

**Appalachian State University**  
**Strategic Planning: Student Achievement Committee**  
**Draft: April 30, 2007**

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**Vision Statement:**

Appalachian State University seeks to attract, retain, and graduate creative and academically prepared students from diverse backgrounds. Appalachian aspires to achieve inclusive excellence while removing financial barriers to higher education. The University prepares students to be innovative, intellectually curious, and fluent in technology through meaningful curricular and co-curricular opportunities. In addition, Appalachian encourages students to participate in the global community through collaborative efforts on and off campus. Appalachian promotes student achievement through inquiry and initiative in an environment dedicated to engagement throughout the academic career and beyond.

**Strategic Direction:**

Utilize innovative enrollment strategies, academic policies, and student development programs to promote student achievement.

**Five Objectives:**

**Objective 1: Access**

Increase the number of North Carolina students, particularly those from the Appalachian region, who are prepared for higher education, and attract creative and academically prepared students from diverse backgrounds through outreach and from new enrollment markets.

**Objective 2: Affordability**

Ensure affordability for students from low and middle income backgrounds. Develop resources and policies that ensure affordability of an Appalachian education.

**Objective 3: Diversity**

Enhance existing and create new programs and practices that increase diversity, enhance the quality of each enrollment class, and support student achievement to graduation.

**Objective 4: Graduation**

Achieve a six-year undergraduate student graduation rate of 75% that simultaneously closes achievement gaps among different student populations.

**Objective 5: Future-Ready**

Strengthen existing programs, develop new programs, and work with alumni and employers to prepare students for future opportunities.

## **Objectives & Activities: Outline**

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### **Objective 1: Access**

Increase the number of North Carolina students, particularly those from the Appalachian region, who are prepared for higher education, and attract creative and academically prepared students from diverse backgrounds through outreach and from new enrollment markets.

#### **Activity 1:**

Create a center for outreach and access responsible for improving college-readiness and developing partnerships with regional K-12 schools and community colleges.

#### **Activity 2:**

*International Focus*

Identify new national and international enrollment markets.

#### **Activity 3:**

Provide programs that help prepare Latinos for college, particularly those who are first and second generation immigrants.

### **Objective 2: Affordability**

Ensure affordability for students from low and middle income backgrounds. Develop resources and policies that ensure affordability of an Appalachian State University education.

#### **Activity 1:**

Increase funding of the Appalachian ACCESS program to cover the full cost of attendance for students at 200% of the federal poverty level.

#### **Activity 2:**

Increase grant and merit-based financial aid to students with financial barriers to higher education, including first generation college students and students from other under-represented groups. Identify university personnel with experience in grant writing. Identify sources of grants. Encourage future senior gift committees to donate for the purpose of funding scholarships for future students.

#### **Activity 3:**

Appoint a task force to explore other means to increase accessibility and affordability.

#### **Activity 4:**

Create a centralized and coordinated presence for campus and college-based scholarships to increase awareness of scholarship opportunities. Create a robust website for scholarship information with links to the Admissions website and to specific colleges and departmental information. Streamline websites to have comprehensive scholarship information for every college and department with contact information.

**Activity 5:**

*International Focus*

Increase financial support for international students and study abroad opportunities. Utilize the efforts of existing development officers. Engage INTAPP members as student ambassadors for fundraising efforts.

**Activity 6:**

Create financial support for college-ready undocumented individuals who graduate from North Carolina high schools.

**Objective 3: Diversity**

Enhance existing and create new programs and practices that increase diversity, enhance the quality of each enrollment class, and support student achievement to graduation.

**Activity 1:**

*International Focus*

Increase the percentage of international degree seeking students to at least 2% of the overall student body, while also increasing the percentage of international exchange students.

**Activity 2:**

*International Focus*

Increase the percentage of domestic students attending Appalachian State University who study abroad to 8%.

**Activity 3:**

Increase the percentage of underrepresented minorities employed at Appalachian State University to grow the percentage closer to the percentage of underrepresented minorities who are students.

**Activity 4:**

Enhance support services for diverse students (students of color, students with disabilities, first generation students, gay, lesbian, bi-sexual and transgender students and religious minorities).

**Activity 5:**

Appoint a taskforce to explore the needs of non-traditional students.

**Objective 4: Graduation**

Achieve a six-year undergraduate student graduation rate of 75% that simultaneously closes achievement gaps among different student populations.

**Activity 1:**

Develop and implement a campus-wide academic advising assessment plan. This plan will include mission, goals, outcomes (should include benchmark measures), assessment methods, and evaluation criteria. This assessment plan will be used to enhance existing advising delivery programs, change underperforming advising delivery systems, and develop innovative new advising delivery structures.

**Activity 2:**

Identify, strengthen, and coordinate existing faculty and peer mentoring programs and develop new mentoring strategies to ensure every freshman and sophomore has the opportunity to engage with a mentor.

**Activity 3:**

Build and implement an Early Intervention system focused on academically underperforming students.

**Activity 4:**

Improve the six-year graduation rate for African American students to 60% by pursuing best practices of peer institutions.

**Activity 5:**

Improve the six year graduation rate for male students to 70% by pursuing best practices of peer institutions.

**Objective 5: Future-Ready**

Strengthen existing programs, develop new programs, and work with alumni and employers to prepare students for future opportunities.

**Activity 1:**

Assess existing internships and field experiences to ensure that students are receiving meaningful experiences related to the learning outcomes of their program of study. Improve existing and develop additional experiences as appropriate.

**Activity 2:**

Promote graduate and professional studies by developing transition programs for graduating Appalachian seniors and improving Appalachian's graduate student orientation and services.

