

Appalachian State University
Strategic Plan
2008-2012

(Draft Presented to the Board of Trustees, September 2008)

University of North Carolina Statement of Mission (NC General Statutes, Chapter 116-1)

The University of North Carolina is a public, multi-campus university dedicated to the service of North Carolina and its people. It encompasses the 16 diverse constituent institutions and other educational, research, and public service organizations. Each shares in the overall mission of the University. That mission is to discover, create, transmit, and apply knowledge to address the needs of individuals and society. This mission is accomplished through instruction, which communicates the knowledge and values and imparts the skills necessary for individuals to lead responsible, productive, and personally satisfying lives; through research, scholarship, and creative activities, which advance knowledge and enhance the educational process; and through public service, which contributes to the solution of societal problems and enriches the quality of life in the State. In the fulfillment of this mission, the University shall seek an efficient use of available resources to ensure the highest quality in its service to the citizens of the State.

Teaching and learning constitute the primary service that the University renders to society. Teaching, or instruction, is the primary responsibility of each of the constituent institutions. The relative importance of research and public service, which enhance teaching and learning, varies among the constituent institutions, depending on their overall missions.

Appalachian State University Statement of Vision

Appalachian aspires to be a model 21st century nationally-recognized university combining the best characteristics of liberal arts and research institutions by resourcefully blending teaching and scholarship. To achieve that objective, Appalachian is committed to attracting, educating, and graduating the best students and to producing the highest levels of scholarship. Additionally, the university will provide excellent value; will be an influential world citizen; and will develop a distinctive identity built on the university's strengths, location, and tradition.

Appalachian State University Statement of Mission (November, 2007)

Established in 1899 as Watauga Academy, Appalachian State University has evolved into a preeminent university located in a unique, rural mountain environment. As a member of the University of North Carolina, Appalachian's fundamental mission is to discover, create, transmit, and apply knowledge to address the needs of individuals and society. This mission is achieved by providing undergraduate students a rigorous liberal education that emphasizes transferable skills and preparation for professional careers; offering graduate students distinctively relevant programs; maintaining a faculty whose members serve as excellent teachers and scholarly mentors for their students and who produce high levels of scholarship and creative activities. Appalachian recognizes that the success of the university depends upon the achievement and cooperation of a diverse community of students, faculty, and staff and strives to implement policies and allocate resources accordingly. We accept our responsibility to be actively involved in addressing the educational, economic, cultural, and societal needs of the changing region, state, nation, and world. As a publicly funded institution, Appalachian is committed to accomplishing its initiatives through efficient and effective resource utilization.

Appalachian State University Statement of Essential Character

We are a unique institution with a combination of large enrollment, rural location, and high quality. In many ways we combine the best of a small liberal arts college (e.g., close relationships among staff, faculty, and students) and a large research university (e.g., breadth of programming and scholarship). Our public identity emphasizes our strong undergraduate curriculum in both liberal arts and professional programs.

Appalachian State University Statement of Core Values

We believe the success of the university depends upon personal achievement, and we maintain as our top priority appropriate policies and resource allocation strategies to promote student, faculty, and staff development.

We support a culture that promotes diversity, shared responsibility, and mutual respect.

We embrace shared governance.

We emphasize open communication and transparent decision processes.

We have genuine respect for the natural environment and a commitment to principles of sustainability.

Appalachian State University Statement of Core Assets

We have dedicated, active, and innovative faculty, staff, students, and administrators.

We have a location in an aesthetically pleasing, culturally and recreationally rich mountain environment and a campus that attracts faculty, staff, and students seeking a high quality of life.

We have expertise and programs capable of providing economic, educational, healthcare, and cultural leadership through partnerships with regional and state organizations.

We have loyal and supportive alumni and retired faculty and staff.

We have a state legislature that historically has valued and supported higher education.

We have a history of providing a student-centered university experience, preparing students to be effective, responsible citizens, and providing high-quality instruction at relatively low cost.

Appalachian State University Strategic Priorities

Priority 1: Create and maintain superior curricula, programs, financial incentives, and intellectual environments to attract, educate, and graduate an exceptional and diverse community of students.

