

## SECTION II

### Southwestern Community College 2004-2005 Accomplishments

#### Institutional/Strategic Initiatives

1. Continue to Implement the NCCCS Information System of the Future at SCC  
*The process of converting from a Unix System to this new centralized information system is well underway at the college. All 58 North Carolina community colleges are being phased into this system over a multi-year period. During 2004-05 both the Financial and Human Resources components of the system were activated at the college. Preparations are also underway for the final stage of this system- the Student Records component. The conversion of this component will likely take a couple of years.*
2. Implement a First Annual Resource Development Agenda  
*The intent of this initiative is to prepare an integrated resource development plan which can help guide the primary activities and focus of the SCC Foundation and the Community & Resource Development Office. Ideally, the plan will proactively align college needs with resource development vehicles (i.e. grants, major gifts, special events, direct mail) to achieve the greatest measure of success. While it was anticipated that this priority would be realized during the 2004-05 year, a series of events combined to prevent this from occurring. For example, there were personnel changes in the Foundation Director position mid-way in the 2004-05 year. The new Foundation Director needed time to become familiar with the Foundation and its activities. Also, unanticipated events arose during 2004-05 which required considerable staff time for the Director of Community & Resource Development. These events are components of the Regional Fiber Deployment project which is addressed in Priority 3 below.*  
  
*Finally, 2004-05 represented the concluding year for both the GEAR UP and the Title III grants. This, coupled with the other events already outlined, made 2004-05 a less than ideal period for developing a comprehensive resource development agenda. Therefore, it appeared to be more realistic and appropriate to delay the implementation of this agenda until the beginning of the 2005-06 year. This project will be carried over and completed during that time period.*
3. Provide Leadership for Regional Fiber Deployment  
*SCC worked closely with Drake Enterprises and the Eastern Band of Cherokee to continue the deployment of a high-performance fiber-optic network which will traverse the six counties west of the Balsam Mountains, several counties in upstate Georgia, and a portion of Eastern Tennessee. The network consists of a minimum of 144 fiber strands. Some of the strands are retained by Drake and the Eastern Band, some will be given to SCC, and some have been used to create a new company, BalsamWest FiberNET. The mission of BalsamWest is to ensure that the region has the tools to participate fully in a global economy by providing open and affordable access to state-of-the-art telecommunications infrastructure. SCC has been selected to serve on the BalsamWest board of directors as the Community Interest Partner.*

4. Operationalize New College Fiber Optic Network

*Progress continued on this on-going initiative during the 2004-05 year, as the college now has approximately 300 miles of the fiber network installed in the region. Well over half of this network was installed during the 2004-05 year. The network covers all three counties in the college service area, the far western counties of North Carolina and portions of eastern Tennessee and north Georgia.*

*Other accomplishments related to this project during the past year include the connection of the college's Public Safety Training Center to the network. It is anticipated that the Cherokee and Swain centers will be connected in Fall, 2005. Additional public schools will be also be connected by Fall, 2005 (Cherokee High School, Franklin High School and Swain County Public Schools). Another on-going focus of this robust fiber-optic network will be the continued upgrading of the interactive television system and a renewed emphasis on the Smoky Mountain Knowledge Network coalition.*

5. Implement Comprehensive College Marketing Plan

*The college established the implementation of a comprehensive college marketing plan as an institutional priority for 2004-05. It was anticipated that this plan would address such areas as: public relations, advertising, market research, internal communication, and the College 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary activities. This project was partially accomplished. A 2004-05 Marketing Plan was developed, which primarily focused on activities associated with the college's 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration. Other topics, such as market research and public relations were not fully addressed in this plan.*

*Personnel changes at the college were the primary reason that all aspects of the plan were not completed. The Public Information Office at the college was responsible for many aspects of this project. However, the Public Information Officer resigned soon into the 2004-05 year. When the position was filled later in the 2004-05 year, it was filled in a job-sharing capacity by two individuals. This arrangement was a new one both for the college and for the two individuals involved. Consequently, this arrangement was a learning experience one for all parties involved. It should be noted that while the arrangement did necessitate a learning phase, the arrangement has proven to be mutually satisfying to all parties as well. However, one consequence of this learning phase was the necessity to postpone the completion of all aspects of the marketing plan. These final elements will be incorporated into the 2005-06 edition of the Marketing Plan which will be completed in the coming year.*

