

# Growing Opportunity

Framing the 2010 - 2013

## Strategic Plan

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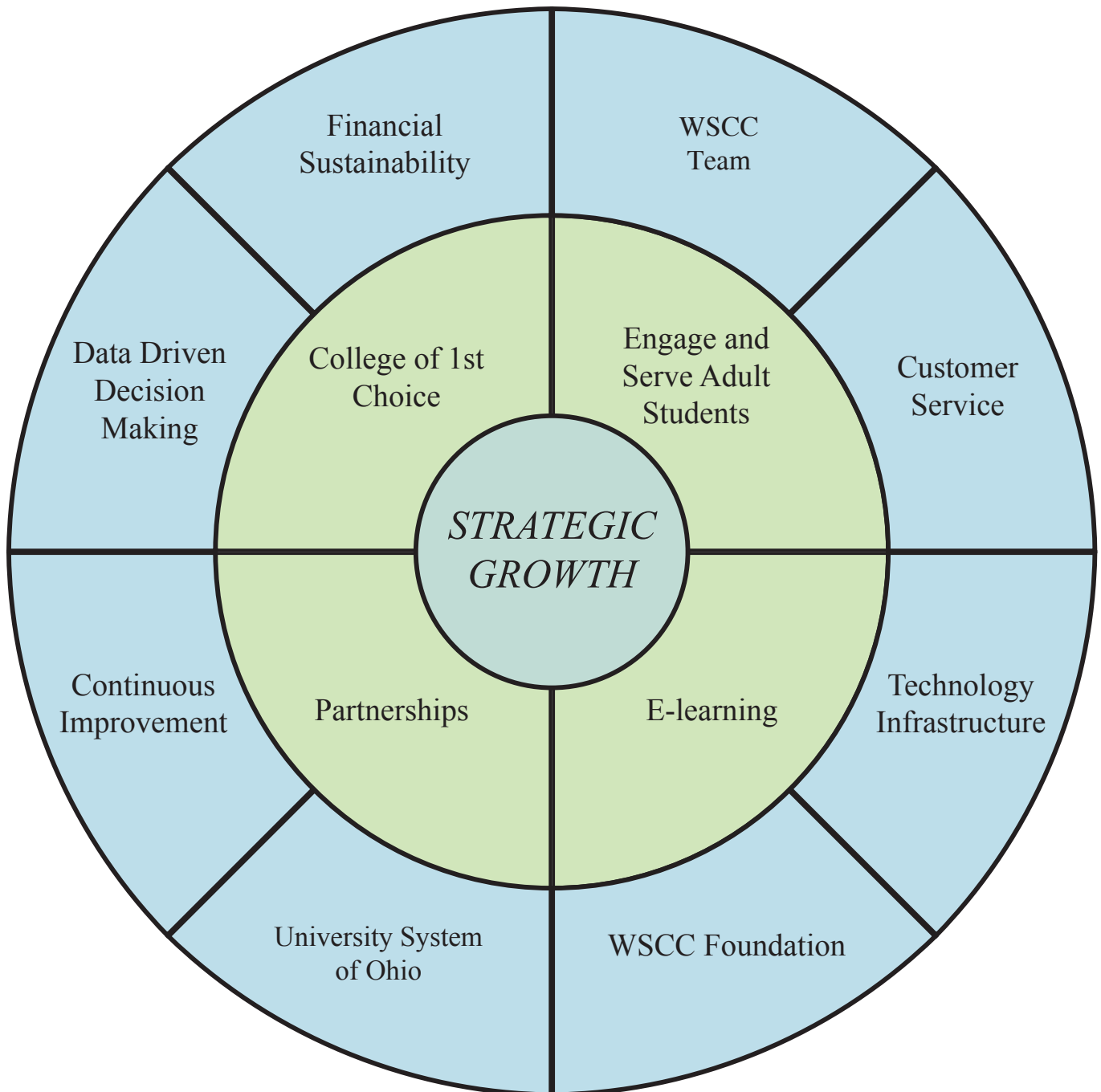


**Washington State**

COMMUNITY COLLEGE

# *Growing Opportunity*

*Strategic Plan 2010 - 2013*





# Growing Opportunity

## Framing the 2010 - 2013 Strategic Plan

As the expectations and challenges of Ohio's institutions of higher education grow in importance, the value of having a road map to guide our organization has also increased.

