

SECTION II

Southwestern Community College 2003-2004 Accomplishments

GOAL #1 - Seek excellence in learning and teaching for transfer, vocational and technical education, literacy development, business and industry training and life long learning in an accessible format to serve a diverse population

- ? Add Practical Nursing Program- *Accomplished*
- ? Add Evening & Weekend Nursing Program- *Accomplished*
- ? Add Surveying Program- *Accomplished*
- ? Pursue New AAS Articulation Agreement for EMS- *Not achieved due to changes at WCU*
- ? Pursue New AAS Articulation Agreement for Culinary - *Accomplished*
- ? Pursue New AAS Articulation Agreement for Medical Laboratory Tech.- *Not achieved due to changes at WCU*
- ? Pursue New AAS Articulation Agreement for Nursing- *Accomplished*
- ? Add an Experiential Learning Component for the Carpentry Program (House Construction Project)- *Not achieved: need to identify potential grant to fund the project*
- ? Secure Full-Time Spanish Instructor- *Accomplished*
- ? Develop an Integrated Plan (Involving Both Curriculum & Continuing Education) for Delivering Services in Homeland Security- Could Result in Establishment of an Institute- *Not achieved: waiting for a funding opportunity*
- ? Evaluate and Determine Appropriate Role for College if Perkins Funding to Public Schools is Cut
- ? Prepare Plans for Implementation of Learning Communities Initiative (Part of This Effort for 2003-04 Will Include Education of Faculty) - *Accomplished*
- ? Development of a Customer Service Training Program for Private Businesses (Will be Especially Geared Toward the Cherokee Area)- *Assumed by the RCCI project: identifying an individual to lead this project*
- ? Develop a Public Relations Strategy for Enhancing the Image of GED Certification – *On-going. However, significant progress was made during the 2003-04 year (better relationship with agencies, better testing environment, etc.)*

GOAL #2 - Maintain a nurturing learning environment by providing comprehensive support and intervention services for every individual.

- ? Implement a Strategy to Address the Gap in Services for Undecided Majors- *Accomplished*
- ? Establish a Comprehensive Student Career Resource Center - *Accomplished*
- ? Institutionalize the Ongoing Retention Effort of the College; Key Retention Activities Will Include the Establishment of an Early Alert System For High Risk Students, the Formalization of the Recruit Back and Exit Interview Components of the Retention Effort and, an Expansion/Enhancement of the Level of Advising Related Services Available to Students *Accomplished (processes have been institutionalized)*
- ? Expand the Student Orientation Effort to Include an Online Option- *Accomplished*
- ? Develop a Broad-based and Comprehensive Student Activities Program - *Accomplished*

GOAL #3 - Proactively identify, acquire and maintain college resources to support the mission, vision and goals of the college.

- ? Upgrade College's Community Link System- ***Partially accomplished: infrastructure is in place, next step is to get all classrooms prepared for upgrade***
- ? Pursue On-Campus Videoconferencing Capability- ***Accomplished***
- ? Pilot a Video Streaming Project (Uses Would Include President's Address, TLC's, New Student Orientation, Etc.) - ***Accomplished***
- ? Implement Online Payment and Registration Capability- ***Waiting for Financial & Student components of the new Information System of the Future System to be activated***
- ? Achieve Integration of Voice-Data-Video Systems at the College Through the Deployment of Fiber to Remote Sites- ***In Process***
- ? Select Team to Facilitate Migration to Information System of the Future- ***Accomplished***
- ? Explore Feasibility (Pros/Cons) of Implementing a Student ID System- ***Accomplished***
- ? Deploy Online Email Accounts for Students- ***Accomplished***
- ? Create an Integrated Resource Development Strategy Team- ***In process***
- ? Develop an Integrated Resource Development Plan Tied to College Priorities- ***In process***
- ? Diversify the Activities of the SCC Foundation (Major Gifts, Planned Giving, Alumni Gifts, Campus Community Giving, Etc.; Also, Develop Criteria and Process for Naming Rooms/Buildings For Donors)- ***Partially accomplished***
- ? Develop a Master Plan for the New Macon Campus (Including Selection of Architect, Development of Program Mix, Etc.)- ***Proposed building plan is currently on hold***
- ? Break Ground on New Macon Campus by Spring, 2004- ***Delayed until Fall 2004***
- ? Develop Strategy for Use of Space at Swain Center Currently Occupied by Cooperative Extension Service- ***Lease expires in Dec. 2004, will reevaluate then***
- ? Acquire Adjoining Property at the Swain Center- ***In process***
- ? Evaluate Repair/Renovation Needs of Existing Buildings and Develop a Priority List - ***In process***
- ? Resolve the Shower Needs at the Public Safety Facility- ***Accomplished***
- ? Monitor the Situation Concerning the Current Smoky Mountain Mental Health Administrative Building- ***Accomplished***
- ? Implement the Design Phase of the Proposed Wellness Center at the Sylva Campus- ***On hold until library issue is resolved***
- ? Conclude Transfer of Title to North Carolina Forest Service Property- ***Need to secure funding to move Forest Service operation***
- ? Resolve Direction for Joint Library With Jackson County (Enter into Design Phase if Commissioners Award Funding, Task Force Will Resolve System Issues, Develop Operating Agreement Concerning Staffing, Etc.). Develop Alternatives if Joint Library Proposal Does Not Move Forward. – ***Waiting for decision by county/library committee on their plans for public library***

