

Western Carolina University

Phase I Response

Submitted

May 1, 2008

University of North Carolina Tomorrow



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I. Executive Summary

Preamble

Western Carolina University was founded in 1889 by Robert Lee Madison as a high school, and it quickly became the state's first rural normal school. Madison founded the school not as a "missionary to the wilderness," but in response to a strongly felt need in the people of the Cullowhee Valley for a local school to provide a "classical high school education." Madison soon realized that rural North Carolina needed trained teachers if he was to be effective in meeting the needs of the people, and he applied for permission to offer a normal certificate so that Cullowhee High School could prepare teachers for the western region of the state. This link between the needs of the people and the institution's effective response became known as the "Cullowhee Idea," and state records show that this concept was exported to Boone and Greenville as the basis for normal schools that became Appalachian State University and East Carolina University.

The Cullowhee Idea remains the most important core value of Western Carolina University. It is embodied in our continuing outreach to the 17 western counties of the state and in our emphasis on high quality teaching. The core principles of the Cullowhee Idea also informed every aspect of our institutional response to UNC-Tomorrow. To prepare the final report, four decision criteria that were consistent with the Cullowhee Idea were created and applied:

1. Can sufficient resources be reallocated or obtained within the next five years to allow WCU to effectively take the action and produce high quality results? The people of North Carolina require excellent universities that operate effectively and efficiently if we are to meet their needs for the future.
2. Can we define assessable outcomes if we take the action? That is, can we measure or assess outcomes to determine if the action was effective?
3. Does the action support our core approach to education as embodied in our SACS-approved Quality Enhancement Plan? In short form: Does the action help us "prepare engaged learners to make a difference in their world"? This principle reflects WCU's ambitious attempt to focus on student engagement not as a series of discrete programs or services, but rather as a complete realignment of the University's educational philosophy.
4. Is the action consistent with the modern statement of the Cullowhee Idea that is embodied in the American Association of State Colleges and Universities' (AASCU) "Stewards of Place" model? WCU's Board of Trustees has adopted this model as its official statement of expectations regarding Western's relationships with its region. This model focuses on four core domains: a globally competitive new economy, livable communities, social inclusion, and civic responsibility.

These four questions acted as the “prism” through which all institutional responses were viewed. As a result, some excellent ideas were not included in this report but may be pursued institutionally. The report that follows is action oriented, assessable, and consistent with the goals of UNC-Tomorrow and WCU’s core values and traditions. It is the most current manifestation of the Cullowhee Idea.

To clarify the core component of each response, WCU developed “flag” statements for each major finding area of the UNC-Tomorrow report representing where the University intends to establish or refine its institutional niches. These statements are bold declarations of where the institution can best serve the interests of North Carolina; that is, where we plan to “plant our flag.”

Process and Opportunities for Input

UNC-Tomorrow provided an opportunity for WCU to engage its broader constituencies both on and off campus in the University’s long-range planning process. The process for soliciting input was participatory and touched the entire University family, including regional stakeholders. The clear message from all participants is that WCU is passionate about its role as a premier regional university with global reach.

The Chancellor officially kicked off UNC-Tomorrow with a campus forum on January 31, 2008. Seven campus Work Groups were formed to respond to major finding areas of the UNC-Tomorrow report. Each Work Group comprised faculty and staff selected for their broad expertise or knowledge. Concurrent with this campus effort, the Chancellor convened two community advisory sessions at which local and regional business, educational, and civic leaders were invited to make suggestions and recommendations on how WCU should respond to the UNC-Tomorrow report.

The campus Work Groups submitted final reports to the WCU Strategic Planning Committee (SPC), a standing university advisory council, in mid-March. The SPC was charged with developing one comprehensive institutional report. The SPC submitted a complete draft to the Chancellor on April 18th, which was subsequently shared with the campus community in a public forum on April 23rd. After receiving and incorporating final campus feedback, the Chancellor submitted the report to UNC General Administration on May 1, 2008.


Structure of the Response:

1. Each Finding is addressed using the following format:
 - “flag” statement representing where WCU intends to establish or refine its institutional niche
 - a summary of the most important current institutional actions/programs specific to the finding
2. Each Recommendation is addressed using the following format:
 - a summary of institutional actions/program specific to the Recommendation

- initiatives proposed to meet the Recommendation, including a brief description where necessary
 - a summary of the implementation strategies for each initiative
3. For each major Finding section, a matrix is provided outlining the following details:
- type of initiative (i.e., new, existing, policy or collaboration),
 - key implementation strategies,
 - key descriptors of success,
 - key barriers/obstacles,
 - implementation timeline,
 - responsible units, and
 - funding sources

Summary of WCU’s Response to Major Findings and Proposed Initiatives

A. Our Global Readiness (4.1): UNC should educate its students to be personally and professionally successful in the 21st century and, to do so, should enhance the global competitiveness of its institutions and their graduates.


 WCU will continue to realign its academic programs and services consistent with its unique and nationally significant philosophy of integrative education.

Initiative 4.1.1.1: Implement model of integrative, intentional learning

Initiative 4.1.2.1: Expand engaged scholarly activities relevant to Western North Carolina’s global competitiveness

Initiative 4.1.3.1: Enhance the study of languages and culture through curricular and co-curricular partnerships and in collaboration with other UNC campuses and institutional partners

B. Our Citizens and Their Future Access to Higher Education (4.2): UNC should increase access to higher education for all North Carolinians, particularly for underserved regions, underrepresented populations, and non-traditional students.

 To address the projected demand for higher education among North Carolinians, WCU will utilize an educational extension model to provide programming and services to non-traditional, underserved, and place-bound students; and increase the main campus capacity.

Initiative 4.2.1.1: Establish a branch campus in Henderson County

Initiative 4.2.1.2: Work with the System to solve core conceptual and funding problems with distance education and summer semester

Initiative 4.2.2.1: Continue to expand partnerships with community colleges within the Western region

Initiative 4.2.4.1 – Seek authority to waive application fees for in-state students

Initiative 4.2.5.1: Expand recruitment and retention activities with historically underrepresented populations in higher education, with special emphasis on the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (EBCI) and the emerging Hispanic population

Initiative 4.2.6.1: Expand support for the Academic Success Program (ASP)

C. Our Children and Their Future: Improving Public Education (4.3): UNC should be more actively involved in solving North Carolina’s public education challenges.



Through its partnerships with the region’s schools and its applied research, WCU will influence public policy and practice with regard to teacher preparation and retention, administrative quality, and school performance.

Initiative 4.3.1.1: Seek funding for a new College of Education and Allied Professions Building to provide adequate space and facilities to improve B-20 education in the Western region

Initiative 4.3.1.2: Implement the Teacher Education Recruitment Plan

Initiative 4.3.3.1: Expand the type and nature of WCU’s professional development activities, ensuring best practices and basing them on 21st Century Standards adopted by the NC State Board of Education

Initiative 4.3.3.2: Expand the role of WCU’s Educational Leadership doctoral program to improve public policy as it relates to an effective state system of public education

Initiative 4.3.4.1: The Dean of the College of Education and Allied Professions will work with the Center for Service Learning and other experiential education programs to develop mentoring programs involving WCU students with regional schools

D. Our Communities and Their Economic Transformation (4.4): UNC should be more actively engaged in enhancing the economic transformation and community development of North Carolina’s regions and the state as a whole.



WCU will apply the Stewards of Place model to effect regional economic transformation.

Initiative 4.4.1.1: Implement the Millennial Initiative

Initiative 4.4.1.2: Increase WCU’s emphasis on innovation, entrepreneurship, applied research and development

Initiative 4.4.1.3: Continue to develop national class capacities in key disciplines and programs that support New Economy economic development in the Western region

Initiative 4.4.3.1: Respond to the AdvantageWest Vision Plan’s call for development of a “think tank” to analyze regional development needs

Initiative 4.4.4.1: Better integrate academic programming with regional visual and performing arts and crafts to enhance the livability of the community

E. Our Health (4.5): UNC should lead in improving the health and wellness of all people and communities in our state.



WCU will expand its role as the major provider of allied health and nursing education, applied research, and service in the Western North Carolina region.

Initiative 4.5.1.1: Improve health and wellness in Western North Carolina with particular emphasis on issues related to aging and rural health care

Initiative 4.5.2.1: Implement Doctor of Physical Therapy Program (DPT) to address rapidly increasing need in the region for well-educated health professionals

Initiative 4.5.2.2: Develop and implement those curricula, research and service programs that have been identified as meeting current (health informatics and gerontology) and future critical allied health needs in the region

Initiative 4.5.2.3: Increase the number of Nurse Educator Master’s students and improve the performance of undergraduate nursing students to address the critical shortage of nurses in the region and state

F. Our Environment (4.6): UNC should assume a lead role in addressing the state’s energy and environmental challenges.



WCU will expand its focus on education and research tied to environmental sustainability with particular emphasis on biodiversity and land use.

Initiative 4.6.1.1: WCU will implement the STARS (Sustainability, Tracking and Rating System) accountability system to monitor its goal to become an environmentally conscious campus

Initiative 4.6.2.1: WCU will create a Master’s degree in Environmental Science focused on applied research to better address environmental issues in the Western region and to take

advantage of key institutional resources, including Highlands Biological Station and the Southern Appalachian Biodiversity and Ecology Center

Initiative 4.6.2.2: Leverage institutional resources to address critical land use issues, including environmental reclamation, land use planning, and sustainable development

Initiative 4.6.3.1: As part of its revision of general education, WCU will examine how to increase sustainability education for all students

Initiative 4.6.3.2: Increase regional knowledge of sustainability through community outreach

G. Our University's Outreach & Engagement (4.7): UNC should become more directly engaged with and connected to the people of North Carolina, its regions, and our state as a whole.



WCU will use the Boyer Model of Scholarship and the SACS-approved integrative, intentional learning model to encourage the application of research to regional issues.

Initiative 4.7.1.1: Implement the Boyer Model of Scholarship campus wide

Initiative 4.7.2.1: Utilize integrated learning (see 4.1.1.1) to focus student engagement on regional needs

Initiative 4.7.3.1: Address critical policy issues to facilitate applied research and development (R&D) that affects the region and the State of North Carolina

Initiative 4.7.4.1: Create and implement a variety of communication strategies to inform WCU's regional audience about University resources

Section 5: Changes to Internal Policies and Processes

Initiative 5.6.1: Implement P.A.C.E.

Initiative 5.6.2: Establish an Administrative Program Review process

Initiative 5.6.3: Implement the Ernst & Young recommendations regarding effectiveness of institutional systems

Initiative 5.7.1: Revise institutional policies and make recommendations regarding System policies to facilitate collaborative research and educational programs

Initiative 5.8.1: WCU will continue to establish and publicize key performance data on institutional quality

II. Institutional Response to Section 4 of the UNC Tomorrow Report:

A. Our Global Readiness (4.1): UNC should educate its students to be personally and professionally successful in the 21st century and, to do so, should enhance the global competitiveness of its institutions and their graduates.

- ▶ WCU will continue to realign its academic programs and services consistent with its unique and nationally significant philosophy of integrative education.

WCU is well positioned to fulfill the vision of global readiness as defined by the UNC-Tomorrow Commission. WCU's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP)¹ focuses on integrative, intentional learning experiences encompassing the academic and co-curriculum. Given our region-centered mission and core values, WCU will continue to expand its focus on applied research and public service. WCU also will raise its profile internationally through its partnerships with international universities and will work to strengthen language requirements and programs of international study.

Recommendation 4.1.1 - 21st Century Skills: UNC should prepare its students for successful professional and personal lives in the 21st century, equipping them with the tools they will need to adapt to the ever-changing world.

