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# CONCORD UNIVERSITY

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## CU FORWARD | Title III

PROJECT NARRATIVE

&

EVALUATION PLAN



**Project Narrative & Evaluation: Amended c. June 1, 2022**

Concord University is a public, career-focused liberal arts institution located in rural southern West Virginia. Since 1872, Concord has offered quality educational programs to one of the poorest regions of the country. With an enrollment of approximately 1,700 undergraduates and 310 graduate students, Concord has experienced an enrollment decline over the past five years due in part to decline in the high school population,<sup>1</sup> college-going rate, and a decrease in state funding for higher education.<sup>2</sup> The region and state face dire economics due largely to the demise of coal production and its ancillary industries, such as the

railroad. Yet the need for postsecondary education has never been greater if West Virginia is to transition from a coal economy to ensure a sustainable future.

To improve retention and graduation rates and thereby strengthen enrollment and fiscal viability, Concord proposes **CU Forward**, a suite of innovations that aligns with the mission of Concord University. First, CU Forward will provide affordable and flexible education through online courses and degree programs.



With its mountainous terrain and difficult topography, broadband and internet access have been slow to arrive in the region due to the unprofitability for service

providers. Thus, access to online education has been limited until recently. CU Forward provides the needed structure to increase and modernize online courses to three populations of students: high school students to increase college readiness; typical college students to increase online degree programs; and adult learners who may have some college but have not completed a degree. Online education is especially critical to increasing higher education access to rural students in Central Appalachia, who are often bound by place and constrained by work and home responsibilities. Second, CU Forward will create a pipeline for students to engage in high-impact practices including research and internships earlier in and throughout their time at Concord to increase retention and completion and ultimately move directly into a career. Finally, CU Forward will develop an Office of Institutional Research so that the University can continue to report to students, the community, faculty, and staff the efforts of the University in a transparent way.

These three areas of development were identified over the past year by engaging the primary stakeholders of Concord University: students, faculty and staff. A Title III committee was developed to represent each of these constituencies. The committee reviewed the University's strategic plan and related data to identify areas weakness that, if addressed in a sustainable way, would positively impact Concord University students by becoming more college ready, increasing retention and persistence, and graduating to move directly into the workforce.

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<sup>1</sup> See WVHEPC, *Higher Education Report Card*, 2017.

<sup>2</sup> WV Center for Budget & Policy, 2017. Funding for higher ed decreased by \$130 million since 2008.



**A. QUALITY OF COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION PLAN**

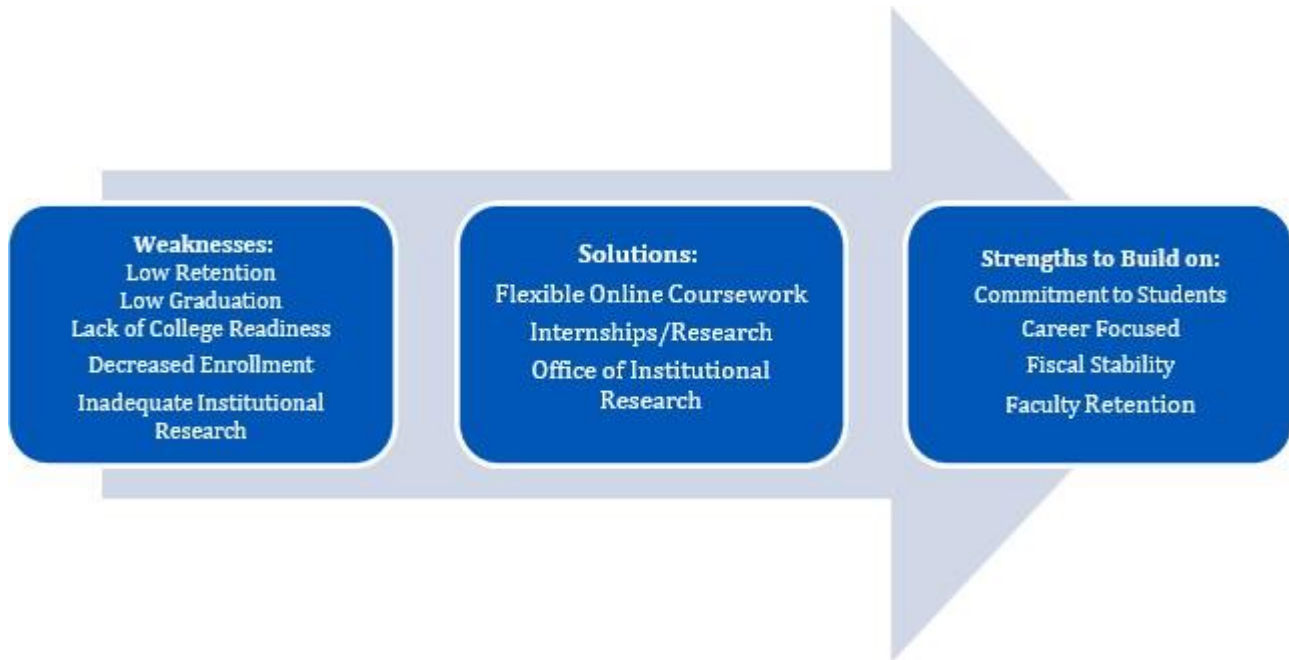
**1) The strengths, weaknesses, and significant problems of the institution:**

Concord University (CU) has a high percentage of low-income, first generation, academically underprepared students who come from the surrounding rural region. Table A1 is a summary of important CU enrollment, academic, retention/completion, and financial aid data. Approximately 84 percent of Concord’s in-state students come from seven rural counties in southern WV including McDowell County, one of the nation’s poorest, with a per capita income of less than \$14,000.

<b>Table A1. Concord University Snapshot</b>	
<b>Enrollment</b>	
Fall 2018 undergraduate headcount enrollment /First-time freshmen	1724 / 429
Graduate headcount enrollment	310
% First-Generation	40%
% 25 years or older (undergraduates)	12.7%
Race: % White / % Black+AmIn-AK+Asian+Hispanic+Latino+ HI+Other	88% / 12%
% Change in undergraduate enrollment Fall 2014 to Fall 2018	-23%
<b>Academic Preparation</b>	
CU Average ACT Composite/National Avg. ACT Composite	21.09/21
Average HS GPA of Incoming Student	3.4
% Placed into developmental math or English (Fall 2015)	34%
<b>Retention/Completion</b>	
Freshmen to sophomore retention rate (5 yr average, Fall 2012-2016)	65%
Six-year bachelor's graduation rate (2012 first-time, full-time	38%

freshmen cohort)	
Four-year bachelor's graduation rate	18%
<b>Financial Aid</b>	
% Pell recipients	54%
% of Students on Financial Aid	97%

Based on comprehensive analysis, the Title III committee determined that developing flexible online coursework and degree programs, engaging students early in their college careers in internships and research along with the development of an Office of Institutional Research would address the academic, institutional management, and fiscal stability problems cited below, while maintaining a mission of integrity and reflecting strategic priorities. The identified solutions/goals were chosen to ameliorate the weaknesses or needs cited in this proposal, but they were also chosen because the solutions are extensions of the strengths of CU. The committee and stakeholders developed a program design that is more likely to succeed and be sustained because there is a foundation in place on which to build.





## WEAKNESSES/PROBLEMS

**Academic Program Problem 1:** Low Retention and Graduation Rates: Concord is known for its quality programs and academic rigor, a strength for academics, but a roadblock to retention/graduation for many underprepared, underrepresented students. Retention/graduation rates have slowly risen, from a low of 62% first-time freshmen retention in 2008 to 68% in 2016<sup>3</sup> and a six-year graduation rate increase from 33.5% for the 2008 cohort to 38% for the latest cohort of graduates. The four-year graduation rate, however, remains below 20% and half that for minority students. CU retention and graduation rates fall below national averages of similarly selective, public, four-year Master's institutions, approximately 70.7%, 24.7% (4-yr), and 44.1% (6-yr)<sup>4</sup> respectively. Retention and graduation are noted as *Special Interest Items* for the CU Board of Governors, are a part of the Strategic Plan, and are key initiatives for the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission (WVHEPC), WV's higher education coordinating board. To improve retention and graduation, over a decade ago Concord created the Academic Success Center (ASC) as a one-stop shop for support services. In Summer 2019, the Academic Success Center and the fledgling Office of Career Services were combined to create the Center for Academic and Career Development in order to increase services from academic support to career guidance. Concord currently lacks resources to devote

the same attention to online education where retention/graduation rates are nationally lower than on-campus programs. One estimate is that full-time online programs average 55% retention, compared to 77% for traditional classrooms.<sup>5</sup> Emphasis on retaining and graduating online students will be a focus of CU Forward.

**Academic Program Problem 2: Lack of College Readiness:** The ACT was the college entrance exam of choice for West Virginia until 2019. In 2018, only 30% of West Virginia’s ACT test-takers met the college readiness benchmark for mathematics; only 32% met the benchmark for science, and 46% met the reading benchmark. Only 20% of WV students met college readiness benchmarks in all four ACT subject areas.<sup>6</sup> Further, only 34% of high school seniors in counties surrounding Concord took classes that meet the WV Department of Education definition of a rigorous high school curriculum. A 2015 Concord University analysis found a positive correlation between the number of higher- level high school math courses taken and hours earned in college,<sup>7</sup> reinforcing the importance of a rigorous high school curriculum to college success. In Fall 2015 approximately 34% of entering CU freshmen were placed into developmental math or English.<sup>8</sup> (Fall 2016 CU moved to a fully corequisite developmental education model, so students requiring remediation are now placed into a college-level course with supplemental instruction, a “game changer” according to Complete College America.)



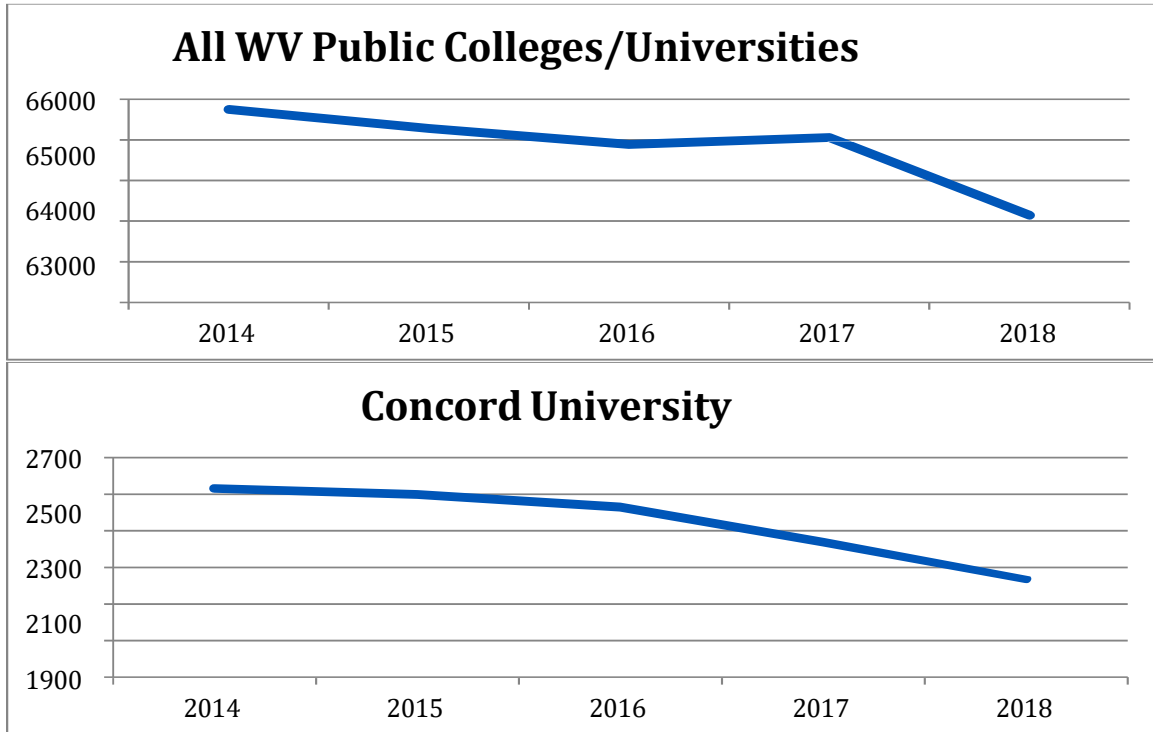
**Institutional Management Problem 1: Need for Innovative Course Design to Maximize Student Success:** Although CU faculty have been participating in Quality Matters training to ensure online course integrity, faculty have had limited in-depth training or support around effective online course design for improving student engagement. This, coupled with a lack of standardized course development procedures, results in some faculty simply transferring lecture-style course format to online delivery. Particularly for General Education, important foundational courses for upper-level curriculum, it is essential to engage students early in the learning process. Failure to do so risks higher numbers of course withdrawal or failure and potentially higher withdrawal rates from the University. Excellent instructional design to meet pedagogical goals allows faculty to develop and deliver quality online courses to improve student success. Providing faculty professional development for innovative course design, along with templates for course development and the implementation of a standard course development process with initial review, is essential.

