

2024-2027

JJC Equity Plan

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The Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion



Award for Most Promising Places to Work in Community Colleges

*2023 and 2022 Winner from the National Institute for
Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD)*

*Joliet Junior College has been nominated by the Illinois Community College
Trustees Association for the 2024 Equity and Diversity Award*

*Joliet Junior College earns Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) Designation
from the U.S. Department of Education in 2024*



JOLIET JUNIOR COLLEGE
1901

Message from President Clyne G. H. Namuo, PhD.



Dear JJC Community,

It is with great pride and enthusiasm that I present to you our comprehensive Equity Plan. This living document embodies our unwavering commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion and lays out a strategic vision for embedding these principles into every facet of our institution.

DEI is integral to the identity and mission of the college. As the nation's first public community college, we have a storied history of opening doors to education for all. Today, we continue to honor that legacy by ensuring that our campus is a place where everyone feels valued, respected, and empowered to succeed. Our Equity Plan is designed to reinforce this commitment, integrating DEI objectives into our Institutional Strategic Plan and the Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM 4.0). These guiding documents will now more than ever reflect our dedication to creating equitable opportunities and outcomes for all students, faculty, and staff. In addition, JJC received a Hispanic-Serving Institution designation from the U.S. Department of Education in April 2024 ([JJC Earns HSI Designation from USDOE](#)). With this designation, JJC affirms its commitment to bridging achievement gaps and cultivating responsive and inclusive learning environments.

Looking ahead, our focus will be on three primary objectives:

- **Growth of 12 X 12 X 12:** We are committed to expanding the college-going rate across our seven-county district by offering dual credit classes in our high schools for \$12 per credit hour, opening dual credit to freshman and sophomore students, and driving completion of 12 college credit hours by the time students finish 12th grade.

- **Stronger Retention and Graduation Outcomes:** We will implement data-driven strategies to enhance student advancement and success. This includes expanding tutoring services, providing comprehensive advising, and creating mentorship programs that connect students with role models who share similar experiences.
- **Authentic and Intentional Culturally Responsive Practices:** We are dedicated to cultivating a campus climate that celebrates diversity and promotes inclusion. This means integrating culturally responsive teaching practices across all disciplines, offering professional development for faculty and staff, and ensuring that our policies and practices reflect the needs and voices of our diverse community.

In closing, I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to each member of the JJC family for your dedication to these critical initiatives. Together, we can build a more equitable and inclusive future for our college and our community. I am confident that through our collective efforts, JJC will continue to be a beacon of opportunity and a leader in fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion in higher education.

Thank you for your ongoing support and commitment.

Aloha,

Clyne G.H. Namuo, Ph.D.

President, Joliet Junior College

Joliet Junior College Board of Trustees

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Chief Equity Officer's Statement on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion



Joliet Junior College (JJC) takes pride in being America's first community college established in 1901 with only 6 students. Over 120 years later, JJC continues to support its community currently serving approximately 25,000 students in credit and noncredit courses and is heavily involved in the community. In addition, JJC has a long history of incremental diversity, equity and inclusion success which continues to be an institutional priority. The ongoing success of JJC's DEI programs, initiatives and student advancement is contributed to the holistic support of the Board of Trustees, President, leadership and employees both past and present.

DEI is an institutional initiative woven into JJC's Institutional Strategic Plan, Equity Plan, Culture and Core Values. Notable initiatives include:

- Hiring a Chief Equity Officer, with adequate support staff and budget
- The evaluation of Executive Director of DEI Role and department
- Executive Director elevated to Chief Equity Officer
- Chief Equity Officer serves on all Vice President's leadership teams
- Mandating Cultural Competency Workshops
- Transforming a multi-stall restroom into an all-gender facility, in addition to having nine single all-gender restrooms
- Establishment of four Employee Resource Groups (Black, Community Service, Latinx, and LGBTQIA+)
- JJC's 12x12x12 dual credit initiative launched in fall 2023. The goal is for all district high school students to earn at least 12 credit hours of dual credit, by the time they complete the 12th grade, and pay only \$12 per credit hour.
- Recognitions such as the 2021 American Association of Community Colleges' National Advancing Diversity Award; one of The Most Promising Places to Work in Community Colleges, a Top Employer for Diversity Jobs by DiversityJobs.com and JJC has been nominated by the Illinois Community College Trustees Association for the 2024 Equity and Diversity Award.

- Provision of a prayer room
- Officially designated as a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI)
- Increased campus climate assessment results and the elevation of racial/diversity subscale Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

It has been an honor to serve as JJC's inaugural Chief Equity Officer. It has been humbling and a reward to lead, develop and implement DEI programs and initiatives. I am proud to highlight the progress JJC has made in fostering an inclusive and equitable environment for all members of its college community.

It is more important now than ever before that higher education elevates its role in identifying and addressing the diverse needs of employees, students and community. Why? It's simple – our community is more diverse than ever before; however, the infrastructure to adequately ensure its success is a work in progress. Although much has been done to address inequities and discrimination, there is still work to do. I will work diligently to continuously identify the gaps, advocate for equity, inclusion and programming that supports the diverse needs of our campus and community.

Sometimes the work seems so much larger than us. We often get fatigued, discouraged and question our efforts. I often remind myself and share with others these two quotes:

“We were planting seeds of change, the fruit of which we might never see. We had to be patient.”
Michelle Obama, *Becoming*

“Be hopeful, be optimistic. Our struggle is not the struggle of a day, a week, a month, or a year, it is the struggle of a lifetime.” John Lewis

Sincerely,

Dr. Escortina Ervin
Chief Equity Officer

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Introduction

Institutional Overview

Joliet Junior College (JJC) is America's first public community college, founded in 1901. JJC began as the "brainchild" of J. Stanley Brown, Superintendent of Joliet Township High School, and William Rainey Harper, President of the University of Chicago as an experimental postgraduate high school program. This innovative junior college academically paralleled the first two years of a four-year college or university.

JJC remains a comprehensive college that continues to serve community and student needs. Today, nearly 25,000 students annually enroll in credit courses and non-credit classes at JJC. Each year, students find the diverse, comprehensive, high-quality educational experience in the 180+ degree and certificate programs, pre-baccalaureate programs for students planning to transfer to a four-year university, adult education, literacy programs, workforce and workplace development services, and support services to help students succeed.

Recently, spring 2024, JJC was designated a Hispanic-Serving Institution by the U.S. Department of Education. This provides JJC further momentum to build out services and expand capacity for Hispanic students, many of whom represent the rich diversity of Hispanic cultures. JJC takes great pride in being a place of learning for our Hispanic students and the entire Hispanic community. The HSI designation will further drive JJC's ability to be an engine of economic mobility, actively embedded in and empowering the communities we serve. With this designation, JJC can do even more to reduce achievement gaps, enhance curricular and co-curricular opportunities, and build on the ability to create authentic and inclusive spaces.

JJC is an educational community that embraces diversity and promotes personal growth through student advancement. Over 123 years later, it continues to identify and provide culturally responsive programs that support student advancement and community educational aspirations. Although the community demographics have shifted over time, JJC continues to meet the community's needs through its agility, innovation, and ongoing identification and remediation of barriers impacting student advancement.

District Population & History

JJC includes five campuses and education centers in Joliet, Romeoville, and Morris and straddles seven counties, 44 zip codes, and a 1,442-square-mile area. JJC serves a population of nearly 210,000 households and about 735,000 residents.



Joliet Junior College has five campus locations: the Main Campus (Joliet, Illinois), the Romeoville Campus (Romeoville, Illinois), the City Center (Joliet, Illinois), the Morris Education Center (Morris, Illinois), and the Weitendorf Agricultural Education Center (Joliet, Illinois).

While this is an expansive area, most JJC students are predominately residents of five zip codes (Table 1). The U.S. Census Bureau data demonstrates characteristics that include educationally disadvantaged (less than a high school degree and language other than English) and underrepresented (Hispanic, Black, Alaska Native, American Indian, Asian-American, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander) populations.

Table 1

United States Census Bureau
Quick Facts 2020

Zip Code	Hispanic	Black	Non-white*	Poverty	less than an H.S. degree	Language other English	High school
60432	33.5%	17.1%	12.8%	10.8%	15.2%	28.8%	Joliet Township
60441	10.0%	1.5%	7.9%	6.3%	3.1%	13.2%	Lockport
60544	8.3%	9.3%	15.6%	2.3%	4.5%	16.2%	Plainfield
60440	27.2%	17.9%	24.3%	7.9%	9.7%	33.7%	Bolingbrook
60446	35.2%	11.2%	22%	5.9%	15.4%	39.6%	Romeoville

United States Census Bureau, 2023

* Alaska Native, American Indian, Asian-American, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander.

JJC is rapidly approaching being a majority-minority serving institution (Table 2). Beginning in 2019 and continuing through fall 2023, over 55,000 students enrolled at JJC, with 42% minority enrollment, of which Hispanic students represent the majority minority (30% average). Specifically, in the fall of 2022, JJC enrolled 10,212 students, 35% full-time and 65% part-time, and most students identified as female (56%) and were between the ages of 17-20 (57%).

Table 2

Joliet Junior College Enrollment Trends

*Fall of each year

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Total Headcount	14,318	10,267	11,551	10,212	9,863
FTE	9225	9172	8301	7783	N/A
Full-time enrollment	33%	38%	32%	35%	38%
Part-time enrollment	67%	62%	68%	65%	62%
White	55%	56%	55%	53%	49%
Asian	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%
Native American	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%
Black (non-Hispanic)	10%,	10%,	9%	9%	10%
Hispanic	29%	29%	29%	31%	34%
Unknown/Not Reported	2%	2%	2%	3%	4%
International Students	13 0%	8 0%	10 0%	13 0%	20 0%
Below-College Level GED, ESL courses	4%	2%	4%	5%	5%
Below-College Level Dual Credit	7%	1%	7%	3%	1%

Table 2
Joliet Junior College Enrollment Trends

*Fall of each year

Male	44%	41%,	43%,	44%,	45%
Female	56%	59%,	57%,	56%	55%
17-20	56%	54%	59%	57%	52%
21-24	18%	21%	18%	20%	22%
25-39	15%	18%	16%	16%	17%
40+	8%	7%	7%	7%	8%

Institutional Research and Effectiveness, 2023b

JJC's Vision of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion (DEI) and Accessibility

Like most other U.S. community colleges, JJC has become increasingly diverse in its global outreach and student, faculty, and staff population. This diversity continues to enrich our community by providing us with many perspectives from which we can learn and through which creativity and innovation thrive. Moreover, our students must learn to thrive in a diverse environment to be adequately prepared to compete in a global economy. In addition, to attract a diverse student population, JJC must develop a faculty and staff population that mirrors that diversity.

Diversity celebrates both similarities and differences. Moreover, diversity is broader than the traditional categories of age, race, disability, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, ethnicity, culture, religion, and veteran status. It also includes socioeconomic status, family background, language, academic preparedness, learning style, and even the communities in which our students, faculty, and staff reside.

Inclusion is the appreciation of and respect for these distinct characteristics. Inclusion goes beyond numerical diversity and creates a climate where all feel valued, and each campus community member is recognized as adding to JJC. It also means that barriers to inclusion, whether policy-based, in actual practice, or systematic, are reduced or eliminated, allowing students, faculty, and staff to thrive.

Equity is the fair treatment, access, opportunity, resources, and advancement for everyone within a group, organization, or society. It acknowledges historically marginalized and underrepresented populations while striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups.

Diversity, equity, and inclusion are vital parts of Joliet Junior College's institutional fabric. The College strategically supports efforts to recognize and celebrate diverse backgrounds and perspectives that make us unique as individuals but unified as a community. Diversity, equity, and inclusion at Joliet Junior College are more than just recognizing what makes our community different; they celebrate the cognitive and educational efforts that unite us.

Institution Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statements

JJC's Core Values of respect and inclusion are central to our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. We show this commitment by serving others with fairness and equality. We are a community of lifelong learners that welcomes, values, and respects diversity. The College fosters a climate of mutual respect and inclusion. We celebrate diversity by embracing our differences.

Accessibility Statement

Joliet Junior College (JJC) is committed to making our website accessible to all users, including those with disabilities. The JJC website follows the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 at the A.A. level.

Neurodiversity Statement

Diversity, particularly neurodiversity, is celebrated at Joliet Junior College for fostering innovation and progress. We honor the unique strengths and perspectives of neurodivergent individuals, striving to create an inclusive environment where every member feels valued and supported. Central to this mission is the principle of universal design, ensuring accessibility across campus and online platforms. This involves flexible learning spaces, sensory-friendly environments, and accessible digital resources, all aimed at removing barriers to learning and participation. Our commitment to accessibility reflects our core values and drives our efforts to create a vibrant and inclusive community where all individuals can thrive. We invite everyone to join us toward a more accessible future at Joliet Junior College.

Institution Mission, Vision, Value Statements

The JJC Mission, Vision, and Core Values (established in 2016) are embedded throughout the College to ensure equitable practices for students, staff, faculty, and the community.

Mission Statement

Joliet Junior College inspires learning, transforms lives, and strengthens communities.

Vision Statement

Joliet Junior College is the first choice for learning, working, and cultivating pathways to prosperity.

