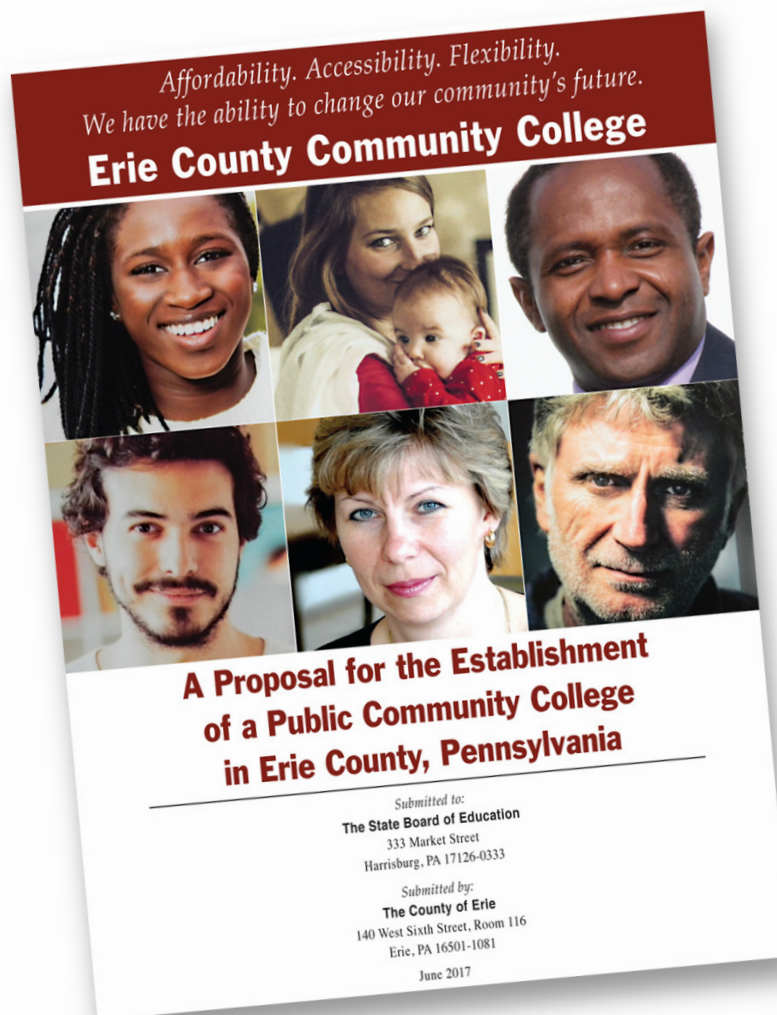


Executive Summary

for the

Proposal for the Establishment of a Public Community College in Erie County, Pennsylvania



Sponsored by the County of Erie

June 2017

Introduction

The County of Erie is proud to sponsor for consideration by the Pennsylvania Board of Education a proposal for the establishment of a public community college in Erie County.

This executive summary offers substantive highlights, relevant data and research, and key insights from the comprehensive community college plan as well as the associated feasibility study and other supporting materials. Key considerations covered in this executive summary include:

- ✓ Rationale for why Erie County needs a community college.
- ✓ Assessment of the educational void that a community college will fill.

- ✓ Description of the key objectives of the proposed community college.
- ✓ Overview of the proposed curriculum and educational offerings.
- ✓ Details on the funding and sustainability of the community college.
- ✓ Information about the community college's sponsor.

We invite further review of the full community college proposal and feasibility study for a more detailed exploration to these and other issues associated with the potential addition of this important asset for Erie County, its citizens, and ultimately the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.



Why Erie County needs a community college

The plan to establish a community college in Erie County comes at a time in which the community is at a key crossroads.

For decades, the county has faced significant challenges regarding its evolving economy. The transition from a largely manufacturing community to a diverse, service-based economy has not yet been fully realized. Socio-economic and educational data reveal that Erie County residents are lagging with respect to educational attainment and wealth creation.

These challenges are not easily addressed, and are, in fact, compounded by a myriad of complications, including persistent post-recession unemployment levels, stagnant wages, high poverty rates, an Erie city school system crippled by a diminished local tax base and persistent funding challenges, and an Erie County school system challenged by inequitable funding. According to Moody's Analytics January 2017 report, Erie's economic, employment, and workforce metrics show that Erie County is still in a mild recession, with higher than usual unemployment and job losses in key industry segments that are difficult to replace with similar high-paying jobs.