**Institutional Management Problem 2: The Use of Organizational Data for Strategic Decision Making:** Concord University has cobbled together an IT position for tracking needed data. However, the University has never had a dedicated institutional research position to ensure stakeholders are making informed decisions, gauging effectiveness towards meeting strategic initiatives, and reporting needed information for both state and federal compliance. Large amounts of data reside in the current LMS and could be utilized for understanding how students learn, their engagement with content, and identifying student risk for dropping or failing a course. The need exists to extract and analyze these data and share them with the campus-wide community.

**Fiscal Stability Problem 1: Decreased Enrollment and Lack of College Attendance:** The graphs below illustrate the decline of enrollment.<sup>9</sup> The first graph represents all WV colleges and universities; the second graph demonstrates that Concord's enrollment decline mirrors a statewide problem.



**Table A2: Postsecondary enrollment: WV public colleges and CU Enrollment**



Fall 2018 first-time freshmen enrollment data for the seven-county, southern WV area surrounding Concord describe a low number of high school students attending college immediately following their senior year. For Fall 2018, only 32.9% of area students enrolled in public four-year institutions the fall following high school graduation, and only 4.3% enrolled in WV public two-year institutions.<sup>10</sup> Yet, on the High School Senior Opinions Survey of 2017, nearly 9 out of 10 seniors report planning to attend college, with 83% reporting a plan to attend the next fall. At the time of the survey, more than 80% had been accepted to college, with more than 70% accepted to a WV public institution.<sup>11</sup> Clearly there is a disconnect between student educational goals and matriculation reality.



Graduating high school students also indicated that program offerings and cost are the two most important factors considered when choosing a college. Close to half indicated they wanted to live at home. Many adult learners also want more flexible, career-focused curricular offerings. Providing affordable online curriculum from a trusted institution improves students' options for attending college.

**Fiscal Stability Problem 2: Large and Continued State Budget Cuts:** West Virginia's economy has been dismal for the last several years. As noted by the WV Center for Budget & Policy (2016) "...state investment in higher education per student fell more than 21 percent from 2008 to 2014, while average tuition rose more than 26 percent over that same time period." State support for higher education has fallen from almost 26.5% to 22% of Concord's budget or by close to \$1 million over the last ten years and by almost \$2 million from twenty years ago, when state appropriations accounted for more than  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the institution's budget.<sup>12</sup> Clearly, fiscal stability is difficult to maintain when appropriations are so drastically reduced. The effects for low-income students are particularly dire, as need-based aid has not kept pace with rising tuition and fees. Increasing in-demand, online courses and programs, thereby increasing enrollment, will help mitigate state budget cuts.

## SECTION ENDNOTES

<sup>3</sup> *CU Graduation Reports*, Beasley, 2016

<sup>4</sup> Source: ACT 2018 National Collegiate Retention and Persistence-to-Degree Rates.

<sup>5</sup> *Online Universities: Retention Rate Data* <https://www.usnews.com/education/online-education/articles/2010/10/22/online-universities-retention-rate-data>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.act.org/content/dam/act/unsecured/documents/cccr2018/National-CCCR-2018.pdf>  
The Condition of College & Career Readiness 2018,

<sup>7</sup> Georgieva, Beasley, & Flanigan, 2015, Presentation to Student Success Summit, Morgantown, WV

<sup>8</sup> WVHEPC Data Portal

[https://www.wvhepc.org/resources/Dashboard/Remedial/2015/cr\\_ftfr\\_dev.html](https://www.wvhepc.org/resources/Dashboard/Remedial/2015/cr_ftfr_dev.html)

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.wvhepc.edu/resources/data-and-publication-center/data-center-enrollment/>

<sup>10</sup> *West Virginia College Going Rates By County and High School, Fall 2018*, WVHEPC, [http://www.wvhepc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/CGR\\_2018\\_Final\\_PDF.pdf?](http://www.wvhepc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/CGR_2018_Final_PDF.pdf?)

<sup>11</sup> *Review and Analysis of the Class of 2014-2017 High School Senior Opinions Survey*, WVHEPC & WVCTC, <http://www.wvhepc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Review-Analysis-2014-LR.pdf> <http://www.wvhepc.edu/resources/data-and-publication-center/high-school-senior-opinions-dashboard/>

<sup>12</sup> WV Center for Budget & Policy WV Center for Budget & Policy <http://www.wvpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/WVCBP-Guide-to-the-State-Budget-2016-web.pdf>

### CONCORD UNIVERSITY PROGRAM STRENGTHS

**Academic Program Strength 1: Strong Commitment to Student Access & Success:** Concord University has long been committed to improving student access and completion, particularly for low-SES and first-generation students in rural



Appalachia.<sup>13</sup> Evidence of this commitment to strengthen the pipeline to college is the multiple TRIO and GEAR UP programs implemented through Concord serving the surrounding communities. CU has the most TRIO programs of any WV higher education institution. Additionally in June 2019, CU announced tuition would now be free for Pell eligible, WV students.<sup>14</sup> Concord leadership, faculty, and staff are dedicated to improving retention and graduation rates, institutional priorities laid out in the 2020 Strategic Plan. Retention rates for Pell-eligible students continue to be high, are close to overall institutional rates, and are above the state's average for all low-income, four-year public college students.<sup>15</sup> Four-year 120 credit hour program plans were introduced to students, and all students are advised to complete 15 credit hours per semester to graduate in four years. Due to these efforts, over the last five years, the percentage of freshmen attempting 15+ credit hours increased from 81.3% to 91.2%, and the percentage earning 15+ hours increased over 9 percentage points (27.2% to 36.6%) while the percentage earning 12+ hours increased from 51.5% to 66.3%. *This commitment to access and student success provides the foundation for affordable and flexible online courses for high school students (through dual enrollment and college-readiness courses), undergraduates, and adult learners.*

**Academic Program Strength 2: Strong Academic Reputation as Career-Focused Liberal Arts Institution:** Concord is a high-quality, career-focused, liberal arts institution with especially strong academic reputations in education, social work, business, and natural sciences.<sup>16</sup> The institution's mission is to provide quality, liberal arts-based education, to foster scholarly activities, and to serve the regional community. Concord provides rigorous programs, primarily at the baccalaureate level, which prepare students to pursue various graduate study and career options and to assume leadership and professional roles in a multicultural society. In keeping with its tradition of service to the region, the University offers a limited number of carefully selected graduate degrees. *Providing student engagement in internships and research will be an extension of CU's already strong undergraduate and graduate degree programs to ensure more students persist and graduate ready for a career.*

**Institutional Management Strength 1: Commitment to Faculty Development and Excellence:** With 96% of full-time faculty having terminal degrees, Concord has long been committed to hiring and retaining a highly qualified teaching faculty. Commitment to faculty development is part of the University’s mission stating we are “committed to furthering knowledge through professional development activities and programs...” In 2018-19 CU’s Provost created the Center for Teaching and Learning. In its first year, 42 percent of faculty engaged in one or more sessions sponsored by the Center. To ensure online course integrity, CU faculty began participating in Quality Matters (QM) training in 2012.<sup>17</sup> Since that initial cohort, all faculty teaching online course have participated in at least one QM training.<sup>18</sup> CU is working towards a peer review of all online courses. *This commitment to faculty development will ensure strong buy-in from faculty to develop and implement quality online coursework.*

**Institutional Management Strength 2: Institutional Stability and Foundation for Online Programs/Services:** Faculty and staff retention is high, strengthening institutional stability and long-term strategic planning and programming capabilities. Concord currently has four online graduate programs (Master of Arts in Health Promotions, Master of Arts in Teaching, Master of Education, and Master of Social Work) and 38 undergraduate online courses, providing a foundation to develop the complete General Education requirements online as well as fully online baccalaureate programs (neither exist currently). To support these programs, Concord participates in the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA), which establishes comparable national standards for interstate offering of postsecondary distance education courses and programs. Also, Smarthinking for 24/7 online tutoring is



available to all CU students as is DegreeWorks, an online degree audit tool. CU has made an investment to develop the infrastructure to support online learning. *CU Forward will provide resources to expand online learning through Dual Enrollment and college-readiness courses, create fully online degree programs, and develop courses specifically designed for adult learners.*

**Fiscal Stability Strength 1: Effective Fiscal Management with Emphasis on Cost Savings, Efficiencies, and Building Enrollment:** Concord is proactively addressing enrollment issues by prioritizing admissions and retention efforts. To address state budget cuts and enrollment declines, CU created a Cost Savings Task Force in 2016, representative of all major constituencies, students, staff and faculty, that meets regularly for analysis and input. Concord employs sound and effective fiscal management that complies with all state and federal regulations, as well as an effective Office of Sponsored Programs that provides oversight to grant programs for ensuring fiscal and programmatic compliance. As a public institution CU is independently audited annually (single audit review process). CU Forward will create affordable online coursework for students in the region thereby increasing enrollment and fiscal stability.

**Fiscal Stability Strength 2: Strong University Foundation:** The Concord University Foundation provides a large number of student scholarships to offset college costs. It actively seeks donor contributions to attract new, and support continuing, students.<sup>19</sup> This commitment to our students has resulted in the highly anticipated announcement, made on June 7th, 2019, that CU will now be tuition-free for Pell eligible, WV students.<sup>20</sup> Another highlight of our commitment to providing an affordable college education is that students graduating from CU are graduating with the lowest amount of student debt in the state.<sup>21</sup> In addition to awarding scholarships based on academic merit, Concord provides many need-based financial support for low-income students. Within the past several years, Concord launched

the PAWS and Pathways scholarships totaling \$100,000 annually for upper-class students with unmet need.<sup>22</sup> Concord's endowment is the largest among the four-year, public regional institutions in the state. <sup>23</sup> Even nationally, Concord's endowment per FTE is high, approximately \$20,000 compared to \$7,600 of public, Master's level institutions included in the National Association of College and University Business Officers' Common Fund Study of Endowments (2018). *Building on this strategic initiative, CU Forward will create affordable online coursework for students in the region.*

### SECTION ENDNOTES

<sup>13</sup> Longstanding federally funded programs like Student Support Services, Upward Bound, McNair Scholars Program, and GEAR UP have enabled Concord to focus on the college pipeline (8<sup>th</sup> grade – college graduation and graduate school).

<sup>14</sup> [https://www.concord.edu/Financial-Aid/Free-Degree-\(1\).aspx](https://www.concord.edu/Financial-Aid/Free-Degree-(1).aspx)

<sup>15</sup> West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission 2018 WV Higher Education Report Card

<sup>16</sup> Concord was named #1 public WV institution among regional colleges South in U.S. News & World Report, 2015.

<sup>17</sup> Quality Matters is a national nonprofit committed to quality assurance in online course design.

<sup>18</sup> One training is not sufficient for creating innovative, effective online courses but creates a foundation on which to build.

<sup>19</sup> Almost 25% of Concord undergraduates receive institutional scholarships/grants with an average award of approx. \$2700. Source: WVHEPC (2014). West Virginia Institutional Aid.

<sup>20</sup> [https://www.concord.edu/Financial-Aid/Free-Degree-\(1\).aspx](https://www.concord.edu/Financial-Aid/Free-Degree-(1).aspx)

<sup>21</sup> [https://www.concord.edu/Financial-Aid/Free-Degree-\(1\)/History-of-Serving-Low-Income-Students.aspx](https://www.concord.edu/Financial-Aid/Free-Degree-(1)/History-of-Serving-Low-Income-Students.aspx)

<sup>22</sup> Sean O'Leary, "State Budget Cuts Hit Higher Education Hard" (Charleston, West Virginia: West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy, March 2017).

<sup>23</sup> WVHEPC financial statements.



## A. QUALITY OF COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION PLAN

### 2) The goals for the institution are realistic and based on analysis:

In early 2016, CU formed a Title III Committee to identify the major institutional issues to address, which were included in a previous proposal. Although the proposal was not funded, the committee remained focused on the overall well-being of the University, and the subsequent goals, objectives, strategies, activities, and solutions to overcome the challenges evolved into this Title III grant proposal. The committee was guided by the following: (1) feedback through the CU Student Government Association (SGA) President, (2) a campus-wide student survey, (3) meetings with the Faculty Executive Board, Academic Council, and SGA, (4) the CU 2020 Strategic Plan (which includes a SWOT analysis and involved both campus and external constituents),<sup>24</sup> (5) the 2013-2019 Institutional Compact (annual progress report to WVHEPC on goals and strategies/ activities/ comprehensive plans/metrics related to enrollment, retention, graduation, and other student outcomes), (6) regional marketing analyses and employment data,<sup>25</sup> and (7) CU admissions and withdrawal data indicating student program preferences and reasons for leaving CU.

