

Peirce College®
Strategic Agenda
2010-2015
March 2010

Introduction

Founded by Dr. Thomas May Peirce in 1865 shortly after the end of the Civil War, Union Business College was established to offer a new kind of practical, business education to returning soldiers and others in the post-war years. Clearly meeting a need for career-oriented academic programs at the time, the College enrolled 550 students its first year, a tremendous success. The College has since had a long and successful history highlighted by practical yet innovative programs, convenient and effective delivery systems, and substantial growth and development.

Peirce College has led the way in educational innovation many times in its history by recognizing and responding to the needs of the community and creating programs to provide graduates the education necessary to succeed in the workforce. The concept of practical, career-oriented education for women, for example, was one of Dr. Peirce's many ideas that were ahead of their time in the 19th century. Despite early resistance, by 1888 the College enrolled over 300 women – a success that has endured, as Peirce College is a leading provider of business degrees for women in Pennsylvania today. Special "War Courses" were introduced during WWI to meet the demand for clerical workers in the public and draft-depleted private sectors. The Office Automation Division was introduced in the 1950s and described as the first such program in the Eastern US. Shortly after, Peirce "Junior College" began offering associate degrees in 1964 and the school opened a Center City branch, yet another new concept for course delivery at the time.

In the 1990s, Peirce committed to taking the college to the student. The Peirce Corporate College® was launched in 1994, bringing complete degree programs into workplace and community sites to provide convenience for working adults. The school became "Peirce College" in 1997 and was granted the authority to award the Bachelor of Science degree for programs in Business Administration, Information Technology, Court Reporting,¹ and Paralegal Studies. Shortly thereafter, heading into the new millennium, Peirce College created the then cutting-edge Peirce Online® program, which enabled students to access quality Peirce courses through the Internet. Peirce Online allows students to take their courses anytime and anywhere, which is consistent with Dr. Peirce's founding philosophy that "students should consult their own convenience and interest in their attendance."

¹ Program suspended in 1999.

Peirce College today reflects both the tradition and evolution of the institution. We take a personal approach to career-oriented education and believe that the importance we place on fostering strong relationships with our students significantly differentiates us from others. Peirce faculty, staff, and administrators are dedicated wholeheartedly to working closely with students to provide a transformational experience that maximizes their opportunities for career success.

Through the process of strategic planning, we have confirmed that we are a community dedicated to meeting the educational needs of career-minded, non-traditional students and learned that we are ready to clearly redefine our role in today's higher education landscape. To build on our success, we must find and implement the most effective ways to provide the supportive, transformational experience² that takes the student, especially the unprepared, to successful career professional. We have found in this process our commitment to becoming *the first choice for career-oriented, non-traditional college students seeking high quality teaching and service.*

Process

We launched our strategic planning initiative in the spring of 2009 with one straightforward goal: to develop a shared vision and strategic agenda for our institution's future. We solicited input from all areas of the institution – students, faculty, staff, administration, alumni, trustees, and external stakeholders. We collected over two hundred strategic issues to consider in the process of designing our future. During a full day retreat, a cross-section of internal and external institutional stakeholders worked together to craft from the strategic issues seven institutional questions we needed to answer. We then developed these questions into charges. The work groups worked from October 2009 through January 2010 to answer them. These work groups were composed of a broadly representative cluster of about 60 members of the College community. (Concurrent with the development of the strategic plan, the College has been undertaking a collaborative reaccreditation self study with the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE). The planning work group structure was designed to take advantage of the existing MSCHE work group structure. With minor adjustments in leadership and membership, the planning teams were largely the same as the MSCHE teams.³)

² When we use the term *transformational* we mean the student's opportunities for personal and professional success are substantially enhanced through the Peirce experience.

³ One new planning work group was added and one existing MSCHE work group was not given an additional planning related charge.

Three times during this period the work groups met with the Peirce College faculty and staff community in open campus meetings to test and revise their thinking on these institutional questions; two additional open forums, supported by technology for asynchronous participation, were held with students. The work groups also met with the Board of Trustees in November 2009 and January 2010 with the same goals in mind. Further, these work groups reported monthly to an equally representative Steering Committee, on which the point person of each work group served. (In addition, all members of the MSCHE Steering Committee served on the planning Steering Committee.) During the remainder of the spring, with the President's leadership, the Steering Committee developed this strategic agenda from the work group reports and utilized the College's financial planning model to test our initiatives.

