



## Blue Ridge Community College PLANNING GUIDE

An overview of the Planning, Assessment, and Accreditation Processes of the College

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Compiled by Director of Planning, Research and Institutional Effectiveness

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Blue Ridge Community College is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges to award associate degrees, diplomas and certificates. Contact the Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097 or call 404-679-4500 for questions about the accreditation of Blue Ridge Community College.

Office of Planning, Research, Institutional Effectiveness

828-694-1882

**Distribution of Planning Guide:**

President's Council  
Senior Leadership Team  
Board of Trustees

# BLUE RIDGE COMMUNITY COLLEGE PLANNING GUIDE

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# Strategic Planning Process – Institutional Planning Guide

## Introduction

In today's world effective and efficient planning assures careful management of scarce resources (fiscal, facilities, and human). Colleges can no longer rely on traditional management approaches. Success depends on the College's ability to develop short and long-range goals supplemented with future action plans to ensure the successful implementation of those goals.

Blue Ridge Community College (BRCC) uses a comprehensive approach in developing its short and long-term vision and corresponding strategic strategies. The College has set in place an annual planning cycle that results in effective and efficient (1) Strategy Formulation (2) Strategy Implementation (3) Strategic Assessment and (4) Strategic Review and Revision. The process assures a cycle of continuous improvement.

The primary focus of the College's strategic planning process is to remain true to our institution mission/purpose while using data-informed effective and efficient decision making processes. BRCC's annual strategic review process can best be summarized as a large-scale, future-oriented planning process, with broad-based participation from college stakeholders. This process ensures the college is progressing toward its goals and is meeting its mission of providing quality education and training opportunities that support student learning, enhance student advancement and success, and meet the workforce needs of our community.

This planning guide provides a road map of the College's framework for effective planning and managerial decision making. By ensuring that each functional area of the College remains successful with their short and long-range planning activities, BRCC will collectively meet its mission and goals long into the future.

College-wide strategic planning allows the College to chart continuous improvement activities year after year. Internal planning activities require the involvement by all stakeholder groups and constituencies of the College. To ensure full representation and a broad-based, integrated approach to strategic planning for the College, planning participants include representatives from all departments, disciplines, college support functions, and other internal stakeholder groups. This representation is demonstrated in the wide variety of representation in standing committees and implementation teams across the college. To assist administrators, faculty and staff, committees and teams, in fulfilling their planning duties, the College has an annual planning cycle. The annual planning cycle depicts major planning events and activities throughout the calendar year:

### OCTOBER

- Employee Survey Distributed
- Program Review Finalized and Presentations Made to Program Review Committee
- President's Council Meets
- Action Plan Results for previous year's Action Plans are requested
- President's Council Meets

### NOVEMBER

- President's Council Meets
- Fall Semester Course Evaluations Distributed
- Senior Leadership meets to prioritize FCAP requests
- Strategic Plan Action Report Updated

### DECEMBER

- President's Council Meets
- Program and Unit Assessment Plans are Updated with Fall semester results
- FCAP Priorities go to County Managers for review

### SEPTEMBER

- Budget is presented to the Board of Trustees for approval
- FCAP process opens for requests from faculty and staff/buildings are assessed
- President's Council Meets

### JANUARY

- President's Council Retreats and Reviews Strategic Plan
- President presents FCAP requests to County Commissioners

### AUGUST

- General education Competency Data for the previous year is review and strategies to improve are developed
- Add Approved Action Plans to Strategic Plan Action Report

### FEBRUARY

- President's Council Strategic Plan Analysis and Recommendations are Finalized
- Budget and Action Plan Process Kicks Off
- Fall Semester Student Success Data Report Distributed

### JULY

- Review of NCCCS Critical Success Performance Measure/Student Achievement Data
- Update Student Achievement Data on the College website
- Update Strategic Plan metrics with results from the previous year

### MARCH

- Strategic Plan Report given to Board of Trustees and Foundation Board of Directors
- Program and Unit Action Plans and Budget Requests for the following year are Reviewed and Approved by Senior Leadership
- Spring Semester Course Evaluations are Distributed

### JUNE

- Graduate Exit Survey Results Tabulated
- Annual and Spring Semester Data Reports Distributed
- Program Review surveys are sent out to current students, former students, and employers of graduates for the programs coming up for review the following year

### MAY

- Program and Unit Assessment Plans are updated with Spring Semester Results and strategies to improve are developed for the following year
- Program Review is kicked off for the upcoming year
- General Education Competency Data is gathered for the Fall and Spring semesters
- Senior Leadership finalizes budget