**Activity 3:**

Review survey data and focus group results from employers about recent graduates from Appalachian to assess the preparedness of Appalachian students.

***International Focus***

## **Objectives & Activities: Details**

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### **Objective 1: Access**

**Increase the number of North Carolina students, particularly those from the Appalachian region, who are prepared for higher education, and attract creative and academically prepared students from diverse backgrounds through outreach and from new enrollment markets.**

#### **Activity 1:**

Create a center for outreach and access responsible for improving college-readiness and developing partnerships with regional K-12 schools and community colleges.

#### **Rationale:**

An outreach and access center will serve as a communication nexus among existing outreach efforts that can avoid duplication of efforts, improve communication, increase effectiveness, and enhance use of resources. Furthermore, it can serve as a source of support and information for individuals seeking to develop new summer or academic year outreach programs. Students who have participated in college readiness programming at Appalachian during the summer or through academic year outreach efforts will more likely develop the mentoring relationships and intellectual confidence necessary to support their academic achievement than students who have not participated in these activities. Additionally, students who have consistently participated in college readiness programming are more likely than others to be prepared for, seek out, and engage in academic programming upon their enrollment in college. Students who undertake a rigorous and relevant preparation for college can more quickly connect to a campus and are more likely to graduate.

#### **Unit(s) responsible:**

Provost; Enrollment Services; Admissions; Institutional Research, Assessment, and Planning; College Awareness Programs; Western North Carolina Network for Access and Success; Conferences and Institutes; RCOE; Academic Departments; and Office of International Education and Development

#### **Assessment strategy(ies):**

- Increase in number of students with honors, college prep, and other rigorous high school or transfer courses
- Increase in SAT & ACT applicant scores and PGPA and GPA for students who participate in programs of the outreach center
- Increase in number and quality of extracurricular activities
- Increase in number and quality of external awards and scholarships
- Increase in number of underrepresented applications & enrollment
- Increase in number of internal scholarships awarded
- Increase in number of formalized partnership programs with K-12 schools and community colleges
- Increase in number of CEUs awarded to K-12 teachers
- Increase in number of grants with K-12 schools and community colleges

- Increase in number of college-readiness and academic programs offered in the summer for K-12 students
- Increase in applicants and enrollees from Appalachia, North Carolina, the U.S., and other countries

**Five-year timeline:**

2008 | Identify and hire Director, identify and hire Administrative Assistant  
 Begin meetings of all outreach directors and programs  
 Develop baseline data for center goals

2009 – 2013 | Continue proven established programming  
 Implement new programs as gaps in services and programs are identified  
 Collect assessment data  
 Modify programming based on data  
 Write grants for external funding to support programming  
 Hold regular meetings for outreach directors

**Estimation of resources (e.g. funds, people) required:**

- Funding for personnel and operation of outreach and access center
- Director: new EPA position \$60,000 plus \$15,000 benefits (12 months, full time) recurring
- Administrative Assistant: new position \$23,000 plus \$8,000 benefits (12 months, full time) recurring
- Operating Budget: \$15,000 recurring
- Furnished offices with computers/telephones: 6,000 x 2 = \$12,000 non-recurring
- Access to adequate meeting space
- Parking consideration for public school teachers and administrators

**Activity 2:**

*International Focus*

Identify new national and international enrollment markets.

**Rationale:**

Identifying and developing new national and international recruitment markets will assist in diversification of the campus and provide an increase in enrollment dollars.

**Unit(s) responsible:**

Provost; Enrollment Services; Admissions; Financial Aid; Institutional Research, Assessment, and Planning; College Awareness Programs; Western North Carolina Network for Access and Success; Conferences and Institutes; College of Education; Academic Departments; and Office of International Education and Development

**Assessment strategy(ies):**

- Increase in number of students with honors, college prep, and other rigorous high school or transfer courses
- Increase in SAT & ACT applicant scores
- Increase in PGPA and GPA
- Increase in number and quality of extracurricular activities
- Increase in number and quality of external awards and scholarships

- Increase in number of underrepresented applications & enrollment
- Increase in number of internal scholarships awarded
- Increase in Appalachia applicants and enrollees
- Increase in North Carolina applicants and enrollees
- Increase in national applicants and enrollees
- Increase in international applicants and enrollees

**Five-year timeline:**

2008 | Assess state and national recruitment activities

Revisit Dr. Nagar Davis' consultant report for recruiting international students

Identify and hire a full-time Director for International Student Recruitment

Develop a new recruitment plan based on newly identified target markets, economic demographics, and enrollment goals

Review annually the enrollment targets set in consultation with UNC GA

2009 – 2013 | Assess state and national recruitment activities

Modify state, national, and international recruitment plans based on results

Review annually the enrollment targets set in consultation with UNC GA

**Estimation of resources (e.g. funds, people) required:**

- Director of International Student Recruitment: new EPA position \$60,000 plus \$15,000 benefits (12 months, full time) recurring
- Administrative Assistant [shared with Admissions or International Education and Development]: \$23,000 plus \$8,000 benefits (12 months, ½ time) recurring
- Operating/Travel Budget: \$15,000 recurring
- 3% increase in Admissions travel and prospective student receptions budget
- International Student Scholarships: \$200,000 recurring
- Sustained contractual support for AdmissionPros - \$15,000 - \$20,000
- Training for campus offices (particularly in the academic areas) on the use of AdmissionPros

**Activity 3:**

Provide programs that help prepare Latinos for college, particularly those who are first and second generation immigrants.

