

# Secondary Education Growth Plan

## Spring 2005

### **Mission Statement**

#### University Mission

Teaching and learning constitute the central mission of Western Carolina University. The University seeks to create a community of scholarship in which the activities of its members are consistent with the highest standards of knowledge and practice in their disciplines.

The commitment of the community to service, research and creative activities complements the central mission and extends the benefits of its scholarship to society. As a major public resource for western North Carolina, the University assists individuals and agencies in the region through the expertise of its faculty, its staff, and its students.

#### Mission of the College of Education and Allied Professions

The primary role of the College of Education and Allied Professions is to prepare educators, counselors, psychologists, speech-language pathologists, recreation personnel and other human service specialists at both entry and advanced levels to staff public elementary, secondary, postsecondary schools, sport and recreation agencies, and other human service organizations in North Carolina and the region beyond. The College fulfills its mission by developing and maintaining a community of scholars that promotes and recognizes good teaching, service, and research. Of these three scholarly activities, providing optimal learning environments for students is most important, followed by service and research.

The College strives to provide leadership and technical assistance for the improvement of teacher preparation and elementary and secondary schooling in North Carolina, the nation, and developing countries. The College is strongly committed to partnering with the public schools in order to educate preservice teachers to teach all children to high standards, to assist beginning professional educators to be successful and remain in the profession, and to provide quality staff development for career professional educators.

Additional fundamental roles of the College are to serve the liberal studies program of the University and to offer programs and special clinical services that relate closely to the mission of the College and that are needed by its constituencies.

The College fulfills its mission by creating and nourishing a community of learners guided by knowledge, values, and experiences. The guiding principles of the community of learners include: (1) the belief that the best educational decisions are made after adequate reflection and with careful consideration of the interests, experiences and welfare of the persons affected by those decisions; (2) an appreciation of and respect for diversity; and (3) a commitment to fostering the responsible use of technology.

## Mission of the Department of Educational Leadership and Foundations

The mission of the department rests on the following two principles: personal and professional integrity and respect for the worth of the individual. All our actions and interactions are to use these as our guideposts.

Our mission has three emphases:

- Department members create instructional environments that contribute to students meeting their personal and professional learning goals.
- Above all else, we are teachers. As teachers, our mission extends beyond the immediate classroom environment to the provision of service to educational and education-related agencies.
- Our mission emphasizes each faculty member being a learner through research into discipline-related topics, through creating learning environments, and through the provision of professional service.

## Goals of the Secondary Education Programs

Western Carolina University's secondary education programs prepare teachers who

- demonstrate content knowledge within their content areas.
- practice the basic principles of instructional practice and assessment, classroom organization and management, and communication skills processes and their interrelationship.
- possess the major language and learning strategies, and the technology skills to facilitate learning.
- are well-versed in curricula appropriate to students in grades 9-12, the NC Standard Course of Study, and who are able to evaluate materials and resources for secondary education.
- understand and address the multiple levels of diversity among their students, particularly by implementing strategies that recognize students' interests, abilities, and modes of learning.
- are reflective, life-long learners who use their critical, intellectual, and aesthetic abilities in the schools and the wider community.

## Enrollment Assessment

### Current Status

At the beginning of the 2004-2005 academic year, the undergraduate secondary education programs in English, mathematics, history/social sciences, science, art, modern foreign languages, and music had **146** majors enrolled (see table below).

**Table 1. Upper Level Enrollment in Secondary Education Undergraduate Programs.**

Fall 1999	Fall 2000	Fall 2001	Fall 2002	Fall 2003	Fall 2004
130	112	113	144	122	146

However, enrollment does not necessarily indicate retention to the point of graduation; students leave school, transfer, or change majors (one notable trend in some programs is students' discovery that the secondary education programs' rigorous requirements in content area and second language courses can be avoided by a strategic shift of major to elementary education.) Undergraduate and graduate degrees shown for the same period in secondary education are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2. Degrees awarded in secondary education undergraduate degree programs.**

Major	98-99	99-00	00-01	01-02	02-03	03-04
Art Ed	2	3	0	1	3	2
Science Ed	3	7	0	5	5	3
English Ed	7	6	9	7	9	9
Social Sciences, Secondary Ed.	5	9	6	10	3	10
Math Ed	5	4	5	1	1	1
French, Secondary Ed.	1	1	0	0	0	0
German, Secondary Ed	0	0	2	1	0	2
Spanish, Secondary Ed	3	2	2	1	7	6
Music, Secondary Ed	10	14	12	6	18	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>38</b>

Plainly, if 122 upper level undergraduate students are enrolled in 2003-2004 and 38 have graduated within that period (see Table 3 below), 31 percent have graduated from the secondary education programs. This indicates that enrollment is growing or retention within the program is declining. Table 3 shows these figures grouped together for all secondary education programs, including graduate degrees awarded in these programs.