Throughout this process, we have looked externally at our environment and internally at ourselves. As a result of this collaborative College-wide effort, we now commit ourselves to become *the first choice for career-oriented, non-traditional college students seeking high quality teaching and service.*

The Environment

Peirce College has a demonstrated history of adapting with the times to provide career-oriented students with the practical education they need to transform their lives and succeed in the workforce. This ability to adapt and innovate is the core strength of the institution. Yet the College has many other positive attributes as well. First and foremost, Peirce is a welcoming place for all. Our student body, faculty, and staff represent diversity relative to ethnicity and gender. We are truly committed to high quality customer service, a commitment we believe provides the greatest chance for student success and also sets us apart from our competitors. In particular, we are focused on providing services in ways that meet the often-unique needs of the non-traditional student. This focus includes our approach to the classroom, where, in the past, we have been able to stay ahead of our competitors with our innovative course delivery systems. We provide a variety of effective delivery methods – from accelerated courses to on site and online delivery – small class size, integrated technology, and programs specifically designed to prepare working adults to succeed in their chosen career. Our faculty members are qualified and credentialed, with many having direct experience in the disciplines we teach and all committed to our personal, student-centered approach to learning. Our staff members are also well qualified and share the commitment to the students that permeates the Peirce culture. We have very low faculty and staff turnover, a sign of commitment to the Peirce mission, culture, and student body as well as our competitive compensation and benefits. We enjoy the benefits of strong leadership that promotes a collaborative approach to sharing information and making decisions. We keep our tuition affordable and stress a conservative approach to fiscal management that has consistently resulted in surplus budgets. This has allowed us to invest in our

conveniently located Center City facility, creating a modern building with state-of-the-art, technology-enhanced classrooms – and we have accomplished this without taking on incremental debt. We are a military-friendly institution, with a solid and growing presence of men and women from the armed forces. Finally, we benefit from having alumni and other members of the community participate on our scholarship committees and advisory boards and are increasing our outreach to various external constituencies to develop other mutually beneficial relationships.

We know we have many challenges to overcome as we strive for future success. While we have evolved and grown significantly over time, our reputation and name recognition have not. We have not invested adequate funds and resources necessary to influence the external community's perception of the College beyond the junior college status of the past and many people in the Philadelphia area are still not aware of us at all. While inclusiveness is embedded in our culture, the College's diversity needs to be clearly defined and employed as a significant asset to the Peirce experience. Many students come to Peirce unprepared to perform college-level academic work and/or effectively use technology. Our primary focus on working adult learners and narrow scope of Business, Legal, and Technology (BLT) academic programs limits our recruitment efforts. Our high level of tuition-dependency puts pressure on our future financial health. We do not have a strong relationship with our alumni or other potential donors to help supplement tuition revenues through fundraising. The lack of infrastructure in institutional advancement has resulted in an untapped alumni base, as well as limited relationships with key potential friends in the surrounding business and government communities. Since our focus has been on working adults and "taking the College to the student," we have substantial excess classroom capacity, especially during daytime hours. We are very limited, however, in terms of available space to add staff and administrative offices or to support students' social and co-curricular activities on campus. Some of our full-time faculty and staff feel burdened with having to wear "too many hats" due to our small size and lean infrastructure. We are dependent on adjunct faculty, whose compensation may be relatively low as compared to our peer institutions, to deliver many courses. We are in the process of adding full-time faculty to not only meet regulatory requirements for full-time/part-time faculty utilization but also with consideration of strengthening the College's full-time faculty capacity in preparation for future graduate programs. While our faculty is strong, we will need to hire full-time faculty expertise in academic program areas targeted for future development. We do not have a formal faculty mentoring program. Finally, we do not fully utilize our existing information systems for either teaching or administrative functions and our CRM and ERP systems are not fully integrated.

We also know there are several opportunities to pursue. While we have not actively recruited traditional-aged students, we have over 200 in our current student population and believe there are more of these

