WALLACE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

STRATEGIC PLAN
2010-2013

March 2010

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

Legal and Human Resources Division
2010

TABLE OF CONTENTS
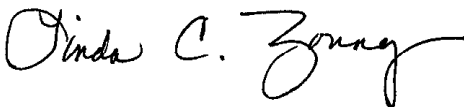
MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Quality. *Affordability*. These two words are the cornerstones of the *Wallace Community College Strategic Plan 2010-2013*, and now, as never before, our students need both.

Current economic woes and the rising unemployment rate are creating significant challenges for educational institutions and the students we serve. Community colleges offer a chance for local constituents to improve their earning capacities and quality of life through higher education at an affordable cost. At the same time, however, we must take measures to enhance programs and services within an ever-tightening budget.

The *WCC Strategic Plan 2010-2013* is designed to help us face these challenges by continuing to develop our areas of strength while addressing areas identified as weaknesses. We also plan to expand outreach opportunities and continue to build relationships with local schools, businesses, and industries. Over the past several years, we have seen a steady, yet gradual, increase in public awareness as to the value and role of the community college in the local service areas, and we plan to seize every opportunity that will help us continue to garner support for our programs and students.

In order for Wallace Community College to be successful, we must work together to ensure that quality is the basis for all we do. We are committed to improving communication and streamlining processes and procedures to provide the most efficient services for our students and each other. As you review this plan, please consider how you, as an individual member of the Wallace faculty or staff, can help us meet each of the initiatives in your area. Your aspect of implementation may be as simple as recycling paper to save money or simply offering a smile to help put a student at ease. Each of you is vital to the success of this plan and this institution.

I look forward to working with you in bringing this plan to fruition and in watching our students and our community benefit from the great things yet to come at Wallace Community College!

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 students and employees.
- *Environmental scanning* analyzes the opportunities and threats which will potentially impact the College based on external demographics assessments.
- *Strategic Initiatives and Related Goals* 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: the WCC Fact Book, College catalog, academic inventories, syllabi, surveys solicited internally and externally, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System reports, operational planning reports, 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. These data provide the context for planning and the rationales for each of the strategic initiatives.

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 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

<u>STRATEGIC PLANNING MODEL</u>

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]