GOAL #4 - Attract and retain quality employees and provide for their personal and intellectual growth.

- ? Create a Professional Development Committee – ***Not achieved***
- ? Prepare a Professional Development Plan- ***Not achieved***
- ? Implement New Continuous Improvement Plans for Staff (Non-Faculty) Positions – ***In process***

GOAL #5 - Develop cooperative community-based relationships which contribute to the cultural, economic, educational and social betterment of the region.

- ? Participate in the RCCI Initiative- ***On-going***
- ? Assist the Cashiers Community in Their Efforts to Achieve Some Official Form of Community Structure (Incorporation, Etc.)- ***Providing help on Cahiers corridor project***
- ? Resolve Direction for Joint Library With Jackson County (Enter into Design Phase if Commissioners Award Funding, Task Force Will Resolve System Issues, Develop Operating Agreement Concerning Staffing, Etc.). Develop Alternatives if Joint Library Proposal Does Not Move Forward. - ***Waiting for decision by county/library committee on their plans for public library***
- ? Continue Leadership Role in Effort to Improve Access to Internet Bandwidth in the Region – ***On-going***
- ? Implement the Design Phase of the Proposed Wellness Center at the Sylva Campus- ***On hold until library issue is resolved***

GOAL #6 - Assess institutional effectiveness as part of the planning and renewal process based on continuous improvement principles.

- ? Assess the Feasibility of an On-Line Departmental Planning System- ***On-going***
- ? Develop a Formalized Process for Evaluating Curriculum Enrollment and Retention – ***On-going***
- ? Assist Administrative Departments in Refining Planning/Outcomes Documents so That Annual Goals Are Outcomes-Based. – ***On-going***
- ? Incorporate Routine Retention Data Collection into College Institutional Effectiveness Process – ***On-going***

GOAL #7 - Effectively promote the college to the community.

- ? Develop a Marketing Plan for the College (Perhaps Utilizing an External Facilitator) – ***A draft marketing plan has been developed in-house***
- ? Increase Cluster Marketing Between Curriculum & Continuing Education (With the Focus on the Career Area Rather Than Distinguishing Between Curriculum and Continuing Education Programs) – ***Addressed via Career Focus publication***
- ? Assess the Value of “Naming Program Clusters, Such as: ***Also addressed via Career Focus***
 - Information Technology Institute
 - Health Services Institute
 - Public Safety Training Institute
 - Career Programs Institute
 - Teacher Education Institute
- ? Establish a Plan to Highlight Various National Weeks Throughout the Year- ***Will be a component of the marketing plan***
- ? Assess College Eligibility for Various Institutional Awards and Designations- ***Not achieved***

Summary of 2003-2004 Institutional Accomplishments

The previous section listed the status for each of the 2003-04 institutional priorities with a brief indication of progress for each priority. This summary will provide a more detailed overview of some of the major accomplishments by the college over the past year which directly impacted the 2003-04 institutional priorities.

Retention Initiative

Like most colleges and universities, Southwestern recognizes that student retention is a complex and challenging issue even for the most student-centered institutions. While Southwestern is confident its retention rates are comparable (or in many cases exceed) to those of other community colleges, it realizes **every** student is important and that all reasonable steps must be taken to enable students to achieve their educational goals. The college also recognizes that it is much easier to retain existing students than to acquire new ones in order to maintain enrollment. As a result, the college initiated a major retention effort in Fall 2001. Assisting the college in this effort was the Noel-Levitz firm, long recognized for its expertise in higher education research and assessment.