Increasingly, effective college learning must involve engaged students who participate in active education that integrates theory, methodology, and subject matter with practice and reflection. Such learning occurs across Liberal Studies and major program curricula from freshman to senior year, and draws clear connections to experiences outside of the classroom – experiences in the lab, field, library, studio, or clinic; experiences in paid internships and co-ops, as well as volunteer service; and experiences through participation in broader campus and community life. WCU has received SACS approval for this model and is in its first year of implementation.

Initiative 4.1.1.1: Implement model of integrative, intentional learning

The implementation of WCU's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), *Synthesis: A Pathway to Intentional Learning*, is the major impetus for developing programs that provide the 21st century skills that will prepare our students for professional and personal success.

Synthesis, the integration of diverse student experiences into an original whole, is the framework for the QEP, and therefore the teaching and the learning at WCU. Foundational skills and experiences derived from an integrated undergraduate experience defined by

¹ The Quality Enhancement Plan was developed as part of WCU's recent reaffirmation by the Southern Association of Colleges and School's Commission on Colleges. The Quality Enhancement Plan is required of all SACS institutions with a mandated focus on student learning.

synthesis will provide students with the competitive advantages necessary to succeed in the global economy. This approach reflects best practices in 21st century education.

Summary of Implementation Strategies

1. Revise the Liberal Studies Program

- Emphasis on more interdisciplinary approaches to teaching and learning
- Enhance “soft skills” by exposing students to experiences that will increase their level of personal, academic, social, regional, and global engagement

2. Expand capstone experiences in the major programs

- Provide the culminating, integrative work that will bring together the skills mastered during the first three years of undergraduate education
- Offer learning opportunities at the regional, national, and/or international level

3. Continue to develop a culture of applied research and development

- Increase the number of students engaged in undergraduate research (This year, more students from WCU participated in the prestigious National Conference on Undergraduate Research, or NCUR, than from any other school in the UNC System.)
- Continue to implement the Boyer Model of Scholarship

4. Emphasize experiential education

- Create an Office of Experiential Education to coordinate internships, co-operative education placement, service learning, and career services (see Initiative 4.7.4.2)
- Expand the resources of the Office of International Programs and Services
- Expand the number of international partnerships

5. Focus on faculty and staff development

- Expand the resources of the Coulter Faculty Center to support faculty implementation of the integrative learning model

6. Implement the “Education Briefcase”

- The Education Briefcase is a web-based, longitudinal portfolio of a student’s work that will document student learning and program quality

Recommendation 4.1.2 - Globally Relevant and Significant Research: UNC programs, especially research programs, should be globally competitive to ensure that they are globally relevant and significant.

WCU has engaged in an extensive strategic planning process. Based on this strategic analysis, WCU is focusing on basic and applied research and development critical to Western North Carolina’s global competitiveness. Specifically, WCU has invested extensively in the following programs: the environment and Appalachian biodiversity; forensic science; applied engineering, with particular emphasis on rapid product realization; and entrepreneurial-based businesses. WCU has established capacity for technology transfer, business commercialization, and intellectual property development.

Initiative 4.1.2.1: Expand engaged scholarly activities relevant to Western North Carolina's global competitiveness

While WCU will continue to support traditional research, it is developing a distinctive identity among institutions – an identity that embraces *applied* scholarship and development responsive to regional needs. To support this effort, WCU was the first UNC institution to formally adopt the Boyer Model of Scholarship, which rewards faculty-applied research and development and recognizes important contributions to the region's future. WCU also will continue to emphasize hiring new faculty who are committed to this vision of engaged scholarship.

Summary of Implementation Strategies

1. Expand forensic sciences

- With the support of General Administration, WCU will become a global leader in forensic DNA and forensic anthropology. It also will develop support capacity in such areas as forensic accounting, forensic computing, forensic psychology, criminalistics, and forensic engineering.

2. Leverage existing resources related to environmental research

- WCU is located in one of the most biologically diverse and intact forests in the nation. The region already houses two of the most important environmental research stations in the country (Southern Appalachian Biodiversity and Ecology Center and the Highlands Biological Station). WCU will use the research stations to conduct applied research on environmental sustainability and reclamation and to create outdoor classrooms to enhance science education at all levels.

3. Utilize resources of the University to create competitive, sustainable, 21st century economic capacity in the region, with special emphasis on advanced manufacturing, health, and distributed technologies

- WCU will increase the integration of its Office of Technology Transfer, Center for Rapid Product Realization, and its nationally recognized Entrepreneurship Program to enhance existing business competitiveness and to create new sustainable globally competitive enterprises. By increasing connections among diverse disciplines including marketing, entrepreneurship, physical therapy, and chemistry, WCU will focus on product and business development in such areas as health care (e.g., medical robots and assistive devices), photonics, and precious metal reclamation.

Recommendation 4.1.3 - International Partnerships and Global Awareness: UNC should promote increased partnerships between its own campuses and international universities and enhance the global awareness of its faculty and students.

WCU has 12 bilateral partners and 235 consortium partners through the University of North Carolina Exchange Program (UNCEP), the International Student Exchange Program (ISEP),

the Japan Global Partnership (JGP), the Maastricht Center for Transatlantic Studies (MCTS), and AustraLearn. UNCEP, ISEP and other bilateral partnerships are designed as student and faculty exchanges; some of the partners provide internship opportunities as well.

The JGP is an example of a successful international partnership. As a result of this partnership, more than 200 WCU students study Japanese on campus or in Japan.

Initiative 4.1.3.1: Enhance the study of languages and culture through curricular and co-curricular partnerships in collaboration with other UNC campuses and institutional partners

WCU is continuing to develop international partnerships that promote faculty and student exchange. Many languages that will be important globally will not draw large numbers of students on any given campus; therefore, WCU will seek partnerships with UNC campuses to promote joint offering of these languages. As important as the study of language, is the ability to act within globally diverse cultures. WCU will review its program of general education (“Liberal Studies”) to incorporate global cultural understanding and practice (see Initiative 4.1.1.1). Also, as an option in the integrative learning program, students will be encouraged to have at least one international experience (see Initiative 4.1.1.1).

To promote the co-curricular implementation of global awareness, Student Affairs is creating language-based living options. The first such opportunity is a Spanish language living-learning community. Over the next several years, Student Affairs will explore the viability of an International Learning Community and other language-based learning communities.

Summary of Implementation Strategies

1. Expand curricular offerings

- Review Liberal Studies to determine where additional language and cultural studies should be incorporated
- Review major/minor program curricula for possible inclusion of additional language or cultural studies.
- Review the International Business major and minor and International Studies minor to ensure that each has appropriate language and cultural study included
- Explore new language study options with other UNC campuses

2. Increase instructional capacity for offering expanded international curriculum

- Maximize existing partnerships with international universities, particularly through faculty exchanges, to provide for more diverse perspectives in language, business, technology, the arts, and culture study
- Pursue inter-institutional partnerships that allow merging of low-enrollment programs to achieve critical mass for instruction across institutions

3. Promote international scholarly opportunities for faculty

- Expand bilateral institutional agreements
- Expand faculty-led international immersion experiences

4. Increase study abroad participation

- Connect and support each WCU academic department with two or more international partners
- Seek extramural funds to support study abroad opportunities

Table 1. Global Readiness (4.1) Initiatives

Initiative	Type (New or Existing – Program or Policy)	Key Strategies	Key Descriptors of Success	Key Barriers/Obstacles	Responsible Unit/Department	Implementation Timeline	Budget Source
4.1.1.1 Implement model of integrative, intentional learning	Existing and New Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Revise Liberal Studies program ▪ Expand capstone experiences ▪ Develop culture of applied R&D ▪ Emphasize experiential education ▪ Expand faculty and staff development ▪ Implement “education briefcase” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Program curricula aligned with QEP learning outcomes ▪ Employer satisfaction ▪ Student acquisition of QEP learning outcomes 	<p>Curriculum redesign issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Creating time within current workload requirements ▪ Professional development, rewards and pedagogical support 	Office of the Provost, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Undergraduate Studies	Phased 5-year implementation beginning in Fall 2008	Local tuition and Reallocation of State funds
4.1.2.1: Expand engaged scholarly activities relevant to Western North Carolina’s global competitiveness	Existing and New Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Expand forensic sciences ▪ Leverage existing resources related to environmental research ▪ Create competitive, sustainable economic capacity in the region by increasing connections among diverse disciplines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increased investment in forensic programs ▪ Increased applied research on environmental sustainability and reclamation ▪ Integration of Office of Technology Transfer, Center for Rapid Product Realization and Entrepreneurship Program to enhance existing business competitiveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Insufficient knowledge of federal funding for applications-based research ▪ Insufficient state funding for applications-based research ▪ Institutional culture regarding applied research and development 	Office of the Chancellor, Office of the Provost, Dean of the Graduate School, Academic Deans	<p>Short-term enhancements expected within 1-2 years</p> <p>Long-term enhancements occur over 5-10 years</p>	Reallocation, New, and Extramural Funding
4.1.3.1: Enhance the study of languages and culture through curricular and co-curricular partnerships and in collaboration with other UNC campuses and institutional partners	Existing and Collaborative Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Expand curricular offerings ▪ Increase instructional capacity for international curriculum ▪ Promote international scholarly opportunities for faculty ▪ Increase study abroad participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increased collaborative language study options with other UNC campuses ▪ Increased faculty/student participation in international opportunities ▪ Increased enrollment in language/culture courses/programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lack of instructional capacity within Department of Modern Foreign Languages ▪ Departmental and student resistance to foreign language requirements ▪ Perception that study abroad is too expensive 	Office of the Provost, Deans, Dept. Heads, Office of International Programs and Services, Department of Modern Foreign Languages	1-3 year implementation beginning in Fall 2008	New and Reallocation

B. Our Citizens and Their Future Access to Higher Education (4.2): UNC should increase access to higher education for all North Carolinians, particularly for underserved regions, underrepresented populations, and non-traditional students.

- ▶ To address the projected demand for higher education among North Carolinians, WCU will utilize an educational extension model to provide programming and services to non-traditional, underserved, and place-bound students; and increase the main campus capacity.

WCU is committed to serving the communities of Western North Carolina. Academic programs span more than 120 specialties in five colleges and two schools. Service is provided from the residential campus in Cullowhee, through its programs in Asheville and Cherokee, and through a wide range of distance-learning programs offered on-site and online in partnership with area community colleges, business, industry, governmental agencies, and the military.

Because of its unique location in the southwestern rural region of North Carolina, WCU has particular involvement with rural populations, Native Americans, and the increasing Hispanic population of the region. Western North Carolina also has a relatively small African-American population. Therefore, to assist the state in serving African-American students, WCU reaches out to the Piedmont and eastern sections of the state. Another population of interest is the large number of military personnel and dependents located in various sections of North Carolina. Several of the curricula offered by WCU are of particular interest to active duty military personnel (e.g., project management, emergency medical care, emergency management, and criminal justice).

Equally important is the projection that UNC must serve 80,000 or more additional high school graduates. Therefore, WCU is expanding its traditional campus capacity to enroll a significant percentage of these students.

Recommendation 4.2.1 - Access: UNC should increase access to educational programs – including academic courses, degree programs at all levels, and certificate programs – for traditional students, non-traditional students, and lifelong learners.

WCU increasingly delivers off-campus education using a model derived from agricultural extension. In this model, a WCU “education agent” is stationed in the field at various community colleges. This agent provides support to dual-enrolled and 2+2 students, facilitates transfer, and provides information to the University on changing education needs in his or her area.