Meanwhile, the region's largest employer, General Electric Transportation, laid off 1,500 employees over the past 18 months, contributing to a current unemployment rate of 6.3 percent for the county.

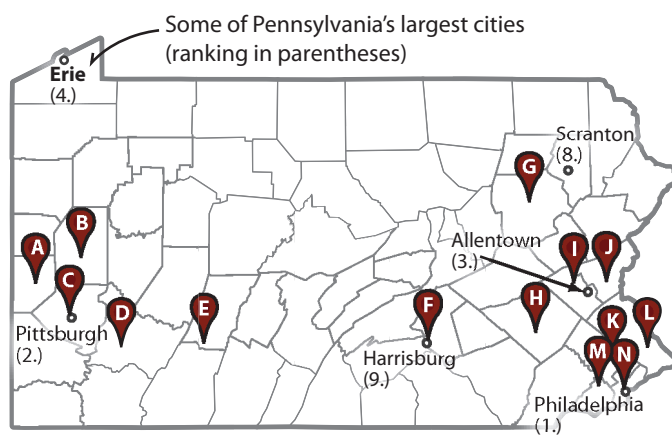
Yet amid these daunting challenges are growing signs of hope and optimism as citizens, industry executives, and thought leaders lay out a path charting the city and county's growth. Erie Refocused, the city's multiyear comprehensive development plan, and Emerge 2040, a community driven master plan, are just two of the vehicles that seek to put the city and county on a path to recovery. Further, Erie's history as a maker city remains a point of generational pride, and innovative plans to market the region's workforce are taking shape.

Establishment of a community college is the next logical — and we believe essential — step in Erie County's journey toward a more promising future. While a community college promises to be transformative on the local level, from a broader perspective the college would serve to level the playing field. Currently, 14 community colleges exist in Pennsylvania, making Erie the largest metropolitan area without a community college.

State's existing community colleges vs. its most-populous cities

PENNSYLVANIA'S COMMUNITY COLLEGES

- A. Community College of Beaver County
- B. Butler County Community College
- C. Community College of Allegheny County
- D. Westmoreland County Community College
- E. Pennsylvania Highlands Community College
- F. HACC – Central Pennsylvania's Community College
- G. Luzerne County Community College
- H. Reading Area Community College
- I. Lehigh Carbon Community College
- J. Northampton Community College
- K. Montgomery County Community College
- L. Bucks County Community College
- M. Delaware County Community College
- N. Community College of Philadelphia



SOURCES: Pennsylvania Commission for Community Colleges; Watchdog.org

Further, a community college can serve as a feeder system of well-prepared employees for a broad range of small business across the full spectrum of sectors. In particular, the college can play an essential role in stabilizing and leveraging a traditional source of Erie's economic strength: Manufacturing.

The manufacturing sector, according to an analysis of 2015 Erie County data, accounts for more than 22,000 jobs, or 17.8 percent of the local workforce – 7.8 percent higher than the average for Pennsylvania as a whole. Building on this strength by expanding the manufacturing workforce can make a substantive

impact on the local economy as manufacturing jobs pay about two-thirds more than the jobs in other nonfarm industries.

When you combine the strength of this sector in the Erie County economy with aging demographics, the demand for a skilled, trained workforce will increase. A community college can directly align with local manufacturers, offering training that meets current and ongoing needs to solidify the manufacturing base and assure the growth of good-paying jobs.

The need for a community college is presented in comprehensive detail in the feasibility study and the full community college proposal that has been submitted by Erie County, the project sponsor.

Some of the most relevant findings from that research include:

✓ Currently, college is financially out of reach for a majority of Erie County residents.

Even with significant financial aid offered by some area post-secondary schools, many students lack the economic means to pursue higher education. A community college would be a lynchpin in increasing the educational attainment of the region. It also would be a key factor to attracting business and industry with decent paying jobs, which could help break the persistent cycle of poverty that afflicts the county.

✓ Affordable educational options and training are lacking in the region.

Analysis of student and community data show that college affordability is the number one driver of support for the community college initiative. Nationally, community colleges educate students at a significantly lower cost than four-year institutions, attract a diverse set of students, and have a higher persistence rate for lower income students than for-profit institutions. Higher education via community college is a much less risky endeavor, particularly for those with lower incomes.

