WALLACE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

STRATEGIC PLAN
2013-2016

March 2013

Wallace Campus
1141 Wallace Drive
Dothan, AL 36303

Sparks Campus
P.O. Drawer 580
Eufaula, AL 36072

INSTITUTIONAL SERVICES AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIVISION
2013

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Our motto, "We are Wallace; We are Community," signifies the strong relationship between our College and the region we serve. As a comprehensive community college, we provide the most comprehensive array of higher education programs in the region encompassing career, technical, professional, and college transfer as well as workforce training and adult education. Each of these programs is responsive to the needs of major employers in the area, and our graduates contribute to the economy and quality of life in the region. Consistent with our mission, the College strives to provide students with access to convenient, affordable, and quality higher education opportunities that prepare them for successful and productive careers. The success of students in their academic programs and in their chosen careers is a primary link between the College and the community. Fulfilling the dream of becoming a college graduate is an accomplishment that is rewarding to each student as well as to the College and the community.

The 2013-2016 Strategic Plan emphasizes the importance of attracting, retaining, and graduating an increasing number of students while maintaining the College's commitment to quality. Building on the College's recent success in reaffirming its accreditation and implementing the Quality Enhancement Plan, the strategic plan focuses on three major initiatives designed to increase student success and enhance the visibility of the College. The Strategic Planning Committee considered projected trends in population demographics and the economy for the region and their implications for employment opportunities over the next several years. The Committee also considered strengths and challenges within the College and developed specific goals and assessment measures to enable us to assess progress toward each of the three initiatives. I am particularly pleased that the Strategic Planning Committee will have a continuing role over the next three years in assessing our progress and in reporting our success to the College faculty, staff, and administration.

On behalf of the College, I express appreciation to all members of the Strategic Planning Committee for their efforts and to Ms. Debbie McCollough for her leadership. I look forward to working with the administration, faculty, and staff as well as the community as we strive to fulfill our commitment and enable an increasing number of students to realize their dream of becoming a college graduate.

Linda C. Young

Dr. Linda C. Young
President

WCC'S STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

The Wallace Community College planning process is conducted on a three-year cycle and projects strategic direction for the institution. The President leads the strategic planning process.

Figure 1-1, the Strategic Planning Model, represents the College's cyclical planning process. Figure 1-2, the Planning Process Chart, illustrates the concept used to establish the following foundation elements which provide the basis for the WCC Strategic Plan:

- The *mission statement* outlines briefly the purpose of the institution.
- The *organizational assessment* reviews the strengths and weaknesses of the internal educational processes, services, and programs and examines the internal demographics of our students and employees.
- *Environmental scanning* analyzes the opportunities and threats which will potentially impact the College based on external demographics assessments.
- *Priority Initiatives* are developed to address priorities which will direct the College toward continual improvement over the next three years.

Through analysis of the College's internal strengths and weaknesses as well as opportunities and threats, WCC is better prepared to define its institutional initiatives and corresponding goals. The data used in this process are collected from a variety of sources, including but not limited to: WCC Fact Books, WCC College Catalogs, WCC academic inventories, syllabi, surveys solicited internally and externally, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, WCC operational planning reports, WCC registration and graduation reports, reports and trends from the Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education, the National Center for Educational Statistics, the Alabama Department of Industrial Relations, the U. S. Census Bureau, the U.S. Department of Labor, the Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce, the Eufaula Chamber of Commerce, and other reports and surveys. This data provides the context for planning and the rationales for each of the strategic initiatives published herein.

WCC's mission statement is approved by the Alabama State Board of Education, the College's governing board. The mission as well as the strategic initiatives and corresponding goals constitute the College's strategic plan. The strategic plan forms the foundation for annual operational planning.

