



Washington County
Community College

ENVISION THE FUTURE

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Washington County Community College

ENVISION THE FUTURE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Washington County Community College, since its inception in 1970, has undergone continuous change and growth as dictated by the ever-changing conditions of the internal and external environments. Perhaps, as never before, the College is poised to engage in even more challenges because of the expansion of the mission to become a comprehensive two-year college with a liberal arts curriculum and more transfer articulation agreements with the University of Maine System and other colleges.

Washington County is experiencing a demographic change in that it has an increasing population of seniors and declining population of youth. An out migration of young families due to significant decrease in manufacturing contributes to this indicator. Plant closings and downsizing are identified as the primary cause of this effect.

The region population, also, has the lowest level of educational attainment in the state. The high unemployment rate forces young college educated people to leave the area for employment. The number of low paying service and agriculture/forest/fishing industries dissuades Washington County high school graduates from furthering their education if they decide to continue living in the county. Robert Roper from the Margaret Chase Center of Public Policy states, "A poorly educated workforce is a signal to outside firms not to locate in a region if they require a labor pool with college acquired skills." This is a matter in which WCCC can have a direct and profound impact.

In undertaking its work in envisioning its future, the College conducted an environmental scan in which it looked at its strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats and their impact on the College's pursuit of its mission and ultimate vision. The process entailed the review of pertinent resources such as the College's New England Association of Schools and Colleges – Commission on Higher Education Institutions visitation report, a recently completed College Master Plan, relevant state and institutional reports pertaining to the State and the service delivery area of the College, and internal self-assessments and focus groups.

The outcomes of the audit were quite sobering to the community. In the area of population growth while Maine's population grew by some 3.7% from 2000-2005 the primary service area of Washington County decreased by -1.5%. The median age within the county grew from 33.4 years in 1980, to 40.5 years in 2000 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006) thereby giving Washington County the distinction of being Maine's second oldest county. The school age youth population continues to decline while their out migration from the county grows.

The College's enrollment also reflects that many of the areas populace just simply cannot afford the cost of higher education. Washington County's residents exceed the States median household income at \$28,311 by \$2,000 more than the next lowest county Sagadahoc at \$30,311. The county leads Maine in the percentage of people receiving food stamps and in subsidized school



lunches. Thirty-four percent of all personal income is derived from “transfer payments” from state and federal government allotments.

One mission of WCCC is to serve the local economy and job market needs. Unfortunately, the economic drought continues as the county sees what seems to be an endless line of business downsizing or closures. This has been most recently born out in the area of wood manufacturing with the closing of an oriented strand board plant, cutbacks in paper making operations, and an aquaculture industry struck with the devastating effects of an infections salmon anemia. The result of these and other setbacks to the county have resulted in a net loss of 1,017 jobs from 2000-2005 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Market Information). Washington County’s unemployment rate is constantly at or near the highest rate of all of Maine’s counties. No single industry dominates the economy of the area. Currently, education, health, social services and public administration provide for 33% of all jobs (Maine Department of Labor, 2006).

Although the previous paints a rather bleak scenario for Washing County, it illustrates the importance of WCCC in exerting itself in its future vision to play an ever increasing and important role in the county. The institution must recognize its strengths which include sound education and training programs, student support services in the area of admission, financial aid, campus-based childcare services, a student mentoring program, educational developmental assistance, along with the establishment of a seniors learning program, existing and pending articulation agreements with other institutions of higher education, and the campus residency of the State’s area Career Center. Campus infrastructure improvements such as enhancements in residence housing, distance learning capacities, instructional area upgrades, and a faculty and staff dedicated to providing the best possible educational and training experience they can for those they serve all add to these strengths.

Similarly, the college must recognize its challenges such as a weak economy and changing population demographics with a declining youth base and their out migration. The lack of understanding by the local communities of the educational opportunities its local community college can provide, diminishing public funding which isn’t able to keep pace in support of the college’s mission and in turn retard the college’s ability to fully serve the area populace all add to these challenges.

However, there are opportunities for the institution as well. The College can work with social service organizations to maximize their clients’ access to the school. Alternative delivery of educational programs can provide greater access to potential students through such approaches as alternative schedule delivery and expanded use of distance learning. The College can work more closely with state and regional economic development entities such as the Department of Economic and Community Development Department and the Sunrise County Economic Development Council to maximize its support to their initiatives. The organization can work in a collaborative way with other higher education institutions such as the University of Maine Machias, Husson College and the New Brunswick Community College located in St. Andrews



New Brunswick to educate the area populace of the educational opportunities available to them and offer an articulated track to further education.

