

SOUTHWESTERN COMMUNITY COLLEGE	PRESIDENT History	Statement 1.02
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In 1963, the North Carolina General Assembly enacted a law establishing the Department of Community Colleges under the State Board of Education and provided for the establishment of educational institutions to offer vocational, technical, adult education and two year college parallel programs. Given increasing demand for a more skilled workforce, leaders in Jackson County quickly approached the new Department to provide such training in Jackson County. Approval for an industrial education center in Jackson County was given. In turn, the county provided a site and the funds for erecting the first building. Also, a working agreement was reached by which the new center would be a satellite unit of Asheville/Buncombe Technical Institute.

In 1964, construction began on the first building with much of the work being done by students in the building trades classes. On December 1, 1964, the Jackson County Industrial Education Center opened with 133 students enrolled in short-term courses and an additional 60 enrolled in full-day courses.

As the Center grew, additional buildings were added and in 1967 the status of the Industrial Education Center was changed to that of a Technical Institute, independent of Asheville/Buncombe Technical Institute. A separate Board of Trustees for the Institute was established in 1968 and the service area of the college was set to include Jackson, Macon, and Swain counties and the Qualla Boundary. In 1970, after an extensive self-study effort, the college received a five year accreditation by the Southern Association of Schools and Colleges. The ten year accreditation was received in 1976, and reaffirmed in 1986, 1996 and 2007.

The College has evolved from an industrial education center (1964) to a technical institute (1969), a technical college (1979) and finally to a fully-accredited community college (1987). The initial and main campus was located in Jackson County in Sylva. In an effort to extend educational services to the region, College outreach centers were subsequently established in Macon and Swain counties and on the Qualla Boundary. Since inception, Southwestern has awarded more than ~~7,000~~ **12,000** degrees, diplomas and certificates.

Southwestern Community College takes pride in a history characterized by community involvement and collaboration resulting in affordable quality educational opportunities for the people of Jackson, Macon, ~~and~~ Swain counties, the Qualla Boundary and beyond. These educational opportunities have brought economic, personal and cultural benefits to the region and its people.

Throughout its history, the College has responded to and anticipated the educational needs of the community and region, offering an ever-widening range of programs and services by which students can prepare for the job market, transfer to senior institutions, and achieve professional and personal goals. In support of these efforts, an educational foundation for the College was established in 1973 to help provide student scholarships and secure additional resources beyond state support.

Southwestern Community College offers ~~more than 70 curriculum programs~~ **90 credential options within 47 academic programs** in Arts and Sciences, Career Technologies, College Transfer and Health Sciences. The College is a regional center for health science programs, public services technologies, and various digital-based technologies associated with advanced telecommunications and electronics. In addition, the college provides a wide variety of Continuing Education programs, courses and services at numerous locations throughout its ~~three county~~ service area.

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Through grants ~~awarded and gifts~~ since ~~1999~~ 2000, Southwestern Community College has ~~raised~~ **brought** more than \$~~45~~ **24** million dollars **of external funding into the College and community to support programs and services for it students as well as programs serving public schools students, displaced and incumbent workers, and veterans throughout the College service area.** Among the notable awards received in 2015 are the U.S. Department of Education TRiO Student Support Services grant, consistently awarded since 1999; the First in the World grant with Central Carolina Community College, one of only two First in the World Validation Awards in the nation and one of only 17 total awards nationwide; the National Science Foundation Advanced Technological Education program grant with Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College; the NASA High Altitude Student Payload program grant via the NC Community College System/NCSU/NC Space Grant Consortium; the Smoky Mountains STEM Collaborative project awarded via a NASA Science Education cooperative agreement and for which SCC was the only community college recipient in the nation, the High Tech Training Center for Swain County grant from the Golden LEAF Foundation, the Balsam Advanced Manufacturing Network grant from the Golden LEAF Foundation, the Duke Energy Community College grant, and the N.C. Community College System Minority Male Mentoring grant. ~~in direct support of joint programs designed to improve high school student graduation and college going rates. Among the efforts has been the New Century Scholars, Gear Up grants, Tech Prep funding, Dual Enrollment programs, the Upward Bound program, 3 high school Early Colleges, etc. Presently, more than 3,500 public school students annually are directly and positively impacted by these programs.~~

The Jackson Campus, located on Hwy 116 in the Sylva/Webster area, is the main campus. The Campus is centrally located to the population center of the service area. Starting in 2000, the facilities--land and buildings--of the Campus were strategically expanded allowing for increased enrollment growth, new facilities and improved public access. Key to this expansion was the acquisition of adjacent properties and the construction of a major new access road which is more than sufficient for the doubling of existing enrollment.