Core Values

Joliet Junior College fosters a caring and friendly environment that embraces diversity and sustainability and encourages personal growth by promoting the following Core Values:

- **Respect and inclusion**

Joliet Junior College advocates respect and inclusion for every individual by demonstrating courtesy and civility in every endeavor. Joliet Junior College pledges to promote and recognize the diverse strengths of its employees and students, and to value and celebrate the unique attributes, characteristics, and perspectives of every individual.

- **Integrity**

Joliet Junior College sees integrity as an integral component of all work done at the College. Joliet Junior College employees demonstrate responsible, accountable, and ethical professionalism. Also, Joliet Junior College models open, honest, and appropriate communication.

- **Collaboration**

Joliet Junior College promotes collaborative relationships as part of the scholarly process, including partnerships within the institution and with other learning communities. Joliet Junior College supports the personal and professional growth of employees and is committed to the advancement and support of intellectual growth, regardless of employment position at the College.

- **Humor & Well Being**

Joliet Junior College recognizes humor as a means for employees and students to achieve collegial well-being, development of strong work teams, and self-rejuvenation.

Joliet Junior College provides a healthy environment where creativity, humor, and enjoyment of work occur, including recognizing and celebrating success.

- **Innovation**

Joliet Junior College supports and encourages innovation and the pursuit of excellence. Joliet Junior College values, respects, and rewards both creative risk-taking and the enthusiastic pursuit of new ideas with foresight and follow-through.

- **Quality**

By continually reflecting, evaluating, and improving on programs and services, Joliet Junior College is built upon a foundation of quality programs and services, while also implementing continuous improvement in order to ensure excellence.

- **Sustainability**

Joliet Junior College recognizes that true sustainability involves a commitment to environmental, social, and economic improvement. Joliet Junior College encourages planning, solutions, and actions that provide benefits for students, employees, and the community.

Institutional Vision for Equity

Value Diversity and Cultivate Belonging – Connect and engage JJC's diverse students to support their equitable access, growth, and connection to the college.

- Increase enrollment of focused student groups.
- Improve the experience for students with disabilities by ensuring ADA compliance throughout the student journey.
- Expand Spanish-speaking and Spanish-language capacity at JJC through written materials and staff resources.
- Close the gap between student and employee demographic representation.
- Expand the culture of philanthropy by increasing alumni engagement and diversifying the college's donor base.

Institutional Statements that Support DEI Efforts

Joliet Junior College (JJC) is America's inaugural public community college and a pioneering leader in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI). DEI remains a steadfast priority championed by JJC's Board of Trustees, President, leadership, and campus community. DEI is woven into the Institutional Strategic Plan, the Strategic Enrollment Management Plan 4.0 (SEM 4.0), the DEI Plan, Culture and Core Values, various departments, and critical groups.

DEI Champions

President's Cabinet (Cabinet) shall adhere to the policy and intent of JJC's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan by accepting shared responsibility for accomplishing progress towards its goals. The Cabinet will be held accountable for helping identify problem areas, formulate solutions, and develop departmental goals, where needed. Specifically, the Cabinet shall:

1. Assure that managers, supervisors, employees and faculty comply with federal, state, local laws, and government regulations regarding equal employment opportunity.
2. Assure that appropriate policies and procedures are implemented throughout their departments consistent with and supportive of the Equity Plan.
3. Assure that managers, supervisors, and all other employees cooperate fully with the investigation and resolution of all discrimination and harassment complaints.
4. Make good faith efforts to help meet Equity Plan goals and timetables.
5. Ensure that all employment decisions, including job knowledge and skill requirements, interviews, assignment, training, and evaluation, are consistent with college policies and diversity, equity and inclusion objectives.
6. Examine national and state data on demographics of students and faculty/staff.

7. Assist Human Resources with the recruitment and retention of a diverse faculty and staff (advertising, recruiting, upgrading opportunities, hiring, etc.)
8. Assure that managers, supervisors, students and employees comply with equal employment opportunity and diversity training programs conducted by the college.

Management Staff (Faculty Department Chairs, Deans, Directors, Managers and Supervisors) are responsible for adhering to and implementing equal employment opportunity policies and diversity and inclusion programs. The management staff is responsible for:

1. Ensuring compliance with equal employment opportunity policies and implementing diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives. Such responsibilities are recognized and are included in the employee's performance appraisal.
2. Assisting in implementation of the Equity Plan by adhering to the established provisions of equal employment opportunity and diversity, equity and inclusion goals.
3. Providing a fair and equitable opportunity for all qualified candidates and employees to be considered for position vacancies.
4. Preventing harassment and retaliation such as racial, age, ethnic, religious, sexual orientation discrimination and sexual harassment of employees or faculty and ensuring a workplace free of discriminatory behavior.
5. Promptly addressing and resolving employee and student issues and concerns regarding harassment, discrimination, or of a similar nature.
6. Participating in and ensuring the participation of employees in training programs provided.

Human Resource Department, under the direction of the Chief Human Resources Officer, shares in the responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of JJC's Equity Plan and compliance with equal opportunity and affirmative action requirements. Some of these responsibilities include but are not limited to:

1. Ensuring that JJC complies with the appropriate federal and state equal employment opportunity laws and guidelines.
2. Ensuring that equal employment opportunity statements (e.g., non-discrimination) are included in all JJC's job announcements, posters, etc.; and are publicly displayed throughout JJC's facilities.
3. Maintaining accurate and up-to-date employee data on race and gender composition of JJC's workforce and applicants.
4. Providing self-identification forms for all applicants.
5. Communicating the Equity Plan while providing related materials to all new employees.
6. Maintaining accurate and up-to-date records on applicant flow data to be utilized for preparation of periodic reports.
7. Assisting in promotion of diversity, equity and inclusion goals and objectives through active recruitment, identification, recommendation, selection and hiring of qualified minorities and females

by ensuring that qualified minority group members and females are among the list of candidates provided to department chairs, directors, administrators and all other hiring authorities for promotional opportunities.

Faculty and Staff It is the responsibility of all faculty and staff to adhere to and implement the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan, by accepting shared responsibility for participating and accomplishing progress towards the goals and objectives. To effectively implement the Equity Plan, all JJC employees should:

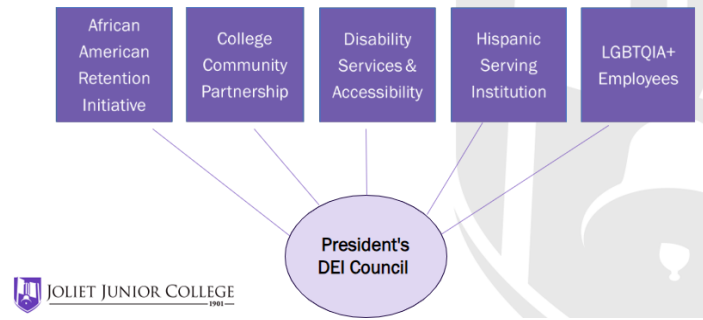
1. Participate in employee engagement and campus climate surveys and respond as openly and honestly as possible.
2. Engage in the diversity effort through trainings, workshops, guest lectures, volunteer opportunities, etc.
3. Improve cultural competency by taking the time to learn about different cultures, races, religions, backgrounds, etc. represented by individuals at JJC.
4. Treat others respectfully while welcoming ideas that are different from your own.
5. Commit to continuous improvement by being willing to learn from others, accepting constructive feedback, and listening to the concerns of others.
6. Communicate and educate others to understand that changing the campus climate is a journey, not a destination. It will take time, patience and perseverance and it is important to remind others of the value and importance of diversity at JJC.

The College established the **President's Diversity and Inclusion Council** in 2014 as an institutional committee under its shared governance structure. The Council promotes collaboration and communication to achieve JJC's diversity, equity, and inclusion goals and other objectives identified in the College's strategic plan. Membership is open to JJC staff, has its own mission and vision, and is focused on five essential areas (Figure 1).

Mission. The President's Diversity & Inclusion Council advocates and champions diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts that prioritize JJC's commitment to the core values of respect and inclusion. The Council will ensure the college community is a place where everyone feels welcomed, empowered, and safe.

Vision. Provide an environment that inspires acceptance, inclusion, and mutual respect.

Figure 1
Joliet Junior College President’s DEI Council 2024



Joliet Junior College Office of Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI), 2024e

The departments within **Student Development** provide services and programs which support the institution's academic mission through a focus on enrollment, retention, and student advancement and success. The initiatives and activities of the division support the strategic goals of JJC, improving the advancement of minority, and underrepresented student populations in addition to closing the gap between high school and college. Specifically, the **Center for Multicultural Access and Success** and the **Office of Student Activities** have equitable and inclusive statements. Each engages, supports, and develops JJC's diverse student populations (Table 3), including (but not limited to) minority, first-generation, undocumented, and English language learners and international students by establishing safe and brave spaces on campus.

Table 3
Joliet Junior College Support Programs and Services for Students

Center for Multicultural Access and Success (CMAS)	Office of Student Activities (OSA)
Tutoring referrals	AIGA JJC Student Group (Graphic Design)
FAFSA completion workshops	American Institute of Architecture Students
Educational Talent Search	Black Student Union
Student Support Services	Business Club
First Generation Celebration	Culinary Club
Black Teen Summit	Disability Awareness Club
Latinx Empowerment Conference	The JJC Gamers Club
What’s Up Wednesday (Advising)	Interior Design Club
Barber Shop Talk	International Society of Automation Student Club
Mid-Semester Check-in (advising)	International Student Club
	InterVarsity Christian Fellowship
	Latinos Unidos

Table 3**Joliet Junior College Support Programs and Services for Students**

Muslim Student Society
Nursing Student Association
Orthotic & Prosthetic Technology Student Assn.
The Pride Alliance
Student Agriculture Association
Vet Tech
Wolf Pack Productions Video Club
Student Government

Joliet Junior College Center for Multicultural Access and Success, 2024; Joliet Junior College Office of Student Activities, 2024

Furthermore, JJC students represent immigrants and recent arrivals from across the globe. In keeping with JJC's core values of Respect and Inclusion, JJC provides equitable and inclusive access to all programs of study, educational resources, and services at Joliet Junior College, as the College affirms and supports Undocumented, DACAmented, and mixed-status families.

DEI Recognition

Joliet Junior College has garnered significant recognition for its unwavering commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion in higher education (Table 4). These accolades reflect the College's enduring commitment to creating an environment where all students, faculty, and staff thrive and succeed. Moreover, these achievements are just a glimpse into the numerous other awards and recognitions the College has garnered through its ongoing dedication to excellence and innovation within the Institution.

Table 4**Joliet Junior College Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Awards and Nominations**

Award Name	Awarding Body	Description	Year Awarded
Charles Kennedy Equity Award	Association of Community College Trustees Equity Award (ACCT)	A two-year postsecondary institution to achieve equity in education programs and services	2021 Awarded
Award for Excellence in Advancing Diversity Award	American Association of Community Colleges (AACC)	Award for significant contributions to advancing diversity within college leadership, the community, and higher education	2021 Awarded
Top Employer for Diversity Jobs	Diversity Jobs	Recognized as a top employer dedicated to diversity and inclusion in the workplace.	2021, 2022 Acknowledged
Most Promising Places to Work in Community Colleges	Diverse Issues in Higher Education and the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development	Top 24 Community Colleges	2022, 2023 Acknowledged

Table 4**Joliet Junior College Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Awards and Nominations**

Community Partner of the Year	African American Business Association (AABA)	Excellence in partnership with AABA to provide opportunities that benefit the community and further the AABA Mission.	June 2023
Support and Dedication to Joliet LEDA and the Community	Latino Economic Development Association (LEDA)	Advancing the economic opportunities for Latino businesses and individuals by creating and connecting them to educational, cultural, and civic resources to expand community prosperity and the expansion of bilingual offerings	December 2023
Equity and Diversity Award	Illinois Community College Trustees Association (ICCTA)	Commitment by an Illinois public community college board and its chief executive officer to achieve diversity, equity, and inclusion in the Institution's education programs.	2024 (Nominee)
Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) Designation	Department of Higher Education	Designated as an eligible institution under Title III and Title V of the Higher Education Act of 1965	2024 Designation
HSI Designation Proclamation	Joliet City Council	In recognition of JJC's HSI designation	May 2024

Joliet Junior College Office of Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI), 2024c

Higher Learning Commission Reaffirmation Review

In the fall of 2023, JJC completed a multi-day onsite accreditation visit with reviewers from the Higher Learning Commission. The final assessment report in April 2024 revealed that JJC met all 18 core components to achieve a 10-year accreditation. The report noted that the college “has adopted a plethora of policies and procedures to guide them through the development of documents used to report on the progress of their goals. JJC’s Strategic Plan is an excellent example with specific goals which must be addressed when making a budget request. The Annual Program Update (APU) process is also clearly defined and used by the faculty and staff to report on their areas. Program and course assessment processes are defined. The five-year Program Reviews identify curriculum changes while the APUs identify budget needs. Faculty buy-in to the assessment process was inculcated into the training process which encouraged faculty to use their own assessment tools to reach their assessment goals...Joliet Junior College has the means and ability to continue as a stellar educational institution. Through continued efforts at all levels, they will succeed at serving students, the community, and industry people.” As demonstrated by the HLC final assessment report, JJC is well established and positioned to support academic advancement for its students.

