WHERE WE HAVE BEEN

History
Through the concerted efforts of concerned and united Catawba County citizens and North Carolina educational leaders, on April 3, 1958, Catawba Valley Community College was established by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction as the ninth school of its kind in the state. Construction of the original facilities began in 1959. The 40,000 square foot building costing approximately $500,000 was completed in August 1960. An initial enrollment of seventy-seven (77) students began classes in September of the same year. From 1960 to 1963, the College operated under the jurisdiction of the Catawba County Board of Education. During this time, the College was known as the Catawba County Industrial Education Center.

In July 1963, the General Assembly of North Carolina enacted into law G.S. 115A which provided for the establishment of the present North Carolina System of Community Colleges. On January 9, 1964, Catawba Valley Technical Institute was among the original seven institutes chartered by the Department. At that time, CVTI established its own Board of Trustees and began operation as a member of the Department of Community Colleges. Thus, it was in August 1964, that the College awarded its first Associate Degree in Applied Science. It was during the transition from an Industrial Education Center to Technical Institute that great strides began in expanding educational programs, increasing student enrollment, developing quality instruction, adding facilities, and increasing community acceptance and service.

On September 1, 1979, the name of the institution was changed to Catawba Valley Technical College by the Trustees and commissioners of Catawba County. On December 1, 1987, the State Board of Community Colleges officially approved CVTC to become Catawba Valley Community College, and the College Transfer program was approved. The College continues as a publicly supported coeducational institution.

Location
Catawba Valley Community College is located in Hickory on Highway 70 in Catawba County, North Carolina. Situated in the heart of the Piedmont some 1,175 feet above sea level, CVCC is easily accessible over Interstate 40, Highways 321, 70, 16 and 127. It is within seven miles of a commercial airport and approximately 50 miles from metropolitan Charlotte. The campus covers approximately 120 acres and includes 11 buildings for a total of 405,647 square feet of floor space.

In addition, there is a Cosmetology Center at the CVCC Newton Center in downtown Newton and the Workforce Development Center at the East Campus.

The Alexander Center for Education, a 15,000-square-foot building situated on 4.72 acres at 345 Industrial Boulevard in Taylorsville, was purchased by Alexander County in 2000 as an off-site center, which opened for classes March 28, 2003.
2007-2012 Strategic Plan
Catawba Valley Community College’s 2007-2012 Strategic Plan was reflective of the college’s stakeholders and vision for that five-year period. The input of the various college stakeholders was crucial in the development of the plan, and the structure of the plan was indicative of an institutional need. For the first time in 18 years, the college was undergoing both a transition in leadership and a massive reorganization, a transition into a new academic and administrative hierarchy. The development of three separate, distinct academic schools and associated innovation centers redefined not only the college, but also its outcomes and operational objectives. A new system of evaluation and assessment was introduced, and the seeds of a new era of accountability were planted. With such internal change and with the realization that the college would need to enhance its operational outcomes to meet the needs of its stakeholders, the 2007 – 2012 Strategic Plan was, by necessity, very directly prescriptive in nature. A rather complex structure of Strategic Directions, Initiatives, and Objectives (outcomes with projected dates of achievement) was developed; this type of prescriptive plan was necessary in assisting the college in maintaining some sense of progressing identity as it worked its way through some of the most dramatic changes that it had ever witnessed.

In June 2010, the Office of the President created an Institutional Mid-Plan Analysis of the CVCC 2007-2012 Strategic Plan. Results/Outcomes for the Strategic Objectives indicated significant progress toward achievement of all strategic objectives; in fact, the vast majority of objectives for years one through four had been achieved at least to some notable extent, and the foundation had been laid for the completion of the fifth-year objectives.
WHERE WE ARE
During the summer of 2011, a group of campus leaders and faculty convened during a strategic planning retreat in Newton, NC, to discuss the drafting of the next five-year strategic plan. The group reviewed the 2007-2012 Strategic Plan and discussed where the college was during the development of the current plan. Then the group was presented information regarding the service area’s demographics, economic status and projections, and business and industry statistics (much of the information was provided by the Western Piedmont Council of Governance). Members discussed the college’s role in a depressed economy and what the college would need to achieve within the next five-year planning period.

