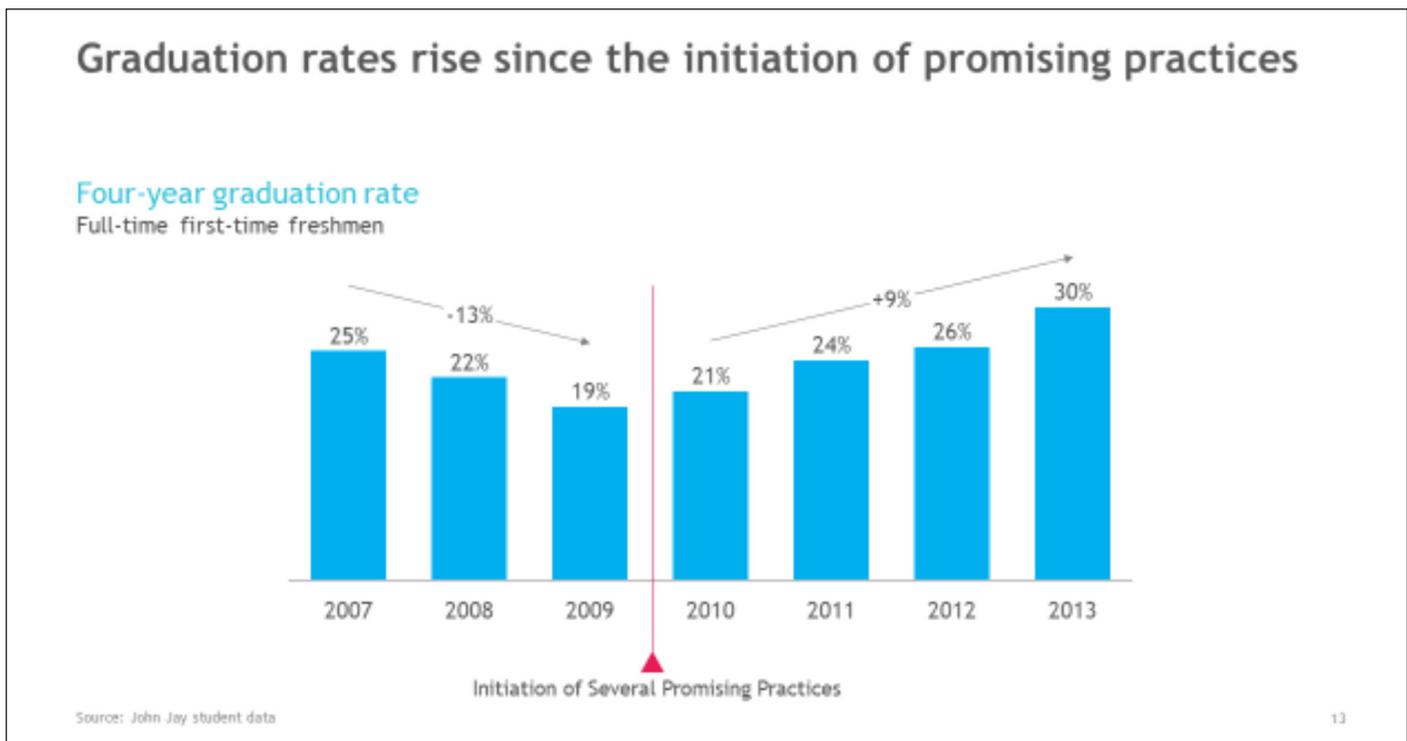
**The College's cohort programs and post-graduate preparation initiatives provide students with nurturing learning communities, mentoring, and research opportunities.**

**John Jay must continue to find new ways to leverage data and technology in order to implement student supports at scale.**

To achieve this vision, we must continually expand what works based on the research and our own data and experience, test innovations, build evidence, and then repeat this cycle.

## Expanding and Continuing Promising Practices

In the past 10 years John Jay has made investments—many of them funded in whole or part through federal, city, and private grants—that have helped us make gains in student success. We must learn from, continue, and expand these practices to reach more students.



- **Building Evidence on How to Dramatically Increase Four-Year Graduation Rates through the ACE Program**

John Jay Accelerate, Complete, and Engage (ACE) is a cohort program designed to improve the percentage of students who graduate with a bachelor's degree—to 50% within four years and 65% within five years—by providing participating students with a comprehensive program of academic, financial, and

social interventions. Based on the principles of the successful CUNY Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) in community colleges, John Jay College has served as a testing ground to show that ASAP's successful model can be replicated in a senior college setting. ACE has had preliminary promising results and is completing its fourth year of operation thanks to generous support from the Robin Hood Foundation, the Mayor's Office for Economic Opportunity, and the Jewish Foundation for the Education of Women (JFEW). In fall 2018, Arnold Ventures is supporting a randomized control trial in order to evaluate the ACE program's ability to increase four-year graduation rates for baccalaureate degree students.

### ■ **First-Year Experience**

The College's innovative First-Year Experience program is the centerpiece of our freshman retention effort. Since fall 2013, approximately 70% of freshmen enroll in a limited-size First-Year Seminar in which they work closely with professors who receive specialized training and assistance from our Student Academic Success Program (SASP). The students also receive support from a Student Success Team, including a peer success coach, an academic advisor, and a career specialist. To increase our 78% first-time freshman retention rate, we need to ensure that all eligible freshmen can enroll in a First-Year Seminar during their first semester at the College to support that crucial transition.