Since 2008, when the President’s DEI Council was first established, JJC has a long-established history of equitable and inclusive practices which are upheld by the President, the Cabinet, the Board of Trustees, and staff. The equitable statements from various departments and programs ensure students are supported and advance toward their goals. While these values and core statements are upheld, the opportunity to review data provides JJC an additional lens for reflection.

Analyze Data

To assess equity gaps for Black, Latino, low-income, adult, rural, students with disabilities, and other underrepresented groups, quantitative data from the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE), Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), and JJC's Institutional Research (I.R.) team were used. JJC also collected feedback from departments and individuals to further inform JJC's understanding of the data's context.

Enrollment Trends

JJC is rapidly approaching a majority-minority serving institution (Table 2). Between the fall of 2017 and 2022, JJC enrolled over 75,000 students, averaging 27% Hispanic, 10% Black, and 46% minoritized students each year. Within the past five years, Black student enrollment has remained steady at 10%, while White student enrollment has decreased by 7%. Remarkably, JJC's Hispanic enrollment has grown from 11.3% in the fall of 2000 to 34% in the fall of 2023, and such growth is expected to continue.

Specifically, in the fall of 2022 (Table 2), JJC enrolled 10,212 full-time students, 35% full-time and 65% part-time. Fall 2022 enrollment data indicated minority enrollment at 44%, of which 31% represent Hispanic students. Most students identify as female (56%) and are between 17 and 20 (59%). Part-time students are from minority and underrepresented backgrounds. Compared to IPEDS peer colleges, JJC's race/ethnicity enrollment is comparable. However, JJC Hispanic enrollment is 93% higher than peer institutions.

Despite well-documented and anticipated national enrollment decline trends, JJC foresees increased student enrollment (Table 5). In January of 2023, JJC released its Environmental Scan for District 205 Demographics and Labor Market Trends (2023-2027), which anticipates a population decrease of White (-4.8%) and an increase in Hispanic (7.1%), Black (2.3%), and Asian (5.6%) communities. The employment projections in these communities are also of significance as JJC offers certificate and degree programs that will provide the necessary credentials for professional advancement (Table 6). Currently, enrollment in cohort programs which align with employment projections, are also proportional to JJC's overall student enrollment (Table 7). This shift in demographics is not new to the 123-year history of JJC, but instead provided the impetus to further develop culturally responsive enrollment practices and student advancement strategies further to decrease postsecondary barriers and increase credential attainment.

Table 5**Joliet Junior College Projected Overall Population Change**

Race/ Ethnicity	2023 Population	2027 Population	% Of Total Projected population	% Change
White	474,876	451,932	62.5%	-4.8%
Hispanic	140,349	150,354	20.8%	+7.1%
Black	70,027	17,645	9.9%	+2.3%
Asian	33,254	35,104	4.9%	+5.6%
Unknown/ Other	12,106	12,811	1.8%	+8.5%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	1,021	1,102	0.2%	+7.9%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	164	205	0.0%	+25.6%

Institutional Research and Effectiveness, 2023a

Table 6**Joliet Junior College Employment Projections**

Description	increase in # of jobs	% Change
Management Occupations	1,246	+6.3%
Education, Training, and Library Occupations	1,093	+6.2%
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations	195	+7.1%
Healthcare Support Occupations	875	+9.7%
Personal Care and Service Occupations	651	+11.8%
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	812	+6.7%

Institutional Research and Effectiveness, 2023a

Table 7**Joliet Junior College Enrollment Trends of Cohort Programs**

	White	Hispanic	Black	Native American	Asian
Total % of JJC enrollment	49%	34%	10%	0%	3%
Diagnostic Medical Sonography	62%	29%	5%	0%	5%
Health Information Management Tech.	45%	28%	17%	1%	5%
Medical Assisting	55%	22%	18%	0%	3%
Orthotics & Prosthetics Technology	70%	25%	0%	0%	5%
Radiologic Technology	70%	20%	5%	0%	2%
Practical Nursing	59%	22%	11%	0%	6%
Veterinary Medical Technology	62%	31%	5%	0%	0%
Nursing	44%	29%	20%	.5%	5%

Table 7**Joliet Junior College Enrollment Trends of Cohort Programs**

Operations Engineering	63%	33%	4%	0%	0%
Operations Engineering	63%	33%	4%	0%	0%
Operations Technician	64%	22%	6%	0%	2%
Operations Technician	64%	22%	6%	0%	2%
Automotive Service Technology	56%	32%	6%	0%	1%

Dual Credit

Between 2019 and 2023, over 23,855 students enrolled in dual credit programs at JJC (Table 8). This long-term equity initiative has been well received by the district, schools, and students, with students receiving course credit toward their postsecondary education. Following their high school graduation, dual credit students who enroll at JJC typically comprise over a third of each year's incoming first-time students (Table 9). These students begin their college education with an average of 5.71 credits (Table 9) and are better prepared to advance and complete their degree at JJC.

Table 8**Joliet Junior College Dual Credit (D.C.) High School Enrollees**

Year	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total Enrollment
Enrollees	4,560	4,773	4,500	4,965	5,057	23,855

ICCB Centralized Data System- Annual Enrollment and Completion (A1) Data

Table 9**Joliet Junior College Dual Credit (D.C.) Enrollees at JJC (First-Year Student)**

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	5 yr. Ave.
D.C. Enrollees as % of incoming Student	34.1%	36.4%	35.2%	36.4%	32.0%	34.8%
Average DC Hours Earned	5.92	5.91	5.75	5.71	5.29	5.29

Institutional Research and Effectiveness, 2024

Retention and Graduation Trends

JJC retention data is promising as the three largest student groups (Hispanic, Black, and White) are at record highs (Figure 2). All three groups are at/above 40% retention, and Hispanic students have the highest

retention rate at 45.7%. Further, White (+5.4%) and Black (+4.3%) students have the most significant one-year gain. While all three groups have achieved record highs, JJC's overall full-time retention rate is -9% and part-time (-11%) based on IPEDS comparison groups from the same year (Figure 3).

Figure 2

Joliet Junior College Fall-to-Fall Retention Rates
2018-2023

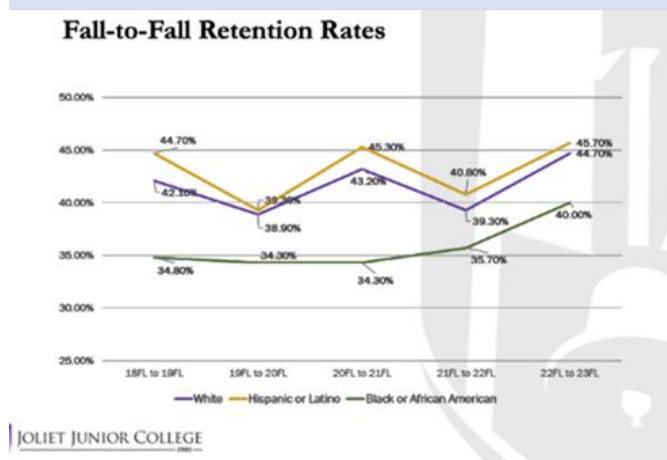
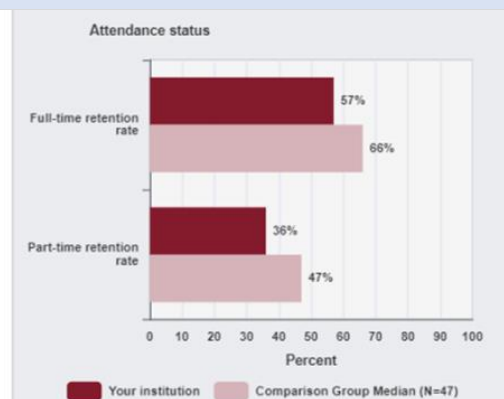


Figure 3

IPEDs Retention rates of first-time degree/certificate-seeking students by attendance status:
Fall 2021 cohort



NOTE: Retention rates are measured from the fall of first enrollment to the following fall. Academic reporting institutions report retention data for the Fall 2021 cohort of students who are still enrolled as of the institution's official fall reporting date or as of October 15, 2022. Program reporters determine the cohort with enrollment any time between August 1 - October 31, 2021 and retention based on August 1, 2022.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS): Spring 2023, Fall Enrollment survey component.

Joliet Junior College Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
2024d

West Virginia University Institute of Technology, 2023, p. 6

JJC's graduation trends for 2022 (Figure 4) exceed those of the IPEDS comparison group in all four categories: associate degrees (+218%); 1-year to 2-year certifications (+115%); 12-weeks but less than 1-year certifications (+450%); and less than 12-week certification (+76%). However, JJC's overall graduation trends still have room for growth. IPEDS Graduation data for JJC's 2019 cohort of full-time, first-time undergraduates within 150% time (Figure 5) indicates White students are graduating at higher rates than all other races/ethnicities. However, all student groups lag over their peers at comparable IPEDS colleges.

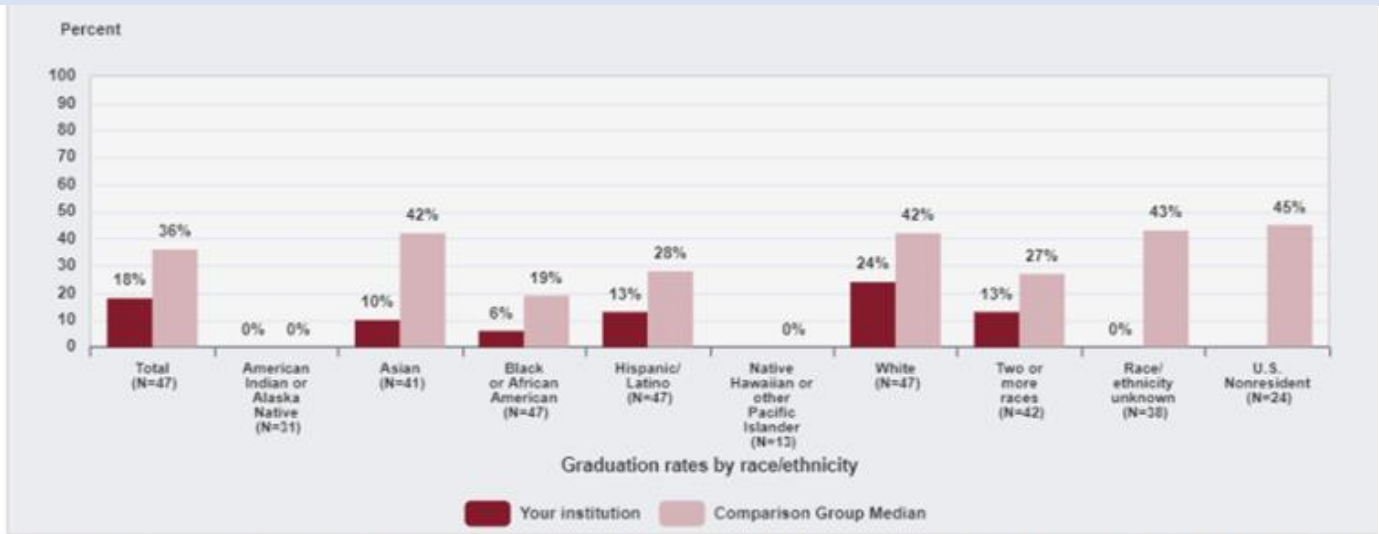
Figure 4
 IPEDS Graduation trends: Number of sub-baccalaureate degrees and certificates awarded by level: 2021-2022



NOTE: N is the number of institutions in the comparison group.
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS): Fall 2022, Completions survey component.

West Virginia University Institute of Technology, 2023, p. 4

Figure 5
 IPEDS
 Graduation rates of full-time, first-time degree/certificate-seeking undergraduate students within 150% of average time to program completion by race/ethnicity: 2019 cohort



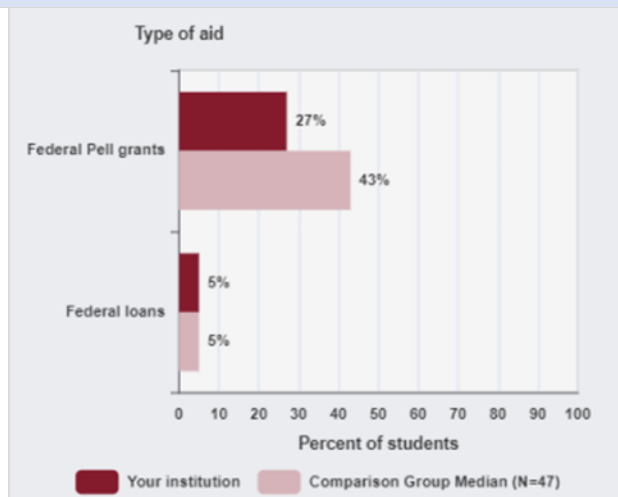
NOTE: For more information about disaggregation of data by race and ethnicity, see the Methodological Notes. The graduation rates are the Student Right-to-Know (SRK) rates. Median values for the comparison group will not add to 100%. N is the number of institutions in the comparison group.
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS): Winter 2022-23, Graduation Rates survey component.

West Virginia University Institute of Technology, 2023, p. 7

Financial Aid

College affordability is a critical factor in the retention and student advancement, especially minoritized and underrepresented students. Since 2021 JJC's cost of attendance has remained the same, allowing students to financially plan for their education. JJC students receiving Federal Student Loans are on par with IPEDS comparison groups (5%) (Figure 6). Although record-low FAFSA completion rates were reported for 2021 in Illinois (67%) and nationally (49%), JCC's 27% completion rate is 16% lower than that of the IPEDS comparison group. Upon further internal review of financial aid completers for fall 2021, 74.9% of minoritized students did not have a FAFSA on file.