✓ An affordable and viable post-secondary education option is essential to replace a retiring workforce and quickly respond to economic shifts and training needs.
The greying demographics of Erie County will

necessitate replacement of many highly-trained employees in the manufacturing sector. More people need the necessary training and certifications. Erie County would benefit from a coordinated workforce and economic development system that can nimbly assess and respond to education and business needs. A community college could be the core of this integrated system, serving as a centralized resource where employees are prepared for and connected with employment. A community college could also help foster the growth of existing companies and attract new jobs to the area.

✓ A community college would put Erie County on equal footing with the rest of the state and bring it to the funding table. Taxpayers in Erie County are currently paying to support community colleges in other areas of the state, but not receiving any of the benefits. In a county that is struggling with poverty and population retention, a community college could help to stem the tide of brain drain and give students a chance to obtain training that matches locally available jobs.

✓ There is strong support for a community college from a broad base of constituencies.

Empower Erie, the nonprofit advocacy group that has spearheaded the community college effort, approached its work with purposeful focus, securing adequate funding to thoroughly research the potential need for a community college, and building a broad and diverse coalition of supporters and advocates representing a robust cross-section of the community. Funding to study the feasibility and viability of a community college included \$300,000 provided collectively from the Erie Community Foundation, the Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority and the Susan Hirt Hagen Fund for Transformational Philanthropy. In addition, Erie County Council committed \$60,000 to study the feasibility of the community college. Endorsements of support have come from a diverse group of organizations, ranging from manufacturing associations to labor unions and the Chamber of Commerce. A survey conducted as part of the feasibility study found strong support for a community college, with 72 percent of respondents agreeing that having a community college is “important” or “very important.”

Filling an educational void in Erie County

The existing post-secondary and higher education offerings in Erie County, while a critical part of the region's educational framework and economy, have been unable to fill the persistent gap of providing affordable, accessible curriculum offerings that meet the economic and educational/training needs of a large segment of the local population, while also aligning closely with the specific needs and future expectations of local employers.

A community college in Erie County is uniquely positioned to fill that gap, offering the right balance of affordability and county-wide accessibility with curriculum offerings designed to have a direct positive impact on the local economy and its associated challenges and opportunities.

A closer examination of the post-secondary market underscores this assessment. Erie County is served by both non-profit and for-profit schools. Erie County hosts a campus of land grant university – Penn State Behrend; Edinboro University, part of the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE), and two private universities: Gannon University, and Mercyhurst University. The region is also host to the Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine, the largest osteopathic medical school in the country.

More costly, for-profit institutions have received increasing scrutiny based on new data collected by the U.S. Department of Education's College Scorecard, leading to closures across the country. At the same time, local colleges and universities are working hard to help Erie by providing associate's degrees and shorter-term certificates at reduced tuition rates. However, they are not designed to provide the kind of highly vocational training, developmental education support, and strong ties to the labor market that community colleges typically offer.

As a result, the effort to deliver offerings that are consistent with the traditional missions of community college have historically been uneven and fragmented at best.

The private institutions, Mercyhurst University and Gannon University, have worked to provide courses in the community and partner with organizations to deliver associate's level degrees, diplomas, and certificates. Mercyhurst University offers programs at the Booker T. Washington Center at significantly reduced costs to residents.

Meanwhile, Edinboro University recently completed

a comprehensive review of its curriculum, degree offerings, and overall operations to revamp the school. Based on the research and analysis completed, it is anticipated that Edinboro will be raising enrollment standards to drive demand, and cutting back program/degree offerings. The actions may potentially include Edinboro eliminating offerings at its satellite campus, the Porreco Center, which would further limit educational access and affordability in the region.

After an effort to establish a community college fell short nearly a decade ago, Edinboro University tried to address the gap by offering a range of two-year degrees at the Porreco Center based a short-distance from the City of Erie. While these offerings proved to be more affordable than some for-profit schools or traditional colleges, it still remains out of reach financially for many students. For example, an Affordability Sample Cost Comparison included as part of the feasibility study found that, prior to any grants or additional financial aid, total tuition and fees for an Associate's Degree in Business from the Porreco Center would be \$14,389 while the same degree at for-profit Fortis Institute would be \$27,600 and \$29,220 at Penn State Behrend.

Based on the projected tuition and fees for the Erie County Community College, a student could obtain the same Associate's in Business Degree for \$4,800.