### ■ **First-Year Writing Program**

A 2013 winner of the Conference on College Composition and Communication's Certificate of Excellence, John Jay's First-Year Writing Program has been an engine of student retention. The program provides direct faculty engagement, collaborative and experiential learning, and a cohesive curriculum that students need. In addition, the Writing Program has designed co-curricular supports with the Writing Center,



**John Jay's  
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Communication's  
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is outcomes and assessment driven, and has a robust program of adjunct faculty mentoring and development.

College-based assessment has indicated that writing gains made in the first year drop off significantly in the second and third years. The goal must be to integrate more writing assignments into the general education and major courses at the 200- and 300-level of the curriculum to build on those hard-won gains.

### ■ **Cohort Programs and Student Engagement Programs**

The College's cohort programs and post-graduate preparation initiatives provide students with nurturing learning communities, mentoring, and research opportunities. The engaging and interactive nature of our cohort programs is integral to the transformation of the College's student success outcomes. **Appendix B** details the range of cohort and engagement programs offered at John Jay. These programs include the Percy Ellis Sutton SEEK Program, the John Jay Honors Program, Macaulay Honors College at John Jay, the John Jay ACE Program, APPLE Corps, and the NYC Department of Corrections CEEDS program, which together have the best retention rates in the CUNY system. Three other programs provide development opportunities for students wishing to pursue graduate, professional, and doctoral degrees: the Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Preparation Program prepares low-income, underrepresented, or first-generation students to matriculate at leading graduate programs; PRISM has enabled more than 80 alumni to attend top-ranked M.S., DDS, Ph.D., and M.D. programs; and the Center for Post-Graduate Opportunities and the Pre-Law Institute have helped students win prestigious national awards and gain admittance to 80 graduate programs and 75 law schools with \$18,000,000 in merit-based scholarships over the last six years.

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In addition to these cohort programs, as detailed in **Appendix B**, the College also offers a range of other engagement opportunities in which students can deepen their extracurricular experiences, forge closer personal ties to the campus community, and reinforce their classroom learning. For example, students are encouraged to join or attend events sponsored by student-led organizations and run for student leadership positions in Student Council. Students are also encouraged to engage in community service activities through the Office of Community Outreach and Service Learning. Active and meaningful engagement in service-learning activities can strengthen the College's ties to its community and positively impact students.<sup>21</sup>

Additionally, many professional events and seminars hosted on campus are open to students, providing networking and professional exploration opportunities. Data shows that students who are engaged in extracurricular activities at John Jay perform better academically and are more equipped with the essential skills necessary for life and employment.

### ■ **CUNY Justice Academy**

John Jay is a pioneer of transfer student success within CUNY, boasting the highest four-year graduation rate for transfer students of all the CUNY senior colleges, as demonstrated in the chart on the next page.

The CUNY Justice Academy (CJA) is key to that success. CJA is a seven-school pipeline program linking associate degree offerings at six of CUNY's community colleges to four of John Jay's baccalaureate programs. Over 8,000 community college students are enrolled in the CJA, transferring to John Jay at

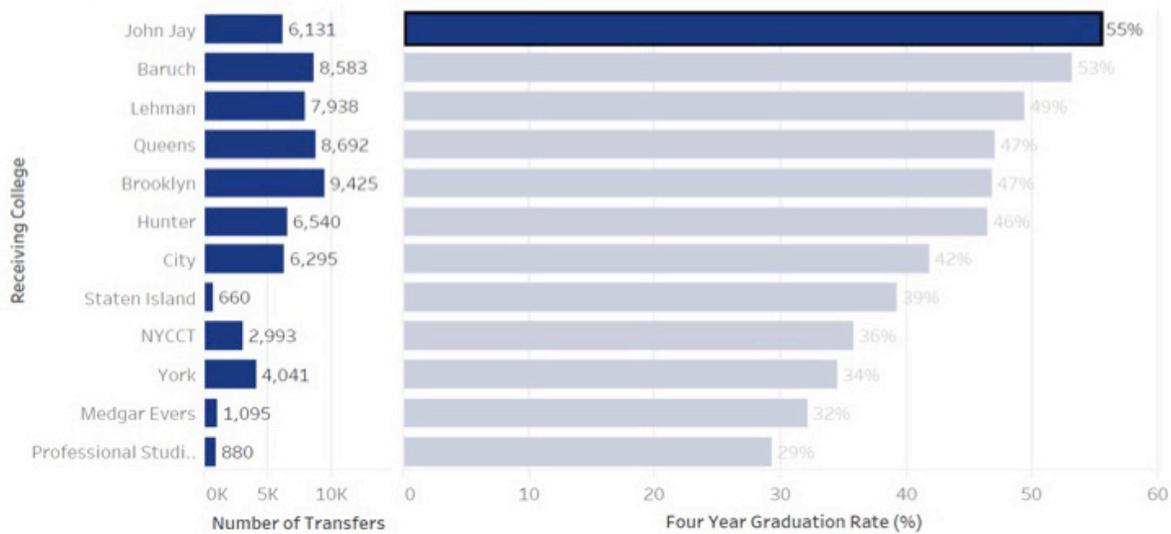
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<sup>21</sup>Teranishi, C. S. (2007). Impact of experiential learning on Latino college students' identity, relationships, and connectedness to community. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*, 6(1), 52-72; d'Arlach, L., Sánchez, B., & Feuer, R. (2009). Voices from the community: A case for reciprocity in service-learning. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 16(1), 5-16.