The Committee arrived at the following Title III goals:

**Goal 1: Increase affordable access to general education and market-driven degree programs through online courses:** This goal addresses Academic Problems 1 and 2, low retention and graduation rates and lack of college readiness. A market analysis assessing the needs for online coursework for Concord students, high school students and adult learners will be completed informing the direction of online course and program creation. In addition to dual enrollment courses, college-



readiness courses in areas such as study skills, financial literacy, and other areas identified as weaknesses among incoming students will be developed. Also, CU Forward will provide targeted, timely, accessible support services for online learners, which is crucial for student success and addresses Institution Management Problem 1, need for innovative course design to maximize student success. Quality course design, delivery, and ongoing assessment are essential for meeting learning goals and for retention/completion. Finally, this goal also addresses Fiscal Stability Problem 1, declining enrollment and lack of college attendance. Providing alternative means for students to access higher education from a well-known area leader will boost enrollment and provide students alternatives to on-campus courses. CU Forward provides a viable option for higher education, given the area's rural nature, long commute times to campus, and need for employment by students. Building on CU's Academic Strength 1 and Institutional Management Strengths 1 and 2, CU will be able to sustain the implementation and expansion of a comprehensive online learning program.

**Goal 2: Student engagement with research/internships that lead to graduation and a career:** This goal addresses Academic Problem 1 and Fiscal Problem 1. Through engagement with an internship and research throughout a student's college career, students will more clearly make connections between the college experience and the possible career opportunities waiting for them. Students participating in research will also have the opportunity to present their findings at appropriate conferences. The Student Services Specialist will lead the development of curriculum to be embedded in courses, walking students through career options related to the course content. Curriculum will be flexible in that faculty can choose from multiple methods of implementation.

Additionally, the Student Services Specialist (SSS) will develop an Alumni Mentor



Network for increased internship and research opportunities. This goal builds on CU's Academic Strength 1 and 2. Through a commitment to student success and an emphasis on careers, CU Forward will enable the University to dedicate resources to cataloging and disseminating critical information to support students in developing post-graduation career plans.

**Goal 3: A robust and transparent office of Institutional Research to share data with students, parents, the community, faculty, and staff:** This goal addresses all the CU weaknesses in that an Office of Institutional Research will enable the campus to make informed decisions regarding each of these areas for growth and track the accomplishments moving forward.

## SECTION ENDNOTES

<sup>23</sup> WVHEPC financial statements.

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.concord.edu/About/History-Future/Strategic-Plan.aspx>

<sup>25</sup> West Virginia University Bureau of Business and Economic Research <http://business.wvu.edu/centers/bureau-of-business-and-economic-research/data/employment-and-wages>; Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce <https://cew.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/OCLM-WestVirginia.pdf>

**A. QUALITY OF COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION PLAN**

**3) The objectives are measurable and related to institutional goals:** The following table illustrates the measurable outcomes as they relate to CU Forward institutional goals. Measures with ‘no current baseline’ data will be collected in year one.

**Table A3: Goals, Objectives and Outcomes**

Goals	Measurable Objectives	Outcomes
<b>Goal #1: Increase affordable access to general education and market driven degree programs through online courses</b>		
1.1 Market-driven online courses meet the needs of Concord students	1.1.A Increase HS Students engaged with dual enrollment and college-readiness courses to 200 students ( <b>Baseline: Fall 2018 headcount=73</b> ) 1.1.B Increase undergraduate/graduate students online course taking by 10% ( <b>Baseline: Fall 2018 head count 1070</b> ) 1.1.C Increase adult learners engaged with online degree programs by 10% ( <b>Baseline: Fall 2018 head count 426</b> ) 1.1.D Increase the percentage of undergraduate students completing online courses and earning grades of C or better to 82% ( <b>Baseline: Fall 2018 77.5%</b> )	A robust online program that supports high school students to complete a dual enrollment or college-readiness course, undergraduate and graduate students to complete a college degree, and adult learners to re-engage in higher education
1.2 Professional Development for faculty to design and implement high-quality online content that engages students	1.2.A Sixty percent of all faculty teaching online will participate in professional development beyond initial QM training and 90% will report an increased competency for incorporating online coursework ( <b>No current baseline: surveys and counts</b> ) 1.2.B Students’ satisfaction with online courses increase by 10% annually ( <b>No current baseline: surveys</b> )	Engaging online coursework to support student enrollment and retention
1.3 Expand student services in the Center for Academic and Career Development	1.3.A Increase the percentage of students completing online courses and earning grades of C or better to 82% ( <b>Baseline: Fall 2018 77.5%</b> ) 1.3.B Fifty percent of students provided support services through the Center ( <b>No current baseline; services tracked</b> ) 1.3.C Increase retention of students served by Center to 70% ( <b>No current baseline; services tracked</b> )	Strengthened support services that increase persistence and completion
<b>Goal #2: Student engagement with innovative career exploration through research and internships that lead to graduation and a career</b>		



<p>2.1 Concord courses will offer career services and support embedded in coursework</p>	<p>2.1.A Forty percent of courses will be embedded with career services (<b>No current baseline</b>)                  2.1.B Forty percent of faculty will receive professional development to embed career services (No current baseline)                  2.1.C Increase in students reporting engaging in career planning with faculty to 3.0 National Survey for Student Engagement (NSSE) average<sup>26</sup> (Baseline: NSSE 2.6 avg.)</p>	<p>Every degree program will have explicit career services content embedded into the curriculum</p>
<p>2.2 Alumni Mentor Network will offer student support for career exploration</p>	<p>2.2.A Increase number of alumni partnerships to 150 (No current baseline; count of network participants)                  2.2.B Thirty percent of students will engage with the alumni network (No current baseline; surveys)</p>	<p>CU students will have access to a network of CU professionals</p>
<p>2.3 Internships &amp; Undergraduate Research will increase student engagement and retention</p>	<p>2.3.A Increase percentage of students participating in internships to 60% (Baseline: NSSE 49%)                  2.3.B Increase percentage of students participating in undergraduate research to 40% (Baseline: NSSE 25%)                  2.3.C Fifty percent of students provided support services from the Center for Academic and Career Development (No current baseline; services tracked)                  2.3.D Increase retention of students provided services by the Center and engaged with internships/research to 70% (No current baseline; services tracked)</p>	<p>Through engagement with internships and research students will persist and graduate and move directly into career opportunities</p>
<p><b>Goal #3: A robust and transparent office of Institutional Research that supports the campus community in making better evidence-based decisions</b></p>		
<p>3.1 Data dashboards for students and community</p>	<p>3.1.A Increase stakeholder views and usage of data dashboards as reported through a survey to 50%                  3.1.B Increase stakeholder use of data for evidence-based decision making as reported through a survey to 30%</p>	<p>Shared data to support decision-making</p>
<p>3.2 Effective use of organizational data for increased evidence-based decision making</p>	<p>3.2.A Increase the number of campus committees that include IR as supporting resource to 15                  3.2.B Increase PD for all levels of Concord University (including administration, faculty and staff) to share data to develop a culture of evidence-based decision making to 75% of all faculty, staff and administration</p>	<p>IR becomes part of the overall campus committee structure</p>

**SECTION ENDNOTES**

<sup>26</sup> NSSE question asks students how often they talked with faculty about career plans: 1 Never, 2 Sometimes, 3 Often, 4 Very Often.





**A. QUALITY OF COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION PLAN**

**4) The plan clearly demonstrates how the institution will sustain the effort:**

The goal of every activity and personnel hire through CU Forward is institutionalize them so that they become part of the fabric of services of CU.

**Table A4. CU Forward Sustainability Plan**

Goals	Outcomes	CU Sustainability
<b>Goal #1: Increase affordable access to general education and market driven degree programs through online courses</b>		
1.1 Market-driven online courses meet the needs of Concord students	A robust online program that supports high school students to complete a dual enrollment or college-readiness course, undergraduate and graduate students to complete a college degree, and adult learners to re-engage in higher education	Maintained by each department along with the IT infrastructure in place
1.2 Professional Development for faculty to design and implement high-quality online content that engages students	Engaging online coursework to support student enrollment and retention	Following a Board of Governor’s Policy every online course must be reviewed by a QM peer review team (already in place to maintain the investment of CU Forward)
1.3 Expand student services in the Center for Academic and Career Development (CACD)	These services include online course advising, best practices for taking online courses and support for students	The CACD will continue to provide student support with no additional funds required by maintaining the SSS position
<b>Goal #2: Student engagement with innovative career exploration through research and internships that lead to graduation and a career</b>		
2.1 Concord courses will offer career services and support embedded in coursework	Every degree program will have explicit career services content embedded in the curriculum	At the end of the grant period State funds will enable the Student Support Specialist position to continue supporting the implementation of career embedded curriculum
2.3 Internships/Undergraduate Research will increase student engagement and retention	Through engagement with internships and research, students will persist and graduate and move directly into career opportunities	At the end of the grant period State funds will enable the Student Support Specialist position to continue supporting the implementation of career embedded curriculum

<p>Goal #3: A robust and transparent office of Institutional Research to share data with students, parents, the community, faculty and staff how Concord is responsive to student needs</p>		
<p>3.1 Data dashboards for students and community</p>	<p>Shared data to support decision-making</p>	<p>The Director of Institutional Research <u>and Data Analyst</u> will continue this <u>IR</u> work with oversight from the Project Director. State funds will begin <u>tiering</u> in year 3 2 to be institutionalized post grant.</p>
<p>3.2 Strategic use of IR</p>	<p>IR becomes part of the overall campus committee structure</p>	<p>The <u>Project Director</u> <u>and</u> <u>the</u> Director of Institutional Research, <u>and Data Analyst</u> will continue this work in <u>a</u> permanent position. State funds will begin <u>tiering</u> in year 3 2 to fully institutionalize the positions and to support these efforts</p>

Sustainability for staffing and continued growth will occur via a commitment to sustaining the investment of resources made through the CU Forward project through maintaining staff positions beyond the grant period.





**B: QUALITY OF THE PROJECT DESIGN**

**4) The extent to which the proposed project is supported by strong theory:**

The CU Forward logic model illustrates the project design, supported by strong theory. Due to the limited research studies cited in the What Works Clearinghouse, the project is based on other studies showing promise. The rigorous external evaluation of CU Forward will meet the What Works Clearinghouse standards of research and add to the body of evidence for the Clearinghouse. See page 29 for a more detailed rationale including research citations.

**Table B1: Strong Theory for CU Forward**

Key Assumptions and Supporting Research	
Assumption	Supporting Research
Online courses increase access to students through a more flexible format	Joshua Goodman, Julia Melkers, and Amanda Pallais, " <a href="#">Can Online Delivery Increase Access to Education?</a> " National Bureau of Economic Research working paper 22754, October 2016.
Support and advising to students for online courses increase access and success	Nsiah, 2013; Levy, 2003; Ludwig-Hardman & Dunlap, 2003
Student engagement through internships and/or research opportunities have a significant direct effect on academic achievement and career choice	Kuh, G. D. (2008). High-impact educational practices: What they are, who has access to them, and why they matter. Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities. <a href="https://www.researchgate.net/publication/269702784_The_Effects_of_College_Student_Engagement_on_Academic_Achievement_and_Career_Choice">https://www.researchgate.net/publication/269702784_The_Effects_of_College_Student_Engagement_on_Academic_Achievement_and_Career_Choice</a>



Logic Model

INPUTS: CU Forward Characteristics

- # students
- Pell recipients
- First-generation
- Race/ethnicity
- Gender
- Academic data
- Student expectations
- Educators' expectations
- Courses
- Online courses
- Adult learners

ACTIVITIES: CU Forward Services

- Academic counseling
- Career exploration
- **Online Courses**
- Online degree programs
- **Online dual enrollment and college readiness courses**
- Center for Academic and Career Development (CACD)
- Institutional research office
- **Undergraduate research**
- Internship coordination
- **Student Internships**
- Professional development (PD)
- Alumni Network

OUTPUTS: CU Forward Measurables

- ↑ Online course taking
- ↑ Online course development
- ↑ Dual enrollment
- ↑ GPA
- ↑ Educational aspirations
- ↑ Student engagement with CACD
- ↑ # Students engaged in internships
- ↑ # Students engaged in Undergraduate research
- ↑ # Courses offering career information
- ↑ # of people taking PD

OUTCOMES: Short and Mid-Term

- ↑ % students passing online courses
- ↑ % students' persistence in online degree programs
- ↑ % students on track to graduate from Concord
- ↑ % student retention
- ↑ % student persistence
- ↑ IR office disseminating data dashboards
- ↓ DFWI

IMPACT: Long Term

- ↑ Postsecondary enrollment
- ↑ % Students graduating
- ↑ % of students moving directly into a career
- ↓ Cost for a more affordable degree by decreasing time to graduate

Rationale: Activities in bold are the components with supporting research indicating evidence of promise

**C: QUALITY OF ACTIVITY OBJECTIVES**

**1) The extent to which the objectives for each activity are realistic and defined in terms of measurable results:** In the following table the CU Forward measurable objectives are broken into annual targets demonstrating that the objectives are both measurable and realistic over the five-year grant period.