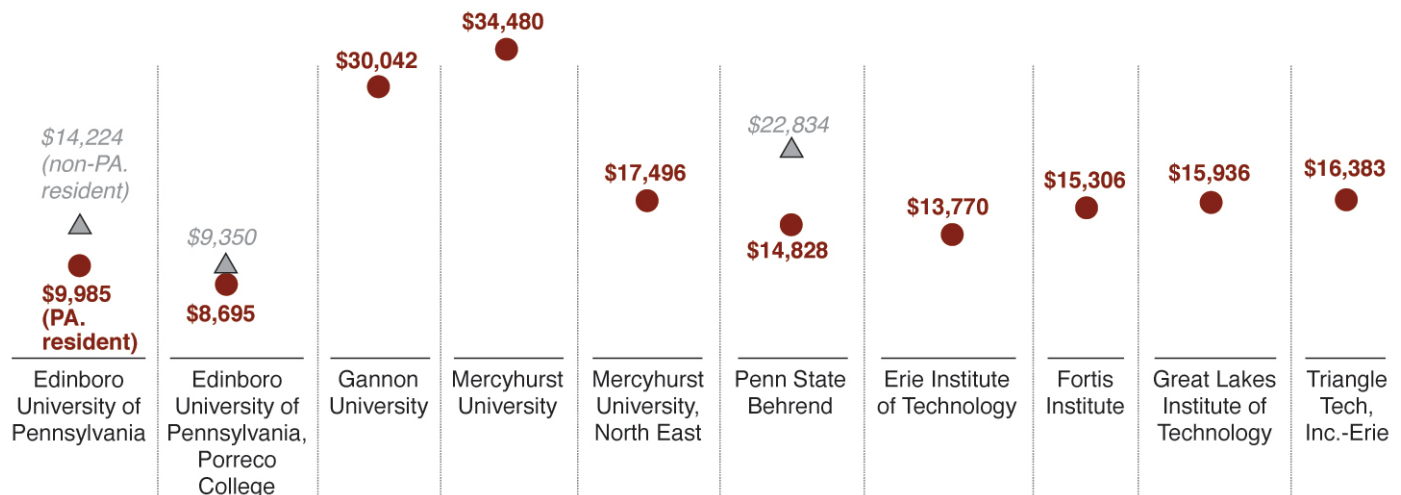
Considering that affordability is the number one driver for the general consumer in Erie County wanting a community college, these numbers are important to consider for those who do not believe that college is within their financial or social reach.

The fragmented approach to post secondary education has presented challenges for area manufacturers who have found that existing efforts to offer skills-based training haven't been able to scale to meet demand. As a result, the skills gap has continued to grow. The manufacturing community has pledged strong public support for the Erie County Community College as the best and most cost-effective approach to scale skills training in ways that assures Erie County remain competitive.

Amid these shifting trends affecting all sectors of post-secondary education, a community college in Erie County has the potential to not only fill a key educational gap, but also add further stability to the existing landscape, allowing post-secondary schools to focus on their core strengths and constituencies.

Erie County's college/university tuition rates

For the 2016-17 academic year. Rates include tuition and fees. Grants and scholarships not included.



Note: Some tuition rates may vary depending on course of study. LECOM not included due to it being primarily a school for master's and doctorate degrees.

SOURCES: Schools; collegetuitioncompare.com

Specifically, a community college has the opportunity to:

✓ Serve as a convener in the market to avoid duplication and promote collaboration.

As one of Pennsylvania's largest counties, Erie must continue down a path of recovery in order to make a turn toward growth and revitalization. In the current climate, resources are limited, and a community college could serve to actively manage collaboration among workforce and economic development efforts, while at the same time partnering with existing educational organizations to connect the entire education ecosystem.

✓ Be a partner, not competitor.

During the assessment process, Empower Erie representatives met with leaders of the area colleges and universities to discuss potential collaboration and partnerships. College and university leaders throughout Erie County would benefit by a community college as a vehicle to increase the market of college bound students. Local colleges and universities partner with the community college, in communities where one exists, to help carve out a niche in the market. Community colleges in other markets have established strong partnerships with existing post-secondary institutions, which have proven to effectively increase enrollment and diverse coursework offerings, while increasing post-secondary attainment levels.

✓ Serve as a feeder to the already established four-year university system.

Erie County has access to four high-quality universities. Each university has its own assets, unique course offerings, and strengths within the community. A community college should not be viewed as a competitor for these schools but a potential partner. As mentioned, many of the universities

already offer some community college-like offerings to students – from Edinboro University's Porroco Center and Mercyhurst University's operations at Mercyhurst Northeast and the Booker T. Washington Center. Centralized collaboration and partnership through a community college could create a more cohesive and responsive system and free up resources for four-year universities responding to the local need for a community college.