6. Engage in Preparation for Reaffirmation Process by SACS

*The college has established the organizational framework for guiding its participation in the reaffirmation process by the Southern Association of Colleges & Schools (SACS). The college has established the Leadership Team, the Compliance Team and the Quality Enhancement Project (QEP) Team. All three of these teams have been actively meeting during the past year. The Compliance Team has developed a plan of action for addressing college compliance with the various Principles and Standards developed by SACS. The college community evaluated options for the Quality Enhancement Plan and made a selection of the topic for the plan. The QEP Team has been actively engaged in developing this plan.*

7. Open New Cashiers Center

*With the acquisition of the Nichols Property by the Jackson County Board of Commissioners, the college has completed preparations to relocate its Cashiers operation to this new facility. The Nichols Property includes a 4,054 sq. ft. house which will be the new SCC Cashiers Center. This facility is almost double the size of the former Cashiers Center. The property adjoins the Cashiers Public Library, the Cashiers Post Office, and is in a prime location to conveniently serve the residents of the Cashiers area. During 2004-05 the college completed a number of improvements to this facility prior to its July 1, 2005 opening.*

*These improvements included installing new electrical circuits, installing a new ceiling, a new paint job and new carpeting, the installation of a new sidewalk and ramp (to make the facility ADA compliant), and a variety of structural improvements.*

8. Development of Macon Campus

*Delays such as construction bids coming in over the budget, sewer access issues and other hurdles negated the possibility of construction of the new Macon Campus during 2004-05. At this point, it appears the Macon Campus will be ready for classes by Spring Semester, 2007.*

9. Implement Retention Strategies

*In an effort to make a quantum leap in student retention, the college will engage in a number of high-energy activities including: implementing a recruiting plan linked to the college marketing plan, implementing Early Alert, Orientation, Recruit Back and persistence activities, implementing student career planning and job search initiatives, and implementing a student-centered service approach to providing enrollment services and support to prospective/current students.*

10. Jackson Campus Development

*Planning continued on the facility needs for the Jackson Campus and the overall future development for this campus. Discussions on potential land acquisition continued during the 2004-05 year, but at this point none of the acquisitions have been realized. One or more of these acquisitions must be realized before the college proceeds with major capital projects on this campus.*

## Departmental/Tactical Initiatives:

### Administrative Services:

1. Address Condition of Interior Road at Swain Center- *this effort is still on-going*
2. Create Professional Development Committee & Plan- *was not accomplished*
3. Campus Security Short Term Improvements & Long Range Plan- *this was completed*

### Instructional Services:

1. Real Estate Program—Faculty Resource Allocation- *this was accomplished*
2. Medical Transcription Certificate- *this program is now available*
3. Cherokee Fine Arts Program- *was not accomplished*
4. Implement Evening Cosmetology Program- *the evening program began in Fall Semester 2004*
5. Gaming Management Program- *was not accomplished, due to lack of participation by partner organization*
6. Experiential Learning for Carpentry Program- *due to a lack of funding, this was not accomplished*
7. CyberCrime—Faculty Resource Allocation- *this was accomplished*
8. Implement Distance Education Plan- *this plan was completed*
9. Arts & Sciences General SACS Competencies- *General Education competencies have been identified as well as methods of evaluation*
10. Re-establish Articulation Process with WCU- *due in part to personnel changes at the university, the articulation process experienced a period of delay. However, during 2004-05 the process was reinvigorated and is now moving forward.*
11. Create a Permanent SCC Faculty Center for Excellence in Teaching- *this was not accomplished*

### Continuing Education:

1. Homeland Security Programming- *was not accomplished, will be re-evaluated during 2005-06 for possible opportunities*
2. Offer Advanced Business Clerical at LBJ- *this program is now offered at the LBJ Job Corps Center*
3. Basic Skills/ESL Marketing & Matriculation- *was accomplished*
4. Upgrade of Public Safety FATS System- *due to a lack of funding, this was not accomplished. However, a through a partnership effort with the North Carolina Highway Patrol, the college has access to a similar system with many of the same benefits.*
5. Customer Service Training Program – *was accomplished.*

### Student Development:

1. Implement Phase II of the Student Career Initiative- *Phase II has been implemented, expanding the career services and resources available to students*

### Institutional Development:

1. Develop and Implement Plan for Improving Quality of Data Entered into College Systems- *a team was created to address this issue. The team reviewed data entry at the college and came up with a number of recommendations to improve the accuracy of data entry- these recommendations have been implemented.*
2. New Century Scholars/Collegiate Connections—Analysis and Evaluation- *was accomplished*
3. Assist Administrative Departments in Refining Planning Systems- *a framework for accomplishing this task has been implemented. Assistance will be provided on an on-going basis.*

