Strategic Goal 3: Expand and promote community education.

Year 1: 2006-07

Success Indicator Task: Gather baseline data for community education participation and satisfaction.

Year one actions are described in detail below:

Action Step 1:

a. Establish contact person for community education courses, programs, and events.

An institutional budget line item has been established for a full-time support position. It was determined, through information gathered in the initial phase of this strategic planning process, that additional resources were needed by this department. It was decided that this new position will serve a dual function. Half-time duties will include support and coordination of internal professional development activities for the staff at Fairmont State. The other half-time duties include support and coordination of community education activities that are identified in this strategic goal.

The position description is completed, a new staff member has been identified and hiring is projected to be completed on 3/17/07.

A published contact number for community education has been established. This phone number is monitored and answered by a human staff member during business hours, and is routed to voicemail during other times. The reception person is located at the Center for Workforce Education (CWE) facility in downtown Fairmont.

All internal CWE staff, which includes a part-time community education secretary, is apprised of program content and event locations. Other CWE staff also field community education calls and follow up with inquiries.

Persons on campus who may have interaction with the public via the main switchboard have been made aware of the community education contact number and that program content and event locations are listed on the web. However, the main Fairmont State phone number is answered automatically, with a long list of ten numerical choices that do not include either community education or CWE. If a person selects 0 to access a human operator, it currently goes to the switchboard during regular business hours and to the Solutions Center (IT help desk) at other times. Both are aware of the correct phone number for calls to community education.

A long-term issue for this goal is to realize that the Community Education Director is currently funded with soft money from the Gear-Up grant. A part-time secretary/receptionist is also provided for community education activities through this funding source. This grant will expire, and a strategy for institutional funding of this position will need to be identified.

b. Create contact list for all community education services and personnel.

A contact list has been established, using the Fairmont State Exchange Server, in an Outlook public folder. This includes contact information for internal departments (Fine Arts, Athletics, Falcon Center, Aquatics, Folk Life, etc.) and external entities (Adult Basic Education, Parks & Recreation, Prickett’s Fort, etc.).

c. Track all community education inquiries.

We are in the process of identifying a comprehensive solution for tracking inquires and responses to prospective students. This project is tied to a larger solution for student registration, student electronic payment, course management, and customer relationship management (CRM) for all non-credit activities on campus. The project includes a requirement that any solution that is chosen will integrate into our institutional enterprise system, SCT Banner. The project is started, with a project charter and team established. The team has almost finished the discovery phase, and a complete project requirement identification document is drafted. It is anticipated that a formal request for proposals will be issued in April.

d. Begin coordinating all community education programs through contact office.

Not all community education programs currently provided by the institution are coordinated through the community education office. We still need communicate this priority with all departments that deliver education programs to the community. Internal policy and control issues greatly affect any effort towards a fully centralized coordination of programs offered to the community.
This is not currently a stated policy, thus it is difficult to keep track of (or even be aware of) all the events that are offered to the community by the campus-wide organizations and departments. We are not convinced that a mandate to this end would be effective. Multiple factors motivate various internal departments and groups to offer these events, and issues such as autonomy, turf and financial benefit are perceived as constraints to full implementation of this goal. We will have to continue to sell this idea to key constituents. These internal constituents will need to perceive that additional value is being brought to the table by allowing the community education department to coordinate its event. Given the number and scope of all the programs currently offered by these groups, we are not convinced that a one and one-half person department could effectively manage all the current activities.

It is our understanding that a software solution (a web-enabled campus calendar) will be coming on line soon. This will help identify those widely-ranging activities that should be placed on this centralized calendar.

e. Convene community education and campus constituents to create procedures for community education services (ticketing, registration, facilities assignment, and personnel).

Comprehensive registration and event management tools are incorporated into the Banner integration project, described above. Integrating procedures for the current multiple systems for ticketing (example: Fine Arts and Athletics) and for facilities management (current decentralized responsibilities for facilities assignment at multiple locations) will be a challenge to implement. This task is currently in process, through initiating conversations with stakeholders, but not completed.

Action Step 2:

a. Inventory community education offerings and their locations.