It's important to note that a more recent addition to the post-secondary landscape in Northwestern Pennsylvania provides the potential to further leverage the benefits of a community college in Erie County. The Rural Regional College of Northern Pennsylvania, approved by the state legislature in 2014, began offering Summer classes in May 2017 to Crawford, Cameron, Elk, Erie, Forest, McKean, Venango, Warren, and Potter counties, and will officially begin its operations in the fall.

Courses will be offered live online, which means that instructors and students will interact via web cameras. In addition, some in-person classes may be offered from time to time in selected settings throughout the nine-county footprint. The college's offerings, at least initially, will consist of an Associate Degree in Business Administration and an Associate Degree in Interdisciplinary Studies. Because of the targeted programming scope, large geographic range, and primary emphasis on online learning, the Rural Regional College offerings will not be duplicative of those at the Erie County Community College. However, over time, there may be strategic opportunities to collaborate in ways that will assure more educational opportunities for all throughout the entire Northwestern Pennsylvania region.

Mission and objectives for the community college

"The mission of the proposed community college is to provide increased access to higher education for the people of Erie County, to assist them in achieving their educational goals, to provide a competent workforce for area employers, and to increase both the baccalaureate and associate degree holders in Erie County."

This mission for the proposed community college is consistent with and guided by the statutory requirements of the Pennsylvania code, which states: Community college shall mean a public college or technical institute which is established and operated in accordance with the provisions of this act by a local sponsor which provides a two-year, post-secondary, college-parallel, terminal-general, terminal-technical, out-of-school youth or adult education program or any combination of these.

The community college may also provide area vocational-technical education services and credit, and non-remedial college courses to secondary senior high school students.

The community college will be an open-access institution intended to provide academic services to the entire community, regardless of prior academic achievement. It is the intent of the State Board that these institutions shall be widely comprehensive, providing for all of the educational requirements of the community. Typically, the colleges provide the following:

- ✓ Liberal Arts Education;
- ✓ Occupational/Technical Education;
- ✓ Continuing Education and Professional Development;
- ✓ Developmental Education;
- ✓ Avocational and Recreational Courses and;
- ✓ Community Service Opportunities.

To accomplish this mission, several key objectives have been established, representing a framework to assure the college will serve as a catalyst, facilitator and partner to achieve educational and economic goals for the broader Erie County community. **Key objectives include:**

- ✓ Provide courses and support that will facilitate the transfer of students to baccalaureate degree granting institutions.
- ✓ Provide both certificate and associate degree occupational programs that help satisfy workforce needs of area employers.
- ✓ Provide lifelong learning and continuing education programs and courses that upgrade workers, keep their skills current and assist them in obtaining new skills as the area's workforce needs change.
- ✓ Provide developmental and basic education support for students whose learning skills need improvement and/or who need to refresh their basic knowledge in order to succeed at the college level.
- ✓ Develop special partnerships with area schools to facilitate, enrich, and/or accelerate learning options for K-12 students through dual credit enrollment programs, alternative high school programs, and summer youth programs.
- ✓ Adopt a broad strategy of using partnerships with area business, industry, government, colleges, schools, and other entities whenever such partnerships are practical and can help the proposed community college more effectively accomplish its mission.

A critical consideration throughout the planning process has been assuring that the community college will be accessible to all residents of Erie County, both from a financial and geographic perspective.

To that end, more than 25 sites throughout Erie County were identified as potential locations of a new community college. Particular attention has been directed toward identifying properties that are currently tax-exempt in an effort to avoid taking properties off the tax rolls if at all possible.

Facilities selection is driven by a range of factors including curriculum demands, class size/headcount, and campus amenity and accessibility needs. State guidelines require the identification of potential spaces for consideration throughout Erie County that meet specific criteria and requirements to open a community college.

After reviewing all of the available information, the potential sites were then divided into three categories – main campus, satellite campus and special training facility alternatives. The main campus sites are located in or close to the centrally located and high-population density downtown area of the city of Erie. Due to the reorganization of the Erie City School District and the closing of some schools, it is possible that one or more of the district building might also become available.

The full proposal provides assessments of several potential locations that could serve as the sites for the main and satellite campuses for the community college. At this point in the community college development process, it is not required to select the final location(s) as the real estate market and properties available, both those that are taxable and tax exempt, will likely change between the study period and initial enrollment.