students looking for a non-traditional college experience in the region who could benefit from a Peirce education. There are also potential students in the region (many of whom are Peirce alumni) with interests and needs we could meet with new programs in areas such as professional development, career-oriented non-credit courses, graduate level degrees, and new academic areas we have not yet pursued. Even among our current target working adult population we have not saturated the market. There are numerous working adults in Philadelphia who need but have not yet completed their degree; our challenge is to identify and attract them. Mayor Nutter's recent emphasis on degree attainment in Philadelphia will help provide more opportunity for these potential students and for Peirce. Many returning military veterans will be taking advantage of the new Post-9/11 GI Bill funding to pursue their higher education goals. We are already well prepared to meet their needs, yet can do more to position Peirce as the best choice for veterans as well as active and retired military. The reality is that students attending college, whether they are recent high school graduates or working adults, are increasingly less prepared for college-level courses while a college degree is increasingly necessary for job attainment and career advancement in the knowledge economy;⁴ the successful colleges will be those who find the right ways to provide the supportive, transformational experience that takes the underprepared student to successful career professional. Beyond program development and enrollment growth, there are many opportunities for Peirce to become a more involved participant in the Philadelphia region: from developing relationships with business and governmental leaders to engagement in community activities and partnering with other institutions. Further, there is fertile ground in the area of alumni development to re-engage former Peirce community members in campus activities for the benefit of all, including but not only fundraising. Other revenue opportunities exist through making idle facility space available to external community members who are looking for meeting space. We attract new faculty and staff with new skills and ideas in the best of times and in a tough market for job seekers, we may attract even more qualified candidates. Finally, ever-evolving technology will continue to provide new opportunities for improved program delivery and operational efficiency.

Of course, we must be aware of and prepared to respond to key threats in the external environment as well. Philadelphia is a highly competitive higher education market. Many area schools have well-established brands and name recognition as well as more resources to invest in new initiatives in areas such as campus life, new technology, or program development. Many are also focusing much more on recruiting the working adult market as traditional-aged pools shrink.⁵ Beyond that, many schools in the area and throughout the country have been developing online programs that are increasingly competitive with ours. This is now true throughout the non-profit sector of higher education; the proprietary sector is,

⁴ *Philadelphia, PA. A Tale of Two Cities*. Philadelphia Workforce Investment Board, 2007.

⁵ Projections of Education Statistics to 2017. National Center of Educational Statistics, 10 Aug. 2009

of course, even more aggressive in online program delivery, especially in the business and career-oriented niches. The current economic downturn has caused real hardship in the region and nation, with future repercussions yet to unfold. While we have weathered the storm successfully to date, our margins are thinner and economic uncertainties will likely impact any future efforts in fundraising and other funding sources or new initiatives – not to mention students’ ability to access the resources to fund their education. It will also make it all the more difficult to invest in future upgrades to facilities, programs, or ever-changing new technologies.

The strategic planning process has presented us with an opportunity to respond to these environmental factors and to explore all possible avenues to enhance our academic, operational, and financial well being. This process has led us to craft a new vision for the next five years to become *the first choice for career-oriented, non-traditional college students seeking high quality teaching and service*.

Vision

With our vision of becoming *the first choice for career-oriented, non-traditional college students seeking high quality teaching and service* informing all that we do, over the next five years we shall:

1. ***Revise our mission, define our core values, and firmly establish our unique brand in the marketplace*** – We will engage the College community in updating our mission to better reflect our institutional purpose, articulate and codify our core institutional values, and engage in a comprehensive branding process to position Peirce College appropriately and effectively in the Philadelphia area higher education marketplace.
2. ***Grow our enrollment by targeting new markets, enhancing academic support, and improving student success*** – We will reaffirm our policy of open admissions and commitment to providing educational opportunity, reach out to new student markets in the greater Philadelphia region, position our diversity as a key strength, and provide the high quality integrated support and developmental programs our students need to succeed.
3. ***Diversify and distinguish our academic programs with an emphasis on career-long learning*** – We will expand our academic programs horizontally and vertically in order to provide career-oriented students with relevant education throughout their working lives and distinguish all programs with our high touch, relationship driven approach to teaching and learning.

4. ***Enhance our students' experience through a renewed focus on signature Peirce service and support and rededication to making the best use of technology inside and outside of the classroom*** – We will set new standards for customer service emphasizing a personalized approach, improve our communications with students, substantially upgrade our academic support services, create signature level career services for students and alumni, and enhance our use of technology to support an effective learning experience and efficient operations.
5. ***Create a culture of measurement, assessment, and continuous improvement*** – We will rededicate ourselves to assessing and improving student outcomes, enhance our use of comparative benchmarking, and develop rigorous academic and operational assessment protocols.
6. ***Invest in and support our people while rebuilding connections and developing new relationships in the community*** – We will enhance faculty and staff development, explore new quality of work life initiatives, maintain a competitive compensation system, celebrate and value the diversity of our community, aggressively re-engage with our alumni base, and become an active, visible member of the Philadelphia community.
7. ***Broaden our revenue streams while emphasizing strategic use of limited resources*** – We will develop new sources of revenue, emphasize a transparent and collaborative approach to financial decision-making, and introduce new tools to ensure that we make the right decisions to support our growth and financial health.

1 - Revise our mission, define our core values, and firmly establish our unique brand in the marketplace – We will engage the College community in updating our mission to better reflect our institutional purpose, articulate and codify our core institutional values, and engage in a comprehensive branding process to position Peirce College appropriately and effectively in the Philadelphia area higher education marketplace.