Attracting, educating, and graduating students who are prepared to make positive contributions to the region, state, nation, and world form the primary mission of the University. To achieve this goal, we must have programs that develop real-world capabilities by challenging and extending the intellectual development of our students.

Initiative 1: Appalachian will attract, retain, and graduate a diverse student body with increasingly distinguished admission profiles.

Attracting outstanding and diverse students requires the implementation of progressive recruiting strategies, competitive merit-based scholarships and appropriate need-based support, and sophisticated marketing strategies to inform prospective applicants about our innovative learning environments.

Principal Accountability Indicators

- 1) *Increase the percentage of entering freshmen with Predicted Grade Point Average (PGPA) above 3.00 to 50 percent.*
- 2) *Exceed the mean general GRE/GMAT/MAT score of the relevant discipline for all graduate programs.*
- 3) *Increase the six-year graduation rate to 75 percent.*
- 4) *Increase the scholarship endowment to \$30,000,000.*
- 5) *Increase the percentage of underrepresented and international student enrollment to 15 percent.*

Initiative 2: Appalachian will intellectually engage students with active, interdisciplinary learning environments and scholarly mentoring.

Research demonstrates that student learning and student success are facilitated by rigorous academic expectations, active curricular and extracurricular learning environments, and close collaboration between faculty members and students on scholarly activities. To enable our students to succeed in and contribute to the 21st century global society, the university will provide multiple opportunities for students to interact with their own communities as well as with other cultures.

Principal Accountability Indicators

- 1) *Implement and assess the General Education program.*
- 2) *Attain NSSE senior scores in the top 10 percent of institutions on each of NSSE's five benchmarks.*
- 3) *Achieve participation by all students in at least one experiential learning program (international experience, internship, research, service-learning, creative activities, field experiences).*
- 4) *Increase student participation in study abroad programs by 25 percent.*
- 5) *Develop workload and merit policies consistent with an enlightened Teacher-Scholar model.*

Initiative 3: Appalachian will continually assess and conduct research to improve academic programs and administrative services and identify new program initiatives.

Optimization of our educational programs requires that we specify measurable learning outcomes, rigorously assess student progress toward these outcomes, and modify our curricula, programs, and teaching methods on the basis of results of assessment and institutional research results. Quality

assurance in academic programs is accompanied by equal attention to effective and efficient administrative services.

Principal Accountability Indicators

- 1) *Develop and implement learning outcomes assessment by all academic units.*
- 2) *Develop and implement program and performance assessment by administrative units.*
- 3) *Obtain accreditation or reaccreditation of selected academic programs.*
- 4) *Develop and obtain approval to offer new programs to meet the demands of a rapidly changing world.*
- 5) *Conduct research and prepare policy analyses to inform university decision makers.*

Priority 2: Provide resources to enable all faculty members to perform quality research and creative activities, and enhanced resources in successive, focus areas of strength to enable Appalachian to make sustained and major contributions in those fields.

A fundamental responsibility of a university is the advancement of knowledge through research and creative activities, and great universities are recognized for the scholarly accomplishments of their faculty. To become a nationally recognized university and engage the best students, Appalachian must significantly advance its overall research profile and achieve prominence in selected areas.

Initiative 1: Appalachian will foster success in scholarship across the university.

Broadly promoting scholarship requires that all faculty members have appropriate time, equipment, space, information access, and staff support to enable them to perform at high levels. We will continually monitor research productivity and resource allocation to maintain adequate levels of support in all areas.

Principal Accountability Indicators

- 1) *Increase our sponsored program support to \$18,000,000.*
- 2) *Increase discipline-appropriate scholarly or creative performance (e.g., peer-reviewed publications/products, presentations, performances, student theses, honors).*
- 3) *Increase academic support per student FTE to the 80th percentile for Doctoral/Research Universities.*
- 4) *Increase funding for graduate research assistantship stipends by 15 percent.*

Initiative 2: Appalachian will build nationally competitive research programs in focus areas.