STATEMENT OF MISSION

George C. Wallace Community College, a comprehensive community college, seeks to provide accessible quality educational opportunities, promote economic growth, and enhance the quality of life of its constituents.
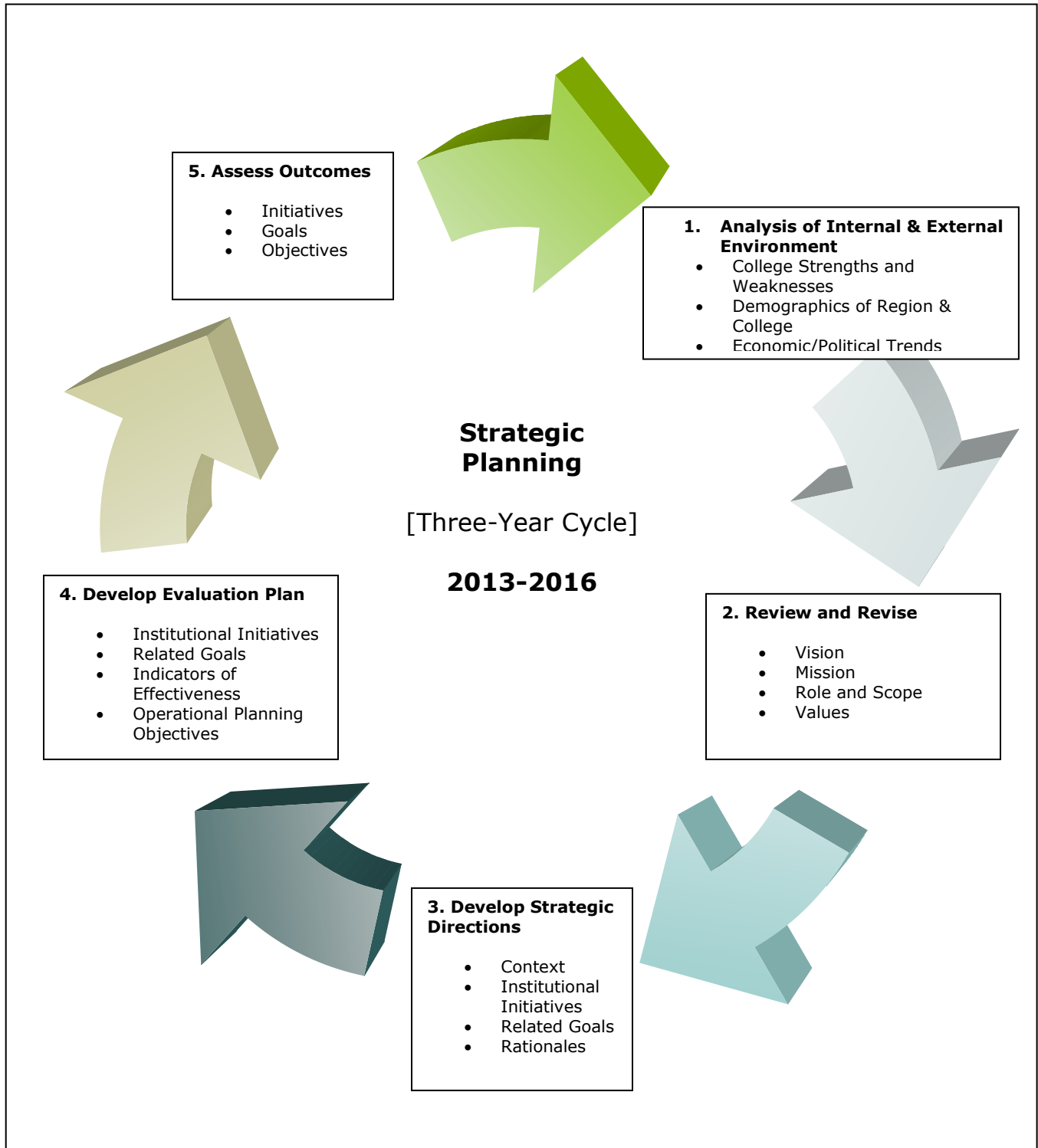
Figure 1-1