**Rationale:**

The Educating All North Carolinians report delivered by the working group of the 2007 Emerging Issues Forum states:

The rate of growth of North Carolina's Latino community is among the highest in the nation. The Latino school-aged enrollment has grown almost 50% in just five years, from 28,053 in 2001-2002 to 131,766 for the current 2006-07 school year. Most of these students have received all of their formal education in the North Carolina public school system. Some Latino students excel in the classroom and obtain a high school diploma but are unable to gain access to our state's colleges and universities because they do not know how to negotiate the transition from high school to college and/or their undocumented status prevents them from doing so. Although not all Latinos are undocumented immigrants, a number of those who graduate from North Carolina's high schools are. The systematic exclusion

of our Latino students from higher education not only results in a permanent working class Latino community, but also results in the state's loss of a trained, bilingual workforce that could fill shortages currently need in industries like nursing and teaching.

Our Supreme Court ruled that it is a fundamental right that all qualified students have the opportunity to receive higher education. North Carolina must make higher education accessible for all academically qualified students, regardless of their race, gender, economic situation or immigration status. This requires that we teach parents and students how to prepare for college and navigate the transition from high school to higher education. North Carolina should develop programs and policies, targeted scholarships and outreach efforts designed to enroll and graduate a higher number of Latino students. The business community, philanthropy and the Latino community itself should fund more scholarships for Latino students. Finally, the N. C. General Assembly should pass legislation allowing undocumented students in the state, who meet certain criteria, to pay in-state tuition at the state's public colleges and universities.

**Unit(s) responsible:**

Provost; Enrollment Services; Institutional Research, Assessment, and Planning; College Awareness Programs; Western North Carolina Network for Access and Success; Conferences and Institutes; College of Education; Academic Departments; and Office of International Education and Development

**Assessment strategy(ies):**

- Increase in number of students with honors, college prep, and other rigorous high school or transfer courses
- Increase in SAT & ACT applicant scores
- Increase in PGPA and GPA
- Increase in number and quality of extracurricular activities
- Increase in number and quality of external awards and scholarships
- Increase in number of applications & enrollment from undocumented Latinos
- Increase in number of internal scholarships awarded
- Increase in North Carolina applicants and enrollees

**Five-year timeline:**

2008 | Assess state readiness programs for Latinos, particularly those who are first and second generation immigrants Revisit Dr. Nagar Davis' consultant report for recruiting international students

Develop a new recruitment plan based on newly identified target markets, economic demographics, and enrollment goals

2009 – 2013 | Assess state recruitment activities

Modify recruitment plans based on results

Review annually the enrollment targets set in consultation with UNC GA

**Estimation of resources (e.g. funds, people) required:**

- Program dollars \$100,000 recurring

- Administrative Assistant [shared with Admissions or International Education and Development]: \$23,000 plus \$8,000 benefits (12 months, ½ time) recurring

**Objective 2: Affordability**

Ensure affordability for students from low and middle income backgrounds. Develop resources and policies that ensure affordability of an Appalachian education.

**Activity 1:**

Increase funding of the Appalachian ACCESS program to cover the full cost of attendance for students at 200% of the federal poverty level.

**Rationale:**

The draft of the Accountability Plan for the University of North Carolina indicates “private fundraising” as one of seven strategic directions campuses should pursue. Additionally, during his inaugural address, UNC President Erskine Bowles stated that “increasing scholarships and the pool of need-based financial aid” is an important goal.

First, we must ensure that the Appalachian ACCESS program is fully funded for students at 100% of the federal poverty level. Not only should this program cover tuition, fees, room and board, but it should also provide for part-time on-campus employment. Additionally, the scope of Appalachian ACCESS should be expanded over five years to include students at 200% of the federal poverty level. Appalachian should achieve this goal by developing a concentrated campaign to fund and expand the Appalachian ACCESS program to cover students up to 200% of the federal poverty level and up to the full cost of attendance.

**Unit(s) responsible:**

Development Officers; University Advancement; Financial Aid; Public Affairs; Alumni Office; Parents Association; University College

**Assessment strategy(ies):**

- Growth of the Appalachian ACCESS program
- Decrease in actual net cost to families by income level
- Decrease in unmet financial need
- Decrease in debt load
- Increase in retention of low-income students

**Five-year timeline:**

Completion date is academic year 2012-2013

**Estimation of resources (e.g. funds, people) required:**

- Students at 100% of the poverty level: \$50,000 / year
- Students at 200% of the poverty level: \$300,000 / year
- New or reassigned individual with dedicated responsibility for administration of the ACCESS Program (award packaging, assessment, cooperate with Admissions for

- marketing program, development of campus partnerships) of the ACCESS Program: \$35,000-40,000 recurring
- \$10,000 for printed materials and website development needed to raise dollars for ACCESS (University Advancement)

**Activity 2:**

Increase grant and merit-based financial aid to students with financial barriers to higher education, including first generation college students and students from other under-represented groups. Identify university personnel with experience in grant writing. Identify sources of grants. Encourage future senior gift committees to donate for the purpose of funding scholarships for future students.

**Rationale:**

The cost of higher education is becoming an increasingly difficult barrier for students to overcome. This objective could help address the concerns of middle income students who struggle with paying for college.

**Unit(s) responsible:**

Development Officers; University Advancement, Student Development; Faculty; Alumni Office; each Academic Affairs department and college

**Assessment strategy(ies):**

- Growth of the available financial aid
- Decrease in actual net cost to families by income level
- Increase in number of students receiving grants and merit based scholarships

**Five-year timeline:**

Completion date is academic year 2012-2013

**Estimation of resources (e.g. funds, people) required:**

- Fundraising for grants and scholarships can be accomplished using existing resources; faculty members who write grants should receive special accommodations to workload

**Activity 3:**

Appoint a task force to explore other means to increase accessibility and affordability.