Figure 6
IPEDS
Percent of degree/certificate-seeking undergraduate students awarded Federal Pell grants and Federal Student Loans: Academic year 2021-22



NOTE: Federal loans include federal loans awarded to students. N is the number of institutions in the comparison group.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS): Winter 2022-23, Student Financial Aid survey component.

West Virginia University Institute of Technology, 2023, p. 5

Entrepreneur & Business Center

With an anticipated population growth (Table 5) and potential employment projections (Table 6), JJC is prepared to support entrepreneurs and business owners. For over 20 years, JJC has invested in assisting both entrepreneurs and businesses within its seven-county district, providing no-cost business advising and resource services at the Entrepreneur and Business Center (EBC). The EBC offers consultations, resources, and seminars to assist entrepreneurs with the start-up or expansion of their business. Services are provided at no cost to those within the district and include workshops and classes on small business financing acquisition,

marketing strategies, technical assistance and one-on-one business advising, and more. The EBC also partners with local business organizations, including chambers of commerce, centers for economic development, workforce investment boards and other educational services.

Opportunities to Enhance Practices that Address Equity Gaps

In advance of JJC's Equity Plan and Practices Framework (2024), JJC's Institutional Strategic Plan (2023-2027), and SEM 4.0 Plan undertook the extensive process of reviewing policies and practices with diverse teams (demographics and role), who reviewed institutional data and provided feedback. Together, they reviewed barriers that influence a student's decision to leave college before completing a program or degree, including pre-college academic preparation, enrollment processes, college navigation, financial concerns, and climate. While JJC has made every effort to identify and remove barriers to establishing equitable policies, there are still opportunities to enhance practices that address identifiable equitable gaps.

Dual Credit Programs

JJC offers students at 34 district high schools the opportunity to take rigorous, college-level classes that will give them college credit. There are many benefits for all students who enroll, especially minoritized students and those from rural communities. These students for whom access or proximity (to JJC) is a barrier benefit from attending their high school during the school day. A long-established concern of dual credit that JJC continues to address is ensuring equitable access for first-generation and minoritized students. Further, more staff is needed to provide the necessary scaffolding for students, their families, teachers, and the schools to increase success rates. Also, there is a need for a software system that monitors high school students through the various steps and bilingual staff.

Enrollment

In preparing the SEM 4.0 Plan, almost 25 staff representing the various phases of student enrollment (including but not limited to admissions, OSA, I.R., faculty, and several Deans) reviewed the student lifecycle and JJC's role in supporting their advancement. This committee identified five important pillars prioritizing student success and developed the SEM 4.0 Plan to include practices, milestones, and a timeline. SEM 4.0 focuses on five distinct pillars, each with its strategy, objectives, and action plans. The five pillars are:

- Admissions & Recruiting
- The Student Experience (Onboarding through Graduation)
- Non-Credit & Extended Campuses
- Academic Excellence
- Marketing

The SEM 4.0 plan supports students during outreach efforts, enrollment, advancement, completion, and the use of culturally responsive practices.

Projected Growth of District. JJC's 2023-2027 Environmental Scan looked at the demographic trends and industry projections not only for the JJC District zip codes, but also the seven counties JJC spans that may overarch the zip code areas to include all Will, Livingston, Grundy, Kendall, DuPage, La Salle, and Kankakee counties. Although JJC may not completely encompass these counties, data was collected from 44 zip codes, to understand the needs of industry (and occupations) in and adjacent to the region. Also included in the Environmental Scan is the anticipated population growth/decline and the educational attainment (current and anticipated) for JJC's district. With this in mind, and the expansive district JJC serves (including rural students), iCampus online offerings will be expanding.

Student Advancement

Traditional student retention and graduation literature often focuses on practices and programs to remediate student deficits. Instead of this approach, JJC prioritizes ***student advancement***. Student advancement in higher education refers to students progressing and succeeding in subsequent educational and occupational endeavors for which their college degree or program was designed to prepare them (Cuseo). It involves not only academic progress but also the acquisition of skills, access to quality education, and holistic support for students' overall well-being (El-Azar, 2022). It includes various aspects, including academic achievement, progression through higher education or employment, self-employment, or further study, and the acquisition and development of skills (AdvanceHE, 2019). This outlook takes a more holistic approach to academic progress and involves students moving forward in their educational journey and achieving their goals beyond their current level of study.

Student Transfers. While JJC looks forward to students attaining their credentials or degree from JJC, academic progress and student advancement may take them to other institutions of higher education to complete their credential or degree. Participation in the Illinois Articulation Initiative (statewide transfer agreement) and access to Transferology (transfer platform to ensure "transferability" of credits), helps students make informed decisions about their advancement. Based on data from the 2022 Illinois Board of Higher Education (Table 10), 893 students have transferred to one of 67 community colleges and universities. 86% of the top 18 transfer schools are four-year universities where students go on to achieve their bachelor's degree. The top three institutions of higher education include Illinois State University (120), Lewis University (111), College of DuPage (110).

Table 10
Joliet Junior College
2022 Receiving Institution for JJC Transfer Students

Institution	Total Transfer
Illinois State University	120
Lewis University	111
College of DuPage	110
University of Illinois Chicago	61
University of St. Francis	59
Northern Illinois University	33
Aurora University	30
Governors State University	30
Southern Illinois University Carbondale	29
Rasmussen University	26
University of Illinois Urbana/Champaign	23
DePaul University	19
Moraine Valley Community College	19
Eastern Illinois University	18
Prairie State College	17
Columbia College Chicago	14
Chamberlain University	12
Western Illinois University	11
Total Transfers	893

Illinois Board of Higher Education, 2024

Low FAFSA Completion Rates

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2023), approximately 65% of high school seniors complete a FAFSA each year, and first-generation and low-income students are less likely to complete the unfamiliar process. For students who complete the FAFSA, the financial aid award amounts do not meet the total expenses students incur during their time in postsecondary institutions, and there is a need to include actual living costs as part of their expenses (Goldrick-Rab, 2016). Without this additional funding, students will continue to work, decreasing their odds of completing a degree.

Although JJC district areas include high poverty rates and eligible Pell Award recipients, only 27% of eligible students submitted a FAFSA. There is also a subsection of JJC students who are eligible and do not complete the Illinois Alternative Application for Illinois Financial Aid (Alternative Application), which allows them to apply for Illinois Monetary Award Program (MAP) grants in circumstances where they would not

qualify for Pell funds and are not included in federal Pell reporting. Access to Pell or other funds that decrease the cost of attendance is necessary for minoritized students to attend full-time or advance in their program of study. Further disaggregation of data should be conducted to understand the profiles of completers and non-completers, support that can be offered, and a holistic review of the cost of attendance.

Importance of Authentic and Intentional Representation

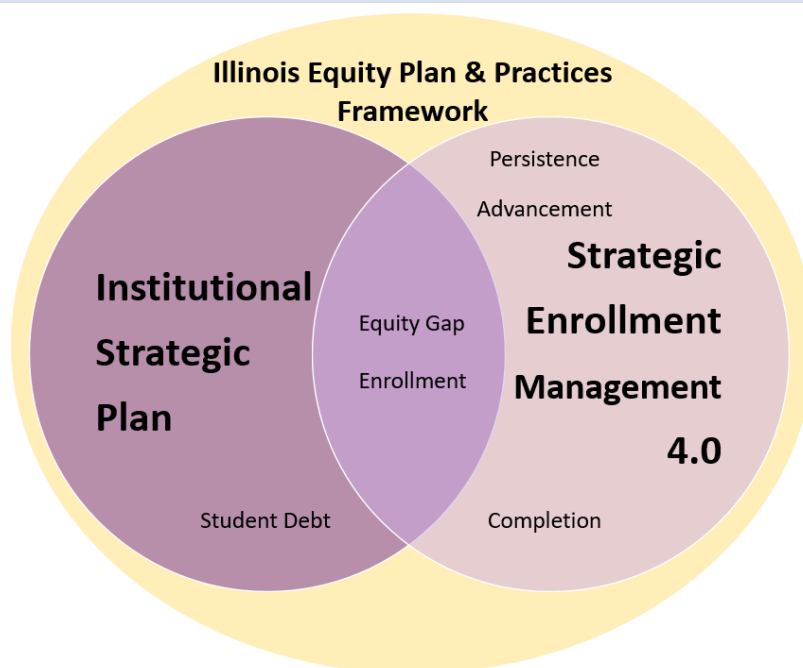
Staffing. Within JJC's district area, high schools, and enrollment, Latinx representation has experienced exponential growth. Within the State of Illinois, JJC has been recognized as having two of the top 11 Hispanic-enrolling high school districts (Romeoville 46%, Joliet 65%), as well as one of the top 10 colleges and universities serving Latinx students (Latino Policy Forum, 2023). JJC Hispanic student enrollment has reached an all-time high of 36%. However, as recently as 2023, JJC Hispanic employees, including faculty, professionals, clerical, custodial, and administrators, have reached 8%. Further, JJC Black employees across all ICCB classifications is only 7%. Opportunity to increase representation (language and culture) is a priority in staffing, practices, and outreach.

Programs Implemented to Address Equity Gaps

After a lengthy review of JJC's policies and practices, the Institutional Strategic Plan (2024-2027) and the SEM 4.0 Plan were shared with the JJC community in the fall of 2023. Both plans advanced equitable policies, practices, and outcomes for students in critical areas of equity gaps, enrollment, persistence, advancement, student loan repayment, and completion (Figure 7). These plans provided programmatic insights that informed practices and effort changes.



Figure 7
Joliet Junior College Relationship between Institutional Strategic Plan 2024-2027, SEM 4.0 Plan, and the Illinois Equity Plan & Practices Framework



Joliet Junior College Office of Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI), 2024e

Enrollment

The development of the five pillars of the SEM 4.0 Plan, which prioritizes student advancement, yielded successful practices among dual credit, pre-college access, developmental math and English, advising, degree and certificate programs, paying for college, and JJC's first generation, minoritized, and rural students.

Dual Credit. Early outreach to high school students via dual credit builds familiarity and relationships amongst students, families, and JJC. The dual credit program has benefited low-income and minority students in many ways, including JJC perks (identification card, access to on-campus resources), convenience (attendance at high school during the day), college experience (enrolling, syllabus, course expectations), lowered debt (special pricing for courses), and shorter time to postsecondary degree completion (transferrable credits). There is great interest among the feeder high schools in continuing to grow dual credit.

Pre-College Access to JJC. As early as five years old, students can visit JJC to enjoy meaningful and engaging experiences that support college aspirations. The Cronin Schoolhouse and the Herbert Trackman Planetarium regularly host elementary school group visits. In addition, high school students are invited to

campus twice yearly to participate in the Black Teen Summit and Latinx Empowerment Conference, where they participate in leadership activities and hear from various speakers. These on-campus activities create welcoming and inclusive events that bring over 1,000 students to JJC yearly.

Student Advancement

Placement into Credit-level Coursework. In anticipation of the Illinois Developmental Education Reform Act (DERA), JJC evaluated and revised several areas to reduce completion time. Most students will never see an English developmental course in reading and writing due to the lowered placement thresholds, GPA for placement, and Transitional English offerings expanding in high schools. Even students who place into English 020 and 098 are eligible to take both in one semester and 096 in the next semester and be done with developmental coursework in two semesters—or they could re-test at the end of those courses and exit developmental coursework in one semester. A decrease in Math Developmental Education can be attributed to the multiple ALEKS placement test retakes available to students. Students in math developmental courses can complete their coursework (at more than one level) in the same semester. Since DERA, the Math department has been piloting two co-requisite courses, Elementary Statistics (Math 028-GP/Math 128-GP) and General Math (Math 027-GP/Math 127-GP). These courses' prerequisites have been lowered to Math 090 or its equivalent. The Math Department has created a first-day survey for all developmental math courses. This survey identifies and contacts students who could better benefit from a higher math placement, a different math course, or remediation using ALEKS.

Advising. There is an opportunity to expand JJC's current advising model with a more proactive, relational advising model that intentionally builds a trusting and supportive relationship between students and JJC advisors. Further, the current advising ratios should be revised to keep JJC students on track for graduation. JJC's current model fluctuates between a 900-1200:1 ratio in the Student Advising Center (SAC). Best practices suggest a 350:1 ratio depending on the student's pathway. Additionally, pathways in the majors are more complex and have requirements beyond traditional classes, necessitating a 40-50:1 faculty-advisor ratio.

iCampus. The mission of iCampus is to provide effective, accessible, and affordable learning opportunities through high-quality college courses and programs that utilize educational technologies, good design practices, and emerging content delivery methods to extend educational opportunities beyond the traditional classroom. iCampus has doubled its offerings from 14 since 2021 to more than 30 by fall 2024. iCampus provides 23 completely online programs including associate's degrees (Arts, General Studies, Science, Business Administration, and Accounting), certificates (Hotel Management, Microsoft Specialist, Child Development Professional, and Global Supply Chain Management) as well as 8 hybrid programs (Cisco Network Associate, Game Design and Development, Network Security Foundation and Restaurant/Foodservice Management). This broad range of courses and degree programs utilize the iCampus

site and other technologies to deliver teaching and learning online and align to the largest employment projection growths for JJC's district like education (+6.2%), healthcare (+9.7%), and management (+6.3%).