In order for WCCC to effectively meet its mission and to overcome the weakness and to prepare for the identified threats, it must maximize its strengths and take advantage of the opportunities. To accomplish this mandate, the following will be done:

1. WCCC will further strengthen its relationship with UMM through joint planning, marketing, and building and updating articulation agreements. These two institutions of higher learning can play a significant role on encouraging constituents to pursue higher education and can be major players in economic development.
2. Continue to expand collaborations with various groups, i.e. The Sunrise Economic Development Council.
3. The College will seek more communication with state and federal agencies in attempts to secure funding for programming and economic development.
4. The College must advance even stronger outreach efforts effects to build partnerships with the business community.
5. The College will enhance its relationship and partnerships with local schools, technical centers, technical prep programs, Early College for ME, Advantage U, and TRIO program etc.
6. The College will work to develop an active, non-competitive, relationship with Husson College's Unobsky College, working to the benefit of the people of the region.

Upon reviewing the Washington County demographic data, the challenges are obvious. Henry S. Commager, a famous U.S. historian once observed, "Schools reflect the society they serve." It is the awesome task of Washington County Community College to serve as the beacon of hope for our society through education, marketing, service, and programs while always keeping our constituents in mind.



Washington County Community College

ENVISION THE FUTURE

SECTION 1

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

Washington County Community College (WCCC), since its beginning in 1970, has undergone continuous change and growth as dictated by the ever-changing conditions of the internal and external environments. Perhaps, as never before, the College is poised to engage in even more challenges because of the expansion of the mission to become a comprehensive two-year college with a liberal arts curriculum and more transfer articulation agreements with the University of Maine System and other colleges. WCCC has always endorsed planning activities involving the WCCC community of employees and students, the community at large, area businesses, and government agencies.

A comprehensive and inclusive environmental scan was undertaken to acquire information for the planning process. This scan, utilizing a variety of sources and surveys, was designed to “check the pulse” internally and externally as it relates to current and projected trends, conditions, and events. The following represents some of the major sources used to obtain this information:

- Information Assessment Project
- Building Construction Program Survey
- Business & Industry Customer Survey
- Curriculum Comparisons
- Demographic and Economic Characteristics of Washington County, Maine
- Demographic Report
- Enrollment Improvement Committee’s Report
- Enrollment Improvement Plan
- Institutions of Higher Education (CIHE)-Self Study Enrollment Trends
- Maine Career Advantage Reports:
 - Health Care Services
 - Information Technology
 - Education Services
- Maine Children’s Alliance – Kids Count
- Maine Department of Labor, Labor Market Information Services
- Maine State Planning Office
- Maine Technical College System (MTCS) Strategic Plan
- Margaret Chase Smith Center for Public Policy, Poverty in Maine 2006
- MDOL, Career Center Customer Outcomes, Washington County
- Muskie School of Public Service, C. Colgan, Maine in 2007
- National Center for Educational Statistics



- NEASC-CIHE-visitation report
- New England Association of Schools and College (NEASC)-Commission on
- Noel Levitz Satisfaction Surveys
- Personal Assessment of the College Environment (PACE) Survey
- Personal interviews with various college stakeholders
- Program Advisory Committee Meetings
- Program Advisory Committee Survey
- Report on Visitation of Vocational Centers
- Secondary School Employers and Student Survey
- Strategic Marketing Report
- United States Census, Census 2000, School District Tabulations Census Projections, 2005
- University of Maine, Fogler Library, Maine Census Data
- WCCC Master Plan
- WCCC Program Reviews
- WCCC Student Survey

This past year The Washington County Community College Educational Master Plan: a Work in Progress document was utilized as a guide for annual work plans of all departments and managers. All assessment and evaluations information that identifies current trends, events, and assumptions was used to assist in planning for the future and establishing goals and strategies to achieve these plans.

DEMOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC OVERVIEW

In 1996, The Margaret Chase Smith Center for Public Policy issued a report by Robert Roper entitled: *Demographic and Economic Characteristics of Washington County, Maine*; which painted a bleak picture of both population trends and economic conditions in Washington County. Sadly, conditions 10 years later show few sign of improvement in either demographics or economics, and the county still leads the state in many unfortunate indicators.