**Table 3: Degrees awarded in secondary education**

	98-99	99-00	00-01	01-02	02-03	03-04
<b>Undergraduate</b>	36	46	36	32	46	38
<b>Graduate</b>	13	7	14	7	8	38

As can be readily seen, there is no definitive trend of steady growth in secondary education graduations over this five-year period; there are “good years” and “bad years”, but the numbers are sufficiently similar that these may be attributed to normal fluctuations in numbers of degrees awarded (though it is tempting to wonder what happened in graduate degrees either in 2003-2004 (the beginning of a trend of returning graduates seeking Masters of Arts in Teaching?) or in 2001-2002 when, presumably, most of these 2003-2004 graduates enrolled. However, given the economic recessions which have marked these years, it would hardly be surprising to find “downsized” graduates returning to seek licensure in profession which all but guarantees work.

As Table 2 indicates, graduation rates of programs in social sciences, music, and English show either slight growth or fairly steady numbers; programs in art, science, mathematics, and foreign languages in French and German show a range of mild declines; the program in Spanish, however, has rebounded to its highest numbers in five years. This may reflect variations between programs; however, lest anyone leap to conclusions about what a given program is doing “right” or “wrong”, it should be noted that during this five-year period, administrative support to programs in mathematics and non-Spanish foreign languages has been reduced, which might reasonably be expected to affect these programs’ graduation rates. It should also be remembered that mathematics and science remain two of North Carolina’s highest-need areas and that there are both current and projected teacher shortages in these areas extending well beyond the bounds of Western Carolina’s programs. In the recommendation portion of this report, these facts suggest that local administrative support in the areas of mathematics and science education is particularly important.

The strengths that all programs have in common include the following:

- Rich early and late field experiences, block and practica.
- Two-semester internships with close supervision by both university and academic department.
- Rigorous courses within the content area.
- A succession of teaching methods courses which build upon one another.

#### Vision (what we can be)

Given the growth recommended, and projected, for WCU over the next five years (by some estimates up to half again the 1999 figures by 2010), it is likely that these programs will grow somewhat; while secondary education graduation rates as a whole have not risen dramatically over the past five years (about 22% separates the “bad years” of 1999 from the peak “good year” in 2002-2003), the increased numbers of freshmen who have attended Western in the past two years have not yet graduated and it remains to be seen in what majors they finally finish.

It is likewise difficult to project from the current numbers what enrollment and graduation rates might look like over the next five years. However, according to Richard Thompson’s *Enrollment Targets for UNC Teacher Education: Report to the Education Oversight Committee* (December 2004), the UNC system hopes to see a 24% growth in WCU’s teacher

education programs as a whole over the next five years; if this figure is applied to secondary education, this suggests that the 146 currently enrolled majors should increase by 35, to 181, and that our graduation rates should increase by about 9, to 47 per year (assuming that the current ratio of students graduating to students enrolled remains about the same and assuming that the disparity which currently exists between these numbers is not the result of climbing enrollment in the past two years; obviously, however, retaining a higher percentage of the enrolled majors would be a very cost-effective answer to the problem of teacher shortages in secondary education.) See Table 4 for a breakdown of this projected increase.

Table 4: Projected/desired majors enrolled and graduating in secondary education.

	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010
<b>Enrolled</b>	181	190	200	210	221
<b>Graduated</b>	47	51	56	61	66

According to University Planning’s Enrollment Growth Recommendations (<http://www.wcu.edu/stratplan/enrlmntgrwth.htm>), Western Carolina’s overall enrollment is projected to grow between 20 and 24% during the next four years. If this projection proves accurate, and if the enrollment growth is evenly distributed between majors, the question of Secondary Education’s projected growth may solve itself. If, on the other hand, the enrollment growth trend at Western Carolina does not materialize, or if the growth materializes but is not evenly distributed among departments and majors, there may be no significant growth in the secondary education programs’ majors and graduation rates at all unless Western is pro-active in enhancing these programs.

However, whether or not the increased numbers of students will result in increasing enrollments and graduation rates in secondary education (a reasonable assumption but not one on which data can yet be gathered), it is likewise reasonable, in view of this requirement and in view of the current and projected teacher shortages, to act aggressively to be sure that this happens.