With the property expansion, a large new academic building--the Burrell Building--~~is under construction and will be available for use in 2014~~ **was completed in 2012.** On the new property and located adjacent to the Holt Library, a Jackson County Early College building ~~is also being constructed for occupancy in~~ **was constructed in 2010.** Finally, ~~in partnership with the East Carolina University School of Dentistry, a new Dental Service Center is planned for construction on the Jackson Campus with occupancy by 2014.~~

In 2007, the College opened the ~~new~~ Macon Campus in Franklin. This campus site is also centrally located for ease of access and offers a stunning view of the mountains and the Little Tennessee River. This site now includes a large classroom/administration building -- Cecil Groves Center-- and the Oscar Ledford Building which houses the Macon Early College. In support of the Macon Campus, a new Macon Country library was built ~~nearby on the same site.~~ **were** constructed allowing for future growth and development of the College and the area.

The College maintains two other key sites in Macon County, the Jerry Sutton Public Safety Training Center ~~and Complex~~ and ~~the Business and Industry Training Center~~ **Educational Opportunities classrooms** at the Macon Courthouse Annex. The Public Safety Training

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~~Complex~~ **Center (PSTC)** is a unique instructional site with the multipurpose Sutton Center, a Fire Technology Burn Center and large Driver Training Track. **In 2016, SCC will launch a Fire Protection Technology associate degree program out of the PSTC.** This complex provides local, regional, and nationwide training for such agencies as the U.S. Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, North Carolina law enforcement authorities.

The College also ~~has~~ **operates two** major centers in ~~Cashiers, Cherokee and Swain County:~~ **The Swain Center and the Swain Business Education and Training Center. Located at the Old Almond School, the Swain Center houses the Outdoor Leadership program, the Nantahala School for the Arts and Educational Opportunities classes. SCC's Mechatronics Engineering Technology program is located at the Swain Business Education and Training Center, and partners with the Eastern Band of Cherokee in operation of the Oconaluftee Institute for Cultural Arts in Cherokee. These centers range in size from some 26,000 sq. ft. to 3,000 sq. ft. The centers provide a wide array of programs, courses and services to local residents. Among the services offered is the Institute for Heritage Arts at the Swain Center and a new initiative at the Cashiers Center for seniors done in cooperation with Jackson County.**

In 2000, Southwestern Community College took a leadership role in technology deployment for workforce education and economic development in western North Carolina. Having successfully operated a multisite instructional television (ITV) program since 1994-serving the public schools in Jackson, Macon, ~~and~~ Swain counties and the Qualla Boundary--the analog delivery system was significantly expanded and upgraded to a digital format. In order to accomplish the upgrade, the College provided the needed leadership for making available affordable high speed Internet access to all of far western North Carolina. Southwestern Community College helped create a private enterprise--BalsamWest FiberNET—which built a 300+ mile world-class, underground fiber optic network serving over 125,000 people and all the public schools in far western North Carolina – Jackson, Macon, Swain, Cherokee, Clay and Graham counties and the Qualla Boundary.

Most importantly, the College's success with students has achieved both state and nationwide recognition. The College has achieved statewide recognition for its rating as a superior North Carolina community college. In 2007, in a first-ever and one-of-a-kind listing of America's community colleges, Southwestern Community College was rated number four in the nation, according to Washington Monthly. The ratings were based on results from the nationwide Community College Survey of Student Engagement, along with federal graduation rates. In a 2009 repeat of the same survey used for the 2007 national ranking, Southwestern Community College showed significant improvement in nearly all categories with no measured area showing a decline. **In 2015, another ranking service – WalletHub – also ranked SCC among the top 10 in the nation. SCC placed seventh in that listing.**

The commitment of Southwestern Community College to student learning has been present since the inception of the College. In part, this can be attributed to the mountain culture where the family is very important given the geographic and topological isolation of the Southern Appalachian region. The spirit of family and associated responsibilities —literally and figuratively-- became a part of the college culture. Overtime, while the region has grown and changed, the culture of family and responsibility has remained. This focus on the student as family when combined with the use of various technologies to enhance student learning and a willingness of College faculty and staff to assume responsibility for student success have helped create a very positive learning environment.

