



**STRATEGIC PLAN
2003-2006**

**Annual Progress Report
Year 1 (2003-2004)**

Annual Progress in Institutional Strategic Planning Progress Report Year 1 (2003-2004)

During the fall of 2002, as the 2000-2003 *Strategic Plan* entered its last year of implementation, work on the 2003-2006 *Plan* began during the 2003-04 year. The 2003-2006 *Strategic Plan* is but the latest iteration in a long line of Dalton State College planning and evaluation efforts, each building from the experiences of the one before. For the first year, 2003-2004, the College community initially adopted 37 goals for implementation during the three-year planning period. Nineteen (51%) of these goals were implemented in the first year. The following is a progress report of the goals achieved.

Goal 1: Pursue grant opportunities and other sources of funding as supplements to state funding.

Two grant proposals were submitted for consideration during the 2003-04 year. A grant proposal was submitted to the Wachovia Foundation for business scholarships. This produced a grant in the amount of \$20,000. A second grant proposal for the Federal Title IV Student Support Services program was withdrawn at the last minute when it was discovered that the College did not meet a competitive percentage of Pell Grant awards.

Goal 2: Facilitate the recruitment, funding, hiring, and retention of the best possible faculty to sustain the instructional load driven by increasing enrollments.

The Office of Academic Affairs worked closely with Division Chairs to identify candidates for part-time teaching positions, assisted Chairs in evaluating candidate qualifications, and made appropriate hiring recommendations to the President. Advertisements for part-time instructors were placed as needed in local media. In the fall of 2003, 41 part-time faculty were employed, out of a total faculty of 153, compared with fall 2002, when 38 part-time faculty were employed out of a total of 150. The Division of Technical Education employed forty-two unique part-time instructors teaching 168 total classes during the 2003-2004 academic year to augment full-time instructors. These forty-two part-time instructors played a vital part in providing quality instruction to students.

Goal 3: Renew and refocus the communication efforts directed by the College toward area employers.

The Office of Public Relations initiated and coordinated the hiring of an educational marketing firm, Mindpower, Inc., of Atlanta to assist with the College's communication efforts toward a variety of audiences, including area employers. The firm's recommendations for ways in which the College's message can be enhanced and made more effective will be implemented in the next planning year, and will be the beginning of a process designed to address special efforts by the College to reach a range of audiences.

Goal 5: Position the College as a preferred choice over other postsecondary institutions.

The Office of Public Relations initiated and coordinated the hiring of an educational marketing firm, Mindpower, Inc., of Atlanta for the purposes of positioning the College as preferred choice over other postsecondary institutions in Northwest Georgia. This is a part of a long-term and comprehensive communication strategy to be implemented in the next few years - with the result being ways in which the College's message can be enhanced and made more effective.

Goal 7: Increase retention and graduation rates.

One objective explored is to increase freshman to sophomore retention rates by five percent over a three year period. One means to achieve this was to use the resources provided through DSC's Title III grant, which established a new Advising Center to work with high-risk students. The Advising Center opened in early 2004, concentrating on those students testing into two or more Learning Support areas upon admission. The Center's activities were meshed with the larger freshman orientation program during the summer of 2004. During the 2004-05 year, the scope of the Advising Center's activities will be broadened as designed in the Title III grant. A second objective also explored was to continue developing strategies to increase retention rates at DSC. One such strategy undertaken was to conduct an initial round of advisors' training sessions with each academic division during the spring of 2004. Another round will be scheduled during 2004-05. It is anticipated that such sessions will be permanent annual events. At this point it is too soon to tell whether this initiative will produce the desired affect.

Goal 8: Fully implement the RTP 45 hour rule.

The Office of Academic Affairs, Division of Humanities and the Dalton State College Testing Center implemented the 45-Hour Rule for the Regents' Testing Program. Through discussions at the annual Fall Faculty Retreat in 2003, memoranda disseminated during the Fall 2003 semester, and division-level advisement workshops held in the Spring 2004 semester, faculty were fully informed about the 45-Hour Rule and the consequences of its violation for both students and the College at large.

Goal 9: Reexamine both the College's institutional effectiveness and strategic planning processes.

During the summer of 2003, the College engaged the services of two external evaluators from other System institutions as recommended by the University System Office. These individuals spent two days on campus to complete a review of the structure of the institutional effectiveness (IE) program at DSC and provided recommendations on ways by which the institutional effectiveness program can be improved upon and, where possible, streamlined. Most of the recommendations were implemented during the 2003-04 year. As a result, the College's IE Program is now more focused on a smaller number of key performance indicators (KPIs). There is also a greater degree of flexibility among academic divisions concerning general education and major area assessment. Indeed, the review process helped the College determine whether the size and scope of the IE program is appropriate for the size and complexity of the institution. It addressed the overarching issue of the amount and usefulness of IE data collected and recommended ways on which certain aspects of the IE program can be pared down as well as engage in an ongoing quest for quality and continuous improvement.

Goal 12: Explore nontraditional scheduling options (e.g. Saturday, afternoon and online classes).

The College engaged in a year-long discussion through its "Non-Traditional Scheduling" committee regarding ways by which the college might better serve and accommodate a growing student body, including its older and working student population, especially in light of the implementation of the new online Web BAS and BBA programs, and other online courses developed for students in the Divisions of Technical Education and Nursing. In response, division chairs were encouraged to schedule more afternoon and weekly classes as might be demanded. During the 2003-04 year, the fall 2003 schedule offered more afternoon classes than before, partly mainly due to the parking crunch on campus. As well, a limited schedule of classes offered on Saturday mornings and Saturday afternoon was continued from earlier years, enabling a student to complete much of the general education Core Curriculum over a three-year period. Moreover, authorization was received from the Board of Regents to participate in a three-institution consortium to offer the Bachelor of Applied Science degree with a major in technology in a completely on-line environment, beginning in the fall 2004 semester. A similar offering the Bachelor in Business Administration degree with a major in management was also planned, with implementation anticipated for the spring 2005 semester. Division Chairs were encouraged to schedule more afternoon and weekly classes as might be demanded.

Goal 16: Increase student participation in study abroad programs.

The Office of Academic Affairs gave full support to recruitment and organization activities undertaken by the Study Abroad Coordinator and to efforts by one faculty member to organize a Study Abroad program in China. Support was also given to programs in Business Administration and in Social Work to provide students in those fields with academic experiences in international settings. The number of students taking credit courses in international settings rose from 1 in 2002-2003 to 17 in 2003-2004, and approximately 25 others had international experiences traveling to trade shows under the auspices of a grant to the Division of Business Administration. Monies from the grant, in its second year, provided several international opportunities for both students and faculty. On two separate trips, faculty and students experienced trade fairs in England and Germany. These trips provided international experiences for two faculty and eight students. The grant also provided funds for faculty members to attend international conferences and three faculty members took a group of seven students to Mexico for a ten-day learning experience. In addition, the grant allocated \$12,000 to support six students in a study abroad program during the 2003-04 year.

Goal 18: Pursue a four-year degree program in teacher education, with an ESOL or bilingual certification.

In December 2003 a proposal for DSC to offer a baccalaureate degree program in middle grades education was submitted to the Board of Regents. Requested revisions of this proposal were underway in the spring of 2004 when the State University of West Georgia announced its intentions to transfer the program in early childhood/elementary education it had offered on the DSC campus since 1986 to DSC operation. Work on the middle grades project was laid aside in favor of preparation to assume this unanticipated responsibility, which will lead to DSC's enrolling its first students in the early childhood/elementary education program in the fall of 2005.

Goal 19: Increase the number of DSC students who continue at DSC from the sophomore to the junior year.

In the Division of Business Administration, where five of DSC's six baccalaureate programs are housed, the activities of the newly organized Business Networking Club included programs designed to encourage perseverance from the sophomore to the junior year. In all, there was a 36% increase (from fall 2002 to fall 2003) in the number of sophomore business students who remained at DSC in their junior year. In the Social Work program, home of the remaining DSC bachelor's degree, faculty met with rising juniors as a group and as individuals to map out plans for junior- and senior-level study. Social Work faculty and students also made several presentations to families of Social Work students about the requirements of the program and organized these family members as a support group.

Goal 22: Advertise certification testing and other services available through the Center for Continuing Education, Center for Applied Business Studies, and the Division of Technical Education.

The Center for Continuing Education began developing a comprehensive program to market the services of the College to its business and industry customers through the use of "account executives" who will call on businesses to determine their educational and training needs and design programs to fulfill them. This initiative will be coordinated with the Center for Applied Business Studies and the Division of Technical Education so that the College will speak with a "single voice" in offering its services to the community.

Goal 23: The College and local employers will utilize four-year degree program advisory councils to determine opportunities for applied research that are mutually beneficial.