## Transfer Four-Year Graduation Rate at All CUNY Colleges

Cohort Years 2009-10 through 2014-15



**CJA transfers do better overall than non-CJA transfers, particularly in key metrics such as GPA, credit accumulation, and time-to-degree completion.**

the rate of 1,700 per year. Institutional data suggests CJA transfers do better overall than non-CJA transfers, particularly in key metrics such as GPA, credit accumulation, and time to degree completion. Student Academic Success Programs has created a robust pre-transition communication and engagement system for CJA students and spearheaded the student-facing realignment of the CJA intake process, resulting in significant CJA transfer enrollment and retention gains. The initiative was recently expanded with joint degree pathways to Cybersecurity and there are plans to develop additional partnerships for transfers interested in our new Human Services and Community Justice major.

As we build on the CJA's success, we also must strengthen the feedback loop between John Jay and all CUNY community colleges by sharing data about transfer student strengths, weaknesses, and outcomes to help inform program improvements at the community colleges.

### ■ Student Wellness Supports

Part of supporting student success is eliminating impediments to student health and well-being that take time and focus away

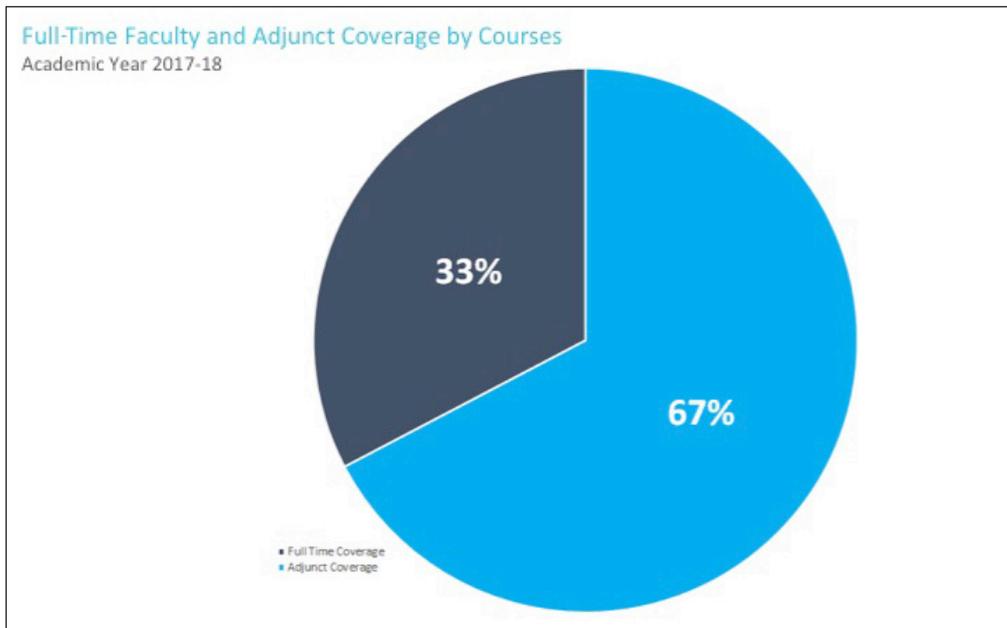
from their responsibilities as students. John Jay's student services have increased dramatically in the past five years. We now have a Wellness Center that provides counseling services, health services, and accessibility services; the LaBrenda Garrett Nelson Children's Center; an Immigrant Student Success Center, a Women's Center for Gender Justice; Military & Veteran Services Center; the Single Stop program, which links eligible students to public benefits and provides free legal services and tax preparation; and a food bank. Through generous support from The Petrie Foundation, we are also able to offer emergency funding for students in need. To make these supports even more effective for students we must continue to ensure that these services have capacity to meet student needs and that all faculty and staff are aware of and can help students access them.