Resident credit programs are offered in Cullowhee, Asheville, and Cherokee. WCU also has 2+2 programs and certificates at various community colleges throughout the region, including

Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College, Blue Ridge Community College, Isothermal Community College, Southwestern Community College, Tri-County Community College, Western Piedmont Community College, and in the Hickory Metro Higher Education Center. Following the extension agent model, WCU offers certificate programs at Pardee Memorial Hospital and has offered complete masters degrees at sites in regional businesses and government agencies. Additionally, WCU offers a wide range of electronically mediated distance-education programs across the state of North Carolina.

To continue our efforts to increase access to educational programs in Western North Carolina, WCU intends to:

Initiative 4.2.1.1: Establish a branch campus in Henderson County

WCU will establish a branch campus in Henderson County (subject to approval by the Board of Governors). Henderson County is in the center of the important I-26 Corridor that links Western North Carolina to I-85. Economic studies of the Southeast show that the I-85 Corridor, and particularly Atlanta, is the center of a “super trade zone” comprising more than 20 million people with a gross economic product that exceeds the GDP of India. The Henderson County branch will allow WCU to support emerging business in the region and to provide a central location for outreach to the border counties, especially Rutherford and Polk, which can benefit most immediately from this emerging economic mega-region. These counties have historically been underserved by four-year institutions. Moreover, they have suffered major losses in manufacturing and require investment to transition to new economy enterprises. Henderson County is the appropriate site because of its central location, land availability, finance capacity, presence of an excellent community college, long-term population growth, and logistics infrastructure (including airport and four-lane highway transportation). The community is also highly supportive of establishing a WCU branch.

One of the critical issues that should be solved by UNC-Tomorrow is clarifying the nature of a regional university and its clear differentiation from more traditional institutions, such as research universities and liberal arts universities. Regional universities have the potential to focus on “intellectual capital development” that is so critical in underserved regions, such as rural Western North Carolina. In Western North Carolina, long standing mission confusion between WCU and UNC-Asheville has suboptimized service and resulted in unnecessarily inefficient program delivery. This makes it difficult for both institutions to fulfill their true institutional missions.

Summary of Implementation Strategies

1. Complete and submit a feasibility report to General Administration

- Focus on enhancement of existing collaboration with Blue Ridge Community College
- Emphasize meeting demands of lifelong learners from individual courses to degree programs
- Maximize partnerships to develop relevant programs
- Offer potential site selections

2. *Business plan*

- Profile of offerings
- Financial budget
- Facilities management plan
- Recruitment of faculty and staff
- Recruitment of students

Initiative 4.2.1.2: Work with the System to solve core conceptual and funding problems with distance education and summer semester

One of the most significant obstacles to increasing access through distance education is its segregation from normal university operations. So long as it is treated as an add-on, universities will be limited in the ways in which they can afford to reach a variety of underserved and place-bound populations. Full integration of distance education, including allowing institutions to fully cover costs of operation, is a critical issue for the future. Additionally, distance education is increasingly viewed as “electronically mediated” education. While this is one important form of distance education, there are many “mixed-mode” delivery models that need to be applied, depending upon the specific clientele to be served. Finally, universities are required to offer a broad range of programming for various types of students. Whether students choose to use a particular program or service has not been the basis for determining institutional charges except in distance education. Universities are encouraged to operate on a “business footing,” yet no business could operate without amortizing its costs across its total operation.

A second major obstacle is the lack of funding for University operations in the summer. A fully funded, year-round schedule will allow the University to improve student retention and graduation rates; to maximize use of its facilities; to better respond to regional needs; to respond to targeted student populations; and to introduce new programs, instructional models, and strategies that serve a wider range of people. Very importantly, many adult learners prefer to attend classes year-round to promote degree completion. This is especially true in high-need areas such as lateral entry teacher education and service to employed professionals who require advanced degrees to promote the global competitiveness of their careers or businesses.

Summary of Implementation Strategies

1. *Explore with General Administration alternative conceptual and funding models for distance education*

2. *Seek full regular state funding of summer semester*

Recommendation 4.2.2 - Community College Relations: UNC should continue ongoing efforts with the North Carolina Community College System to strengthen and streamline articulation between the two systems to develop a more seamless relationship.

WCU has created partnerships with area community colleges to promote both degree completion programs and professional development opportunities through certificate programs. Agreements have been negotiated with Tri-County Community College, Blue Ridge Community College, Western Piedmont Community College, Southwestern Community College, and Isothermal Community College. Membership as a partner with the Hickory Metro Higher Education Center provides market access for online learning opportunities for individuals in the Unifour Region. Pardee Memorial Hospital is the home site for WCU's Center for Positive Aging and provides office and instructional space for the Gerontology Certificate Program.

Initiative 4.2.2.1: Continue to expand partnerships with community colleges within the Western region

WCU will build and strengthen its relationships with the 17 community colleges in the western region of North Carolina. The University is addressing the seamless transfer of students, work force development, collaborative degree programs, and regional economic development. More than a year ago, WCU announced the "Western 2-Step," which articulated all WCU majors with AA and AS community college transfer curricula. Additionally, WCU has developed specific articulation agreements with certain AAS degrees. Through various graduate programs, WCU is taking a leading role in responding to the looming shortage for credentialed community college teachers.

Summary of Implementation Strategies

1. Develop a structure to better coordinate community college partnerships and programs

- Provide single point of coordination for community college articulation and transfer
- Develop a specific contact and communication strategy to support the broad range of relationships between the University and the community colleges
- Explore the viability of developing a "community college – university consortium" to promote joint planning, program development, and service delivery

2. Improve advising of community college transfer students

- Expand WCU course catalog to include one-to-one representation of all courses in the North Carolina Community College Common Course Library
- Train advising staff to better address specific needs of community college transfer students

3. Develop and offer programs, including degrees and certificates, to address the critical need for credentialed community college teachers

- Create a distance learning M.A.Ed. in Community College Teaching that includes a minimum of 18 hours in an academic discipline to meet SACS standards
- Create appropriate certificates to document teaching pedagogy or 18-hour disciplinary education requirements

4. Continue to expand 2+2 programs with community college partners

Recommendation 4.2.3 - Disabilities Accommodations: *UNC should be a model for accommodating the needs of persons with disabilities including students, faculty, staff, and the general public.*

WCU strives to maintain ADA compliance. Given the age of many of its facilities and the unique topography of its campus, WCU cannot reasonably strive to be a “model” for accommodating persons with physical disabilities. The University can and will continue to enhance its accommodations to encourage more people with physical and mental disabilities to come to WCU. For more than 20 years, WCU has hosted the federal TRIO programs to support education for those with disabilities and first-generation college students. WCU will continue to seek TRIO funding.

Recommendation 4.2.4 - Affordability: *UNC should maintain affordability and increase financial aid options.*

WCU has a long tradition of minimizing overhead and administrative costs. Recent review by General Administration showed that WCU’s administrative cost per FTE student was the lowest in the UNC System. We will continue to monitor cost increases within the bounds of prudent management of the state’s resources.

WCU’s Financial Aid Office maximizes grant funds for students while minimizing loans. The University also has obtained gifts to provide need-based financial aid and short-term loans. Phase II of the University’s Campaign for Excellence will be focused on obtaining significant endowments for scholarships. Finally, WCU is working closely with an external contractor to better package financial aid and admissions offers so that students and their parents can better understand the true cost of education.

Initiative 4.2.4.1 – Seek Authority to Waive Application Fees for In-State Students

Market studies show that application fees are a deterrent to low-income students applying to college. To increase affordability, and to encourage underserved populations to apply to college, WCU is seeking the right to offer a true waiver of its \$40 application fee for North Carolina residents.

Summary of Implementation Strategies

1. Request authority from General Administration to waive undergraduate application fees for North Carolinians

Recommendation 4.2.5 - Underrepresented Populations: *UNC should increase the educational attainment of all underrepresented populations, especially African-American male and Hispanics students.*

WCU is committed to increasing its African-American, Hispanic and Native American students, particularly the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Indians (EBCI), and to increasing retention and graduation rates of students in these groups. Programs currently in place include: Project C.A.R.E. (Committed to African–American Retention in Education), a peer mentoring program; and a range of collaborative initiatives with the EBCI focusing on the educational attainment of Native American students in the region.

Initiative 4.2.5.1: Expand recruitment and retention activities with historically underrepresented populations in higher education, with special emphasis on the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (EBCI) and the emerging Hispanic population

Peer mentoring programs have had a demonstrated effect on WCU’s ability to attract and retain African-American students. WCU will capitalize on this success and use it to model programs specifically targeting Native American and Hispanic students. WCU anticipates an increase in the number of EBCI and Hispanic students as a direct result of these programs.

Summary of Implementation Strategies

- 1. Implement a Native American peer mentoring program*
- 2. Implement a Hispanic peer mentoring program*

Recommendation 4.2.6 - Academic Preparedness: UNC should help ensure that all students are better prepared to enter and succeed academically in college.

WCU’s approach to academic preparedness is threefold: to increase admissions standards to reflect institutional expectations; to provide successful bridge programs to ease transition to the University; and to provide a comprehensive network of support at matriculation that remains consistent during the time the student is at WCU. WCU intends to build and strengthen its efforts at all stages, from pre-enrollment through matriculation and graduation.

Initiative 4.2.6.1: Expand support for the Academic Success Program (ASP)

WCU offers an Academic Success Program (ASP) for promising underprepared students to begin their college experience early to promote success. This program is designed as a complete “first year experience” to aid transition to college and the development of academic skills. WCU will expand the program that now serves approximately 150 students. Initial assessments of the program demonstrate an improvement in students’ affective behaviors that are linked with high levels of learning and improved retention.

Summary of Implementation Strategies

- 1. Focus on integration between curriculum and co-curriculum*
- 2. Align ASP with Liberal Studies*

3. Incorporate integrated learning principles consistent with the QEP

4. Provide peer mentoring component

5. Implement case management model of student advising

Table 2. Access (4.2) Initiatives

Initiative	Type (New or Existing – Program or Policy)	Key Strategies	Key Descriptors of Success	Key Barriers/Obstacles	Responsible Unit/Department	Implementation Timeline	Budget Source
4.2.1.1: Establish a branch campus in Henderson County	New	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Complete and submit feasibility report ▪ Develop business plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enrollment matches projections from business plan ▪ Graduates match projections from business plan ▪ Community satisfaction ▪ Economic and workforce impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lack of clear mission differentiation between UNC-Asheville and WCU ▪ Funding ▪ Start-up logistics and staffing 	Office of the Chancellor, Office of the Provost, Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance	Phased implementation beginning in Fall 2009 (pending approval prior to March 1, 2009)	New and Reallocation
4.2.1.2: Work with the System to solve core conceptual and funding problems with distance education and summer semester	Existing Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work with GA to develop alternative conceptual and funding models for distance education ▪ Seek full regular state funding for summer semester 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Revision of System policies to fully integrate distance and resident instruction ▪ Summer SCHs are reimbursed by the State 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Multiple tuition structures of the UNC campuses ▪ Legislative action required to change summer funding ▪ Multiplicity of policies that govern resident and distance instruction 	Office of the Chancellor, Office of the Provost, Dean of Educational Outreach	Continuous	N/A
4.2.2.1: Continue to expand partnerships with community colleges within the Western region	Existing Programs and Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop structure to better coordinate community college partnerships and programs ▪ Improve advising of community college transfer students ▪ Develop and offer programs to address need for credentialed community college teachers ▪ Expand 2+2 programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increased enrollment of transfer students ▪ Improved retention/graduation rates of transfer students ▪ Student satisfaction with advising ▪ Increased number of graduates in M.A.Ed. in Community College Teaching ▪ Increased number of 2+2 programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ None 	Office of the Provost, Associate Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management	Continuous	Reallocation
4.2.4.1 – Seek authority to waive application fees for in-state students	New Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Request authority to waive undergraduate application fees for State residents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Authority is granted to offer waivers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Requires modification of existing BOG policy 	Office of the Chancellor, Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance	Immediate upon approval	Reallocation

Table 2. Access (4.2) Initiatives, Continued

Initiative	Type (New or Existing – Program or Policy)	Key Strategies	Key Descriptors of Success	Key Barriers/Obstacles	Responsible Unit/Department	Implementation Timeline	Budget Source
4.2.5.1: Expand recruitment and retention activities with historically underrepresented populations in higher education, with special emphasis on the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (EBCI) and the emerging Hispanic population	New Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implement a Native American peer mentoring program ▪ Implement a Hispanic peer mentoring program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increased enrollment of EBCI and Hispanic students ▪ Improved retention/graduation of EBCI and Hispanic students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Current position of the State regarding residency status of children of illegal immigrants 	Office of the Provost, Office of Admissions, Division of Enrollment Management; Division of Student Affairs	Staged implementation beginning Fall 2008	Reallocation
4.2.6.1: Expand support for the Academic Success Program (ASP)	Existing Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Integrate curriculum and co-curriculum ▪ Align with Liberal Studies Program ▪ Incorporate QEP learning goals ▪ Provide peer mentoring ▪ Implement case management model of advising 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improved retention of underprepared students ▪ Increased matriculation of underprepared students ▪ Improved learning and development of ASP student 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lack of full funding for summer semester 	Office of the Provost, Division of Enrollment Management, Division of Student Affairs	Continuous	Current (Existing)

C. Our Children and Their Future: Improving Public Education (4.3): UNC should be more actively involved in solving North Carolina's public education challenges.