Paying for College

FAFSA completion. Early efforts to understand the trend and increase FAFSA and the completion of the Illinois Alternative Application have begun. JJC staff participates in FAFSA completion events at high schools. A dedicated website with announcements, videos, forms, and deadlines is available on the JJC student portal. Students can also request an appointment for an in-person or virtual (chat or virtual) appointment. Workshops provided in English and Spanish are offered during the FAFSA season.

Scholarships. In 2023-2024 the JJC Foundation has awarded \$1,000,522 in 790 donor-funded scholarships to students across various disciplines in the 2023-24 school year. This year's scholarship awards represent a substantial increase in scholarship funding (\$870,000 in 2022-2023), highlighting the Foundation's dedication to expanding opportunities and reducing the financial burden for JJC students. Flyers and materials are also available in English and Spanish.

Additional Funding. Unexpected financial hardships can derail a student's semester. In order to mitigate these circumstances, JJC students can request funds through the **Student Emergency Fund (SEF)** to cover basic needs (housing, food, and transportation). SEF also covers emergency housing and monthly gas cards for students in need. The SEF serves students from diverse backgrounds, including single parents, and can serve many more students than it currently serves. The **HEROES** Nursing and Teaching Scholarship provides additional funding to low-income students who are experiencing housing insecurity and qualify for assistance. HEROES is open to all full- or part-time students regardless of status and GPA. The Center for Academic Success in Healthcare (**CASH**) offers healthcare students various types of support, including tutoring, financial assistance, and advising. Funds from CASH can be used for transportation, groceries, childcare, or any other barrier preventing students from advancement in their healthcare program. The CASH Center also provides pipeline seminars (skills training, job placement, and advancement).

First Generation, Minoritized, and Rural Students

Office of Student Activities (OSA) provided opportunities for students to discover, practice, and develop their personal and professional skill sets through campus involvement opportunities that included clubs, Student Government, leadership training, wellness programs, diversity, equity, and inclusion conversations, and social events. OSA supported over 20 different student organizations and clubs to ensure students felt a sense of belonging and connection to other students (Table 3). They offer student organizations and clubs, including identity (Latinx, Black, Muslim, LGBTQIA+, and International), advocacy, special interests, spiritual, and honor societies. Each semester, OSA hosts a campus-wide Ally Training Program that is designed to foster a more welcoming and affirming environment for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and

questioning (LGBTQ+) students by creating a visible network of allies. Over 100 employees have completed the training sessions and received a Safe Zone Ally logo for their office, a Safe Zone Ally pin, and documentation for their records. These individuals understand some of the issues facing LGBTQ+ people and are aware of LGBTQ+ resources.

The newly named Center for Multicultural Access and Success (CMAS), previously known as the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs is an advocate, coach, and mentor for students. CMAS hosts the Director of Multicultural Undocumented Resources (MUR) and the Undocumented Student Liaison. UNDOCU-friendly practices include school and community outreach, student informational sessions and advising, the iDALE student club, and campus-wide advocacy. CMAS was also home to two United States Department of Education TRIO grants (Educational Talent Search and Student Support Services), which focused on services and programs that supported low-income and minority student postsecondary selection, enrollment, retention, and graduation.

Building on a legacy of success of JJC's TRIO college access grants, CMAS, and MUR seek to advance a more relational advising structure that features advisors, support staff, and student employees who understand the needs of first-generation, low-income, underrepresented and minority students. Routine advisor check-ins ensure students develop meaningful relationships with caring adults as they continue their completion path (certificate, degree, or transfer). Importantly, CMAS and OSA staff reflect the diversity of JJC students (first generation, underrepresented, and minoritized) with lived experiences that mirror the students.

Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) Designation. In the spring of 2024, JJC was designated a Hispanic-Serving Institution. JJC's Hispanic student population increased from 11% in 2000 to an incredible 34% of JJC's student population in 2023, and JJC has taken deliberate actions to ensure Hispanic students and families feel welcome and the Spanish language is honored. The development of Spanish language outreach and marketing materials engage students and families in their language of preference; the availability of these informational materials honors language and culture in an authentic and meaningful way. Translation devices are available to staff or at events, and special events on campus like "Discover JJC" and financial aid workshops are offered in Spanish. A Spanish Hotline is available for students or families who call and have questions. Future job postings will include a preference for all new hires for Spanish. Due to its expansive district, JJC has also expanded culturally responsive Spanish language marketing to communicate with students and families across the district. Further, this recent designation increases opportunities to build services and expand capacity for JJC students, many of whom represent the rich diversity of Hispanic cultures.

Entrepreneur & Business Center

In support of businesses owned by residents from the JJC district, JJC has established the Entrepreneur & Business Center (EBC) to provide no-cost professional services to the community. Education workshops and one-on-one support are available for the various stages of a business (launch, grow, or purchase). EBC works closely with Black (AABA) and Latino (LEDA) business associations to reach community members. Together with AABA and LEDA, EBC is better able to reach many of the businesses in the area with their passion and dedicated teams. Through these partnerships, JJC offers effective programming and aims to level the playing field by bringing business information to the Latino and African American business communities. Since the summer of 2022, over 250 businesses and non-profits have participated in the EBC program. Further, JJC has committed to contracting local businesses to provide services from the community that are familiar to students.



JJC's ongoing commitment to advancing equity for students and employees strongly emphasizes data-driven decision-making. By employing various methods, JJC systematically collects and analyzes data as referenced above. This rigorous and transparent approach allows JJC to gain critical insights into the experiences and outcomes of its students and employees. This evidence-based approach identifies disparities, assesses the effectiveness of JJC's DEI initiatives, and implements targeted strategies for improvement, instilling confidence in the fairness and transparency of JJC's operations.

Assess Climate

Process for Engaging the College

Joliet Junior College (JJC) implements a multifaceted approach involving staff, faculty, and the diverse student body to ensure a comprehensive and inclusive engagement process. This process is designed to provide equitable opportunities for input and participation from all stakeholders, especially those historically marginalized or underrepresented.

JJC establishes regular forums, workshops, and an annual Personal Assessment of the College Environment (PACE) survey to gauge the college climate and gather feedback from **staff and faculty**. These interactions encourage open dialogue where voices from all departments and levels are heard. Additionally,

Cultural Competency education and programming are provided to ensure diversity, equity, and inclusion are available to foster an inclusive workplace culture.

For **students**, JJC provides many engagement channels tailored to meet the needs of JJC's diverse population. CMAS hosts focus groups to inform their practices and a twice-monthly space for students to share their JJC experiences at Barber Shop and Beauty Shop. OSA convenes student leaders to participate in college committees, conducts surveys, hosts events, and more. The Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) and the Survey of Entering Student Engagement (SENSE) provide information on student engagement, a key indicator of learning and, therefore, of the quality of community college.

The **President's DEI Council** advocates and champions diversity and inclusion efforts that prioritize JJC's commitment to the core values of Respect and Inclusion. This safe and brave space creates opportunities for JJC employees and students to engage in dialogue and learn about the meaning and importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion. The Council will ensure the JJC is a place that inspires learning, transforms lives, and strengthens communities and where everyone feels welcome.

Process for Engaging Local Perspectives and the Community

JJC believes in its community and regularly engages its members to collect their feedback, insights, and recommendations to serve its students better.

The Joliet Junior College **Board of Trustees** comprises elected community members who serve a six-year term. The Trustees, whose lived and professional experiences mirror those of their community, advocate for policies and practices that support JJC's diverse communities and student populations.

Joliet Junior College has executive-level **community ambassadors** (Cabinet members) who have established community relationships. The ambassadors invest over 200 hours yearly volunteering, creating and supporting programs with the Spanish Community Center, Latino Economic Development Association, African-American Business Association, YMCA, Joliet Chamber of Commerce, Council for Working Women, Zonta Club of Joliet, G.W. Buck Boys & Girls Club of Joliet, Joliet Township High School Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities (JTHS CEO) Program and Will County area chamber of commerces. Through this ambassadorship, organizations have access to JJC Cabinet members who then gain firsthand accounts of the strengths and concerns of the community.

JJC **dual credit advisory board** includes at least one representative from each of the 35 high schools and meets each semester. During the twice-yearly meetings, representatives provide feedback on the program and student progress and discuss classes offered at the high school. These invaluable insights have helped strengthen and grow dual credit.

To better understand the enrollment needs of JJC first-time students, JJC Admissions has partnered with **high school counselors** from District 525. Yearly events like the Counselor Breakfast (15 consecutive years) and monthly events like the newly formed Counselors Advisor Board engage high school counselors

from local and rural schools to share their school's updates and trends and hear about JJC programs and highlights. For seven years, high school counselors have received the "Inside Scoop" newsletter that provides details about programs, enrollment, and scholarships, among other relevant information. Based on these interactions with high school counselors, a dedicated webpage was created to provide relevant information and documents in one location. These dialogues engage JJC's local high school partners, who provide valuable and timely feedback on student experiences and those who support their postsecondary aspirations.

Climate Surveys

Yearly, Joliet Junior College administers online surveys that collect information on student experience (SENSE and CCSSE), a faculty survey on student engagement (CCFSSE), and a faculty and staff climate study (PACE).

The Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) and the Survey of Entering Student Engagement (SENSE) provide information on student engagement, a key indicator of learning and, therefore, of the quality of community colleges. The surveys, administered to community college students, ask questions assessing institutional practices and student behaviors correlated with student learning and retention. *SENSE* does not employ a sampling strategy for the online administration to boost responses to the online survey. All students (18 years and over) enrolled in credit-bearing or developmental education 1st year Math or English courses were invited to participate. Of the 2,879 students invited to participate, 194 provided valid survey responses (surveys contained responses and did not fall into any exclusionary categories). The student profiles (Table 11) indicate minoritized (race and ethnicity) and marginalized (non-native speakers) student participation. Demographics generally mirror the fall 2023 10th Day Census report with students who identify as White (49%), Hispanic (34%), Black (10%), and Asian (3%) enrollment (The Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE), 2023).



Table 11
Joliet Junior College SENSE and CCSSE Participant Profile

	SENSE	CCSSE
Full- Time	72%	60%
Part-Time	28%	40%
18-24 years old	93%	77%
Female	68%	72%
Male	32%	28%
White	44%	51%
Hispanic	29%	23%
Black	7%	10%
Asian	4%	3%
American Indian	1%	0%
International	7%	2%
1 st Generation	43%	30%
Non-Native English	14%	15%
Work 21 or more hours a week	23%	47%
The goal for attending JJC		
Certificate	65%	60%
Obtain associate's degree	88%	88%
Transfer to 4-year university	78%	63%

Survey of Entering Student Engagement (SENSE), 2023; The Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE), 2023

The Community College Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (CCFSSE) is an online survey that elicits information from faculty about their teaching practices, how they spend their professional time in and out of class, and their perceptions regarding students' educational experiences.

During February and March 2023, the PACE Climate Survey for Community Colleges (PACE) was administered to 1,516 Joliet Junior College (JJC) employees. Of those 1,516 employees, 425 (28.0%) completed and returned the instrument for analysis. Respondents were also invited to complete a qualitative section asking what they find most and least favorable about their institution and two diversity, equity, and inclusion questions. Of the 425 JJC employees who completed the PACE survey, 254 (59.8%) provided written comments (Cotton & Bank, 2023).

In addition to frequent feedback collected both formally and informally, JJC routinely engages students, staff, and faculty in formal data collection. Most recently, PACE, SENSE, CCSSE, and CCFSSE were conducted in 2023 (Table 12).

Table 12
Joliet Junior College Campus Survey Frequency

	Audience	Administered	Frequency
PACE Personal Assessment of the College Environment Climate Survey for Community Colleges	Employees	Spring 2023	Yearly from 2020. Previously, a two-year cycle
SENSE Survey of Entering Student Engagement	Entering Student	Fall 2023	Two-year cycle
CCSSE Community Colleges Survey of Student Engagement	All Students (exempted dual credit students)	Spring 2023	Yearly from 2019. Typically, two-year cycles
CCFSSE Community College Faculty Survey of Student Engagement	Faculty	Spring 2023	Four-year cycle

Cottom & Bank, 2023; Survey of Entering Student Engagement (SENSE), 2023; The Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE), 2023

Key Findings to Inform the Equity Plan & Practices

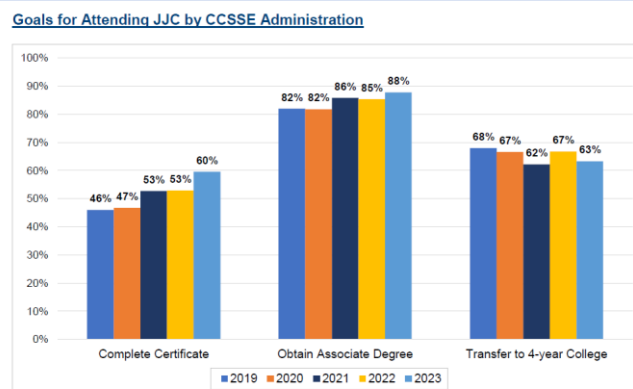
"The CCSSE benchmarks are groups of conceptually related survey items that address critical areas of student engagement. The five benchmarks denote areas educational research has shown to be critical to students' college experiences and educational outcomes. Therefore, they provide colleges with a helpful starting point for looking at institutional results and allow colleges to gauge and monitor their performance in areas central to their work. In addition, participating colleges can make appropriate and valuable comparisons between their performance and that of other colleges" (The Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE), 2023, p.2). Their feedback includes:

- **Minority and Marginalized Students:** Establishing student organizations and support groups specifically for minority and marginalized students, where they can share experiences and advocate for their needs.
- **Low-Income and Rural Students:** Offering financial aid workshops, providing access to affordable housing, and facilitating transportation solutions for students from low-income or rural backgrounds. Creating mentorship programs that pair these students with faculty or staff who can provide guidance and support
- **Students with Disabilities:** Ensuring accessibility in all campus facilities, services, and online platforms and providing accommodations such as sign language interpreters, academic intervention, testing accommodations, and assistive technology.

