

March President's Report

Introduction

Thank you, Chairman, and good morning everyone. It's great to be in Wilmington for some balmy beach weather. My thanks to Zito and his team for three outstanding days of meetings and hospitality.

My thanks as well to two Seahawks who are leaders for the System – Gabriel Lugo, chair of the Faculty Assembly and Dawn Brown, chair of the Staff Assembly. It's good to see you both here in your home institution, and thank you for your leadership on behalf of all 17 institutions.

And my thanks as well for a strong year of service from Association of Student Governments' President Tyler Hardin. Tyler, we appreciate your advocacy on behalf of our more than 230,000 students, and we look forward to hearing about what's next for you after you graduate.

State of the University Tour

This morning caps quite a week of travel for many of us.

I was in Charlotte on Monday with a number of Board members, kicking off the statewide State of the University Tour, and UNCW hosted stop number two on Wednesday.

Six more stops are coming up through the next several weeks in Pembroke, Fayetteville, Asheville, the Triad, Greenville, and the Triangle.

This tour is about better telling our story and laying out a vision of where we're going — driven by your Strategic Plan. The debates that fill your meeting agendas and the policies that you vote on matter for the future of our state and the prospects of all North Carolinians. And as our constituents, the people of this state must know how we're doing against those goals.

This tour is also about raising expectations for what we should expect from one of the finest university systems in the world, one that we're all so proud of.

I was at UNC-Chapel Hill on Tuesday with Governor Byers listening to Tennessee Governor Bill Haslam speak to students there. Governor Haslam has overseen a nationally renowned expansion of higher education, a record-setting economy, and the largest tax cuts in Tennessee's history.

But it was his comment on something else that stood out for me. He said, "The hardest thing to do in any position of leadership is to change expectations."

This Board does many things: increases graduation rates and student access, grows research funding, ensures affordability and efficiency. And we're succeeding. The trends are strong and they're getting better.

But what about the title of our Strategic Plan? How do we create Higher Expectations? And as Governor Haslam said, that's the hardest thing to do.

Success will demand a statewide push to create a college-going culture. A culture of accountability, where priority is placed on extending opportunity for all and advancing the public values we all share.

So I look forward to seeing many of you at the upcoming stops on the Tour.

A few other things to highlight:

Tuition and Fees

The tuition and fees process has been, as always, long, intensive, and data heavy. I appreciate the diligence and hard work, from the Budget and Finance Committee, led by Chairman Sloan, our Boards of Trustees, and the staff at all our institutions to get this work done.

The result is flat tuition at all our institutions and a remarkable drop to \$500 at UNC Pembroke, Western Carolina University, and Elizabeth City State University thanks to the Legislature and the NC Promise program.

We're grateful for the trust they have placed in this System's governance and oversight.

And because of that, North Carolina is the national leader in the affordability debate, as we fulfill our responsibility to provide education as free as practicable as our Constitution calls on us to do.

Short Session

The Short Session is fast approaching, and I thank the members of the Public Affairs and Budget and Finance Committees for their hard work establishing our priorities.

During yesterday's joint meeting, committee members unanimously approved a System agenda and discussed our top legislative priority, for me, and that's data modernization.

We must align and improve our clunky, legacy data systems across our 17 institutions so that we can better manage our operations, target our resources, and answer the questions policymakers like you ask.

There are too many things we don't know because our data systems are not up to the job.

Other key priorities include:

- Restoring our faculty retention and recruitment fund,
- Garnering resources for a student success innovation fund to test new ideas that drive retention,
- Establishing pilot grants to allow students to take summer courses,
- And supporting technology that can customize digital instruction by providing real-time insights into student performance and effective teaching.

While our priorities are relatively modest given the strong budget the legislature gave us last year, our full short session agenda contains a range of strategic investments that will allow us to achieve our goals.

Faculty Engagement Survey

Speaking of those goals, we checked one of them off last month when we received results from the first System-wide faculty and staff engagement survey and we're processing those results now.

This is part of our commitment to pull the curtain back on our own operation so we can improve and hone our work. And the Personnel and Tenure committee will be delving into this survey and exploring next steps in May.

School Safety

On a national note, we have all watched as the shooting in Parkland brought renewed attention to issues of school safety. Here at the System, emergency preparedness and campus safety are constant priorities. The work to improve readiness never stops, and we must be relentless in ensuring our students are safe.

Winston-Salem State University and UNC Greensboro both conducted large training exercises over the past month, and on Monday, NC State is conducting an exercise as well. You can see some of the coverage from the UNCG exercise – a massive, community-wide endeavor – in the *Carolina Journal* issue at your tables.

Following these exercises, institutions are sharing best practices with the rest of the System, and Associate Vice President Brent Herron has been working with all of them to ensure our plans, procedures, and resources are what they need to be.

My Future NC

Finally, two updates on ongoing initiatives. My Future NC, the commission that the Board initiated through the Strategic Plan, had its second full meeting in Winston-Salem with an in-

depth conversation on the barriers within and between the stages of the educational continuum.

We had a fantastic turnout from the business community and from key figures in state government and across the state, including our friend Rep. John Fraley. And we're on track for a report at the end of the year recommending a statewide attainment goal and a roadmap for achieving it.

Teacher Prep

And last month, we released a report on improving our colleges of education and their teacher prep programs. Our deans are behind this, our school districts are telling us its essential, and the research is loud and clear. We can do better, and we must prepare our teachers to be effective in the classroom from day one.

I want to thank former CMS superintendent Ann Clark, NC A&T Dean Anthony Graham, and UNC Wilmington Provost Marilyn Sheerer for co-chairing the advisory board that will chart the way ahead on that topic.

This is a personal priority for me. We're going to get this right. We owe it to our next generation of UNC students to do so.

Conclusion

And finally, I want to end with a big thank you and warm welcome back to Chancellor Sartarelli. Though we hardly needed a reminder, we now have official confirmation that the man has a heart.

It's been wonderful being on campus for the past three days, and we appreciate the warm welcome.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my report.