

*New River*  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

**PROFESSIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT PLAN**



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## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

### **INTRODUCTION**

New River Community College embraces professional development as an important function in support of the college's mission. As a framework for professional development initiatives, this plan provides basic information for faculty and staff about various opportunities, processes and procedures related to professional development. The plan has been developed by the college's Professional Development Committee and is subject to adjustment or revision at any time. Suggestions about the plan or any of its components are welcomed.

### **DEFINITION OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

For this plan, the definition of professional development mirrors that developed by the Virginia Community College System (VCCS):

“A systematic process of renewal for individuals which ultimately creates an environment for learning and growth for students, for educators, for staff and for colleges. Professional development is a philosophical approach, not an event.”

### **EMPLOYEES TO WHOM THIS PLAN APPLIES**

This plan applies to all New River Community College personnel. Some types of professional development opportunities may be restricted to specific employee groups, but the overall plan applies to all personnel.

**PHILOSOPHY**

New River Community College is committed to a comprehensive professional development program that provides opportunities to promote the individual progress of all faculty and staff members. Such progress comes through improvements in efficiency and effectiveness, resulting in faculty and staff members who feel positively about themselves, their jobs, and their skills, all working together in a supportive environment toward the mission of the college and the Virginia Community College System.

**BELIEFS**

New River Community College's professional development plan includes the following foundation:

- Every faculty and staff member makes a significant contribution to the college as it fulfills its mission as a comprehensive community college.
- NRCC's professional development program should provide opportunities for all personnel.
- NRCC's professional development program should involve constituents in defining needs, determining content, and implementing programs.

**MISSION WITHIN VIRGINIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM**

New River Community College has developed its professional development plan within the aegis of the Virginia Community College System (VCCS). The VCCS is committed to meeting the constantly changing educational needs of the constituencies it serves and to creating an exciting learning environment. To assure sufficient resources, knowledge, and opportunity to best meet its educational mission, the system has committed itself to a comprehensive professional development program. In keeping with this VCCS aim, New River Community College helps accomplish its local mission by fulfilling the goal of supporting professional development for all of its personnel.

**GOALS OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

In support of this mission, the college-wide plan is based upon the achievement of the following goals:

- 1) To support instructional excellence.
- 2) To maintain institutional vitality--This goal relates primarily to improving the educational and operational functions of New River Community College in meeting the needs of the community.
- 3) To foster organizational development--Appropriate activities should focus on increasing employee effectiveness, developing a better understanding of the college's mission and goals among all personnel, and increasing the effectiveness of the day-to-day operation of the college.
- 4) To promote professional/occupational development of all personnel--Appropriate programs should include a wide range of activities designed to improve and increase individual job skills and effectiveness.
- 5) To encourage individual education and personal growth to all personnel--Appropriate activities should encourage education, training, development, and employee interaction.
- 6) To improve morale and performance--Appropriate activities will meet the assessed needs of individual employees as well as those of the institution.

**RESPONSIBILITY**

Responsibility for the advancement of the professional development plan at New River Community College rests in the Office of the President. Development of the plan and oversight of its implementation is the responsibility of the Professional Development Committee appointed by the President. This committee operates as described below.

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

**Committee Responsibilities**

The Professional Development Committee will develop and maintain NRCC's Professional Development Plan and oversee implementation of the Plan. Other responsibilities include: (1) coordination of training needs assessment; (2) recommendation of college-wide professional

development needs to the President; (3) evaluation of the success of NRCC's professional development efforts; and (4) publication of development opportunities provided by the college.

**Committee Membership**

The membership of the Professional Development Committee consists of the Vice President for Planning and Advancement, the Human Resources Officer, one teaching faculty member from each Division, and three to five professional and classified staff members.

**NON-COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES**

In addition to the Professional Development Committee, each NRCC faculty and staff member holds responsibility in the area of professional development.

It is the responsibility of supervisory management to:

- decide on appropriate action for the cohesive implementation of the professional development plan; and
- support the individual and institutional need for an approach and commitment to the concept of professional development.

It is the responsibility of individual employees to:

- complete an individual plan for self development and growth in coordination with the supervisor;
- search out human resource development programs and opportunities; and
- participate actively in college professional development programs.

**STRATEGIES FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AT NRCC**

Professional development activities sponsored by the college should accommodate the needs, values, and goals of the institution and individual. All faculty and staff should have opportunities to determine and achieve professional development goals. The institution should support professional development through encouragement, funding, and flexibility of offerings. Selected

possible areas of professional development are outlined below (note: this is not an exhaustive list but is merely illustrative of possible approaches).

**College Courses**

Employees should have the opportunity to enroll in college credit or noncredit courses at NRCC or at a four year college, to pursue academic degrees or enhance competencies. Where possible, flexibility in work schedules and tuition assistance should be made available to assist the employee. This may vary by employment category and other factors including VCCS and NRCC policies related to professional development support. NRCC is committed to maintaining an aggressive program of support for professional development.