STRATEGIC PLANNING MODEL

5. Assess Outcomes

- Initiatives
- Goals
- Objectives

1. Analysis of Internal & External Environment
- College Strengths and Weaknesses
- Demographics of Region & College
- Economic/Political Trends

Strategic Planning

[Three-Year Cycle]

2013-2016

4. Develop Evaluation Plan

- Institutional Initiatives
- Related Goals
- Indicators of Effectiveness
- Operational Planning Objectives

2. Review and Revise

- Vision
- Mission
- Role and Scope
- Values

3. Develop Strategic Directions

- Context
- Institutional Initiatives
- Related Goals
- Rationales

Figure 1-2

PLANNING PROCESS CHART

VISIONS AND VALUES

Mission Statement

Organizational Assessment
Education Process
Administrative Services
Other Demographics

Environmental Scanning
National Assessment
Regional Assessment
Local Assessment

Strengths

Weakness

Opportunities

Threats

Internal

External

Institutional Initiatives

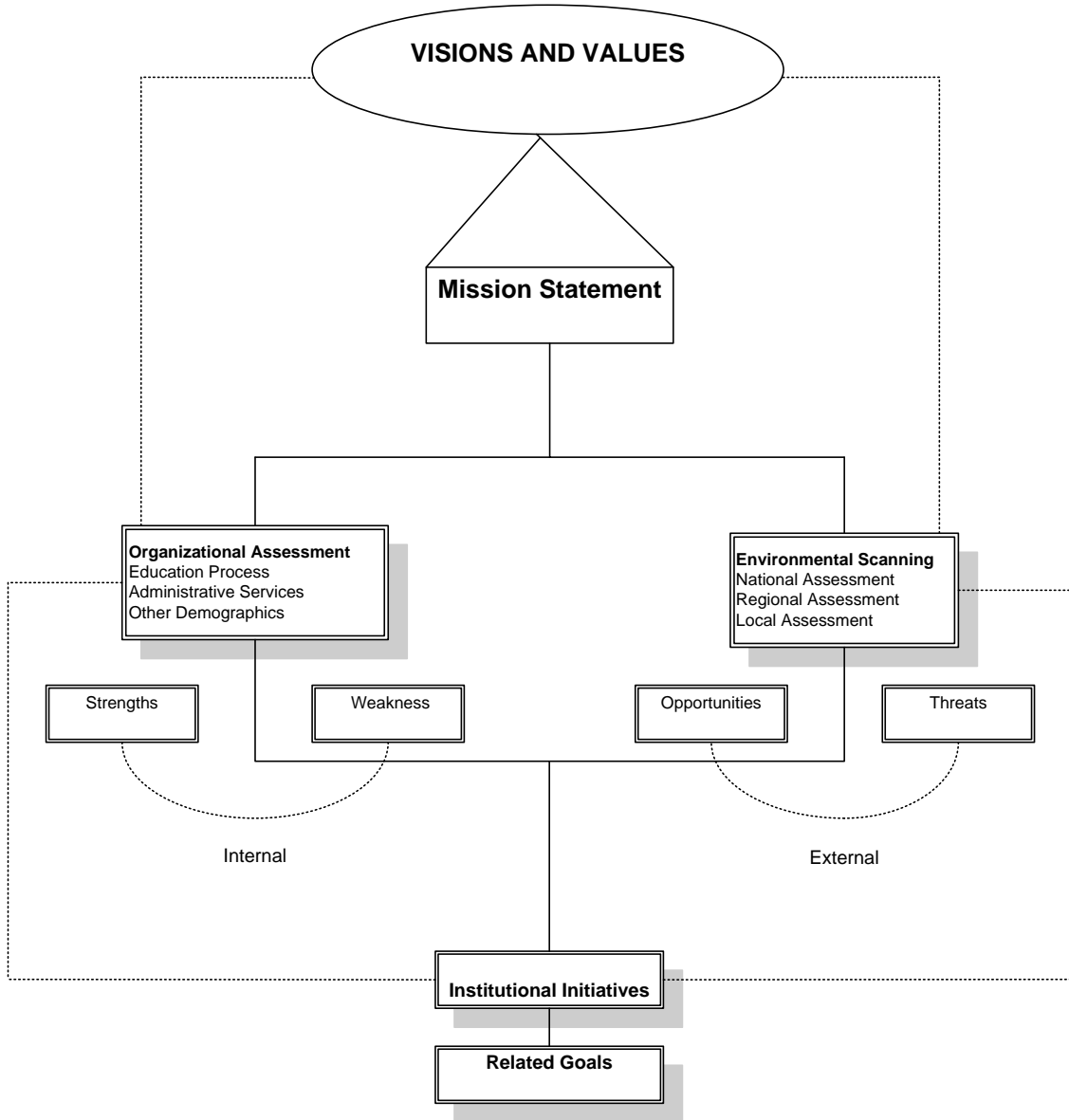**Related Goals**

Introduction

Wallace Community College continues to be the college of choice for a significant number of students in the southeast Alabama region. Enrollment has remained reasonably steady over the past several years, varying only a small percent each year from around 4,600 students. The majority of the students who enter indicate completion of a college degree as their primary goal while some plan to enter full-time employment upon graduation, and others indicate plans for college transfer. The College continues to offer a wide range of educational opportunities consistent with its mission as a community college encompassing degree programs, certificates, workforce training, and adult education. Programs in nursing and allied health fields continue to account for over half the of the College's graduates. More than 75% of WCC's graduates complete degrees, certificates, or diplomas in career and technical fields that lead to employment in the community. WCC continues to provide a convenient, affordable opportunity for access to higher education and to a rewarding career for students who enter with adequate preparation for collegiate study and with focused academic and career goals. Similar to other community colleges across the country, however, the College faces challenges in meeting the needs of those students who enter college without the prerequisite skills for collegiate study and who are undecided about academic and career goals.

