

## **FORTY YEARS OF CONTINUITY AND INNOVATION** **Guiding Old Westbury's Unique Mission, 1966-2006**

### **I. An Innovative Curriculum: Old Westbury I, 1966-1970**

#### ***1966 SUNY Master Plan***

SUNY allocates resources for a college in Nassau County that “pays heed to the individual student and his [sic] concern with the modern world.” The *Plan* mandates a college that will feature a more flexible approach to pedagogy, giving students a say in their own curriculum, and providing faculty outlets for creative instruction.

### **II. In Pursuit of Human Justice: Old Westbury II, 1970-1973**

#### ***1971-72 College Brochure: Mandate***

Building on the college's self-described mandate to develop “new ways to teach and learn,” the college now pledges “to focus the college's resources and organize the curriculum around the theme of human justice.” The *Brochure* also affirms the college's emphasis on “historically by-passed” students, on serving regional students, on a critical analysis curriculum, and on shared governance among students, staff, faculty and administration.

#### ***1972 Guide to Old Westbury***

The *Guide* re-affirms the new mandate to serve “historically by-passed” students and offer innovative pedagogy. Further, the *Guide* reaches out to students “who would welcome the opportunity to study in a multi-cultural environment” and those having “a strong concern for social justice and a desire to apply knowledge to the major problems confronting American society.”

### **III. Serving the Region: Old Westbury III**

#### ***1974 Mission Approved by SUNY Board of Trustees***

In 1973, the college receives an additional charge, to serve the Long Island region, and particularly transfer students from local 2-year community colleges, while maintaining its commitment to broad access and innovative curriculum.

- “Support for innovative educational models and an aggressive outreach for cultural and generational pluralism.
- Responsiveness to the needs of Long Island's Two-Year College transfers, and;
- Development of Old Westbury as a regional campus of the State University serving Long Island, New York City, and the Southern Tier of New York.”

### **1975-76 Old Westbury College Catalog**

Access, excellence and a social vision become integral to the college's identity by the end of its first decade:

"Broadly stated, the College sees its mission as: accessibility to students, a commitment to excellence, and concern for the needs of contemporary society. The College is open to individuals from all walks of life, and is available to students of all income levels, races, ages, cultural and national backgrounds and stages on the educational ladder."

### **1981 Statement of Mission**

By 1981, the varied strands of Old Westbury's mission are inextricably intertwined:

"The College at Old Westbury is a growing four-year liberal arts college dedicated to the principle of human justice: to maintaining a student body drawn from among those underserved by the mainstream of higher education because of their low incomes, race, class, sex or age.

The College aims at using its small size but great diversity of students and faculty to promote justice and equality in living and learning; innovation in teaching and in the organization of knowledge.

The College is committed to excellence, to the advancement of knowledge, and to the constant improvement of the quality of education and of its graduates. In this we see our greatest service to the public on Long Island and beyond.

As the only four-year public college in Nassau County, Old Westbury will continue to explore a variety of ways to increase its service to local communities and to involve their people more actively in the life and aspirations of the College."

### **1984 SUNY Master Plan**

The *Master Plan* of colleges and universities in the SUNY system outlines Old Westbury's special mandate:

"to offer diversified programs in both liberal arts and the career-oriented studies appropriate to the needs of the region; to place special emphasis on education for a diverse student body, including older students, economically disadvantaged students and persons from a variety of racial, cultural and ethnic backgrounds; and to be especially responsive to the needs of Long Island community college transfers for programs of study at the upper division."

### **1985-87 College Catalog**

The three missions persist, becoming central to Old Westbury's unique place within the SUNY system:

"Old Westbury has three missions: to offer diversified programs in both liberal arts and career-oriented studies appropriate to the needs of the region; to place special emphasis on education for a diverse student body, including older students, economically disadvantaged students, and persons from a variety of racial, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds; and to be especially responsive to the needs of Long Island community college transfers for programs of study at the upper division."