**Rationale:**

The cost of higher education is becoming an increasingly difficult barrier for students to overcome. This objective could help address the concerns of middle income students who struggle with paying for college.

**Unit(s) responsible:**

Academic Affairs; Enrollment Services; Student Development; Financial Aid; University Advancement; Parents Association; Western North Carolina Network for Access and Success; College Awareness Programs; University College; Office of Research and Graduate Studies

**Assessment strategy(ies):**

- Evidence will be collected based on the objectives of the developed plan

**Five-year timeline:**

2008 | Taskforce to be named

2010 | Plan completed and initiation of the plan begins

**Estimation of resources (e.g. funds, people) required:**

- Taskforce of ten to twelve faculty, staff, and student members from across campus

**Activity 4:**

Create a centralized and coordinated presence for campus and college-based scholarships to increase awareness of scholarship opportunities. Create a robust website for scholarship information with links to the Admissions website and to specific colleges and departmental information. Streamline websites to have comprehensive scholarship information for every college and department with contact information.

**Rationale:**

The Admissions Office provides information regarding scholarship opportunities available for incoming freshmen. Beyond this, continuing and transfer students have a need to be continually educated about scholarship opportunities that may be available to meet college costs. By providing more scholarship opportunities as well as clear information regarding these opportunities to incoming, transfer and continuing students, more students will have the opportunity to attend or continue their education. Centralizing scholarship information would create an easily identifiable path for students searching for scholarship information and provide campus personnel with an additional resource for assisting students.

**Unit(s) responsible:**

University College; Alumni Office; Development Officers for Departments and Colleges; Student Development; Enrollment Services

**Assessment strategy(ies):**

- Increase of the number of students who apply for and are awarded scholarships

**Five-year timeline:**

Completion date is academic year 2012-2013

**Estimation of resources (e.g. funds, people) required:**

- New or reassigned position with dedicated responsibility to serve as webmaster/coordinator for a centralized scholarship website, to develop and provide regular scholarship information workshops for students, to communicate regularly with faculty, academic advisors and other appropriate administrators about continuing student scholarship opportunities, and to coordinate assessment reports of scholarship applications and awards - \$35,000-40,000 recurring
- \$3,000 operating budget (for workshop materials, training, professional development, etc.) recurring

- Interface with existing campus software packages

**Activity 5:**

*International Focus*

Increase financial support for international students and study abroad opportunities. Utilize the efforts of existing development officers. Engage INTAPP members as student ambassadors for fundraising efforts.

**Rationale:**

Since international students are not eligible for federally funded financial aid programs, state and institutional monies should be made available to international students for whom cost is a barrier to education.

Study abroad opportunities are nonexistent for students with certain economic profiles. Many of the study abroad trips occur in summer, a period for which financial aid is extremely limited. Increasingly, students need this exposure to other cultures to be competitive in the job market.

**Unit(s) responsible:**

Office of International Education and Development; Academic Affairs; Student Development; University Advancement; Enrollment Services; Service Learning; Undergraduate Research; Office of Research and Graduate Studies

**Assessment strategy(ies):**

- Increase in funds available for international students
- Decrease in actual net cost to international students
- Decrease in unmet financial need for international students and students traveling abroad
- Decrease in debt load for international students and students traveling abroad
- Increase in number of international students on campus
- Increase in number of native Appalachian students traveling abroad

**Five-year timeline:**

Completion date is academic year 2012-2013

**Estimation of resources (e.g. funds, people) required:**

- \$200,000 to award to non-international Appalachian students for study abroad opportunities, recurring
- \$200,000 available for International Student Scholarships (from “Objective 1: Access”)

**Activity 6:**

Create financial support for college-ready undocumented individuals who graduate from North Carolina high schools.

**Rationale:**

The Educating All North Carolinians report delivered by the working group of the 2007 Emerging Issues Forum states:

The rate of growth of North Carolina's Latino community is among the highest in the nation. The Latino school-aged enrollment has grown almost 50% in just five years, from 28,053 in 2001-2002 to 131,766 for the current 2006-07 school year. Most of these students have received all of their formal education in the North Carolina public school system. Some Latino students excel in the classroom and obtain a high school diploma but are unable to gain access to our state's colleges and universities because they do not know how to negotiate the transition from high school to college and/or their undocumented status prevents them from doing so. Although not all Latinos are undocumented immigrants, a number of those who graduate from North Carolina's high schools are. The systematic exclusion of our Latino students from higher education not only results in a permanent working class Latino community, but also results in the state's loss of a trained, bilingual workforce that could fill shortages currently need in industries like nursing and teaching.

Our Supreme Court ruled that it is a fundamental right that all qualified students have the opportunity to receive higher education. North Carolina must make higher education accessible for all academically qualified students, regardless of their race, gender, economic situation or immigration status. This requires that we teach parents and students how to prepare for college and navigate the transition from high school to higher education. North Carolina should develop programs and policies, targeted scholarships and outreach efforts designed to enroll and graduate a higher number of Latino students. The business community, philanthropy and the Latino community itself should fund more scholarships for Latino students. Finally, the N. C. General Assembly should pass legislation allowing undocumented students in the state, who meet certain criteria, to pay in-state tuition at the state's public colleges and universities.