Overview of curriculum and offerings

Throughout the development of the community college plan, significant focus was placed on assuring that recommended curriculum and programs closely align with the most pressing needs of the community and also fit appropriately within the existing post-secondary landscape to avoid duplication of offerings.

Program offering recommendations were developed by a broadly representative Curriculum Working Group (CWG), which studied the Needs Assessment Study conducted by the Parker Phillips Group (PP) and incorporated their own knowledge and expertise concerning the needs and aspirations of the region. The feasibility study gathered viewpoints of leaders from every sector and a cross-section of the general public, and potential students, and contrasted them with secondary data from the Census, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the state of Pennsylvania and other sources.

The study also mapped the existing post-secondary education landscape. The CWG identified typical community college programs that would respond to the identified needs and aspirations and proposed program offerings that align with economics and community development goals articulated through the leadership of the community. It is clear from all of these sources that the program offerings will enable Erie County to raise and enhance educational attainment levels, prepare residents for the workforce of tomorrow and help create the talent pool needed to drive economic growth and create prosperity in the region.

The program offerings are organized by program and career pathways that will be used to guide students toward their educational and career goals. The career pathways and programs will be developed by faculty experts in their fields with insight and, in many cases, through partnerships with those who will employ the

students once they successfully complete the expert/ employer-crafted preparation necessary for their field. As is generally the case with community colleges, the number of students attending with a goal of achieving a Baccalaureate degree is anticipated to be roughly equivalent to those seeking career pathways leading to direct employment.

The remaining students may be pursuing continuing education, job training, avocational interests or personal enrichment. Consequently, the Baccalaureate degree transfer pathway feeds four-year degree programs throughout the Erie region and beyond. The offering will align with the Pennsylvania Transfer and Articulation System to ensure students who begin their baccalaureate studies at the community college can take advantage of the equivalency guarantees afforded by the system. Each of the Direct Job Entry Pathways includes careers and programs that respond to identified needs and aspirations of the region.

While most of the offerings are to be provided on a college credit basis, some may be clock hour programs that respond in a unique way, particularly for job training.

The community college will operate on a semester basis. Each semester will be 15 weeks in length. A full schedule of summer offerings will also be made available to students. Programs will evolve over time based upon the input of advisory committees, in conjunction with educational partnerships and through consultation with the private sector. However, the plan was developed to provide a rationale for an initial set of program offerings. Not all of these will be attainable in the first year or two of operation, but they can serve as a suggested blueprint as the community college evolves.

Recommended Program Pathways

I. Baccalaureate Transfer

II. Engineering & Manufacturing

III. Computer & Information Technology

IV. Business & Entrepreneurship

V. Liberal & Creative Arts

VI. Health and Wellness

VII. Tourism and Hospitality

VIII. Math & Science

IX. Human/Social Services/Public Service

X. Continuing Education

as early in their program of study as possible, by being exposed to contextual learning related to their career field, and work-based learning experimentation through project-based learning, internships and/or cooperative education learning experiences.

In the Direct Job Entry program offerings, the goal will be for students to experience work within their career choice field throughout their

The year in which each program offering will most likely be initiated is identified as well. Some students will arrive at the College needing to update or develop their academic skills and abilities to be able to master college level coursework. Consequently, the College intends to address these needs through co-requisite models that focus on any identified developmental needs collaterally with the initial college level offerings to which the student aspires. This capitalizes on current research, which demonstrates that intensive supplemented support provided within the context of the college level offerings leads to achieving the best results in a cost-effective manner.

Further, Erie County has experienced a significant immigration of non-English speaking population, the College may be called upon to provide English as a Second Language instruction (ESL). This program offering will likely evolve as an outgrowth of the developmental education and Language Arts programming. The College intends to utilize a guided pathways approach to academic and career advisement processes. A premium will be placed on motivating students to complete their programs by forging a deep connection to their career choice through strategies like exposing students to coursework in their majors

educational preparatory program. Part of the ethos of the community college will be to do much of its work through partnerships. First, the college expects to be a partner with businesses and other employers to develop programs that are most relevant to the needs and growth strategies of Erie's employers. Not only will they provide input in shaping curriculum, but will be asked to work with the college to provide work-based experiences for students, as part of their education.