**Table B2: Measurable Results**

Measurable Objectives (MO)	Percentage of goal Increase by Year (# is actual)				
	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Goal 1: Increase affordable access to general education and market-driven degree programs through online courses</b>					
1.1.A Increase HS Students engaged with dual enrollment or college-readiness courses to 200 students	0%	25%(50)	25%(50)	25%(50)	25%(50)
1.1.B Increase undergraduate/graduate students online course taking by 10% (Baseline 1070) to 1,177	0%	25% (27)	25% (27)	25% (27)	25% (27)
1.1.C Increase adult learners engaged with online degree programs by 10% (Baseline 426)	0%	10%(4)	30%(13)	30%(13)	30%(13)
1.1.D Increase the percentage of undergraduate students completing online courses and earning grades of C or better to 82% (Baseline 77.5%)	0%	0	33% (1.5 %points)	33%(1.5 % points)	33%(1.5 % points)



1.2.A Sixty percent of all faculty teaching online will participate in professional development beyond initial QM training and 90% will report an increased competency for incorporating online coursework	Collect Baseline	PD for 25% of identified faculty	PD for 25% of identified faculty	PD for 25% of identified faculty	PD for 25% of identified faculty
1.2.B Students report satisfaction with online courses increasing 10% annually	Collect Baseline	10%	10%	10%	10%
1.3.A Increase the percentage of students completing online courses and earning grades of C or better to 82%	0%	0	33% (1.5 % points)	33% (1.5 % points)	33% (1.5 % points)
1.3.B Fifty percent of students provided support services through the center annually (Baseline Total Undergrad Headcount 1724)	0%	25% (431)	50% (889*)	50% (902)	50% (915)
1.3.C Increase retention of students served by Center to 70%	Collect Baseline	25%	25%	25%	25%
<b>Goal 2: Student engagement with innovative career exploration through research and internships that lead to graduation and a career</b>					
2.1.A Forty percent of courses will be embedded with career services	0%	25%	25%	25%	25%
2.1.B Forty percent of faculty will receive professional development to embed career services	0%	0%	PD for 33% of identified faculty	PD for 33% of identified faculty	PD for 33% of identified faculty
2.1.C Increase in students reporting engaging in career planning with faculty to 3.0 NSSE average <sup>27</sup> (Baseline 2.6)	0%	5% (.13)	5% (.13)	10% (.26)	Maintain growth
2.2.A Increase number of alumni partnerships to 150 (Baseline 0)	20% (30)	20% (30)	20% (30)	20% (30)	20% (30)
2.2.B Thirty percent of students will engage with the alumni network beginning with 10% of the total student body and increasing to 30%	0%	0%	10% (173)	20% (344)	30% (517)
2.3.A Increase percentage of students participating in internships to 60% (baseline 49%)	49% (845)	52% (896)	55% (948)	58% (1000)	60% (1034)
2.3.B Increase percentage of students participating in undergraduate research to 40% (Baseline 25%)	25% (414)	30% (517)	33% (569)	36% (620)	40% (689)

2.3.C Fifty percent of students provided support services from the Center for Academic and Career Development	Collect Baseline	25%	25%	25%	25%
2.3.D Increase retention of students provided services by the Center and engaged with internships/research to 70%	Collect Baseline	25%	25%	25%	25%
<b>Goal 3: A robust and transparent office of Institutional Research that supports the campus community in making better evidence-based decisions</b>					
3.1.A Increase stakeholder views and usage of data dashboards as reported through a survey by 10% annually	Use survey for Baseline	10%	10%	10%	10%
3.1.B Increase stakeholder use of data for evidence-based decision making as reported through a survey 10% annually	Use survey for Baseline	10%	10%	10%	10%
3.2.A Increase the number of campus committees that include IR as supporting resource to 15	0	5	10	15	15
3.2.B Increase PD for all levels of Concord University (including administration, faculty and staff) to share data to develop a culture of evidence- based decision making to 75% of all administration, faculty and staff	0	25%	25%	25%	25%

\*Baseline Data from 2018



## C: QUALITY OF ACTIVITY OBJECTIVES

### 2) The extent to which the objectives are directly related to the problems:

By developing quality online courses and degree programs, CU Forward will not only provide college access to a region faced with severe poverty and geographical barriers (mountainous rurality) but also reverse the adverse institutional trends of declining enrollment and low retention/graduation. Increased opportunity for internships and participation in research will lead to retention and completion, leading to a stronger local community workforce. Other areas of the proposal link the goals to a comprehensive development plan, the following narrative links the goals to the identified problems:

**Goal 1:** Increase affordable access to general education and market-driven degree programs through online courses—associated problems include low retention and graduation rates, lack of college readiness, the need for innovative course design, and decreased enrollment.

**Goal 2:** Student engagement with innovation through research and internships that lead to graduation and a career—associated problems include low retention and graduation rates, lack of college readiness, and decreased enrollment.

**Goal 3:** A robust and transparent office of Institutional Research to share data with students, parents, the community, faculty and staff about how Concord is responsive to student needs— associated problems include all identified challenges (pg. 4-8) low retention and graduation rates, lack of college readiness, the need for innovative course design, decreased enrollment and budget cuts.



**D: QUALITY OF IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY**

**1) The extent to which there is a comprehensive implementation strategy:**

The following chart describes the activities and implementation strategies for each CU Forward objective:

Measurable Objectives	Implementation Strategy
<b>Goal #1: Increase affordable access to general education and market driven degree programs through online courses</b>	
1.1.A Increase HS Students engaged with dual enrollment or college-readiness courses 1.1.B Increase undergraduate/graduate students online course taking 1.1.C Increase adult learners engaged with online degree programs 1.1.D Increase the percentage of students completing online courses and earning grades of C or better	1.1.B, C, & D The Online Instructional Design Coach (OIDC) will facilitate Courses/programs designed in Years 2, 3, 4, as a result of the market analysis and open for enrollment in Years 3, 4, 5 (Provost’s Office will work with colleges/departments to coordinate using market analysis results and Academic Strategic plan developed in 2018) Quarter 1 Year 2 Technology Services will purchase and update network core to support Online Courses 1.1.D OIDC and Center for Academic & Career Development (CACD) will develop process for referring students with a D or F for advising in Year 2 and begin by Quarter 3
1.2.A Sixty percent of all faculty teaching online will participate in professional development and 90% will report an increased competency for incorporating online coursework 1.2.B Students report satisfaction with online courses	1.2.A OIDC, along with the Director of the Teaching & Learning Center, will begin implementation of PD in Year 2 after market analysis in Quarter 4/Year 1 (PD will continue in Years 3, 4, & 5) 1.2.B Evaluators will create faculty PD surveys to begin implementation in Year 2
1.3.A Increase the percentage of students completing online	1.3.A, B, & C Beginning in Year 2, the Student Support Specialist (SSS) and OIDC will enter student services (later in the CACD and Provost’s Office, respectively)



<p>courses and earning grades of C or better                  1.3.B Fifty percent of students provided support services through the CACD                  1.3.C Increase retention of students served by CACD</p>	<p>related to students seeking advising for online course-taking</p>
<p>Goal #2: Student engagement with innovation through research and internships that lead to graduation and a career</p>	
<p>2.1.A Forty percent of courses will be embedded with career services                  2.1.B Forty percent of faculty will receive professional development to embed career services                  2.1.C Increase in students reporting engaging in career planning with faculty</p>	<p>2.1.A Development of curriculum will occur quarters 3 and 4 of Year 1                  2.1.B Professional Development will begin in Quarter 1 of Year 2                  2.1.C Curriculum will be embedded in courses beginning in quarter 3 of Year 2, Quarter 3 Year 3                  NSSE will be given to students</p>
<p>2.2.A Increase number of alumni partnerships                  2.2.B Thirty percent of students will engage with the alumni network beginning with 10% of the total student body</p>	<p>2.2.A Student Support Specialist will develop the Alumni Mentor Network Quarter 1 Year 2 in conjunction with Alumni Affairs through outreach to CU alumni via email, social media, alumni magazine. Network membership will be cataloged using the existing career services platform (College Central Network)                  2.2.B Student engagement with Alumni Mentor Network will begin Year Quarter 3 Year 2; Center for Academic and Career Development will coordinate promotion of network among students via email, posters, social media, presentations</p>



<p>2.3.A Increase percentage of students participating in internships</p> <p>2.3.B Increase percentage of students participating in undergraduate research</p> <p>2.3.C Fifty percent of students provided support services from the ACC</p> <p>2.3.D Increase retention of students provided services by the Center and engaged with internships/research</p>	<p>2.3.A Student Support Specialist will begin coordinating and cataloging research opportunities on campus beginning Quarter 3 year 1</p> <p>2.3.B Beginning Quarter 3 Year 1 Student Support Specialist will develop protocols for students to secure internships and begin outreach to secure internship opportunities (faculty, alumni, and organizations); internship opportunities will be cataloged in the existing career services platform</p> <p>2.3.B, C, D Student Support Specialist will log/track all student services in database</p>
<p>Goal #3: A robust and transparent office of Institutional Research to share data with students, parents, the community, faculty and staff how Concord is responsive to student needs</p>	
<p>3.1.A Increase stakeholder views and usage of data dashboards as reported through a survey</p> <p>3.1.B Increase stakeholder use of data for evidence-based decision making as reported through a survey</p>	<p><u>3.1.A The Director of Institutional Research</u> will identify software to support data sharing on website Quarter 4 year 1 then publish with the help of IT Quarter 1 of Year 2</p> <p><u>3.1.A. The Data Analyst will create and maintain innovative and accessible data visualizations, including graphics, charts, tables, etc. to effectively communicate institutional data and analyses beginning in Year 3</u></p> <p><u>3.1.B The Project Director and Director of Institutional Research</u> will begin to report out data Year 2 to all stakeholders</p> <p><u>3.1.B. The Director of Institutional Research and Data Analyst will implement data literacy, data governance, and other data outreach campaigns through web, social media, email, and other communication channels under the guidance of the Project and other stakeholders.</u></p>
<p>3.2.A Increase the number of campus committees that include IR as supporting resource to 15</p> <p>3.2.B Increase PD for all levels of Concord University (including administration, faculty and staff) to share data to develop a culture of evidence-based decision making</p>	<p>3.2.A <u>Project Director and the Director of Institutional Research</u> will identify committees to join that would benefit from Data and in Year 2 Director will join committees as a resource to support the work of the committees</p> <p>3.2.B <u>Project Director, and the Director of Institutional Research, and Data Analyst</u> will begin providing PD to campus stakeholders Year 3 for the remainder of grant period</p>

**D: QUALITY OF IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY**

**2) The extent to which the rationale for the implementation strategy for each activity is clearly described and is supported by the results of relevant studies or projects:**

Online courses provide access to students who never would have the opportunity or inclination to take classes in person.<sup>28</sup> CU Forward will implement high-quality online courses to students, enabling them to create a more flexible schedule around work and family commitments thereby increasing student retention and graduation. Nsiah's analysis of research notes that online education provides a flexible, open-learning environment. Research shows the need for a clear vision & strong leadership; appropriate organization & planning; sound instructional design & technical support resources; and faculty as co-learners.<sup>29</sup> CU Forward builds on this study by creating an advisory committee to provide oversight of online learning made up of faculty and students to maintain a clear vision for implementation and development of expanded online learning opportunities for high school students, degree programs, and adult learners.

CU Forward online learning expansion is based on identified needs from institutional experience, best practices and standards, research findings, and others who have successfully implemented online learning. Concord utilizes Quality Matters (QM) standards and rubrics as part of faculty training for assuring course quality. All CU online faculty (100%) complete QM training, and all courses developed will be subject to the peer review process using QM rubrics to ensure quality standards are met. The University Committee on Online Education will provide ongoing oversight to online coursework and will continue the peer review process for all courses. The Online Learning Consortium (OLC) is the industry-recognized professional organization for e-learning. OLC offers training, resources, and guidance for all



aspects of online education, including an open source professional journal for best practices and resource sharing. These resources underlie the CU Forward project activities.

