



## **Campus Visit Summary Appalachian State University**

Campus Visit Date: May 3, 2007

### ***Brief Overview***

Appalachian State University offers 95 undergraduate majors and 81 graduate majors. As a comprehensive university serving the traditional undergraduate student, Appalachian's primary mission is instruction. The University feels a special responsibility to the Appalachian region and seeks to contribute to the understanding, appreciation, and preservation of its unique culture. Appalachian State University is committed to equality of opportunity.

Boone (population: 14,500) is in the heart of the Blue Ridge Mountains. The area offers skiing in the winter and cool temperatures in the summer.

- Total Enrollment Fall 2006: 15,117
- Undergraduate Enrollment Fall 2006: 13,447
  - 90% white, 3% black, 7% other
  - 52% female, 48% male

### ***Campus' definition of its "region"***

Located in Boone (Watauga County), the campus primarily serves the counties in northwestern North Carolina, many of which border Tennessee to the west and Virginia to the north, as well as the Hickory/Unifour area.

### ***Current responses to regional and statewide needs***

The campus highlighted the following programs and initiatives as representative of its efforts to meet regional and state wide needs:

- Educating students for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century – campus is comprehensively revising its general education requirements to incorporate innovating teaching and learning opportunities to develop 21<sup>st</sup> century knowledge and skills (See page 4).
- Economic Transformation –
  - *Appalachian Regional Development Institute* – through the Institute, campus resources, faculty and professional staff are available to address economic, business, government, and social issues and problems related to regional development through applied research and community service.

- *Hickory Metro Area programs* – responding to needs of this area, the campus is offering undergraduate and masters level courses as requested by and needed in the Hickory metro area.
  - *Entrepreneurship programs* – Appalachian Enterprise Center and the Center for Entrepreneurship both offer training and educational programs in entrepreneurship (course offerings will be in fall 2007 in areas such as International Entrepreneurship, a course offered in partnership with institutions in Spain and Austria).
  - *Oenology, Viticulture, and Natural Products Group (OVNP)* – research programs focusing on the western NC wine and natural products industry; faculty and students conduct research to enhance the quality of NC grapes and wine production, and the development of other natural products in the region; OVNP also operates WISELAB, a mobile viticulture research vehicle.
  - *Professional Science Master's (PSM) program* – masters level degree programs that are interdisciplinary and connected to relevant industries, government entities, and non-profit organizations (faculty must have experience working in these areas); proposed PSM programs are Applied Physics Instrumentation and Automation; Wine Science, Materials Science, and Financial Mathematics (PSM's in certain disciplines are also offered at WCU, UNC-C, NCSU, NCCU, FSU, UNCW, and ECU).
  - *ASU Economic Development Outreach Planning Group* – formed to apply ASU's academic and research capabilities to promote sustainable economic growth in the region.
  - *Split Rail Records* – an independent label music company run by ASU students.
- **Education –**
    - *College Awareness Programs* – enrollment services staff provide programs in area high schools to prepare students for college; 7,515 students and 717 educators served since 1999.
    - *Public School Partnership Programs* – College of Education and other faculty provide professional development programs for educators and lateral entry teacher training; 54,622 students and 3,832 educators served.
    - *Increasing number of teachers* – the campus plans to increase the number of education graduates to 659 by 2009-10 (approx. 100 student increase).
  - **Environment and Energy –**
    - *Research Institute for Environment, Energy, and Economics* – faculty and students conduct interdisciplinary research in environmental sciences fields including water quality, greenhouse gas emissions, environmental history, climate change, and environmental history and culture (one current major research focus is developing sustainable and affordable alternative energy sources); a wide variety of public education programs, conferences, and workshops are offered through the Institute.

- Health -
  - *Nursing* – addressing the shortage of nurses and nurse educators by establishing a BSN completion program and is planning BSN prelicensure programs and MSN nurse educator programs.
  - *Institute for Health and Human Services* – faculty and students provide research, clinical services, and training programs in health and human services disciplines.
  
- *Off-site instruction* – Through the Appalachian Learning Alliance, ASU partners with 10 community colleges in western North Carolina to offer undergraduate and graduate level courses taught by ASU faculty at the community college campus. Since 1999, 53 undergraduate programs and 141 graduate programs have been taught to 3472 students. Programs focus on the areas of Teacher Education, Business, and Health & Public Service (social work and nursing).
  