2010-2013

4. Develop Evaluation Plan

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

2. Review and Revise

- Vision
- Mission
- Role and Scope
- Values

3. Develop Strategic Directions

- Context
- Strategic 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

Strategic Initiatives

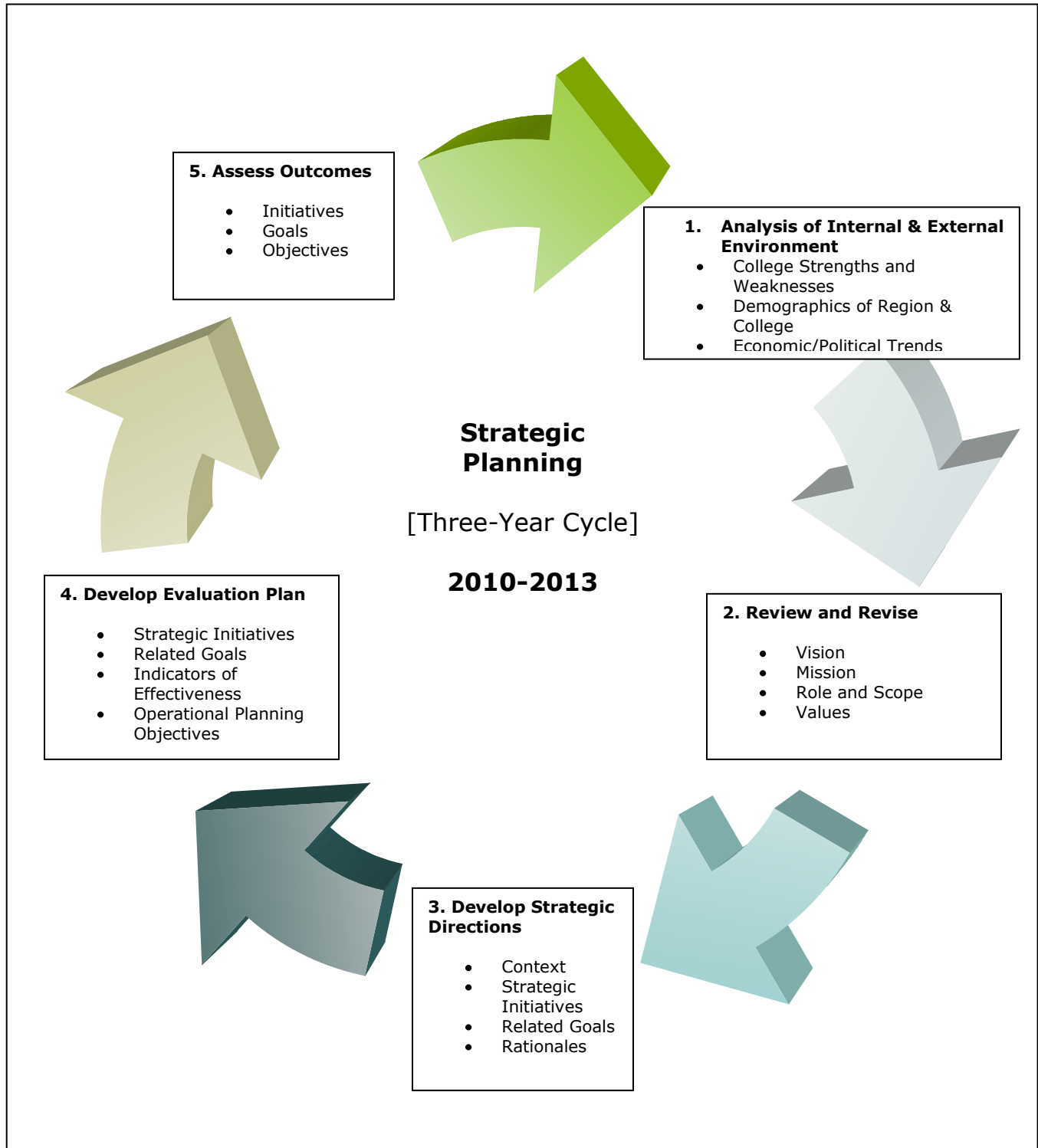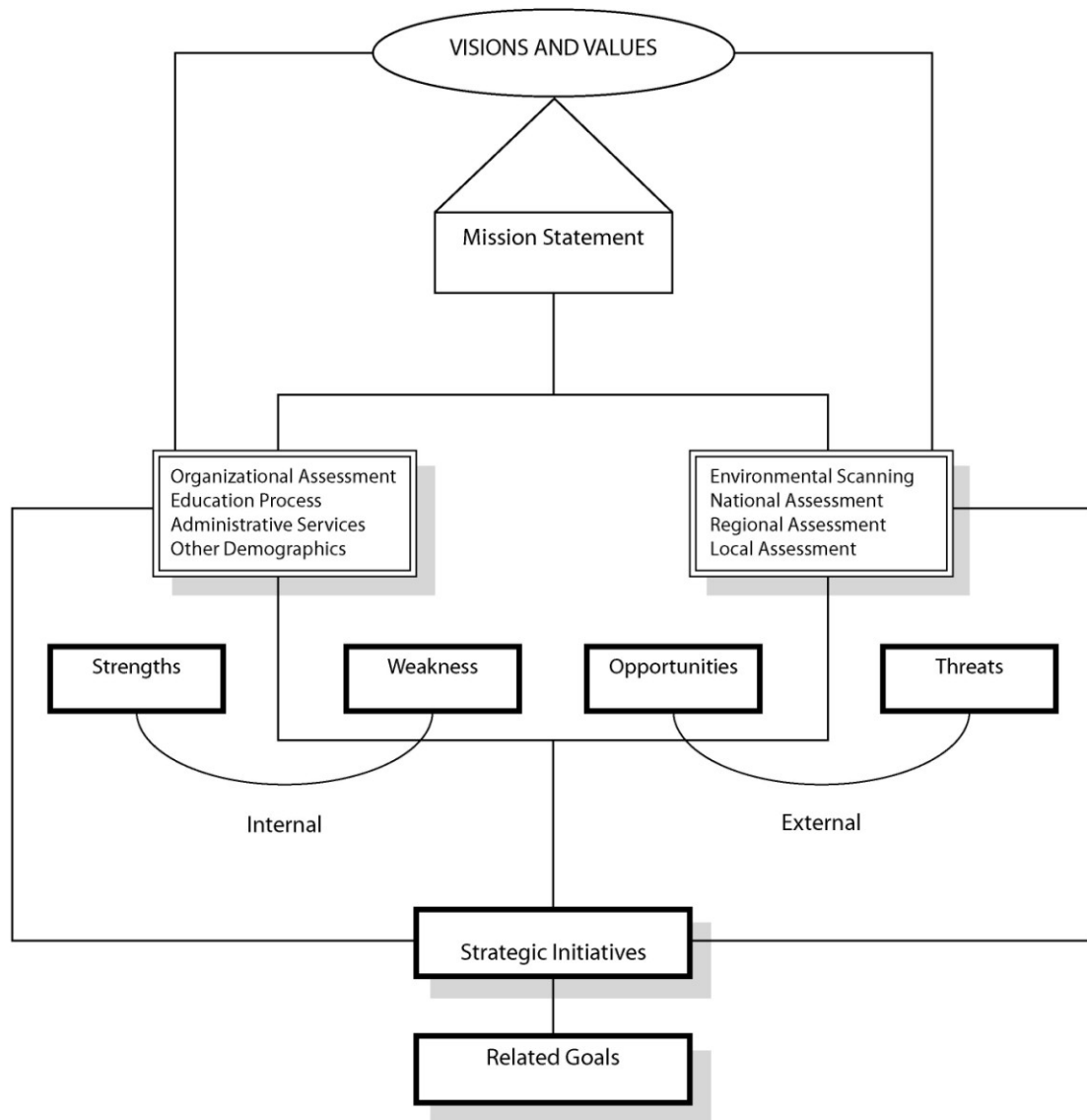Related Goals