The college realized that in order to address retention and to develop solutions, it first had to develop a better understanding of retention issues, including those factors which contribute to the student dropout problem. Two Noel-Levitz surveys were administered- one for students and one for faculty and staff. After the surveys were administered, the results were analyzed and areas for action were identified. In addition, the college developed two primary institutional goals associated with retention:

- Increase the fall-to-fall retention rate of all first-time students by 2% in the fall of 2003.
- Increase student satisfaction levels using baseline data from the institution's satisfaction survey and/or the Student Satisfaction Inventory and Institutional Priorities Survey.

The college also formed teams to address the following areas for action which emerged from the two Noel-Levitz surveys:

- Develop an early alert system to be piloted by Fall Term 2002.
- Create a profile of non-persisters using both 1999-00 and 2000-01 data cohorts by Spring 2002.
- Strengthen the advising process by developing a comprehensive advising model with multiple phases to begin piloting by Summer 2002.
- Identify students who are undecided majors and provide comprehensive services in order to move them toward the choice of a major.
- Develop a recruit back program to be piloted Fall 2002.

- Improve and expand orientation to include program goals and objectives as suggested by the National Orientation Directors Association (NODA) and the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) for each semester starting Summer 2002.
- Develop a student centered, written service philosophy.
- Implement a training program that corresponds to the written service philosophy.
- Evaluate the resources allocated to Financial Aid so that the processing and counseling functions are better managed to meet student needs.
- Restructure the job placement center to include current methodologies regarding job search and career attainment.
- Provide an efficient and effective bookstore operation that leads to increased customer satisfaction.

Each team developed an action plan to address each of these strategies. The action plans include a description of each issue, necessary steps to address each issue, a timetable, an assigning of responsibility and where applicable, the required budget. The action plan for each team was forwarded to the Retention Committee, which is responsible for monitoring the college's progress in addressing this issue. A number of recommendations emanating from the eleven teams were implemented. For example, the college has adopted a written philosophy of service centered around its students. This philosophy (as stated below) was developed by the action team charges with addressing this issue.

Service - Compassion Commitment

Service is how we relate to people we interact with everyday. At Southwestern Community College, the needs of our students will remain our highest priority. We serve an internal and external clientele including current and prospective students, employees and community members. Our student-centered service philosophy forms the very basis for how we do our jobs.

- ? We will greet people with courtesy.
- ? We will demonstrate professionalism.
- ? We will communicate with accurate information.
- ? We will demonstrate a welcoming and helpful manner.
- ? We will respect the needs of others.
- ? We will take positive action on behalf of others.

Some key actions which were implemented to positively impact retention at the college include:

- Implementation of a recruit back program for students who failed to return to college from the prior semester.
- Implementation of a new computer system at the college bookstore which will include Pell amounts so student accounts can be quickly checked.
- All bookstore merchandise is now bar coded so it can be scanned at the register.
- Additional personnel are now available in the bookstore at the beginning of each semester to facilitate quick and effective customer service.

- Modifications to college registration forms which will improve the quality of information on students enrolled at the college. This action will facilitate the development of a profile of students at risk for dropping out.

The Noel-Levitz surveys were administered once again during Fall Semester, 2003 to students and to faculty/staff. These results were compared to the findings from the Fall 2001 survey. The comparison indicated that the college is making significant progress in addressing those issues identified as having a direct relationship to retention. In addition, the latest retention data was released in Fall 2003. This data was compared to the retention rate as reported in Fall 2001. The results indicate the college did meet its overall goal of increasing the retention rate of two percent from 2001 to 2003.

Facility/Property Acquisition, Renovation and Development

The renovation of facilities and the acquisition of property continued to be a major focus for the college during 2003-04. The primary activity associated with the Jackson (Sylva) campus during this period included the replacement of the roof and the air conditioning chillers in the Balsam Center, and the installation of electronic door openers at The Pines and Founders Hall. Other renovations to the Sylva campus included the installation of a new floor and a new plumbing system to the Culinary kitchen in Bradford Hall.

During the last two years the college researched the feasibility of a joint use library between the college and the Jackson County Public Library. This project involved a number of discussions with the Jackson County Board of Commissioners and the County Manager as well as with various community/civic groups. However, as a result of a lack of consensus by local officials/groups on this project, the college withdrew the offer of proceeding with a joint use library.

