



Framework for the Future of New Jersey's Community Colleges

Initiative 2:

Strengthening the Delivery of Innovative Learning of Essential Skills and Abilities

To achieve family supporting careers and to be prepared to thrive in a rapidly changing economy and democracy, New Jerseyans must have the ability to think critically, to solve problems, to work in teams, to communicate effectively, to be engaged in their communities and society, to be entrepreneurial, and must have a broad knowledge of the world around them. Community colleges must continue to prepare all learners to be successful in their lives and careers by broadening their perspectives so that they can adapt and thrive in a rapidly changing world and innovation economy, and by equipping them to fulfil their civic duties as responsible members of a diverse democracy.

The New Jersey Council of County Colleges and the community colleges will launch an effort, working with a variety of partners including employers, academic experts, state leaders, students, and community college leaders, to further define and identify the essential skills, knowledge, and abilities that all New Jerseyans should possess. The Council and colleges will then identify and implement innovative strategies to assist more students to obtain these skills, knowledge, and abilities. These strategies will include classes and academic programs, work-based learning, and extra-curricular activities and engagements and will be designed to reach all students, including those in credit or noncredit programs.

This effort will focus on the arts, the liberal arts, and the humanities and the role that these disciplines and courses play in providing people with valuable and relevant skills, knowledge, and abilities needed to think creatively, to solve problems, and to be successful in work and in life. This effort will build on the critical role that New Jersey's community colleges play as local arts and cultural engines.

This effort will also focus on expanding the civic engagement of students so that students can contribute to their communities and can respect and appreciate people who are different from themselves.

Finally, this effort will focus on the importance of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial skills so that students can start and manage new businesses, obtain the skills needed to contribute to the success of the organizations and companies that employ them, and to manage their own careers in a rapidly-changing economy.

The Essential Skills Initiative will:

- ✓ Further refine the identification of essential skills
- ✓ Identify effective strategies for delivering and mastering these essential skills
- ✓ Implement new efforts

Essential Skills:

- Problem solving
- Critical thinking
- Teamwork
- Communication
- Entrepreneurship

Key Partners:

- Industry Associations
- Arts, Culture, and Humanities Organizations
- Civic Engagement Organizations
- High Schools
- Colleges and Universities
- State Government
- Academic Experts