

**Columbia State Community College
Project Report on 2000-2005 Strategic Goals
October 11, 2005**

Strategic Goal One

Raise the level of educational attainment within the college's service area through increased access and retention.

Columbia State addressed this goal during 2000-2005 by increasing enrollment, reducing barriers to access, and increasing the number of conferred degrees and certificates.

Columbia State headcount increased 10.2 percent to 4,697 from fall, 2000 to fall, 2004. With regard to underrepresented populations, minority enrollment increased 16.8 percent to 347; male enrollment increased 13.9 percent to 1,608; and non-traditional enrollment increased 9.2 percent to 1,785.

We continued efforts to reduce barriers to access during 2000-2005. For example, we implemented an evening/weekend nursing program in May, 2004. The pilot program, a contract class for Maury Regional Hospital and National Healthcare Corporation, made it our nursing program more accessible for working adults. Our University Center continued partnerships with several universities to make needed baccalaureate programs available in our service area. Our participation in the Regents Online Degree Program reduced barriers to access and grew enrollment by 362 students. We also developed an accelerated business management program that was implemented in fall, 2005.

We conferred 2,536 degrees during 2000-2004, with 561 conferred during calendar year 2004. Our fall-to-fall retention rate for 2004-2005 (68 percent) exceeded the state average (62.3 percent) for community colleges. Our six-year persistence to graduation rate for first-time, full-time students (31.6 percent) exceeded the state average (25.1 percent) for community colleges.

Strategic Goal Two

Facilitate the seamless transfer of students through program to program articulation with the universities to which Columbia State students most frequently transfer.

We addressed this goal during 2000-2005 by continuing to work with TBR and other institutions to improve articulation. During this period, TBR approved a general education core of 41 hours. We identified and received approval for approximately 50 courses which will be accepted for general education requirements at all TBR institutions. We began working with other TBR institutions in discipline task forces to designate courses that meet transfer requirements for the majority of majors in the TBR

system. In addition, we developed program-to-program articulation agreements with Austin Peay and Tennessee Tech in both general transfer and applied science programs. We also developed articulation agreements with several private institutions, including Belmont University, Bethel College, Cumberland University, Martin Methodist University and the University of Phoenix.

Strategic Goal Three

Enhance academic excellence by strengthening student achievement in general education.

We addressed this goal in 2000-2005 by concentrating efforts on raising student proficiency in critical thinking. During 2000-2005 we developed critical thinking program objectives for all 18 degree and certificate programs. We also developed activities for at least one course in each program. We appointed a critical thinking committee to implement a “critical thinking across the curriculum” initiative that encouraged faculty to emphasize critical thinking within their courses. The committee developed and implemented a professional development plan for faculty, acquired materials, developed newsletters, and conducted other activities that introduced critical thinking as an important component of student achievement.

Academic program directors reported that the increased emphasis on critical thinking had made both faculty and students more aware of its importance. All but one program director stated that student critical thinking skills had increased. Ninety-one percent of faculty reported that they had modified or added activities to their courses to enhance critical thinking. One faculty member stated that “the most rewarding activity related to critical thinking was the fact that the professional development activities caused the faculty to think critically about their own teaching methodologies.” In addition, 81 percent of faculty reported that students’ critical thinking skills had improved.

Our students’ ETS Academic Profile scores, which measure critical thinking and other general education skills, fluctuate around the national mean. We will monitor scores and expect to see improvement as we further develop and integrate critical thinking activities into the curriculum.

Strategic Goal Four

Assist communities in meeting their workforce and life-long learning needs by ensuring that college programs meet community needs.

We addressed this goal during 2000-2005 by implementing new criminal justice and horticulture programs, developing new competencies for computer information systems and business technology programs, and developing an accelerated business management program. We also continued efforts to expand our business and industry training programs. Through a combination of direct service and collaborative arrangements, we

increased the number of business and industry training participants by 23.6 percent to 2,351. Partnerships with the Governor's Highway Safety Office and Tennessee District Attorney contributed to this increase by helping us fund and deliver new training programs to the law enforcement community. We also partnered with local law enforcement agencies to develop a noncredit in-service training program.

Other workforce development achievements included a 100 percent pass rate by radiological technology graduates and 94 percent pass rate by nursing graduates on their respective licensure exams; an increase from six to 46 respiratory care students; and 96 percent placement rate for career program graduates.

We took another important step toward this goal by conducting market research that identified service needs for the counties in our region. Research findings suggested that we further develop programs and services in Williamson County, strengthen business and industry training, and develop programs that are more accessible to nontraditional students. We are addressing these findings in our 2005-2010 strategic plan.