After two days of careful deliberation and intense discussion, the group came to the following conclusions:

1. Stakeholder input in the drafting of a new strategic plan is indispensable.
2. Given the present economic concerns and the rather volatile environment, the new strategic plan would by necessity need to be easily amended/revised to meet the need of an unpredictable economic and social climate.
3. The 2013-2018 Strategic Plan would need to be more user-friendly and usable in general.
4. While the 2007-2012 Strategic Plan was beneficial to the college during its years of transition and definition, the new 2013-2018 Strategic Plan would need to be more interpretive and intuitive in nature.
5. While the 2013-2018 Strategic Plan would need to be less prescriptive and complicated, it would still need to maintain or suggest usable and to the extent possible, quantitative measurements of outcomes achievement.

Stakeholder input would be garnered by the use of Strategic Planning Focus Groups, which would be conducted with various service area representatives. Members of the strategic planning group that had met for the retreat would be trained in facilitating these focus groups. The intent would be to discover the various stakeholder perceptions of what the college has meant to its service community and what the college would need to perform or achieve in the next five years to remain a vital and desirable educational and training facility.

The facilitators’ training was conducted during the fall of 2011, and on 8 February 2012, the first Catawba Valley Community College Strategic Planning Focus Group was conducted for the college’s Interclub Council, a group of representatives from the various student clubs and organizations on campus. Nineteen other focus groups were to follow:

1. Support Staff Association (22 February 2012)
2. Community Partners (6 March 2012)
3. Student Leadership Academy (6 March 2012)
4. Faculty (session 1 – 15 March 2012)
5. CVCC Administration (19 March 2012)
6. Catawba County Chamber of Commerce (22 March 2012)
7. Faculty (Session 2 – 27 March 2012)
8. CVCC Board of Trustees (28 March 2012)
10. CVCC Professional Staff (5 April 2012)
11. Faculty (session 3 – 11 April 2012)
12. Rotaract Club (12 April 2012)
In addition to these Strategic Planning Focus Groups, electronic survey links were sent to all employees and to over 9000 current and former students to elicit input.

An external consultant was retained to examine the focus group notes and the results of the CVCC Strategic Planning Survey online. The consultant identified **Seven Common Strategic Themes/Directives** arising from the data:

1. Improved Student Guidance
2. Offerings Tailored to Jobs/Workforce Needs
3. Employee Development/Training/Morale
4. Enhanced Student Services
5. Outreach/Community Service
6. Advertising/Messaging/Marketing
7. Expanded Programming/Credential Offerings (sub-thematic)

The consultant also identified core values and beliefs associated with these themes. Catawba Valley Community College has seven existing core values; the seven existing core values reflected those identified by the consultant:

1. Student Success
2. Excellence in Teaching and Lifelong Learning
3. Economic and Workforce Development
4. Quality Stakeholder Engagement
5. Global Perspectives
6. Embracing Diversity
7. Integrity and Ethics

The consultant’s report added that student engagement occurs in three stages: Entry, Experience, and Exit. It is important that the institution take a holistic view of the students to understand their motivations and needs.
WHERE WE ARE GOING: 2013-2018 CVCC Mission, Vision, and Strategic Philosophy

College Mission
Catawba Valley Community College is an innovative, comprehensive community college that fosters and promotes a multitude of learning experiences, enabling and empowering its students, faculty, staff, and stakeholders to identify and to serve higher purposes in their lives and in their communities.

College Vision
The vision of Catawba Valley Community College is to be validated and recognized in the achievement of its mission as the statewide, regional, and national standard of excellence for programs, services, and facilities.

Strategic Philosophy
At Catawba Valley Community College, the college’s students, faculty, staff, and stakeholders share a very special commonality: all are engaged in a life-long educational journey. The college is proud to serve as a passageway in that journey. Whether a student searching for a degree or certification, a faculty or staff member on a voyage of discovery in his/her specialized field, an industry owner who desires the college’s services in establishing a specialized training for his/her industrial employees, or a community member who wants to learn a new craft for personal satisfaction - all are moving toward a higher purpose, a self-defined element of life quality for which an individual demonstrates a passion to maintain or enhance by gaining some degree of education or skills training. Catawba Valley Community College recognizes and accepts its role in assisting all of its community members in their efforts to fulfill a higher purpose.

1. Students and Trainees - Across the United States, community colleges use open-door admissions policies to allow the general populous access to an affordable quality education and training. Many of these institutions maintain that student or trainee success is the college’s mission.

Catawba Valley Community College also values student and trainee success; however, unlike some colleges, CVCC realizes that student and trainee success is not, in itself, the college’s mission, but a desired outcome, the consequence of a student’s good intention, accurate planning, and hard work. Student/Trainee success is one measurement of the institution’s success, rather than a mission in and of itself.

