A Plan for the Future

Blue Ridge Community College's Strategic Plan
2008 – 2013

Blue Ridge
Community College

Blue Ridge
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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On the Inside

Message from the President 1
Strategic Planning 2
Our Stakeholders 2
Blue Ridge Community College Facts 3
College Mission, Vision, and Values 4-5
Trends and Assumptions 6-7
Strategic Directions. 8-9

Message from the President

Next year Blue Ridge Community College will celebrate forty years of service to Henderson and Transylvania Counties. Since our founding in 1969, we have built a solid foundation for our programs and services. Now we must turn our attention to the next five years and determine how we can better serve our community.

The Strategic Plan 2008-2013 is our blueprint for the future. This document is a product of assessing our needs, analyzing the trends, and developing strategic directions for the College. The process of developing this plan has given us an opportunity to pause, take a step backward, and then look at our future with a fresh perspective. In fact, we have already begun to act on many items identified by our community college stakeholders.

I encourage you to take a moment to review the material on the following pages. It is my hope that you can continue to support this exceptional educational institution and help us achieve our goals and provide quality education to our students.

Molly A. Parkhill, Ed.D.
President (2007 - present)

Strategic Planning

Strategic Planning begins with the future and works backward. Strategic planning allows an institution to stay true to its stated mission by anticipating and analyzing the impact of both internal and external trends, and by setting a strategic direction and drawing realistic action plans that address those trends.

Through the leadership of Blue Ridge Community College's own 20-member Planning Council, the College began developing its own Strategic Plan in early 2007. The first step was to review the College's mission and to create a vision and values statement. The next step was to broaden the planning process by asking the community, "Where should the College be by the year 2013?" This process of environmental scanning included an analysis of demographic and enrollment data, posting of community surveys, and the employment of community focus groups. The end product was a collection of planning trends and assumptions which became the basis for the final strategic directions.

Our Stakeholders

Students

Faculty and Staff

Community College Alumni

Board of Trustees

Partners

Employers

Business and Industry

Organizations

Community leaders

North Carolina State Board of Community Colleges

Donors and External Funders

Public and Private Schools

Four-year Colleges and Universities

General Public

Facts about Blue Ridge Community College and its Students

- Blue Ridge Community College maintains two sites: the main 140-acre Flat Rock Campus and the Transylvania Center in Brevard, NC
- Serves 3,000 curriculum students and 15,000 continuing education students each year
- Offers 26 associate degree programs, 25 diploma programs, and 45 certificate programs
- Offers five college transfer programs which articulate to four-year institutions
- More than 600 different continuing education courses are offered annually
- The average age of a curriculum student is 26; the average age of a continuing education student is 42.
- 37% of students are male; 63% are female
- 87% of students are Caucasian, 5% are African American, and 5% are Hispanic
- 16% of curriculum students attend class in the evening; 40% carry a full course load
- More than 570 area high school students take college-level courses at Blue Ridge
- 66% of curriculum students work while going to college
- 40% of the student body receives some financial assistance
- 66% of students reside in Henderson County, 17% in Transylvania County, and 17% in surrounding counties
- 99% of graduates are employed within one year after leaving Blue Ridge
- 20% of curriculum students enroll in distance learning classes
- Blue Ridge employs 175 full-time faculty and staff and 500 part-time faculty
- Blue Ridge is the only community college in North Carolina to receive a superior rating for seven consecutive years

Our mission . . . enriching the lives of those within our reach through education, training, and cultural activities.

Our Vision

Blue Ridge Community College will continue to provide programs of excellence in academics and training that foster economic vitality in our community. Our College will lead by example with our partners in business, industry, and education to improve the quality of life for the people we serve by:

- promoting instructional excellence in all program areas
- serving the lifelong learning needs for all citizens
- expanding and enhancing programs to meet the evolving needs of our community
- working closely with business and industry to train a competent workforce
- strengthening partnerships to advance the mission of the College
- enhancing customer service to all who come our way
- increasing the retention and success of our students
- increasing community awareness of the programs of the College
- infusing appropriate technologies for problem solving and enhanced program delivery
- developing a multi-culturally competent citizenry
- developing responsive and effective education programs

Our Values

- We value excellence in teaching, training, and student-centered learning.
- We open our doors to all who seek knowledge and a better life through academic growth and development.
- We value the diversity of all people and will make our programs accessible to all learners regardless of disabilities or physical challenges.
- We believe that our faculty, staff, and administration should conduct themselves with the highest integrity in the classroom and beyond.
- We will be candid and supportive with our students in the assessment of their skills and their progress on the journey toward knowledge.
- We will be responsive to the changing needs of our community by providing targeted programming that improves the skills, knowledge, and economic progress of our workforce.
- We will be the champions of innovation, ever vigilant for opportunities to improve the delivery and quality of instruction through changes in technology and educational research.
- As a public educational institution, our faculty and staff are accountable to the people we serve to deliver the best programs possible to enrich the lives of those within our reach. Our students are accountable to their instructors to strive for improvement and demonstrate the mastery of identified, measurable educational objectives in every class attended.

These are the values of Blue Ridge Community College that guide our behavior and frame our dreams. As your community college, we pledge to demonstrate these values in all that we do and say as we work in partnership to make our community a better place in which to live and work.

