WILKES COMMUNITY COLLEGE
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Strategic Enrollment Management Plan
2025–2030

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Mission

Wilkes Community College empowers individuals with the knowledge and skills to transform lives and enrich our communities through accessible lifelong education, workforce development, and community engagement.

Vision

Wilkes Community College provides programs, resources, and services that create quality educational, economic development, and cultural opportunities. Wilkes Community College aspires to be an effective learner-centered educational institution and a dynamic learning organization.

Values

Wilkes Community College's mission and vision are guided by a culture of care and the values of learner-centered excellence, integrity and respect, compassion, equity and accessibility, continuous improvement, and collaboration and engagement. These principles drive us to create an exceptional educational experience that supports and respects every individual.

What is Strategic Enrollment Management?

Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) is a proactive and comprehensive approach that higher education institutions employ to achieve and maintain optimal enrollment levels aligned with institutional mission, vision, values and goals. SEM involves analyzing demographic trends, market dynamics, and institutional capacities to develop data-driven strategies for recruitment, admissions, financial aid, student retention, and student success. (NCCCS Strategic Enrollment Planning Guidebook)

Project Scope

This project will develop and implement a comprehensive Strategic Enrollment Management Plan for Wilkes Community College. The plan aims to strengthen student enrollment, persistence, retention, and credential completion through targeted strategies, data-driven decision-making, and cross-departmental collaboration. Four main institutional goals have been identified with corresponding Key Performance Indicators (KPI). To achieve each goal, interdisciplinary teams have selected overarching strategies and developed implementation activities with supporting KPI to be completed between August 1, 2025 and June 30, 2030.

Project Stakeholders

Multiple internal and external stakeholders will collaborate and benefit from the goals and activities. Primarily, as WCC Faculty and Staff, we desire for our learners to thrive. To achieve this outcome, we will not only work together toward achieving the goals outlined below, but we will also interact with local community partners, industry, and government entities, which include but are not limited to: K12 school districts, NC Works, Chambers of Commerce, EDC, High Country Council of Governments, Regional Employers, and non-profit connections to provide robust and comprehensive onboarding, support, and career pathways for our learners.

Project Review Cadence

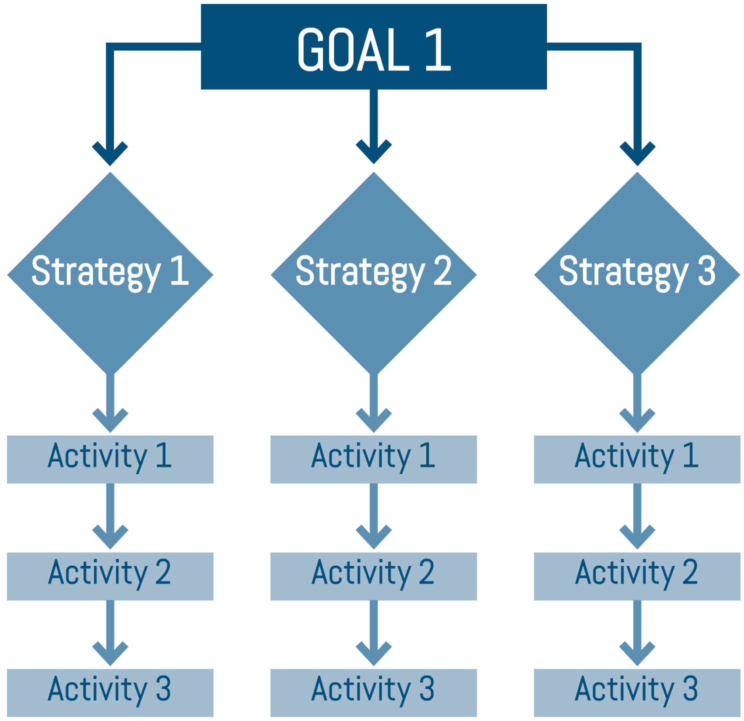
Beginning in August 2025, Project Leadership and select activity groups will meet monthly to schedule and implement activities with minimal disruption to operations. Progress updates will be shared with department leads each quarter, while biannual reviews with the Strategic Enrollment Management Leadership Team will assess progress and relevancy. This project cadence will enable sustained momentum toward project goals, while also providing feedback loops for identifying challenges and making necessary adjustments.

Defining Goals, Strategies, Activities, and Key Performance Indicators

Goal
A broad, measurable outcome the college wants to achieve

Strategy
A general plan or approach for achieving a goal

Activity
A specific action taken to implement a strategy



Primary KPI
The main metrics for whether a goal has been achieved

Secondary KPI
Supporting metrics that indicate effectiveness of strategies and activities

**Note: Secondary KPI are not listed within this document, as they will vary based on the specific strategy or activity. These supporting metrics will be tracked via data dashboards, progress updates, and/or biannual reviews.*

Goal	Primary KPI	Baseline	Target
1. Increase total enrollment and FTE 10%.	Total Enrollment / Full-Time Equivalent (FTE)	8,792 / 3,051	9,671 / 3,356
2. Raise overall curriculum persistence to 85%.	Persistence rate (%)	80.4%	85%
3. Raise overall curriculum retention to 75%.	Retention rate (%)	70.6%	75%
4. Grow the credential completion rate 5%.	150% Completion rate (%)	49.6%	55%

GOAL 1:

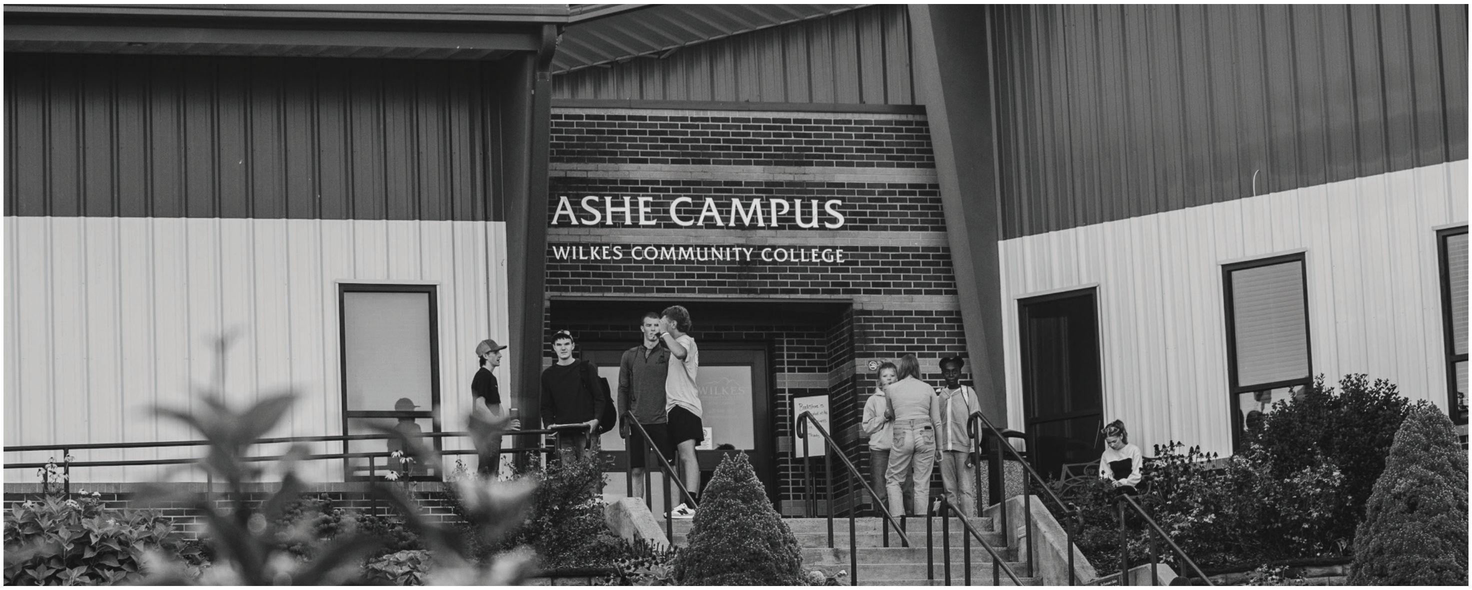
Increase enrollment and FTE 10% by June 30, 2030
(Primary KPI: Total Enrollment / Full-Time Equivalent)

