A. The College is committed to providing for the continued professional and personal growth of the faculty and staff in an effort to keep the College both competitive and attuned to the needs of those served. The demands of changes in the teaching/learning process and its support, especially changes resulting from the application of technology, require that Gaston College have a professional development program. It is the policy of the College to encourage, within available resources, employee participation in appropriate educational programs pertinent to their responsibilities within the College.

B. Professional Development opportunities to be made available to employees include, but are not limited to, the following functions and activities:

1. on-the-job training
2. formal on-campus College classes
3. attendance at conferences
4. workshops and seminars
5. in-house training and development programs
6. field trips and visits to other community colleges, agencies, and businesses related to the College's purpose and philosophy
7. educational leave

C. The spirit of the program is to permit the employee and his/her supervisor maximum flexibility in planning the individual's professional development.

D. Responsibilities and Budgets for Professional Development

1. Department chairs, deans, and directors are responsible for the coordination of employee development activities within their areas and are responsible for the inclusion of monetary provisions for external development activities within their annual budgets with approval of the vice presidents or President. Credentials required by the College to maintain employment may be funded by the College.

2. Human Resources is responsible for the development, budgeting, and scheduling of the College's professional development program. Programs may be scheduled on professional development days as determined by the College. There is no charge to employees for training programs offered by Human Resources.
E. Directive

1. Employee attendance at short courses, workshops, seminars, conferences, and similar work-related programs directly may be approved with payment of full salary, registration fees, necessary travel expenses, and other applicable expenses.

2. An employee who is required to attend a job-related College course, workshop, program, or related training program may do so during regular working hours. This is considered worked time and the time away from the job does not have to be made up.

3. Employees who attend professional development activities as described in directives (1) and (2) should complete a Professional Development Evaluation Form and return it to the immediate supervisor.

4. Non-required training during the normal work schedule may be approved by the dean, director, vice presidents or President, provided the hours away from work are made up at a mutually agreeable time.

5. Employees will be released during regular working hours to attend in-house training and development programs coordinated by Human Resources. Operating requirements of the department/division will determine whether or not employees can be released.

6. Each employee should maintain a professional development plan that is reviewed annually by the employee and his/her supervisor. Documentation in the form of a certificate, diploma, or the like for professional development events attended will be retained in each employee’s personnel file. The employee is responsible for submitting the documentation to Human Resources.