Secondary education will be sought as a critical partner, as well. In addition to partnering to create smooth pathways from high school to college, the College will focus specifically on the development of dual enrollment opportunities for students to engage in college work, with transcribed college credit, while still in high school. The college will place a premium on partnering with the other colleges and universities offering baccalaureate degrees. It is the College's goal to assist in raising educational attainment across the post-secondary educational continuum through partnerships and collaborations. Partnering may take a range of forms designed to capitalize on existing programs, create synergy among available options and increase the flow of students through the educational and career pathways.

Funding and sustainability

Sustainability has been a central focus in every phase and aspect of the effort to establish a community college in Erie County. The sponsor and supporters of this effort envision the community college will be a permanent fixture within the Erie County community, serving as an anchor for educational attainment and opportunity and a dynamic driver of economic growth and stability.

To that end, sustainability has been a critical consideration to assure the college can operate and grow without causing undue burden to taxpayers. The tone was set for this focus on fiscal responsibility during the exploration and study phase.

Funding to study the feasibility and viability of a community college included \$300,000 provided collectively from the Erie Community Foundation, the Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority and the Susan Hirt Hagen Fund for Transformational Philanthropy. In addition, Erie County Council committed \$60,000 to study the feasibility of the community college.

In addition, The Erie Community Foundation has promised \$3.7 million would be available for start-up and operational costs upon state approval of the community college plan.

Erie County, as sponsor of this effort, is keenly aware of the importance of fiscal responsibility and restraint, particularly at a time in which the region faces myriad economic challenges. To that end, the plan to fund the college on a sustainable basis was developed in a way in which no additional tax burden will be placed on the citizens of Erie County.

This financing is based on certain assumptions, including the assumption that the Community College will be administered and financed according to the legislation and regulations that govern community colleges in Pennsylvania. Another assumption is that the Community College will offer instructional courses in multiple locations, with a main campus, satellite campuses and training centers. A third assumption is that the Community College will employ a combination of full-time and part-time faculty and minimal administration.

It is further assumed that the administration of the college will be diligent in its efforts to be cost efficient, and fiscally conservative in order to provide the lowest possible tuition rate to its students. Upon approval of the community college plan, it is projected that no additional tax revenue will be required to fund the

college. In addition, further funding is anticipated through an estimated \$2.95 million in existing gaming revenue funds, as well as nearly \$1 million more in gaming revenue funds expected to be available in 2021.

With the funding from these revenue streams, Erie County projects that the Community College can operate without the need for any real estate tax revenue to fund it.

A breakdown of the three main sources of revenues for the community college on an ongoing basis are as follows, and are consistent with how existing community colleges are funded throughout Pennsylvania.

✓ **Student Tuition:** Tuition for full-time Erie County residents is expected to be \$2,400, gradually increasing to \$2,800 in year four and five of the community college. Tuition for out-of-county residents will be \$4,800, steadily rising to \$5,600 in year five of the community college. For part-time county residents, the tuition will be \$105 per credit, while the tuition for part-time out-of-county residents will be \$210.

✓ **State Support:** Historically, the state support for community colleges is based on a formula that involves: A. Base rate, B. Growth Supplement (25%), C. Base Supplement (75%), and D. Economic Development Stipend (prioritizes High Cost Occupations, High Priority Occupations and Non-Credit Work Force Development). But community colleges have not been funded by this formula since 2009-10, as stated in a White Paper on Community College issues prepared by the Council of Higher Education in November 2015. In each year since 2009-10, language has been added to either the state Fiscal Code or the Public School Code that distributes funds based on a pro rata distribution of their allocation in the prior year, the White Paper notes.

✓ **Local Support:** After student tuition and state support for operating and capital costs are calculated, it is the responsibility of the local sponsor to provide the balance needed. According to the community college legislation, the local sponsor is responsible for all of the financial support not provided by the State. The legislation states that support “may in part be represented by real or personal property or services made available to the community college” and that the funding “shall come from general revenues, loan funds, special tax levies or from other sources, including student tuitions.” This application will focus on the Community College being able to draw upon “other sources.”