▶ Through its partnerships with the region's schools and its applied research, WCU will influence public policy and practice with regard to teacher preparation and retention, administrative quality and school performance.

WCU is well positioned to be a leader in the state in producing more and better teachers as well as other professional educators. The preparation of teachers is one of the activities in which the University has excelled. WCU's reputation for preparing excellent teachers was further enhanced when the University was named recipient of the Association of Teacher Educators (ATE) Distinguished Program in Teacher Education Award in 2006 and the AASCU Christa McAuliffe Award for Excellence in Teacher Education in 2007. Although WCU is the seventh-largest producer of teachers in the state, WCU realizes that it needs to produce more and better teachers. The University is in the first year of implementing its Teacher Recruitment Plan and preliminary results are promising. WCU is also poised to become a leader in influencing public policy regarding public education, particularly as it relates to rural schools. Many faculty and staff in the College of Education and Allied Professions are engaged in public policy work, and WCU's doctorate in educational leadership is a vehicle for public policy research and change.

Recommendations 4.3.1 and 4.3.2 - Quality and Quantity of Public School Teachers: UNC should improve the quantity, quality, and geographic distribution of public school teachers. UNC should help address the shortage of science and math teachers, especially in rural areas.

WCU is currently engaged in significant efforts to improve the quantity, quality and geographic distribution of public school teachers. WCU has a comprehensive Teacher Recruitment Plan with ongoing action plans targeting an increase in the number of teachers produced that is consistent with the UNC System teacher recruitment plan. In addition, WCU actively recruits middle and high school students to consider teaching as a career through a variety of outreach programs. Also, the University is strongly committed to participating in NC TEACH (North Carolina Teachers of Excellence for All Children).

One of the major limitations faced by the College of Education and Allied Professions is its insufficient facilities. The current facility is old, undersized, and lacking in modern laboratories and teaching spaces. The ability of the College to make significant inroads in meeting recruitment and enrollment targets is dependent in large part on an expansion and improvement of space and resources for its programs.

Initiative 4.3.1.1: Seek funding for a new College of Education and Allied Professions building to provide adequate space and facilities to improve B-20 education in the Western region

WCU will seek funding to develop an Education Neighborhood as part of its Millennial Initiative. A new College of Education and Allied Professions building would be the centerpiece of the Education Neighborhood, providing adequate space for current and proposed educational programs and teacher support services. It also will serve as a location where educators throughout the region can gather to consider strategies to promote more effective public policy controlling public education.

Summary of Implementation Strategies

1. Develop the Education Neighborhood as part of the Millennial Initiative

- Work with General Administration to secure funding for new education building
- Seek private partners to locate in the Education Neighborhood to promote educational innovation and performance
- Expand relationships with NCCAT

2. Coordinate fundraising efforts with Advancement and Development

Initiative 4.3.1.2: Implement the Teacher Education Recruitment Plan

WCU has developed an aggressive teacher education recruitment plan in conjunction with General Administration. This plan focuses on improving both the number and quality of teacher education candidates leading to retention of the best teachers in the classroom.

Summary of Implementation Strategies

1. Advocate for higher salaries and enhanced working conditions for teachers in the region

2. Revise Teacher Education and School Executive programs to meet 21st Century Standards passed by the State Board of Education

3. Increase personnel to manage required field and clinical experiences

4. Advocate for scholarships and out-of-state tuition waivers for students who will work in education in North Carolina upon graduation

5. Implement a pilot program through General Administration to employ faculty in selected professional education programs on alternative semester contracts that include summer

Recommendation 4.3.3 - Support of Existing Faculty and Administrators: UNC should strengthen efforts to enhance the teaching skills of public school faculty and the leadership skills of public school administrators.

WCU's current professional development initiatives are built on the strong relationships with public schools in the region. WCU is actively engaged in professional development for teachers and school executives in collaboration with Western North Carolina public school systems and the School-University Teacher Education Partnership (SUTEP), Centers housed in the College of Education and Allied Professions (CEAP), and faculty members from CEAP and the Colleges of Arts and Science and Fine and Performing Arts. Service to beginning teachers is integral to the mission of CEAP; support options for first-year teachers are developed in collaboration with Western's Center for the Support of Beginning Teachers and LEA Beginning Teacher Coordinators. Last year WCU provided approximately 1,550 services of various types to the public schools.

Initiative 4.3.3.1: Expand the type and nature of WCU's professional development activities, ensuring best practices and basing them on 21st Century Standards adopted by the N.C. State Board of Education

WCU has a number of existing Centers, faculty involvement, and SUTEP which provide support for public school personnel. WCU intends to provide additional professional development to address 21st Century Standards, curriculum, and instruction with a focus on leadership training in a variety of delivery modes (online, distance, and/or face-to-face) to reach personnel throughout the region (e.g., highly rural areas including the Cherokee Central Schools).

Summary of Implementation Strategies

- 1. Work with General Administration to create a funding priority for support of beginning teachers statewide and especially within Western North Carolina*
- 2. Work with General Administration to define faculty workloads statewide that allow sufficient time for faculty involvement in public schools*

Initiative 4.3.3.2: Expand the role of WCU's Educational Leadership Doctoral Program to improve public policy as it relates to an effective state system of public education

One of the major issues in improving B-20 education is the need for a coherent policy framework that links educational outcomes to the state's and society's future. For the United States and the state of North Carolina to be competitive on the global stage, development, implementation, and assessment of such a policy framework is critical. WCU will increase its focus in Educational Leadership on this issue.

Summary of Implementation Strategies

- 1. Create center for educational policy and research within Educational Leadership*

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2. *Seek endowed professorship in public policy and education*
 3. *Create a doctoral focus on public policy within the Educational Leadership Program*

Recommendation 4.3.4 - Dropouts and Academic Achievement: *UNC should leverage its expertise and increase collaborations with the State Board of Education and Department of Public Instruction to lower our state’s dropout rate and improve academic achievement in all North Carolina public schools, especially those that are high-priority and low-performing.*

North Carolina faces a persistent challenge in preventing students from dropping out of school. For many years, WCU has addressed this issue by offering a wide range of enrichment opportunities on campus geared toward “educating students on the need for and value of education to motivate them toward improved academic performance” (Strand #5 in UNC-Tomorrow Report). WCU currently offers a wide range of enrichment opportunities on campus to support and encourage K-12 students.

Initiative 4.3.4.1 – The Dean of the College of Education and Allied Professions will work with the Center for Service Learning and other experiential education programs to develop mentoring programs involving WCU students with regional schools

Summary of Implementation Strategies

1. *Conduct a Needs Assessment regarding additional “best practices” mentoring programs that should be developed by WCU*
2. *Perform a comprehensive assessment of existing enrichment programs with the intent of increasing their effectiveness*

Recommendation 4.3.5 - B-20 Education: *UNC should strengthen partnerships with the State Board of Education, the N.C. Department of Public Instruction, the North Carolina Community College System and our state’s Independent Colleges and Universities to develop a seamless educational continuum from pre-K through higher education (“Birth to 20”).*

As noted in Section 4.2, the University lacks central coordination of relations with community colleges, which affects communication, advising, recruitment efforts, and oversight of articulation agreements. WCU intends to continue to improve relations with community colleges and to maintain its strong working relationship with the Department of Public Instruction as well as with members of the General Assembly who have special interest in B-20 education.

Initiatives – See Response to Recommendation 4.2.2

Table 3. Public Education (4.3) Initiatives

Initiative	Type (New or Existing – Program or Policy)	Key Strategies	Key Descriptors of Success	Key Barriers/Obstacles	Responsible Unit/Department	Implementation Timeline	Budget Source
4.3.1.1: Seek funding for a new College of Education and Allied Professions Building to provide adequate space and facilities to improve B-20 education in the Western region	New	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop Education Neighborhood of Millennial Initiative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work with General Administration to secure funding for new education building - Seek private partners to locate in the Education Neighborhood to promote educational innovation and performance - Expand relationships with NCCAT ▪ Coordinate fund raising with Advancement and Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Full funding acquired for Education Building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Limited funding for capital projects 	Office of the Chancellor, Office of the Provost, Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance, Dean of Education and Allied Professions	3-5 years pending funding	New
4.3.1.2: Implement the Teacher Education Recruitment Plan	Existing Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Advocate for higher salaries and enhanced working conditions for K-12 teachers ▪ Revise Teacher Education and School Executive Programs ▪ Increase WCU personnel to manage field and clinical experiences ▪ Advocate for tuition assistance for students who will work in NC ▪ Employ WCU faculty on alternative contracts that include summer. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increased number of teacher education graduates ▪ Increased enrollment in teacher education programs ▪ Quality documented through program evaluation ▪ Improved licensure rates ▪ Improved regional salaries and benefits for K-12 teachers ▪ Implemented alternative faculty contracts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inadequate scholarships and financial assistance for teacher education students ▪ Insufficient faculty to teach and intervene in K-12 ▪ Tuition waivers require BOG approval 	Office of the Provost, Dean of Education and Allied Professions	Phased implementation beginning in Fall 2008	Existing, New and Reallocation
4.3.3.1: Expand the type and nature of WCU's professional development activities, ensuring best practices and basing them on 21 st Century Standards adopted by the NC State Board of Education.	Existing Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work with GA to create funding priority for support of beginning teachers ▪ Work with GA to define faculty workloads to allow sufficient time for faculty involvement in public schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improved retention of WNC teachers and school executives ▪ Increased reported job satisfaction among new teachers and school personnel ▪ Increased enrollment in professional development activities and advanced degree programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lack of State funding for non-credit K-12 professional development activities ▪ Insufficient logistical support to coordinate collaboration among Education faculty and B-12 professionals ▪ Inadequate professional development funding in public schools 	Dean of Education and Allied Professions, Dean of Arts & Sciences	Phase I – 6 mos. -1 year Phase II – years 2-5	Reallocation and New

Table 3. Public Education (4.3) Initiatives, Continued

Initiative	Type (New or Existing – Program or Policy)	Key Strategies	Key Descriptors of Success	Key Barriers/Obstacles	Responsible Unit/Department	Implementation Timeline	Budget Source
4.3.3.2: Expand the role of WCU's Educational Leadership doctoral program to improve public policy as it relates to an effective state system of public education	Existing Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create Center for Educational Policy and Research within Educational Leadership and Foundations department ▪ Seek endowed professorship in public policy and education ▪ Create doctoral focus on public policy within the Educational Leadership program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Approved Center for Educational Policy and Research ▪ Endowed professorship in public policy and education ▪ Increase in doctoral dissertations with public policy focus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ None 	Dean of Education and Allied Professions, Department Head of Educational Leadership and Foundations	1-3 years beginning in Fall 2008	Reallocation and New (Spangler funds)
4.3.4.1 – The Dean of the College of Education and Allied Professions will work with the Center for Service Learning and other experiential education programs to develop mentoring programs involving WCU students with regional schools.	New and Existing Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conduct a needs assessment regarding best practices for mentoring programs ▪ Perform comprehensive assessment of existing enrichment programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ New mentoring programs established ▪ Improved effectiveness of existing enrichment programs ▪ Increased participation in existing enrichment programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ None 	Dean of Education and Allied Professions, Director of Service Learning	Phased implementation beginning Fall 2008	Reallocation and Existing

D. Our Communities and Their Economic Transformation (4.4): UNC should be more actively engaged in enhancing the economic transformation and community development of North Carolina's regions and the state as a whole.