INTRODUCTION

Providing equitable and affordable educational opportunities is at the heart of the mission of community colleges. Wallace Community College has made unparalleled progress in the past three years in fulfilling its mission in providing higher education opportunities for students in the Southeast Alabama region. Following a period of merging and demerging campus sites, the College has established a firm identity that has been an impetus for growth and improvement. The College has reversed a trend of modest enrollment decline and has achieved its largest enrollment in the last decade with over 4,650 students across its two campuses in Dothan and Eufaula and its center at Fort Rucker.

Significant strides have been achieved in technology and facilities, enhancing the quality of instruction and outreach to students. The number of computers and computer laboratories available to students across campuses has increased. The vast majority of classrooms are now equipped with the latest in instructional technology, and faculty members have been provided with opportunities to incorporate this technology into their instruction. Distance learning through online delivery of courses has increased dramatically, enabling the College to reach an increasing number of students. Other delivery formats such as blended courses combining traditional lecture and discussion classes with technology delivery have enriched the quality of instruction in many classes. Moreover, the two campuses are better linked electronically.

New and renovated facilities and campus improvements have been instrumental in enhancing the College and its services. These changes have enabled some programs to expand with additional classrooms, laboratories, and faculty office space. The renovated Cherry Hall building on the Wallace Campus with its 950+ seat auditorium has provided a focal point for campus events and much-needed office space for faculty in the arts and humanities. Renovation and expansion of the Science Building and the updating and remodeling of the Gary Building and Rane Hall have provided needed classroom, laboratory, and faculty office space and have permitted the reassignment of space for a Center for Instructional Excellence, a Health Sciences Resource Center, and a Health Sciences Simulation Center. Renovations to Grimsley Hall have enabled academic administration, student services, and the business office to be located conveniently in the same building. Additional landscaping and improved signage have added significantly to the appearance of the College and provided increased access to the community for special events and activities.

Consistent with its mission as a comprehensive community college, Wallace Community College has continued to contribute to the economic development and quality of life in the region. Enrollment in programs designed for collegiate transfer has increased, new degree programs in Criminal Justice and in Industrial Maintenance Technology have been implemented, and the

College is giving greater attention and visibility to workforce development to serve business and industry in the region. The College continues to be the region's primary provider of personnel in the health professions, with more than 60 percent of WCC graduates earning degrees and/or certificates in Nursing and Allied Health fields and more than 80 percent of graduates earning degrees, certificates, or diplomas in fields that prepare them for employment in the region.

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THE CONTEXT FOR PLANNING

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Wallace Community College faces significant challenges in the next strategic planning period in maintaining its momentum and fulfilling its mission as a comprehensive community college. Within the College, state funding for higher education has decreased by more than 10 percent and cost of tuition for students will amount to over a 25 percent increase by the beginning of fall semester 2010. Across the region, economic growth has slowed, and the greatest percentage of growth in population will be among people over age 65, by almost 30 percent, with practically no increase in the school-age and workforce age ranges. Job growth in the region is expected primarily in the service sector, with health care and retail employment being the major opportunities and little growth in manufacturing and construction industries. In addition, the recent growth in enrollment and the incorporation of technology in instruction and outreach to students through distance learning have been major accomplishments. To maintain this momentum in the context of the challenges it faces, the College will need to continue to strive for enrollment growth and the incorporation of up-to-date technology across all programs and among campuses.

