MISSION
The Consortium is a nonprofit educational association committed to the advancement of higher education in the Washington Metropolitan Area.

VISION
The Consortium will be a national model for cross-sector collaboration that creates new opportunities for student learning, faculty scholarship and research, and institutional partnerships.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES
1. Re-vision the roles, regions for engagement, and membership structure of the Consortium.
2. Create greater academic synergy and collaboration within the Consortium.
3. Deepen collaborative engagements with businesses, organizations, and governments in the immediate Washington metropolitan region.
5. Enhance advocacy on local, regional, national, and international issues affecting member institutions.
6. Ensure sufficient resources.

1. Re-Vision the Roles, Regions for Engagement, and Membership Structure of the Consortium
Since its founding in 1964, the Consortium has periodically reflected on and expanded the roles it plays in both the higher education and civic communities. Originally conceived as a District-centric organization, the original roles emphasized sharing of graduate courses and programs through cross-registration and of library resources. This subsequently expanded into advocacy on behalf of the District’s higher education community with the addition of more District universities through the 1970s. By the 1980s, the Consortium added a larger, regional view that included some aspects of economic development as it added universities in neighboring areas of Maryland and Virginia. Most recently, a third refocusing occurred when the Consortium expanded to include regional community colleges, thereby creating a true cross-section of nonprofit higher education that now participates in broader discussions of economic development and creation of the full talent pipeline.
Although the broader roles of the Consortium have adapted and expanded over time, especially in the economic development arena, the basic structure of the organization has not. Throughout these three phases of role development, there were two constants in the structure of the organization: (a) each institution had its main campus in the nearby metropolitan Washington area, and (b) membership in the Consortium brought a voting seat on the board and participation in the cross-registration program.

The implementation of the 2014-2017 Strategic Plan brought much greater visibility to the Consortium, resulting in the Consortium’s participation in larger, more inclusive discussions about the future economic development of a wider greater Washington region, including a view that this region stretches from Baltimore to Richmond (as envisioned by the Greater Washington Partnership). With this wider view of economic development came a need for a similarly broader view of higher education’s role, and new, innovative opportunities for the Consortium to facilitate these discussions. For instance, as a founding member of the Global Cities Initiative (with the Greater Washington Board of Trade and the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments), the Consortium is recognized as a major economic sector and driver of the regional economy.

The opportunities to help shape the future regional economy broadly construed raise important, challenging, and evocative issues for the Consortium. Consequently, two core subgoals of this Plan provide for revisioning the roles of the Consortium in economic development, and for considering new forms of organizational structure and membership.

Revisioning the Roles of the Consortium

In order to chart the appropriate course for the Consortium to participate most effectively in regional planning on future economic development, the Consortium seeks to answer the following questions. (Note: The specific focus on various forms of engagement in the historic geography of the Consortium is considered separately under Goal 3.)

- What should the Consortium’s role be in serving as a participant, convener, facilitator, and/or influencer in more inclusive planning of future economic development in an expanded definition of “region?”
- How should the Consortium best apply its considerable resources (e.g., research, educational programs, etc.) to support these discussions?
- As an existing group that reflects the entire workforce preparation pipeline, how should the Consortium best serve to align needs with appropriately educated supply?

Rethinking the Consortium’s Organizational Structure and Membership

As noted above, the Consortium has maintained the same organizational structure and definition and benefits of membership since its founding in 1964. Provided that the outcomes of the processes regarding the Consortium’s positioning in discussions about future economic development result in an openness to a broader, more active role, then the Consortium will seek answers to the following questions:
Given a desire for new types and levels of broader regional engagement, what would be the optimal organizational structure to support those activities?

Under a broader model of engagement, what types of membership or affiliation would enable maximal support for this engagement and maintain the historic programs that leverage the resources of the “core” historic membership (e.g., cross-registration, course and program collaboration, etc.)?

What services and benefits would accrue to other forms of membership or affiliation?

What implications are there for governance with alternative forms of membership or affiliation?

2. Create Greater Academic Synergy and Collaboration Within the Consortium

The need for collaboration and mutual investment in academic programs has never been greater. Such synergy is a hallmark of other higher educational consortia, and is increasingly the optimal solution for large scale academic partnerships with external organizations. For example, the Five College Consortium in Amherst, Massachusetts not only fosters cross-registration, but has also created and oversees true shared programs and centers. These include numerous certificate and degree programs (click here for details). Five College Centers include East Asian Studies, World Languages, and Women’s Studies.