Increasing student success is a crucial priority for Wallace Community College in achieving growth in enrollment and in fulfilling its mission as a community college in the region. Trends in population growth, tuition costs, and potential changes in state funding and federal financial aid present challenges in maintaining or increasing student enrollment. Consistent with other community colleges across the country, approximately 40 percent of first-year entering students each year make little progress in their educational programs and fail to return the following year. Many of these first-year entering students are underprepared for collegiate-level educational programs and are undecided about their academic and career goals. Consistent with its mission, WCC must respond to these needs and provide appropriate educational opportunities and student support services essential for increasing student success. Retaining and graduating a greater percentage of students for successful careers as productive citizens in the community is a priority for WCC in fulfilling its role as an open admissions college.

The College has taken preliminary steps to address the priority of increasing student success and to respond to the needs of underprepared entering students. In 2012, WCC was successfully reaffirmed for accreditation by the

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools for the next 10 years. As a part of this process, the College has implemented a Quality Enhancement Plan that addresses new instructional strategies in mathematics and incorporates technology in providing feedback and in monitoring student progress. Additional steps such as the "I Can" initiative and improvements to student orientation and advising have been initiated. Ensuring that planning and assessment processes in the College build on these efforts and address additional needs will be important in contributing to the growth of WCC and its mission in the community.

Strategic Planning at WCC

Strategic planning is a vital component in the linkage of Wallace Community College to the community it serves. First and foremost, strategic planning through the formulation of major initiatives and goals for a multi-year time period gives greater definition to the institution's mission and provides benchmarks for assessment. Secondly, it provides greater guidance in planning and assessment among the educational departments, student support services, and operations within the College, establishing priorities and enabling educational departments and administrative and support units to plan in relation to College priorities. Equally important, strategic planning is based on an analysis of the internal environment of the College as well as on the factors in the external environment including the community it serves. Finally, strategic planning requires periodic assessment of progress toward initiatives and goals. In some cases, goals may be revised or eliminated and new goals formulated in response to changes within the College or in the external community. Ongoing assessment is an essential component of a successful strategic plan.