WCU will apply the Stewards of Place model to effect regional economic transformation.

Since its founding, WCU has acted as a “steward of place.” The Stewards of Place model was developed by AASCU to describe in detail the role of regional universities. The basic model has four domains in which a university is to act.

- Assist in creating a vibrant region economy that is linked to the emerging global economy (create a “new economy”).
- Assist the region in developing livable communities. Livable communities are characterized by a high-quality natural environment, safety, excellent schools, high-quality health care, and active cultural life. Livable communities also have excellent universities and community colleges focused on regional needs.
- Assist the region in developing inclusively so that all groups in the region’s population have an opportunity to benefit.
- Assist the region in creating strong civic leadership including voluntary organizations, elected representatives, and government operations.

One of the most important aspects of the Stewards of Place model is that it recognizes the University’s role as a partner and contributor to regional quality, not as the “owner” or expert. Universities must link with the people of the region to understand their needs and to understand how to respond.

The Board of Trustees adopted the Stewards of Place model as its official position on WCU’s relationship with its region. All initiatives in this section are consistent with this model and Board policy.

Recommendation 4.4.1 - Economic Transformation and Community

Development: UNC should increase its capacity and commitment to respond to and lead economic transformation and community development.

WCU has been focused on the economic transformation of this region since 1996. In this period of more than a decade, WCU has created research capacity in core areas and redeveloped its curriculum to directly address the needs of the 21st century. In addition, WCU has increased its focus on applied research and development, and adopted the Boyer Model of Scholarship to support those faculty members who will lead this regional economic transformation.

WCU has developed a national reputation as one of the leaders in linking academic institutions to the economic, social, and cultural transformations that define the 21st century. An exemplar of this philosophy is the realignment of the University’s academic structure to better focus on

the economic transformation of the region. For example, the Kimmel School was created as an organization based primarily on business-University interaction. The Center for Rapid Product Realization, the Photonics Consortium, and the Center for Adaptive Devices are located within the Kimmel School. All of these centers directly focus on business competitiveness and development of entrepreneurial enterprises. The focus of the College of Business was changed to implement an external philosophy of business education and engagement. Additionally, the College of Business was restructured to better fit the modern business climate, and a Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation was created. This Center is actively involved in redeveloping the business base of Canton and other small communities in the Western region. Critical to this reorganization is the requirement that the College of Business and the Kimmel School jointly plan and execute extensive business interventions; that they jointly develop new economy businesses; and that they prepare students for the global economy.

Note: Many of the key initiatives that affect economic transformation are addressed in response to Recommendation 4.1.1, 4.1.2 and 4.7.1.

Initiative 4.4.1.1: Implement the Millennial Initiative

The Millennial Initiative is WCU's strategic approach to redeveloping its campus and institutional direction by taking advantage of the Millennium Campus legislation. The institution is creating nine public-private partnership neighborhoods and a town center on campus. This physical transformation of the campus is designed to promote economic development through faculty-community interaction, technology transfer, University service delivery, and, most importantly, the fundamental improvement of undergraduate and graduate education.

Summary of Implementation Strategies

- 1. Continue development of the "Health Neighborhood" by attracting private partners, including health care providers, retirement and assisted-living developers, and age-related businesses*
- 2. Seek full funding for the Education Building that will become the center of the "Education Neighborhood" (See response to Recommendation 4.3.1)*
- 3. Create conditions to support a profitable, privately developed town center*

Initiative 4.4.1.2: Increase WCU's emphasis on innovation, entrepreneurship, applied research, and development

The literature on economic development clearly indicates that most successful New Economy enterprises will be entrepreneurial and based in technological innovation. Because of WCU's adoption of the Boyer Model, the institution now has a reward structure capable of supporting faculty members in applied research and development. Additionally, because of the institution's strong emphasis on undergraduate research and engaged education, its student body is increasingly well positioned to engage in business development. For

example, all graduate students in the Entrepreneurship Program have started a business and half of all undergraduate students in the program have started their own businesses.

While WCU has developed many programs to address this initiative, there remains a core problem with regard to obtaining early stage capital. Without innovative solutions to this issue, the western region of North Carolina will not achieve its economic potential.

Summary of Implementation Strategies

- 1. Develop faculty staffing plans in critical fields to promote regional economically related applied research and development*
- 2. Allocate faculty positions in critical departments to address innovation, commercialization or applied research and development*
- 3. Expand the institution-level support for the student entrepreneurship competition (“WISE Challenge” – Western Innovative Student Enterprise Challenge)*
- 4. Seek funding for “transitional space” for new and emerging enterprises*
- 5. Seek non-enrollment based funding for staff to support faculty and student entrepreneurship*
- 6. Allocate a position to coordinate and manage faculty and student entrepreneurial activities, including contract management and specification of deliverables*
- 7. Work with General Administration to revise the R&D investment tax credit in the IRS code*
- 8. Work with General Administration to create a mechanism to generate early stage capital for student and faculty entrepreneurial enterprises*

Initiative 4.4.1.3: Continue to develop national-class capacities in key disciplines and programs that support New Economy economic development in the Western region.

As part of UNC-Tomorrow, WCU is focusing on program development to address regional needs as defined by the Clusters of Innovation in the AdvantageWest Vision Plan (www.advantagewest.com/uploads/File/Vision_Plan_--_Final.pdf). Specifically, WCU is responding to the following clusters: Advanced manufacturing, Communications and IT, Environment, Health Care, and Security (see 4.1.2, 4.4.3, 4.5.2, and 4.6.2 for additional implementation strategies). It should be noted that this approach is consistent with the Board of Governors’ proposed policy on academic planning.

WCU’s current program array addresses issues within each broad cluster. Because of the unique location of WCU and its connections to Oak Ridge National Laboratory and forensic businesses, WCU intends to become one of the lead institutions in the nation in forensic DNA analysis and forensic anthropology. This specialization will allow WCU to utilize its

Millennium Initiative to create a strong cluster of security-related businesses that are tied to human identification, DNA database management, security and health uses of DNA, and other applications of this emerging science.

Summary of Implementation Strategies

- 1. Seek advanced degrees in forensic sciences and expand capacities in forensic science and environmental science to promote business development in the region (see response to Recommendations 4.1.2 and 4.6.2). Because of the unique location of WCU and its connections to Oak Ridge National Laboratory and forensic businesses, WCU intends to become one of the lead institutions in the nation in forensic DNA analysis and forensic anthropology*
- 2. Seek national accreditation for forensic science programs from the Forensic Science Education Programs Accreditation Commission*
- 3. Implement the applied-focus Bachelor of Science in Engineering Degree (BSE) to promote global competitiveness of key technology-based industries in the Western region*
- 4. Expand the focus of the Public Administration Program on core questions of local taxation, land use planning, public management, and government policies that promote regional economic development*

Recommendation 4.4.2 - Needs of Rural, Underserved Regions: UNC should focus specific efforts on meeting the needs of rural and underserved areas of the state.

WCU's response to UNC-Tomorrow deals primarily with a rural underserved region utilizing the Stewards of Place model. With the exception of the counties included in the Asheville MSA, all other counties in Western North Carolina are rural. Therefore, this recommendation will not be dealt with separately because it is embedded in the entire report. Of particular note is the development of the Millennial Initiative. This initiative is designed to create an "economic central place" to act as a catalyst for development of rural Jackson County and the surrounding rural counties, Macon, Swain, and Graham. (See specifically response to Finding 4.2, Access)

Recommendation 4.4.3 - Alignment with Strategic Economic Plans: UNC should seek to align appropriate campus programs with the strategic economic plans (including sector and cluster plans) of their regions and the state, recognizing the unique differences and challenges of our state's economic and geographic regions.

WCU’s traditional mission has focused on meeting the needs of the people of Western North Carolina. As a result, the institution utilized the AdvantageWest Vision Plan in its strategic planning process. Responses to this recommendation are embedded throughout WCU’s response to UNC-Tomorrow and specifically in Initiative 4.4.1.3

Initiative 4.4.3.1: Respond to the AdvantageWest Vision Plan’s call for development of a “think tank” to analyze regional development needs.

Western North Carolina’s efforts at economic development have been hampered by a lack of ready sources of data regarding regional conditions, analyses of regional trends, and examination of the external factors that are driving regional development. Additionally, there are few studies that inform counties and regions in North Carolina regarding best public policy practices associated with development. Because of WCU’s emphasis on applied research, it is appropriate for the institution to address these concerns.

Summary of Implementation Strategies

- 1. Restructure the Institute for the Economy and the Future to be an economic data development and analysis center focused on the Western region*
- 2. Refocus the Public Policy Institute to address core policy issues associated with regional development*

Recommendation 4.4.4 - Promote the Arts and Cultural Enrichment: UNC should promote the arts and cultural enrichment in all regions of the state.

Because of the importance of arts and culture to the Stewards of Place model, WCU has invested significantly in facilities and support for the visual and performing arts. The largest project funded by the 2000 bond issue at WCU was construction of the Fine and Performing Arts Center. WCU also has invested in state-of-the-art sound recording and video production facilities. These investments are made even more important because Western North Carolina has a rich tradition in art, culture, and craft.

Initiative 4.4.4.1: Better integrate academic programming with regional visual and performing arts and crafts to enhance the livability of the community

Summary of Implementation Strategies

- 1. Develop a cultural arts activities calendar (performing arts and the WCU Gallery) to promote the University’s role as an arts center*
- 2. Expand arts academic programs in Musical Theater, Commercial Music, Film (digital video) Production, and Television*
- 3. Elevate the Department of Stage and Screen to “School” status as it expands its programming and enrollment*

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4. *Develop a College of Fine and Performing Arts strategic plan that increases the College's external regional engagement*

Recommendation 4.4.5 - Inclusive Discussions: *UNC should facilitate inclusive discussions on important community issues.*

WCU regularly hosts conferences, regional activities, and regional discussions. Both the Public Policy Institute and the Institute for the Economy and the Future will continue to discuss their data and findings in regional forums and provide information to local news outlets. As has been documented throughout this response, WCU's adoption of the Stewards of Place and Boyer models directly addresses recommendation 4.4.5.