Given the quality and diversity of its membership and academic programs, the Consortium is in a unique position to create a national best practice model for collaborative academic programs. Doing so will create new and creative pathways to faster degree completion, enhanced learning outside the classroom, new credential options, and more flexible customization of areas of study. Building on the examples of others, the Consortium will create a set of opportunities that best matches its strengths. Among the goals for academic synergy and collaboration are:

- Expanded use of cross-registration to create accelerated degree program options.
- Expand shared study abroad programs.
- Create Consortium-wide network of faculty development and shared best practices by linking directors of teaching and learning centers.
- Create shared symposia, lectures, exhibitions, and other related programs that are specifically designed to engage multiple Consortium members.
- Create a web-based central directory of experiential learning opportunities and high impact practices (e.g., service learning, community engagement learning, and undergraduate student research opportunities) through cross-registration or other cooperative agreements.
- Create shared preparation opportunities for prestigious scholarship and fellowship competitions (e.g., Rhodes, Truman, and Fulbright).
- Create partnerships among academic programs (e.g., Consortium-wide centers or institutes, Consortium-wide sustainability program, etc.) that would be managed by the Consortium for the benefit of all in a way similar to current oversight of cross-registration.
- Foster interinstitutional collaborative teaching.
3. **Deepen Collaborative Engagements With Businesses, Organizations, and Governments in the Immediate Washington Metropolitan Region**

The Consortium has become the preferred resource for regional businesses, organizations, elected officials, and higher education leaders to contact. With the membership in the Washington Higher Education Secretariat in 2017, the Consortium gained a seat on the primary national thought leadership group in higher education. Specific collaborative agreements are also now in place with the Greater Washington Board of Trade (BOT), the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG), and the U.S. Department of Commerce. The Consortium, along with the BOT and COG, founded the Global Cities Initiative in Washington. Explorations regarding providing postgraduate education to regional corporations are occurring. Thus, the role and influence of the Consortium is considerably greater than it was a few years ago.

Even with the achievements of the past few years, the Consortium still has numerous opportunities to continue raising its profile and expanding its influence. Strategic goals here include:

- Strategically utilize the opportunities that CUWMA Board member participation on key boards and committees offers in terms of collaborative opportunities for the Consortium.
- Ensure that the Consortium is represented on all major regional initiatives and boards.
- Ensure that the Consortium is part of all major economic development initiatives, and participate selectively in related collaborative activities (e.g., trade missions).
- Emerge as a national thought leader on higher education and the roles that higher education play in economic development and community enhancement based on examples in the Consortium.
- Provide a link to the Consortium on every member institution’s homepage.
- Broaden and strengthen partnerships with other key economic sectors.

4. **Expand and Enhance the Consortium Research Fellows Program, U.S. Institute of Peace Research Assistant Program, and Reach4Success**

**Consortium Research Fellows Program**

Since its founding in 1981, the Consortium Research Fellows Program (CRFP) has had four primary goals: (a) provide our sponsoring organizations with high-quality research, technical, and analytical support by promoting partnerships with higher education; (b) engage university students in educationally-relevant professional experiences that enhance their knowledge and research skills and encourage their interest in future employment with our affiliated organizations; (c) encourage knowledge and technology transfer among government, partner organizations, and academia by involving university faculty in collaborative research projects; and (d) expand the scope of the CRFP into new areas of research with government agencies, non-profit organizations, and the corporate community. Led by Dr. Scott Beal, a former CRFP Fellow himself, CRFP has enjoyed tremendous success. Since 2014, CRFP has expanded its reach from the Army Research Institute (ARI) and the human performance/human factors division of the Air Force Research Lab (AFRL) to include Navy Personnel, Research, and Technology (NPRST), as well as discussions to expand to Naval Air Warfare Center Training Systems Division, NASA, the Army Research
Lab, to additional areas of AFRL (through new collaborations with the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, another Consortium member), and the Navy’s Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) Program.

As the CRFP expands into new research areas and organizations, and increases the number of Fellows, strengthening and expanding our relationships with the Consortium universities and other accredited institutions of higher education becomes one of our most pressing concerns. With the approval of and working with the chief academic officers (CAO) at our Consortium universities and other institutions, we will reinforce our existing relationships and develop new ones that benefit students, universities, and sponsoring organizations.