### ***1986 Middle States Periodic Review of the Mission***

Twenty years into Old Westbury's history, the three strands of the College's historic mission set the background for future growth:

"Old Westbury's tripartite mission based on the themes of innovative education, human justice and service to Long Island, developed by accretion between 1966 and 1973, during which period the College passed through three distinct evolutionary stages. The original mission of Old Westbury I (1966-70) aimed at creating an experimental curriculum and an appropriately innovative pedagogy. Old Westbury II (1971-73) added the human justice mission, its goal being to afford access to students "traditionally by-passed" by higher education because of age, gender, race, or class. Finally, Old Westbury III began in 1973 with an additional mandate from the University's Board of Trustees to make available more upper division places to the graduates of Long Island's two-year public colleges."

### ***1990 Middle States Self-Study***

By 1990, the tripartite mission remains infused with the theme of "human justice."

"The mission of the State University College at Old Westbury as it has evolved and been reaffirmed by the SUNY/Board of Trustees is as follows:

- To provide the highest quality liberal arts education in interdisciplinary, disciplinary and career-oriented fields;
- To assure the broadest possible access to higher education to all constituents of our society, including persons from a variety of cultural, racial and ethnic backgrounds, and those who are economically or otherwise disadvantaged;
- To serve Long Island, New York City, and southeastern region of New York State and especially to be responsive to the requirements of graduates of Long Island community colleges for programs of study at the upper division leading to the baccalaureate degree.

The unifying theme that has given this mission its unique role and vitality on our campus has been a commitment to the advancement of human justice."

### ***1996 Middle States Periodic Review of the Mission***

Human justice animates the college's larger goals of access, innovative education and a range of curricular choices to serve the region:

"Set within the larger theme of 'human justice,' the tripartite mission of Old Westbury with emphasis on 'the broadest possible access,' 'liberal arts education,' and 'the disciplinary approach to instruction' continues to animate the campus, giving Old Westbury a special tenor and tone."

### ***2000 Middle-States Self-Study Mission***

The Self-Study identifies five central elements of Old Westbury's Mission (citing the findings of the Mission Review Committee in 1998):

- "To provide the highest quality education in interdisciplinary, disciplinary, and career oriented fields;

- To maintain a commitment to diversity on campus, bringing together persons from a variety of cultural, racial, and ethnic backgrounds, as well as those who are economically or otherwise disadvantaged;
- To serve the Long Island and greater New York regions of New York State and to be responsive to the requirements of graduates of Long Island community colleges for programs of study at the upper division leading to the baccalaureate degree;
- To enhance in each individual a sense of human justice, excellence, and community; and
- To work for innovation in teaching and the organization of knowledge.”

### ***2000-2005 Strategic Plan***

“Core Values: The College has a set of beliefs that is ingrained in the way we think and act. These five core values guide our choices, defining for us the right courses of action, the clearest directions and preferred results.

Leadership: Visionary and ethics-centered leadership will be a cornerstone of our development. The continued success of the College is a direct consequence of our ability to attract and motivate high quality faculty, staff and students.

Inclusion: Diversity will continue to be the source of our strength. The commitment and contribution of faculty, students and staff will determine our success. Our community is a rich mixture of people of diverse nationality, race, gender and opinion. We value the unique ability of each individual to contribute.

Integrity: We will educate students to hold themselves to the highest ethical standards in all of their endeavors both within and outside the college.

Creating a Performance-Based Environment: Performance is the foundation of Old Westbury's success. We commit to creating and promoting a learning environment that prepares students to enter competitive graduate and professional schools and to achieve leadership positions in a global marketplace.

Community Partnership: The College will create an environment that fosters life-long engagement between the College and our students by providing quality services through partnership, participation, pride and respect.”

### ***2006 Memorandum of Understanding with SUNY***

Access, innovation and intercultural understanding continue to define Old Westbury:

“From its founding in 1968, the State University College at Old Westbury has been characterized by its commitment to innovative pedagogy, its interdisciplinary academic programs, and its mission of providing services to a diverse range of students. Today, Old Westbury remains true to its mission and continues as a small, public college that offers close interaction among students, faculty, and staff and that weaves intercultural understanding into the very fabric of its liberal arts and professional programs. The College also continues the quest to become recognized for offering high quality education in Liberal Arts and Sciences, Teacher Education and Business while retaining the rich mixture of nationality and race that contributes to its individuality within the SUNY system.”

To read more documents on the history of Old Westbury's mission, [click here](#).