## **Enriching Academic Excellence and Post-Graduate Success**

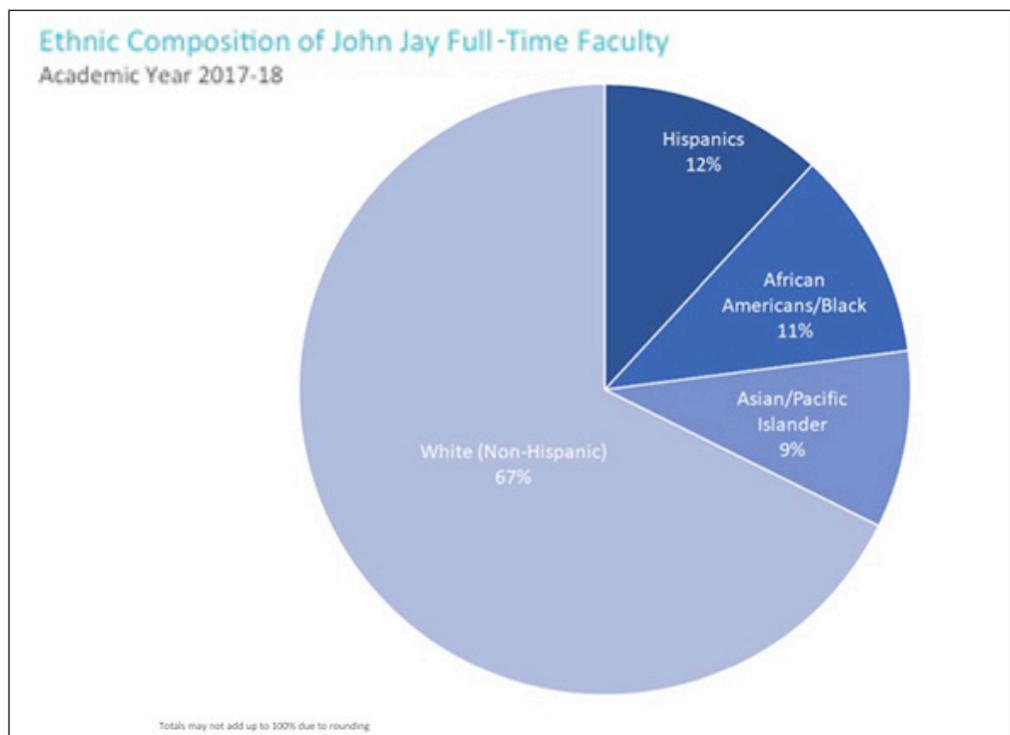
### **■ Growing the Faculty and Expanding Diversity**

Faculty interaction and quality teaching are the key drivers of student success. To increase student retention and support academic excellence while continuing to enhance our research capacity and reputation, we must find ways to increase the size of our full-time faculty, and we must do so with a firm commitment to equity and inclusive excellence.

As reflected in the chart on the next page, we must increase the size of our full-time faculty—which currently numbers 401 members—in order to better serve our student body. We intend to increase the size of the faculty to 470 by 2030. We will target growth to strategic areas of need.



It is our mission and our mandate to promote equity through a diverse faculty. As reflected in the chart below, we must continue to increase the diversity of the faculty to better reflect the majority-minority student population we serve. Research specifically on HSIs has underscored the importance of Latinx administrators, faculty, and staff in supporting the success of



Latinx students.<sup>22</sup> Latinx faculty play a special role in cultivating students' sense of belonging, connecting with the institution, providing professional role models, affirmation of a positive ethnic identity, advocacy on behalf of students, and culturally-responsive pedagogy and curricula.

But these responsibilities must also be shared across the entire faculty. Thus, as we work to both increase the size and diversity of our full-time teaching force, we must also provide ongoing professional support and development to our existing full- and part-time faculty. This training must equip faculty with the knowledge and skills needed to teach in a culturally responsive way that supports the success of our students. We are completing a five-year Faculty Diversity Strategic Plan (2013-2018) in which we followed strategies for recruiting and retaining a diverse faculty while working toward an inclusive climate for all. An inclusive climate is one in which we practice mutual respect for qualities and experiences different from our own, reduce stereotype threats, appreciate our interdependence, and recognize that personal, cultural, and institutional discrimination creates and sustains privileges for some while creating and sustaining disadvantages for others. An inclusive environment seeks to build alliances across differences so that all can work together. Progress made toward a more inclusive climate will be measured by looking for improvements in the Spring 2019 faculty job satisfaction survey (COACHE) as compared with our 2015 survey results. We will comb the results of that survey and continue to find ways to enhance our inclusive environment.

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<sup>22</sup> Perez, Lisandro et al. (2017). "A Position Paper: John Jay College as a Hispanic-Serving Institution: Meeting the Challenges and the Opportunities." Submitted to the John Jay College Community by the Faculty of the Department of Latin American and Latina/o Studies (LLS). (discussing research suggesting that student academic performance is enhanced when students see themselves represented among an institution's faculty and administration).

## ■ Writing Across the Curriculum

Writing is a gateway for academic success and a necessity for post-graduate success. In addition, good writing is inextricably tied to successful research. Because most professors do not receive training in how to teach writing, many are hesitant to critique student writing, or assign much of it. As presently constructed, the College's writing-intensive course model is not reaching enough students to have broad impact on student outcomes. While we know from our first-year writing program and specific writing intensive interventions that we can be successful in teaching writing, we also know from overall outcomes assessment that these efforts do not have lasting nor universal results.

**We need to rethink our approach to ensuring writing occurs at every level and in all areas of the curriculum.**

We need to rethink our approach to ensuring writing occurs at every level and in all areas of the curriculum. General education courses outside of composition should have basic writing requirements. Majors will need to take responsibility for integrating writing assignments and assessments into their curriculum. Best practices in a writing-infused curriculum should include widespread practice of writing for specific audiences and in specific genres; should have numerous low-stakes and scaffolded writing assignments for students to practice and deepen thought; should recognize writing as a process that enhances student learning and engagement; and only once all of the aforementioned have been done, should include high-stakes writing assignments.

## ■ Curriculum

As an HSI with a near-majority of Latinx students, and an MSI with 80% students who identify as people of color, John Jay must continue to build a curriculum that recognizes historical and current power imbalances and segregation as affecting academic privilege and curricula. We must also work to correct these social injustices through an inclusive curriculum

that reflects the racial and ethnic experiences of our students, validates their lived experiences, and provides them with the tools to apply their talents and chart more equitable futures.