### APRIL

- Student Satisfaction Survey Administered
- President's Council reviews action plans and budget requests for the coming year



## Blue Ridge Community College

## Institutional Effectiveness & Assessment

## Planning Cycle Chart

Information in this Planning Guide fully supports *The Principals of Accreditation Foundations for Quality Enhancement*, published by the Southern Commission of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). The SACSCOC *Criteria* clearly states that accredited Colleges must:

- Operate with integrity in all matters
- Engage in ongoing, comprehensive, and integrated research-based planning and evaluation processes that (a) focus on institutional quality and effectiveness and (b) incorporate a systematic review of institutional goals and outcomes consistent with its mission.
- Identify expected outcomes of its administrative support services and demonstrates the extent to which the outcomes are achieved.
- Identify, evaluate, and publish goals and outcomes for student achievement appropriate to the institution's mission, the nature of the students it serves, and the kinds of programs offered. The institution uses multiple measures to document student success.
- Identify expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of seeking improvement based on analysis of the results in the areas below: a. student learning outcomes for each of its educational programs
- Identify expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of seeking improvement based on analysis of the results in student learning outcomes for collegiate-level general education competencies of its undergraduate degree programs
- Identify expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of seeking improvement based on analysis of the results academic and student services that support student success
- Have sound financial resources and a demonstrated, stable financial base to support the mission of the institution and the scope of its programs and services.
- Ensure adequate physical facilities and resources, both on and off campus, that appropriately serve the needs of the institution's educational programs, support services, and other mission-related activities.

The Planning Guide, updated annually, is designed to assist faculty, staff and students of the College in understanding how the annual planning cycle fully supports each of the above SACSCOC *Criteria*. It also ensures continued success for our students, faculty, staff, and other constituents of the College's service area.

Since the strategic planning processes of all educational institutions can never be perfectly static nor considered to be absolutely perfect in a world that is constantly changing, occasional modifications in the annual planning cycle may be required. To ensure an orderly Planning Guide revision process, the College will make periodic changes to the electronic version of this guide, as the changes occur. The electronic version, housed on the College's intranet, is considered the official copy of the Guide. All employee, students, and stakeholders are encouraged to recommend quality improvement changes, as necessary, to keep the annual planning process fine-tuned throughout the planning year. Recommended changes should be submitted to the Director of Planning, Research, and Institutional Effectiveness.

## **Assessment Support for the Strategic Planning Process**

The assessment process at BRCC is ongoing, comprehensive and critical to strategic planning. The assessment cycle runs from July 1 to June 30. All areas of the College are categorized as either a Unit or Program for assessment purposes and all units and programs have an Assessment and Improvement Plan located on the college-wide server. Every Program and Unit Assessment and Improvement Plan has a minimum of three outcomes. Each outcome has a related measure and target. Assessment of the outcomes occurs throughout the year, and plans are updated with results at the conclusion of every semester. Strategies to Improve, or in some cases, Action plans are developed to address areas in which improvement is noted or desired. If additional resources (physical, personnel, or equipment) are required to implement the action plan, those resources are requested during the action plan/budget development process. Senior Leadership reviews assessment plans and action plans within their own divisions to ensure outcomes are being measured, progress is being made, strategies are being implemented, and to approve or deny budget requests related to action plans.

Approved action plans are expected to be implemented the following year. President's Council reviews the progress of action plans at their annual retreat. Based on a careful analysis of the Strategic Plan metrics, action plans, and budget dollars being spent on action plans, the President's Council makes recommendations for the following year. These recommendations will inform planning and budgeting decisions for the coming year.



## **Key Planning and Assessment Roles and Responsibilities**

College-wide involvement in the planning process is crucial to its success. Listed below are major responsibilities:

### **Board of Trustees (BOT)**

1. Upon recommendation of the President:
  1. Monitors the NCCCS Mission Statement and approves the College's Mission Statement
  2. Approves the College's Strategic Plan and Strategic Goals
  3. Approves the College's Budget
2. Provides general guidance for annual strategic management visions for the College

### **College President**

1. Leads the Institutional planning and assessment efforts to ensure a broad-based strategic planning process at the College
2. Appoints members of Senior Leadership and the President's Council
3. Monitors the annual planning cycle activities for timely completion
4. Presents institutional planning information to the Board of Trustees for their information and/or approval
5. Supervises budget allocations for strategic planning initiatives and monitors implementation phases of the Strategic Plan and corresponding budget decision plans and/or expenditures.
6. Monitors NCCCS Planning Assumptions and initiates actions to modify College Planning Assumptions, as needed, to align with system level assumptions.
7. Presents a Strategic Plan Update to the Board of Trustees annually.