Through a collaborative process, a revised mission statement will be developed that more appropriately reflects who we are, what we do, and what is distinctive about Peirce College. The new mission will inspire a connection to the school's purpose; it will be broad enough to be concordant with all of the College's offerings – current and future, undergraduate and graduate, credit and non-credit – and yet specific enough to be distinctly Peirce. Key themes that will drive our discussion will include: student centeredness; career-long learning; instructional excellence; outstanding career preparation; producing responsible citizens; fostering intellectual and personal growth; preparing the underprepared; and developing critical thinking, problem solving, and communication skills. The new mission statement will be foundational to the development and implementation of our brand.

We will define our core values to go hand in hand with a mission statement and to codify the character and identity of the institution as well as inspire and inform those within it. As we develop our new mission statement, we will document our core values, which play such an important part in personal connections to the institution, and simultaneously engage the community in clearly defining and articulating them.

We will collaboratively develop and implement a brand strategy that will position Peirce College distinctively in the Philadelphia area higher education marketplace. Peirce is currently suffering an identity crisis: brand misperceptions in the Philadelphia marketplace tied to our previous status as a junior college, misplaced attempts to broaden to a national platform, and a fragmented view of our brand even within our own community. Worse, only 16% of those surveyed in the tri-state area were even aware of Peirce College. Our brand promise will be based on our mission and unique value proposition,⁶ and ultimately serve to build an awareness and understanding of Peirce among existing and new markets. A major goal will be for all constituencies to embrace and live the brand promise every day. The branding campaign itself will consist of steady, repetitive messaging to all existing and new target markets and reveal the distinctive Peirce experience and culture. While this initiative will require

⁶ The results of the market survey confirm a variety of factors that currently differentiate Peirce from other institutions, including: affordability; accelerated courses; flexible study formats; small class sizes; Center City Philadelphia location; career-oriented degree programs; qualified, accessible faculty and high-quality customer service.

significant investment, it is an investment that will be crucial to our long-term success and we cannot afford to delay.

2 - Grow our enrollment by targeting new markets, enhancing academic support for underprepared students while also targeting and improving student success – We will reaffirm our policy of open admissions and commitment to providing educational opportunity, reach out to new student markets in the greater Philadelphia region, position our diversity as a key strength, and provide the high quality integrated support and developmental programs our students need to succeed.

We will focus on helping underprepared students get ready for and succeed in college and, targeting new segments of the non-traditional student market, we will endeavor to achieve an enrollment of 3,000 students by FY2013 and 3,300, which will represent nearly 25% growth over this planning horizon, by FY2015 of our strategic plan. Maintaining an open admissions policy at the undergraduate level will require even more emphasis on support and remediation. We will enhance our remediation efforts through mandatory placement testing in math and English. Research shows that mandatory testing and remediation are successful strategies to achieve greater student academic success and retention. We will integrate developmental education into the curriculum, as appropriate, which will provide added support for students and further distinguish Peirce in the marketplace.

Our clear emphasis will be in online and on campus delivery of programs and services. There will be no specific strategy aimed at growing on site delivery over this planning horizon; however, we will consider on site opportunities that correlate with other aspects of this agenda. There will also be no specific initiatives geared to the national or international markets but marketing activities may lead to exposure and enrollments beyond the region.

We will focus on the Philadelphia region⁷ as our target geographic market and working adults, especially but not exclusively first-generation students, as our target population. We will also directly target traditional-aged students seeking a non-traditional, career-oriented higher education experience. Peirce already enrolls over 200 of these students with very little marketing effort. We are confident that with a more targeted recruitment effort and development of additional campus-based infrastructure to meet their needs,⁸ we can attract many more. Many of these students are likely to be underprepared academically; we will prepare them.

⁷ Philadelphia region, which is made up of the City of Philadelphia and its neighboring counties (e.g., Pa.: Bucks, Delaware, Montgomery; N.J.: Burlington, Camden, Gloucester; Del.: New Castle).

⁸ Such as space for social events and activities, computer labs, etc.

We will also recruit more prepared traditional-age students from selected Philadelphia area high schools, targeting schools that combine rigorous academic and college preparation in their curricula with alternate delivery formats and career emphasis similar to Peirce. This will help create a more diverse and richer learning environment that we believe will be healthy for all students.