**Unit(s) responsible:**

Academic Affairs; Provost; Enrollment Services; Institutional Research, Assessment, and Planning; Academic Departments; and Office of International Education and Development; Student Development; University Advancement; Undergraduate Research

**Assessment strategy(ies):**

- Increase in number of undocumented students who receive a college education
- Increase in number and quality of external awards and scholarships
- Increase in number of applications & enrollment from undocumented Latinos
- Increase in number of internal scholarships awarded

**Five-year timeline:**

Completion date is academic year 2012-2013

**Estimation of resources (e.g. funds, people) required:**

- \$200,000 to award to undocumented students in scholarship dollars to make receiving a college degree a reality recurring

**Objective 3: Diversity**

**Enhance existing and create new programs and practices that increase diversity, enhance the quality of each enrollment class, and support student achievement to graduation.**

**Activity 1:*****International Focus***

Increase the percentage of international degree seeking students to at least 2% of the overall student body, while also increasing the percentage of international exchange students.

**Rationale:**

Data provided by Institutional Research, Assessment, and Planning shows that in the fall 2006 less than 1% of our overall student body is made up of international students. Data from a variety of sources underscores the importance of institutions of higher learning graduating students who are equipped to work in a global society, increasing the number of international degree seeking students on our campus and providing them with structured and meaningful ways to interact with our domestic students is one method way to aid us in this effort. We also know that increasing the number of international students who attend Appalachian through an exchange program will allow us to send more of our students to other countries to gain a cultural experience; therefore increasing this number will allow for more global experiences by more of our students.

**Unit(s) responsible:**

Academic Affairs; Office of International Education and Development: Colleges and departments; Enrollment Services

**Assessment strategy(ies):**

- Percentage of degree seeking international students

**Five-year timeline:**

Completion date is 2012 – 2013

**Estimation of resources (e.g. funds, people) required:**

- Additional position of Director of International Recruitment; additional scholarship monies for degree seeking international students

**Activity 2:*****International Focus***

Increase the percentage of domestic students attending Appalachian State University who study abroad to 8%.

**Rationale:**

Data provided by *Open Doors: Report on International Educational Exchange* indicates that in 2004-2005, Appalachian had 540 students or 3.7% of its students study abroad. As stated in the priorities report from the Economic and Community Development Working Group of the Institute for Emerging Issues, “As North Carolina’s economy transforms and faces increased global competition, North Carolinians are turning to their higher education institutions for support and solutions.” The report goes on to state that:

"Higher education institutions help communities develop a creative, competitive, competent workforce capable of meeting the needs of the global economy. A relevant and effective technical skills training infrastructure is an essential component of this workforce development. However technical skills alone will not suffice. To enhance the productivity of North Carolina's workers, institutions of higher education must seek to develop the 'whole person' – individuals with the personal attributes (soft skills) needed to thrive and contribute to a rapidly changing environment that is characteristic of today's 21<sup>st</sup> century economy" (Davies et al, 2007).

**Unit(s) responsible:**

Academic Affairs; Colleges and departments; Office of International Education and Development; Student Development and University College

**Assessment strategy(ies):**

- Increase in number of students enrolled in study abroad programs

**Five-year timeline:**

Completion date is 2012 – 2013

**Estimation of resources (e.g. funds, people) required:**

- \$200,000 to award to non-international Appalachian students for study abroad opportunities, recurring (**this is the same \$200,000 identified in Objective 2: Affordability**)

**Activity 3:**

Increase the percentage of underrepresented minorities employed at Appalachian State University to grow the percentage closer to the percentage of underrepresented minorities who are students.

**Rationale:**

Research shows that increasing the number of qualified teachers of color increases future college access to minority students. Furthermore, minority students taught by educators of color are more likely to academically and socially succeed because they are able to see their experiences reflected in their teachers and are likely to look to their teachers as role models. Currently, data provided by Institutional Research, Assessment, and Planning show that in 2007 4% of the entire faculty and staff are from underrepresented minorities while 10% of the 2006 student body are members of underrepresented minorities.

**Unit(s) responsible:**

Academic Affairs; Deans; Office of Equity, Diversity and Compliance

**Assessment strategy(ies):**

- Increase in number of faculty and staff from underrepresented minorities hired and retained

**Five-year timeline:**

Completion date is 2012 – 2013

**Estimation of resources (e.g. funds, people) required:**

- \$600,000 to hire 10-12 additional faculty and staff members

**Activity 4:**

Enhance support services for diverse students (students of color, students with disabilities, first generation students, gay, lesbian, bi-sexual and transgender students and religious minorities).

**Rationale:**

Data shows that students participating in the TRIO programs are experiencing academic success as demonstrated in the greatly improved six year graduation rate from 50 to 75% in the years of 1997 to 2000, providing additional resources will allow more students to be served by these programs. Additionally reviews of best practices for recruitment and retention of students of color shows that academic and cultural support services programs to provide the help that students may need in dealing with the demands of their academic programs or in dealing with an unfamiliar cultural milieu greatly enhance the retention rates.

**Unit(s) responsible:**

Student Development; Multicultural Student Development; Associate Vice Chancellor for Equity, Diversity, and Compliance; Academic Affairs; Office of Disability Services; Learning Assistance Program; College Awareness Programs; Assistant Vice Chancellor for Student Development for Diversity

**Assessment strategy(ies):**

- Increase in retention and graduation rate of students from these populations

**Five-year timeline:**

Completion date is 2012 – 2013

**Estimation of resources (e.g. funds, people) required:**

- Immediate / short-term: \$7,500 to hire 1 graduate student to assist with implementing programs and \$15,000 operating budget for programming
- Long-term: refer to the recommendations of the Diversity Task Force

**Activity 5:**

Appoint a taskforce to explore the needs of non-traditional students.