POPULATION

While the population of Maine grew 3.7% from 2000-2005, the population of Washington County is in decline and our overall population decreased by 1.5% during this period. The major municipalities in the College's immediate service area showed an even more substantial rate of decline with the populations of Calais and Baileyville each declining by 4%; Eastport, -2.8%; Lubec, -3.8%; Machias, -2.8%; and Jonesport, -3.8%. The Passamaquoddy Reservations experienced a similar trend with a decline in population at Indian Township of -4.1% and at Pleasant Point of -3.3%. (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006). What growth there is seems to be occurring only in the smaller communities and in the far western end of the county.

Compounding the College's enrollment challenges is the rapid aging of the population. The median age of Washington County residents has risen from 33.4 years in 1980, to 35.6 years in



1990, and then jumped to 40.5 years in 2000, thereby giving Washington County the distinction of being Maine's second oldest county.

The school age population (0-18 years) is also continuing to decline, shrinking from 36% of the total population in 1980, to 29% in 1990, to 23% in the latest census. Especially disturbing is the population of traditional college-age students, which now reflects only 8% of the county's population – 2,715 persons. This figure certainly reflects the out-migration of our young people who leave the county for schooling and economic opportunities elsewhere. This dramatic decline in population, especially in the school age and traditional college-age groups creates ever-larger enrollment challenges for WCCC.

To complicate matters, Washington County's population has the lowest level of educational attainment of all Maine's regions. Of the population age 25 and over, more than 20% do not have a high school education. Eleven percent have not finished the 9th grade. On the other end of the spectrum, an additional 20% hold the Associate's or higher degree. This figure has risen nearly 4% in the last ten years (perhaps illustrating the College's effectiveness since it began emphasizing degrees), but still trails the state average of 30.3% of residents holding the Associate's degree or higher. (National Center for Educational Statistics). In his 1996 report, Robert Roper argued that this county/state disparity was caused by several factors, foremost of which were the high unemployment rate and the concentration of employment opportunities in the low paying service and fishing/farming/forest industries. These, he said, "effectively dissuade Washington County high school graduates from furthering their education if they decide to continue living in the county" (p.10). Finally, he cites as a factor the extent to which new firms locate in the county. "A poorly educated workforce is a signal to outside firms not to locate in a region if they require a labor pool with college acquired skills" (p.12). This is a matter in which WCCC should have a direct and profound impact.

POVERTY

The College's enrollment also reflects what seems to be the curse of Washington County—poverty. It is a significant factor that many of our neighbors simply cannot afford the cost of education. Although the percentage of persons living in poverty has declined since his report (1996 = 21.8%; 2006 = 16.1%), the county continues to lead the state, as it has since the 1970's, in the percentage of people who live in poverty. The current figure is fully one-third higher than the state average poverty rate. Even more alarming, the poverty rate for children age 17 and below is 23.1% and the county poverty rate for children in households led by single mothers is a staggering 50.8%.

Median household income in Washington County is reported at \$28,311. This is more than \$2,000 less than the next lowest Maine county (Sagadahoc - \$30,780), is 25% below the median income in neighboring Hancock (\$37,924), and is a full 40% below Cumberland County (\$47,669). Washington County leads Maine in the percentage of people receiving food stamps (19.6%), a figure which increased 40.5% between 2002 and 2005. The number of school-age children who qualify for the subsidized school lunch program also leads Maine. Over one-half (52%) of all Washington County school children qualify for free or reduced price school meals.



The proportion of per-capita income derived from net earnings is lower in Washington County than in any other county in Maine. Thirty-four percent of all personal income here is the direct result of “transfer payments” from the state and federal governments. These funds come through a variety of programs and agencies including Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, Veteran’s benefits, food stamps, heating assistance, and direct income assistance to families. Clearly, when over one-third of net income results from the largesse of the government, poverty is a very serious issue.

Of all the populations we serve, our Native American students are, on the whole, the most impoverished. They have, however, been advantaged in accessing higher education because of tuition waivers by the College and by tribal support for books, fees, transportation and living expenses. This tribal support was made possible through Federal educational funds provided by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Education can help to break the cycle of poverty on the reservations.

EMPLOYMENT

Since one mission of WCCC is to respond to the needs of the job market, the College must recognize the sensitivity of program enrollment to business and employment trends. Unfortunately, an extended economic drought continues to impact the county, effecting both the number and quality of jobs available to the people who live here. The forest products industry, once the major economic engine of the county and its largest employer, is a shadow of its former self. The Domtar pulp and paper mill in Baileyville is the only significant employer remaining. Domtar has downsized its’ workforce several times in the past few years and there seems to be little optimism among the local population about the mill’s long term future.

All major timber-sawing operations have closed, along with most of the smaller ones. The County’s only sheet goods manufacturer, The Louisiana Pacific oriented strand board plant has closed permanently after several years of on-off employment.

The Aquaculture industry, which for a time showed much promise, has been devastated by Infectious Salmon Anemia, and the once plentiful cage sites have diminished to a small fraction of their former numbers. A New Brunswick firm, Cooke Aquaculture, has announced plans to invest \$60 million in stocking salmon in Downeast waters over the next 18 months and potentially can revive this once promising industry.

Given these problems in two of our major industries, and the related impact of those problems, the county has witnessed a continuing loss of jobs. The net change in employment from 2000-2005 indicates a loss of 1,017 full and part time jobs. (U.S. Bureau of Labor Market Information). Unemployment, which has been consistently at or near the highest rate of all Maine counties, remains at that level with a reported rate of 6.7% in November 2006. The average unemployment rate for the past 5 years (2001-2005) has been 7.8%. (MDOL).

No single industry dominates the economic engine of Washington County as the forest products industry once did. Manufacturing concerns now employ only 14% of the workforce. The



farming/forestry/fishing industries account for only 11% of jobs, while the retail industry provides another 11%. Please note that many of the jobs in the farming/forestry/fishing sector are seasonal in nature and in terms of average weekly wages, such occupations are second only to the retail industry at the lowest end of the average weekly wage scale in all occupations. (MDOL). Currently, Education, Health, and Social Services provide the most employment and account for 26% of all jobs. Construction provides 7% of the available jobs while the Tourism industry, including accommodations, recreation, arts and entertainment, and food services accounts for 5.5%. Public Administration accounts for 7% of all jobs while the remainder of positions are scattered across a variety of other sectors.

WCCC'S ROLE IN THE FUTURE OF WASHINGTON COUNTY

The Washington County region, unfortunately, did not fully benefit in the national economic boom of the last decade. This fact underscores the necessity for the College to play an even larger role promoting in economic development through improving the skills of the workforce and providing assistance to businesses. The College will also need to expand its outreach efforts to meet the needs of an economically stressed rural area.

An obvious need to keep abreast of the ever-changing technology is a constant challenge. In addition to acquiring the most modern equipment and related components, faculty must continually upgrade their technical skills. This is particularly true as the Colleges' role in upgrading workers has continued to significantly increase.

The Governor and legislature have mandated that the community colleges expand their roles to encourage more Maine citizens to participate in higher education. As the Governor of Maine and legislature do not wish to create a third higher education system, the community colleges have assumed responsibilities of a comprehensive two-year college system. In so doing, WCCC must continue to expand its collaboration efforts with the University campuses and other colleges. It must expand its curricula offerings. The College will also enlarge its outreach efforts and improve its student support services. This expanded mission will require a more flexible scheduling of courses and services. The College must continually strive to improve and expand all student services. The college community is recognizing and embracing its expanded role and will move to meet the current and projected trends and needs.

Recent downsizing at Domtar, the county's largest employer, and the closing of the Louisiana Pacific Oriented Strand Board mill, and the Creative Apparel plant resulted in a substantial number of lay-offs providing further challenges to the local economy. These developments obviously significantly impact business, municipal budget, local schools, etc.



STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, THREATS ANALYSIS (SWOT)

To develop plans to effectively and efficiently serve this unique region Washington County Community College completed a SWOT Analysis to determine strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. This process entailed reviewing pertinent college plans, self-studies, New England Association of Schools and Colleges Commission of Institutions of Higher Education (CIHE) progress reports, and conducting focus groups. The following were identified:

Strengths:

1. The College's Mission and Purpose are ideal for meeting educational and service needs of the region.
2. The College, with a limited staff development budget, makes a commitment to assisting and encouraging faculty to stay current in field of discipline and to upgrade academic credentials.
3. The College responds to student and community needs in an efficient and timely manner.
4. The TRIO program and learning assistance labs are major components of the student success program aimed at academic achievement and retention.
5. Faculty demonstrates commitment to students.
6. The College created a long and short-term staff development program.
7. WCCC has consistently been identified as a student centered institution.
8. The goal established to serve a specific number of students online has been surpassed.
9. WCCC has established a spacious modern library with a number of electronic databases available.
10. Buildings and grounds have been substantially improved.
11. Significant upgrades and improvements to information technology have been completed.
12. Major improvements and upgrades to residence halls have been completed.
13. The College possesses sound financial control policies.
14. WCCC demonstrates timely responses working with Department of Labor (DOL) and other agencies to serve displaced or unemployed workers.
15. WCCC is increasing articulation agreements with University of Maine Machias (UMM), other university campuses, and with high schools and tech centers.
16. Although there are few major industries, Washington County hosts a substantial number of small businesses.
17. The College has developed a Comprehensive Enrollment Management Plan.
18. The Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Survey indicates WCCC rated higher than the national average in nearly all areas.
19. The Department of Labor Career Center is located on campus leading to enhancement of collaboration and cooperation.
20. A Head Start daycare center is located on campus to serve students as well as the community.



21. The College accommodates students with special needs through the TRIO program, learning labs, and personal instructional assistance from faculty.
22. Local cable access allows WCCC to market programs and services to meet local regional needs.
23. The creation of a student mentoring program.
24. The establishment of a College for Seniors Program.

Weaknesses:

1. The Downeast economy is weak with major industries downsizing or closing.
2. The Washington County region is experiencing a change in demographics with declining youth population and an increasing senior population.
3. Difficulty in changing the academic inventory to reflect accelerating change inhibits the College's ability to react pro-actively.
4. Lack of understanding by the local community of the educational opportunities its local community college can provide.
5. A shortage of support staff currently exists.
6. Credentials of faculty in some areas need to be updated.
7. Some programs are currently and some consistently remain under enrolled.
8. For a small college, WCCC maintains a significant infrastructure which impedes adequate financial support for its academic and occupational programs.
9. Variable faculty workload policies in some areas restrict efficiency, competitiveness, and flexibility.
10. Overall the College experiences inadequate funding to meet its goals and to more effectively meet its mission.
11. The local region is experiencing a serious and growing substance addiction problem, particularly among the younger generation.

Opportunities:

1. WCCC is prepared to increase partnerships and embrace collaboration efforts in meeting local needs to maximize efficiency and areas of expertise.
2. The College will work more closely with other community colleges, UMM, other university campuses, and appropriate state and local agencies.
3. WCCC will more aggressively seek outside funding i.e. grants, donations, etc. to augment its revenues.
4. The College will continue to advance online education to reach remote areas of the region.
5. WCCC will emphasize entrepreneurship training and education to assist and encourage the important small business segment of the local economy.
6. The College will continue to build relationships with New Brunswick Community College, particularly with the St. Andrews campus.



7. The College will work with the Department of Labor (DOL) Career Center to build a comprehensive career opportunity planning center to assist students in preparing for and receiving meaningful employment.
8. The faculty and management committee may review department workloads to ensure educational soundness and efficiency as the College faces the ever-increasing challenges of the future.
9. WCCC will increase the pool of skills of workers in demand to attract new industry to the area as well as continue to meet existing business and industry needs.
10. WCCC will seize the opportunity through a variety of approaches to educate the general public of opportunities, programs, and services available.
11. An image building component will be developed for the strategic plan.
12. The College will serve the increasing retired population who seek career changes or leisure interests.
13. WCCC will more aggressively meet the needs of the significantly growing small creative business economy.

Threats:

1. Declining population, especially youth.
2. Significant decline in the number of local high school graduates.
3. An appalling shrinkage of the manufacturing base.
4. Perceived prohibitive costs for higher education by certain segments of the population.
5. Current political climate whereby movements are underway to reduce financial support for public institutions.
6. Division among groups and communities locally over several political issues, challenging the College to meet united community needs.
7. Continued lack of accurate public funding to support the College's mission.
8. Increased competition for a declining prospective student population from the newly established Unobsky College, a division of Husson College.

Relationships:

In order for WCCC to effectively meet its mission and to overcome the weakness and to prepare for the identified threats it must maximize its strengths and take advantage of the opportunities. To accomplish this mandate, stronger relationships and partnerships will be pursued. The following will be done:

1. WCCC will further strengthen its relationship with UMM through joint planning, marketing, and building and updating articulation agreements. These two institutions of higher learning can play a significant role on encouraging constituents to pursue higher education and can be major players in economic development.



2. Continue to expand collaborations with various groups i.e. The Sunrise Economic Development Council.
3. The College will seek more communication with state and federal agencies in attempts to secure funding for programming and economic development.
4. The College must advance even stronger outreach efforts effects to build partnerships with the business community.
5. The College will enhance its relationship with local schools, technical centers, technical prep programs, Early College for ME, Advantage U, and TRIO program etc.
6. The College will work to develop an active, non-competitive, relationship with Husson College's Unobsky College, working to the benefit of the people of our region.

Upon reviewing the Washington County demographic data, the challenges are obvious. Henry S. Commager, a famous U.S. historian once observed, "Schools reflect the society they serve." It is the awesome task of Washington County Community College to serve as the beacon of hope for our society through education, marketing, service, and programs while always keeping our constituents in mind.



SECTION 2

ENROLLMENT

Utilizing the Maine Community College System (MCCS) mission, WCCC mission, and regional data as guidelines, the College developed a comprehensive enrollment management plan. The key components are as follows:

- WCCC will target regional high schools and non-traditional students to increase enrollment in the liberal studies program. The College firmly believes that the development of the educated person will contribute to the cultural and economic growth of the area.
- The College will develop strategies to better serve the remote regions of the county. Increasing online and additional evening and weekend courses will achieve the goal of allowing all citizens the opportunity to avail themselves of WCCC's programs and services.
- WCCC will continue to aggressively promote its unique programs statewide and nationally. Heavy Equipment Operations, Adventure Recreation and Tourism, and Automotive Technology for example, have emerged as exciting programs that have attracted students from outside the county as well as from within.
- The College will continue to collaborate with local high schools to encourage qualified high school students to enroll in selected college courses to enhance career opportunities and to entice them to pursue higher education upon graduation.
- Washington County is enriched in history and culture. It shares many traditions and culture elements with its adjoining neighbor, New Brunswick, Canada. WCCC will expand its international partnerships, particularly with New Brunswick Community College, St. Andrews. These agreements will also allow students to study in various areas of North America.
- The demographic data clearly indicates that Washington County is experiencing a declining youth population and an increasing senior in-migration. WCCC will serve this increasing constituency by developing programs and services to meet their needs. The Senior College program will be expanded in addition to utilizing the skill and talents of this populace.
- The College will continue to build upon its articulation agreements with the University of Maine at Machias, other colleges, high schools, and with fellow community colleges to enhance opportunities for citizens of the service area.
- WCCC will continue to promote the technology programs for which it has long been noted for excellence in meeting the needs of local and statewide industries in a pragmatic approach.



EDUCATIONAL OFFERINGS AND DELIVERY

Washington County Community College will continue its mission of delivering two-year higher education through certificate, diploma, and associate degree technology programs that meet current regional and state needs. These programs will be periodically reviewed to ensure relevance and effectiveness.

WCCC will also continue to expand its liberal studies offerings through the Associate of Arts degree, facilitating more transfer possibilities to the University.

The College has surpassed its goal of increasing online courses and will continue to advance this effort to better serve this large remote region.

Through continuing education, evening courses, weekend college activities, and course offerings offsite will be delivered to serve the non-traditional population. The College will respond to industry needs with customized training as well.

WCCC will continue to partner with DOL Career Centers and other service organizations to retrain the unemployed and the underemployed. In addition to serving this segment of the population through utilization of the existing academic inventory of programs, additional preparation or developmental courses will be implemented. Study centers and the TRIO program will play significant roles in preparing this population for college success.

The College will continue to work with high school guidance counselors and faculty to recruit students. Tech-Prep articulation agreements will be increased and others will be updated.

The Early College for ME program will continue to partner with WCCC. Partnerships with the regional centers will continue to be a priority by developing new articulation agreements and updating the old ones.

WCCC will continue to develop articulation agreements with the University of Maine at Machias and with other four-year institutions of higher education to facilitate easy transfer. The transfer part of the College mission will continue to expand.

The College will continue to participate with the Washington County Sunrise Economic Development Council and municipal economic development offices to enhance economic opportunities for the region. Providing a trained and educated work force will entice business development.

WCCC will partner with other community colleges to facilitate programs to meet short-term needs. This approach may be more effective rather than this institution developing and implementing its own programs for a short duration.

Washington County is increasingly becoming an aging population as retirees relocate to this region in significant numbers and youth out migration is increasing. The College will address



the need of the growing population through a variety of services including expanding Senior College program offerings. The College will address the needs for seniors through programs and services. New proposed programs will also address health, social, and economic needs of the senior population.

STUDENTS SERVICES

In addressing the needs of the diverse WCCC population the College will expand and redirect the student services department. WCCC will dramatically increase its outreach efforts through a variety of directed approaches. Another part-time recruitment officer will be obtained to assist in educating high school students and the general public in this large geographic area of the state. As technology faculty build relationships with their counterparts at the technology centers, academic faculty will do the same with their colleagues at the traditional high schools. A local resident of each of the major communities will be solicited to help identify local people who would benefit from the College programs and services. These people would be directed to the College admissions office. These local outreach volunteers will be fully educated on the College offerings and services and become fully integrated into the WCCC family.

The website will be constantly monitored and updated. This will become a more viable marketing outreach tool as perspective students and clients are encouraged to avail themselves of this technology.

The student services department will restructure into two separate but cohesive divisions to increase efficiency and more clearly define roles in student assistance. One division will become the student enrollment center concentrating on recruitment, admissions, financial aid and other administrative functions. The second division will focus on student support services. This will include the student support counselor, the TRIO program, tutoring services, learning labs, etc. More attention will be placed on improving student retention and college success.

Through collaboration with area agencies, a professional clinical counselor will be added on a part-time basis to address more serious student problems. This addition, along with student success teams, can significantly impact student success and retention in a very positive way. Early identification of possible problems, concerns, or difficulties will be a key to prevention of potential serious or critical situations at a later date.

Because WCCC serves an area experiencing serious substance abuse difficulties, a substance abuse program will be implemented with the goals of early detection, education, prevention, referral, counseling, and drug-alcohol policy enforcement. This problem cannot be ignored as it prevents too many students from college success and career goal attainment.

The student services department will place more emphasis on quality residential life experiences. Focus on first-year student needs will be a focal point of this program. Additional thoughtful residential life activities will be developed and implemented aimed at recreational, social, and educational needs.



The College mentoring program will continue to expand in an attempt to help every student achieve success at WCCC.

The Student Services Department will assume the lead in working with the entire college community to ensure that both traditional and non-traditional students receive a high quality comprehensive experience at WCCC.

FACILITIES

The Mechanical Technology programs at WCCC provide a variety of occupational opportunities in several specialized areas. Currently, however, they operate in several physical sites in isolation of each other. To maximize efficiency the College proposes to retrofit a 16,000 square foot classroom/lab facility to accommodate the Automotive Technology, Heavy Equipment Operation, Heavy Equipment Maintenance, Mechanical Technology, and Engine Specialist programs. This will reduce duplication of equipment and allow more collaboration among the technologies. This project will result in a high-quality, first-class mechanical technology center. In addition, a new 30-space parking lot will be added to accommodate the growing number of commuting students.

Vacated space by the mechanical programs will be renovated to give badly needed additional space to the Construction Technology programs. This will upgrade heating, plumbing, residential electricity and welding technologies. This, too, will provide students with a first-class learning environment with classrooms and labs.

In addition, the College plans to expand its academic curricula, particularly in the sciences. In order to meet these goals, new science labs and classrooms will be constructed in areas vacated through the other campus upgrades. As health care training needs continue to grow, the College will be poised to meet them in a proper environment.

WCCC will continue its plan to upgrade campus resident halls on an on-going basis. The common lounge area will be retrofitted to include new laundry areas, enhance social lounge and handicap accessible bathrooms.

TECHNOLOGY

WCCC recognizes that it is vital to keep abreast of current technology in order to prepare students for today's business world. As an institution with a community college mission it should strive to play a leadership role. Because of this goal, the College has prepared a master plan for the use of technology as an instructional resource. It reflects forward thinking with an emphasis on present and future trends. The plan presents incremental steps to ensure that the College and its faculty utilize appropriate technology as an instructional resource to its fullest. It remains the institution's responsibility to keep pace with the rapid growth of technology and to prepare students for the careers they will face upon graduation.



The plan identifies the following elements:

- Promotes use of technology in instruction
- Based on specific needs of faculty and students
- Ongoing source of information
- Provides ample flexibility
- Open to periodic review and modification.

In keeping an eye to the future, four concepts that must be integrated into education are:

- Enrichment – Development of practice exercises that reinforce the learning experience
- Remediation – Tutorials help students learn on their own
- Acquisition – Students learn to obtain and seek new sources of information
- Problem Solving – Help students develop problem solving skills.

Specifically, WCCC plans on expanding online offerings. The Education program will be offered completely online within two years. In a large rural region this will enhance opportunities for many more of its residents. Other programs will assess the possibility of following suit. Some classes will be presented by utilization of wireless laptops, perhaps in lieu of traditional textbooks. Additional multi-media classrooms will encourage use of technology into instruction. Smart classrooms are envisioned also to enhance the instructional technology goals. This approach will provide the tools to facilitate continued learning on an on-going basis. To support this vision the College will address the following components:

1. Plans for on-going faculty development in instructional application of technology.
2. Create an atmosphere that provides assistance to faculty who are using technology for instructional purposes.
3. Prepare physical facilities for delivery of technology in the classroom.

WCCC views technology as a major tool in addressing the challenge of serving a region massive in geographic size and small in population. The institution sees technology in the classroom as a means of preparing its student for the current and future world of both public and private employment enterprises.