### **President's Council**

1. Participates in college-wide Planning and Assessment activities.
2. Advises the President on matters related to short and long-range strategic planning and assessment activities
3. Reviews unit and program level action plans and operational level plans including follow-up actions, as needed, such as analysis of program reviews, program advisory committee recommendations and end-of-year student success data reports.
4. Reviews strategic plan metrics annually to ensure progress is being toward strategic goals, recommends revisions as necessary.
5. Recommends changes to the institutional mission, goals, policies and procedures, assessment activities, and annual planning assumptions to the President.

### **Unit and Program Personnel**

1. Develops and maintains program and/or unit mission statements that are supportive of the College's mission

2. Maintain records of all planning documents including Assessment and Improvement Plans and Action Plans
3. Monitors assessment plans with intended outcomes, measures, and achievement targets (program areas develop student learning outcomes) to ensure currency and relevancy
4. Develops and implements metrics and/or rubrics for assessment data collection ensuring those measurements remain related to intended outcomes
5. Evaluate surveys, evaluations, program reviews, curriculum mapping, and related tools available within the overall assessment process to devise appropriate improvement strategies to improve action plans.
6. Update Assessment and Improvement Plans annually with results, analysis and strategies to improve
7. Develop action plans and budgets that help meet the program/unit mission, the College's mission and the Strategic Plan
8. Implement Strategies to Improve and Action Plans in a timely manner
9. Provide results of Action Plan implementation from previous year
10. Schedule and coordinate Program Advisory Committee meetings and incorporate recommendations from committee membership within short and long-range department plans (Program areas only)
11. Review and recommend plans for continuous improvement related to the NCCCS Performance Measures for Student Success
12. Ensure participation in all of the above steps from all employees within the unit and/or faculty within the program
13. Recommends improvement processes that can be incorporated into the institutional planning process for continuous quality enhancement

## **PROGRAM REVIEW PROCESS**

### **PURPOSE OF BRCC PROGRAM REVIEW**

Blue Ridge Community College has a systematic, program review process allowing for comprehensive assessment of all educational programs and support services. The self-study used for this assessment complies with all elements of the review policy as required by the State Board of Community Colleges.

The review critically evaluates a program's stated outcomes and use of supporting data to measure whether or not the program is fulfilling its goals and adequately supporting the College's mission. The self-study process requires supporting documentation and analysis of future trends, employer training needs, and internal verification of accreditation requirements and standards. The results of the self-study will facilitate continuous improvements and directly correlate to the College's Mission and Strategic Plan. The self-study also becomes a baseline measurement of where the programs are currently with thought and direction given on how to get the program where it needs to be in the next three years. The program review will provide qualitative and quantitative data, self-study analysis of that data, and considerations for achieving future objectives. The program review is not intended to replace the College's assessment planning activities. The self-study, conducted on a three-year cycle, is intended to provide additional information to supplement assessment planning.

## EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM REVIEW GUIDELINES

The educational program review process allows for institutional prioritization of short and long-range goals.

### Process:

1. The Program Review Process (PRP) begins with an internal self-study. The Director of Planning, Research, and Institutional Effectiveness provide the program faculty with quantitative and qualitative data related to their program including enrollment, completions, retention, FTE, demographics, SLO data, current and former student SWOT analysis of the program, and graduate employer SWOT analysis of the program. The faculty provide a history of the program, analysis of the data, and reflect anticipated curricular changes, program area market trends, equipment and facility needs, future plans/strategies to keep the program relevant
2. Teams shall use the most current template to provide their input. Supplemental information and supporting documentation must be provided adequately supporting all program review findings including advisory board minutes, Program Action Plans, and Program Assessment and Improvement Plans.
3. The full Self-Study shall be submitted to the Office of Planning, Research and Institutional Effectiveness every three years upon request.
4. Upon submission of the full three (3) year self-study, program faculty will meet to develop a formal presentation of the self-study findings, action plans, and other recommendations deemed appropriate by the team. This presentation will be attended by the Program Review Committee, SACS Liaison, Vice President of Instruction and Director of Planning, Research and Institutional Effectiveness. The presentation must include appropriate recommendations for continuous improvement and required program needs to implement such improvements.
5. Recommendations related to budgeting shall be considered during future budget planning using the College's personnel/equipment decisions process. Department Chairs/Program faculty shall prepare and submit necessary budget requests for all approved recommendations.
6. Recommendations related to curricular changes will be brought before the Board of Trustees Curriculum sub-committee as needed. All recommendations from this committee are then brought to the Board for a vote.

# Program Review Process Chart