**Rationale:**

Data from the Institutional Research, Assessment, and Planning indicates that 11.9% of our undergraduate students are non-traditional (23 years of age or older), yet few if any our programs and services are designed with an emphasis on their unique needs.

We need to explore the needs of these students. A taskforce could create a plan that addresses the following factors surrounding adult education: [including but not limited to] motives for learning and implications for practice; understanding how adults learn; exploring and facilitating self directed learning; considering where learning takes place;

facilitating learning. In addition, the taskforce should consider factors influencing non-traditional students such as: reviewing course times; family needs; housing; work-school life balance.

**Unit(s) responsible:**

Academic Affairs; College of Education; Office of Distance Education; Student Development Associate Vice Chancellor/Dean of Students, Assistant Vice Chancellor, and Director of Child Development Center; Housing and Residence Life; All campus units

**Assessment strategy(ies):**

- Evidence will be collected based on the objectives of the plan developed

**Five-year timeline:**

2008 | Taskforce to be named

2010 | Plan completed and initiation of the plan begins

**Estimation of resources (e.g. funds, people) required:**

- Taskforce of ten to twelve faculty, student, and staff members from across campus

**Objective 4: Graduation**

**Achieve a six-year undergraduate student graduation rate of 75% that simultaneously closes achievement gaps among different student populations.**

**Activity 1:**

Develop and implement a campus-wide academic advising assessment plan. This plan will include mission, goals, outcomes (should include benchmark measures), assessment methods, and evaluation criteria. The plan will be used to enhance existing advising delivery programs, change underperforming advising delivery systems, and develop innovative new advising delivery structures.

**Rationale:**

Reaching ambitious goals for learning requires integrating elements of the curriculum traditionally treated as separate—general education, the major, and electives—into a coherent program. While students will not be required to take a common set of courses, new forms of advising will help them create a plan of study which leads to the essential outcomes of a meaningful education. As the AACU Greater Expectations national panel report states, "There will be many alternative paths up the educational mountain. But every student needs a sense of direction, markers as well as knowledgeable guides, and navigational tools to support the journey" (2007). Currently, students at Appalachian State University receive uneven advising throughout their career, and the advising load is inequitably distributed among faculty members.

**Unit(s) responsible:**

University College (broad oversight of assessment and programmatic improvement in advising); Registrar's Office; Office of Research and Graduate Studies (for input in the advising assessment plan); University Advising Council; Departmental faculty and chairs, deans, and staff advisors; Provost and Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education

**Assessment strategy(ies):**

- Evidence will be collected (student achievement on objective criteria and/or measuring how students have changed over time; e.g., timely completion of degree requirements) with results to be reported on selected outcomes

**Five-year timeline:**

2008 | Appoint a task force for the Improvement of Student Academic Advising to collaborate with the newly formed University College

2009 | Implementation of evaluation methods using new criteria

2012 | Improvement in the overall structure of campus advising delivery realized in higher six-year graduation rates

**Estimation of resources (e.g. funds, people) required:**

- Establish University College
- Appoint a campus-wide Task Force for the Improvement of Student Academic Advising that is made up of students, faculty and department/college personnel responsible for academic advising
- \$5,000 for the purchase and support of AdvisorTrac package; one-time start up
- \$2,500 for on-going support of AdvisorTrac; recurring

**Activity 2:**

Identify, strengthen, and coordinate existing faculty and peer mentoring programs and develop new mentoring strategies to ensure every freshman and sophomore has the opportunity to engage with a mentor.

**Rationale:**

The National Survey of Student Engagement measures activities that impact student achievement, noting a strong correlation between mentoring and contact outside of the classroom and student success. Through receiving mentoring, students are more likely to persist and graduate.

In addition to faculty mentoring, research shows that students learn most effectively from interpersonal communication with their peers. This experience solidifies the culture of connections between students and assists students see their own future success and graduation through watching upper class students model successful academic and personal behaviors. In addition, the upper class student mentors will be able to enhance their professional and interpersonal development and receive co-curricular transcript credit for their active participation. Appalachian has several peer mentoring programs that can provide leadership and guidance for the development of new and needed experiences to address the gaps in peer mentoring.

**Unit(s) responsible:**

University College; Center for Student Involvement and Leadership; Student Affairs; Freshman Seminar; Academic departments; Residence Life; Learning Assistance Program; Orientation

**Assessment strategy(ies):**

- Increase in number of peer mentoring opportunities
- Increase in number of students who participate in a peer mentoring experience
- Increase in number of co-curricular transcript credits awarded
- Increase in retention and graduation rates of students who participate in a peer mentoring experience
- Increase in number of students who declare majors by the end of the first year of college
- Increase in number of students who declare majors by the end of the first semester of the second year of college
- Increase in number of students who declare majors by the end of the second semester of the second year of college

**Five-year timeline:**

2008 | Collaborative planning meetings with existing mentoring program leaders; development of a shared best practices process; assessment of gaps in mentoring opportunities; development of a shared plan for enhancing existing programs; and a plan for the implementation of new mentoring opportunities

2009 | 50% of departments without a peer mentoring program will have established a peer mentoring program

2010 | First cohort of 1st and 2nd year students is tracked for participation and early declaration, retention, and graduation rates.

**Estimation of resources (e.g. funds, people) required:**

- \$35,000 – \$40,000 addition of a full-time mentoring coordinator
- \$8,000 operating budget
- Peer mentors will sign up for and receive academic credit for the experience
- \$1,500 - 3,000 increase in academic department operating funds to support departments with mentoring programs, recurring

**Activity 3:**

Build and implement an Early Intervention system focused on academically underperforming students.