4. Identify On-line Planning System- *several alternatives were evaluated during the past year, but none were identified which met both of the college requirements for technical proficiency and affordability. Research for a potential system will continue.*
5. Form Router Online Survey Software- *was not accomplished due to cost constraints*
6. Evaluate Possibility of College Name Change- *this issue was discussed, but was placed on hold for now. It may be re-evaluated at a future time.*

Telecommunications/Technology:

1. Off-Campus Computer Upgrades- *this was accomplished at all the off-campus centers*
2. Upgrades & Additions to Software Licenses- *a variety of software licenses were renewed and/or upgraded during the 2004-05 year.*

## Summary of 2004-2005 Institutional Accomplishments

The previous section listed the status for each of the 2004-05 institutional priorities with a brief indication of progress for each priority. This summary will provide a more detailed overview of three major accomplishments by the college over the past year which directly impacted the 2004-05 institutional priorities.

### Modifications to the SCC Planning Process

Planning and institutional effectiveness at Southwestern Community College are evolving processes which undergo periodic changes and modifications in order to better meet both internal and external planning and assessment requirements. As a result of the December 7, 2004 President's Council meeting, a committee was appointed to review current planning processes at the college and to make recommendations on actions which would strengthen and enhance these processes. The rationales for this review of the college planning process included:

- the need to more closely align planning and budgeting,
- the desire to better communicate annual institutional priorities down to the departmental and programmatic level, and to improve linkages between institutional priorities and activities at the departmental and programmatic level,
- the need to broaden the level of participation in the planning process (particularly in regard to planning at the institutional level),
- to more formalize the recording of decision-making activities of key college committees and councils, and
- the need to modify the planning calendar in order to create a more orderly and logical flow to the overall planning process.

Upon discussing the aforementioned items, the team has developed the following recommendations which should result in a more effective and efficient planning process at the college. These changes are categorized under four major themes.

1. **Modifications to the President's Council.** The President's Council was created as a representative body to help guide the overall planning process at the college. While primarily advisory in nature, the council was designed to be an active participant in the planning process. However, the council evolved into primarily a reporting mechanism for activities and initiatives at the college. In order to achieve the original intent for this group and to reinvigorate its role in the planning process, the following changes were recommended:
  - ?? Reassign responsibility for assessing progress in meeting institutional priorities from the previous year. Currently this is the responsibility of the Executive Council, but under this proposal it would be reassigned to the President's Council.

- ?? Reassign responsibility for developing the planning assumptions from the Executive Council to the President's Council. The planning assumptions represent a form of environmental scanning. Individual members would be assigned topics which currently comprise these planning assumptions. These topics include such areas as Technology, Economy, Demographics, etc. and mirror those included in the planning assumption categories utilized by the NCCCS Office for the plan for the Community College System. In addition, there will be a greater emphasis on gathering trends in these areas which have relevance to the college. Also, new categories of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) to the college will be added to the current categories.
- ? Reassign responsibility for developing a **draft** of the annual **college** priorities from the Executive Council to the President's Council. This draft would include an "A" list and a "B" list of no more than five institutional priorities for the upcoming fiscal year. A variety of information sources would be used by the members to develop these priorities. These include the planning assumptions, data currently collected on a routine basis at the college, and information each member of the President's Council could provide on major needs in his/her department or program. The final version of the annual college priorities (ideally a list of five or so priorities) would be adopted by the Executive Council. In addition, the Executive Council will develop action plans for each of these priorities. The appropriate areas will be assigned responsibility for carrying out these actions plans during the coming year.
- ? In order to achieve the three tasks listed above, the council would schedule two half-day planning retreats.
- ? The Executive Council will report to the President's Council on the finalized list of priorities for the upcoming fiscal/academic year. In addition, the Executive Council will conduct a mid-year "pulse check" to assess progress in meeting institutional and divisional priorities. This will likely occur in January. The results of this "pulse check" will be shared with President's Council at its January meeting.
- ? Improve the use of data for decision-making purposes by making the review of data a more important element of President's Council meetings. The council needs to create a climate which is receptive to data analysis and a willingness to develop solutions for those issues which data indicate may need some form of action.
- ? Increase the term of at-large members from two years to three years.
- ? Broaden the level of active participation in the President's Council by rotating the chairmanship of this body on an annual or bi-annual basis. A nominating committee comprised of one administrator, one staff and one faculty (from the President's Council) will be appointed to select a nominee for this position. The nominee must be approved by a majority of the President's Council. In addition, the nominating committee will select a chairman-elect who will serve at the end of the term of the current chair and will act as chair at President's Council meetings in the absence of the current chair.