- **Adult Students:** Offering flexible scheduling and online courses to accommodate the unique needs of adult learners.
- **Other Underrepresented Backgrounds:** Conducting outreach programs to identify and engage with students from various underrepresented backgrounds and implementing cultural competency education training for all institution members to foster an environment of respect and inclusion.

While the CCSSE and SENSE provide many insights into JJC students, key findings around enrollment, barriers to persistence, and academic experiences influence the JJC Equity Plan and Practices. It is worth noting that JJC students enroll with high aspirations for completion of their certificate (60%), obtaining an associate's degree (88%), and transferring to a 4-year college (63%) (Figure 8), yet based on the 2023 IPEDS Report (Figure 3), they are less likely to be retained (57%) or graduate (Figure 5) depending on their race/ethnicity (between 6%-24%). Further, students identified “lack of finances” (41%) and “working full time” (39%) as the top two concerns (Figure 9). Further, only 43% of students feel “less supported” in affording their education (Figure 10). Increased completion of FAFSA and subsequent PELL awards could mitigate these concerns.

Figure 8
CCSSE
Goals for Attending JJC (Student Response)



The Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE),
2023, p. 7.

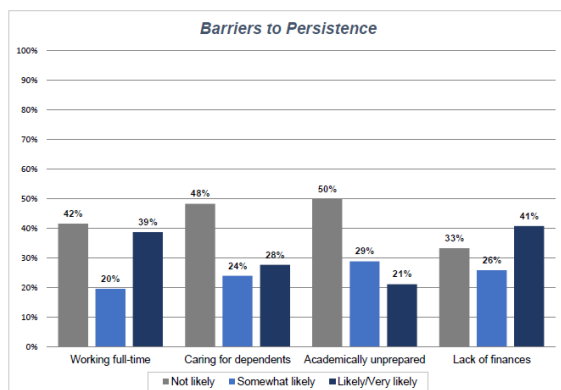
Figure 9
CCSSE Barriers to Persistence (Student Response)

Barriers to Persistence

Research indicates that there are several factors that put undergraduate students at risk of not attaining their educational goals. Community college students generally are three to four times more likely to reflect those factors than are their counterparts in four-year colleges and universities. Students are given the opportunity to mark *not likely*, *somewhat likely*, *likely* or *very likely* in response to: How likely is it that the following issues would cause you to withdraw from class or from this college?

- Item 23a - Working full-time
- Item 23b - Caring for dependents
- Item 23c - Academically unprepared
- Item 23d - Lack of finances

Two of the largest concerns towards student persistence are family and finances. While some students go to school full time without the responsibility of a full time job or family obligations, other students will oftentimes work full-time jobs and have family responsibilities during their tenure as a student, as displayed in the following graphs.

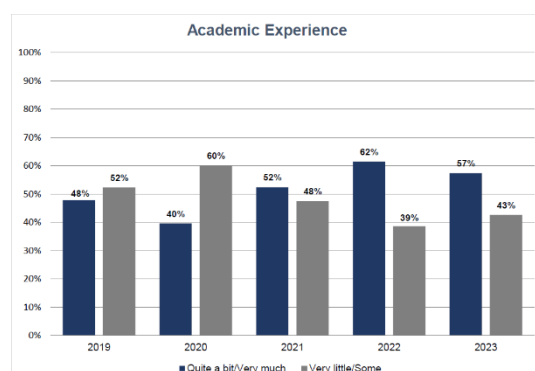


The Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE), 2023, p. 33.

Figure 10
CCSSE JJC Provided Financial Support Needed (Student Response)

While some students feel highly supported by their college financially (those who marked *quite a bit* or *very much*), others feel less supported, as illustrated by their responses of *very little* or *some*, as displayed in the following graph.

- Item 9f. Amount of emphasis by college: Providing the financial support you need to afford your education



The Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE), 2023, p. 33.

PACE Climate Survey at JJC included 84 five-point Likert-type scale questions ranging from a low of "1" to a high of "5". JJC's survey included the standard PACE 46 questions and the Racial Diversity Question Set. The PACE 46 questions are organized into four climate factors: Institutional Structure, Student Focus, Supervisory Relationships, and Teamwork. At JJC, the overall mean score of the PACE Survey was 3.906. The Student Focus climate factor had the highest mean score of 4.146, followed by Teamwork (4.050), Supervisory Relationships (4.016), and Institutional Structure (3.570). When disaggregated by the custom personnel classification demographic category of the PACE instrument, Adjunct Faculty rated the campus climate the highest with a mean score of 4.054, followed by staff (3.908), Administrators (3.904), and Full-time Faculty (3.835). Of the 46 standard PACE questions, the bottom ten mean scores have been identified as areas potentially needing improvement at JJC. All ten pertain to the Institutional Structure climate factor.

There is demonstrated growth in eleven of thirteen metrics for diversity, equity, and inclusion (Figure 11). Significant growth can be found in two questions: (a) representation of different races/ethnicities in administration (Goal 1.D) and (b) diverse student satisfaction with their educational experiences (Goal 3.D).

Figure 11**PACE Growth Comparison of KPIs (Employee Response)**

Goal One KPIs- Improve the diversity of our employees to be more representative of the student body	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23
B. People of different racial/ethnic backgrounds are well-represented among faculty (PACE-diversity subscale)	N/A	51%	58%	61%
C. A racially/ethnically inclusive institution is created through my institution's practices. (Pace- diversity Subscale)	N/A	67%	75%	83%
D. People of different racial/ethnic backgrounds are well-represented among senior administrators (ex: Pres, VP, Deans, etc). (PACE-diversity subscale)	N/A	68%	68%	82%
E. Increase the number of respondents for the annual PACE Climate Survey	32%	34%	33%	28%
Goal Two KPIs- Create a welcoming environment for our diverse employee population	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23
A. My institution has a strong commitment to promoting racial/ethnic harmony (PACE)	N/A	74%	80%	82%
B. My institution practices open and ethical communication to promote employee inclusion (PACE)	42%	54%	56%	57%
C. The extent to which employees participate in decision-making (PACE)	34.6%	45%	41%	50%
D. The extent to which this institution considers employee feedback in decision-making (PACE)	31%	39%	40%	42%
E. The extent to which employees are made aware of the outcome of decisions (PACE)	44%	58%	57%	52%
Goal Three KPIs- Create a safe, welcoming, and engaging environment	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23
A. How much does the college emphasize the following? Encouraging contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds. (CCSSE)	2.72%	2.70%	2.78%	2.95%
B. CCSSE Support for Learners (CCSSE)	48.4%	49.2%	77.30%	81.80%
C. My institution advances the educational persistence of students from diverse racial/ethnic backgrounds (Pace- diversity Subscale)	N/A	70%	75%	91%
D. Students from diverse racial/ethnic backgrounds are satisfied with their educational experience at my institution. (PACE)	N/A	55%	61%	81%

Joliet Junior College Office of Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI), 2023

The comprehensive data collected through the SENSE, CCSSE, CCFSSSE, and PACE surveys provides invaluable insights into the experiences and perceptions of students, faculty, and staff at Joliet Junior College. These surveys, which have a direct and positive impact on JJC's initiatives, highlight key areas of student engagement, faculty practices, and institutional climate, forming a critical foundation for the college's ongoing efforts to enhance educational outcomes and foster an inclusive, supportive campus environment. The feedback obtained is essential in identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and addressing challenges, particularly for minoritized and marginalized groups. By utilizing these findings, Joliet Junior College is better equipped to implement effective strategies that support student advancement, drive equity initiatives, and continually improve the overall campus experience, instilling a sense of hope and optimism for the future.

Policies, Strategies, Services, & Practices

Opportunities to Advance Equity

In the 123 years since its founding, JJC has stayed true to its founding mission and core values of reducing barriers and providing programs that support the postsecondary aspirations of the community. However, JJC also recognizes there are still areas of improvement. Through this process, several barriers and ideas for addressing them have come to light. Ideas like expanding to include additional departments, generating data that is disaggregated by race, and increasing Hispanic and bilingual staff are all areas of growth and will be a part of future conversations.

Early Access to College and Enrollment

12 X 12 X 12. In Fall 2023, JJC inaugurated an expanded Dual Credit initiative for 23 school districts and over 30 schools. This initiative, known as 12 x12 x 12 and championed as an equity imperative by JJC President Namuo, has set a goal for JJC district high school students to earn at least **12** credit hours by the time they complete the **12th** grade and pay only **\$12** per credit hour. With over 40,000 eligible students, JJC is committed to making college accessible to all students and has made significant progress in addressing this equity gap by increasing enrollment of Hispanic (+37.9%), Black (+70%), and Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander (+50%) students. A dedicated dual credit staff department supports schools, teachers, students, and families to ensure students enroll and complete their courses. Students who complete their courses are encouraged to attend JJC and will be eligible for institutional scholarships. In 2022 and before 12x12x12, 35.6% of those who completed the dual credit program enrolled at JJC with an average of 5.87 credits, and JJC looks forward to further growth. This program has been well received by multiple districts, as demonstrated by the high enrollment numbers (including 5 schools with 100-200 students enrolled). Furthermore, 12x12x12 is supported by the Joliet Township Government, who expressed their support for JJC's 12x12x12 program with a \$25,000 donation for the program (spring 2024). The continued growth and success of 12x12x12 are written in the Strategic 2024-2027 and SEM 4.0 plans and championed locally by district high schools and superintendents.

Recruitment. JJC's high school outreach has expanded under SEM 4.0 to create a more welcoming and uncomplicated student enrollment experience. Increased outreach and enrollment support to minority and underrepresented students is a priority. Due to its expansive district, JJC has engaged in culturally responsive marketing to communicate with students and families across 1,442 miles and 44 zip codes. The development of Spanish-language materials and marketing engages students and families in their language of preference; the availability of these informational materials honor language and culture authentically and meaningfully. Bilingual recruitment staff help students and their families navigate the college enrollment, orientation, and FAFSA completion processes; future hires will include bilingual (Spanish) preferred criteria for employment. Additionally, the Center for Multicultural Access and Success (CMAS) has been and continues to function as a

catalyst for high school outreach to minority and Spanish-speaking communities. The success of these early culturally responsive practices has led to a 4% increase in Hispanic student enrollment (29% to 34%) and has already exceeded the baseline established.

Placement into College-level Courses. The expansion of multiple placement measures and transparency around JJC's placement practices and data has helped close equity gaps for students placed into both developmental and college-level courses. A Placement and Testing Data Coordinator position was added in (2023-2024) to establish a new Placement Office for JJC students to receive frontline support around their placement and course prerequisites. A new English for Academic Purposes (EAP) pilot program is underway to expand placement opportunities through the Accuplacer ESL test for students whose first language is not English. Beginning in 2023, JJC has expanded to include placement measures to place into college-level English and math courses for all student groups, including:

Alternate Placement Measures: ACT, SAT, PSAT, High School GPA, Transition Math, Transition English, GED, HiSET, and TASC

Placement Exams: Accuplacer, Accuplacer ESL, and ALEKS

Transfer credits from other institutions and Credit for Prior Learning college credit such as CLEP, AP, Seal of Biliteracy, International Baccalaureate, DSST (DANTES), JJC Proficiency Exams, Military Credit, and a variety of industry training and certification

Student Advancement

Advising. JJC seeks to re-engage the campus community to revamp intake and onboarding processes to support students' advancement in a Guided Academic Pathways environment. JJC will analyze stop-out data by age, gender, and ethnicity demographics and create a proactive outreach plan to support at-risk students and prevent them from stopping out.

Increasing the number of full-time advisors will reduce the caseload once they are fully trained. This will allow SAC to provide more intrusive academic intervention and support (when fully staffed/trained). JJC is also working to increase the number of faculty advisors in each pathway. This ratio must remain significantly lower (approximately 40-50:1) as faculty are content experts rather than professional full-time advisors.

JJC will leverage current technology to streamline and report on retention and completion. The early intervention system Navigate was launched in 2023 and is in the training phase of implementation. Navigate will be used for scheduling, communicating (emailing and texting students), and monitoring their academic progress. This early intervention system offers several features that will partner with faculty, advisors, and students to support student advancement.

Ongoing initiatives include creating a Spanish-speaking phone line with bilingual staff to support JJC's Spanish-speaking population.