The ideal curriculum demonstrates high standards, reflects our students, is aligned to John Jay's mission of educating our next generation of justice-minded leaders. Such curricula promotes skill development through scaffolded courses and capstones that in turn correlate to 21st century employer needs, particularly those of law enforcement agencies and justice-oriented organizations. All areas of the curriculum must relate back to our institutional learning goals, including intellectual and practical skills and core values.

There are areas of excellence at John Jay, but there are also areas for improvement. Research shows that the curriculum is one of the most significant areas a college can communicate its commitment to inclusivity. Yet, a recent analysis of race and social justice in the undergraduate curriculum suggests that our offerings are unevenly distributed across the College's programs and departments. To impact this, the College must also support curriculum development and faculty engagement by highlighting the development of culturally responsive and responsible curricula in our undergraduate education, from methods to research to best practices. We must also ensure that our curriculum equips students to use historical context and a critical lens to identify and challenge false narratives, and analyze current events.

**The curriculum must equip students to use historical context and a critical lens to identify and challenge false narratives and analyze current events.**

There are numerous ways in which the curriculum is currently designed to explicitly support our goals to generate skills in critical thinking, quantitative reasoning, oral and written communication, creative research and problem solving, and

technological and informational literacy.<sup>23</sup> Students do have opportunities for experiential learning. However, when it comes to the values we espouse—justice advocacy, global citizenship, ethical reasoning, leadership and collaboration in a society of difference—we do not yet see them fully woven into our curriculum.

All curriculum, and particularly information literacy and open educational resources, must be supported by library resources and space for student collaboration and solo study, which have been expanded, but will continue to be a matter for concern.

■ **Teaching and Learning:**

Faculty commitment to inclusive, student-centered pedagogies is essential to student success. Instructional quality is positively correlated with student learning and motivation, course pass rates, and subsequent interest in a subject, all of which have the potential to decrease course retake and time to degree. When colleges invest in faculty development, they are investing in student success. A programmatic approach to faculty development is relatively new at John Jay. Since Fall 2016 the Teaching and Learning Center has, with modest investment, supported faculty in sustained and paid learning opportunities as well as informal opportunities to share best practices and expand their ability to teach with culturally responsive and research-based active learning strategies. The HSI Faculty Seminars, Working Groups, and Presidential Fellowships in Curriculum-Driven Student Success are important examples of this work. Increased and sustained investment in supporting faculty as they learn how best to motivate and facilitate inclusive student learning is essential to raising student retention and academic success.

**HSI Faculty Seminars, Working Groups, and Presidential Fellowships in Curriculum-Driven Student Success are important examples of the Teaching & Learning Center's work.**

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<sup>23</sup>The John Jay College of Criminal Justice ILO Mapping Project (Undergraduate Studies 2018).

## ■ **Expanding Undergraduate Student Research**

Mentored undergraduate research is a form of experiential learning that has been shown to have significant positive effects on student learning and professional growth.

Specifically, undergraduate research experiences have been associated with improved intellectual development, gains in reflective judgment ability, and enhanced professionalization in the field in which students are working. Undergraduate researchers are more likely to be retained in the program in which they work, and they are more likely to pursue post-graduate education in related fields. Undergraduate research programs have also been shown to be particularly effective at reducing performance gaps for underrepresented students in math, science, and related fields. Our PRISM program demonstrates this, and the Office for Student Research & Creativity (OSRC) was recently created to expand undergraduate student research experiences by funding, supporting, and recognizing high-quality student-faculty collaborative research and scholarship in all disciplines, representing the diversity of John Jay College. OSRC strives to create and sustain a robust, inclusive, and competitive research support program that maximizes cutting-edge research opportunities, raises student and faculty profiles, and represents a nationally acclaimed and globally recognized research institution for criminal and social justice.

**The Office for Student Research & Creativity (OSRC) was recently created to expand undergraduate student research experiences by funding, supporting, and recognizing high-quality student-faculty collaborative research and scholarship in all disciplines, representing the diversity of John Jay College.**

## ■ **Offering Integrated Career/ Academic Planning, Internships and Experiential Learning**

John Jay College recognizes that there is a critical step between students' career exploration and students' post-graduate opportunities: linking academic programs to experiential learning and developing the skills to secure and succeed in them. We offer an array of programs designed to help students make connections between academic concepts and the professional experiences gained from experiential

learning opportunities in the broad areas of advocacy and justice. Programs such as the Ron Moelis Fellowship, the Rossana Rosado Fellowship, the Tow Fellowship, the Pinkerton Fellowship, the Innocence Project Fellowship, the Alan Siegel Fellowship, and the Professionals in Residence Pre-Internship Program increase student exposure with experienced professionals who are committed to student engagement and success. The more we can provide such experiences for our students, the better their experiences at John Jay and after will be.