This is your introduction to the Strategic Plan for Washington State Community College. Developed by the President's Strategic Team with input from faculty, staff, Trustees, Foundation Board members and community constituents, the plan will provide structure for decision making during the next three academic/fiscal years (2010 – 2013), a period which will be heavily reflective of the challenges of the state and local economies.

Although the times are challenging, we have chosen a title for the plan which reflects our belief that education offers hope and it can make the future brighter for the individuals, families, communities and economies we serve. Growing Opportunity is where we want to focus for the near future. We believe there is opportunity for the college to grow its programs and offerings, to reach more individuals who choose to grow their skills and knowledge to transfer credits, change careers, find a job or simply embrace learning for personal growth.

The plan is developed around a central theme – Strategic Growth. There are four Core Initiatives that direct us to attract and serve students (traditional and non-traditional) who are not currently choosing us by learning more about them and better meeting their needs; to prioritize continued partnerships as means to reach more students; and to elevate e-learning to bring opportunity to students far beyond our physical locale.

In addition to the Core Initiatives, the three-year focus includes eight Operational Initiatives that acknowledge the systemic requirements for the plan's success. It will be through the efforts of the entire organization and all of the resources we have that Washington State will establish and fulfill the 2010-2013 Strategic Plan.

The Strategic Planning process began in early fall with the engagement of Mike Schmidt of Cramer and Associates. The Strategic Team reviewed the college's previous planning documents representing 2004-2006 and 2007-2009. That was followed by a review of strategic plans from other Ohio community colleges and a variety of documents and information sources which helped shape the conversation and thought process. They included WSCC data points and national comparisons such as results of the Community College Student Survey of Engagement, the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction study, WSCC's annual student satisfaction survey and AQIP feedback.

The initial draft document carried forward language from the prior document. Six key Pillars with multiple sub-Priorities were shared with various groups including the President's Cabinet, Board of Trustees and Foundation Board. The President's Cabinet conducted a SWOT analysis on the content of the document.

At the same time the strategic plan was being developed, the Strategic Team was also developing. The planning process was started in the fall by the President, Chief Academic Officer and Chief Information Officer. By the time it was completed the team was also complete with the addition in October of the Chief Enrollment Management Officer, the Chief Finance Officer in December, and the Executive Director of Workforce Development in January.

It should come as no surprise that as new individuals joined the team they brought new ideas and experiences which led to expanded thought processes, conversations and ways of thinking about how the strategic plan would best reflect the next three years of the college.

In parallel, our consultant conducted a series of conversations to gather input around the general focus of the Pillars and Priorities. The first conversations were with faculty and staff, followed by our Trustees and Foundation Board in a joint session. Lastly, we held discussions with leaders from the health care field, business and industry, agency/community, other education entities, and from Morgan County. Review and consideration of information from the respective groups led to the creation of Growing Opportunities, but the more critical use of that information and ideas will come into play as the strategies and tactics are developed in respective divisions and departments.

After the first of the year, what started as a vague sense of dissatisfaction led the group to begin a new conversation; the “plan” was an admirable list of projects and goals, but would it direct decision making? How could it be more strategic? Because growth is key to success we began discussion around a new question – what will help us grow? But, because head-count and FTE are not the only ways to grow, we added a second question -- what other ways can we create or free up resources (e.g. how can we become more efficient, how can we use our resources more effectively?)

The result is Growing Opportunity. What is outlined here is a framework, a structure that will go next to the departments and divisions who, with their respective roles in mind, will craft the strategies, tactics and measurable outcomes to be implemented over the next three years. The plan will include current efforts, the expansion of ongoing projects as well as the development of new ideas. It will be dynamic. If we have to step away from an idea or add an idea we have that flexibility.

