

DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION

Committee on Educational Planning, Policies, and Programs

Revision of the Academic Program Planning Process

The revision of the academic program planning process is driven by the results of the findings and recommendations of the University of North Carolina Tomorrow Commission. The University has an extensive inventory of academic degree programs numbering over 2,000 that are offered by the 16 university campuses of UNC. UNC now has over 100 online degree programs, and approximately 160 online degree, certificate, or licensure programs available anywhere, anytime for citizens of North Carolina and others beyond our borders. It is a dynamic inventory with change initiated by both the campuses and General Administration. Since the reconfiguration of UNC in 1972, approximately 670 degree programs have been added to the inventory and approximately 510 have been discontinued. All of these changes are the result of actions by the Board of Governors, since the Board has the sole authority to approve all new degree programs and the sole authority to discontinue academic degree programs.

Some of this change has been driven by campuses reconfiguring their offerings, some by the addition of a long-recognized degree program at a campus, and some by responding to developments that result in entirely new degree areas, such as bioinformatics or nanotechnology. Some of the new offerings are joint programs among two or more campuses, for example, the joint doctoral program in biomedical engineering between North Carolina State University and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. For the most part, our distance learning and online learning programs have taken existing programs and extended them in a face-to-face format to over 50 counties in North Carolina or made them available online to students wherever they are in the State.

Our campuses and the University have been serving the State through a broad range of degree programs and multiple modes of delivery. The University of North Carolina Commission's report focuses our attention on more and better ways we can address the needs of the people of North Carolina. In the words of the report, "UNC and its constituent institutions must transform themselves internally to be more nimble, efficient, and responsive."

The Commission report clearly calls attention to new ways to proceed and additional considerations that need to be brought to the academic program planning process. These may be articulated through a combination of general guidelines and values that are endorsed by the Commission.

General Guidelines

State needs will be the primary consideration in program development and discontinuation.

Degree program proposals for high-need areas will have priority over other programs.

All levels should become more nimble, efficient, and responsive.

Online degree offerings are to be expanded and integrated into the consideration of program duplication.

The University must remain committed to excellence.

The broader values of the University set the context for program planning.

Guidelines for General Administration

Proactively and regularly scan for degree program needs that lead to new, expanded, jointly developed, revised, or discontinued academic programs.

Track workforce needs and anticipate areas for new degrees or expansion of existing programs to meet new or growing needs.

Do an annual scan of state needs and produce an annual high-needs list and a revised response plan.

Develop a proposed systematic list of programs for online delivery and a plan for seeking campus development of the programs.

Develop a mechanism to scan for underserved regions of the State and a way to address the findings.

When needs are identified, use a formal or informal RFP process for seeking a campus or campuses to develop or expand a program.

Promote collaboration in developing or expanding degree programs.

Continue the study of productivity of all programs and newly established programs.

Develop new methodology for addressing duplication, whether regarding new degree proposals or existing degrees.

Develop standards for campuses' periodic reviews for quality and responsiveness to regional and state needs (utilize campus best practices).

Review internal GA processes for efficiency and speed of response.

The University must balance nimbleness and responsiveness with due diligence and a state-wide perspective.

Review and revise standards for offering degree programs at various levels and by various methodologies.

Guidelines for Campuses

Campuses are to be demand-driven and not so much internally driven.

Identified state and regional needs (new or expanded) will be the key driver for academic program development.

Review and develop ways to make campus program development processes more efficient and less time consuming.

Provide an avenue to nimbleness in program response at the campus level.

Include expansion of existing programs and collaboration as key considerations in the review process for proposed new degree programs.

Include consideration of whether there are degree programs that could be discontinued and resources reallocated as part of the justification for a proposal to establish a new degree program.

University Values Shaping Program Planning and Decision Making

Excellence in teaching, research and scholarship, and public service by an excellent faculty; expanding access to higher education; graduates who are globally competitive; priority to meeting identified state needs; degree programs related to economic development; research-related economic development ; improving public education; economic transformation & community development; promoting health and well-being; addressing energy and environment; outreach and engagement, promoting interdisciplinary and inter-institutional collaboration; serving underserved regions; and providing a range of degree program offerings consistent with a globally competitive 21st Century university of the stature of the University of North Carolina.

First Draft of Proposed BOG Policy Statement

UNC General Administration and the constituent universities are to be guided in their academic degree program development and discontinuation activities by the needs of the people of North Carolina. Processes and procedures are to be organized to be nimble, efficient, and responsive to those needs at all levels.

UNC General Administration will assume a lead role in determining state needs that require an academic program response and formulating the best ways to meet these needs. In this role, General Administration will develop procedures to regularly review workforce needs and, on an annual basis, determine the high-need areas in the State and coordinate a response to those identified needs in collaboration with the campuses. Constituent institutions should review regional as well as a state-wide

needs and plan a response for meeting those needs in collaboration with General Administration. In General Administration's role of reviewing for unmet state needs, it is to pay special attention to assessing whether all regions of the state are adequately served by the University.

General Administration should take the lead, in collaboration with the campuses, in expanding the availability of online degree and other programs that can open access to higher education to more people from high school and college students to life-long learners of any age. As the availability of online offerings matures, General Administration should incorporate online offerings into the assessments regarding program duplication and develop new methodologies for dealing with program duplication.

In program development and discontinuation activities at all levels, expansion of existing programs and collaboration among institutions should be carefully integrated into the assessment of the best option to pursue. Campuses should regularly review the priority of their offerings and be prepared to discontinue programs that no longer meet any significant need. Consideration of whether there are degree programs that could be discontinued and resources reallocated will be part of the justification for a proposal to establish a new degree program.

General Administration will be responsible for ongoing reviews of quality and productivity of programs, though the ultimate responsibility for quality, efficiency, and productivity rests at the campus level. In this regard, General Administration will be responsible for periodic reviews to determine whether productivity and quality review processes are effectively being followed on the campuses. General Administration should also review and revise standards for offering degree program at various levels and by various methodologies.

The University must balance nimbleness and responsiveness with due diligence and a state-wide perspective.

It is understood that in serving the needs of the people of North Carolina the University will be serving the nation since the goal of UNC Tomorrow is to make the State globally competitive in multiple arenas, thereby contributing to the strength of national competitiveness.

The President is authorized to provide regulations to implement the Board's policy, and General Administration, subject to the President's approval, is authorized to revise and provide documents and Web sites to guide campuses in their academic program development and discontinuation activities.