**Professional Memberships, Conferences and Meetings**

Individuals should be encouraged to have memberships in professional organizations within their career field. Such organizations provide a great source of professional development offerings which include off-campus conferences, workshops, and journals and newsletters presenting the most current topics of interest. Vendor sponsored workshops, trade fairs, new product introductions, and equipment training may also be available.

**Literature Accessibility**

Within resource constraints, the institution should provide books and magazine/journal subscriptions through the library or other sources for faculty and staff to obtain up to date information in their various career fields. In addition, the college may wish to provide literature for career guidance and development through the Learning Resource Center or other appropriate avenue.

**On-Campus Training Activities**

Activities can be designed for an overall impact on the entire organization or groups of employees as opposed to the individual. These may include sponsorship of workshops,

teleconferences, conferences or seminars which may offer information, training, personal growth development, career patterns, changes in technology, and other areas where offerings can appeal to multiple participants.

**Computer Training/Support**

Faculty and staff are encouraged to utilize computer-related resources such as the Internet, PLATO software, computerized instructional packages and other computer-related activities which enhance professional knowledge and skills.

**Faculty and Staff Initiatives**

Faculty and staff members are encouraged to develop programs or innovative techniques which enhance teaching and learning and which develop new skills and knowledge. Faculty and staff members should have the opportunity to meet in group sessions to express concerns and to share ideas for change or improvement.

**Support for Training**

NRCC may wish to sponsor first-line supervisor training programs, including management skills and performance evaluation techniques.

Where possible, professional development activities should be supported with tuition assistance, travel time and expenses, flexible work schedules, and adequate funding. Faculty and staff who need training and retraining as technology changes should be provided with the equipment, software, and tools needed to enhance their skills and to meet the expectations of the institution.

**PROGRAM AND ACTIVITY EVALUATION**

Effective professional development at New River Community College should result in desirable outcomes in job performance, enthusiastic behavior, and professional growth. Professional



development activities should have expected goals and should be assessed to determine whether those goals have been met. Whenever possible, easily measured standards for an activity should be established before the activity takes place. Particular attention should be paid to possible improvement of any activity which may be repeated in the future.

In establishing criteria for evaluation of a professional development activity, questions such as the following may be addressed.

- Which needs were the activity designed to address?
- To what extent did the material meet the stated needs?
- How often will the material be used on the job?
- What percentage of the material presented was new to the participant?
- Was the activity worth the time and effort involved?
- Was the instructor competent, knowledgeable, and effective?
- Was the material organized for effective presentation?
- To what extent was productive discussion encouraged?
- Should this activity be recommended to other faculty and/or staff members?
- What one element of the activity could be improved?

Where possible, more than one measure of success should be used in the evaluation. Satisfaction of participants is one possible evaluative tool. Supervisor feedback may also be an important evaluative measure, especially where the purpose of the professional development was to improve job performance or to learn new job skills.

The Professional Development Committee shall assess, on a periodic basis, the success of NRCC's professional development efforts. In addition, employees and their supervisors may assess progress on an individual basis. In most cases, the employee and the supervisor will work together to decide whether the activity has furthered the professional development goals of the college and the individual. This may take place at the time of the employee's yearly evaluation or at the time of the activity. Ideally, during each year's evaluation interview participants will review the professional development of the past year and will set new goals in professional development for the coming year,

so that employees may approach the year confidently, assured that the college appreciates them and wishes to help them effectively accomplish their jobs.

**OTHER ELEMENTS**

NRCC's professional development plan also includes the following provisions:

- 1) All employees shall be eligible to participate in professional development activities. Access to specific sources of funding or support, and related approval processes, will be defined by written policies and procedures appropriate to each instance (e.g. NRCC Foundation policies for professional development activities supported by Foundation funds, Department of Personnel and training Policies, etc.)
- 2) Funding resources will be provided to the extent possible. Various funding sources may be utilized, possibly including (but not limited to) VCCS funding, local funds, NRCC Foundation funds, state and federal grants, and departmental funds. Faculty and staff will be routinely informed regarding the availability of such funds.
- 3) Employee training records will be maintained by the Human Resources Office. The Professional Development Committee may elect to assist in this process. Note: Faculty and staff are encouraged to maintain information about professional development activities in which they participate, to report such information to the Human Resources Office, and to share information about professional development with colleagues where appropriate.
- 4) College-wide professional development needs will be assessed through written surveys or other means. This process will be coordinated by the Professional Development Committee. Results of surveys will be utilized in planning professional development activities.
- 5) To the degree possible, professional development activities will be integrated into the operation of the college. For example, training in use of computer software (such as "Windows" training) will be coordinated with the acquisition and implementation of software featuring expanded capabilities. Similarly, needs identified in individual development plans may provide the impetus for group training in instances where a pattern of need/interest has been identified.
- 6) With respect to classified employees, the plan will comply fully with the Department of Personnel and Training's Policy 5.05.