The Strategic Planning Task Force was appointed by the President and began its work in fall 2009 with a detailed SWOT analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats looking both within the institution and across the region it serves. A series of surveys and focus group meetings were conducted with key constituency groups including faculty, students, board members, high school counselors, and community representatives. Although many specific observations and comments were provided, the major findings from the SWOT analysis are presented in Table 1. These major results, insights from the detailed analysis of the observations and comments from surveys and focus groups, and the deliberations of the Strategic Planning Task Force have provided the basis for seven strategic initiatives and related goals for each that make up the 2010-2013 Strategic Plan for Wallace Community College.

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8

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Table 1. Brief Summary of Strategic Planning Task Force SWOT Analysis

Major Strengths
• Small class sizes permitting individual attention to students
• Low tuition costs compared to other institutions
• Qualifications of the faculty

Major Weaknesses
• Technology infrastructure
• Communication among divisions and across campuses
• Limited number of instructional programs on Sparks Campus

Major Opportunities
• Expand outreach to students through alternate modes of instructional delivery
• Enhance relationships with area high schools
• Enhance cooperation with business, industry, and community agencies

Major Threats
• Decreased state funding and higher tuition costs to students
• Competition from online degree programs from private, for-profit providers
• Difficulty in "staying current" with changes in knowledge, practices, and technology in programs

This strategic plan is intended to recognize and build upon College strengths while addressing the weaknesses within the context of the opportunities and threats within the institution and the region it serves. Priority must be given to maintaining the College reputation in providing quality teaching and learning, in employing a qualified faculty, and in providing educational programs that contribute to the economic development and quality of life in the region. The institution's greatest opportunity within this strategic planning period may be on focusing its mission and demonstrating its commitment to the constituencies it serves. Graduating students who are technology literate and up-to-date in their fields and administrators, faculty, and staff who actively are involved in the community build a solid reputation for the College and enhance opportunities for greater community support for College programs and services.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES AND RELATED GOALS

Strategic Initiative I: To demonstrate the College's commitment to quality teaching and learning through increased student success and continuous improvement in instructional programs

Effective teaching and learning are essential for a successful community college. The establishment of learning outcomes for educational programs is important both for ensuring consistency regardless of the mode of instructional delivery and for evaluating the effectiveness of programs. Continuous improvement of educational programs depends on analyzing

results from instruction and using these results for quality enhancement. Appropriate class sizes and faculty advising loads must be maintained in order for faculty to give attention to the individual needs of students and monitor their progress in achieving learning outcomes. For faculty, professional development based on the needs they identify is essential in responding to the diversity of students and changes in technology.

The following are goals related to this strategic initiative:

Goal A: Increase the success of students in college transfer programs, in career and technical programs, and in health professions programs

Goal B: Increase the retention and success of students in transitional classes in English, mathematics, and reading

Goal C: Increase student attainment of learning outcomes in all programs and in general education with emphasis on "gateway" courses in English, mathematics, and science

Goal D: Maintain an adequate faculty-to-student ratio that ensures class sizes and advising loads that enable sufficient attention to individual student learning needs

Goal E: Provide systematic professional development opportunities for faculty and professional staff based on identified faculty and staff needs and ensure use of evaluation and feedback for improvement

Strategic Initiative II: To enhance access to educational opportunities through alternative instructional delivery and achieve a larger and more diverse student enrollment

Providing access to educational opportunities is at the heart of the mission of community colleges. Although traditional college-age students may comprise the majority of enrollment, alternate modes of instructional delivery may provide access to a more diverse student population. Changing population demographics also may require services for students who are not native speakers of English. Closer relationships with high schools in the region and the provision of programs and information to acquaint high school students and counselors with the full range of educational opportunities at Wallace Community College will be important. Cooperative programs that enable students to earn collegiate credit while in high school may prove valuable in recruitment and retention.