The 2013-16 strategic planning process at WCC has involved groups both within the institution and external to the College. Preliminary planning initially involved the College's Administrative Council in a two-day review and planning session. Council members reviewed "Reclaiming the American Dream: Community Colleges and the Nation's Future, " a 2012 report from the American Association of Community Colleges. This report highlighted problems facing community colleges across the country, including the number of students unprepared for college-level study, the low rates of student success, and proposed actions to address these challenges. The Council reviewed information related to the internal environment of the College such as enrollment, retention, and graduation data as well as some survey information. Information related to emerging trends in the external environment was also examined, particularly that related to population trends, educational levels, and future employment opportunities in the

region.   Subsequently, a Strategic Planning Committee composed of faculty and staff within the College was appointed.   The membership of this committee is provided in Table 1. This committee met and reviewed some of the same information related to the internal and external environments of the College.

Table 1. WCC 2013-16 Strategic Planning Committee

Committee Member	Title
Ms. Susan Childs	Bookstore Manager, Sparks Campus
Mr. Tony Greene	Instructor, Industrial Systems Technology
Ms. Heather Johnson-Walker	Accountant
Dr. Chris Joiner	Instructional Technologist
Mr. Zack Kelley	Instructor, Humanities, Behavioral, & Social Sciences
Ms. Shatangi Lane	Instructor, Speech
Ms. Debbie McCollough	Director, Planning & Quality
Dr. David Payne	Instructor, Psychology
Ms. Terri Ricks	Coordinator of Services Student Support Services
Ms. Tomi Sherlock	Secretary, Allied Health Programs
Mr. Jonathan Smith	Instructional Coordinator, Adult Education
Mr. Ryan Spry	Student Life Coordinator
Dr. Joy Whitlow	Instructor, Associate Degree Nursing

Overall, both the Administrative Council and the Strategic Planning Committee observed that WCC faces many of the same challenges within the College as other community colleges in the country; namely, low retention rates for a sizeable portion of each entering class, many of whom require transitional studies in preparation for collegiate-level study.   Information about the external environment in the region indicated little to no growth in the school-age population over the next decade with the greatest increase (i.e., about 30%) in the population age 65 and over. The economy of the region depends strongly on the service and retail sectors, and a major portion of employment for the region is in health-care and human services. The need for additional personnel in these fields is expected to grow based

on population projections. Employment in computer and information technology also will be an increasing need in the future.

A second phase in the strategic planning process involved meetings with key constituency groups, including faculty, professional staff, students, and members of external advisory committees. These groups participated in a SWOT analysis responding to questions related to their viewpoints about the strengths, weaknesses (or challenges), opportunities, and threats regarding WCC and the community it serves. Although a wide range of observations were made across the groups, the results emphasized three or four major findings for each of the components of the SWOT analysis. A summary of these findings is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Summary of SWOT Analysis from Key Constituency Groups

Major Strengths
• Affordable tuition in comparison to other institutions
• Wide range of educational options (e.g., career, technical, professional, transfer)
• Qualifications & commitment of faculty
• Small class sizes permitting greater individual attention
Major Weaknesses (Challenges)
• Student retention
• Low success rates in transitional studies
• Student advising, especially for first-time entering students in general studies
• Limited community awareness of collegiate transfer options
Major Opportunities
• Enhance cooperation with area high schools in dual enrollment and career/technical programs
• Increased collaboration between college degree and certificate programs in recruitment of workforce development and adult education participants
• Greater visibility for the comprehensive mission of the college, including collegiate transfer programs
Major Threats
• Changes in federal policies and procedures for student financial aid
• Demographic trends indicating limited growth among the school-age population in the region
• Rapid changes in technology requiring significant funding to remain competitive

The results of the Administrative Council planning session, discussions with constituency groups, the SWOT analysis, and the discussions and review by the Strategic Planning Committee have provided the basis for three strategic initiatives and related goals for WCC's 2013-2016 Strategic Plan. Assessment measures also are provided.