By expanding the Center for Academic and Career Development (CACD) to include support and advising to students to access online courses, CU Forward is implementing best practices as cited by many researchers for comprehensive student services (e.g. Nsiah, 2013; Levy, 2003; Ludwig-Hardman & Dunlap, 2003). Best practices dictate a strong orientation, skills development, online course support, financial aid assistance, tutoring access, group collaboration, and access to the same services as on-campus students, such as library resources, records access, comprehensive advising, and mentoring. Through the services offered by the CACD, online students will have access to one-stop-shop services and referral to appropriate resources. Expansion of the Center will provide two-way support for all academic and student service systems to ensure seamless institutional integration and sustainability.

CU Forward also builds on the wealth of research indicating that internships improve students' employability, academic outcomes, and career crystallization.<sup>30</sup> It is well documented that student engagement in college has tangible outcomes. Chang's results demonstrate that student engagement has a significant direct effect on academic achievement and career choice.<sup>31</sup> This study suggests encouraging student engagement, which will lead to improvements in students' academic achievement and career choices in higher education settings.

Results of the 2016 CU National Survey of Student Engagement indicate that 56% of students have had an internship while only 29% have participated in research with a faculty member. These percentages are in line with peer institutions but have room for improvement. The mean score for the question related to acquiring knowledge for a job or the workforce was 2.8 out of a 4-point scale. This is central to the goals of CU Forward. Supporting students to connect their learning with a future job through

career services, an internship, or research is essential to accomplishing the goal of a career after college.

### SECTION ENDNOTES

<sup>28</sup> Joshua Goodman, Julia Melkers, and Amanda Pallais, "[Can Online Delivery Increase Access to Education?](#)" National Bureau of Economic Research working paper 22754, October 2016.

<sup>29</sup> Nsiah, G.K.B. (2013). Best Practices in Distance Education: A Review. *Creative Education*.  
[http://file.scirp.org/pdf/CE\\_2013122417082784.pdf](http://file.scirp.org/pdf/CE_2013122417082784.pdf).

<sup>30</sup> Narayanan, V. K., Olk, P. M., & Fukami, C. V. (2010). Determinants of internship effectiveness: An exploratory model. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 9(1), 61-80.

<sup>31</sup>[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/269702784\\_The\\_Effects\\_of\\_College\\_Student\\_Engagement\\_on\\_Academic\\_Achievement\\_and\\_Career\\_Choice](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/269702784_The_Effects_of_College_Student_Engagement_on_Academic_Achievement_and_Career_Choice)



## E. QUALITY OF KEY PERSONNEL

### 1) The experience and training of key personnel are directly related to the stated activity objectives:

The CU Forward Project will hire ~~three-four~~ full-time (100% time and effort, 12-month) employees, Project Director, Online Instructional Design Coach, ~~and~~ Student Services Specialist, and Data Analyst. A part time, 50% effort, Director of Institutional Research is also requested along with ~~two~~ Graduate Assistants (GA). The GAs will provide direct services to students as well as assist the professional staff with project activities. A Program Assistant will provide administrative support at 100% effort.

**Project Director:** The Project Director is responsible for implementing and managing all aspects of the CU Forward project. The Director serves as a liaison between the project and Concord University to ensure that project goals, activities, and outcomes are met. The Director reports directly to the Vice President of Operations. **Qualifications:** Masters degree required, doctorate preferred; minimum of 3-years experience in higher education administration; experience required with online education, including online course delivery, assessment of learning outcomes. Must have excellent interpersonal and communication skills, be customer-service oriented, have supervisory experience, demonstrated collaborative and coordination skills; experience creating a strategic vision; assessment and evaluation skills; experience with federal education grant programs preferred. **Key Responsibilities:** Provide vision, leadership and day-to-day management for CU Forward project; assess and evaluate project effectiveness on an ongoing basis through collaboration with external evaluators; collaborate with administration, department chairs, faculty, and staff to develop and revise initiatives for online education and revise or create online curriculum; oversee the development of assessment process, data collection, analysis and dissemination of information regarding student success, course/academic program integrity, and project impact; oversee development of



comprehensive student services; collaborate with Technology Services on an ongoing basis for all aspects of the project; collaborate with Advancement, Admissions, and Academics to implement a strategic marketing plan for online programs; assure all project deliverables are achieved according to the approved timeline; ensure compliance with all federal, state, and institutional requirements; coordinate with the Business Office and the Office of Sponsored Programs to ensure fiscal integrity.

**Related to Activity Objectives:** The Director will ensure, by the end of the five-year grant cycle, that an increased number of classes and complete degree programs are available online; technology infrastructure is expanded to increase online course capacity and create a positive academic experience for faculty and students; faculty/staff are provided professional development, including QM and peer review training; conduct QM course review according to standards matrix; ensure proper management, assessment, and reporting of CU Forward activities.

**Director of Institutional Research:** The Director of Institutional Research (DIR) is responsible for managing the development of the Office of Institutional Research and institutional research dashboards. The DIR reports directly to the Project Director to ensure the achievement of program goals and objectives related to institutional research. **Qualifications:** Bachelor's degree required, Master's preferred from an accredited institution; minimum of 3 years of experience related to higher education institutional research; knowledge of higher education academic systems, including ability to work collaboratively with faculty and other University departments; excellent grasp institutional data needs and IR technologies; assessment and evaluation skills; excellent communication, interpersonal skills, and customer service. **Key Responsibilities:** Work with CU administration and the Director/SDIE to develop an Office of Institutional Research that aligns with the mission of the institution, by identifying the IR needs of the institution, developing a dashboard system for dissemination of the data and integrated process for ensure accurate data is provided to stakeholders. Increase professional development opportunities for stakeholders regarding evidence-based decision making.



**Related to Activity Objectives:** Director of Institutional Research will identify software to support data sharing on website and publish with the help of IT. DIR will develop mechanisms to begin to report out data regularly. DIR will identify institutional committees that would benefit from Data working collaboratively with committees as a data resource to support the work of the committees. The DIR in collaboration with the Project Director will provide professional development to campus stakeholders.

**Online Instructional Design Coach:** The Online Instructional Design Coach (OIDC) reports to the Project Director and is responsible for assisting and providing faculty and academic departmental support for the innovative and effective design of online courses/programs; developing and providing faculty professional development and student skills modules; CU Forward deliverables related to instruction technology; assessment and evaluation; and strong collaboration with Technology Services, faculty, and academic structures. The OIDC supports the success of online learners and contributes to retention projects. The OIDC will stay current with online educational trends and innovative technologies. This position ~~reports to~~ works with the Provost's Office, with close collaboration with Technology Services.

**Qualifications:** Master's degree from an accredited institution; minimum of 3 years of experience related to distance/online education, with an understanding of the unique needs of online learners; knowledge of higher education academic systems, including ability to work collaboratively with faculty and other University departments; excellent grasp of innovative learning technologies; assessment and evaluation skills; excellent communication, interpersonal skills, and customer service; intimate knowledge of QM training and rubrics. **Key Responsibilities:** Work with faculty to design and format course content, based on QM standards; collaborate with Technology Services for CU Forward website development; create robust online faculty and student training resources; assist with comprehensive analysis of online education and advising components; ensure accessibility through assistive



technology and training faculty on accessible course design; provide ongoing technical assistance; develop comprehensive resources for CU Forward website for faculty and students to maximize course online learning success; assist with development of online advising model; assist with assessment & evaluation of course and project outcomes. **Related to Activity Objectives:** The OIDC will assist faculty with innovative course design that meets quality learning objectives according to QM standards; design and coordinate faculty/staff professional development resources; create course templates to replicate for new curricula; create/coordinate online skills modules and resources for students; assist faculty with applying data analytics for improved learning and course completion.

**Student Services Specialist:** The Student Services Specialist (SSS) reports to the ~~Director of Student Success in Student Affairs~~ Project Director and works as part of the CU Forward project team to conduct focused assistance to help students succeed persist through creating the Alumni Mentor Network, coordinating and cataloging internship and research positions, and advising students regarding internships and research opportunities. Collaborates with faculty and administrative offices to assure seamless flow of services from admissions to degree completion. Works with CU Forward team to assess and evaluate project processes, outputs, and outcomes. **Qualifications:** Bachelor's degree, Master's preferred; minimum of two year's experience related to student retention and career services; ability to work collaboratively with faculty and other University departments, with understanding of University structures/processes; superior customer service and interpersonal skills; solid analytical, problem-solving and decision-making abilities. **Key Responsibilities:** Creation of Alumni Mentor Network, database of internship positions along with campus-wide research and oversight of the career curriculum. The Student Services Specialist will advise students in the area of career services, internships in the surrounding community and campus research. **Related to Activity Objectives:** The Student Services Specialist will develop and implement a comprehensive database of internship positions, campus research, and Alumni Network to connect students to their career goals, student advising, and oversight of the development of the career

curriculum and supporting faculty to implement the career curriculum in their courses.

**Data Analyst:** The Data Analyst reports to the Director of Institutional Research is responsible for developing and maintaining compelling data dashboards, data visualizations, and other data-based outreach materials that augment the availability, accessibility, and use of institutional data across the campus community. The Data Analyst collaborates with Institutional Research and other designated offices on implementing additions and edits to the Title III and Institutional Research websites, including CU Data Commons, the University's hub of institutional data and analytics. The Data Analyst works with designated staff to create and lead innovative and impactful professional development activities, including workshops and presentations. The Data Analyst also supports Title III in the evaluation, assessment, visualization, and communication of project goals, and assists Institutional Research with data requests and federal and state required reporting.

**Qualifications:** Bachelor's degree in a relevant field such as statistics, data science, social science, business, graphic design, or other related fields, demonstrative experience with and knowledge of data visualizations, excellent written and verbal communication skills, strong organizational skills, ability to work collaboratively and congenially with a diverse array of stakeholders.

**Key responsibilities:** Maintenance and development of compelling and comprehensive internal and external data dashboards and other data visualizations, coordinate and support outreach initiatives, maintenance and development of the Institutional Research website and a repository of accessible data-based resources for faculty, staff, students, and the public, support external and internal reporting and professional development activities.

**Related to Activity Objectives:** The Data Analyst will directly support the growth of data dashboard use, the accessibility and use of data for effective data-based decision making, heighten the capacity for participatory use of institutional research on campus committees, and expand then sustain high-quality professional development to the campus community.



**E. QUALITY OF KEY PERSONNEL**

**2) The extent to which the time commitment of key personnel is realistic:**

Table E2 outlines the key personnel, funding source, general description of project activities and time required for meeting CU Forward project goals. Descriptions of key project personnel qualifications and responsibilities are included in Quality of Key Personnel. Critical roles within the institution including President, Provost, Vice President of Student Affairs, and Vice President of Business all commit 5% of their time to providing oversight and implementation of CU Forward. The ~~four~~ four key personnel positions of Director of CU Forward, ~~Director of Institutional Research~~ Data Analyst~~h~~, Online Instructional Design Coach, and Student Services Specialist ~~are~~ all dedicate 100% ~~dedicate significant time and~~ effort to ensure the best possible outcome for all CU Forward objectives and activities. Likewise, the Director of Institutional Research dedicates significant time and effort to supporting the project's success.