Academic Intervention. The Academic Intervention and Communication Center (AICC) program helps advance equity by providing continuous outreach and support through academic intervention for at-risk students. The AICC supports faculty by serving as a conduit between students facing challenges in attendance, withdrawal, tutoring, general student concerns/ online assistance, and the appropriate JJC resources. The AICC advances equity through quality and continuous outreach to all student and community populations within JJC. AICC provides outreach for students flagged at risk for failing, withdrawing, or needing tutoring and additional student support services.

As indicated in SEM 4.0, a renewed advising model includes a robust team to support student advancement. Addressing an information and equity gap, JJC is working to provide support from the point of application through advising. JJC has allocated funding to hire additional full-time advisors to reduce the caseload once they are fully trained. This will allow JJC to provide more intrusive academic intervention and support (when fully staffed/trained). The use of new emerging technological platforms like Colleague SaaS, Transferology, and Advantage Design provides an enhanced student experience. JJC is also working to increase the number of faculty advisors in each pathway. This ratio must remain significantly lower (approximately 40-50:1) as faculty are content experts and advisors.

First Generation, Minoritized, and Rural Students

Designation as an HSI. For over 120 years, Joliet Junior College has maintained its founding mission and core values of reducing barriers and providing programs that support student and community educational aspirations. This mission and core values directly align with the purpose of the Developing Hispanic-Serving Institution, which is to "expand educational opportunities for, and improve the attainment of, Hispanic students" (U.S. Department of Education, 2024). The prioritization of minoritized and underrepresented students, especially Hispanic students, has been long established through the JJC mission and reinforced daily by President Namuo, leadership teams, in the Strategic and SEM plans, departments, TRIO and State of Illinois funding, financial allocations, and overall commitment to desegregating higher education.

As a designated Hispanic-Serving Institution, JJC unquestionably supports Hispanic students in their educational goals and aspirations. JJC wants to be known as something other than an HSI merely because it met the 25% Latinx student enrollment requirement. However, JJC wants to be recognized as a Hispanic-Serving Institution that builds *confianza* (trusting relationships) while identifying and eliminating equity gaps.

Although the HSI designation is recent, the support systems and services cited are part of JJC's long-standing commitment to its students and communities. JJC is committed to the Hispanic community and to achieving their educational goals and career aspirations by expanding educational opportunities for Hispanic

students and their community. The HSI designation also enables JJC to seek more funding for programs focusing on Hispanic culture and language, benefiting students and parents.

Language. Hispanic students are the largest race/ethnic group within the district and are enrolled at JJC. JJC is taking deliberate actions to ensure Hispanic students and families feel welcome and the Spanish language is honored. The inclusion of Spanish language materials and marketing engages students and families in making an informed decision. Translation devices are available daily or at special events like "Discover JJC." Financial aid workshops are being offered in Spanish and a Spanish Call Hotline is available for students or families with questions. Future job postings will include a preference for bilingual hires. Due to its expansive district, JJC has expanded its culturally responsive Spanish language marketing to communicate with students and families.

Undocumented, DACAmented, and Mixed Status Students. At JJC, the Multicultural & Undocumented Resources (MUR) department within the Center for Multicultural Access and Success (CMAS) is dedicated to serving the needs of immigrant students. It upholds critical pieces of legislation in Illinois that support undocumented immigrants and mixed-status families. All faculty and staff must ensure that JJC remains compliant as an open-access institution. An undocumented student liaison (Public Act 102) has been appointed and is available to support students and departments in applying these statutes.

Entrepreneur & Business Center and Student CEO Program

JJC will continue to support minority, women, and persons with disabilities businesses through the EBC program. EBC will work with its participants to establish their businesses and offer information sessions to help owners navigate the government bidding process.



In the fall of 2024, JJC will partner with Joliet Township High Schools in the Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities (CEO) Program. Funded by investors known as Community Champions, the CEO program enrolls high school students in a for-credit class where they will create their own businesses. This program is community-driven, community-supported, and free for schools and students. JJC will be represented on the Advisory Board.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Diversity, equity, and inclusion remain a steadfast priority championed by JJC's Board of Trustees, President, leadership, and campus community. DEI is woven into the Institutional Strategic Plan, DEI Plan, Core Values, and culture. JJC has developed and implemented



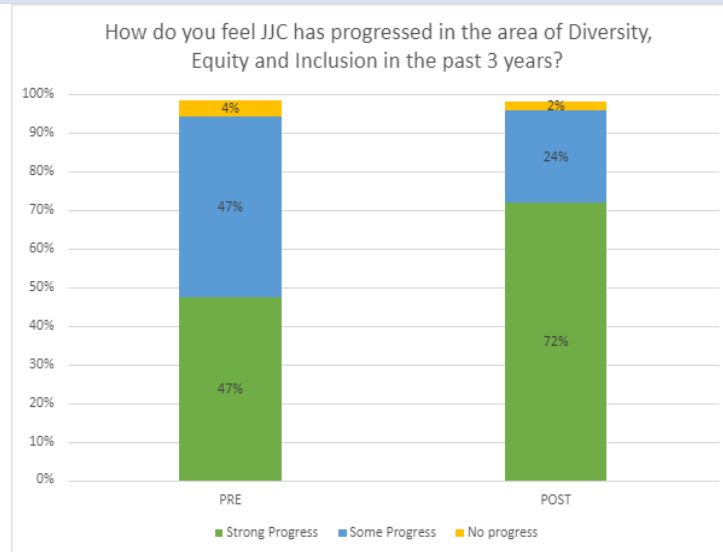
culturally relevant programs and initiatives to support all students, especially its growing demographics of Hispanic students. JJC's DEI team is building a solid campus foundation to welcome students based on cultural awareness and inclusivity. Yearly events, including book clubs with over 400 participants, required Cultural Competency Workshops (CCW), President's Diversity Council, Employee Resource Groups (ERGs), and guest speakers, provide faculty and staff the opportunity to engage, experience, and expand their understanding of minority and underrepresented communities. JJC's recent addition of a Hispanic-Serving Institution Manager demonstrates an institutional commitment to developing practices prioritizing Latinx students and servingness.

Employee Resource Groups. The Employee Resource Groups (ERG) aim to further the mission and core values of JJC, represent the interests of individuals, and support JJC's overall diversity, equity, and inclusion goals. The Employee Resource Groups continues to do this through initiatives such as:

- Celebrate significant historical dates each month (Cultural Awareness)
- Collaborate and support community initiatives and local businesses
- Professional Development (including Self-Care)
- Support/volunteer for employee and student resources and events

Mandatory Cultural Competency Workshops (CCW). Cultural Competency Workshops (CCW) aim to increase awareness of DEI and its value to the JJC community while building skills to help employees create an inclusive culture where everyone can thrive. These workshops provide a safe and open interactive learning environment, encouraging honest dialogue while fostering the JJC Core Values of respect and inclusion. The Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion has provided Cultural Competency Workshops for over 1,265 employees (76%) and shown strong growth in DEI (Figure 12).

Figure 12
 Joliet Junior College Comparison of DEI Progress at JJC, 2021-2024
 (Employee Responses)



Joliet Junior College Office of Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI), 2024a

DEI Employee Book Club. As a campus, JJC has read eight books during the past three years, and there are over 400 returning and new participants. Books are selected based on participant recommendations and include authors such as bell hooks, Ta-Nehisi Coates, Robin DiAngelo, and Estela Bensimon. The book club offers an opportunity for employees to engage with colleagues across various campuses on topics covered in the book(s), such as interpersonal dynamics in professional environments and diverse cultural narratives.

Campus-wide Events. JJC conducts several campus-wide events to promote an inclusive environment. These events consist of Table Talks, Mental Health and Wellness Workshops, Student Focus Mentorship programs, International Student events, programming, and collaborating in over 25 events.

Table Talks are an invaluable platform for meaningful discussions on topics suggested by employees and college leadership. These talks create a space where diverse voices can unite to explore crucial issues facing JJC's campus community and beyond. From discussions on diversity and inclusion to conversations about mental health and wellness, Table Talks foster open dialogue and understanding among participants. Through these sessions, we aim to promote empathy and critical thinking while empowering individuals to advocate for positive change within the campus environment.

In addition to Table Talks, JJC hosts various inclusive events throughout the year, each designed to enrich the student experience and foster a sense of belonging for all. Diversity Week is a cornerstone of the commitment to celebrating and embracing rich cultural backgrounds. Moreover, JJC Mental Health & Wellness Workshops provide essential resources and support for students navigating the challenges of college life.

Through initiatives like the Student Focus Mentorship Program and International Student Events, we cultivate a culture of support and collaboration, ensuring that every member of the campus community can thrive. Whether celebrating cultural heritage or collaborating on programming for over 25 events annually, the JJC commitment to inclusivity remains at the forefront of this campus.

DEI in the Community. The Office of DEI is pivotal in extending JJC's campus values by engaging with the broader community through various impactful initiatives. Through participation in community service opportunities, the DEI office exemplifies JJC's commitment to service and social responsibility in the local area. By forging collaborations with organizations like the Entrepreneur & Business Center (EBC), we foster an environment of innovation and economic empowerment, driving positive changes within the community. Also, by extending Cultural Competency Education training to community partners and partnership organizations, it underscores JJC's dedication to fostering understanding and inclusivity beyond the campus. Through these collaborative efforts, we strive to build bridges and promote equity.

Timeline, Milestones, Assessments, and Metrics

The following timeline and milestones (Table 13), as well as the assessment and metrics (Table 14), were developed in alignment with the Institutional Strategic Plan (2024-2027) and the SEM 4.0 Plan and informed by various departments and stakeholders.



Table 13**Joliet Junior College Implementation Timeline with Milestones**

Existing or Initiate	Program or Service					Milestones
		2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	
E	Dual Credit 12x12x12	X	X	X	X	- Unbiased enrollment - Fully and bilingually staffed - Online platform for monitoring program
E	Recruitment	X	X	X	X	- Yearly growth
E	Placement into college-level coursework	X	X	X	X	- Multiple opportunities for students to be placed into for-credit courses and avoid developmental courses - Transitional English and Math
E	Advising from a relational approach	X	X	X	X	- Decreased Advisor/student ratios - Additional and bilingual staff - Improving student experience through the new emerging technologies
E	FAFSA Completion	X	X	X	X	- Identifying groups that need additional support
E	Scholarship	X	X	X	X	- Continued growth
E	Servingness at HSI	X	X	X		- Examine current practices - Identify areas of success and growth - Expand outreach to families
E	Inclusion of Spanish Language	X	X	X	X	- Landing pages available in Spanish - Materials readily available - Fully bilingual events
E	Undocu-Friendly Campus	X	X	X	X	- Student outreach and employee awareness campaigns and events - Student Advising - Info sessions (Alternative App, ITIN app, and scholarships) - Student Club (iDALE!) - Establish Undocumented Ally Training
E	EBC	X	X	X	X	- Offer seminars, classes, and advising - Co-host networking events - Provide understanding and support of bidding processes - Early career professional support
E	DEI initiatives	X	X	X	X	- Ensuring DEI remains an institutional priority - Mandatory Cultural Competency Workshops - Enhance data collection and analysis to validate impact - Continue embedding DEI institutionally through collaboration

Joliet Junior College Office of Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI), 2024b

Table 14

Joliet Junior College
Assessment Approaches and Metrics

Program or Service	Milestone	Assessment	Metrics Key Performance Indicators
Dual Credit 12x12x12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unbiased enrollment - Fully and bilingually staffed - Online platform for monitoring program 	Surveys Enrollment Reports	- Expanded programming to 9 th and 10 th grades
Recruitment/ Enrollment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase student recruitment, outreach, and High School Relations - Yearly growth - Close the gap between student and employee representation - Create an onboarding task force to assess each step of the enrollment cycle between application to enrollment - Increase persistence rates of focused racial/ ethnic students by fall 2025 	Enrollment Reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase 2% fall over fall - Increase graduation and transfer out rates by 1% each year for the next 3 years
Placement into college-level coursework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Multiple opportunities for students to be placed into for-credit courses and avoid developmental courses - Transitional English and Math 	Reports	
Advising from a relational approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Decreased Advisor/student ratios - Additional and bilingual staff - Improving student experience through the new emerging technologies 	Enrollment data Surveys	- Increase student to staff engagement from onboarding through graduation
FAFSA Completion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assist students with new FAFSA from 2024-2025 	FAFSA completion reports	- Comparison between FY24 and FY25 to determine necessary supports
Servingness at HSI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Examine current practices - identify areas of success and growth - Expand outreach to families 	Survey	- Representation at key events
Inclusion of Spanish Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Landing pages available in Spanish - Materials readily available - Fully bilingual events 	- Survey	- Increased access
Undocu-Friendly Campus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Student outreach and employee awareness campaigns and events - Student Advising - Info sessions (Alternative App, ITIN app, and scholarships) - Student Club (iDALE!) - Speaker Series - Establish Undocumented Ally Training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enrollment reports - Participant sign-ins - Surveys - Focus groups 	- Increase in the baseline of participants
EBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Offer seminars, classes, and advising - Co-host networking events - Provide understanding and support of bidding processes - Early career professional support 	- Participant information	
DEI Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensuring DEI remains an institutional priority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reports - Surveys 	- KPI measurements

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mandatory Cultural Competency Workshops - Enhance data collection and analysis to validate impact - Continue embedding DEI institutionally through collaboration - Develop HSI servingness practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Data Collection - Professional Development - Collaboration - Climate Studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Favorable Campus Climate results - Awards and recognitions - Employee engagement and participation - HSI research, analysis and development
Joliet Junior College Office of Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI), 2024b		