We look forward to your feedback today and over the months and years as we work together to serve our students and our community.

## Core Theme

# Strategic Growth

The Core Theme for the next three years is growth but, more specifically, it must be strategic.

Growth is easily understood -- more students, more programs, more businesses and industries served, but growth for growth's sake is a willy-nilly process that can end up being counter-productive or even negative. The 12 elements of Growing Opportunity – 4 core initiatives and 8 operating initiatives – are the points which will help us decide what new ideas will be implemented and how available resources will be expended for current requirements and priorities over the next three academic years, including our year of transition from quarters to semesters.

Some of these elements will be very critical. Every decision must be reviewed in light of Financial Sustainability, but building the WSCC Team will be the top priority as it is the key to making all other success possible. Many of the elements are interrelated such as e-Learning which depends on Technology Infrastructure as does the ability to generate information for Data-Driven Decision Making. Customer Service and Continuous Improvement both support every aspect of the Core Initiatives – College of First Choice, Serving Adult Students, Partnerships and e-Learning -- where the key strategies for growth will reside.

The Washington State Community College Foundation offers a unique opportunity for supporting students, programs and all of the resources needed to provide them, with their ability to reach into the community for friend and fund raising and to provide a conduit for grants and gifts.

The University System of Ohio is guiding the state's college and universities and WSCC is striving to exceed the growth goals we have set in response to their accountabilities.

## Enrollment Growth Targets

(As submitted to the University System of Ohio)

- 2010-2011 +3.5 percent
- 2011-2012 +4.0 percent
- 2012-2013 +3.0 percent (anticipated decrease due to Quarter to Semester conversion)

*These targets are considered minimum growth.*

## Core Initiatives

# College of First Choice for High School Graduates

Becoming a college of first choice is vital to increasing the numbers of traditional-aged students at Washington State. As an institution of higher education that offers both technical and transfer degrees, Washington State has the potential to serve virtually any high school graduate within our local market. Undoubtedly, being a first choice for high school graduates signifies that students have recognized the benefits of a Washington State education and believe that we are the best choice to help them achieve their post secondary goals.

The idea that WSCC becomes a college of first choice is bold. It implies that Washington State should become a college that students plan to attend. It will change the way that students, parents, and guidance counselors view the community college experience. To accomplish this goal, Washington State will need to reinforce the quality message to prospective students and develop specific recruitment plans which are aimed at promoting technical as well as transfer programs. The college will also need to be more aggressive in delivering its message and creating a call-to-action among students. Washington State is an open enrollment institution with no deadlines so it is incredibly important to create a timeline for students and give them incentives for taking action.

There has already been progress made towards a new recruitment ideology at Washington State. The Admissions Office currently offers Priority Enrollment as an incentive to high school seniors who apply to Washington State by December 1. The Priority Enrollment Process gives students priority access to all areas of the enrollment process including financial aid, assessment testing, and advising. Other strategies to support this core initiative of becoming a first choice college include:

## Key Actions:

- Conduct an extensive evaluation of our scholarship program to understand the best way to market and allocate our scholarship funds to recruit and retain traditional-aged students.
- Develop a more systematic way of tracking our students' outcomes for use in recruitment.
- Expand the existing Priority Enrollment initiative and develop additional strategies for the junior and senior year time line.
- Develop an integrated recruitment strategy targeting high school students and their parents that focuses on the messages of quality, affordability, and outcomes, including transfer and career opportunities at both the technical and transfer level.
- Involve partners in recruitment, including guidance counselors, teachers, WSCC alumni, four-year institutions, and local businesses.

# Engage and Serve Adult Students

Of the 230,000 new students target by the University System of Ohio's Strategic Plan, we know the majority will be adults (age 25 +). This age group is also key to WSCC's growth. We must encourage many more non-traditional students to return to school, but at the same time we know that many families are facing financial challenges that limit them severely. Because we believe that education is a key path to increasing earning power and strengthening the Mid-Ohio Valley's economy we must find ways to reach out and help adults become students and reach their potential.

The non-traditional student is much different to recruit than their traditional-aged counterparts. These adult learners often take several years or more to enroll after making their initial inquiry. Returning to school is not easy for many non-traditional students. They often must retool their academic basics, overcome issues of self-esteem and family resistance to higher education while juggling jobs, extended families and financial concerns. An important aspect of WSCC's Strategic Plan will be to create an environment that understands the limitations and motivation of these adults and welcomes, supports, retains, and leads to graduation or other satisfactory resolution of their educational goals. To do this, we will employ several strategies.

## Key Actions:

- Assign a recruiter specifically to the potential adult student who will be charged with cultivating the market and managing the recruitment funnel.
- Develop an integrated recruitment strategy focused on adult students that addresses the common roadblocks to enrolling (ie. job/family commitments, finances, self-confidence).
- Align the marketing plan to support adult student recruitment initiatives which includes utilizing the website and social media as a primary means of contact.
- Continue to expand online, blended, and interactive video learning options in order to provide classes when and where non-traditional students can fit college into their already busy schedules.
- Research and better understand the needs of part-time and other non-traditional students, and take steps to connect with and engage them in new ways, particularly in the evenings and on weekends.
- Assist each non-traditional student to clearly define his or her educational goals and skill set, and leverage current and new support and retention strategies, including developmental education and Adult Basic Literacy Education, to help them achieve those goals.

# Partnerships

In challenging economic times, we value partnerships and collaborative efforts as a way of maximizing opportunity while minimizing cost. By sharing facilities and programs we can offer students a wider variety of educational options and eliminate duplication of effort and equipment.

Our focus on this area parallels an increasing emphasis on partnerships deriving from the University System of Ohio. From partnering to provide transfer of credit to sharing unique programs and business and IT systems to joint purchases for prescription drugs and copier systems, the USO is modeling partnering for us all. The shared focuses of partnering being efficiencies leading to cost savings and non-duplication of effort.

The broad mission of community colleges defines the necessity for partnering. Without partnerships we could not begin to serve the area business and industry base with tailored training often supported by state training grants or provide academic programs, serving local employers, often supported by agency or company funding. On the academic side we partner with high schools to pull students into two-year degrees and push them on to baccalaureate delivering partners.

The Strategic Plan calls for building on current partnerships while seeking new opportunities for collaboration.

## Key Actions:

- Expand program sharing opportunities with Belmont Technical College, Zane State College, and the Rio Grande Community College and take a leadership role in forming a Southeastern Ohio Higher Education Program Sharing Network.
- Continue to expand our partnerships with the Washington County Career Center to include additional shared programs such as Cisco Systems.
- Build partnerships with area high schools and offer WSCC classes on every high school campus in Washington and Morgan Counties using the on-site dual enrollment funding option for cost sharing.
- Work with the IBEW to provide a seamless Associate of Science degree pathway to electrical trade apprentices.
- Expand our relationships with business and industry to create new co-op and internship opportunities for WSCC students.
- Continue to build a seamless pathway to college success by working with our Adult Basic Literacy Education partners on the WSCC campus and at the Morgan Learning Center.
- Work with existing business and industry contacts to form internships and co-ops for our opportunities for our students.
- Identify partners for offering life-long learning classes for adults.



# e - Learning

To grow the institution and our enrollment, we need to find new ways to recruit and serve new students within and beyond our service district. We must invest in and expand our e-Learning initiatives to accomplish this goal. Our current enrollment in e-Learning classes proves the demand for distance learning classes exists. Over 68 percent of our current student body is enrolled in at least one e-Learning class with the online sections the first to fill during registration. The availability of e-Learning, any time day or night, allows our students to take more classes than would otherwise be possible with fixed schedule, face-to-face classes. This also frees up valuable campus resources that can be used for other purposes.

The first step in this strategic initiative is to prepare for and offer a fully-online degree. We are auditing our internal processes, assuring they are ready for students to receive and manage their education completely online. We are preparing to submit to the Higher Learning Commission a proposal to make Industrial Process Technology our first online degree. This degree may be part of a statewide, program sharing network.

Our strategy must go beyond content and course offerings. We must prepare our faculty and staff to serve e-Learning students in a new way. To ensure our student's success, we must engage them via interactive, online experiences. We will increase the amount of multi-media content within our e-Learning classes, provide training specific to online instruction to our faculty, and provide expanded tools within Sakai, our online learning management system.

To reduce the burden of managing our online learning management system as online enrollment grows, we will integrate it with our Student Information System, Datatel Colleague. Our goal is to automate the creation of the online course structure as well as the registration of each student for each online class.

## Key Actions:

- Offer a fully online degree in 2011
- Offer a second, fully online degree by 2012
- Offer Title IV eligible certificates and degrees to Morgan County in 2011
- Participate in the State-wide Quality Matters Initiative to improve the quality of our e-Learning classes 2011-13
- Convert 10 face-to-face classes to online classes each year
- Ensure 50 percent of all online classes contain dynamic/multimedia content by 2013
- Provide one training per year to full-time and part-time faculty specific to online teaching/learning
- Integrate Sakai and Datatel for course creation and student registration by 2012
- Expand our reach in offering specific, specialized online programs

## Operational Initiatives

# Financial Sustainability

To enable the college to grow and serve more students in an economy of limited resources it is imperative the college use our existing resources more efficiently. We must constantly seek new ways to lower costs, streamline processes, and improve productivity. Our strong academic programs and the financial viability of the college are inextricably linked. While our financial sustainability can advance through increased enrollment, we must not lose sight of our responsibility to live within our means, at all opportunities matching costs to savings.

We must balance the relationship between changes in full-time equivalent staffing to growth in enrollment and net tuition revenue. Strong fiscal management by the entire college community must constantly control the growth in operating expenses while delivering the highest quality of services to our students and employees. Likewise, we will endeavor to match future tuition increases to necessary operating costs that are well controlled.

In recognition of our strategic core theme of strategic growth and the initiatives encompassed in the plan, we recognize an evolution of the budget process is necessary to prioritize funding requirements for strategic initiatives while achieving an operating surplus to support the future growth of the institution.

## Key Actions:

- Evolve the financial reporting mechanisms of the college to functional reports which support Data Driven Decision Making
- Centralize the purchasing function to include purchasing through collaborative partnerships where there is a cost benefit for the college
- Invest in energy Conservation projects to reduce our utility consumption
- Manage cash flow of liquid assets to maximize investment income
- Improve Senate Bill 6 ratio from 3.2 to 4.0

# WSCC Team

Bringing the college's faculty and staff together to form a Team is the single largest and most critical challenge facing the college. Without success in this initiative, the strategic plan cannot achieve its potential.

Developing Growing Opportunity provides a college-wide initiative that will be an important tool for building teams and the culture that supports them. Faculty and staff have already had input into the creation of the plan's structure through focus groups and the SWOT analysis. The next step will be collaboration between managers and their respective employee groups to develop the strategies and tactics that turn initiatives into plans of action. The teams who create the strategies and tactics will be the teams who implement them.

The team approach is integral to several plan initiatives. Continuous Improvement, is a concept designed specifically around using multi-disciplinary teams for process improvement and one with which we are experienced. Making data driven decisions also relies on groups collaborating over what data to gather, how to use it and, ultimately, what decisions it directs. Partnership is another word to describe one element of team and any student recruiting and retention effort no matter for high school or adult students is a joint effort. None of the 12 initiatives can be accomplished by an individual or single work group.

Critical to the success of Growing Opportunity is the necessity that it is flexible and dynamic and that the teams implementing it will be most successful if they share those characteristics.

Critical to WSCC Team is finding the right way to build trust and improve two-way communication and to provide well-deserved recognition for successful Teams.

The engagement of a consultant by the Trustees will provide critical support for success in identifying the components for building the new culture. The outcomes of the consultation will direct the efforts to help develop the WSCC Team.

## Key Actions:

- Improve two-way communication
- Build trust at all levels
- Implement changes identified by the Trustee's consultant
- Utilize AQIP Valuing People guidelines
- Develop employee wellness program

# Data Driven Decision Making

Data driven decision making is at the heart of strategic growth. To become truly strategic and utilize our diminishing resources in a responsible manner, we must go beyond anecdotal evidence and look at data as a driving force. To accomplish this, sophisticated data collection, management, analysis, and delivery systems must be in place.

The University System of Ohio has always required significant levels of data reporting, but the enhanced uses of that data have heightened our focus simply by the challenge of understanding the definitions they are using and the sources for the numbers they cite. The ability to match (with our data) the USO reports will become more critical as a portion of our funding will be linked to data driven Success Points.

In 2009, we began an AQIP Action Project related to Measuring Effectiveness. We have greatly improved our ability to access, analyze, and report on our data due to that project. Next, we will standardize our data, broaden access to it, and improve its readability and usefulness.

To truly measure the institutions progress, we must compare ourselves to our peers. We will continue to participate in peer comparison through State and National surveys related to student success and satisfaction. We will seek out new opportunities for comparison and we will utilize this comparative data in our strategic planning and decision making process.

## Key Actions:

- Participate in the National Community College Benchmarking Project by 2012
- Define data elements in key areas such as enrollment and retention in 2011
- Identify 3 key metrics for 5 departments and build a dashboard to present those in 2011
- Establish 1 source for data, ensuring consistent reporting for key areas such as enrollment and retention by 2012
- Utilize next-generation analytics to provide advanced data modeling by 2013
- Train “power users” to generate reports from Data Orchestrator

# Customer Service

Customer Service is a foundational strength that is necessary in providing the exceptional experience that will draw students and clients to Washington State Community College and encourage them to want to return. The first interaction with a customer often sets the tone of a lasting impression and we want every customer to have a positive experience. We also believe our interactions among different constituencies on campus deserve handling with superior customer service in recognition that we are all here to accomplish a common goal.

Communication is a key aspect of superior customer service and we will foster better communication among the team to support our growth. We are dedicated to being more accessible, more approachable and responsive to the needs of our customers. Throughout our mission to improve our service, we may identify opportunities to streamline processes and improve our delivery systems. We are also committed to continuously updating the customer service skills of our employees and will strive to provide opportunities for every member of our team.

Through the strategic growth plan, Washington State Community College will be prepared for the unexpected and always step out to go above and beyond.

## Key Actions:

- Development and implement an annual training plan for professional development in customer service
- Develop an accountability process with measurable outcomes
- Create a seamless experience for all customers with consistent customer service
- Cultivate exceptional customer service from the top to bottom
- Create a culture that is excited about exceptional customer service and a can do attitude

# Continuous Improvement

Through the college's participation in the Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP), WSCC began focusing on creating a culture of continuous quality improvement in 2003. Over the past seven years, we have evolved from talking about continuous improvement as a means for maintaining institutional accreditation to making continuous quality improvement a consistent part of our day-to-day business.

During the timeframe for this strategic plan, we will strive to move to the next level of continuous quality improvement by streamlining our processes and using data driven decision making to serve our students and other stakeholders more efficiently.

## Key Actions:

- Complete our current project on measuring effectiveness and put into place the tools and data collection necessary for making data driven decisions.
- “Map” and improve ten major college processes while training 60 faculty and staff in the tools and procedures of process mapping and process improvement.
- Use the quarters to semesters transition as an opportunity for continuous quality improvement of our courses, programs, and service to students.
- Implement a project to design and initiate a special advising process for those students who will start their degree program in the quarter system and graduate in the semester system.
- Create and submit our second AQIP Systems Portfolio in preparation for a renewal of the institution's accreditation in 2011.
- Continue to encourage, implement, and document an average of 50 non-AQIP continuous improvement projects each year in an effort to serve students and other stakeholders more effectively.

# Technology Infrastructure

Technology has become a cornerstone of any business, including higher education. Students, faculty, and staff need modern, efficient data systems to manage their daily activities. We must provide access, at anytime from anywhere, to key resources.