Table E2. CU FORWARD Key Personnel: Time Commitment, Activities, Funding Source

Personnel	Time Commitment	Project Activity	Funding Source
CU FORWARD Director	100%	Project Management, Institutional Research	Title III—100% yr. 1,2; state funding yr. 3
On-line Instructional Design Coach	100%	Innovative Course Design; Professional Development; online support services	Title III--100% yr. 1-5 with state funding in yr. 5
Student Services Specialist	100%	Comprehensive student support services, coordination of internships, campus research, and Alumni Network	Title III--100% yr. 1-5 with state funding taking over in yr. 5
CU Technology Services Staff: Online Systems Manager (OSM); Systems Programmer; Web Developer; Chief Technology Officer	20% Year 1 15% Year 2 10% Year 3-5 & after	Assist w/ online course development & hosting; website hosting; assist w/ prof. development; institutional research; OSM serves on CU FORWARD Committee	In-kind Concord University
Student Success Director	10%, Years 1-5 & after	Assist w/ retention efforts for online students; data analysis & report assistance; <del>serve on CU FORWARD Committee;</del>	In-kind Concord University

CU Forward: Concord University Title III Critical

President	5%, Years 1-5	<del>Supervise CU FORWARD Director;</del> serves on CU Forward Committee	In-kind Concord University
<u>Vice President for Operations</u>	<u>5%, Years 1-5</u>	<u>Supervises CU Forward Project Director</u> <u>Serves on CU Forward Committee</u>	<u>In-kind Concord University</u>
<u>Provost: Associate Provost; College Deans; Division/Dept. Chairs; Faculty</u>	<u>5%, Provost &amp; Assoc. Provost, Years 1-5; Faculty</u>	<del>Supervises Online Instructional Design Coach;</del> Provost, Associate Provost, and College Deans serve on CU FORWARD Committee; 4-yr. plans for online curriculum; online course development & delivery	<u>In-kind Concord University</u>
<u>Vice President of Student Affairs</u>	<u>5% Years 1-5</u>	Student Affairs staff assists w/ online student service delivery (e.g. advising, tutoring; accommodations, financial aid, career services, Title IX, etc); serves on CU FORWARD committee	<u>In-kind Concord University</u>
<u>Vice President of Business &amp; Finance; Business Office Staff; Office of Sponsored Programs Staff</u>	<u>5% Years 1-5</u>	Fiscal project compliance/ accounting/audit; Title III reporting; Personnel management (HR); OSP and VP serves on CU FORWARD Committee	<u>In-kind Concord University</u>
<u>Alumni Director</u>	<u>15% Years 1-5</u>	Collaborate with SSS to develop the Alumni Mentor Network	<u>In-kind Concord University</u>
<u>Director of Institutional Research</u>	<u>50%</u>	Institutional Research, Data Dashboards, <u>Reporting, Professional Development</u>	<u>Title III - 0% yr. 1</u> <u>50% yr. 2 and 3;</u> <u>25% yr. 4 and 5</u>
<u>Data Analyst</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>Institutional Research, Data Visualization, Surveys, Professional Development</u>	<u>Title III- 100% yr. 3-5; State funds taking over at end of yr. 5</u>



## F. QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT PLAN

### 1) The extent to which procedures for managing the project are likely to ensure efficient and effective project implementation:

The CU Forward Director has the authority to effectively manage the Title III project. Responsibilities and qualifications for professional staff are noted in the preceding Key Personnel section of this narrative. As noted in the Comprehensive Development Plan, Concord has an excellent history of grants management and compliance (CDP Management & Fiscal Strength). Central to the management of the online course development will be an advisory committee made up of faculty and students to provide oversight to the market analysis, development of online coursework, and implementation of degree programs. This advisory committee will continue after the grant to ensure sustainability and continuity of services.

**Project Administration:** The CU Forward Director has the responsibility of ensuring that all grant objectives and activities are carried out in accordance with federal, state, and institutional regulations, policies, and procedures. The Director ensures that project goals, objectives, timelines, deliverables, assessment and evaluation, and reporting requirements are met. Personnel are hired and supervised in accordance with Human Resources guidelines, assuring that all Affirmative Action policies are followed and minority applicants are encouraged to apply. (See GEPA Statement.) Collaboration with other administrative offices is crucial for a smooth implementation. Bi-monthly reports to the President and Board of Governors will be provided. Records management and reporting is in accordance with institutional, state, and Title III requirements.

**Fiscal Management:** The Director and project staff work closely with the Business

Office and Office of Sponsored Programs to ensure fiscal integrity, compliance, and efficiencies. Title III funds are utilized to supplement, not supplant, institutional monies; project funds are only used to carry out the objectives and activities of the CU Forward project in accordance with Title III and OMB and EDGAR guidelines. All federal, state, and institutional regulations are followed for purchases. The Director is responsible for the project budget, with oversight from the Business Office and OSP. Expenditures and services are monitored monthly for compliance and fiscal management, with Title III included in the institution's annual external audit. Concord consistently passes fiscal and program audits with no findings.



**F. QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT PLAN**

**2) The extent to which project coordinator and activity directors have sufficient authority to conduct the project effectively, including access to the president:**

To ensure sufficient authority, CU Forward is under immediate supervision of the Vice President of Bus Operations with regular reports to the President, Board of Governors and the Title III Advisory Committee. CU Forward personnel will initially be housed together, as illustrated in the first organizational chart. At the end of the grant period, Then in year 4 each position will move to the permanent department or office to become sustainable ~~after the grant period~~. The second chart depicts the ultimate placement of personnel for sustainability.

**Chart F1: Initial Organization of Title III personnel:**

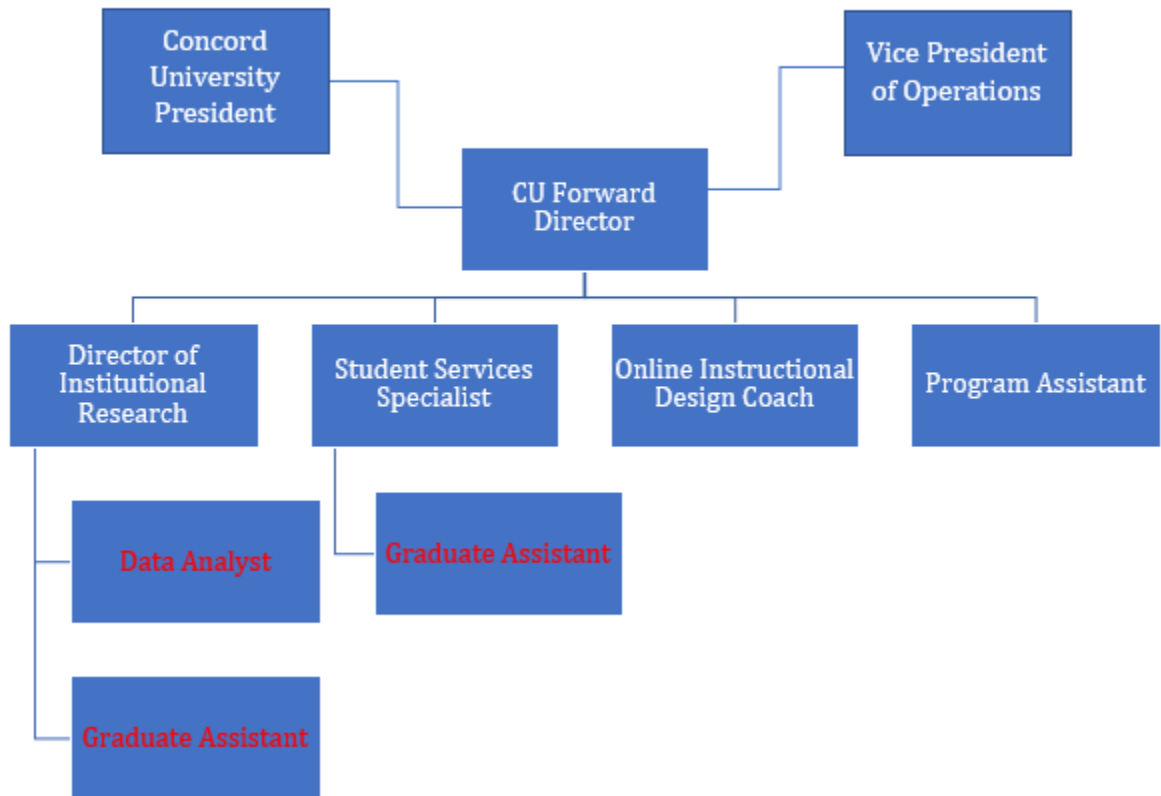
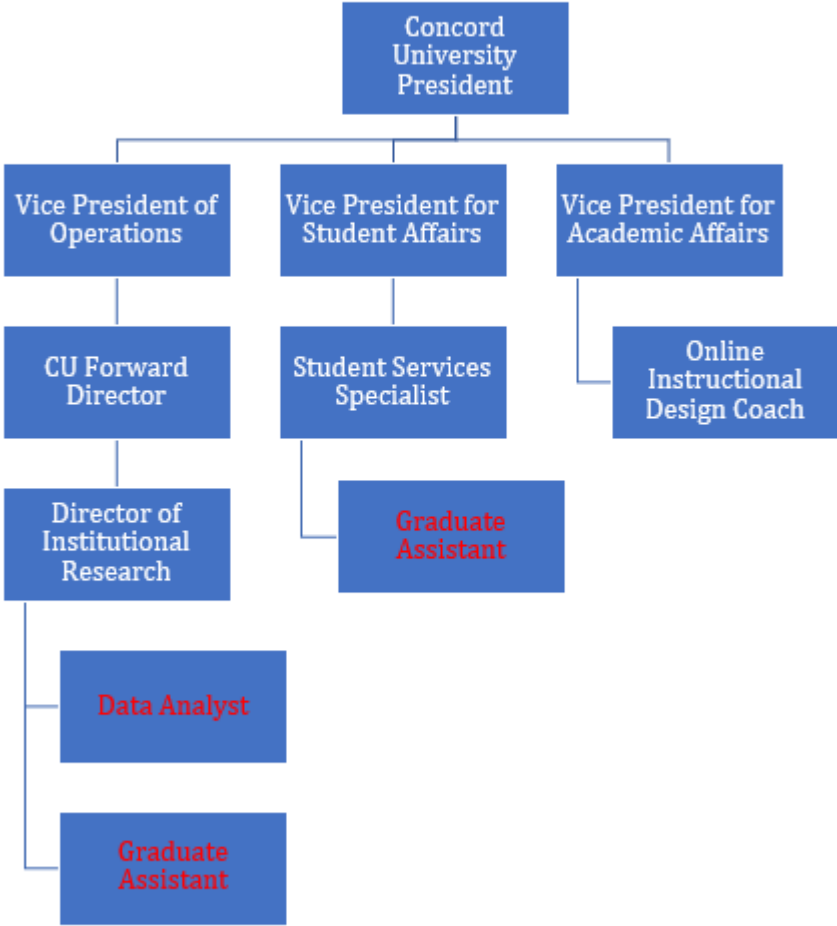




Chart F2: Final Organization of Title III personnel:





The director and staff are included on key University committees, including Strategic Planning, Retention, Technology, Student Affairs and Assessment. The Director chairs the Title III Committee composed of the President, Provost, Associate Provost, Students, College Deans, faculty (one faculty member from each department), Student Success Director, Technology (Online Systems & Network Managers, IR), VP of Student Affairs, and OSP Grants Manager. The Director reports CU Forward progress to the Vice President of Operations then reports to the President and Board of Governors as part of the monthly Title III Advisory Committee. The Director has full authority to manage the CU Forward project to meet grant goals and objectives.

## **G. QUALITY OF EVALUATION PLAN**

### **1) The extent to which the data elements and the data collection procedures are clearly described and appropriate to measure the attainment of activity objectives and to measure the success of activities:**

Vela Institute will serve as external evaluators to the project. The evaluation design will utilize multiple/mixed methods evaluation that will systematically integrate both quantitative and qualitative data. This approach will use multiple designs incorporating quasi-experimental designs (QEDs), focus groups, surveys, and an analytical review of student-level data, all based on the logic model found under section Quality of the Project Design.

Collectively, this evaluation will provide a rigorous evaluation of the CU Forward services as required by the 2017 White House Budget (Office of Management and Budget, 2017) and will promote services and practices that show evidence of promise and moderate evidence of effectiveness (both defined by 34 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 77.1). Additionally, statistical and analytic techniques used will assess moderating or enabling variables among student characteristics, project services, and project outcomes. Examining the moderating and non-linear relationships between these factors will enhance the collective understanding of the factors that result in increased student enrollment, engagement, retention, and graduation from college with the necessary skills to contribute to WV's economic growth. The quality and type of data collected, combined with the use of advanced evaluation and analytic methodologies, will enhance the collective understanding of the nuances of service efficacy and produce promising evidence to guide future supportive services implementation on a national scale.



CU Forward evaluation design and proposed activities are based on researched practices to produce a strong theory, making it likely the evaluation will demonstrate a rationale and show evidence of promise. These replication efforts meet the standards for yielding “promising evidence” for a variety of reasons. First, they include adequate assessments of the key study components (e.g., type and frequency of services received and intervention enrollment). Second, they have relevant outcomes (e.g., postsecondary enrollment and postsecondary persistence) that will be captured using an innovative longitudinal data-tracking system. Third, they will use the appropriate statistical analyses. As a result, CU Forward findings have the potential to meet WWC standards for promising evidence of the effectiveness.

Central to this Title III evaluation producing valid and reliable data is a robust data collection system for gathering and storing identifiable student-level data. The longitudinal student tracking database, Performance Insights (Pi), will be used to track individual students, their academic performance, postsecondary retention and graduation, and all student services ensuring reliability in performance data.

The project utilizes quantitative (numeric) and qualitative (descriptive) measures yielding formative (ongoing) and summative (outcome) results for determining project effectiveness. Formative assessment is used to not only gauge progress toward the project objectives but to refine objective activities and outputs, while summative assessment will demonstrate the project’s impact and financial return on investment. All participant data will be stored in password-protected files/computers, file shares, and locked file cabinets. Only CU Forward staff and CU administrators will have access to the data. Participants’ identities will be protected (unless permission given) and data will be reported anonymously and/or aggregately.