As an open-door institution, Catawba Valley Community College is, like so many other community colleges, reflective of the nation’s ongoing allegiance to access in higher education. Access alone is not the measure of educational quality and achievement. Access is only the beginning of a transitional phase within life-long learning. What do stakeholders in a community college gain if students and trainees who find the college to be their door to educational access discover that the college offers no further passage in their movement toward a higher life purpose? Along with access, students and trainees need completion, a successful transition from where they are at the point of access to a measureable destination, a destination that marks a defined transitional point from CVCC. That destination may be the successful completion of an AA or AAS degree, the completion of a specific certificate, the completion of job training, or the completion of a life-skills training. Whatever the destination may be, it marks the point where the student or trainee has completed the phase in his/her life-long educational journey from access to CVCC to the point of transition toward a higher purpose.
Perhaps the college’s mission for its students and trainees can best be described as the two types of realization: access realization and completion realization. During access, the college must assist students and trainees in discovering and understanding, in realizing, what choices in educational training exist, what options present the most viable choices for an individual, and where appropriate training may be available. CVCC recognizes that not all people will have higher purposes for which it will offer the appropriate training, yet the college can assist such an individual by suggesting where such training can be attained. For those that the college can offer appropriate educational training, assisting the students and trainees to better define that higher purpose and the appropriate paths to success is a priority. Such definition is validation of the college’s efforts to enable and empower individuals to identify higher purposes.

Completion realization indicates the fulfillment (realization) of potential by completion of an individual’s prescribed CVCC pathway/curriculum. A student’s or trainee’s identification and definition of the appropriate paths to higher purpose are only as valid as his/her completion of the path. These paths from access realization to completion realization represent education/training that is much more than rote learning and formulas; completion must include acquisition and development of functionality, including skill-specific competencies and critical thinking skills that are the hallmarks of institutional excellence. Once again, completion realization at CVCC is not, in itself, a final destination, but rather a point of transition toward higher purpose. Completion of the intended educational training is in itself validation of the college’s efforts to enable and empower individuals to serve higher purposes.

2. Faculty and Staff - Just as Catawba Valley Community College recognizes and accepts its role in assisting its students and trainees to identify and serve higher purposes, the college also acknowledges its obligation to assist its faculty and staff in their efforts to achieve such goals. Each Catawba Valley Community College faculty and staff member is a dedicated professional within his/her career field. It is the passion that these professionals demonstrate toward their fields and in the execution of their duties that determine the impact that the college has on its service community. These professionals demonstrate their dedication to a higher purpose every time they enter a classroom, assist a student in paying tuition, or prepare the Tarlton Complex for a Job Fair event.

To assist faculty and staff in the identification and service to higher purpose, the college must continue to foster educational and support environments that offer fertile ground for creativity and innovation, two necessary mediums for the growth of professional passion and for professional realization. All college operations, whether physical, fiscal, or educational, must be aligned to current best practices, and must offer opportunity for creative expansion in order to demonstrate and promote both access and completion realization for the students and trainees. Faculty and staff who realize their own potentials not only give implicit permission for those they serve to do the same, but also inspire those they serve toward higher purpose.

3. Other Stakeholders - Catawba Valley Community College serves a multitude of stakeholders beyond its service to students, trainees, faculty, and staff. However, service to these stakeholders is much more than being in service to them. The college maintains the role of leadership by assisting our stakeholders through processes of discovery and understanding, and through fulfillment of potential (access and completion realization). Whether the college offers its community the opportunity to discover the beauty and achievement of pottery, or the opportunity to discover new quality management techniques to help business and industry, the college plays a vital part in promoting the growth of its service area and in driving and supporting economic development.
The Strategic Philosophy Invitation

One of the primary concerns of the strategic planning group was that the new 2013-2018 Strategic Plan must be a usable document that is pertinent to all college stakeholders. There must be a mechanism within the strategic planning document that allows and encourages personal ownership, and that allows stakeholders to enhance personal and/or professional passions. It must also provide a means for stakeholders to empower themselves to enhance the college operations. To encourage stakeholders to embark on such journeys of realization, the process of planning must be of a somewhat protective nature, promoting initiatives that show promise, but have no guarantee of success.

Perhaps the best parallel may be found in the world of business. *Entrepreneur* is defined in The Merriam-Webster Dictionary (New Edition, 2004) as “one who organizes and assumes the risk of a business or enterprise.” For the purposes of the CVCC 2013-2018 Strategic Plan, a newly-coined term will suffice – *interpreteneur*. *Interpreteneur* may be defined as “one who interprets and then organizes and assumes the risk of action based upon that interpretation.”