Finally, we will dedicate full-time recruiting resources toward increasing our efforts to enroll students from the military. The College has already been recognized as a *military friendly* institution by the Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges Consortium and Yellow Ribbon Program and our practical programs, affordability, transferability, and flexibility all appeal to this population. For many years, we have offered our Protect & Serve® Grant for first responders to include all branches of the military, their spouses, and dependent children. Until now, the grant covered up to 25% of tuition and fees depending on the number of credit hours attempted. We will raise those benefits in the future.

3 - Diversify and distinguish our academic programs , with an emphasis on career-long learning – We will expand our academic programs horizontally and vertically in order to provide career-oriented students with relevant education throughout their working lives and beyond and distinguish all programs with our high touch, relationship driven approach to teaching and learning.

We will develop new pre-college programs from preparation to enrollment in college and initial entry into the job market, to career development and industry specific skill building, to career advancement, all supported with our signature high touch and convenient environment. By adding new programs along this career-long learning spectrum, we will become the first choice for all non-traditional students in the region, expanding our reach to many prospective students and therefore expanding our growth potential.

At the baccalaureate level, we will continue moving forward on new programs currently in development in Accounting, Human Resource Management, and Healthcare Administration – and follow with the research and development of additional new programs such as those identified in the market survey, for example, Organizational Development, Business Law, and Entrepreneurial/Small Business. At the associate degree level, a new Health Information Technology program is in development with preliminary plans for a bachelor's level degree in Health Information Management. We will research prospective new programs – associate, bachelor's, master's, and non-credit - to assure need and demand by students and employers and our competitiveness with other institutions. We will also identify and develop additional programs of study most suitable for our increased emphasis on the traditional-aged and military markets.

Graduate programming will enable Peirce to offer career advancement education to the same population we have been serving for decades, just further along in their career. There is particularly strong demand for graduate degrees among current Peirce students and alumni. Our first proposed graduate program is Organizational Development and Leadership (ODL), which is already in development and the market survey confirmed is one of the top ranked program choices among our alumni. ODL has been made the first choice because it is a broad based program that can attract graduates from all of the College's existing and planned undergraduate degree programs; research indicates that it has high job growth opportunities in the next several years; and it will be a program differentiator in the region. We will follow this new program with proposals for additional master's level programs, such as Business Administration and Human Resource Management, identified in the market survey, with supporting research for need and demand and confirming our competitiveness.

To meet educational needs at the career development and skill building stage of career-long learning, we will produce new programs in professional development from our current Business Administration, Information Technology, and Paralegal Studies offerings. We will deliver non-credit courses broadening our offerings to current students and alumni and meeting the needs of other working professionals in the region. These programs may also provide participants with enough exposure to the College to convince them to enroll in our core degree programs. Most notably, professional development offerings will support our overall branding and outreach strategies by getting Peirce more exposure to numerous constituencies including employers and professional associations.

We will build on our recent success with a Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) project to add corporate training to our educational portfolio. In addition to being a potential revenue generating activity targeting new students, it will support our desire to build more and better connections to the regional business community as well.

We will deliver all of our academic programs with an emphasis on "high touch approach" (HTA) teaching. Small class size and continued faculty development in active learning techniques are essential factors to delivering an effective high touch approach to teaching.

4 - Enhance our students' experience through a renewed focus on signature Peirce service and support and rededication to making the best use of technology inside and outside of the classroom – We will set new standards for customer service emphasizing a personalized approach, improve our communications with students, substantially upgrade our academic and career support services, create signature level

career services for students and alumni, and enhance our use of technology to support an effective learning experience and efficient operations.

Our commitment to customer service has been a hallmark of Peirce College and it will become even further emphasized as an important component of our brand strategy. We will define what we mean by Peirce customer service, ensuring it includes a focus on a high touch approach to customer service that mirrors our high touch approach to teaching.

Because convenience influences perceptions of student services and our students are not on a nine-to-five academic schedule, we will assess the availability of academic support services to ensure that sufficient services are available when students need them. We will enhance our communications strategies, taking advantage of new tools to create a dynamic social media environment that can be used to promote connectedness to and a sense of community among our students and keep us in better sync with their needs.

We will review our student service processes and redesign and reorganize those that are inefficient or ineffective. For example, having identified an opportunity to enhance our transfer credit review process, we will streamline/centralize the process to evaluate all new students' transcripts before students start. This will prevent issues before they become complex and frustrating for students and staff alike and free up our Program Advisors to focus on high-value activities such as counseling and mentoring students.

We will consider a more robust orientation program that meets the needs of the non-traditional learner, providing a foundation for academic success, career exploration, and career-long learning. This orientation course will be based on the student's level of need and address areas such as expectations of the college learner, skills for classroom success, resource management, career exploration and development, leadership, and professional etiquette.