- *Appalachian & The Community Together (ACT) Office* – The office serves as the campus’ clearinghouse for community service, service-learning for students, and community-based research opportunities. The office currently reports 130 community partners, 550 service projects, and 42 community-based research opportunities; impacts reported by the office include 247,612 hours of community service since 2004-05.

***Methods of identifying and incorporating regional and statewide needs into academic mission***

- *Needs assessment* - The campus identifies regional needs through analysis of national data and reports (Commission on the Future of Higher Education), state-level data and reports (State of North Carolina Workforce report), and local efforts including seeking input from 40 departmental and campus advisory boards (collectively totaling 750 people), formation of a Board of Visitors, and Listening Tours conducted by the Chancellor in counties within the region (Ashe, Wilkes, and Alleghany already conducted, and Avery, Caldwell, and Catawba scheduled). Through his listening tours, the Chancellor identified key needs in the region as being:
  - Small business development
  - Addressing the high school drop-out rate
  - Environmental protection
  - Health / nursing
  - Aging and retirement
  
- *Strategic Planning Process* – Information received through the needs assessment mechanisms outlined above are incorporated into the campus’ strategic planning process (the campus is currently in the process of updating its strategic plan, with the final draft to be presented to ASU’S Board of Trustees in Spring 2008).

*Teaching Innovations (soft skills development, experiential learning, etc.)*

- *General Education Reform Model* – this is part of a 2 ½ year process to date that will be implemented in Fall '09. It focuses the student experience on learning outcomes that create a well-rounded competitive graduate.
  - (The committee's recommendation was made available May 9 and can be found at: [http://www1.appstate.edu/orgs/gen\\_ed/PDF/Final\\_Report\\_5-9-07.pdf](http://www1.appstate.edu/orgs/gen_ed/PDF/Final_Report_5-9-07.pdf))
  - Learning outcomes
    - Thinking critically and creatively
    - Communicating effectively
    - Making local and global connections
    - Understanding responsibilities of community membership
  - The model provides required coursework grounded in a liberal education in the arts and sciences.
    - It employs a *vertical model* which provides opportunities in each year of enrollment for students to improve their skills in critical thinking, inquiry and analysis, written and oral communication, information literacy, and technological literacy.
    - It advocates synergy between general education and the academic major.
    - Finally, it advocates integrative learning through thematic coursework in four Perspectives: Aesthetic, Historical and Social, Local to Global Connections, and Science Inquiry. These perspectives are intended to help students accomplish the “essential learning outcomes” advocated by AAC&U's National Leadership Council for Liberal Education & America's Promise (knowledge of human cultures and the physical and natural world; intellectual and practical skills in inquiry, critical thinking, quantitative and information literacy; personal and social responsibility; and integrative learning).
    - The student ends his/her studies with a capstone experience in the major that applies course lessons with real world application and problem solving.
- The general education curriculum model requires a total of 44 semester hours (s.h.).
  - 3 s.h. First Year Seminar
  - 3 s.h. First Year Writing
  - 3 s.h. Sophomore Writing
  - 4 s.h. Quantitative Literacy
  - 2 s.h. Wellness Literacy (the ability to read, understand, assess, and act on health and wellness information)
  - ----- Information and Communication Technology Literacy (to be determined)
  - 29 s.h. Perspectives (including 3 s.h. each in fine arts, historical studies, literary studies)
  - Coursework in the major:
    - Junior Writing
    - Senior Capstone Experience

### ***Enrollment growth – General***

- ASU believes it can grow to 17,108 students by 2015 on its campus, but the campus is very much land locked and new housing for students is a major challenge.
  - They are looking to increase their utilization of distance education courses in order to ease that increase.
    - Many interested students are from distant counties that make commuting multiple times per week to Boone more than challenging if the student maintains a job/family (hence the interest in satellite campuses – *See Opportunities below*)
- 77% of ASU's student population lives outside of the University's county of location (Watauga) and adjacent counties prior to enrolling.