The purpose of the CVCC Strategic Philosophy is to invite all college stakeholders to become interpreteneurs—to interpret the philosophy, examine the Seven Common Strategic Themes/Directions and the CVCC Core Values, and to organize plans to promote a personal or area passion that benefits the college community with a higher purpose. For students and trainees, development and implementation of the plans may result in projects that aid in transfer to another college or university, the gaining of understanding or of a particular skill, a mentoring research partnership with an instructor, or the enhancement of existing skills. For faculty and staff, such development and implementation may result in professional development and the intercollege sharing of acquired knowledge/information, the initiation of enhanced operational processes, the changing of classroom environments for learning, or efforts to train campus personnel in professional applications. For other community stakeholders, development and implementation could lead to new, innovative industrial trainings; various life-long learning opportunities; or in the development of community collaborations/partnerships.

A form for requesting support for these Strategic Action Plans is available from the Office of Accountability, Efficiency, and Effectiveness (OAEE). These forms may be completed, submitted to the immediate supervisor or to the supervisor of the area to approve/monitor the plan, and then a copy filed in the OAEE for strategic tracking purposes. All Strategic Action Plans must be approved first by the Advisory Committee for the OAEE, then by the Review and Innovation Team and the President prior to inclusion as appendices to the CVCC 2013-2018 Strategic Plan.

Approved requested budgets on the Strategic Action Plans should be included in the reporting of budget requests on the academic areas’ annual learning outcomes assessment reports or the administrative areas’ annual objectives assessment reports. Strategic Action Plans may be used to support and enhance Annual Program Learning Outcome Assessment Reports or Annual Area Operational Objective Assessment Reports.

Action Plan Parameters
While the invitation stands for all stakeholders, certain parameters of use do exist. For example, budget allocations will be subject to funds available and to restrictions of uses of certain funding sources. Funding for the completion of approved plans may come from differing budgets, dependent on availability.
Other parameters include the following:

1. **Strategic Action Plans** should offer individuals and areas the opportunity to enhance performance or college operations (academic or administrative). Faculty and staff action plans should not be submitted that include the general responsibilities of a specific job or condition of employment, except under the following conditions:
   A. The plan may enhance an individual’s or area’s ability to meet certain responsibilities and be replicable in other areas,
   B. The plan may allow for professional development to progress or stay current in the field.

2. The college reserves the right to require individuals who are funded by the college to complete professional development activities to share those experiences and/or offer training to the college community in the specific area for which the individuals received development training. Specific requirements for such offerings should be noted in the “Benefits to the College” section of the Strategic Action Plan form prior to the form’s submission to the direct supervisor.

3. **Strategic Action Plans** are not a required component of annual employee evaluations. However, approval of, work toward, and completion of Strategic Action Plans may be included in annual evaluations as part of indications of enhanced job performance, as determined by direct supervisors.

4. All approved Strategic Action Plan forms must demonstrate readily-identifiable support for one or more of the **Seven Common Strategic Themes/Directives**. The specific themes/directives should be identified on the Strategic Action Plan form. There are no restrictions as to which of the Seven Common Strategic Themes/Directives may be used in the development of Strategic Action Plans from various programs and areas.

5. The 2013-2018 Catawba Valley Community College Strategic Plan is a fluid, living document. Approved action plans are added as appendixes, indications of the functionality of the 2013-2018 Strategic Plan. Other changes in the philosophy or the application narrative require approval of the Advisory Committee for OAEE (ACOAEE) and the Review and Innovation Team; the ACOAEE and Review and Innovation Team may recommend the approval of other representative committees or boards if suggested changes in the Strategic Plan impact the constituency represented by the particular committee/board or if the changes are of some consequence to the specific committee’s/board’s responsibilities.

**2013-2018 CVCC Strategic Plan Purpose**

Educational innovation, especially during periods of an unsettled economy, is most often driven by individuals who construct their own passages to opportunity. These efforts are usually the direct or indirect result of personal/professional passions. Realization of educational potential for students and trainees, faculty and staff, and other college stakeholders most often requires some degree of personal/professional innovation that is beyond education/training according to a prescribed program of education; such fulfillment may lie in a path that is unique for the individual, an unexpected extension beyond the ordinary. The 2013-2018 CVCC Strategic Plan is designed to allow those students and trainees, faculty and staff, and other college stakeholders an opportunity to follow the passions, to fulfill potential that some other educational institutions may not recognize.

*At CVCC, expect the unexpected.*