**2. Modifications to planning at the departmental and programmatic level.** Changes at this level include:

- ? Each major division of the college (in this case a division is defined as all departments which are administered by a college vice president) will develop three to five divisional priorities for each academic/fiscal year. These will be communicated to all departments/curriculum programs within the respective divisions.
- ? Scheduling coaching/informational sessions with various departments (particularly administrative departments) to help communicate the annual institutional priorities and to help develop the annual divisional priorities ( three to five priorities). Part of the session would include a discussion of how these institutional and divisional priorities relate to individual departments.
- ? All planning/outcome documents will be submitted electronically by individual departments to their respective vice president or dean. Vice presidents and deans will then forward these plans electronically to the Institutional Research & Planning Office. Consequently, the signature element will no longer be part of these documents.
- ? The planning/outcomes document will be expanded to include a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis at the departmental and programmatic level.
- ? Expansion of the planning/outcomes document to include a more detailed budget section in order to document both operational and expanded budget requests.
- ? Continue to pursue the possibility of migrating to a web-based planning system if one which is both technologically feasible and affordable can be identified.

**3. Modifications to the current planning calendar.** These modifications include the addition of new elements to the planning calendar as well as changing the schedule for when some current activities will take place.

- ?? The faculty budget hearings will be moved to May (for those faculty on a 9 month contract), June (for those faculty on a 9-1-0 contract) and July (for those faculty on a 9-0-1 contract).
- ?? The planning assumptions/priorities retreats will be moved to March and April (as opposed to the current schedule of February).
- ?? Greater emphasis (both at the institutional and departmental level) of a mid-year “pulse check” to evaluate progress in meeting annual goals and priorities.
- ?? Link budget planning with strategic initiatives and incorporate into the planning calendar.

#### 4. Other activities/initiatives to improve the planning process at the college.

- ?? Improve/formalize recording of key decision-making activities at the college- for example, institute the recording of notes for Executive Council meetings. These notes would not be highly detailed, but would provide a record of decisions which are made and the rationale for these decisions.
- ?? Develop effective strategies to mitigate two major obstacles to planning- (1) the wide fluctuations from year to year on finalizing the state budget, and (2) the inherent difficulty of coordinating curriculum planning with other elements of the college due to most faculty working a nine month contract. This situation forces faculty to compress annual planning into a nine month period, with limited time for participating in the more in-depth planning activities.

These recommendations were presented to the President's Council at the May 2, 2005 meeting. After some discussion, the Council unanimously adopted these recommendations. These changes are effective with the beginning of the 2005-06 planning period which begins July 1, 2005.

#### Commencement of the SACS Reaffirmation Process

In January, 2005 members of the college leadership team attended the Southern Association for Colleges and Schools (SACS) Reaffirmation Orientation Session held in Atlanta, GA. This marked the formal start of the college's reaffirmation process with SACS. Major accomplishments on this project in 2004-05 include the establishment of three teams which have the primary responsibility of leading the reaffirmation effort at the college. The first of these teams is the Leadership Team which will provide overall direction and guidance to the project. The second team is the Compliance Team, which is primarily responsible for assessing the college's compliance with the Core Requirements and Comprehensive Standards and preparing the college's response for each. The third team is the Quality Enhancement Project (QEP) Team, which is responsible for preparing the college's Quality Enhancement Plan.

Composition of the respective teams was carefully considered, with the members appointed being those individuals most knowledgeable about the various issues/areas addressed. During this reporting period all three of the teams have been actively engaged in their areas of responsibility.

In addition, input was solicited from the college community on potential topics for the Quality Enhancement Plan. After giving careful consideration to a number of topics, **Improving Distance and Technology-Enhanced Learning from a Learning College Perspective** emerged as the overwhelming choice. This selection is an appropriate choice, given the growth the college has experienced in its distance learning offerings and the overall increase in the use of technology for instructional purposes in all types of classes (distance as well as traditional classroom). Furthermore, the college recognizes that the QEP is an opportunity to further assess how technology is being incorporated into instruction and to explore how the college can enhance this area to improve student learning.

## Regional Fiber Deployment Project

Southwestern Community College continued to play a leading role in this project, which is designed to create a regional telecommunication network in the far western counties of North Carolina. The focus of this project in 2004-05 was the on-going creation of a 240 mile fiber-optic network which will ultimately extend from the six westernmost counties of North Carolina, into portions of eastern Tennessee and into portions of north Georgia. Approximately half of the network was installed during the 2004-05 year. The network contains four strands of fiber, with fiber laterals to serve community college campuses and centers, individual public schools, and county-based HUB sites. Once fully operational, this network will enable students and teachers to electronically connect with one another and anywhere in the world – and bring never-before-imagined resources into the classroom. The other primary partners in this effort are Drake Enterprises and the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians.