

North Carolina Wesleyan College
2012-2015 Strategic Plan
Creating America's Next Great College

The Strategic Plan in Context

The 2012-2015 North Carolina Wesleyan College Strategic Plan is an initiative that began in the Fall 2011 semester. At that time, President Jim Gray formed the Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) with various groups across campus represented in the Committee's membership, namely Trustees (David Oettinger, Michael Pratt), administrators (Bill Allen, Evan Duff, Jim Gray, Jay Stubblefield, Randy Williams), Faculty (Pamela Patterson, Fred Sanborn, Kathy Wilson), Staff (Larry Kelley, Cliff Sullivan), and students (Megan Simpson, Tammy Wrazz). The SPC has been chaired by Randy Williams and has met weekly since October 19, 2011. Committee members have worked diligently and collaboratively within the constraints of a short timeframe, motivated by the shared goal to improve the College in meaningful ways. Further, the SPC has sought throughout the planning process to strike a balance between the practical and the aspirational.

What follows is the SPC's initial outline for the Strategic Plan. In examining this outline, it is critical to understand that the plan is not complete at this stage. What appears here is an internal, working document, subject to continued work by the SPC and further input from campus stakeholders. It should also be understood that whenever possible, the SPC has attempted to make data-driven decisions. Thus, supporting documentation and data appear in appendices for some goals. However, given the firm deadline for this stage of the plan, it was not possible to provide documentation in all instances. It is intended that the final version of the Strategic Plan will contain a full range of supporting data. In addition, the final plan should include specific tasks designed to help achieve the goals that have been set. Further investigation is also needed to more accurately estimate timelines and costs. Additionally, there should be opportunity for Faculty, Staff, Trustees (and possibly students and alumni) to offer suggestions before the plan is finalized.

The SPC recommends that the process be concluded April 27, 2012 when the plan is approved by the Board of Trustees.

Subsequently, it is recommended that the plan and Wesleyan's progress towards plan implementation be reviewed annually. The Vice President for Advancement and Strategy will lead that effort along with the President.

Vision Statement

One of the first tasks that the SPC undertook was composing a vision statement. The vision statement is intended to guide the Strategic Plan, and indeed the College, through the next three years. It is also hoped that this vision will inspire and support individuals across campus in

making significant improvements in the coming years. In addition, the vision reflects and sustains the mission of the College to prepare students for professional advancement, life-long learning, and responsible participation in their communities. The vision statement (subject to possible further revision) that was adopted by the SPC is as follows:

North Carolina Wesleyan College strives to become a diverse and dynamic community of learning in which student-centered support empowers students, faculty, and staff to have a positive, meaningful impact in the world.

Within this vision statement, there are four pivotal concepts: *diverse*, *dynamic*, *student-centered support*, and *impact*; each is detailed below as it applies to NCWC and the Strategic Plan.

- For some years, NCWC has been one of the more ethnically diverse small colleges in the Southeast, with large populations of both African-American and Caucasian students. In more recent years, the College has seen significant growth in its international student population. This diversity is viewed as a strength and as a point of distinction. The Strategic Plan includes mechanisms to further develop, support, and academically prepare an ethnically and internationally *diverse* student population.
- An ongoing challenge for NCWC is to employ current practices that yield success in the evolving marketplace of higher education. The Strategic Plan includes methods to allow the college to become more nimble and *dynamic* in responding to external trends in areas such as teaching and learning, technology, academics, enrollment, and finance.
- There are many success stories of Wesleyan students who have thrived with individualized support from faculty and staff. Many current students are in need of such guidance in order to succeed. However, recent years have demonstrated a need for increased organizational commitment to individualized student support at NCWC. The Strategic Plan includes means for allowing NCWC to become known as a community of learning where college-wide *student-centered support* is successfully sustained in a way that encourages all students to be successful.
- One of the most important aspects of college education is that it has the potential to change lives. This is especially true in the experiences of many who attend NCWC, particularly those who are first-generation college students and those with a strong financial need. The College, being situated in economically distressed Eastern North Carolina, also has tremendous potential to positively impact those in the surrounding area. Thus, the Strategic Plan includes elements that support students, faculty, and staff in making a positive, meaningful *impact* in their classrooms, on their campus, in their communities, in their families, and in their own lives.

Strategic Theme and Priority Areas

With the vision statement in mind, the SPC determined that many of the College's current challenges and most of its future aspirations revolve around **creating an academic environment that fosters student persistence and success** hence the overarching strategic theme.

It was further determined that creating this academic environment involves six priority areas: 1) **Academic Excellence**, 2) **Distinctiveness/Brand**, 3) **Enrollment & Retention**, 4) **Facilities/Physical Plant/Technology**, 5) **Faculty/Staff Welfare**, 6) **Financial Strength**. In the outline that follows, each of these areas is addressed with regard to goals, units/persons responsible for meeting these goals, estimated timelines, estimated costs, and estimated completion dates. These priority areas and their accompanying goals were not placed in order of importance. It was determined by the SPC that this should be the task of the President, the Vice Presidents, and/or the Trustees.