Table 4. Economic Transformation (4.4) Initiatives

Initiative	Type (New or Existing – Program or Policy)	Key Strategies	Key Descriptors of Success	Key Barriers/Obstacles	Responsible Unit/Department	Implementation Timeline	Budget Source
4.4.1.1: Implement the Millennial Initiative	Existing Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continue development of the Health Neighborhood ▪ Seek full funding for the Education Building ▪ Create conditions to support profitable town center 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bring Health Building online ▪ Occupancy targets met in commercial spaces ▪ Full funding received for Education Building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Limited funding for capital projects ▪ Government regulatory issues ▪ Mortgage crisis 	Office of the Chancellor, Office of the Provost, Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance, Dean of Health and Human Sciences	Phased implementation beginning Fall 2008	New, Reallocation and Existing
4.4.1.2: Increase WCU's emphasis on innovation, entrepreneurship, applied research and development	Existing and New Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop faculty staffing plans in critical fields ▪ Allocate faculty positions in critical departments ▪ Expand support for student entrepreneurship competition ▪ Seek funding for "transitional space" for new and emerging enterprises ▪ Seek non-enrollment based funding to support faculty and student entrepreneurship ▪ Allocate position to coordinate and manage entrepreneurial activities ▪ Work with GA to revise R&D investment tax credit in the IRS code ▪ Work with GA to develop mechanism to acquire early stage capital for entrepreneurial enterprises 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increased faculty in critical fields ▪ Increased participation in entrepreneurship competitions ▪ Funding acquired for space to house new and emerging enterprises ▪ Increased economic activity in the region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Funding dependent on projected enrollment growth ▪ Limited funding available for capital projects ▪ Insufficient State funding for non-credit University activities 	Office of the Chancellor, Office of the Provost, Academic Deans	Continuous	Reallocation and New
4.4.1.3: Continue to develop national class capacities in key disciplines and programs that support New Economy economic development in the Western region.	New and Existing Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Seek advanced degrees and expand capacities in forensic science and environmental science ▪ Seek national accreditation for forensic science ▪ Implement BS in Engineering ▪ Expand focus of Public Administration program on core questions related to regional economic development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Advanced degrees implemented ▪ Enrollment targets met ▪ Graduation targets met ▪ Local government leader satisfaction ▪ Increase in MPA projects/theses that address core issues ▪ Awarded national accreditation for forensic science ▪ Increased economic activity in the region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Non-enrollment based funding ▪ Clarity of institutional mission 	Office of the Provost, Dean of the Graduate School, Dean of Arts & Sciences, Dean of the Kimmel School, Department Head of Political Science, Department Head of Engineering and Technology, Program Director of Forensic Science	Current through 2011	New (GA requested), Reallocation and Gifts

Table 4. Economic Transformation (4.4) Initiatives, Continued

Initiative	Type (New or Existing – Program or Policy)	Key Strategies	Key Descriptors of Success	Key Barriers/Obstacles	Responsible Unit/Department	Implementation Timeline	Budget Source
4.4.4.1: Better integrate academic programming with regional visual and performing arts and crafts to enhance the livability of the community	Existing Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop a cultural arts activities calendar ▪ Expand arts-related academic programs ▪ Elevate the Department of Stage and Screen to “school” status ▪ Develop the College of Fine and Performing Arts’ strategic plan to address regional engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Published activities calendar ▪ Expanded programming ▪ School of Stage and Screen ▪ Published CFPA strategic plan ▪ Increased attendance/participation at arts-related events ▪ Increased enrollment in arts programs ▪ Increased regional engagement of Fine & Performing Arts faculty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ None 	Dean of Fine & Performing Arts	Phased implementation Fall 2008	Existing and enrollment funding

E. Our Health: *UNC should lead in improving the health and wellness of all people and communities in our state.*



WCU will expand its role as the major provider of allied health and nursing education, applied research, and service in the Western North Carolina region.

Graduating more than 400 students in health-related areas each year, WCU is a leader in the education of health professionals. The University recognizes its responsibility to extend the benefits of its health programs through regional, state, and national service to public and private organizations, community groups, and individuals; and to participate in research efforts that support the practice of the health professions. In these endeavors, the faculty and staff intend to be more responsive to the needs of the marketplace for competent health professionals, technical support, and up-to-date continuing education that is required by the changing health industry.

Recommendation 4.5.1 - Improve Health and Wellness: *UNC should lead in improving health and wellness in North Carolina.*

Initiative 4.5.1.1: Improve health and wellness in Western North Carolina with particular emphasis on issues related to aging and rural health care

As part of its Millennial Initiative, WCU is creating a “health neighborhood” (see Initiative 4.4.1.1). The centerpiece of this neighborhood is the new 160,000-square-foot Health and Gerontological Sciences building slated to open in 2010. Development of this neighborhood offers WCU an opportunity to increase its health initiatives and partnerships with the community. Also, WCU is involved in an inter-institutional Center for Health and Aging to be developed with the Mountain Area Health Education Center (MAHEC) and UNC-Asheville. WCU will emphasize health research and allied health programming. MAHEC will provide support for medical practitioners and links to the UNC Medical School. UNC-Asheville will focus on wellness.

Summary of Implementation Strategies

- 1. Develop the Health Neighborhood component of the Millennial Initiative*
- 2. Work with MAHEC and UNC-Asheville to complete planning and implement the Center for Health and Aging*

Recommendation 4.5.2 - More Health Professionals: *UNC should educate more health professionals.*

WCU has contributed to the health and well-being of North Carolina residents for more than 40 years. With a major demographic shift for the 23 westernmost counties of North Carolina,

particularly in the population segment above 60 years of age, growth in academic programs focusing on health promotion and illness prevention are of particular importance.

WCU will target resources to programs with the greatest success in educating health care professionals who ultimately practice in the regions with the greatest need.

Initiative 4.5.2.1: Implement Doctor of Physical Therapy Program (DPT) to address rapidly increasing need in the region for well-educated health professionals

WCU will transition its current Master of Physical Therapy Program to Doctor of Physical Therapy immediately upon approval from UNC General Administration. This is a critical issue because the professional accrediting organization has increased the number of graduate hours required for licensure. Competing institutions therefore have transitioned their programs to doctorates in physical therapy. This degree has now become the accepted credential for entry into the field by employers and clients alike. As a result of not having authority to offer the doctorate, WCU's applications have declined by nearly 60 percent. If the doctorate is not granted, the University faces the likelihood that this program will not be able to continue. This is a particularly difficult issue because of the rapidly increasing aged population in this region. It is expected that the population over age 60 will continue to expand rapidly, and therefore there is critical need for allied health professionals in all fields.

Summary of Implementation Strategies

- 1. Immediately implement DPT Program upon approval by General Administration*

Initiative 4.5.2.2: Develop and implement those curricula, research, and service programs that have been identified as meeting current (health informatics and gerontology) and future critical, allied-health needs in the region

Western North Carolina has several critical health-related issues. First, the population in the region is aging at a rate faster than the state as a whole, both because of changes in the indigenous population and patterns of in-migration. Second, there are extensive health issues associated with low income and rural poverty, including childhood obesity, diabetes, and more. Third, people in rural areas in Western North Carolina have significant drug abuse issues. Because WCU is the largest producer of allied health and nursing professionals in the western portion of the state, expansion of these health programs is critical to addressing core regional needs.

Summary of Implementation Strategies

- 1. Propose a Health Informatics Master's Degree*
- 2. As part of the annual Regional Outlook Report research, analyze health-related trends in the region*
- 3. Expand offerings in Hendersonville (e.g., allied health and gerontology) to meet regional needs of the aging population in the eastern portion of WCU's service region*

Initiative 4.5.2.3: Increase the number of Nurse Educator masters students and improve the performance of undergraduate nursing students to address the critical shortage of nurses in the region and state

Enhance the online Nurse Educator Program in order to increase the number of graduates who will be prepared and qualified to work as faculty in nursing programs at the community college level. Implement consultants' recommendations on improving undergraduate nursing curricula.

Summary of Implementation Strategies

- 1. Expand the School of Nursing options leading to a specialization in nursing education*
- 2. Make courses more accessible, using online and web-based technologies combined with geographically close faculty*
- 3. Improve measurable nursing education outcomes by providing students with experience in high-technology teaching methodologies such as high-fidelity simulation-training and Web-based environments*
- 4. Expand continuing education offerings for nurse educators to meet the N.C. Board of Nursing requirements*
- 5. Implement recommendations of Nursing Program consultants*

Recommendation 4.5.3 - Utilize Information to Improve Health and Wellness: UNC should lead in utilizing health information to improve health and wellness in North Carolina.

WCU's new College of Health and Human Sciences faculty will focus its engagement activities on the 17 counties of Western North Carolina. It will work with public health officials within the region to determine the most critical health care issues facing the WNC population and develop outreach programs to serve them.

See Initiative 4.5.2.2.

Table 5. Health (4.5) Initiatives

Initiative	Type (New or Existing – Program or Policy)	Key Strategies	Key Descriptors of Success	Key Barriers/Obstacles	Responsible Unit/Department	Implementation Timeline	Budget Source
4.5.1.1: Improve health and wellness in Western North Carolina with particular emphasis on issues related to aging and rural health care	New and Existing Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop Health Neighborhood ▪ Complete planning and implement Center for Health and Aging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bring Health Building online ▪ Implemented Center for Health and Aging ▪ Targets met for public/private partnerships in Health Neighborhood ▪ Improved regional access to healthcare 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Unclear ownership options for Center for Health and Aging facility 	Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration, Dean of Health and Human Sciences, Vice Chancellor for Advancement and External Affairs	Phased implementation – beginning Spring 2008	New, Existing, Public-Private partnerships, and Private Funding
4.5.2.1: Implement Doctor of Physical Therapy Program (DPT) to address rapidly increasing need in the region for well-educated health professionals	Existing and New Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implement DPT program upon approval 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Approved DPT ▪ Increased enrollment in Physical Therapy programs ▪ Increased Physical Therapy graduates ▪ Increased placement of Physical Therapy graduates in the region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ System policy regarding the nature of regional institutions 	Dean of Health and Human Sciences, Department Head of Physical Therapy, Dean of Graduate School	Unknown	Existing
4.5.2.2: Develop and implement those curricular, research, and service programs that have been identified as meeting current (health informatics and gerontology) and future critical allied health needs in the region.	New Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Propose Health Informatics Master's degree ▪ Analyze health related trends in region ▪ Expand health offerings in Hendersonville 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Approved Health Informatics degree ▪ Revised Regional Outlook Report ▪ Increased enrollment in health programs offered in Hendersonville 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Branch campus not yet approved 	Dean of Health and Human Sciences, Dean of Educational Outreach, Director of the Institute for the Economy and the Future	Phased implementation beginning Fall 2008; Phased implementation pending approval of branch campus	New, Existing, Reallocation and Enrollment Funding

Table 5. Health (4.5) Initiatives, Continued

Initiative	Type (New or Existing – Program or Policy)	Key Strategies	Key Descriptors of Success	Key Barriers/Obstacles	Responsible Unit/Department	Implementation Timeline	Budget Source
4.5.2.3: Increase the number of Nurse Educator Master's students and improve the performance of undergraduate nursing students to address the critical shortage of nurses in the region and state	Existing Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Expand School of Nursing options related to nursing education ▪ Make courses more accessible (technology, location) ▪ Utilize high-tech teaching methodologies ▪ Expand continuing education offerings ▪ Implement recommendations of nursing consultants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Nursing pass rate of at least 85% ▪ Increased Nurse Educator graduates ▪ Increased continuing education offerings ▪ Improved learning in undergraduate nursing program ▪ Increased licensure rates of undergraduate nurses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Extensive curricular restructuring across colleges required ▪ Limited clinical sites 	Dean of Health and Human Sciences, Dean of Arts & Sciences, Director of the School of Nursing	Immediate and continuing	Existing

F. Our Environment (4.6): UNC should assume a leadership role in addressing the state's energy and environmental challenges.



