

Approved By Southern Association

Accreditation Renewed For Western Piedmont

Christmas has once again come to the students, faculty and trustees of Western Piedmont Community College.

Dr. Gordon C. Blank, Western Piedmont's president, announced today that the college's

accreditation was reaffirmed by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools at its annual meeting this week in New Orleans.

A similar circumstance occurred four years ago in

December 1968, when the Burke County college was informed that it had been accredited at the earliest possible time for a new institution. As soon as the college delegate assembly voted to reaffirm Western Piedmont's accreditation, Jim Cates, member of the College's business department faculty who attended the New Orleans meeting, excitedly telephoned college officials to report the good news.

Since the colleges and universities to be recommended were read alphabetically, Cates mentioned that he spent many anxious moments waiting for the institutions whose names began with "W" to be read.

Western Piedmont Community College, founded in 1964, began full operations in temporary facilities in downtown Morganton in the fall of 1966 and graduated its first associate degree students during the summer of 1968 from its permanent campus near Interstate 40 and U.S. 64.

Initial accreditation after graduation of the first degree class and reaffirmation of accreditation four years later have been granted within the least amount of time permissible under regulations of the Southern Association. Now that initial accreditation has been reaffirmed, the college is on a ten-year schedule, although it can request the cycle to occur more frequently to assess institutional quality.

The college currently enrolls 1,073 students in curriculum programs (leading to an associate degree or diploma) and in addition, approximately
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2,500 people enroll each quarter in various continuing (adult) education classes.

Maintenance of accreditation is essential to the college as it indicates continued achievement of institutional purposes and adherence to the high standards of the Southern Association it was pointed out.

With the goal of having the College continue to hold its place among the ranks of quality educational institutions in the South, trustees of Western Piedmont Community College, with Morganton's W. Stanley

Moore as chairman, instructed the college's administration and faculty to maintain and exceed the high standards of the College Delegate Assembly of the Southern Association.

The standards relate to all phases of the college's operation and activities. They cover institutional purposes, organization, administration, educational programs and curricula, financial resources, faculty competence, library resources, student personnel services, physical facilities, equipment, and institutional research and development categories for evaluation.

The process of reaffirmation of accreditation began with the institutional self-study, initiated in the Fall of 1970 and completed in the Spring of 1972.

The self-study involved students, faculty, staff, administration and trustees in studies of all aspects of college operations in relation to the college's stated purpose and the standards of the college delegate assembly of the Southern Association.

The self-study effort was headed by Giles Shepherd, instructor of physics at the college, who served as chairman of the steering committee and director of the self-study.

Steering Committee members were Ruby Harbison, instructor of biology; Ruth Thomas, instructor of social sciences; Harold Olsen, director of occupational programs; and the late Paul W. Hutchins.

The thorough evaluation presented in the self-study report evidences the intensive effort made by trustees, faculty and students in analyzing every facet of the college's operations.

The self-study culminated with the visit by a Southern Association of Colleges and Schools committee from out-of-state colleges during the Spring of 1972.

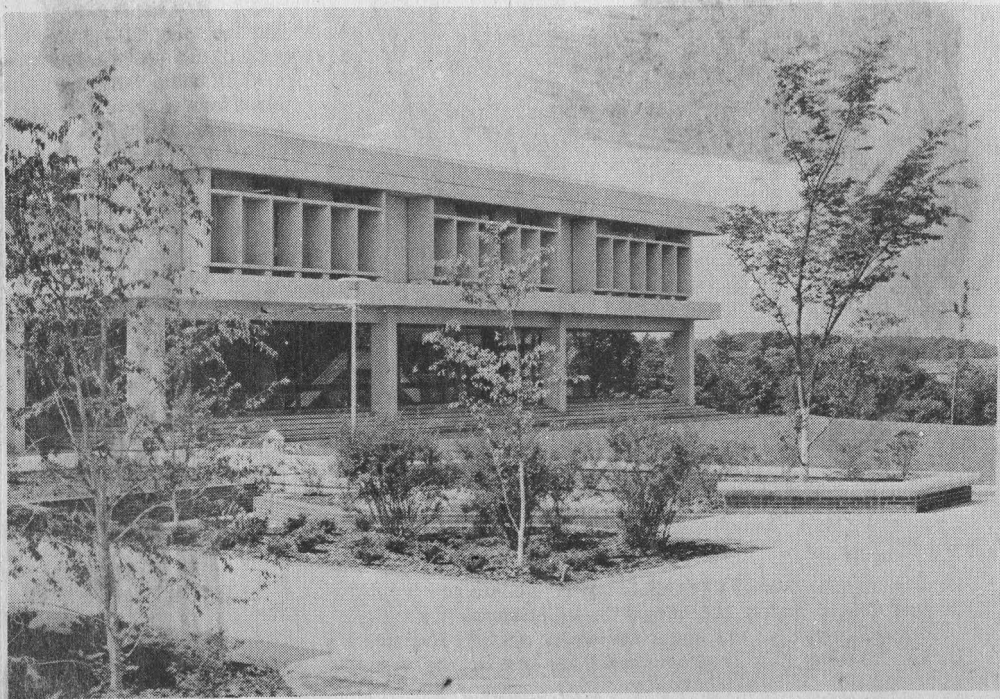
The visiting committee evaluated the college in relation to various standards by reviewing the self-study, examining institutional data, and consulting with trustees, faculty and students.

The visiting committee reported to the Committee on Accreditation of the Commission on Colleges, who in turn recommend that the delegate assembly grant reaffirmation of accreditation for Western Piedmont, which it did this week.

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools was founded in 1895 as a regional accrediting association with member institutions in thirteen southern states.

The work of the Association in over three-fourths of a century has been a major force in continuously upgrading the quality of education in the South.

On behalf of the trustees, Chairman Moore stated, "Reaffirmation of accreditation is another milestone in the developing history of Western Piedmont Community College. It is recognition that the College has achieved and maintained a mark of academic respectability and has demonstrated a level of program quality which meets or exceeds rigorous educational standards. Citizens of this region are rightfully proud that their college has maintained its accredited status."



Community College Retains High Status With Southern Association