During the 2003-2004 year, a Business Advisory Council was established to provide guidance on local needs in business and industry and to suggest opportunities for applied research by DSC faculty and students, especially through the Center for Applied Business Studies in the Division of Business Administration. The Advisory Council worked with the Division to determine needs of both students and the business community. The College believes that an advisory council is tremendously beneficial for students and faculty because its business members are able to provide information regarding current needs in their industries.

Goal 25: Seek construction funding and a naming gift for the Continuing Education building.

As a next step in the College's physical growth plan as well as to meet a critical need identified in the 1998 Comprehensive Physical Master Plan, DSC officials announced on June 9, 2003 that the College has been approved to receive state funding from the FY2004 budget to begin construction of a \$6 million Continuing Education/Economic Development building near the DSC campus. The 26,000 square foot building, which will be built on a five-acre tract of land, will be designed to provide a flexible array of spaces for business and industry outreach and public outreach activities. The facility will enable the College to become even more responsive in meeting the needs of the Northwest Georgia area.

Goal 26: Seek state funding for a new classroom building.

During the 2003-04 year, the College completed a preliminary design of a new health sciences building. The College was invited to make a presentation to the Board of Regents at its June 2004 meeting. However, the project was not included on the FY 2006 Major Capital list. The College will work to secure an invitation to present this proposed building at the Regents' June 2005 meeting and to secure a spot on the Major Capital List for FY 2007. The program of the building will likely change to reflect the findings of the current Physical Master Plan update.

Goal 27: Explore on and off-campus parking and transportation options.

To ease parking problems for students, especially at the beginning of the semester, an additional 125 spaces was created on the athletic field with sidewalk constructed to connect parking lot with the main campus. This was in addition to using the Northwest Georgia Trade Center parking lot for another parking option for students which they can access via shuttle service from the main campus. There is, however, still some pressure to providing more parking spaces, especially in light of growing student enrollment.

Goal 30: Student Services will develop programming to address the six dimensions of wellness (i.e. physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, social, and environmental).

The College's Student Services evaluated the number and quality of related programming activities in the six dimensions of wellness through a combination of student evaluations (formal and informal) and faculty feedback from class presentations. Based on the review, it was determined that the Academic and Career Enhancement Center effectively offered programming through orientation seminars and class presentations in the areas of mental, emotional, and social wellness. Through the evaluation of all of the six areas, the Center staff was more cognizant of the programming strengths and areas needing improvement. It found that the spiritual, physical and environmental aspects of wellness have not been addressed and thus will become a focus for the 2004-2005 implementation year. Nonetheless, the goal gave the student services area an opportunity to do a program review based upon a well defined student development model. If students' needs are being met, it should be a contributing factor to a higher institutional retention rate.

Goal 33: In cooperation with the Georgia Project, employ a recruiter whose primary focus will involve the Latino community.

Because of the growing Hispanic population in the DSC service area and the increasing number of Hispanic students at the College, a goal to employ a Hispanic recruiter became a priority. Thus, during the 2003-04 year, the Enrollment Services office and the Georgia Project collaborated and recruited a Latino recruiter to help increase Hispanic student enrollment, retention and graduation rates. Preliminary enrollment data of registered students indicate this initiative has been very positive as the number of Hispanic students enrolling in fall 2004 increased by about 28% from fall 2003. At this time, this goal is vital to the continued growth of the College. It has helped the Admissions office to address the increasing number of prospective Latino students. Indeed, employing a Latino recruiter has enhanced the ability of DSC to reach out effectively to the Latino Community and has re-emphasized the college's commitment to recruit, enroll, retain and graduate Hispanic Students.

Goal 39: Develop outreach and recruitment initiatives directed toward both private school and home school students.

As part of its Senior Days program that bring prospective high school students to explore enrolling at DSC, the College included students from private and home school students. This is an untapped source of prospective college-age students. During the week of October 20, 2003 through October 24, 2003, five hundred high school students visited Dalton State College for the Senior Days Program. To make the experience more effective, student numbers were limited to those who had expressed and interest in attending DSC after graduation. These students included private and home school constituents. They attended a general information assembly which focused on enrollment services. Folders containing an admissions application, brochures, program evaluation, financial aid information and campus map were distributed and were escorted to various academic divisions for faculty information sessions. Students also were given an opportunity to attend an actual college class in their specified area of interest and invited to use this time to socialize with DSC students.

Two new institutional goals were added to the original goal list and will be implemented in the second year (2004-05). The goals are:

Goal 10: Implement revised/modified institutional effectiveness program.

Goal 17: Develop a new Honors program.