Erie County Community College Projection						
	Pre-Operating Year	Year One	Year Two	Year Three	Year Four	Year five
OPERATING REVENUES						
Operating revenues						
Student tuition and fees		\$2,535,738	\$3,259,081	\$3,715,614	\$4,773,701	\$5,520,850
Auxiliary commissions						
Bookstore commissions		30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000
Auxiliary		30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000
Other operating revenue, Social Security and Medicare reimbursement						
	44,300	116,059	149,469	169,765	205,892	232,087
Operating revenues	44,300	2,711,797	3,468,550	3,945,379	5,039,593	5,812,937
OPERATING EXPENSES						
Educational and general						
Instruction	504,600	2,256,817	2,687,605	3,197,904	4,231,875	4,871,087
Academic support	208,322	452,430	899,955	1,075,643	1,100,325	1,316,637
Student services	189,384	509,050	735,678	902,127	1,296,992	1,324,067
Institutional support	1,461,198	1,893,586	2,197,064	2,392,216	2,598,989	2,646,246
Operation and facilities	579,958	1,900,116	2,444,671	2,537,409	3,260,677	3,780,006
Operating expenses	2,943,462	7,011,999	8,964,973	10,105,299	12,488,858	13,938,043
Operating income (loss)	(2,899,162)	(4,300,202)	(5,496,423)	(6,159,920)	(7,449,265)	(8,125,106)
NONOPERATING REVENUES						
Pennsylvania Department of Education reimbursement						
	—	1,384,200	1,725,840	1,943,883	2,376,257	2,818,676
Pennsylvania Department of Education reimbursement of equipment and building leases						
	1,449,581	582,902	712,520	786,804	942,952	1,045,282
Erie County	1,449,581	2,200,000	2,700,000	3,100,000	3,500,000	3,500,000
Depreciation funded through capital budget						
	—	200,000	400,000	400,000	650,000	850,000
Nonoperating revenues	2,899,162	4,367,102	5,538,360	6,230,687	7,469,209	8,213,958
Income (Loss)	—	\$66,900	\$41,937	\$70,767	\$19,944	\$88,852

Another key consideration related to sustainability focuses on demand. The feasibility study conducted in association with the college plan offers a detailed assessment of the range of factors and market conditions affirming that there is clear demand for a community college in Erie County. The study's authors conclude "the level of educational attainment, lack of affordability in the market, and clear need to have a responsive mechanism to industry and workforce development all

point to the urgent need for a community college."

The community college plan has been established with awareness of declining population in Erie County, a factor that has contributed to developing a conservative and fiscally responsible plan that takes into consideration population trends as well as the range of challenges affecting existing colleges and post-secondary schools.

Projected Enrollment and Projected Space Utilization

	FTE's	Total Projected Enrollment	Square Footage Utilized
Year 1	769	1,529	65,323
Year 2	940	1,786	79,900
Year 3	1,038	1,905	88,230
Year 4	1,244	2,235	105,740
Year 5	1,379	2,455	117,215

It is the hope of the sponsor that a community college over time will serve as a key tool in stemming “brain-drain” and stabilizing or reversing population trends as more residents acquire the skills and training necessary to secure stable local employment.

First-year projections for the community college are for full- and part-time student population of 1,529. Once the community college is established, it is projected student enrollment will grow steadily. If Erie County aligns with national trends of 4.5 percent of those over the age of 18 being enrolled in a community college, that would translate to 12,000 students being served annually by the Erie County Community College.

Erie County: Sponsor of the Erie County Community College

Erie County will serve as the legal sponsor of the proposed community college. As the sponsor, Erie County represents the cities, the townships and boroughs located within the boundaries of the county. Erie County Council will serve as the governing body of the local sponsor. The Board of Trustees will govern the proposed community college as required under Pennsylvania’s Community College Act of 1963.

Erie County Council on June 27, 2017 approved a plan established and presented by Empower Erie, the non-profit advocacy group that has served as the organizing entity to secure the necessary funding for evaluating the need for a community college and developing a plan that adheres to state guidelines.

Understanding the importance of a college that meets the needs of the entire county, from both a geographic and socio-economic standpoint, an educational campaign has been conducted that has resulted in endorsements from a diverse group of organizations, ranging from manufacturing associations to labor unions and the Chamber of Commerce.

Further, to assure community input and understanding, scores of presentations have been made to local school boards, community groups and associations. Most recently, a series of town halls hosted by the Erie County Executive were held throughout the entire county to explain the plan and answer any questions and concerns.

As sponsor of this community college plan, Erie County is confident that the due diligence committed to evaluation and the need for a community college fully meets the requirements and expectations of the state Board of Education. On behalf of the citizens of Erie County, the sponsor respectfully requests approval of the community college plan and looks forward to partnering with state officials to establish an institution that promises to provide significant benefit to local citizens and businesses, and ultimately, the entire Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.