Trends and Assumptions

Demographic Trends

- Retirees from the Baby Boom generation moving to Henderson and Transylvania Counties will require a greater variety of new programs to address their interests and train them for new jobs after retirement.
- Retiring workers will create a major gap in the workforce, particularly in education and health care.
- The local Latino population will increase at a rate far greater than that of other races or ethnicities and the College will need to find ways to serve that population.

Workforce Trends

- Older workers will require training in new technologies to keep pace with younger workers.
- Projected population increases will be augmented by the unprecedented development of retirement communities; this will create a gap in the service industry.
- There will be a continued demand in the local workforce for skilled workers such as machinists and automotive technicians.
- There will be a demand by employers to teach "soft skills" such as leadership, work ethics, responsibility, critical thinking, teamwork, problem solving, communications, and social skills.
- The stigma that "blue collar" and manufacturing jobs are not viable career choices will gradually change.

Technology Trends

- College instructors will need to "retool" and obtain new skills to keep up with new technologies.
- Distance learning will become a major component of community college education and instructors will use new methods to deliver course material, including hand-held devices.
- Availability of affordable broadband service will be required to deliver educational programs of the future.
- The opening of the Technology Education and Development Center at its Flat Rock Campus in the spring of 2008 will create many opportunities for new programs in technology.

Economic Trends

- Low-skill manufacturing jobs will continue to be lost but unemployment in the region will remain low because of rapid growth in the construction and service industries.
- Students will demand affordable childcare services, including providing both day and evening childcare at the College.
- Businesses must prepare their workers to function in the international business arena.
- Immigration laws will change dramatically and employers must be able to react accordingly.
- The increased cost of living, compared to other metropolitan and rural areas of the state, will make it more difficult for younger families to live and work in Henderson and Transylvania Counties.
- Public transportation will be an issue with the rising cost of vehicle ownership.

Social and Political Trends

- New partnerships with employers, organizations, and other educational institutions will be of prime importance.
- Part-time adjunct faculty members will become a greater proportion of the College's overall instruction cadre.
- Environmental issues will become more important and "green" will become a major part of the College's day-to-day operations.
- The non-profit organizations will increase locally and will need specialized programs to assist with leadership development, and financial and administrative skills.
- With Baby Boomers having more time on their hands, the hospitality industry in Western North Carolina will demand more services.
- To reach more students, the College will need be more flexible in terms of the time of day, days of the week, and the duration of its course offerings.
- Bilingual workers will be in greater demand.
- Interest in lifelong learning courses and activities will grow as the over-65 population increases.
- Young students will become more involved with service learning (volunteerism).
- The College will provide more leadership in the area of individual and corporate wellness.

Strategic Directions

To meet the needs of a growing and diverse student population, the College will:

- Increase the enrollment, retention, and degree attainment of underserved student populations.
- Collaborate with high schools to expand offerings in the Huskins Program, the Dual Enrollment Program, Early College, and Learn and Earn Online.
- Develop and promote new programs that serve the functional needs and the lifelong learning interests of the "50-plus" generation.
- Explore the development of a Fletcher Center to extend the College's education and training programs.
- Offer cultural enrichment programs that foster the exchange of diverse experiences and traditions.

To address the rapidly changing workforce, the College will:

- Integrate the soft skills employers are seeking including leadership, teamwork, responsibility, communication, strong work ethic, critical thinking, and problem solving into college courses.
- Assist in filling identified gaps in the local workforce including the areas of applied technology, health care, and the growing service industry.
- Develop and offer more short-term certificate programs to reach students with non-traditional schedules.
- Support local economic development by creating and promoting programs that employ the College's newest technological resources and facilities.
- Provide training opportunities for business and industry that will help them develop a reputation as an employer of choice.

To stay current in all levels of technology and educational delivery, the College will:

- Expand opportunities for College faculty to pursue advanced technical competencies.
- Train College faculty in the newest features of instructional technology, course content development, and advanced methods of assessing student learning.

- Offer incentives for faculty to develop successful and innovative classroom teaching techniques.
- Expand and promote distance learning programs in formats that are convenient to students.
- Use the resources of the College to develop and broadcast educational programs to the community via cable television and other delivery media.

To strengthen the economic vitality of the community, the College will:

- Collaborate with economic development agencies to promote the College as a training resource and a venue for regional conferences and events.
- Enlist the leaders of local business and industry and College advisory committees to evaluate the effectiveness of College programs.
- Use the College's new Business Innovation Center as a tool to promote local entrepreneurship.
- Cultivate a greater awareness of global issues and the impact of international events on the regional economy.

To offer its stakeholders the most value for the services it provides, the College will:

- Expand partnerships with four-year institutions to offer more college-level baccalaureate degree programs on campus.
- Initiate an adjunct faculty orientation program and schedule events designed to expand and strengthen the College family.
- Promote environmental awareness and infuse green technologies into all aspects of the College's educational programs, physical plant operations, and planning activities.
- Integrate service learning components and the value of volunteerism into College programs and encourage student participation in extracurricular activities.
- Share the College's story with the community including both its long-term facility and program needs as well as its educational and economic impact.

Blue Ridge
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

180 West Campus Drive
Flat Rock, NC 28731
www.blueridge.edu
(828) 694-1700

Blue Ridge Community College is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award associate degrees.

an equal opportunity college

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