Developing the Equity Plan & Practices Framework

In advance of the Illinois Equity Plan & Practices Framework, Joliet Junior College has spent the past two years listening and reflecting with JJC stakeholders and community, developing core documents, and implementing equitable and inclusive practices that close equity gaps and support student advancement and achievement. The core documents, the review of current data (IPEDS and JJC IR dashboards), and recent firsthand experiential accounts have informed JJC's Equity Plan. Existing core institutional plans and reports such as (but not limited to):

[JJC Institutional Research \(home\)](#)

[JJC IPEDS Report 2023](#)

[JJC 10th Day Census Report \(fall 2019- fall 2023\)](#)

[Personal Assessment of College Environment \(PACE\) Climate Study 2023](#)

[Community College Survey of Student Engagement \(CCSSE\) 2023](#)

[Community College Faculty Survey of Student Engagement \(CCFSSE\) 2023](#)

[Survey of Entering Student Engagement \(SENSE\) 2023](#)

[JJC Institutional Strategic Plan 2024-2027](#)

[Strategic Enrollment Management Plan 4.0 \(2023-2025\)](#)

[JJC Environmental Scan 2023-2027](#)

[JJC Diversity and Equity Plan \(2020-2023\)](#)

[JJC Fact Book 2021](#)

Two key documents informed the JJC Equity Plan- the Institutional Strategic Plan 2024-2027 (Figure 13) and the SEM 4.0 Plan 2023-2025 (Figure 15). In January 2023, the Joliet Junior College community began its seven-month comprehensive planning to develop the 2024-2027 Institutional Strategic Plan. Intended "to design responsive solutions that utilize campus strengths to foster student success" (JJC Institutional Strategic Plan, 2023, p. 11), the strategic planning team included JJC leadership representing the various departments. It included various plans (Academic Plan, Facilities/Master Plan, IT/Tech Plan, and the SEM plan). As explained by President Namuo, "These goals and objectives were developed with broad input. Employees, students, alumni, businesses, board members, donors, and other external partners contributed their perspectives to create this plan, establishing a clear vision while acknowledging how the pandemic has shaped our business. It

defines longer-term goals and objectives while providing a roadmap to ensure we are working toward a common, shared purpose." (JJC Institutional Strategic Plan, 2023, p. 3). The Strategic Timeline (Figure 14) explains the inclusive practices that engage students and allow stakeholders to participate via feedback sessions and surveys. Further, the five pillars of the SEM 4.0 Plan, Admissions & Recruiting, the Student Experience (Onboarding through Graduation), Non-Credit & Extended Campuses, Academic Excellence, and Marketing (Figure 15) align with JJC's mission and vision and advance the goals of equity and inclusion of all students.



Figure 13

JJC Institutional Strategic Plan 2024-2027



Value Diversity and Cultivate Belonging

Connect and engage JJC's diverse students to support their equitable access, growth and connection to the college.

- Increase enrollment of focused student groups.
- Improve the experience for students with disabilities by ensuring ADA compliance throughout the student journey.
- Expand Spanish speaking and Spanish language capacity at JJC through written materials and staff resources.
- Close the gap between student and employee demographic representation.
- Expand the culture of philanthropy by increasing alumni engagement and diversifying the college's donor base.

Craft an Intentional Student Lifecycle

Create a pathway for students to enter and succeed at JJC and ensure a seamless transition into the workforce or transfer institution.

- Strengthen the pipeline by increasing yield of applicants to enrolled students and their first-year retention.
- Increase students' access to advising services to ensure meaningful and effective academic planning.
- Close the equity gap in JJC's overall persistence rate by increasing persistence among Hispanic/Latino, Black and Asian students.
- Increase access to mental health services and supports for current students.
- Increase cohort graduation and transfer outcome rates.

Strengthen from Within

Ensure a supportive and collaborative work environment to retain and develop diverse, talented employees.

- Enhance the employee experience through increased innovation, satisfaction and belonging.
- Increase opportunities for employee career advancement at JJC.
- Decrease 1, 3, and 5-year employee separation.
- Conduct an organizational assessment to examine departmental structures, roles and responsibilities, staff resources and compensation.

Maximize the Infrastructure

Secure JJC's financial, physical and technological resources to support innovation, student success and institutional effectiveness.

- Modernize JJC's technology to position the college on the cutting edge of innovative program and service offerings.
- Successful implementation and adoption of ERP modules.
- Continue efforts to remain fiscally stable and healthy while pursuing new revenue and generating partnerships and grant opportunities.
- Diversify space utilization through predictive analytics internally and community collaborations for satellite locations.
- Ensure institutional systems are secure and vulnerabilities are decreased.

Grow Our Possibilities

Differentiate JJC through innovative credit, non-credit and high school programs to support diverse student needs and goals.

- Increase the total number of district students, and particularly the number of students of color, who complete the 12x12x12 initiative, 12 credits earned by 12th grade.
- iCampus: Increase flexibility for students' route to completion blending in-seat, hybrid and online course schedules.
- Grow High-Impact Practices, focusing on the implementation of First-Year Experience courses.
- Increase the number of corporate training programs and enrollees.
- Increase the number of ABE, ESL, GED, ELL and international students enrolling in and transitioning to credit-bearing programs.
- Expand community learning experiences, ensuring students have a variety of internships and service-learning opportunities on and off campus.
- Expansion in Grundy County.

Joliet Junior College, 2023a, p. 9.

Figure 14
JJC Institutional Strategic Plan 2024-2027 Timeline



Joliet Junior College Strategic Plan 2024-2027

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Figure 15
Joliet Junior College Five Pillars of the SEM 4.0 Plan



The first pillar is The Admissions/Recruiting theme will focus on bringing new students to the college. Its action plans will ensure a strategic and innovative approach to recruiting a diverse population of traditional, non-traditional and dual-credit students. It will capitalize upon areas that set JJC apart from competitors, and will provide a framework for targeting, recruiting and removing barriers from the enrollment process.

The second pillar is The Student Experience. Here, action plans are established that reflect the entire student journey from application through graduation.

The third pillar is Non-credit & Extended Campuses. Here, we will strategically look at growing our non-credit offerings, and providing a seamless transition for those students into our credit-bearing programs at all JJC locations and online.

The fourth pillar focuses on Academic Excellence. Today's students expect an affordable, accessible, high-quality academic product. It is our goal to meet and exceed this student expectation. Action plans will include introducing new academic programs that meet employer needs, providing robust faculty development, and expanding our online offerings.

The fifth pillar of SEM 4.0 is Marketing. Marketing impacts all areas of the college, and this pillar reflects that. Joliet Junior College is a critically important part of the community. As such, JJC has a responsibility to be visible and active within our community. This pillar creates a strategic approach to accomplishing this goal.

Joliet Junior College, 2023a, p. 5.

Joliet Junior College, 2023b, p. 4

The Illinois Equity Plan & Practices Framework will be shared with the entire JJC community, and feedback will be invited to ensure the policies, strategies, services, and practices reduce barriers and increase student advancement. There are four steps towards transparency:

1. Viewing of the Equity Plan & Practices Framework

The plan will be available for students and employees to view on a dedicated website.

2. Employee and Management Orientation

The Equity Plan will be shared with management personnel, particularly those responsible for activities and practices. The orientation is to provide a better understanding of the intent of the Equity Plan, its goals and timetables, and individual responsibilities and roles in ensuring the successful implementation of the Equity Plan.

3. Meetings on the Equity Plan

Periodic meetings are held to discuss the plan's goals and objectives. In addition, the plan's progress will be updated regularly and reported to various constituents, including, but not limited to, the President's Cabinet, Board of Trustees, President's Leadership Council, Institutional Strategic Plan, Academic Affairs Town Halls, and Welcome Week.

4. Community Outreach

Joliet Junior College is committed to various community outreach groups and initiatives. JJC's service to the community is ongoing, and the President's Ambassador Group and College-Community Partnership subcommittee builds upon external partnerships each year.

In addition, the President's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Council will serve as a coordinating council for diversity groups and issues on campus for information and as a champion for diversity. The goals of this Council include:

1. Serve to achieve student success, emphasizing enrollment, advancement, graduation, transfer rates, and effective teaching and learning outcomes.
2. Improve the advancement of minority, underrepresented, and underprepared student populations and close the gap between high school and college performance.
3. Recommend goals and action plans to the President in alignment with the college's mission and strategic plan.
4. Review the implementation and evaluation of the action plan.
5. Review reports that track and chart progress.
6. Report on progress to the campus community.
7. Provide recommendations to the administration.

Relationship Between Equity Plan & Practices Framework and Institutional Plans

The Equity Plan & Practices Framework encompasses JJC's two guiding documents, the Institutional Strategic Plan 2024-2027 (Figure 13) and the SEM 4.0 Plan (Figure 15) as demonstrated in Figure 2.

The recently launched Institutional Strategic Plan 2024-2027 and SEM 4.0 place students' experiences (predominantly minority and underrepresented) at the forefront and set an institutional expectation of enrollment, retention, and completion at JJC. Both plans included committees comprised of key individuals from various departments, including Academic Affairs, Student Development, Enrollment, and Senior Leadership, whose insights and leadership guide the college. Significantly, the five goals of JJC's guiding document were developed with broad input from multiple groups of stakeholders. Three of the five goals and objectives prioritize students, their diversity, and intentionally growing programs supporting their growth and aspirations. These are:

- **Value Diversity and Cultivate Belonging:** Connect and engage JJC's diverse students to support their equitable access, growth, and connection to the college.
- **Craft an Intentional Student Lifecycle:** Create a pathway for students to enter and succeed at JJC and ensure a seamless transition into the workforce or transfer institution.
- **Grow our Possibilities:** Differentiate JJC through innovative credit, non-credit, and high school programs to support diverse student needs and goals.

SEM 4.0 Plan aligns with the JJC's strategic plan, adheres to its mission, values, and goal, and will take the college in a new direction by focusing on five distinct pillars. The five pillars are identified as (a) Admissions & Recruiting, (b) The Student Experience (Onboarding through Graduation), (c) Non-credit & Extended

Campuses, (d) Academic Excellence, and (e) Marketing, and each includes strategies, objectives, and action plans. Importantly, the Institutional Strategic Plan 2024-27, SEM 4.0, with its detailed initiatives, programs, and goals, is a priority for President Clyne Namuo and the Cabinet, faculty, staff, and Board of Trustees of Joliet Junior College. The support and consistency that permeates the college ensures everyone sees JJC minority and underrepresented students, their lived experiences, aspirations, advancement, and successes as a priority.

Plan for Continuous Feedback from College and Community

JJC will share its Equity Plan & Practices Framework and solicit feedback through existing practices. These established opportunities are familiar, brave, and safe spaces where equity conversations often occur.

All community members will be engaged through JJC's social media, digital marketing, and on-campus displays. JJC and JJC DEI have well-established and active social media platforms, and these multiple platforms will be used to share information about the Equity Plan and Practices Framework. Centralized on-campus digital displays at all five campuses are available to provide information and promote events. Multiple information boards are available to post flyers for all to see. The Center for Multicultural Access and Success and the Office of Student Activities are a hub for students and an ideal location to share and solicit student feedback. These flyers will also be provided to JJC Ambassadors to share with the community organizations they engage with.

Throughout the academic year, there are several events and convenings of administrators, faculty, and staff during which updates can be provided and feedback collected. Campus-wide events like Opening Week (fall and spring) and EDUCON allow faculty and staff to facilitate a topic of their choice. They would be an ideal space for sharing the Equity Plan & Practices Framework. Student Development and Academic Affairs host Town Hall meetings (twice monthly), during which time can be requested to discuss the plan. The Board of Trustees will receive annual updates. There is also a JJC training portal where training videos can be uploaded.

The President's DEI council hosts Community Dinners, inviting the public and key external partners to provide input to inform institutional initiatives and strategic planning. JJC also provides outreach and strategic partnerships to the African Black Business Association (ABBA), Latino Economic Development Association (LEDA), YMCA of Greater Joliet, the G.W. Buck Boys and Girls Club, and Joliet's Chamber of Commerce DEI Council, where this information can be shared.

In summary, JJC's comprehensive approach to diversity, equity, and inclusion is not just a set of policies, but a testament to JJC's unwavering commitment. It is reflected in the equity policies, strategic initiatives, and supportive services. The data and outcomes presented validate the ongoing progress in fostering an equitable and inclusive campus culture where everyone can thrive. JJC's policies, institutional strategies, and practices ensure that DEI principles are not just words but are embedded institutionally,

demonstrating JJC's unwavering commitment to advancing equity and inclusion, driving meaningful change, and creating a campus culture that values and respects everyone.

JJC's Equity Plan and Practices Framework is a comprehensive guide articulating how the college fosters an inclusive, equitable, and diverse community. Through its institutional strategy, policies, innovative practices, and dedicated support services, JJC is committed to creating an environment where students, employees, and the community feel welcome and respected. The incremental successes detailed in this plan demonstrate JJC's dedication to student advancement, continuous improvement, and equitable outcomes. By fostering an inclusive and supportive campus culture, JJC, its leadership, and its employees collaboratively ensure the college's sustainability and its students' advancement.

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