Assessment of progress in relation to the strategic plan is an on-going responsibility of the Strategic Planning Committee. This assessment is intended to occur at least once on an annual basis and is multi-faceted, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative information. The assessment measures formulated as a part of the strategic initiatives and goals are an important component, but the process should also include broad consideration of the accomplishments of educational departments, student support services, and operations within the College as well as the professional judgment of the committee in terms of overall progress. The Strategic Planning Committee is expected to provide an annual progress report to the College including its recommendations for revisions to the goals and assessment measures of the strategic plan.

Strategic Initiatives (SI), Goals (G), and Assessment Measures(AM) 2013-2016

The three strategic initiatives developed by the Strategic Planning Committee identify priorities for the College for the next three years. These initiatives, along with their related goals, provide guidance and direction for planning and decision-making at both the College level as well as among educational departments, student support services, and administrative offices. The ongoing role of the Strategic Planning Committee in assessing progress toward the achievement of the initiatives and goals will be valuable in increasing communication and collaboration across divisions within the College.

Strategic Initiative I: Achieve Increased Excellence in Student Success in Educational Programs

Increasing student success is a primary commitment of the College. Achieving higher student retention and graduation rates are important components of student success, but these measures of success must be considered along with factors such as licensure examination pass rates, job placement, feedback from employers, and success of transfer students. Analyzing feedback from students and faculty and providing appropriate professional development and technology will be essential for improving student success.

Goal A: Increase the collegiate graduation, transfer, and/or alternate completion rates for students among degree and certificate programs of the college.

A.M.: Percentage of first-time entering students in a fall cohort who earn a degree, certificate, or transfer to a four-year college/university within a 2-, 3-, or 4-year period
IPEDS report data may be used for graduation/completion
ACHE may provide transfer data

Goal B: Improve fall-to-fall retention rates among students enrolled in all programs.

A.M.: Percentage of first-time entering student in a fall cohort who return the following fall minus those who completed any certificate or transferred to another college/university

Goal C: Increase the class retention and pass rates of students in transitional classes in English, mathematics, and reading each year.

A.M.: Percentage of students who remain enrolled in each transitional class offered in the three areas and the percentage of students who earned a passing grade in each class

Goal D: Achieve pass rates above state and/or national averages among first-time test-takers on licensure or certification examinations in Health Sciences Programs and in applicable Career and Technical Programs.

A.M.: Percentage of students successfully passing licensure or certification examinations and comparison of performance to state and/or national averages

Goal E: Increase the College's job placement rate of Career and Technical and Health Science students who graduate from degree and certificate programs.

A.M.: Annual Perkins Report

Goal F: Achieve an increase in the number of students completing their general education requirements at the College.

A.M.: Number of first-time entering students who earn more than 41 semester credit hours prior to transfer to a 4-year college/university

Goal G: Demonstrate higher student ratings and greater positive feedback
regarding academic program quality including
- Academic challenge
- Active and collaborative learning
- Student-faculty interaction
- Caring
- Recommend Instructor

A.M.: Results of Faculty Course Evaluation for All Populations
Results of Faculty Course Evaluation for Underprepared Students
Use of student comments from surveys for specific feedback regarding
courses

Goal H: Provide professional development opportunities responsive to the
needs of the faculty.

A.M: Number of faculty participants and results of evaluation questionnaire
by participants for internal professional development activities
Number of documented external professional development activities
completed that are based on faculty/supervisor identified needs

Goal I: Improve the technology infrastructure essential to support the
instructional programs of the College through continued update and
implementation of the technology plan.

