

WPCC officials planning for growth

By RAE BEASLEY
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With enrollment figures up and area universities' tuition skyrocketing, Western Piedmont Community College is making big plans for the future.

The college has recently outlined a "Master Campus Plan," explaining the plans the college has for increased enrollment in the next decade.

"It's foolish not to have it (Master Plan)," said WPCC President Jim Richardson. "It's a requirement. With the way we are growing, we need to know how to handle the

increase in students."

The master plan includes new buildings, landscaping and parking areas, things a survey done on campus indicated the students needed or wanted.

This survey, distributed in January 1991, reported that students, faculty and staff needed: 30 offices, 14 classrooms, 14 storage areas, nine workrooms, seven computer laboratories, six instructional laboratories, two shops and additional conference, career center rooms and a pistol range house.

Monies for the additional buildings will come from several areas, college officials said.

"We have several options to look at," Richardson said. "Private grants, campaigns to raise funds locally, federal grants, state funding and local bond monies will all be considered."

In 1990, the Phifer Learning Resource Center was built and provided 46,000 square feet of additional library space, classrooms, offices and work space. Although the building is brand new, the needed areas were absorbed instantly, along with the resulting vacated spaces elsewhere on campus, college officials said.

WPCC has begun renovation plans for Moore Hall, the administration

building on campus. Plans include adding faculty and staff offices, an expanded learning lab and two large classrooms. Vacated spaces due to this renovation have already been assigned to specific programs or services, college officials said.

Despite the recent additions to the campus, Richardson says additional buildings are needed.

First on the list for the college will be a new Business Technology Building.

"By 1992, all students must be computer literate to graduate from Western Piedmont," Richardson said. "We need to enhance the programs that other local public schools

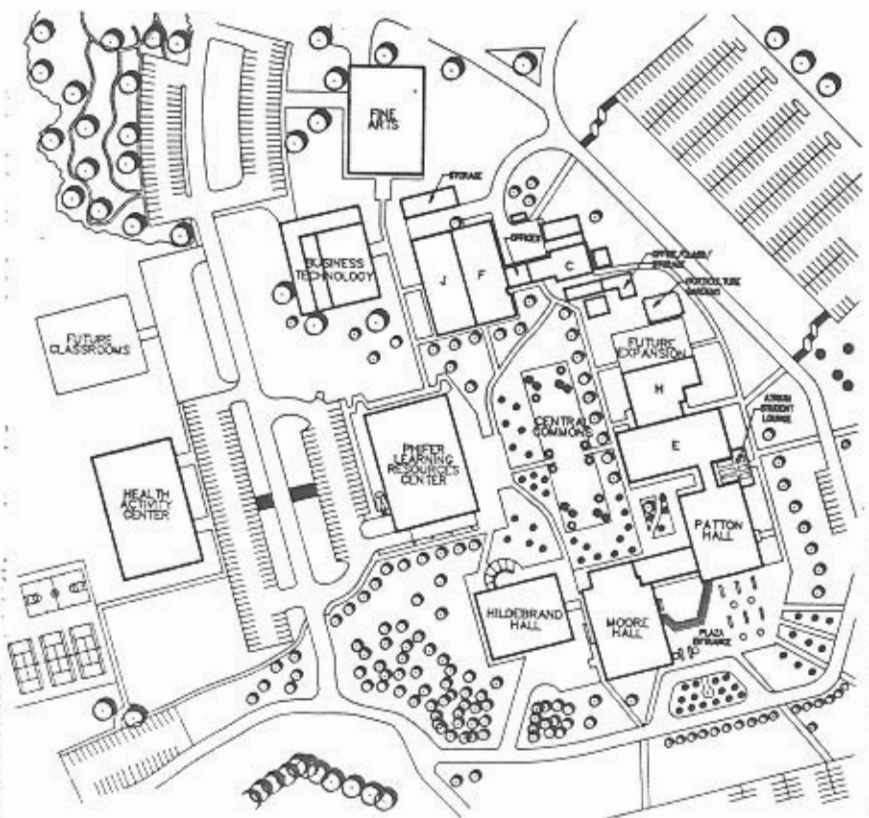
are requiring."

Other college officials agree that a Business Technology Building is needed.

"Conventional wisdom indicates that WPCC needs a new classroom building now for Business Technology and Physical Education—not only for the additional space but also to permit the renovation of vacated areas for other functions. When the new classroom building is constructed, first floor Hildebrand Hall will be renovated for the cafeteria, Book Cellar and student activities such as SGA, a game room and a TV

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THE CENTRAL CAMPUS



The long-range plan for WPCC includes several new buildings.

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lounge. In addition, first floor Patton Hall will be renovated for instructional classes, offices and storage," the plan stated.

Future needs include: a student services building and new student lounge areas.

"WPCC's average full-time enrollment has increased almost 40 percent over the past 10 years," the plan stated. "The college typically serves over 14,000 students in extension and academic courses each school year. This means that one out of five adults in Burke County will attend classes at Western Piedmont this year."

"It is anticipated that WPCC will continue to grow in enrollments at the current average rate of 1 percent per year," the plan stated.

"Obviously, the addition of 1,400 students during the next decade will impact significantly on support services as well as classrooms. Student services will need to expand on the second floor of Hildebrand Hall. New student lounge areas will be required."

"Hildebrand Hall needs to be turned back to the students," Richardson said. "It's overcrowded."

Another building that WPCC desperately needs is a continuing education building, Richardson said.

"Ninety-five percent of non-credit continuing education courses are offered off-campus," Richardson said. "This is an administrative nightmare. They are scheduled all over the county. We would like to see a larger portion of the classes offered on campus."

Richardson said the building would also include plans for a child care center where students could bring their children while they attend classes.

The buildings will be constructed as soon as the necessary monies become available, said Larry Clark, dean of planning and research.

Since its founding in 1964, WPCC has awarded more than 4,000 degrees, 6,000 diplomas and 80,000 continuing education certificates. More than 80 percent of all Burke County nurses, law enforcement of-

ficers and emergency medical technicians have trained at the college.

WPCC offers over 80 educational and training programs in college transfer, technical, vocational and continuing education, college officials said.