FINANCES

In order for Washington County Community College to fulfill its vision for the future various fundraising activities will be undertaken to supplement state funding and tuition revenues. Aggressive grant procurement activities will be implemented aimed at program improvement, program development, and professional development. The College will seek a Title III planning grant initially to assist the College community in assessing future needs and developing a college plan to address them. This plan will provide direction for WCCC's fundraising activities.

Additional efforts will be undertaken to access various foundations to support programs, faculty, and students to fully realize the mission and vision. Additional funds to support professional development will allow faculty to obtain necessary credentials to meet college standards and to keep abreast of the ever-changing technological advances in the respective industries. Other



grants will be sought to specifically benefit students in preparation for college work and for transfer to four-year institutions upon successful completion of appropriate Associates degrees. WCCC will aggressively seek donations of equipment to maintain currency in the technology programs. The College Advisory Committees will play prominent roles in this important effort.

In addition, grants supporting the fine arts will be pursued to support the expanding Liberal Studies Associate of Arts program. Washington County is quickly becoming a haven for a variety of distinguished artists, writers, poets, and artisans. The College will actively recruit their assistance and solicit their support. Their support will be important as the College investigates the establishment of an Associates of Fine Arts Degree.

WCCC will identify public and private agencies, businesses, and other institutions whereby collaborative agreements will enhance common missions and goals to impact economic and educational efficiency.

As the demographic data clearly demonstrates, WCCC's immediate service area reflects the poorest economic population in the state. Therefore, the College will significantly increase its efforts to obtain scholarship funds to financially assist students with their college pursuits. In addition to direct appeals to business, service organizations and key individuals, various fundraising events will be undertaken.

To successfully realize the vision of serving the region and the state in a high quality comprehensive approach, fundraising efforts to supplement traditional sources of revenue will be critical.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In a county struggling with slow or decreasing business growth, high unemployment and underemployment, and an overall depressed economy, Washington County Community College plays a significant role in addressing these issues. The College will implement a multifaceted approach in encouraging economic development as a vital focus of its mission. A region experiencing these challenges absolutely requires the programs and services that WCCC provides.

For those who become unemployed as a result of downsizing or plant closings, WCCC will work with other agencies in counseling, educating, and providing retraining for current or future employment opportunities. In addition, the College will continue to provide and expand upgrading programs for those who are currently employed in low skill, low paying jobs.

WCCC will work closely with local business and industry to determine training needs. The College will develop and deliver customized short-term programs and courses directed at meeting industries' specific needs. Some of these offerings, if deemed appropriate, may be offered on site at the respective industry, plant, or business. Conversely, WCCC will deliver courses and services offsite from the campus for those who, because of remote distances, find it difficult to travel to the campus.



WCCC will develop plans to meet the increasing needs of the growing segments of the regional economy; namely social services, government, health care, and law enforcement. It is anticipated that their needs will be met by newly developed courses and programs or by partnering with other colleges and agencies to address specific requirements.

The needs of the general populace will be addressed as well. Their needs will be ascertained through surveys, focus groups, and various community organizations. Their desired services will be delivered through CED utilizing a variety of mediums, from live courses on campus, off site, and through workshops, seminars, and online offerings.

In order for this ambitious agenda to become a realization a number of strong partnerships need to be developed. WCCC will continue to expand its relationships with the Sunrise Economic Development Council, The St. Croix Economic Alliance, local municipal officers and planners, and local and county Chambers of Commerce. The College will utilize the services of the Eastern Maine Development Corporation. WCCC will build upon its relationship with the Department of Labor and the Career Center, as well as utilizing the expertise of the Department of Economic Development. Local business and labor leaders will be consistently consulted for direction and advice. Educational leaders, particularly from the University of Maine at Machias, Husson College, and local public schools, will play significant roles, where appropriate, in jointly pursuing the economic development agenda.

To summarize the role of Washington County Community College in advancing economic development in the region:

Provider of Services – Courses, workshops, seminars, customized training, and consulting.

Facilitator – Take leadership role in identification of needs, building partnerships, acquiring expertise, developing programs, and delivering services.

Local Center for Economic Development - Develop relationships whereby WCCC is recognized as the leader for assisting new businesses and helping existing business grow and develop. Although few large industries exist in the region, numerous small enterprises contribute to the local economy. The College's Business Management and Entrepreneurship program will meet the unique needs of this important segment of the Downeast community with business planning, marketing, and management.

Washington County Community College is poised to play a significance and key role in leading this unique region in growing its economic development and improving the lives of its constituents.