Strategic Goal Five

Implement and support technology applications that will increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the instructional program, student support services, and institutional and fiscal management.

We made major strides in implementing and supporting technology applications during 2000-2005. Early in the planning period we installed the network infrastructure needed to support needed technology applications. We also placed instructional labs and desktop computers on a two-year hardware and software evaluation/replacement schedule.

In 2002 we developed a strategic focus report as part of our institutional self-study. The report recommended specific technology-based actions that would increase the effectiveness and efficiency of institutional management, instructional delivery and enrollment management. In 2003, we developed an Academic Services Technology Plan. These documents have played a significant role in our efforts to implement and support technology applications.

The Faculty Instructional Technology Training Center, established in 2002-2003, was an important step toward providing needed support for technology applications. The center provides training, mentors, and other services to help faculty incorporate technology into academic programs. These efforts are paying off. For example, 80 percent of faculty reported that they use web-based communication to interact with students. This is a 54.7 percent increase since 2000-2001. In addition, 31.4 percent of returning faculty and 28.6 percent of newly hired faculty stated that they have moved beyond web pages and use WebCT as a means of communicating with students and managing courses. Twenty-two percent of faculty delivered courses electronically in 2004-2005, up from 9.8 percent in 2000-2001.

We made major improvements in instructional technology during 2000-2005, particularly in health sciences. These include additional instructional presentation equipment, a ventilator for respiratory care, digital upgrade for x-ray equipment used by radiologic technology and veterinary technology, and additional emergency medical technology equipment. We also developed a new networking laboratory for our computer information systems program.

We initiated a “one-stop shop” student services model in our newly renovated Jones Student Center. The model included a cyber center with 17 computer stations for students to register for courses, research transfer schools, pay fees online, review transcripts, and check email. We placed computers in the student services area of extended campuses for the same purpose.

We began implementing the financial module of the Banner administrative system in 2005 and are proceeding with subsequent Banner modules. Banner implementation is an important part of our 2005-2010 strategic plan.

Strategic Goal Six

Maintain the college's reputation for high quality by recruiting and retaining a diverse faculty and staff committed to the comprehensive mission of the college and dedicated to meeting the needs of all of its students.

During 2000-2005 we addressed this goal by implementing a staffing plan, implementing an equitable salary structure with planned salary adjustments, expanding professional development opportunities for faculty and staff, and stressing the importance of our mission in guiding decisions.

With regard to staffing, full-time faculty produced close to 70 percent of student credit hours in each academic discipline in 2004-2005. This exceeded our 2005-2010 performance standard (60 percent).

The salary structure, developed for the college by William M. Mercer Inc., provided job-specific information on college positions, reviewed job classifications to ensure consistency, compiled market data to establish the college's competitive position, and developed a grade structure and associated pay ranges. The structure has played an important role in attracting and retaining quality employees.

The establishment of the Faculty Instructional Technology Training Center was a major professional development initiative during 2000-2005. The FITT Center provides faculty training in developing and teaching internet, hybrid and web-enhanced courses. Related professional development initiatives included the Faculty Technology Mentoring Program and the Instructional Design Team. The mentoring program is a peer-to-peer faculty network that provides technical support in online course management, discipline

specific software, and core computer competencies. The design team, consisting of faculty who are experienced in web-course development and pedagogy, helps faculty develop and teach online and web-enhanced courses. We also established a professional development website that includes a conference and workshop calendar, solicits faculty and staff professional development needs, and provides links to online training opportunities.

Strategic Goal Seven

Provide and maintain the physical facilities necessary to support the educational and public service activities of the college

During 2000-2005, we addressed this goal through facility planning, construction, renovation and maintenance.

We implemented a major renovation of the Jones Student Center. This renovation accompanied organizational changes that streamlined student services and established a “one-stop shop” on the Columbia campus.

We used Maury Regional Hospital funds to renovate the Walter Nursing Building on the Columbia Campus. This provided an additional classroom and laboratory for respiratory care and updated the nursing laboratory. Movement of the respiratory care program to the Nursing Building, in turn, allowed the physics/physical sciences laboratory to be moved to a larger and more appropriate room.

The opening of the Waymon L. Hickman Building in fall 2001 provided state of the art facilities and equipment for music, art, theater, mass communications and Spanish. It also provided three training rooms and an administrative suite for the Center for Economic and Community Development.

Other facility improvements during the period included HVAC upgrades in several buildings, a Williamson County Center renovation, a chemistry lab renovation, and roofing projects for the Webster, Pryor and Clement Buildings. We also completed a signage program on the Columbia campus. We began preparing for the 2005-2010 planning cycle by completing a space utilization study for the Columbia campus and updating the college’s master plan.