A.M.: Evidence of faculty and student satisfaction with technology
improvements

**Strategic Initiative II: Enhance Student Success and Engagement
through Excellence in Student Development Services**

**Increasing student success is vital to achieving enrollment growth.
Potential changes in federal financial aid present challenges for some
students.   Increased   attention   to   student   support   services,
particularly academic, career, and financial advising will be crucial to
attracting and retaining an increasing number of students. Adequate
resources to support and expand services will be needed as well as
professional development for staff and technological support for
services and operations.**

Goal A: Achieve enrollment increases each year through a combination of
recruitment of new students and/or increased retention of enrolled
students.

A.M.: Changes in fall semester enrollment each year with comparison of ratio
of first-time entering students with students retained from previous fall

Goal B: Increase the retention and success of first-time entering students who are academically underprepared and/or lack definitive career goals.

A.M.: Changes in fall semester retention rates among the cohort of identified first time entering students

Goal C: Increase the enrollment of GED graduates into workforce development and/or certificate and degree programs through increased collaboration to facilitate transition.

A.M.: Changes in the number of students who enroll in workforce development training and/or degree or certificate programs following completion of GED
Annual report of activities of departments/programs to attract GED and workforce training graduates

Goal D: Achieve greater student participation in student organizations, in leadership development, and in service-learning programs.

A.M.: Report of number and percent of students participating in activities to enhance student development (e.g., organizations, leadership, service learning)

Goal E: Demonstrate higher student ratings and greater positive feedback among identified first time entering students regarding the quality of student development services including
- Orientation and advising
- Financial aid
- Learning support services.

A.M.: Results of student surveys on items related to student development services
Use of student comments from surveys for specific feedback regarding services.

Goal F: Provide professional development opportunities responsive to the needs of the professional staff.

A.M.: Number of staff participants and results of evaluation questionnaire by participants for internal professional development
Number of documented external professional development activities completed that are based on professional staff/supervisor identified needs.

Goal G: Improve the technology infrastructure essential to support the student services and administrative operations of the College through continued update and implementation of the technology plan.

A.M.: Evidence of staff satisfaction with technology developments.

Strategic Initiative III: Enhance the Image of the College and Knowledge of its Value to the Region

The College has achieved increased visibility within the community, particularly for some of its educational programs and outreach. Greater visibility for the College's academic transfer programs may be a priority. Faculty and students provide a valuable resource in enhancing knowledge of the College and its comprehensive array of education programs. The College's success in external funding and in its relationships with area high schools continues to demonstrate its value to the region.

Goal A: Achieve over 300 positive media citations through newspapers and enhance image of WCC through radio, television, and other media that reach differing populations in the region.

A.M.: Number of newspaper citations from within the service region
Report of advertising, interviews, special reports and other media citations
Results faculty and student surveys.

Goal B: Increase involvement of faculty, staff, and students in providing programs and presentations to community organizations, civic clubs, and schools within the region.

A.M: Report of changes in the number of presentations to external groups with data on number of students, faculty, and staff participating and estimates of persons in attendance at presentations.

Goal C: Enhance recognition of the College through increased grants, contracts, gifts, and other external funding sources.

A.M.: Report of changes in the number and value of grants, contracts, gifts, and other external support

Goal D: Enhance value and recognition among area high schools through opportunities for college credit such as articulation agreements, dual enrollment, bridge programs, advanced placement, and similar arrangements.

A.M.: Report of changes in the number of high schools involved
Annual report of enrollment and credit hours produced in each
enrollment opportunity

Goal E: Increase participation and expand the scope of workforce
development activities in support of business and industry in the
region.

A.M.: Annual report of workforce development activities of WCC

Goal F: Enhance the physical facilities of the college through continued
implementation of the Facilities Master Plan to improve campus safety,
security, and appearance of college campuses.