### ***Enrollment growth – Special Populations***

- ASU is addressing its campus diversity through increased focus on faculty and staff hires as well as student recruiting.
  - Campus is proactive in sending out recruiters to minority students' homes and high schools to speak with their families about ASU as a great education that is close to home.
  - When hiring Hispanic admissions counselors ASU did so realizing that they needed to be in the communities with bilingual staff and literature to truly reach out to potential students.

### ***Faculty Issues***

- *Promotion and Tenure policies* – With the adoption of the campus' new General Education Reform program, the campus is now studying its existing P&T policies so that faculty can be rewarded (or at a minimum, not penalized) for the new role that faculty are expected to play in the new General Education program. The campus has formed a task force to examine how P&T rewards and incentives can be realigned to better match the work that faculty are actually performing, since faculty reward structures have not kept pace with recent changes in the nature of faculty work at ASU and elsewhere (e.g., increased engagement and public service, broader definitions of scholarship, responsibility for student learning outcomes, supervising student service projects, etc.).
- *Attrition and Retirement rates* – The Office of Institutional Research, Assessment, and Planning annually conducts faculty age assessment studies that project retirement trends. These data are distributed to deans and department chairs.
- *Faculty housing* – In the resort community of Boone, the cost of living is high, making it difficult for faculty to afford to live in the area; this challenge hinders faculty recruitment.

### ***External Communications***

- The campus last assessed its impact on the region in 1997-98 at approx. \$400 million dollars. An update of this assessment would enable the campus to better communicate its impact on the community (good impact data on community engagement is reported by the ACT Office, which estimates community service projects adding \$4,954,000 in value to the community).
- *Directory of Community Service, Cultural and Educational Outreach and Economic Development* – The campus produces a comprehensive listing of community service and engagement opportunities. A wide variety of programs and resources are listed with campus contact information for each program.

### ***Barriers and Challenges facing the campus***

- *Low facility utilization rate* – the campus noted that improvement could be made in its facility utilization:
  - 3-yr classroom and lab occupancy rate: 25%
  - 3-yr classroom and lab station usage rate: 20.8%
- *Physical expansion* – The campus is virtually landlocked, so as it contemplates expanded student enrollment, significant physical expansion will be challenging, especially in providing on-campus student housing.
  - Fall 2006 enrollment: 15, 117
  - 2017 projected enrollment: 18,498
- *Recruiting and retaining graduate students* – The lack of graduate student tuition remission funding makes recruiting and retaining highly qualified graduate students difficult.
- *Research funding* – Start-up funding for research programs is limited, especially in the non-science fields where external grant resources (“soft money”) are limited. This lack of funding hinders innovation among faculty in developing new initiatives and engaging in community-based applied research.

### ***Opportunities***

- *Satellite campus* – ASU has a strong interest in exploring establishing a satellite campus in Hickory, expanding on UNC’s Hickory Center for Engineering Technology and the Hickory Metro Higher Education Center.
  - ASU attracts more than 700 transfer students per year (see attached tables)
- *K-12 vertical integration program* – The campus’ faculty work in interdisciplinary teams paired with teachers in local public schools to discuss curricular compatibility between high school courses and college courses. This innovative program enables

educators at both levels better prepare high school students for entry into and success in college, and is worth exploring for broader application elsewhere in the state.

- *Energy issues studies* – With the growing need for alternative energy sources, the campus is poised to become a national leader in this field, which could translate into significant economic opportunities for the region and state.
- *Emerging gaps* – The campus noted the following areas as emerging gaps in academic programs (based on HB 1264 study):
  - Undergraduate – Accounting, Business, Recreation, and Social Work
  - Masters – Rehabilitation Counseling, Physical Therapy, and Market Research
  - Doctoral – Medical Sciences, Clinical Counseling, and School Psychology
- *Campus Services Directory* – As noted above, the campus’s Directory of Community Service, Cultural and Educational Outreach and Economic Development provides a comprehensive listing of campus programs and resources with campus contact information for each program. This directory can serve as a model for communicating university resources and programs on other campuses.
- *High School Initiative* – A new University effort seeking to increase graduation and retention rates of regional high school students. The initiative will investigate areas of academic interest of at risk students as well as find out why past students have dropped out of high school in the region.