The following are goals related to this strategic initiative:

Goal A: Increase enrollment of graduates from area high schools by at least 3% each year

Goal B: Increase enrollment of non-traditional students by at least 5% each year

Goal C: Improve recruitment, admissions, and enrollment services for students for whom English is a second language

Goal D: Expand the number of courses and increase the semester credit hours produced through distance learning (electronic delivery)

Goal E: Increase the course offerings and semester credit hours produced through evening, weekend, or off-site classes

Goal F: Enhance opportunities with area high schools for college credit through articulation, dual enrollment, tech prep, bridge programs, advanced placement, and similar arrangements

Strategic Initiative III: To provide educational programs, services, and workforce development that are responsive to the changing economic, demographic, and cultural needs of the region

WCC is a comprehensive community college whose educational programs are well-aligned with the employment and educational needs of the region. Health care, transportation, and retail sales continue to be major components of the economy in the region and demographic trends suggest these will continue to be critical to the region's economy.   Workforce development continues to grow in its service to business and industry in the area and its visibility has enhanced the image of the College throughout the region.   Data on educational attainment in the region suggest that adult education programs designed to enable students to earn General Equivalency Diplomas will be a continuing need as will transitional programs to prepare students for college-level degree and certificate programs. Attention to these needs will continue to be an important part of the college mission.

The following are goals related to this strategic initiative:

Goal A: Plan for new educational programs based on the changing population, health care needs, and growing service sector of the regional economy

Goal B: Implement a multi-year schedule of instructional program review to assess program viability and/or need for program continuation or change

Goal C: Utilize program advisory committees for all educational programs and ensure that these committees are used regularly to enhance program quality, effectiveness, and visibility

Goal D: Expand educational opportunities for area citizens through non-credit short courses, continuing education activities, and attendance at cultural events on campus

Goal E: Expand the scope and increase participation in workforce development activities in service to business and industry in the region

Goal F: Provide adult education services that respond to the needs of the region

Strategic Initiative IV: To improve services in support of student success and enhance the collegiate experience through greater student engagement

Student services are crucial in attracting and retaining students.   Many students form their first impressions of the College through their contact with the admissions office.   A student-friendly, service-oriented approach is essential in all phases of the continuum of services from the recruitment, admission, and enrollment of students, to the support services vital to retention and student success, and through career planning and placement. Student services also enrich the collegiate experience through participation in clubs, special events, and leadership and service opportunities in the College and the community.   Adequate student security and convenience to student lounges and food service is needed, particularly for students with lengthy commutes who are on campus for extended times.

The following are goals related to this strategic initiative:

Goal A: Review and improve the orientation, advising, and registration process for new students including planning and participation by college student leaders

Goal B: Improve the effectiveness and efficiency of student services operations through the incorporation of technology wherever possible with emphasis on student registration, financial aid, and student records

Goal C: Establish student success centers to provide tutorial assistance available to all students with emphasis on writing, mathematics, and study skills

Goal D: Provide career planning and placement services to aid students in career choices and in the transition to employment

Goal E: Improve campus security and student access and convenience to campus services

Goal F: Increase student participation and leadership opportunities in student organizations and initiate innovative Service-Learning programs

Goal G: Provide a program of cultural events on campus that incorporates student participation and promotes student attendance

Strategic Initiative V: To enhance communication, cooperation, and collaboration among divisions and across campuses to achieve greater synergy within the College

Communication is an ongoing concern at colleges with multiple campuses. Administrative offices for some programs and services may be located on different campuses. Inquiries, decisions, and feedback may be delayed. Information-sharing may be enhanced through the use of electronic updates and newsletters. Faculty and staff collaboration is essential in improving communication and cooperation across campuses and programs. Incorporating technology whenever possible may also increase responsiveness and efficiency.

The following are goals for this strategic initiative:

Goal A: Review and streamline administrative processes and procedures incorporating technology whenever possible

Goal B: Implement information-sharing sessions among faculty, student services, and administrative staff to improve understanding and communication among programs, services, and operations

Goal C: Provide regular updates to the campus community through a weekly electronic newsletter

Goal D: Encourage faculty and staff collaboration in technological development and applications and innovative strategies for the improvement of instruction services to students

Goal E: Initiate strategies to increase recognition and incentives for outstanding teaching by faculty and for outstanding performance by professional staff

Strategic Initiative VI: To provide administrative support and adequate resources to ensure the quality of programs, services, and operations while maintaining a safe and secure campus learning environment

Significant progress has been made in improving campus facilities and support for the instructional programs and student support. Enhancing the technology infrastructure will be crucial in supporting College goals for quality instruction and for outreach to students through online courses and must be a priority. The ability of programs and services to keep pace with changes in the workplace will be a continuing challenge with decreased state funding. Consolidating the College's accomplishments over the past few years and accommodating the need for growth in productive programs and services will require careful consideration of priorities and wise stewardship of resources.