WCU will expand its focus on education and research tied to environmental sustainability with particular emphasis on biodiversity and land use.

The Southern Appalachian region surrounding WCU is one the world's biodiversity hotspots. In order for WCU to utilize its regional advantage, it will continue to implement a campus focus on sustainability and the environment. This will involve curricula that focus on biodiversity and environmental issues, management of new land development, and increased sustainability.

Recommendation 4.6.1 - Environmental Sustainability: UNC should embrace environmental sustainability as a core value among its institutions.

WCU has traditionally embraced environmental sustainability as a core value. As an engaged public university, WCU bears the responsibility of developing an educated citizenry to cope with significant public policy issues. Environmental sustainability is an issue of particular importance to Western North Carolina because of natural resources that include mountains, rivers, forests and abundant wildlife. As a result, WCU will continue to develop and implement energy solutions to reduce its carbon footprint and to create a comprehensive approach to sustainability.

Initiative 4.6.1.1: WCU will implement the STARS (Sustainability, Tracking and Rating System) accountability system to monitor its goal to become an environmentally conscious campus.

STARS is designed to create a measurable, comparable way of assessing sustainability at diverse institutions of higher education, to offer incentives for continuous improvement toward sustainability, and to provide a vehicle for sharing information about sustainability practices and performance. WCU will be one of the first institutions in the UNC System to implement STARS.

Summary of Implementation Strategies

- 1. Continue to implement and monitor progress on STARS*
- 2. Work with General Administration to change state law to allow energy savings to remain on campus and be reinvested in sustainability initiatives*

Recommendation 4.6.2 - Critical Environmental and Energy Issues: UNC should leverage its existing research expertise to address critical environmental and energy issues.

WCU's location and its adjacency to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, the Blue Ridge Parkway, and several national forests make WCU a natural center to focus on the environment. Therefore, WCU will expand *interdisciplinary research* addressing the complex interplay between social, economic, and environmental issues of the region, the state, and the nation. Of utmost importance will be WCU's ability to conduct research that provides innovative methods to manage the region's unique and highly valuable ecosystems during this time of unprecedented exurban development. Additionally, WCU will continue to leverage its institutional expertise to address statewide environmental issues, particularly those related to land use and shoreline development.

[See also response to Initiative 4.1.2.1]

Initiative 4.6.2.1: WCU will create a master's degree in Environmental Science focused on applied research to better address environmental issues in the western region and to take advantage of key institutional resources, including the Highlands Biological Station and the Southern Appalachian Biodiversity and Ecology Center

WCU's capabilities to conduct environmental research have increased substantially during the past five years. More than a dozen new faculty positions in environmental fields have been created, along with a number of laboratories equipped with state-of-the-art analytical equipment. WCU's environmental research differs from that of many other campuses by focusing predominantly on real-world problems facing the region and state and by involving large numbers of undergraduate students. The MS degree will pull together interdisciplinary elements and focus research on issues germane to the region. Further, it will utilize several existing interdisciplinary centers (e.g. Highlands Biological Research Station) to augment the learning and research opportunities for its students.

Summary of Implementation Strategies

1. Immediately pursue approval for MS in Environmental Science with General Administration

Initiative 4.6.2.2: Leverage institutional resources to address critical land use issues, including environmental reclamation, land use planning, and sustainable development.

Summary of Implementation Strategies

1. Expand the Master of Public Administration Degree to include land use planning and sustainable development

2. Create a specialization in environmental reclamation involving environmental science and construction management

3. Link the Program for the Study of Developed Shorelines with other UNC coastal and marine initiatives

Recommendation 4.6.3 - Community Awareness: UNC should increase community awareness of environmental and sustainability issues.

One of the key elements of the Stewards of Place model is livable communities. Livability is strongly grounded in environmental quality. Improving the environment requires civic leadership and economic resources. Therefore, WCU has a primary responsibility for working with the community to improve the region's environment.

Initiative 4.6.3.1: As part of its revision of general education, WCU will examine how to increase sustainability education for all students.

Summary of Implementation Strategies

1. Examine appropriate options to include sustainability issues in the Liberal Studies Program.

Initiative 4.6.3.2: Increase regional knowledge of sustainability through community outreach.

Summary of Implementation Strategies

- 1. Conduct non-credit workshops for local elected officials on sustainability and land use issues*
- 2. Develop continuing education certificates in land use management and sustainable development*
- 3. Examine outdoor science options at the undergraduate and graduate level for B-12 teachers in conjunction with Highlands Biological Station and the Southern Appalachian Biodiversity and Ecology Center*

Table 6. Environment (4.6) Initiatives

Initiative	Type (New or Existing – Program or Policy)	Key Strategies	Key Descriptors of Success	Key Barriers/Obstacles	Responsible Unit/Department	Implementation Timeline	Budget Source
4.6.1.1: WCU will implement the STARS (Sustainability, Tracking and Rating System) accountability system to monitor its goal to become an environmentally conscious campus.	New Program and Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implement STARS ▪ Change State law to allow energy savings to remain on campus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Achievement of minimum 3 star rating for STARS ▪ Retention of energy saving on campus ▪ Reduced energy consumption on campus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ State law 	Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance, Associate Vice Chancellor for Facilities Management, University Legislative Liaison	Immediate and in Long Session	Existing
4.6.2.1: WCU will create a Master's degree in Environmental Science focused on applied research to better address environmental issues in the western region and to take advantage of key institutional resources, including Highlands Biological Station and the Southern Appalachian Biodiversity and Ecology Center	New Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pursue approval for MS in Environmental Science 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Approved MS in environmental science ▪ Enrollment targets met 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ None 	Dean of Arts & Sciences, Dean of Graduate School	Spring 2009 for permission to plan	Existing and Enrollment Funding
4.6.2.2: Leverage institutional resources to address critical land use issues including environmental reclamation, land use planning, and sustainable development	Existing and collaborative programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Expand Master of Public Administration to include land use planning and sustainable development ▪ Create a specialization in environmental reclamation ▪ Link Program for Study of Developed Shorelines (PSDS) with other UNC coastal and marine initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase in number of MPA theses and projects that address land use planning and sustainable development ▪ Established specialization in environmental reclamation ▪ PSDS collaborations established with other UNC centers ▪ Community satisfaction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ None 	Dean of Arts & Sciences, Dean of Graduate School, Department Head of Political Science	Fall 2008 and continuing	Existing and Enrollment Growth

Table 6. Environment (4.6) Initiatives, Continued

Initiative	Type (New or Existing – Program or Policy)	Key Strategies	Key Descriptors of Success	Key Barriers/Obstacles	Responsible Unit/Department	Implementation Timeline	Budget Source
4.6.3.1: As part of its revision of general education, WCU will examine how to increase sustainability education for all students	New program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Examine appropriate options to include sustainability issues in Liberal Studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increased sustainability content in Liberal Studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Length of time to review Liberal Studies 	Assistant Vice Chancellor for Undergraduate Studies, Liberal Studies Oversight Committee	January 2009 until completion	Existing
4.6.3.2: Increase regional knowledge of sustainability through community outreach	Existing Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conduct workshops for local elected officials on sustainability and land use issues ▪ Develop continuing education certificates in land use management and sustainable development ▪ Examine outdoor science options at the undergraduate and graduate level for B-12 teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Local officials satisfaction ▪ Certificates implemented ▪ Enrollment targets in certification programs met ▪ Outdoor Science programs options implemented ▪ Increased regional knowledge of sustainability ▪ Participation targets for Outdoor Science options met 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ None 	Dean of Arts & Sciences, Associate Dean of Arts & Sciences, Dean of Education and Allied Professions, Department Head of Political Science	Spring 2009 and continuing	Existing

G. Outreach & Engagement (4.7): UNC should become more directly engaged with and connected to the people of North Carolina, its regions, and our state as a whole.



WCU will use the Boyer Model of Scholarship and the SACS-approved integrative, intentional learning model to encourage the application of research to regional issues.

Two of Western Carolina University's stated core values are to be a "major public resource for Western North Carolina" and to "prepare students to become lifelong learners and responsible citizens." In accordance with these values, WCU has been accepted to apply for the Carnegie Community Engagement Elective Classification. This classification signifies that a university integrates activities related to curricular engagement, outreach, and partnerships in its operation. The recent adoption of an integrated learning model (see Initiative 4.1.1.1) will augment engagement because it has higher expectations for student and faculty involvement in the region.

Recommendation 4.7.1 - Apply and Translate Scholarship: UNC should apply, translate, and communicate research and scholarship to broader audiences.

Initiative 4.7.1.1: Implement the Boyer Model of Scholarship campuswide.

WCU is implementing the Boyer model as the foundation for decisions regarding faculty evaluation, promotion, and tenure. The model recognizes that faculty may engage in worthwhile scholarly activities beyond "basic research," including activities focused on application of knowledge to help solve problems that face the community beyond the boundaries of the campus. Last year, WCU received Board of Governors' approval to implement the Boyer Model. This year, every academic unit is developing criteria for faculty evaluation aligned with the model. WCU is one of the first midsize or larger institutions in the nation – and the first UNC campus – that has adopted the Boyer Model. Adopting this model will encourage faculty to conduct more applied scholarship to resolve problems specific to the region.

Summary of Implementation Strategies

- 1. Finalize departmental plans to incorporate the criteria outlined in the Boyer Model*
- 2. Monitor TPR process to assure that Boyer Model is integrated into decision making*
- 3. Monitor merit process to assure that Boyer Model is integrated into decision making*
- 4. Seek "Engaged Institution" status from Carnegie Foundation*

Recommendation 4.7.2 - Strategic Plan for Scholarly Public Service: UNC should develop a strategic plan for scholarly public service on each campus that is detailed and specific in definition and scope.

The Boyer Model for faculty and the new integrated learning model for students are complementary approaches to motivating faculty and students to be engaged in scholarly public outreach through applied research and engaged learning activities. All disciplines will develop outreach programs related to their disciplinary content and research. WCU will affect the region through its portfolio of academic programs, engaged learning opportunities, and applied research and development (R&D). In recognition of emerging institutional strengths and specific regional issues, WCU will selectively focus its public engagement mission around five core areas: allied health, teacher education, business development, forensic sciences, and environmental sustainability.

Initiative 4.7.2.1: Utilize integrated learning (see Initiative 4.1.1.1) to focus student engagement on regional needs

As part of the University's integrative learning initiative, it will create an Office of Experiential Education. The Office of Experiential Education will be responsible for developing and maintaining a strategic plan for public engagement activities including co-ops, internships, international experiences, and service learning. In addition, the University has established a strong record in mentored undergraduate research. The integrative learning model requires mentored undergraduate research to be spread even more broadly throughout undergraduate curricula.

Summary of Implementation Strategies:

- 1. Create the Office of Experiential Education and reorganize existing related programs*
- 2. Develop internships with businesses, governmental and non-profit organizations*
- 3. Create a Council for Institutionalizing Undergraduate Research and Creative Scholarship*
- 4. Seek additional funding for faculty and student participation in undergraduate research and experiential education*

Recommendation 4.7.3 - Mechanism for Applied Research: UNC should create a mechanism for applying research and scholarship to address regional and statewide issues.

WCU has committed to applied research and development as a core university function through its new tenure, merit and promotion policies and through development of the Kimmel School. These initiatives have been discussed in detail in our response to Findings 4.1, 4.4, 4.5 and 4.7.

There are however, several critical policies both at the campus level and at the System level that will affect WCU's ability to effectively and efficiently implement applied research and development models.