**Rationale:**

Using Academic Progress Reports, Noel-Levitz retention management system (CSI), and other data, Appalachian can build an Early Intervention system focused on giving underachieving students additional guidance and academic support. If necessary, we can expand or enhance available student academic support systems for identified at-risk

student populations. This program can be modeled after the early awareness programs of campuses recognized for their best practices with student success across all populations. An Early Intervention program should include proactive interventions which allow the student time to improve.

In the U.S. Department of Education's *Answers in the Toolbox* and *Toolbox Revisited*, a crucial variable in predicting college persistence and graduation is whether students earn fewer than 20 credits the first calendar year of post-secondary education, which severely damages their chances of completing a degree. Students at Appalachian from the 2001 new freshman cohort who were not retained to fall 2002 had, on average, a lower number of attempted hours through Spring 2002, and a dramatically lower earned hours through Spring 2002.

Best practices from other institutions as described in reports from the Education Trust such as *One Step from the Finish Line: Higher College Graduation Rates are Within Our Reach* (Carey, 2005) and *Choosing to Improve: Voices from Colleges and Universities with Better Graduation Rates* (Carey, 2005) show that early warning systems can help improve graduation rates significantly. The ACT report *What Works in Student Retention: Four-Year Public Colleges* (Habley & McClanahan, 2004) cites advising interventions with selected student populations as one characteristic which contributes strongly to retention.

Identifying targeted populations of students and concentrating interventions to give them additional academic support and guidance will result in improvement of our overall retention and graduation rates across all populations. Currently at Appalachian, we suffer from an achievement gap for male, ethnic minority, out-of-state, first generation, and high financial need students. Improvements in graduation rate within each of these populations will result in an overall improved graduation rate for the campus.

All campus units will need to take on a role in promoting student achievement and preventing attrition. Sometimes resident assistants, teaching assistants, faculty members, advisors, club and organization leaders, and friends are the first to know about a student who is skipping class, failing courses, or starting to engage in behaviors that lead to leaving college prematurely. We need a campus culture in which everyone feels that retention is their responsibility.

**Unit(s) responsible:**

Student Achievement Team; University College; Learning Assistance Program; Academic Advising; Departmental faculty; Student Development; Residence Life; Institutional Research, Assessment, and Planning; Office of Distance Education

**Assessment strategy(ies):**

- Improved second year retention and graduation rates among all student populations

**Five-year timeline:**

2008 | Student Achievement Team will analyze non-returners versus persisters to determine characteristics of most at-risk students and most successful students,

investigate best practices of a model Early Intervention program, and make recommendations about the implementation of such a model

2009 | Improve and expand the APR process to include more meaningful feedback from faculty to all students and their advisors

2010 | Implement Early Intervention program and start assessing results

**Estimation of resources (e.g. funds, people) required:**

- Identification of a common, accessible, web-based, interactive, comprehensive communication tool for the entire campus. The Student Achievement Team may recommend additional or re-assigned staffing to administer an Early Intervention system.

**Activity 4:**

Improve the six-year graduation rate for African American students to 60% by pursuing best practices of peer institutions.

**Rationale:**

Data collected by Institutional Research, Assessment, and Planning indicate that in 2005 African Americans had a six year graduation of 55.1% compared to the Caucasian six year graduation rate of 64.4%. Studies show that summer orientation programs designed specifically to help black students adapt to the culture of predominately white campuses, as well as courses that allow students to develop self identity often positively impact retention and graduation.

**Unit(s) responsible:**

Student Development; Multicultural Student Development; Associate Vice Chancellor for Equity, Diversity, and Compliance; Academic Affairs; Learning Assistance Program; Faculty Fellows; University College; Orientation; Freshman Seminar; Office of Admissions; Athletic Department

**Assessment strategy(ies):**

- Increased retention and graduation rates for African-American students

**Five-year timeline:**

Completion date is 2012 – 2013

**Estimation of resources (e.g. funds, people) required:**

- \$65,000 operating funds for summer orientation and support programming for the targeted population, recurring.

**Activity 5:**

Improve the six year graduation rate for male students to 70% by pursuing best practices of peer institutions.

**Rationale:**

Data collected by Institutional Research, Assessment, and Planning indicate that in 2005 males had a six year graduation of 59.4% compared to the female six year graduation rate of 68%. We recommend that the Student Achievement Team take the lead in pulling together individuals from the units listed below to create new and innovated strategies to increase this rate.

**Unit(s) responsible:**

Academic Affairs; Student Achievement Team; Learning Assistance Program; Outdoor Programs; Freshman Learning Communities; Student Development; Center for Student Involvement; Leadership and University Recreation; Athletic Department

**Assessment strategy(ies):**

- Increased retention and graduation rate for males

**Five-year timeline:**

Completion date is 2012 – 2013

**Estimation of resources (e.g. funds, people) required:**

- \$5,000 recurring for experiential programming component

**Objective 5: Future-Ready**

**Strengthen existing programs, develop new programs, and work with alumni and employers to prepare students for future opportunities.**

**Activity 1:**

Assess existing internships and field experiences to ensure that students are receiving meaningful experiences related to the learning outcomes of their program of study. Improve existing and develop additional experiences as appropriate.

**Rationale:**

Many students are participating in different types of internships and field experience activities while at Appalachian. In the past five years, 16,302 students participated in semester-long internships, practica, and student teaching projects. In addition, 3,961 students had additional practical experiences in their field of study including independent research courses, studio courses, courses with a clinical component, field experiences, and experience as an instructional assistant. However, some of these experiences have a more significant impact on student learning outcomes than others. It is critical to invest time in identifying what works and expand successful offerings to more students.