We will build and emphasize a signature career services department that will actively engage alumni, connect with the community, and provide a gateway to opportunities for Peirce students from admissions through graduation and beyond. We will develop a career assessment plan requirement for degree seeking students and establish a mentoring program that engages existing students, alumni, and business contacts.⁹ We will connect students and alumni with employers through targeted marketing efforts and

⁹ In a recent survey by The American Society for Training and Development, 75% of private sector executives said that mentoring was critical in helping them reach their current position.

support this by providing interviewing space for employers, upgrading our resume exchange program,¹⁰ and expanding our industry-specific networking sessions and panel discussions available both on campus and via webcast. Finally, we will explore additional technology including Podcasts and Webinars to make our services even more available and useful to our students.

We will rededicate ourselves to identifying and implementing new course technologies to upgrade our students' learning experience and reclaim our leadership position in the online education market. We will identify technologies that emphasize seamless access, ease of use, and support, as well as foster development of relationships our high touch approach requires. With an eye toward maintaining a strong position in the online delivery arena, we will thoroughly assess our existing Learning Management Software (eCollege) and supplemental applications¹¹ with the need for more sophisticated future utilization in mind. We will also benchmark our current platform in relation to available systems in the marketplace. We will involve faculty, staff, and students in the evaluation process. We will conduct a comprehensive review of our Student Information System (SIS), looking for ways to more fully utilize the software's capabilities and make the user experience more satisfying to students, faculty, and staff alike. We will renew our commitment to providing effective live IT support for all courses and student services, in line with our extended academic support services.

We will establish and enforce minimum technology requirements for students to ensure they are prepared to succeed in our increasingly technology-oriented institution and society. Similar to our academic testing and remediation initiative, we will assess student proficiency early and provide the necessary training to enable them to succeed in a technology-driven environment. Further, we will implement and enforce stricter guidelines and expectations relating to student computer hardware, software, and Internet access. To support this initiative, we will enhance our laptop purchasing program for students.

5 - Create a culture of measurement, assessment, and continuous improvement – We will enhance our use of comparative benchmarking, rededicate ourselves to assessing and improving student outcomes, and develop rigorous academic and operational assessment protocols.

We will commit to creating a new culture of assessment throughout the organization, identifying and measuring key performance indicators (KPIs) to inform our decisions, monitor our progress, and hold ourselves accountable for the College's success. We will engage in a transparent process with the

¹⁰ Resume exchange allows students and alumni to review employment opportunities and gives employers access to qualified applicants from a pool of Peirce students and alumni.

¹¹ Such as class companion websites, online survey tools, integrated and external audio and video, dynamic course modifications, active learning tools, communications, social media and collaboration tools.

opportunity for input and feedback to develop a definitive list of comparison institutions against which we will regularly compare the College to assess our competitive position in areas of operating and strategic performance.

We will ensure that we have a rigorous system for measuring, monitoring, and improving student outcomes to determine that our students possess the knowledge, skills, and competencies set forth in our curricula.

We will continually review our operations and engage in business process redesign (BPR) initiatives when appropriate to ensure that our processes are efficient and effective. We will identify and remove inefficiencies and redundancies, reduce delays, and implement appropriate technological solutions to replace manual activities. We will pilot our BPR efforts in the area of document workflow, where we have experienced challenges relating to document accessibility and timeliness due to our dependence on a manual process.

We will develop a systematic, objective model for ongoing evaluation of all academic programs to support resource allocation and new program development decisions. Similar to our approach for resource allocation decisions and prioritizations, we will appoint a cross-functional committee comprised of staff and faculty to collaboratively develop and implement a model that will address program quality, the market demand, financial viability, and how the program is tied to the mission of the College.

We will continue to stay abreast of and monitor the College's regulatory compliance, and adherence to accreditation standards and guidelines. Given our substantial use of adjunct faculty, we will closely monitor our full-time/part-time faculty utilization ratio in relation to the Pennsylvania Department of Education requirements and ensure ongoing compliance, including as new baccalaureate and master's degree programs are added to the College's offerings.

Finally, we recognize that Peirce College is undergoing yet another period of substantial change and development. In order to manage this change, we will make every effort to apply effective change management principles to support the community throughout the implementation of our vision.

6 - Invest in and support our people while rebuilding connections and developing new relationships in the community We will enhance faculty and staff development, explore new quality of work life initiatives, maintain a competitive compensation system, celebrate and value the diversity of our

community, aggressively re-engage with our alumni base, and become an active, visible member of the Philadelphia community.