To achieve our goals, a strong technology foundation must be in place and a fast, efficient network is a necessity. We will improve our wired network and expand the reach and speed of our wireless network. As fiscal resources are reduced, we need to increase utilization of current and new technology assets. Through virtualization, the software simulation of a physical piece of hardware, we can increase the utilization of our servers, providing more resources at a lower cost. We will use similar technology to decrease the cost and increase the availability of student labs.

At the heart of our technology infrastructure is Datatel Colleague, our student information management system. It represents a large portion of our technology budget. As such, we must maximize its capabilities. We will expand its use through investment in key modules, broader staff training, strategic customization, and integration with our learning management system, Sakai.

We must also focus on cost reduction and data protection. Through technology innovation, policy, and management, we can reduce costly processes and protect our data.

## Key Actions:

- Create and implement a Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery plan in 2011
- Reduce our print/copy costs by 30 percent by 2013
- Virtualize 20 percent of our servers by 2011 and 30 percent by 2013
- Increase the speed of 60 percent of our network by a factor of 10 by 2012
- Standardize PC configuration and management by 2012
- Maximize our investment in Datatel products by implementing key modules, such as Workflow, by 2012
- Reduce the cost to replace a student lab by 25 percent by 2012
- Double the speed of 50 percent of our wireless network by 2013

# University System of Ohio

The University of Ohio published a 10-year Strategic Plan for Higher Education (2008-2017) with the goal of enrolling 230,000 new students in colleges and universities and increasing the rate of graduation by 20 percent. The plan focuses on Access, Quality, Affordability and Efficiency, and Economic Leadership and establishes specific accountabilities for public institutions of higher education.

The USO benchmarks reflect 2006 enrollment levels, Washington State's highest ever headcount, leaving us playing catch-up until about 2011-2012 when we hope to regain that level of enrollment. The first year (2008-09) we projected our growth at 2 percent across all categories, a not insignificant goal given that for the previous 3 years we had seen consistent declines in enrollment. We achieved our goals in all categories except increasing minority enrollment.

Our recast projections, submitted in January 2010, are based on 3.5, 4.0, and 3.0 percent growth for the next three academic years.

A new component of the USO plan will be implemented within the time frame of this strategic plan. It establishes an additional set of benchmarks and goals defined as Success Points. Using a representative committee, the Ohio Association of Community Colleges, established a series of measures specific to our sector that we will be adopting as part of our accountabilities. Additionally, we will be establishing unique Success Point measures for WSCC. As currently planned, Success Points will determine a growing percentage of state funding over the next several years.

## Key Actions:

- Total Post Secondary Enrollment
- Total STEM degrees Awarded (annually)
- Total enrollees age 25 and older
- Total degrees awarded to first generation college students
- Percent of total degrees awarded to Black, Hispanic, and American Indian students (annual)
- Percent of facilities in satisfactory condition
- Total size of endowments and foundations per FTE
- Percent of first time enrollees below age 21 with equivalent of one semester or more of college credit earned during high school
- Number of students engaged in internships and co-ops



# WSCC Foundation

The Washington State Community College Foundation was established in 2003 at the direction of the college's Board of Trustees to strengthen ties to the community and to provide philanthropic assistance to support the students, programs, and facilities of the college. The Foundation is more important today than ever as traditional sources of higher education funding became tighter and more students with more need seek skills and training for better lives and futures.

The Foundation is a unique operational initiative. Using the tools of friend raising, fund-raising, alumni recognition, donor recognition and a variety of other outreach efforts, the Foundation helps donors who believe in higher education match their interests with the needs of the college. An annual fund drive and year-end fund drive along with individual and organizational cultivation are keys to generating donations to the Foundation from both campus and community constituencies.

A recent assessment of the Foundation suggests goals that would support Growing Opportunity include: implementing a major gifts program, developing a volunteer structure to support major gift goals, and increasing efficiency and effectiveness of the Foundation's infrastructure.

## Key Actions:

- Partner with WSCC to provide support for our students and mission
- Engage donors in growth plans
- Position the Foundation for major gifts
- Partner with WSCC to market and communicate “one voice” regarding the college's future