Students participating in internship experiences with faculty and staff, through service-learning projects, or with prospective employers all have the opportunity to learn more about their prospective discipline, expand their knowledge and experience, and interact with others in a professional capacity.

**Unit(s) responsible:**

Departments to develop assessment measures and additional internships as appropriate; Academic Affairs; Alumni Affairs; Office of Research and Graduate Studies; Center for Student Involvement and Leadership; Career Development Center; Institutional Research, Assessment, and Planning

**Assessment strategy(ies):**

- Evaluation of impact of internships, field experiences, and courses that offer an experiential component
- Increase in the amount of internships available to students
- Increase in the amount of funding available to students for internship opportunities

**Five-year timeline:**

2008 | Departments to write and include a measure about internships, field experiences, and courses that offer an experiential component in their Program Assessment Plans

2009 – 2013 | Departments to begin assessing the impact of internship, field experiences, and courses that offer an experiential component on student learning outcomes; departments will present at conferences about results in this work; faculty will seek grants and corporate opportunities for placement of students

**Estimation of resources (e.g. funds, people) required:**

- No new personnel is needed for assessment activity
- Consideration of start-up funds for new programs as appropriate

**Activity 2:**

Promote graduate and professional studies by developing transition programs for graduating Appalachian seniors and improving Appalachian's graduate student orientation and services.

**Rationale:**

For graduating seniors, it is important to assist them in understanding entrance requirements, scholarship/stipend/assistantship opportunities, selection of a program of study and identification of a graduate study mentor. For entering graduate students it is important to review academic responsibilities and deadlines, scholarship/stipend/assistantship opportunities, professional standards, campus and departmental mentoring opportunities, academic advising and career placement resources.

In more and more professions, the need for post-undergraduate study is increasing. There is a need to assist students who have completed their undergraduate education at Appalachian in preparing for and enrolling in graduate and professional studies and in assisting students who enroll in graduate studies at Appalachian. Although many transitional activities may be currently underway in individual departments and through the Office of Research and Graduate Studies, a more comprehensive and intentional approach will better serve all of Appalachian's students engaged in graduate and professional studies.

**Unit(s) responsible:**

All campus units; Office of Research and Graduate Studies; Career Development; Academic Affairs; Alumni Affairs; University Advancement; Center for Student Involvement and Leadership; University College; Center for Faculty Development

**Assessment strategy(ies):**

- Increase in number of Appalachian students applying for graduate or professional study programs
- Increase in number of Appalachian students accepted for graduate or professional study programs
- Increase in number of Appalachian students enrolling in graduate or professional study programs
- Increase in enrollment in Appalachian's graduate programs
- Increase in entrance exam scores (MCAT, GRE, etc.) as a measure of readiness of Appalachian undergraduates to pursue graduate studies
- Increase in GRE scores for students enrolling in Appalachian's graduate programs
- Increased satisfaction by employers of students with a graduate degree from Appalachian

**Five-year timeline:**

Completion date is 2012 – 2013

**Estimation of resources (e.g. funds, people) required:**

- \$5,000 additional operating funds for Graduate Student orientation and student service resources, recurring
- \$20,000 new operating funds for the creation of a collaboration among CSIL, University College, academic departments and colleges that will serve graduating seniors in readiness activities for graduate and professional studies, recurring

**Activity 3:**

***International Focus***

Review survey data and focus group results from employers about recent graduates from Appalachian to assess the preparedness of Appalachian students.

**Rationale:**

Institutions of higher education need to educate students to contribute to a global community. As stated by the Innovation, Technology, and Entrepreneurship working group of the 2007 Institute for Emerging Issues, "Higher education plays a critical role in supporting innovative thinking, technology, commercialization, and entrepreneurship.... It is the creativity, technical know-how and enterprising spirit that students carry within themselves after they graduate that makes the greatest contribution in this area" (Davies et al, 2007). In addition, the Economic and Community Development report delivered by the working group of the 2007 Emerging Issues Forum states:

An educational institution's curriculum should be flexible, responsive to the changing needs of the community, the workforce, and relevant business sectors.... To enhance the productivity of North Carolina's workers, institutions of higher education must seek to develop the whole person – individuals with the personal attributes (soft skills) needed to thrive and contribute to a rapidly changing

environment that is characteristic of today's 21st century economy (Atkins et al, 2007).

In order to meet the needs of the global community and the North Carolina community, Appalachian needs to assess whether our graduates are able to meet the challenges of society including their academic preparation, technology and information skills, global perspective, support of diversity, and skills with collaboration and communication in a multilingual environment.

**Unit(s) responsible:**

University College; Academic Departments and Colleges; Institutional Research, Assessment, and Planning; Career Development; Alumni Affairs; Office of Research and Graduate Studies; University of North Carolina General Administration

**Assessment strategy(ies):**

- Development of curricular and co-curricular experiences that provide Appalachian students:
  - 1) academic preparation in their field of study;
  - 2) technological and information literacy skills;
  - 3) appropriate global perspective and ability to work with diverse populations;
  - 4) ability to collaborate; and
  - 5) ability to communicate effectively in English and other languages
- Positive survey results regarding the preparation of Appalachian graduates in these five areas

**Five-year timeline:**

2008 | Identify existing surveys with data from employers regarding preparation of graduates from Appalachian. As needed, modify or develop new surveys to gather data regarding Appalachian student readiness in these identified five areas of importance

2009 | Begin gathering data, disseminating the results widely throughout the campus, and modify for improvement (based on assessment) curricular and co-curricular experiences

**Estimation of resources (e.g. funds, people) required:**

- Establishment of University College and general education assessment
- No new resources needed for assessment of currently enrolled graduate students