Specific goals for 2018-2021 include:
  - Increase the number of student Fellows from our Consortium universities.
  - Increase the number of sponsoring organizations, especially through relationships with such organizations that are facilitated by Consortium member institutions.
  - Explore potential for expanding the CRFP model to private sector organizations.

U.S. Institute of Peace Research Assistant Program
The U.S. Institute of Peace (USIP) Research Assistant Program places Consortium graduate students at USIP in a range of support capacities.

Strategic goals for 2018-2021 include:
  - Advocate for the continued funding for USIP and for the Graduate Assistant Program.
  - Explore with USIP opportunities to expand the partnership with the Consortium.

Reach4Success
Reach4Success (www.reach4success.org) is a multidimensional college access program that targets students and their parents/guardians from middle school through high school in the metropolitan DC area. Services are also available to undergraduate, graduate, and adult student learners. The program is conducted in partnership with American Student Assistance (headquartered in Boston). While Reach4Success is primarily focused on understanding and accessing student financial aid, it also operates the College Information Center. It offers a variety of programs, including Get Financially Fit for College and The Financial Aid Roadmap. These programs are offered at various locations in the District.

Strategic goals for 2018-2021 include:
  - Expand Reach4Success to communities outside the District.
  - Continue increasing the number of trained and certified financial aid coaches.
• Develop wider array of programming for adult learners at both the high school and college levels, especially for individuals whose first language is not English.
• Expand community-based partnerships to increase opportunities for adult learners.
• Increase breadth of programming for test preparation (e.g., TOEFL).
• Use Reach4Success as a means to create new roles for collaboration between the Consortium and the P-12 educational communities in the region. Specific focused activities could include:
  o Expansion of programs for students who need more academic and social support so that more students are college- and career-ready.
  o Explore opportunities to create neighborhood learning centers to provide support for students.

5. **Enhance Advocacy on Local, Regional, National, and International Issues Affecting Member Institutions**

Advocacy has a long history in the Consortium. Historically, most of this activity has focused on the DC City Council, especially when the majority of Consortium member institutions were located in the District. With current membership nearly equally divided (9 members in the District, 8 in Maryland or Virginia), and with expanded roles in higher education policy, the Consortium’s advocacy activities have expanded considerably. Additionally, the advocacy roles the Consortium plays no longer focus exclusively, or even mainly, on governmental relations. Now these roles increasingly include advocacy with regional, national, and international businesses in addition to governments. Consequently, advocacy activities represent a new separate strategic initiative for the 2018-2021.

Strategic goals for 2018-2021 include:
• Developing consensus Consortium legislative goals for each year.
• Actively participating in the Washington Higher Education Secretariat as a forum and basis for forming the Consortium advocacy priorities.
• Expanding and deepening relationships with federal agencies.
• Establishing an appropriate Consortium role in advocating at regional and state levels.
• Establishing the Consortium as a regional and national thought leader in higher education issues.
• Deepen relationships and explore collaborative activities with NAICU State Executives and State Higher Education Executive Officers.

6. **Ensure Sufficient Resources**

In order to provide the highest level of service to member institutions and to the broader Consortium mission, it is essential that the Consortium have the necessary resources. During the 2014-2017 period, the Consortium reduced expenditures or avoided cost by reducing its staffing by 1.5 FTE, restructuring and outsourcing IT services, implementing an electronic timesheet/payroll tracking system for federal contracts, and increasing review on costs associated with participating in regional events (e.g., annual or
Due to significant structural and service deficiencies in the facility the Consortium rented, a new lease agreement at a different location was signed that took advantage of the tenant market in the District. The space the Consortium moved to is significantly better, provides room to house Reach4Success administrative staff, and provides appropriate space for Senior Fellows and interns at a rate per square foot comparable to the former space.

There were no dues increases over this period, and only one special assessment for contracted services related to analyses of a Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) proposal by the DC Tax Revision Commission. Revenue increases over the 2014-2017 period were entirely self-generated through increased activities in the Consortium Research Fellows Program, United States Institute of Peace contract, and Reach4Success.

Looking ahead, the Consortium’s goals as outlined in this plan will require additional resources. Specific goals include:

- Analyze costs associated with strategic initiatives identified elsewhere in this plan.
- Identify potential collaboration/partnership opportunities with member institutions to close revenue gaps.
- Explore additional avenues for adding value through expansion of existing programs (e.g., Senior Fellows) or initiating new approaches.
- Develop multi-year financial plan to address resource needs for addressing gaps, including predictable schedule of dues increases, for board review.