## **Testing Innovations and Building Evidence to Implement at Scale**

In order to stretch our limited resources further, John Jay must continue to find new ways to leverage data and technology in order to implement student supports at scale and target supports to students based upon their differentiated needs. In addition to the ACE program, examples of some of these approaches include:

- **Enhanced Freshman Support: LEAP**

- (Linking Experience, Academics, and Practice)**

- As discussed above, the College's cohort programs and post-graduate preparation initiatives boost retention by providing students with nurturing learning communities, mentoring, and research opportunities. Together, the cohort programs at John Jay have the best retention rates in the CUNY system. Despite the proven success of the cohort approach, however, hundreds of first-year students have been denied access to this effective support due to limited resources. In Fall 2018, approximately 810 non-Science freshmen were not attached to any of our multi-year academic cohorts or special programs. Next year, that will change.

The College has committed to developing and implementing a new cost-effective but high-impact cohort program using proven strategies to support approximately 1,100 non-cohort freshmen. Beginning in Fall 2019, the LEAP program will emphasize the value of, and opportunities for, experiential learning with an integrated approach to major and career advisement, documentation and presentation of academic and career development, and guidance in securing skills-enhanced pre-professional opportunities. As a result, for the first time ever in John Jay's history, every student in the entering class of 2019 will have access to multi-year cohort program support.

■ **Text-Based Nudging Pilot**

We are engaged in a two-year study to design and assess a low cost, scalable retention intervention targeted to near-completers and transfers with the greatest risk of dropping out. The Nudges to the Finish Line (N2FL) research study is a federally-funded Institute for Education Sciences (IES) project that uses mobile nudges (personalized text messages containing concrete and actionable information and reminders) to increase degree completion among students who have accumulated significant credits but are still at risk of dropping out. N2FL's dropout prediction models are based on a comprehensive analysis of demographic characteristics, prior academic performance, indicators of whether students previously stopped out from college, transferred institutions, and/or changed majors, etc. The project draws from research that has shown the potential for text-based nudges to improve educational outcomes and is a collaboration between researchers at the University of Virginia, Stanford University, Harvard University, and the City University of New York. John Jay's N2FL pilot during the 2018-2019 academic year focuses on text-based nudges addressing academic barriers to college completion for students who began as freshmen at John Jay as well as transfer students with 60+ credits.

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In 2016  
**79%**  
of ACE students earned  
**30 credits**  
by the end of their  
first academic year  
in comparison with  
**52%**  
non-ACE freshman.

### ■ **Summer/Winter STEM Accelerator**

Over the past three years we have learned from the success of the John Jay ACE program and are beginning to apply those lessons in targeted ways to support additional students. In order to receive ACE benefits such as the tuition scholarships and MetroCards, students must continuously meet the 30-credits per year milestone. Should a student lag in credit accumulation, the student must attend summer and winter terms in order to maintain their participation in the program. ACE pays for the summer and winter tuition and tutoring needs and offers advisement during these periods. With these supports, in 2016, 79% of ACE students earned 30 credits by the end of their first academic year (including summer) in comparison with 52% of non-ACE freshmen. With an investment from Bank of New York Mellon, the Office of Undergraduate Studies is piloting a Summer and Winter Acceleration program to provide additional John Jay students with a similar opportunity to leverage tuition-free courses during summer and winter sessions to help these students stay on track to 30 credits. The intention is to build this initiative into a scalable acceleration model with renewable funding to propel 300 low-income students toward degree completion each year.

### ■ **Predictive Analytic Modeling Tool for 90+ Credits with Success Strategies**

With an investment from the Price Family Foundation, John Jay is engaged in a two-year effort to develop and implement a novel program that propels at-risk seniors to degree completion. This pilot program builds on a previous philanthropic investment from MasterCard Foundation, DataKind, and the RobinHood Foundation that enabled the creation of a custom predictive modeling tool. The tool used 10 years' worth of student level data and analyzed more than 100 risk factors to identify John Jay students at risk for

stopping out before they do so. Weighting the 30 most salient risk factors, the tool is capable of generating a risk score for each individual John Jay student at the 90-credit mark. The goal is to leverage the predictive modeling tool's valuable new risk analyses to act on that information to serve up to 1,500 at-risk John Jay students. By using data to selectively apply intrusive interventions and financial supports at a pivotal point in the decision-making process for the most at-risk students identified through the predictive model, we can propel significant numbers of additional students forward across the finish line of graduation.

Building on this effort, John Jay also seeks to develop a new analytical tool which will capture and use existing data of the approximately 5,790 John Jay sophomores and juniors in order to target, tailor and deploy individual advisement and other interventions to this group of students in the most cost-effective manner possible. This predictive modeling approach departs from traditional intervention and advisement strategies and, if funded, will be replicable, scalable, and have impact far beyond John Jay College.

#### ■ **Testing Approaches to Boost Transfer Success**

Approximately 3,000 students transfer to John Jay each year from CUNY's community colleges. Forty percent are supported by our successful CUNY Justice Academy (CJA) partnership program and the remaining 60% are processed through our Admissions office. Although our data show that CJA transfers fare better on retention and graduation metrics than non-CJA transfers, the recent 24% increase in our non-CJA CUNY enrollments has prompted us to explore new methods for scaling transfer support. As with other public institutions, limited human resources have made it difficult to build the kind of deep engagement community college transfers require throughout the various phases of their transition experience.