## G. QUALITY OF EVALUATION PLAN

### 2) The extent to which the data analysis procedures are clearly described

Using formative and summative evaluations that yield quantitative and qualitative data, CU Forward is able to implement timely, effective, programmatic changes based upon the evaluation results. The **primary focus** of the evaluation will be on research questions, annual performance measures and how well the treatment group performs relative to the control. For example, the evaluation will produce objective measures of CU Forward services' impact on student online course enrollment, retention and persistence, academic performance and matriculation into a career. The annual performance measures include:

1. The percentage change, over the five-year period, of the number of full-time degree- seeking undergraduates enrolled at SIP institutions.
2. The percentage of first-time, full-time, degree-seeking undergraduate students at four- year SIP institutions who were in their first year of postsecondary enrollment in the previous year and are enrolled in the current year at the same SIP institution.
3. The percentage of first-time, full-time, degree-seeking undergraduate students enrolled at four-year SIP institutions graduating within six years of enrollment.

**Quantitative data** will be examined using descriptive analytics in the form of frequency charts and graphics, measures of central tendency, and measures of dispersion will be used to evaluate and track the progress of the study's outcomes. More advanced statistical and analytic techniques will be used to examine the relationships between service delivery and CU Forward research questions. The impact study will examine the following research questions: *What is the impact of the online course completion/online degree completion on college engagement, persistence,*



*and graduation? What is the impact of the early engagement in internships or research on students' success in persisting and graduation in college?*

All diagnostic or inferential analyses will meet the WWC standards for correlational studies with statistical controls. Additional analyses also include chi-square, Pearson and Spearman correlations, Mann-Whitney U, Analysis of Variance, Kruskal- Wallis, and Generalized Linear Models (e.g., logistic and Poisson) depending on the characteristics of the outcome measures.

**Qualitative data** will be collected through focus groups and by using open-ended comments on surveys. NVivo will be used to manually thematically code and analyze data to identify common topics in unstructured text. When a large volume of text is collected, such as in open-ended survey questions, text mining using tidy data principles (Wickham, 2014) and supervised scaling machine learning (Grimmer, 2013) or a Latent Dirichlet allocation topic modeling (Silge, 2017) in R will be used to identify a common set of themes. Focus groups will be guided by widely accepted design and application of sound manual and analytic coding techniques to produce valuable insights from CU Forward's qualitative data (Liamputtong, 2011).

Dr. Shawn Bergman, director of research at Vela, provides technical support and oversight to the project. Dr. Bergman has 19 years of experience as a research, evaluation, and analytic consultant, has provided empirically-based solutions for a variety of public and private sector clients, and has co-authored over 65 evaluation and applied research reports. Shawn is a member of The American Educational Research Association (AERA), American Evaluation Association (AEA), Society for Industrial-Organizational Psychology (SIOP), and the Center for Evidence-Based Management (CEBM).

The Evaluation Plan is designed to measure CU Forward effectiveness and determine project success, utilizing the Logic Model presented earlier. (See Section B1.)

**Table G1 describes how the CU Forward project goals/indicators are evaluated:**

Measurable Objective		Evaluation Method
<b>Goal #1: Increase affordable access to general education and market driven degree programs through online courses</b>		
1.1.A HS Students engage with dual enrollment or college-readiness courses 1.1.B Undergraduate/graduate students course taking 1.1.C Adult learners engage with online degree programs (head count) 1.1.D Increase the percentage of students completing online courses and earning grades of C or better		1.1.A Enrollment number assessment: Descriptive analysis 1.1.B Enrollment number assessment: Descriptive analysis 1.1.C Count of adults enrolled: Descriptive analysis 1.1.D DFWI assessment compared to baseline: Descriptive analysis
1.2.A Sixty percent of faculty teaching online will participate in PD specific to online coursework and 90% will report an increased competency for incorporating online coursework 1.2.B Students report satisfaction with online courses		1.2.A Count of faculty and faculty survey compared to Baseline: Descriptive analysis 1.2.B Student survey: Descriptive analysis
1.3.A Increase the percentage of students completing online courses and earning grades of C or better		1.3.A DFWI assessment compared to baseline: Descriptive analysis
1.3.B Fifty percent of students provided support services through the CACD 1.3.C Increase retention of students served by Center		1.3.B Completion and Center attendance tracking: Descriptive and inferential analysis using correlation 1.3.C Change in persistence numbers: Descriptive analysis
<b>Goal #2: Student engagement with innovation through research and internships that lead to graduation and a career</b>		
2.1.A Forty percent of courses with embedded career services 2.1.B Forty percent of faculty receiving PD to embed career services 2.1.C Percent of students reporting satisfaction within the context of the course		2.1.A Count of courses with embedded career services: Descriptive analysis 2.1.B Count of faculty receiving PD: Descriptive analysis, baseline comparison 2.1.C Student Survey: Descriptive analysis



2.2.A Increase number of alumni partnerships 2.2.B Thirty percent of students will engage with the Alumni Mentor Network	2.2.A Count of alumni engaged in Alumni Mentor Network: Descriptive analysis 2.2.B Count of students engaged in Alumni Mentor Network: Descriptive analysis
2.3.A Increase percentage of students participating in internships 2.3.B Increase percentage of students participating in undergraduate research 2.3.C Fifty percent of students provided support services through CACD 2.3.D Increase retention of students provided services by the Center and engaged with internships/research	2.3.A Percent compared to NSSE baseline: Descriptive Analysis 2.3.B Percent compare to NSSE baseline: Descriptive analysis 2.3. Completion and Center attendance tracking: Descriptive and inferential analysis using correlation 2.3.D Change in persistence numbers: Descriptive analysis
<b>Goal #3: A robust and transparent office of Institutional Research to share data with students, parents, the community, faculty and staff about how Concord is responsive to student needs</b>	
3.1.A Increase stakeholder views and usage of data dashboard as reported through a survey 3.1.B Increase stakeholder use of evidence-based decision making	3.1.A Survey: Descriptive analysis 3.1.B Survey: Descriptive analysis
3.2.A Increase the number of campus committee that include IR 3.2.B Increase PD for all levels of CU (including administration, faculty, and staff) to share data to develop a culture of evidence-based decision making	3.2.A Count of committees: Descriptive analysis 3.2.B Count of PD at each level: Descriptive analysis

Overall, the CU Forward project is designed to strengthen and improve Concord University through increased enrollment, improved academic programs and management structures, and strengthened fiscal stability. The CU Forward Evaluation Plan determines whether these goals and objectives are met through this ambitious, attainable Title III project.



**H. QUALITY OF BUDGET<sup>1</sup>**

**(1) The extent to which the proposed costs are necessary and reasonable:**

The CU Forward project costs are necessary and reasonable to carry out the goals and objectives described, they align with today’s market, are allocable to project activities, and adhere to all federal, state, and institutional fiscal regulations.

**Basis for Estimating Costs**

**Professional Personnel Salaries-~~\$1,220,865~~ \$1,345,162:**

	Grant Year 1	Grant Year 2	Grant Year 3	Grant Year 4	Grant Year 5	Total Budget
Salaries	<del>\$212,750</del> <u>\$60,000</u>	\$212,750 <del>\$235,345</del> <u>\$186,695</u>	\$185,550 <del>\$242,000</del> <u>\$316,600</u>	\$159,150 <del>\$192,000</del> <u>\$267,400</u>	\$145,950 <del>\$192,000</del> <u>\$243,400</u>	\$916,150 <del>\$1,074,095</del>
Benefits	<del>\$71,275</del> <u>\$11,000</u>	\$71,275 <del>\$54,032</del> <u>\$71,685</u>	\$61,755 <del>\$57,920</del> <u>\$74,218</u>	\$52,515 <del>\$43,920</del> <u>\$60,442</u>	\$47,895 <del>\$43,920</del> <u>\$53,722</u>	\$304,715 <del>\$271,067</del>

Direct costs include salaries and benefits for the CU FORWARD Director (\$80,000), Online Instructional Design Coach (\$50,000), Student Services Specialist (\$40,000) and Program Assistant (\$30,000), and Data Analyst (\$50,000) annually. The Director of Institutional Research is requested at 50% effort (\$60,000) annually beginning in Year 2. To reallocate residual carryover funds, it is requested that Title III provide 85% of funding to all designated continuing full-time Title III personnel in Year 3. This one-time, one-year, adjustment will allow the University continue to display its commitment to institutionalizing grant goals and designated personnel while remaining fiscally responsible with carryover funds. Full time staff salaries with 100% effort and 85% Title III funding obligations are included for the Project Director (\$68,000) and Director of Institutional Research 50% effort



(\$51,100) in Year 3. Salaries for the Project Director (Yr 4 50%, Yr 5 25%) and Director of Institutional Research (Yr 4 25%, Yr 5 25%) will continue to be institutionalized in subsequent years, reducing effort charged to the grant.

Part time salaries include two Graduate Assistants/Student Workers (\$12,750) at 100% effort and 100% Title III funding obligations in Years 3 through 5. All professional staff salaries are in accordance with the WV Higher Education Policy Commission (WVHEPC) salary schedule and are competitive and commensurate with peer positions within West Virginia.

**Fringe Benefits:** Fringe benefits for positions are calculated based on actual costs at the average university rate of ~~35%~~ 28% for full time employees and 10% for part time employees, respectively.

~~However, the salary salaries will be instiitutionalized for the Project Director (Yr 3-75%, Yr 4 50%, Yr 5 25%) and Director of Instiitutional Research (Yr 1 0%, Yr 2 50%, Yr 3 50%, Yr 4 25%, Yr 5 25%), will be institutionalized beginning in Year 3 reducing effort charged to the grant, to 66%, reducing to 33% in year 4 and to 16.5% in year 5. This reduction in effort shows Concord's commitment to continuing the~~

**Project Staff Travel - ~~\$131,000~~ \$98,000:**

	Grant Year 1	Grant Year 2	Grant Year 3	Grant Year 4	Grant Year 5	Total Budget
Travel	<del>\$20,000</del> \$4,200	<del>\$16,000</del> <u>\$15,000</u> \$22,800	<del>\$25,000</del> <u>\$16,000</u> \$24,000	<del>\$35,000</del> <u>\$27,000</u> \$27,000	<del>\$35,000</del> <u>\$20,000</u>	<del>\$131,000</del> 0 \$98,000

Funds are requested to support all staff to travel pursuing professional development activities in support of the program goals. Employees are critical to the success of the program—, and to further emphasize the importance of quality professional development systemically within the institution, funds are requested in Year 3 for Concord University staff identified by the Title III Office as in positions critical to the continual success and sustainability of program goals to attend or participate in professional development activities in support of those goals. As a result of several retirements throughout the pandemic, the University’s workforce includes many new and young professionals, and this funding will enable them to further hone their craft in support of Title III goals.~~further outlining the importance of quality professional development.~~ Costs are approximated at ~~\$12,000 total for three staff positions in year one and \$8,000, \$6,000 in year two, \$2,000 in year three, \$4,000 in year four and \$8,000 for four staff positions in Year 3—reflecting the addition of a Data Analyst in the Office of Institutional Research—but will remain as previously budgeted for Years 4 through 5.~~ Costs for non-Title III staff is budgeted at \$4,000 for Year 3. As previously budgeted, \$10,000 is requested to support student engagement in undergraduate research opportunities, including travel to conduct research, attend conferences, participate in programmatic undergraduate research



~~experiences, and present research findings. Employee and student funding includes mileage, airfare, lodging, per diem meals, incidentals, and conference/course registration.~~

~~\$2,000 for year 5, total for years 2-5. This funding includes mileage, airfare, lodging, per diem meals, and incidentals.~~ An additional \$5,000 annually in Yyear 1, \$4,000 in Yyear 2, \$2,000 in Yyear 3 and \$1,000 in Yyears 4 and 5 is requested for local travel for the student services specialist to visit with local businesses and alumni partners to develop relationships that generate internship and research opportunities for students. Further, travel funding is requested for Concord University's existing Alumni Director to travel in coordination with the Student Services Specialist building the Alumni Mentor Network, creating more mentor and internship opportunities for students. All travel costs are estimated based historical costs.

~~Additionally, funds have been allocated in the amount of \$10,000 in year 3 and \$20,000 in years 4 and \$15,000 in year 5 for student travel to present research projects at a professional conference or setting, supporting the objectives to increase student research opportunities.~~

**Equipment- \$70,000:**

	Grant Year 1	Grant Year 2	Grant Year 3	Grant Year 4	Grant Year 5	Total Budget
Equipment	\$0	\$50,000	\$20,000	\$0	\$0	\$70,000
		\$0	\$0			\$0

Funds are requested for one time technology equipment that will upgrade the technology infrastructure to support additional online courses and programming. In year 2 1, \$50,000 is requested to purchase a network core upgrading from the existing dated technology. Additionally, in year 3 1, \$20,000 is requested to purchase network switch upgrades that will support the new infrastructure.