The process of identification and inventory of these offerings is ongoing, but not complete. Internal activities of the community education department offerings are inventoried, but a comprehensive list of offerings of other on-campus departments and groups have not been fully identified and inventoried. Communication lines have been established with some of the major providers, but as noted in action step 1d above, it is difficult to make a listing current and comprehensive without a clear understanding by the providers of such content that communication with the community education office is required.

b. Establish contacts in each county in the service region.

Gear-Up FACE coordinators have been contacted and made aware of classes that are currently being offered. We have worked directly with FACE Coordinators to provide courses, content and instructors to facilitate community activities within the Gear-Up schools. We need to clarify the role of the Pierpont Community & Technical College off-campus coordinators in regard to community education, and better utilize their local connections to establish these contacts. Programs at a distance are difficult to coordinate, especially since many are held in the evening, and these off-campus coordinators could provide on-site services, especially during the start-up of new classes.

c. Conduct needs analysis and surveys.

Formal surveys were distributed to Gear-U families in the counties served by this program. Several hundred responses were received from this targeted audience throughout the service region. These responses were manually input and organized. Analysis of this information identified specific areas of topical interest by geographic region. We have not yet begun responding to the needs identified in these outlying areas due to time constraints. Having the additional resource of a new half-time coordinator will help in response to additional market segments.

A customer needs analysis and survey tool may be incorporated into any program management software tool that is identified in the Banner integration project. Anecdotal evidence of interest in community education topics, identified through direct customer contact, is being tracked in our current Outlook contact database. Further needs identification and analysis must be done on an ongoing basis. Market analysis is a critical function for a growing program. Better tools are required to be successful with this goal.

d. Determine underserved locations.

We are working with Gear-Up FACE coordinators to identify locations at participating middle schools throughout the service region. A potential location for entry into the Clarksburg market has been
identified, adjacent to the Caperton Center. This market has a good potential for the growth of community education programs in this neighboring county.

Much of our outlying thirteen-county service region could be seen as underserved. Some counties and locations have well-developed community arts and/or education programs, where strategic partnerships could be created. Other counties have little in the way of community education programs, but have a predominately rural and dispersed population, where the physical distance from Fairmont is the main constraint for the coordination of quality programs.

e. **Develop new offerings in response to needs analysis.**

Information generated from surveys administered thus far has been used in the development of the current community education schedule of class offerings. Additional development will flow from ongoing needs analysis efforts. As indicated in goal c above, better tools for customer relations management, communication and survey tools are needed to gather, manage and analyze this data.

**Action Step 3:**

a. **Establish consortium of community education providers.**

We have begun developing a cadre of quality community education providers for various topical areas. A growing list of instructors has been created. Dialog with these various providers has begun, and a wide variety of education programs are currently being offered. No formal consortium has been established.

b. **Develop orientation program for community education providers.**

An orientation packet for instructors has been developed and disseminated to all community education instructors. Job responsibilities and work schedules have been coordinated to provide greater face-to-face interaction with instructors consistent with the times and locations of community education offerings.

**Action Step 4:**

a. **Identify potential community organizations for partnerships in fostering community education awareness.**

Formal arrangements have been made with Marion County Adult Basic Education and Prickett’s Fort State Park. Dialog with other organizations is ongoing.

b. **Establish marketing and advertising plan.**

The institution has begun an image study, which is being conducted in consultation with the Carnegie group. The current internal and external image of the institution will be identified by this project, and specific outcomes of this effort should include areas of competitive advantage for both the institution as a whole, and for non-credit activities as well. A more well-defined community education marketing plan will flow from the results of this effort. The department does not currently have institutional funds placed into a budget line item for marketing or advertising. This will continue to be a significant constraint for implementing any marketing strategy that is identified.

**Action Step 5:**

a. **Create database of programs, activities, and events information.**

A database of community education department offerings currently exists in an Excel flat file format and also in our online registration database. Programs, activities and events offered by other departments are not currently in a central database.

The institutional calendaring function, to be implemented soon, will facilitate the sharing and transfer of this information between departments.

The software integration project, referenced in other goals above, is designed to provide additional tools to coordinate and track this specific information, and integrate this information into the institutional Banner database format.

We have initiated conversation with the Fairmont State Foundation staff, with the goal of integrating the contact list(s) managed by this department with the community education database. Issues and problems of this integration goal have not yet been fully identified.