Plan for Growth and Development of Secondary Education at WCU (how to get there)

These suggestions have been divided into three categories:

- **Recruiting**, obviously designed to affect enrollment numbers more immediately than graduation rates, and to some extent changes feasible for individual programs to implement—if properly funded and supported—independently;
- **Program and university development**, meant to improve preparation and retention of majors as well as graduation rates, and
- **Accommodation of diverse and financially straitened populations**, a category which includes but is not limited to recruiting initiatives. The populations from which teachers do not traditionally emerge constitute a pool which remains largely untapped on state and university levels: these include less-educated and less-affluent rural groups who find the financial and time requirements of traditional teacher

education too burdensome, workers who are being “downsized” and “outsourced” mid-career, and those who have family obligations which too often prove prohibitive to full-time teaching, but which need not prohibit part-time teaching, if the state were creative in working with part-time, full-benefits teachers. Within these broad categories, our suggestions are loosely arranged in order from easiest to implement at a departmental or program level to those requiring the most administrative support from the university and from the state legislature.

## **Recruiting**

- Program directors and secondary education might meet with Lynn Milner, currently in charge of recruiting for teacher education as a whole, to discuss what she does do now and how she feels it might be made more effective.
- It might also be necessary to hire another teacher recruiter whose primary job is secondary-education based; until each program meets with Lynn Milner, we won't know if it is.
- Secondary education programs might work with FTA groups and teacher cadet programs in local schools to orchestrate some kind of overnight event/program for those interested in teaching, maybe a Friday/Saturday event.
- Each program needs to be sure sure guidance counselors at local high schools are getting high-visibility materials about our secondary education programs, which means . . .
- Each program must develop its teacher education program recruitment materials; for instance, each specialty area should have a glossy brochure, a program-specific poster to post in schools, a CD with various components (slide show, FAQ, interview with student teacher, etc) or all three. This in turn means...
- ...a university-funded department-level budget for advertising and recruitment.
- Likewise, Western Carolina might increase advertisement efforts, perhaps through College Foundation, to fully describe special scholarships and loan programs for prospective teachers, and simplify application procedures for these funds.
- Western might increase school contacts generally and encourage students visiting our Open Houses to interact with extracurricular programs like music, athletics, clubs, etc. In many cases, students are the best recruiters of other students.
- To get faculty and staff into schools, secondary education should establish a speakers' bureau for WCU faculty/staff and funding for these speakers to travel to local schools.
- It's been even more strongly suggested that Western send student teachers and teacher ed students, as well as recruiters and professors, to local schools to offer information about the teacher education programs.
- Secondary education might develop a package to attract students to WCU for summer programs in teaching; NC TEACH is a good beginning, but the committee recommends developing an advertising program for advanced degrees leading to licensure, like the MAT, maybe calling them something catchy like “Get your Master's in the mountains.”
- North Carolina might make efforts to identify individuals with a teaching background who are not currently teaching by working with the NC Office of Teacher

- Certification to obtain contact information. Then it could prepare materials encouraging those persons to enter or re-enter the teaching field.
- The state should survey former teachers who have left the profession “early” and determine reasons for leaving. Then North Carolina could work with school administrators and university teacher educators to address the problems discovered.
  - The state might be able to identify retired teachers and set up programs to allow them to work for salary while also receiving retirement payments. Many teachers retire even though they love their jobs because they see a retirement “window” open, in terms of benefits and salary, which they can’t afford to miss.
  - The state could establish programs encouraging current teachers’ aides and other support personnel to obtain full teacher certification, including special scholarships and loan programs.

### **Program and University Development**

- An obvious requirement of program development is to hire new faculty in specialty areas to strengthen teacher education programs. In English education, for instance, the program director is currently non-tenure-track, and while this will, it is to be hoped, change in the near future, the department’s effort to make a second English education hire four years ago has resulted in that line being moved to professional writing; the line was effectively lost to teacher education and may never be restored. In this and situations like it, new lines need to be designated for additional specialty area education hires. This is even more true in high-need areas like mathematics and science education, where teachers are desperately needed; it’s desirable to have a minimum of two faculty working primarily with the education programs. Supervision of interns, in particular, merits only a one-course reduction no matter how many interns there are; currently teacher education faculty are already working more hours to supervise interns than they are given in release time. If the number of interns does indeed increase, it will be doubly necessary to hire more faculty, to increase the release time, or both.
- Program directors might work with Janice Holt to develop consistent checksheets and requirements for NC TEACH students in specialty areas.
- All secondary education programs must continue to assess current curricula to identify barriers and areas which require change.
- Faculty in high-need areas like math and science teacher preparation might apply for more grants to develop their programs, equipment, and preparation.
- The College of Education and Allied Professions might also consider whether there are any alternatives to requiring the essay-pedagogy sections of the PRAXIS II, whose time restrictions mean that very few students finish it. The committee has no immediate problem with the objective section, but seven mini-essays in one hour, as in the Composition and Pedagogy section of the English exam, seems to put the emphasis in the wrong place, on speed, and “weeds” students who might have been good teachers despite a lack of facility on standardized tests.
- In physical terms, Western must increase the number and capacity of classrooms which can function as EC’s (electronic classrooms) or at least have computer/projector options like those in McKee; the carts are rapidly becoming so