The following are goals related to this strategic initiative:

Goal A: Improve the technology infrastructure essential to support the instructional programs, student services, and administrative operations of the College and continue to update and implement the technology plan

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

Goal C: Provide for capital improvements for additional classrooms and laboratories and for student services facilities to accommodate program expansion and student enrollment

Goal D: Continue implementation of campus master plan to improve safety, security, and appearance of college campuses

Goal E: Increase financial support for the College through the foundation and through external contracts and grants

Goal F: Ensure compliance with all health and safety regulations in laboratories and shops, enhance electronic surveillance on campus, and improve access to relevant criminal justice data/and information

Strategic Initiative VII: To increase community awareness and support for the College and its programs and services

Greater community awareness of the College and its connections to economic development and services to the region will be important in gaining greater support and enhancing resources for the institution. Marketing of the College and its competitive advantages in terms of its cost, convenience, and comprehensive array of programs should involve faculty and students. Active participation of the administration, faculty, and staff in community and regional planning as well as their presentation of programs to the schools and community organizations will be instrumental in enhancing the image of the College.

The following are goals related to this strategic initiative:

Goal A: Review and revise the College's marketing plan ensuring participation from key constituency groups including faculty, staff, students, board members, and community leaders and incorporating multiple media sources

Goal B: Increase the visibility of workforce development in service to business and industry in the area by expanding on-campus community and industry support programs (e.g., hosting youth summits, regional task force meetings, Southeast Alabama Council on Economic Development sessions) and presentations to students by business and industry leaders

Goal C: Continue active participation in the Region 10 Workforce Council and provide relevant data and statistics about the College for inclusion in the annual *Regional State of the Workforce* which is posted online and provided to all industries seeking relocation

Goal D: Increase community support through additional cooperative and collaborative agreements with business, industry, agencies, and organizations within the College's service area

Goal E: Enhance the College Web site through appointment of a webmaster, redesign of the Web site, and incorporation of linkages with other appropriate Web sites (e.g., schools, hospitals, chambers of commerce)

Goal F: Reorganize the WCC Speakers Bureau to provide programs for area schools, community organizations, and business and industry and encourage faculty participation in local civic, service, and charity organizations

Goal G: Increase financial support for the College through private gifts and business and community support

RELATIONSHIP OF STRATEGIC PLANNING
TO ANNUAL OPERATIONAL PLANNING

Strategic planning at Wallace Community College is designed to provide a bridge between the College's present status and its mission and vision for the future. Strategic initiatives and related goals have two primary purposes: 1) to provide guidance and direction for crucial decisions and actions for the College over the next three years; and 2) to enhance communication, focus, and commitment among College administration, faculty, staff, and key constituency groups. Moreover, strategic planning provides the context for operational planning and evaluation among the educational programs, administrative offices, and educational support services throughout the institution.

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 Institutional Effectiveness Manual*.

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

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 one- to three-years. Functional and unit planning areas are expected to focus on the Strategic Initiatives and Related Goals that are 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, planning teams review progress toward the accomplishment of objectives established for their area 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.

Effective Spring Semester 2010 the status of planning objectives is recorded in the Web-based planning system, Strategic Planning Online (SPOL). The summaries in SPOL 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 effectiveness in fulfilling the College mission and achieving Strategic Initiatives and Related 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 is a vital partner in improving economic development and the quality of life for the people of southeast Alabama. Over the next several years, the College faces significant challenges in maintaining momentum and fulfilling its mission in education and workforce training. As stated previously, state funding for higher education has decreased by more than 10 percent; tuition costs are rising, economic growth has slowed; the greatest percentage of growth in population will be among people over age 65; there is no projected increase in the school-age and workforce age ranges; job growth is expected primarily in the service sector with little growth in manufacturing and construction industries. These challenges will have significant implications for the institution in providing access to quality educational opportunities for students and in offering educational programs and services that are responsive to the needs of the communities it serves. 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.

Four cornerstones among the seven strategic initiatives in this plan include (1) commitment to quality teaching and learning through increased student success and continuous improvement in instructional programs, (2) enhancement of access to educational opportunities through alternative instructional delivery to achieve a larger and more diverse student enrollment, (3) provision of educational programs, services, and workforce development responsive to changing economic, demographic, and cultural needs, and (4) improvement of services in support of student success and the enhancement of the collegiate experience. The additional strategic

initiatives focus on improving communication and collaboration, providing administrative support and resources, and expanding external awareness and support for the College and its programs and services. These Strategic Initiatives and Related Goals provide a framework to guide operational planning and decisions and to enhance the quality of the programs, operations, and services of Wallace Community College.