We will systematically identify focus areas that will be targeted to receive enhanced resources in order to facilitate leading edge inquiry in those fields. Program strength and potential to advance the state's and nation's welfare will be the selection criteria for these areas. The two areas targeted for enhanced resources during the next five years are health-related fields and research at the nexus of energy, environment, and economics.

Principal Accountability Indicators

- 1) *Establish the Research Institute for Environment, Energy, and Economics.*
- 2) *Hire 15 high-profile faculty members in the focus areas.*
- 3) *Increase sponsored program awards in each focus area to \$5,000,000.*
- 4) *Establish research partnerships with other institutions.*

Priority 3: Allocate resources, develop support services, and promote a collegial culture to attract, develop, and retain an exceptional and diverse faculty and staff.

An outstanding and diverse faculty is the foundation of a great university. We strive to have preeminent teaching scholars exemplified by notable scholarship, excellent teaching, and meaningful service. A high-quality staff, dedicated to the academic success of the institution, is necessary to enable the university to excel in these core functions.

Initiative 1: Appalachian will offer competitive salaries and benefits for faculty and staff.

Competitive salaries and benefits are necessary components to attract and retain exceptional faculty and staff.

Principal Accountability Indicators

- 1) Increase faculty salaries to the 80th percentile of those at our peer institutions and maintain salaries at that level.
- 2) Increase staff salaries to appropriate labor market benchmarks.

Initiative 2: Appalachian will implement institutional policies that promote exemplary faculty and staff performance.

To promote faculty and staff career satisfaction and development, we will create a welcoming culture, transparent policies, and fair reward systems that encourage high performance, diversity, and equity. Equally important is a commitment to provide robust professional development and support programs that recognize and promote flexible career paths.

Principal Accountability Indicators

- 1) Increase the percentage of underrepresented and international faculty and staff to appropriate availability and utilization benchmarks.
- 2) Employ best practices with promotion and tenure, post-tenure review, and merit policies.
- 3) Employ best practices with staff performance reviews.

Initiative 3: Appalachian will provide resources to support and enhance faculty and staff career development and satisfaction.

The success of the university depends on a productive and satisfied faculty and staff. Financial support is necessary both for faculty and staff development and for services that enhance their well-being.

Principal Accountability Indicators

- 1) Increase financial support for faculty and staff development.
- 2) Employ best practices in providing support services (e.g., faculty housing, trailing spouse/domestic partner support, childcare) for faculty and staff.

Priority 4: Apply our intellectual, academic, cultural, and research resources to promote sustainable economic growth, prosperity, and quality of life throughout this region and state.

As a public university, we are committed to using our resources to improve citizens' lives in this region, state, and nation. We will leverage our academic, intellectual, cultural, and research assets to proactively assess needs and develop interventions.

Initiative 1: Appalachian will address the state's workforce needs by recruiting and graduating students in projected areas of need.

It is well established that this region, state, and nation are facing a growing shortage of teachers and health professionals. We will address those needs by creating new programs and improving existing ones in high-need areas.

Principal Accountability Indicators

- 1) Complete the construction of the College of Education building.
- 2) Exceed our General Administration teacher education goals.
- 3) Establish a College of Health Sciences.
- 4) Complete the construction of the College of Health Sciences Complex.
- 5) Develop selected Professional Science Master's (PSM) and Professional Master's (PMA) degrees.

Initiative 2: Appalachian will provide constructive public service to this region, state, and nation.

We recognize not only our obligation to provide public service but also the educational value of doing so. Accordingly, we are committed to connecting what is learned in the classroom and laboratory to activities that promote the public good.

Principal Accountability Indicators

- 1) Achieve a Carnegie Engaged University designation.
- 2) Increase the number of Appalachian & the Community Together (ACT) service hour targets by 15%.
- 3) Strengthen community program offerings (e.g., community arts, personal enrichment, health and human services).
- 4) Expand K-12 outreach activities.
- 5) Increase the number of economic development programs (e.g., Center for Entrepreneurship, Appalachian Business Center, Appalachian Regional Development Institute, Kellar Radio Farm System Institute).

Initiative 3: Appalachian will expand our capability to serve students.