Strategies	Activities
1. Increase number of applications	a) Identify and tailor marketing messages to specific applicant demographic segments with low rates of post-secondary educational attainment b) Determine programs with low enrollment over the past 3 years to prioritize marketing efforts for those with available capacity c) Evaluate recruitment events calendar for target demographic segments and low enrollment programs d. Utilize Element 451's CRM capabilities to capture prospective student information, track engagement, and deliver timely, personalized communications that guide students through the application process
2. Convert a larger number of applicants to enrolled students	a) Operationalize viewing data from the Applicants Report Power BI Dashboard with clearinghouse data to identify conversion trends b) Evaluate application and enrollment process across divisions to streamline the learner experience (Curriculum, WDCE, CCR, and CCP) c) Implement and utilize Element451 to enhance tracking of student interest and enrollment across Curriculum, WDCE, CCR, and CCP
3. Increase the percentage of high school students who enroll in CCP Pathways prior to high school graduation.	a) Develop and market pathway cohorts related to student career goals b) Offer strategically aligned CCP courses in high schools to support WCC campus transition as soon as able c) Expand CCP opportunities to eligible students d) Explore rotating select certificate offerings fall/spring, every other year, to promote student participation and onboarding options
4. Increase the number of high school graduates enrolling at WCC	a) Create a target campaign for early graduates b) Host fall College Connections event(s) to connect early graduates to admissions and WCC resources c) Identify the ~40% of students who are not attending any post-secondary programs to implement outreach while promoting curriculum and WDCE options with scholarships
5. Increase the number of adult students enrolling at WCC	a) Develop a family-friendly, college-wide Open House event b) Incorporate bi-annual NC Reconnect marketing campaign into recruiting calendar c) Implement Learn & Earn tailored scheduling beginning with Advanced Manufacturing Technician program by Fall 2026 d) Investigate opportunities to enroll parents of CCP students

GOAL 2:

Raise overall curriculum persistence to 85% by June 30, 2028 (Primary KPI: % Persistence Rate)