We will enhance our professional development program for faculty and staff to ensure they are well prepared to deliver high quality education and services to our students and succeed professionally themselves at Peirce. Faculty training will include an emphasis on active learning theory and techniques, which will be the bedrock of the high touch teaching philosophy that will set us apart from our competitors. Staff training will similarly emphasize a high touch approach to customer service based on flexibility, availability, and developing supportive relationships.

We will create a mentoring program in which full-time faculty are trained to be mentors to both students and adjunct faculty. Our seasoned faculty will develop and implement a program that takes advantage of our small size to conduct mentoring on a personal, one-on-one basis. This will enable us to “onboard” junior and adjunct faculty much more quickly and effectively, exposing them to the Peirce culture and approach to teaching in an organized but personal way. Our mentoring program will expose students to their academic discipline in an informal and meaningful way and create the kind of deep relationships that lead to greater connection to the school, increased satisfaction, and retention.

We will re-evaluate the faculty work-at-home policy and support structure to enhance its effectiveness. We believe that flexible work schedules and other creative benefits can enhance work-life balance and improve employee productivity as well as commitment to the institution. We will seek opportunities to apply these benefits to staff, faculty, and administrative positions where the benefits can be employed appropriately. This will also assist in talent acquisition and future retention.

We will review the College’s performance evaluation program, tie it more specifically to our new emphasis on active learning in the classroom and high quality service throughout, and assess how it can better measure competencies, behaviors, and results to reflect the realities of the diverse jobs on campus. We will regularly assess employee satisfaction through surveys and respond publicly and appropriately to our findings. This will be part of an overall strategy to ensure open communication throughout the institution and a transparent approach to addressing issues as well as to creating a working environment that promotes a team culture and collaborative decision-making.

We will initiate a workflow analysis project to ensure that our staff members are appropriately aligned with their job functions and to improve organizational efficiencies. We will establish a compensation

philosophy and assess our compensation system (including a review of how and who we benchmark) to ensure that our salaries are competitive in the marketplace. We will be more transparent with the employee base about compensation and benefits policies and practices. We will also restructure faculty workload to find an effective balance with teaching, faculty development, scholarly activity, and service with attention toward expanding faculty research and training in preparation for our future graduate programs.

Our diversity is and will remain a key strategic strength. We will celebrate and value the diversity of our community and continue to make Peirce a welcoming place for all. Our first step will be to define the term *diversity*, which means different things to different people. We will not take our diversity for granted and will actively seek out opportunities to learn from the diverse members of our community while building on the richness that diversity and inclusiveness provide in the classroom and throughout the organization. We will also promote our diversity as a major opportunity for prospective students and for employers looking to diversify their human resources.

We will re-establish the Office of Institutional Advancement with the clear mandate to lead the College in building relationships with a variety of internal and external stakeholder groups and creating the infrastructure and capacity to achieve long-term *friend* and *fundraising* success. We will re-engage with our alumni to create a mutually beneficial relationship, as committed alumni represent a wealth of opportunity for growth and development throughout the College, from new student referrals to student mentoring to curriculum development to fundraising. We will support the re-creation of an active alumni association, engage them in all aspects of the College, provide them services that meet their career needs, and keep them informed through various modern media including email, blogs, and social networking sites.

We will establish a stronger community presence in order to build connections with and a leadership position in the local community. We will seek out volunteer opportunities that are in alignment with our mission as well as the needs of the student body and community. Community service will enable students to learn about themselves, enhance decision-making skills, and broaden their knowledge of social issues. For the College, the promotion of community service and engagement will provide opportunities for faculty and staff to share their expertise with the community and enhance Peirce College's reputation as a leader in the community and as a community resource.

We will actively build relationships with the local business community to enhance Peirce's curriculum and provide better career opportunities for our students. We currently have nearly 50 professionals

serving periodically on program advisory boards and close to 20 corporate partnerships. We will build on these connections by engaging them in meaningful discussions about their perceptions of our current programs and the future needs in their professions. We will seek out other opportunities to engage with area business leaders, involve them in building our curriculum into a valuable resource for workforce development in the region, and create valuable connections between our students and the working world. We will pursue similar relationships with local and state government, following our recent discussions with Mayor Nutter, to enhance Peirce's profile and increase fundraising or other opportunities. We will reach out to establish effective relationships with the legislature, the congressional delegation, the governor's office, state and federal agencies, and other external entities to advocate for our institution's strategic directions and goals.¹²

We will build more partnerships with other educational institutions. Our existing partnerships take the form of articulation, dual admissions, and acceptance agreements with community colleges, high schools, and graduate institutions, which provide us with access to new students and provide our existing students greater educational opportunities beyond what we can offer. While we will continue to pursue agreements with additional schools, we will also explore opportunities to develop alternative collaborations that will allow us to do more in partnership than we can alone, such as deliver new programs to our students, engage in money-saving purchasing coalitions, or even share the cost of infrastructure such as technology.