- unreliable as to be prohibitive to technologically-based lessons. This problem also constitutes a barrier to distance learning.
- And increasing the number and availability of night courses and distance learning courses are, of course, primary strategies to provide more opportunity to non-traditional and lateral entry students.
    - However, many departments are reluctant to support more distance learning until the copyright situation on the distance-learning courses is more favorable to faculty. Currently the University owns such course material as appears on Web CT or other distance-learning media, an ownership justified by a one-time salary payment of \$3000 to faculty developing the course. A recent compromise states that faculty may still use their own copies of the material in other courses or venues, but University ownership of the material might well lead to, as the phrase is, “outsourcing ourselves.” That is, the University’s outright ownership of the course materials is an issue less because it interferes with faculty’s fair use of their own creations (an issue addressed by the recent compromise) but because an academy in which adjunct faculty are ever more numerous and in which tenure is being eroded might logically be expected to assign those courses and that material to adjunct faculty to save the expense of tenured and tenure-track faculty. If, however, the University agreed to pay fair royalties on the use of an online course to the faculty who developed that course, rather than contracting for that development on a one-time salaried basis, it would ensure some protection against a faculty member finding her work used in courses across the country taught by adjuncts, and would act as a disincentive to universities inclined to exploit faculty members in this way. And doing so would cost the university nothing as long as the faculty member who developed the course continued to teach it.
  - The committee recommends that Western assign advisors in the specialty areas for lateral entry students, who tend to “fall through the cracks” when it comes to advising and support and who sometimes take longer than need be to finish their programs.
  - The committee further recommends that the University make every effort to simplify the credit-transfer process and the Liberal Studies program; if North Carolina needs teachers in the classrooms as soon as possible, a Byzantine liberal studies program which too often leads to additional semesters probably constitutes a barrier.
  - Western should develop new licensure and degree programs in high-need areas like ESL, with all that attends that recommendation (notably new faculty hires and administrative support for these programs.)

### **Accommodation of diverse and financially pressed populations**

- The committee would like to see the Teaching Fellows program expanded to allow the recruitment of currently enrolled University students. This might net us many good teachers who simply didn’t know at age seventeen that teaching was what they wanted to do.
- It further recommends expanding teacher scholarship programs to offer increased number of tuition scholarships for prospective teachers; many student teachers find

- surviving our rigorous programs, culminating in a semester in which they aren't allowed to work outside of the internship, a financial hardship.
- Prospective teacher loan programs should be expanded to offer repayment opportunities via years of service as a North Carolina teacher.
  - In terms of recruiting, Western might make more effort to identify and target communities with declining industries for recruitment, and to inform those who might be interested in a change of career to teaching of our teacher education programs. There will be more such populations, not fewer, over the next ten years; their needs and the state's might well coincide, if sufficient financial support were available to allow them to complete a licensure program.
  - This raises, once again, the specter of transfer credit: the more difficulty in transferring credits into Western, and the less consistency as to what "counts", the more barriers we place in the way of prospective teachers.
  - Western might improve outreach efforts to reach non-traditional students in the community; currently these students tend to approach Southwestern, which makes them feel welcome with a streamlined financial aid process, personal attention and interest, and innovative scheduling. For instance, workers at Jackson Paper can't get a college education because they're on a rotating shift schedule; no one works the same shift for more than six weeks or so. What about some basic courses at Western which also rotate, to accommodate an interested group of employees? Some faculty might be willing to change their class times weekly or monthly to help this population find the education which many of them do want very much.
  - **At state level, all efforts will be largely stopgap measures until state salaries, benefits, class sizes, and working conditions are improved for all teachers.**
  - Furthermore, the state might formalize arrangements allowing for flex-time benefits for teachers with family conflicts; a teacher who was able to receive half-pay but full benefits while he or she tended a new child or a dependent parent might be more willing to stay in the profession. Moreover, such a plan is to a school's benefit: because a half-time teacher teaches two classes and a full-time teacher three, for one full-time salary and two benefits packages, the school covers four courses instead of three.
  - **We also encourage the state to offer salary bonuses for teachers working in areas of extreme shortage, especially math, science, and special education.**