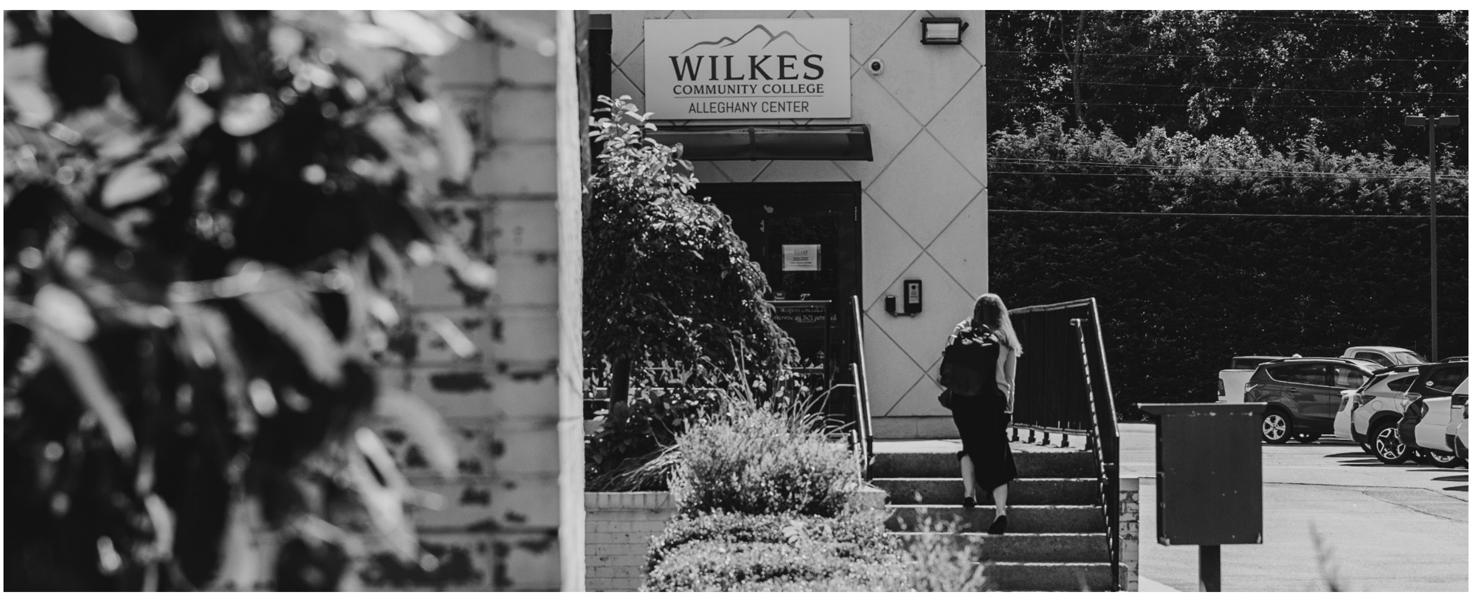
Strategies	Activities
1. Determine persistence by program to inform best practices and intervention	a) Review data to determine high and low persistence programs (+/- 15 %) b) Interview faculty from both high and low persistence programs to understand unique challenges/solutions c) Review data to determine if certain characteristics consistently yield high/low persistence d) Implement best practices and intervention in low persistence programs e) Interview students from both high and low persistence programs to understand unique challenges/solutions
2. Data-informed policy and learner-centered process improvements	a) Analyze stop-out data to identify possible policy barrier amendments (e.g., cost, rigid policies, course delivery, etc.) b) Evaluate and transition early alert workflows for academic and attendance issues to supply targeted student supports c) Determine feasibility of constant contact or an assigned peer mentor to high-risk students d) Evaluate and identify resources to contact and assist learners with financial holds/barriers before and after a purge for non-payment



GOAL 3:

Raise overall curriculum retention to 75% by June 30, 2028 (Primary KPI: % Retention Rate)

Strategies	Activities
1. Determine retention by program to inform best practices and intervention	a) Review data to determine high and low retention programs (+/- 10 %) b) Interview faculty from both high and low retention programs to understand unique challenges/solutions c) Review data to determine if certain characteristics consistently yield high/low retention d) Implement best practices and intervention in low retention programs e) Interview students from both high and low retention programs to understand unique challenges/solutions
2. Flexible, accessible, and easy to re-engage on-ramps	a) Determine how to increase flexible modalities (online, hybrid, in-person, Competency Based Education), 8-week courses, and year-round on-ramps to develop momentum by program b) Use Element451 to communicate and promote earlier and more flexible registration opportunities c) Determine feasibility of constant contact or an assigned peer mentor to high-risk students d) Provide retention training for select staff who directly support learners



GOAL 4:

Grow the credential completion rate 5% by June 30, 2030
(Primary KPI: 150% Completion Rate)

Strategies	Activities
1. Leverage data tools to identify and support near-completers	a) Develop dashboard to track Certificates, Diplomas, Associate degrees by program, CCR, WDCE b) Identify low completion programs (lower 10%) to evaluate barriers to completion using student and faculty surveys c) Develop career and transfer exit planning for near-completers to enhance focus on goals after completion d) Identify near-completers using cohort tracking for targeted wrap-around services
2. Accelerate and streamline credential pathways	a) Develop and promote stackable credentials and embedded certifications within low-completion programs to incentivize momentum b) Review Credit for Prior Learning process to ensure every learner receives credit for their transcripts and experience c) Review Labor Market data to determine available high-mobility careers for future Learn & Earn partnerships
3. Create measurements of success for WDCE offerings	a) Define enrollment, attrition, and course completion KPIs of success b) Operationalize review of KPIs to evaluate program success c) Process refinement of program review for WDCE

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