**The goal is to use the predictive modeling tool's risk analyses to selectively provide at-risk students with advising and financial supports.**

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John Jay proposes to implement, test, and compare three approaches to supporting the transition and retention of transfer students, and ultimately conclude which model proves most successful and cost-effective. Specifically, the College seeks to compare John Jay’s current support approach for the majority of transfers—voluntary group advising sessions—with two alternate intervention strategies. The first would be an intrusive, or proactive, advisement approach with a sample population of transfer students. Such approaches are higher cost but a significant body of evidence shows that they can work. The second would leverage artificial intelligence, data, and “mobile nudging” (promoting young people’s ongoing engagement through mobile phone applications) to create a lower-cost custom artificial intelligence bot that will send students targeted personalized messages. The technology would guide transfers to and through complex processes such as securing financial aid, enrolling in courses, attending orientation, and registering during fall and spring re-enrollment periods. John Jay envisions that a comparative evaluation of these three approaches to transfer advisement and retention.

The aim is to reduce  
the annual textbook  
expense in  
General Education  
courses by  
**\$1 Million**  
a year by  
**2020.**

## Addressing Financial Barriers

### ■ Expand Open Educational Resources

With an investment from Governor Cuomo, the New York State Legislature, and CUNY, John Jay’s Office of Undergraduate Studies has commenced a multi-year project to use open and alternative resources as a means of providing every undergraduate, regardless of their financial resources, access to high quality educational materials. The aim is to reduce the annual textbook expense in general education courses by \$1 Million a year by 2020. This plan focuses on four key areas: (1) a zero textbook cost pathway through the general education curriculum to reduce financial obstacles to student success; (2) an open source Justice E-Reader that includes readings

and a curated collection of assignments that reduces textbook costs for students and enriches the conversation about justice across the College; (3) zero textbook cost pathways and capacity in key degree programs and departments that are identified according to criteria of learning outcomes assessment, financial benefit to students, scale, and faculty interest and capacity; and (4) shared open educational resource materials across the CUNY Justice Academy that ensures curricular alignment for student success and contributes to the University’s work toward a “Connected CUNY.”

### ■ **Completion Grants, Excelsior Program**

John Jay provides financial relief in several ways to help students remain enrolled and complete their degrees on-time. With support from the Price Family Foundation, John Jay is experimenting with how targeted completion grants—aimed at students with a genuine unmet need who have used all other sources of aid but are on track for graduation and because of a financial gap would otherwise drop out—impact retention for advanced credit students. Additionally, the Excelsior Scholarship is a New York State program providing comprehensive tuition packages to students with household incomes of equal to or less than \$125,000 after TAP, Pell, and all other qualifying scholarships or grants have been applied. These combined efforts stand to improve student success outcomes for low-income students, improve classroom performance from lowered work constraints, and continue John Jay’s tradition of promoting upward social mobility for its students.

## **Changing the Way We Do Business**

As John Jay strives to educate our students as Fierce Advocates for Justice, the College itself must continually strive to serve as an institutional advocate for justice. To do so, we must continue

to adapt, change, and innovate in order to tap into the unique strengths of our students and expand opportunities for them, rather than continuing to operate in the same manner simply because we always have. We believe that there are ways—including some low-cost and even no-cost ways—that we as an institution can “change the way we do business” and our culture in order to remove unintentional institutional barriers that may impact our students’ success.

**Student retention and completion at John Jay is everyone’s responsibility.**

■ **Engaging the Entire John Jay Community**

Every member of the John Jay community has a role to play in promoting the success of our students. We recognize that each interaction a student has with any member of the John Jay community can impact that student’s trajectory for success. For that reason, we believe that from faculty, to Student Affairs leaders, to Information Technology professionals, public safety officers, financial aid and bursar’s office staff members, cafeteria and custodial workers, and beyond—student retention and completion at John Jay is everyone’s responsibility.

We also recognize that the John Jay community extends beyond the campus to the families our students come from, and, in many cases, continue to live with while enrolled at John Jay. Families—particularly families of first-generation college students—can become powerful allies in promoting student success when they are equipped with an understanding about expectations for the college experience and the responsibilities of John Jay students. As shown through programs such as ¡Adelante!, this knowledge can be cultivated through targeted and bilingual outreach to families, and intentional efforts to involve and partner with families through orientation and other events.

## ■ **Inclusive Community Reflective of our HSI and MSI Identities**

Our 2017 Diversity Climate Survey shows that John Jay is making progress in creating an inclusive community for all of our students, but we must continue to gather and use climate surveys and disaggregated data to identify and address gaps in access and opportunity on campus. We must also continue to build on our efforts to transform John Jay from merely a Hispanic-and Minority-*enrolling* institution into a truly Hispanic and Minority-*serving* institution aligned with our federally designated status as both an HSI and MSI. In addition to equitable outcomes for all minority students we should seek to develop their critical consciousness, promote their civic engagement, and facilitate involvement in their communities with an eye toward socially just outcomes. Such efforts will benefit all John Jay students.

## ■ **Strengthening Our Use of Data**

Our student-centered approach of engaging all students and staff must be grounded in data. We must continue to use data to identify areas requiring further study, drive actions and continual improvements, and allocate resources based on outcomes. As part of the work around developing this shared vision, we have created new student success data tools and are working to identify critical student success metrics at the individual student and institutional levels that will enable us to spotlight effective departments and programs and guide our focus and prioritization of time and resources across the College.