Enrollment projection models indicate significant increases in the student demand for the University of North Carolina institutions. Appalachian's capability to absorb additional students in Boone is limited by the constraints on the size of our physical footprint. Our contribution to this need requires expansion of our distance learning programs and partnerships with community colleges.

Principal Accountability Indicators

- 1) *Increase student headcount in programs offered through the Appalachian Learning Alliance, other site-based locations, and online by 50 percent.*
- 2) *Increase the number of on-line programs to six.*
- 3) *Increase the number of programs in the Hickory metropolitan area.*

Priority 5: Develop and implement a comprehensive plan to protect and enhance our distinctive historical, geographical, and cultural identity associated with our location in the Appalachian mountains.

Two hallmarks of Appalachian are our location in an aesthetically pleasing as well as culturally and recreationally rich, mountain environment and a campus that attracts faculty, staff, and students seeking a high quality of life. We are committed to conscientious stewardship of these important resources and to assertive leadership by promoting sustainable policies and practices.

Initiative 1: Appalachian will enhance our sustainability efforts.

Faculty, staff, and student interest and expertise in sustainable development, along with our location compel us to provide leadership in sustainable development.

Principal Accountability Indicators

- 1) *Create an Office of Sustainability.*
- 2) *Develop and implement a campuswide sustainability plan.*
- 3) *Attain Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification in major construction or modernization capital projects as appropriate.*

Initiative 2: Appalachian will develop a living master plan that promotes our intimate residential campus character.

Appalachian's proximity to local businesses and residential neighborhoods necessitates careful planning to maximize the aesthetic and functional balance between the town and the university. It is important that Appalachian's community culture and residential character are maintained.

Principal Accountability Indicators

- 1) *Create and maintain a living campus master plan.*
- 2) *Maintain a communication plan with the Town of Boone and Watauga County.*
- 3) *Increase on-campus residential housing to 40 percent of undergraduates and maintain that level.*

Initiative 3: Appalachian will ensure that interior and exterior campus spaces are adequately maintained to create functional, attractive, accessible learning and working environments.

Research indicates that aesthetically functional learning and research environments not only attract high-quality students, faculty, and staff but also facilitate performance and promote career satisfaction.

Principal Accountability Indicators

- 1) *Address deficiencies identified in Office of State Construction Facilities Condition Assessment Program (FCAP) reports.*
- 2) *Develop plans for capital expenditures and repair and renovation projects.*
- 3) *Meet or exceed peer benchmarks for physical plant expenditures per student FTE.*

Priority 6: Practice sound management of institutional resources to continue to be a best value for students.

Appalachian is committed both to efficient and effective operations to remain affordable for students and to a concentration of our resources to better support the university's core mission. We will continue to develop and refine processes that employ valid benchmarks to maximize efficient allocation of faculty and staff positions, use of space and equipment, and the operation of programs.

Initiative 1: Appalachian will maintain appropriate faculty and staffing levels.

Because the overwhelming costs of operating the university are expenditures for personnel, we must develop policies that optimize the management of this critical resource.

Principal Accountability Indicators

- 1) *Develop methods for determining EPA nonfaculty and SPA staffing needs.*
- 2) *Use Delaware Workload benchmarks in the position metric and in the allocating of faculty positions.*

Initiative 2: Appalachian will ensure the efficient utilization of all space on campus.

The university's teaching, research, and service mission requires sufficient space that is effectively and efficiently used and maintained at the department, college, and university levels. New capital requests and changes in the assignment of space will be based on careful assessments of current and future space utilization needs.

Principal Accountability Indicators.

- 1) *Meet or exceed the UNC System minimum square foot standards for all offices and address substandard office space.*
- 2) *Improve academic space utilization to appropriate UNC benchmarks.*
- 3) *Apply space utilization data in planning new buildings and in modernizing existing buildings.*

Initiative 3: Appalachian will develop and implement policies that promote effective use of current technologies.

The provision of modern technologies is increasingly essential for the effective operation of the university and for the success of students, faculty, and staff.

Principal Accountability Indicators

- 1) *Develop and maintain a plan for providing current technologies to students, faculty, and staff.*
- 2) *Provide appropriate training programs for using technologies.*