**Materials and Supplies- ~~\$76,000~~ \$55,703:**

	Grant Year 1	Grant Year 2	Grant Year 3	Grant Year 4	Grant Year 5	Total Budget
Supplies	<del>\$18,000</del>	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$78,000
	<u>\$14,550</u>	<u>\$13,648</u>	<u>\$9,385</u>	<u>\$8,745</u>	<u>\$5,925</u>	\$55,703
		<u>\$10,639</u>	<u>\$15,844</u>			



Funds are requested for a computer for each of the ~~four~~ five staff members at \$2,000 per staff member for a total of \$8,000 in year 1 (one-time cost). Funds are requested to purchase office supplies at \$5,000 ~~per~~ in year 1, \$2,000 in year 2, \$2,500 in year 3 and 4 and \$1,500 in year 5 including photocopying and printing, and postage. Additionally, supply funds are requested for faculty professional development workshops at \$5,000 in year 2-5, \$6,100 in year 3 and \$2,000 in years 4 and 5 and meeting expenses associated with developing student internships and alumni network at \$5,000 ~~annually~~ in year 1 and 2, \$2,500 in years 3 and 4, and \$2,000 in year 5. Materials and supplies are purchased through the university warehouse and under state contract ensuring costs are reasonable.

\$6,103 from carryover funds is requested for materials and supplies in Year 3 in order to more fully support faculty professional development and related activities of the Center for Teaching and Learning, to facilitate and supplement career development activities for students, to provide an additional computer for the Data Analyst position, and to replace or update existing supplies and materials utilized throughout the pandemic during Years 1 and 2. \$6,100, inclusive of carryover, is requested to support supplies and resources needed for multiple coordinated professional development workshops and student activities through the Center for Teaching and Learning and Center for Academic and Career Development on topics including online instruction, integrating career learning into classrooms, career development, undergraduate research, and other ancillary topics. The 2022-2023 academic year saw the introduction of more than 20 new faculty members to campus, and these additional funds will provide critical first-year support for new

faculty and staff while sustaining the capacity to provide high quality professional development opportunities for seasoned faculty and staff. \$3,000 in carryover will be utilized to purchase a new computer for the Data Analyst position and to update existing hardware, software, or purchase a new computer for staff with existing machines that are outdated or otherwise in need of upgrades. All other line items in Years 3 through Year 5 are requested to remain the same.

**Contractual Agreements - ~~\$285,000~~ \$323,000:**

	Grant Year 1	Grant Year 2	Grant Year 3	Grant Year 4	Grant Year 5	Total Budget
Contractual Agreements	\$85,000	\$35,000	\$55,000	\$55,000	\$55,000	\$285,000
	<u>\$78,760</u>	<u>\$67,000</u>	<del>\$57,000</del> <u>\$63,240</u>	<u>\$57,000</u>	<u>\$57,000</u>	<u>\$323,000</u>

\$30,000 in funds are requested in year one to enter into a contract with an external firm to conduct a market analysis of academic course/programs in demand and regional workforce needs to assist in the development of market-driven academic programs. This will allow Concord to development academic programs that will lead to career pathway. Additional \$10,000 is requested in years 2-5 to retain access to the Market analysis software provided by the vendor.

An additional \$6,240 in funds drawn from carryover will be obligated in Year 3 in order to support contractual arrangements in online learning and institutional research. \$15,240 is requested to support contractual agreements and arrangements with professional development firms, organizations, and associations such as Quality Matters, the Association of College And University Educators, On Course Workshops, etc. in order to facilitate or otherwise deliver professional development services on campus, including workshops, speakers, facilitators, and credentialing for faculty and staff in the areas of effective online learning, dual enrollment, career education, undergraduate research, and other related topics aligned with grant goals.



An additional \$1,000 is requested for allocation to market analysis software to adjust to new market rates and continue assistance in the development of market-driven academic programs. All other line items are requested to remain as is in Year 3 and shall remain as is through Year 5.

The Vela Institute will carry out the external evaluation as described in the narrative.

The annual total for evaluation is \$35,000.

The program will also contract with professional associations and presenters to provide professional development activities for faculty and staff concerning the use of institutional research in decision-making, innovative course development and integration of career services content in courses as outlined in the grant objectives.

~~\$20,000~~ \$10,000 is allocated in years ~~2-5~~ 4-5 for professional development workshops / seminars for faculty.

\$20,000 is allocated in year 1 and \$10,000 in year 2 for the development of career services content to integrate into the curriculum. These contracts will be developed with external professional organizations with content specialization.

**Other Costs-~~\$239,000~~ \$207,000:**

	Grant Year 1	Grant Year 2	Grant Year 3	Grant Year 4	Grant Year 5	Total Budget
Other	<del>\$40,000</del>	\$49,000	\$53,000	\$49,000	\$53,000	\$244,000
	<u>\$27,000</u>	<u>\$64,000</u>	<del>\$33,000</del>	\$37,000	\$33,000	\$207,000
		<u>\$65,545</u>	<u>44,455</u>			

Funds are requested to support the purchase of ~~software for improved course~~ development and career services student engagement in the amount of ~~\$9,000 in years 2-5~~ \$20,000 in year 2 and \$8,000 in years 3-5. \$25,000 in year 1 and \$10,000 in years 2-5 annually is also allocated for the purchase of the institutional research data dashboard software to meet the objective of utilizing institutional research in



decision-making. Other expenses include \$30,000 in year 2 and \$15,000 annually in year 1,3,4 and 5 in library resources to support increased additional course development and \$4,000 in year 3 2 and 5 4 for the National Survey for Student Engagement (NSSE). The NSSE survey is used as a measurement tool for evaluation of proposed objectives.

One-time funds are requested to support the purchase of statistical software in order to support the growing needs of the Office of Institutional Research at \$1,455 in Year 3. In addition, \$25,000 is requested to continue the purchase of library resources, including the acquisition of library books, periodicals, online databases, and telecommunication program materials in order to enhance the online learning experience for both on-campus and remote student populations and to provide additional support for career development and undergraduate research. Carryover funds will be utilized to support the \$11,455 increase in obligated funding for this area while Year 4 and 5 budget items are anticipated to remain the same, as carryover expenditures for Year 3 are anticipated to be one-time purchases that are able to be sustained at no additional cost or otherwise absorbed by other related line items at the institutional or grant level in Year 4 and Year 5.



~~decision-making. Other expenses include \$30,000 in year 2 and \$15,000 annually in year 1,3,4 and 5 in library resources to support increased additional course development and \$4,000 in year 3 2 and 5 4 for the National Survey for Student Engagement (NSSE). The NSSE survey is used as a measurement tool for evaluation of proposed objectives.~~

**Total Direct Costs-\$2,028,865:**

	Grant Year 1	Grant Year 2	Grant Year 3	Grant Year 4	Grant Year 5	Total Budget Request
Total	\$447,025	\$449,025	\$415,305	\$365,665	\$351,845	\$2,028,865



**Invitational Priority: Spurring Investment in Opportunity Zones- *Invitational Priority—Spurring Investment in Opportunity Zones. Under this priority, an applicant may address one or both of the following priority areas:***

- (1) Propose to serve children or students who reside, or attend elementary or secondary schools or institutions of higher education, in a qualified opportunity zone as designated by the Secretary of the Treasury under section 1400Z-1 of the Internal Revenue Code**

Six counties in Concord’s primary service region are designated opportunity zones (Greenbrier, Mercer, Monroe, Raleigh, Summers, and Wyoming). Students from these six counties comprise over 63% of CU’s undergraduate enrollment. Meanwhile, just over 70% of Concord’s undergraduate enrollment comes from all thirty of the West Virginia counties designated as opportunity zones.

<b>County</b>	<b>Percent of CU enrollment</b>
Greenbrier	4.04%
Mercer	30.31%
Monroe	3.75%
Raleigh	18.84%
Summers	3.26%
Wyoming	2.83%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>63.03%</b>

**Competitive Preference Priority 1: Fostering Flexible and Affordable Paths to Obtaining Knowledge and Skills**

***Projects that are designed to address providing work-based learning experiences that align with in-demand industry sectors or occupations of the Workforce Innovation and Reinvestment Act.***

Responding to identified needs of ‘in-demand’ sectors and jobs identified by the WV Department of Commerce, specifically the demand for locally educated professionals, the CU Forward program will support students interested in health care professions, education, and the computer science field. Concord students will be introduced to these areas of study through the career modules developed to be implemented as an embedded resource in courses provided by Concord University as described in the CU Forward proposal. As students enroll in a program specific to health care, education, and computer science, the Student Support Specialist will identify an advisor/mentor to be assigned to support students participating in these programs. The goals for advising/mentoring these students are to (Objectives and Measurable Outcomes are found in the narrative in Tables A3 and B2):

- A. Support students as they move through these programs of study to persist and complete in 8 semesters or 4 years.
- B. Introduce students to internships and/or research opportunities related to their field of study.
- C. Enroll students in high-impact internships and/or research opportunities

The CU Forward Student Support Specialist will provide high-impact opportunities for students to engage in job shadowing, internships, and research to provide real-life experiences through CU’s Alumni Mentor Network and local businesses. The chart illustrates ‘In-demand’ sector jobs as reported by the WorkForce WV, the Commerce Department of WV.<sup>32</sup>



Concord University is committed to increasing these high-impact experiences for students. The most recent NSSE survey shows that student participation in internships increased from 50% (2015) to 56% (2016) and participation in research



activities from 24% (2015) to 29% (2016). The work of CU Forward will build on these prior efforts to create more opportunities as well as connect students to these opportunities. By dedicating a position (Student Support

Specialist) to catalog and identify internships and research opportunities, more students will have the chance to gain real world experience to enable them to translate their postsecondary experience into a meaningful career.

Concord is a member of the newly formed Alliance for the Economic Development of Southern West Virginia. A joint initiative among the state’s southern colleges and universities, its goals are to better connect the population to educational resources and workforce training, to engage external partners, to build coalitions by pooling the state’s resources, to ensure workers have access to latest training and technology, and to foster entrepreneurship thereby creating jobs and revitalizing southern WV communities. This alliance will enhance student opportunity in high-impact activities including both internships and undergraduate research.

## **Competitive Preference Priority 2: Fostering Knowledge and Promoting the Development of Skills that Prepare Students to be Informed, Thoughtful, and Productive Individuals and Citizens**

Concord's 2018 National College Health Assessment results revealed that 43% of CU students reported that within the last 12 months finances were "traumatic or very difficult to handle." Further, in a survey given to CU freshmen in Fall 2018, two-thirds indicated they were somewhat to very concerned about paying for college. Given these troubling survey data and the fact that 97 percent of CU students receive financial aid, 54 percent are Pell recipients, and 76 percent receive federal student loans, it is imperative to provide instruction in personal financial literacy and higher education financing and repayment. Benefits to such financial education are well-documented ranging from increasing savings and retirement to starting checking accounts to budgeting wisely among many others.<sup>33</sup>

While the individual benefits of financial education are many, community ones become particularly important for the rural region in which Concord is located. A 2019 brief from the Federal Reserve describes the student loan debt connection to rural brain drain, indicating that high-balance borrowers were 41 percent less likely to stay in a rural area than the lowest quartile of borrowers.<sup>34</sup> Education around saving for college and "smart" borrowing becomes especially critical to staunch the flow of the region's college educated to metropolitan areas outside the region and state. The West Virginia Forward initiative, "a blueprint with a host of recommendation and ideas to advance the state's economic future," identifies financial literacy as a goal.<sup>35</sup>

Online financial literacy resources and curriculum will be incorporated into the CU Forward project through some of the dual enrollment and college-readiness online courses being developed for high school students. Moreover, the Student Services Specialist will revitalize the ad hoc committee formed at CU in 2015 comprised of student affairs and financial aid staff and faculty aimed at providing campus-wide financial education to students. The incumbent will also work with the Director of



Student Success to incorporate strengthened financial education into the University 100 curriculum (a required course for all CU freshmen) and expand the financial literacy resources on the CU website and learning management system (Blackboard).

### SECTION ENDNOTES

<sup>32</sup> [http://www.wvcommerce.org/business/workforcewv/job\\_seekers/demand.aspx](http://www.wvcommerce.org/business/workforcewv/job_seekers/demand.aspx)

<sup>33</sup> Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (2007). A longitudinal evaluation of the intermediate-term impact of Money Smart financial education curriculum upon consumers' behavior and confidence. <https://www.fdic.gov/consumers/consumer/moneysmart/pubs/ms070424.pdf>

<sup>34</sup> Tabit, P.J., & Winters, J. (2019). "Rural brain drain": examining millennial migration patterns and student loan debt. Federal Reserve Board Division of Consumer and Community Affairs. *Consumer & Community Context*, 1(1), 7-14. Federal Reserve  
<https://www.federalreserve.gov/publications/files/consumer-community-context-201901.pdf>

<sup>35</sup> <https://wvforward.wvu.edu/about-us>