## ■ **Business Processes to Support Success**

As we continue to update, evaluate, and refine our approaches to supporting student success in the classroom and co-curricular programs, we must also use data to ensure that our business and operational processes maximize student success and do not create unnecessary obstacles to student retention and graduation. This means we must continue to

improve the ways we are meeting the needs of our diverse student population, including transfers, part-time, evening, and working students, by examining our hours of operation, policies, and services in business and support areas such as financial aid, course scheduling, counseling, and registration.

We should also continue exploring options for customer-friendly updates to our current business practices in order to better meet the needs of our diverse students. For example, we should explore options for increasing the availability of online courses, while maintaining academic quality, and consider establishing more flexible payment options.

#### ■ **Academic Policies and Momentum to Support Success**

Similarly, we must continue to examine our academic policies, take meaningful steps to review any academic, admissions, and registration policies practices, and expectations that may conflict with best practices for student success. For example, the previous Change of Major policy permitted students to switch a major at any time and without consultation, but data showed that this policy had troubling results for students. Students who change majors after 45 credits are at greater risk of losing their eligibility for state financial aid (TAP) and extending their time to degree. Significantly, students who change their major repeatedly are also overrepresented in the College's Academic Review process. Yet, College data indicated that an alarming number of students changed their major repeatedly, including as juniors and seniors. In response to this data, in 2018, the College revised the Change of Major policy to require consultation for any student changing their major after 45 credits. The new policy does not prohibit changing the major, but by requiring consultation, the policy helps to identify and retain at-risk students. Other policies or processes that require examination include the policy on "Incompletes," the CUNY "F repeaters" policy, the direct

admissions policy for transfers, and the academic progress audit process for students between 75 and 90 credits.

As part of the CUNY-wide Academic Momentum Campaign, John Jay is embarking on a one-year plan to increase academic momentum by 5% in 2019. We will accomplish this ambitious goal by assessing and designing low-cost, scalable retention interventions: developing targeted “Take 15” credit accumulation campaigns; increasing awareness around degree maps; piloting acceleration initiatives for TAP-eligible students, and creating a non-algebra pathway in Mathematics. We also plan to provide targeted outreach to at-risk near-completers and transfers by applying the latest research findings on mobile nudging and using data science. The purpose of this campaign is to significantly increase the academic momentum and the four-year graduation rate of our students. This effort is a reaction to data and research that show tangible benefits for students who take 15 as opposed to 12 credits: they are likely to boost their GPA, more likely to re-enroll, more likely to graduate, and receive financial benefits due to sustained access to financial aid and earlier access to higher earnings as college graduates.

Students who take  
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# **The Future: The Work Continues**

**Ultimately, by transparently defining this vision, pursuing these strategies, and publicly tracking our progress, we have an opportunity to enhance and scale our tremendous impact on the lives of our students.**

## **Initial Outcomes and Next Steps**

The ongoing college-wide conversations that have informed the development of this vision have been an important first step in engaging our community around our shared goals for student success. Indeed, the process of collaboratively creating this document and defining these student success goals has in some ways been as important as the document itself—which will continue to evolve over time. The process led to dozens of conversations with students, faculty, and staff across the College, and helped create among these stakeholders a shared language and understanding of the student success priority at John Jay.

This understanding has in turn informed decision-making and priority setting at all levels of the College. This process has also prompted the College's commitment to developing and funding the LEAP program beginning in Fall 2019—when, for the first time ever, every incoming freshman student at John Jay will have access to the College's most effective retention innovation: participation in a multi-year cohort support program.

We are now working with outside experts to develop a financial cost model for pursuing the priority initiatives identified through this process. The vision will serve as the starting point for the upcoming development of the College's next strategic plan, set to commence in 2020.

## **Tracking Progress**

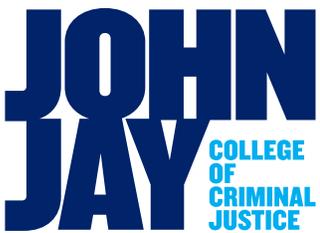
An important change in our shared vision for student success is expanding the universe of data consumers and decision makers at John Jay. We believe data is best utilized when it is shared, accessible to multiple stakeholders, and an integrated part of the community's discussion of student success. Through pro bono

support, we have created a new student success dashboard on Tableau to track key outcomes, and our Assessment and Institutional Research offices will not only monitor our progress on key indicators and provide projections for future growth, but also involve the John Jay community of students, staff and faculty in addition to administrators in data-informed decision making. We will continue to invest in technological solutions that expand access to relevant data in the decision making process.

## **National Incubator for Innovative Student Success Strategies— An Institution Advocating for Justice**

Ultimately, by transparently defining this vision, pursuing these strategies, and publicly tracking our progress, we have an opportunity to enhance and scale our tremendous impact on the lives of our students. But in doing so, we also have a special opportunity to demonstrate John Jay’s leadership in developing and implementing innovative, cost-effective, data-driven and scalable strategies to address the nation’s completion crisis for low-income and minority students. Our success can lead the way for other CUNY colleges and peer institutions to pursue similar strategies, leading to the success of students like ours all across the country.

These innovations—and our successes in dramatically increasing the academic competencies, graduation rate, and post-graduate success of our students—will continue to ensure that John Jay is an institution that not only teaches about justice, equity, and fairness, but continually lives those values and fulfills its mission as a powerful engine of social mobility and opportunity for the next generation of leaders in criminal and social justice.



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