The college continued to pursue a property exchange agreement with the North Carolina Forest Service (NCFS). The NCFS regional office is located on a nine acre tract adjacent to the Sylva campus. The college located and purchased a ten acre tract with the intent of exchanging this tract for the NCFS's current property. Acquisition of this property will allow the college to make expansions and improvements to the Sylva campus which would otherwise be impossible. During the 2003-04 year the college met with the Governor's Office concerning this project.

Facility and property activities at college centers other than the Sylva campus included the installation of showers and handicapped-accessible restrooms at the college's Public Safety Center in Macon County. In addition, renovations to the Burn Building were completed, which will allow the college to provide training on fighting higher temperature fires. The college also installed fencing and a storage building for the Driver Training facility at the Public Safety Center.

The college accelerated efforts during 2003-04 secure a new facility for the Cashiers Center. This action was necessitated by the impending expiration of the lease on the current facility. The Freeman House was evaluated and appeared to be the best alternative for a new center. The county acquired the title to this property and plans are now underway to convert it to the college's Cashiers Center.

Progress continued on the college's new branch campus in Macon County. The college now has the title to 20 acres (which may eventually expand to a total of 50 acres). An architectural firm was selected in 2004 and this firm is preparing a master physical plan for the new campus. The blue prints for the initial building on the campus have been designed and have been sent to the State Construction Office for approval. The eventual development of this campus will enable the college to dramatically expand its offerings in Macon County beyond those currently available at SCC's Macon Center. Official ground-breaking on the new Macon campus will likely be in January or February, 2005. Other planning activities associated with the new campus are underway and these activities will accelerate during the 2004-05 year.

Regional Telecommunications Initiatives

The college continued to play a key role during the 2003-04 year in telecommunications initiatives impacting not only the college service area, but the larger western North Carolina region as well. Activities by the college (in tandem with its regional partners on these initiatives) in this regard are included in two closely related endeavors- BalsamWest FiberNET and the Smoky Mountain Knowledge Coalition.

BalsamWest FiberNET is an effort to bring affordable, high-performance telecommunications services to western North Carolina. This effort was referred to as the Appalachian Access Initiative in the Institutional Effectiveness Plans prepared by the college during the past three years. During the 2003-04 year this effort led to the creation of a joint venture partnership which was named BalsamWest FiberNET. Partners with the college in this venture include the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians and Drake Enterprises. The goal of the partnership is to provide direct access in the region to advanced telecommunications infrastructure at prices and quality levels comparable to those in major metropolitan areas. A major focus during the past year was the deployment of the fiber network to provide this service. During the past year the partnership deployed approximately 170 miles of 200+ mile fiber network required to serve the region. All fiber is expected to be deployed by 2005.

The Smoky Mountain Knowledge Network is a companion effort to the BalsamWest FiberNET project. This Network was formed as a loose coalition of educational, healthcare, governmental, nonprofit and private enterprises who joined together to increase the awareness of the technologies of the 21st Century and to determine how the region can best utilize the infrastructure being deployed to improve the quality of life for western North Carolinians. During the past year the college worked with its educational partners to establish an agreement to connect the more than 50 educational institutions (public schools and higher education institutions) in the six county region to the new fiber network. This connectivity will enable these educational entities to connect with each other and with external sources of information-enhancing the educational experience for students.

A more detailed summary of college's role in these Regional Telecommunications Initiatives is included in Attachment One- Partnerships With External Agencies on Regional Telecommunications Initiatives, 2003-04 Activity Summary as part of Appendix III - the College Technology Plan Update of this document.

Superior Institution Designation

Southwestern received the designation of a Superior Institution by the North Carolina Community College System Office by virtue of the college's success in meeting the 2003-04 Performance Measures and Standards. These standards (a total of 12) were implemented by the System Office for assessing the performance of the 58 institutions comprising the North Carolina Community College System. Southwestern met or exceeded the standards for 10 of the 12 measures in 2003-04, including 5 of the 6 measures associated with performance funding. Highlights of Southwestern's success in meeting the measures include:

- 100% of SCC's College Transfer degree recipients in the cohort for this reporting year had a 2.0 or higher GPA at the 4-year UNC-System) institution they are now attending.
- 24-hour (non-degree recipients) transfers from SCC to UNC-System institutions also exceeded the standard for this cohort.
- 100% of businesses and industries served by the college were satisfied with the quality of training they received.
- The college met both measures associated with the performance of Developmental students in Developmental courses and in subsequent college-level courses.

For additional information, refer to Appendix IV of this report which details the results of the 2003-04 Performance Measures.