Initiative 4.7.3.1: Address critical policy issues to facilitate applied research and development (R&D) that affects the region and the state of North Carolina

Summary of Implementation Strategies:

- 1. Review grants development and grants administration for possible revision and restructuring*
- 2. Work with General Administration to align summer funding and supplemental pay policies to encourage applied research*
- 3. Modify internal policies (e.g., faculty workload policy) to stimulate funded research and contracts*

Recommendation 4.7.4 - Communicate Resources: UNC should communicate its resources and expertise to wider audiences.

The University is a complex institution comprising talented people and significant physical resources. As a public institution, Western is challenged to find ways to help the people of the region find gateways to the University's vast resources. This challenge is made even more difficult in the western region because so few residents have experience with universities.

Initiative 4.7.4.1: Create and implement a variety of communication strategies to inform WCU's regional audience about University resources

Summary of Implementation Strategies:

- 1. Complete the University branding program to include an internal and external communication plan*
- 2. Develop a Speakers Bureau in the Office of Public Relations*
- 3. Continue to develop Western magazine as a vehicle for disseminating information about WCU's involvement in the region*
- 4. Encourage community groups to use campus resources*

Table 7. Outreach and Engagement (4.7) Initiatives

Initiative	Type (New or Existing – Program or Policy)	Key Strategies	Key Descriptors of Success	Key Barriers/Obstacles	Responsible Unit/Department	Implementation Timeline	Budget Source
4.7.1.1: Implement the Boyer Model of Scholarship campus wide	Existing Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Finalize departmental plans to incorporate Boyer criteria ▪ Monitor TPR process for Boyer compliance ▪ Monitor merit process for Boyer compliance ▪ Seek 'Engaged Institution' status from Carnegie Foundation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All departmental plans incorporate Boyer criteria ▪ Established controls on TPR and merit processes ▪ 'Engaged Institution' status received ▪ Increased amount of scholarly engagement activities by faculty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Traditional research culture in higher education 	Office of the Provost, Academic Deans	Immediate and continuing	Existing
4.7.2.1: Utilize integrated learning (see 4.1.1.1) to focus student engagement on regional need	New Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create Office of Experiential Education ▪ Develop internships ▪ Create Council for Institutionalizing Undergraduate Research and Creative Scholarship ▪ Seek funding for undergraduate research and experiential education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Office of Experiential Education established ▪ Increased number of internships and co-ops ▪ Increased participation in undergraduate research ▪ Increased funding for undergraduate research and experiential education ▪ Participation targets for internships and co-ops met 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ None 	Assistant Vice Chancellor for Undergraduate Studies, Dean of the Honors College	Immediate and continuing	Local Tuition, Reallocation and Existing
4.7.3.1: Address critical policy issues to facilitate applied research and development (R&D) that affects the region and the State of North Carolina	New Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review grants development and grants administration ▪ Align summer funding with supplemental pay policies ▪ Modify internal policies to stimulate research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increased grant activity ▪ State funding of summer semester ▪ Increased deliverables of applied R&D 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Internal and System policies ▪ Insufficient infrastructure to support redesign of grant administration 	Dean of Graduate School, Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance	Spring 2009 and continuing	New and Reallocation
4.7.4.1: Create and implement a variety of communication strategies to inform WCU's regional audience about University resources	New Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Complete University branding initiative ▪ Develop Speakers' Bureau ▪ Continue to develop <i>Western</i> magazine ▪ Encourage community groups to use campus resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ University adopts clear brand image ▪ Communication plans implemented ▪ Increased facilities utilization by community groups ▪ Increased use of faculty expertise by the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ None 	Vice Chancellor for Advancement and External Affairs	Current and continuing	Existing and Reallocation

Section 5: Changes to Internal Policies and Processes

Many administrative systems that were designed to manage business processes in the '70s, '80s and '90s are inadequate in the current rapidly changing environment. As WCU attempts to redesign business processes to respond to this current environment, it frequently finds policies and procedures both at the System and campus levels that reduce nimbleness and are counterintuitive, inefficient, and ineffective. To meet the 21st century demands, General Administration and WCU will find it critical to address deficiencies in key administrative functions and their related policies and procedures.

This is a particularly difficult issue because the state of North Carolina is competing nationally with other states and internationally with countries that have entirely different approaches to regulation and process administration. A balance must be found between “control” and “responsiveness.”

Recommendation 5.6 - *UNC should continue to seek efficient use of available resources in the fulfillment of its mission.*

Recent review by General Administration showed that WCU’s administrative cost per FTE student was the lowest in the UNC System. Compared with other UNC campuses, WCU will need to focus more on effectiveness than on cost savings in many areas. The focus at WCU has to be on improving management information systems, implementing effective electronic data systems, and enhancing financial control and reporting as the University continues to grow.

Initiative 5.6.1: Implement P.A.C.E.

The University will continue to implement P.A.C.E. seeking efficiencies in business practices.

Summary of Implementation Strategies:

- 1. Continue to implement potential efficiencies and fund reallocations through the annual budget process to increase institutional effectiveness*
- 2. Maintain P.A.C.E. web site to show progress*
- 3. Encourage the President’s Council on P.A.C.E. to review alternative public budgeting strategies that reduce audit exceptions, reduce overhead, and simplify the budgeting process*

Initiative 5.6.2: Establish an Administrative Program Review process

Following the existing model for Academic Program Review, the University will establish and implement a comprehensive administrative review process, including an internal self-study and a review by external experts. The intention of the program review is to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the administrative units that serve University constituencies.

Although the focus of the review is program improvement, other possible outcomes include consolidation, enhancement and phase out.

Summary of Implementation Strategies

- 1. Establish policy, guidelines, procedures, and schedule for Administrative Program Review*
- 2. Establish procedures for implementing and monitoring the recommendations that result from the review process, especially those that have budget implications*

Initiative 5.6.3: Implement the Ernst & Young recommendations regarding effectiveness of institutional systems

As indicated at the beginning of Section 5, WCU's administrative systems can no longer support its complex functions. Ernst & Young is recommending major improvement both in System and campus processes. As a result, major changes will be made in such key areas as financial reporting, human resource operations, payroll, and use of technology. The Ernst & Young dashboard will provide important management information to allow senior administrators to judge business process effectiveness and efficiency.

Summary of Implementation Strategies

- 1. Implement the Ernst & Young recommendations*

Recommendation 5.7 - UNC should encourage and facilitate interdisciplinary and inter-institutional collaboration among its institutions.

WCU will address administrative roadblocks at the institutional level in order to foster interdisciplinary collaboration, as well as advancing new inter-institutional projects. The University intends to focus on initiatives to promote collaborative educational exchanges within the UNC System and with its international partners. It is important both at the institutional and System level that a true cost-benefit analysis accompanies any proposed inter-institutional or program collaboration.

Initiative 5.7.1: Revise institutional policies and make recommendations regarding System policies to facilitate collaborative research and educational programs

Although WCU has several practices that interfere with internal collaboration, most of the obstacles that make inter-institutional collaboration difficult are at the System level. WCU has already begun to modify outdated practices to encourage internal collaboration and is working through the CAO group to modify System practices and policies to encourage inter-institutional program collaboration. The most important of those initiatives are listed below. Parentheses (I) or (S) indicate whether the issue is at the institutional or System level.

Summary of Implementation Strategies

- 1. Advocate for per credit hour charges across the UNC System institutions (S)*

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2. *Modify accounting practices to allocate SCHs by faculty member rather than course prefix to promote interdisciplinary campus initiatives (I)*
 3. *Advocate for elimination of differential charges for distance and resident credit programs (S)*
 4. *Advocate for distance education to be integrated as a core university function (S) (see also Initiative 4.2.1.2)*
 5. *Work through WCU's centers, such as Highlands Biological Station, Carolinas Phototonics Consortium, Center for Rapid Product Realization and Southern Appalachian Biodiversity and Ecology Center, to establish collaborative programs and research opportunities (I)*
 6. *The WCU Office of Research and Administration will adopt the RAMSeS Grant Administration System developed by UNC-Chapel Hill (I)*

Recommendation 5.8 - UNC should continue efforts to establish accountability and performance measures that ensure and demonstrate transparently its success in carrying out its missions.

The success of the University and its ability to respond to opportunities depends upon a solid foundation of inputs and outputs that support its mission. WCU's Strategic Planning Committee is charged with monitoring and reporting the overall performance of the University within a context of both internal and external influences.

Initiative 5.8.1: WCU will continue to establish and publicize key performance data on institutional quality

WCU has been on the forefront in establishing public measures of accountability, including the Collegiate Learning Assessment, the National Survey of Student Engagement, and the Voluntary System of Accountability. The institution, as part of its comprehensive strategic planning efforts, will employ a set of public dashboard indicators to communicate institutional quality to University constituents.

Summary of Implementation Strategies:

1. *Continue to implement the Voluntary System of Accountability to make institutional performance data more transparent to consumers*
2. *Refine and begin staged implementation of WCU Planning Database to better align institutional planning and budgeting priorities*
3. *Develop and publicize an institutional report card, composed of 12 to 15 performance indicators that measure the health of the institution*

Table 8. Section 5 Initiatives

Initiative	Type (New or Existing – Program or Policy)	Key Strategies	Key Descriptors of Success	Key Barriers/Obstacles	Responsible Unit/Department	Implementation Timeline	Budget Source
5.6.1: Implement P.A.C.E.	Existing Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implement efficiencies and reallocation of funds ▪ Maintain P.A.C.E. website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Targets met for reallocation of funds ▪ Improved institutional effectiveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ WCU's low administrative costs per FTE student limits options 	Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance	Ongoing	Existing
5.6.2: Establish an Administrative Program Review process	New Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish policies, guidelines, and procedures ▪ Establish procedures for implementing and monitoring recommendations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improved client satisfaction ▪ Improved effectiveness of administrative units 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ None 	Office of the Provost, Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance, Office of Assessment	Fall 2009 and continuing	Reallocation
5.6.3: Implement the Ernst & Young (E&Y) recommendations regarding effectiveness of institutional systems	New Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implement E&Y recommendations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improved dashboard indicators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ None 	Office of the Chancellor, Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance, Associate Provost for Information Technology	Fall 2008 and continuing	New
5.7.1: Revise institutional policies and make recommendations regarding System policies to facilitate collaborative research and educational programs	New Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Advocate for per credit hours charges across UNC (S) ▪ Modify accounting practices to allocate SCHs by faculty member (I) ▪ Advocate for elimination of differential charges for distance and resident credit (S) ▪ Advocate for distance education to be integrated as a core function (S) ▪ Work through WCU centers to establish collaborative programs and research opportunities (I) ▪ Adopt the RAMSeS grant administration system (I) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implemented credit hour charges ▪ Increased interdisciplinary and inter-institutional collaboration ▪ Distance education fully integrated ▪ Improved effectiveness and reporting functionality in grants administration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Current policy framework 	Office of the Provost	Immediate and ongoing	Existing

Table 8. Section 5 Initiatives, Continued

Initiative	Type (New or Existing – Program or Policy)	Key Strategies	Key Descriptors of Success	Key Barriers/Obstacles	Responsible Unit/Department	Implementation Timeline	Budget Source
5.8.1: WCU will continue to establish and publicize key performance data on institutional quality	New Policy and Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implement Voluntary System of Accountability ▪ Begin staged implementation of WCU Planning Database ▪ Develop and publicize an institutional report card 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improved transparency and accountability ▪ Improved institutional reputation ▪ Increased linkages between strategic planning and budgeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ None 	Office of the Provost, Office of Assessment, Office of Institutional Research and Planning, Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance	Immediate and continuing	Existing and Reallocation