

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Northeast State Community College

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Strong: being “especially able, competent, or powerful” (Strong, 2020). That is the purpose of *Northeast State Bear Strong: A Culture of Service Excellence*, to enable student-facing staff to be “especially able, competent, or powerful” regarding their knowledge of student support services and higher education customer service best practices. In turn, staff will empower students to be *Bear Strong*...to be especially able, competent, or powerful when making decisions that influence their educational future. Inasmuch, the College has defined **one overarching goal related to Northeast State Bear Strong: Empower students to make appropriate academic decisions that lead to student success.**

There are two defined and measurable student success outcomes (SSOs) associated with Northeast State’s QEP. Through participation in services offered through the program: 1) **Potential students will identify and utilize appropriate educational resources that enable them to matriculate into the College, and 2) Current students will identify and utilize appropriate educational resources that enable them to persist to graduation.**

Northeast State’s tripartite *Culture of Service Excellence* (CSE) plan is designed to empower students to make appropriate academic decisions. The College will 1) **implement virtual and campus-based student success centers, called Bear Dens**, staffed by well-trained personnel who will serve Northeast State’s future and current students. 2) **Implement an intensive staff professional development program.** Staff professional development will focus on a) customer service; b) the primary functions of four QEP areas of emphasis (Admissions & Records, Advising, Financial Aid, and student-facing skills); c) and the needs of identified higher- risk student subpopulations (Pell-eligible Students, Students of Color, Students Registered with the Accessibility Office, and Student Veterans). Professional development will focus on common issues (and resolutions) that often deter students’ success within the QEP areas of emphasis. The unique needs of higher-risk subpopulations will also be emphasized. The professional development program’s intent is to increase staff’s knowledge so that they may better serve and inform students. In turn, students will become more informed decision-makers regarding their academic careers. 3) **Co-locate student success offices** at the main campus so that, if a student must be redirected from a Bear Den to a specific office, the student’s success is not deterred by having to traverse from building-to-building, etc.

Northeast State will implement its virtual Bear Den in the fall of Year One, and the main campus Bear Den in the spring. The off-campus Bear Dens will be phased in during years Two through Four. Implementing the virtual Bear Den success center first is strategic, as it will help to support all students while the in-person Bear Den success centers are developed. The professional development program will also be implemented in Year One, phasing in higher levels of the program in Years Two and Three. The co-locations of student success-related offices will be phased in over time in Years One through Four.

This plan and accompanying structure shall ensure that Northeast State’s students become *Bear Strong*. Through Northeast State’s tripartite plan, **students will become especially able, competent, or powerful when making decisions that influence their educational future.**