A.M.: Results of faculty and staff surveys
Yearly report on campus master plan.

Goal G: Ensure the College budget is based on sound educational planning
consistent with institutional priorities and wise stewardship of
resources.

A.M.: Budget allocations and expenditures consistent with priorities and
available resources
State Board Approval

RELATIONSHIP OF STRATEGIC PLANNING
TO ANNUAL OPERATIONAL PLANNING FOR ACCOUNTABILITY

Wallace Community College has a strong commitment to relating operational planning to its strategic plan. Through its operational planning and evaluation process, the College strives to fulfill its primary mission of providing students greater access to quality educational programs that respond to the economic and workplace needs of the region. The segments of the operational planning process and the corresponding administrative responsibilities are extensively outlined in the *WCC Planning and Evaluation Manual*.

Operational planning is conducted at two levels: 1) the functional-level which includes deans of instructional and administrative areas, and 2) the unit-level which includes divisional directors and directors of administrative/support services. Functional-level planning team leaders appoint the unit-level planning team leaders who are responsible for establishing unit-level planning teams. The planning and evaluation process is a continuous cycle that includes broad-based involvement of College personnel at both levels and plays an integral role in establishing a plan of action in relation to the strategic plan.

Unit-level and functional-level planning involves the establishment of planning unit goals and short-term objectives related to the College's strategic initiatives and related goals. These objectives generally are targeted for accomplishment within a one- to three-year time period. Functional and unit areas are not expected to develop objectives related to all of the strategic initiatives and goals, but rather to focus on those most cogent to their mission and purpose.

Evaluation is a crucial component of the operational planning process and forms the foundation for accountability. Each spring, functional and unit areas are expected to review progress toward the accomplishment of objectives established for their unit in the prior year. In some cases, specific objectives may have been accomplished. In other cases, some progress may have been achieved and efforts are ongoing. The status of functional and unit objectives are recorded in the College's web-based planning system, Strategic Planning Online (SPOL). These summaries are used to assess progress in relation to each of the strategic initiatives and related goals of the strategic plan.

Accountability at WCC is a shared responsibility among the administration, faculty, and staff, and occurs at many levels. For the president and administration, accountability involves assessing the College's effectiveness in fulfilling its mission and achieving its strategic initiatives and goals. For faculty, accountability involves ensuring quality programs and instruction that attracts, retains, and prepares students for productive careers and responsible citizenship. For staff, accountability involves providing efficient

and effective services that fulfill the purpose of their office and respond to the needs of the students and the College. Most importantly, accountability encompasses the evaluation of results, the reporting of results, and the use of results for improving the quality of College programs, operations, and services.   Strategic planning, operational planning and evaluation, and accountability are the cornerstones of WCC's commitment to quality enhancement.

SUMMARY

Wallace Community College continues to be the college of choice for a significant number of students in the southeast Alabama region as indicated by an enrollment of more than 4,600. Over the next several years, the College faces significant challenges in meeting the needs of those students who enter college without prerequisite skills for collegiate study and who are undecided about academic and career goals.   As stated previously, trends in population growth, tuition costs, and potential changes in state funding and federal financial aid present challenges in maintaining or increasing student enrollment.   These challenges will have significant implications for the institution in providing appropriate educational opportunities and student support services essential for increasing student success.   Responding to these challenges will require effective and efficient use of resources and increased cooperation and collaboration both within the College and with key constituency groups.

Preliminary steps have been taken to address these challenges in the development of the Quality Enhancement Plan that addresses new technology in providing feedback and in monitoring student progress, as well as the "I Can" initiative and improvements to student orientation and advising. A continued commitment through the planning and assessment processes will build on these efforts and address additional needs. The 2013-2016 Strategic Plan provides guidance and direction for planning and decision-making at both the College level as well as among education departments, student support services, and administrative offices and will enhance the quality of the programs, operations, and services of Wallace Community College.