Finally, we will ensure that our campus is well maintained, safe and secure, and effectively utilized to advance this agenda. In particular, facilities upgrades will be prudently made, regular maintenance schedules will be maintained, and periodic security assessments will be performed. Security training will also be conducted. In addition to being used as a key part of the College's outreach strategy, the campus will also be used to establish and advance community connections. Maintaining good relationships with residential neighbors and good citizenship will continue to be priorities.

7 - Broaden our revenue streams while emphasizing strategic use of limited resources – We will develop new sources of revenue, emphasize a transparent and collaborative approach to financial decision-making, and introduce new tools to ensure that we make the right decisions to support our growth and financial health.

¹² It may be possible to hire an external consultant to lead some of these initiatives.

We will aggressively identify and pursue new revenue generating ideas to diversify and grow our revenue streams. Broadening our target markets will attract more students and therefore more revenue to the College and enrolling more traditional-aged students to our day program, in particular, will enable us to grow without substantially adding to our cost base.

The College's newly renovated facilities will be used to generate revenue directly and indirectly. We are confident there are organizations looking for meeting and event space that would find our facility appealing and useful for their activities. This will provide direct revenue. We also plan to offer our facility to the community and associations as a means to increase our outreach and expose more people to our state-of-the-art physical plant and our superior customer service, which will increase public awareness and our reputation.

The investment in the position of Vice President of Institutional Advancement (IA) and related IA infrastructure will lead to significant fundraising success. We will create a *culture of giving* in the Peirce community whereby all members of the College community will be educated about the importance and benefits of fundraising for the institution. Giving will depend on students' and alumni perception of their college experience, their amount of involvement with and connection to the College, and their own level of wealth.¹³ While it will take several years to see a significant increase in this area, we will expect steady and sustained growth.

We will create transparent, collaborative processes for making financial decisions and employ new analytical tools to support them. We will appoint a Resource Allocation Committee to regularly review our plans for strategic investment and ensure the annual budget is in alignment with the priorities of our vision. We will use our newly developed five-year financial planning model, which is based on our existing economic system and our understanding of key variables forecast into the future, to test the fiscal impact of the initiatives in the strategic plan. To further support our priority setting, we can apply the Resource Allocation Map¹⁴ to help test and clarify our institutional priorities based on reflection on the relative importance of variables such as finances, mission, market, and competencies.

Financial Planning

A multi-year financial planning model (FPM) was created to support the development of the strategic agenda. The FPM models the College's current economic system and predicts income and expenses

¹³ According to our market survey, Peirce students and alumni are more satisfied with their college experience than the general population and the many initiatives within this strategic agenda will serve to make their experiences even better.

¹⁴ Developed by KPMG and Prager, Sealy & Co., LLC.

during the five-year planning period. Assumptions were made for the baseline data based on historical information and inflation projections. Projected costs and revenue were then developed for each strategic initiative and incorporated into the financial forecasts. The FPM accounts for necessary additions to faculty and staff for each initiative, as applicable. Additional positions were factored in based on overall student headcount growth forecasts, including faculty and additional support staff in areas such as admissions, advising and financial aid. The College does not anticipate taking on any additional debt to support this vision. We project that the College will experience positive net income from operations for each year of the planning period. While we expect FY10-11 and FY11-12 will show surpluses close to breakeven (\$82,294 and \$7,173, respectively), the College's operating surplus is expected to be \$724,660 in FY12-13, \$2,154,074 in FY13-14, and \$3,969,213 in FY14-15. Total investment over the five-year planning horizon is projected at \$16,499,707, while revenue is projected at \$17,942,371 over this period.

Next Steps

Through operational planning, we will develop a detailed list of tasks, capital and operating budgets, revenue sources, priorities, responsible parties and timelines to deliver on our vision of becoming *the first choice for career-oriented, non-traditional college students seeking high quality teaching and service.*

Our president and steering committee will lead the implementation of this agenda and the tasks required to implement it; they will create evaluation systems to assess our progress with our implementation and they will report to our campus community, board, and external stakeholders regularly. They will also continue the process begun in the spring of 2009 to scan our environment, assess strategic issues, and develop strategies for updating our vision and operational plan.

We shall do all in our power to become *the first choice for career oriented, non-traditional college students seeking high quality teaching and service.*