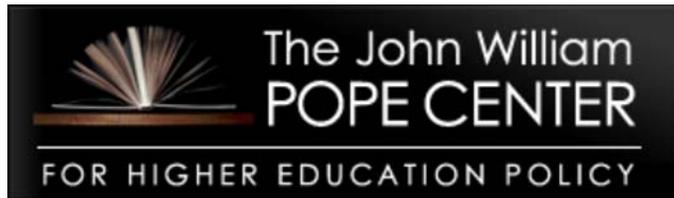


**Attachment 2** Faculty Assembly Meeting Materials  
November 30, 2012

The following documents are included for your reading pleasure (and to help set the context for our Panel Discussion on UNC General Education in the UNC system):

- *Change We Hope* – Jay Schalin, November 5 (and 7), 2012
- *Carry on in UNC's Proud Tradition* – Steven Bachenheimer and Stephen Leonard, November 14, 2012
- *Essential Knowledge* – Jay Schalin, November 15, 2012
- *Pathways To Success* – Pat McCory's Plan for Higher Education, 2012
- UNC GenEd Competencies Spreadsheet – prepared by the Faculty Advisory Council to the UNC Strategic Directions Committee, November 2012
- *The UNC Guarantee for Baccalaureate Study* – prepared by the Faculty Advisory Council to the UNC Strategic Directions Committee, November 2012



Commentaries  
**Change, We Hope**

**The University of North Carolina's governing board may initiate a badly needed change in direction to a staid system.**

*By Jay Schalin*

**November 07, 2012**

Editor's note: This article originally appeared in the Raleigh News & Observer on Monday, November 5.

The winds of change may be sweeping through the halls of the University of North Carolina. Some members of the Board of Governors are asserting themselves—and important issues and alternate opinions that have long been ignored are coming to light.

In recent years, and for much of its existence, the board almost exclusively followed the lead of the UNC system's administration. As the governors appoint the system's president, it is only natural that the board and administration would favor similar policies. And because their views, historically, were shared by most of the system's faculty, there has been little major dissent for many years. Even the recent budget cuts did not affect the system's philosophical unity.

But that is no longer the case. Voting members of the Board of Governors are chosen by the legislature, and the election of 2010 brought about a new Republican majority on the board. They have recently begun expressing opinions contrary to the system's longstanding consensus.

Board member Fred Eshelman is leading the charge. Eshelman, founder of medical research firm PPD and a large donor to UNC schools, is the chairman of one of the two committees convened by the governors to revise the long-range blueprint for the university system, the UNC Strategic Directions Working Group. (The other is the UNC Advisory Committee on Strategic Directions, which includes people from outside the system.)

At an Oct. 24 meeting of the other committee, the UNC Advisory Committee on Strategic Directions, Eshelman raised an alarming statistic from the best-selling book "Academically Adrift," written by two sociology professors. The authors state that, "with a large sample of more than 2,300 students, we observe no statistically significant gains [after two years] in critical thinking, complex reasoning and writing skills for at least 45 percent of the students in



## Carry on in UNC's proud tradition

By Steven Bachenheimer and Stephen Leonard

*PUBLISHED IN: OTHER VIEWS*

The UNC Strategic Planning process has always been an occasion to recommit ourselves to the ideals for which public higher education in North Carolina was established. Today, it appears to have become the occasion for implementing radical changes favored by a handful of individuals.

Against all evidence to the contrary, and against the long and venerable tradition that has made public higher education in North Carolina a model for the nation and the world, the changes being promoted suggest that the widely available, broadly accessible and readily affordable system of higher education we have is an extravagance North Carolina does not need.

Some “leading the charge” for radical change have been repeatedly quoted saying that only 19 percent of North Carolinians holding college degrees need them for their jobs. Perhaps those who don’t understand the aspirations and lives of regular folks might conclude that this proves that a college education is a wasteful expense for police officers, firefighters, carpenters, mechanics, preschool teachers, receptionists, small business owners and many others who don’t “need” a degree for their jobs.

It is doubtful, however, that they would find much agreement from the firefighter with the degree in art history – who also volunteers at the local senior center to lead visits to museums and galleries. Or the print shop owner with the degree in anthropology – who has built a prosperous and respected business because her customers appreciate her interest in their lives and their culture and their faith.

It is also doubtful that those whose commitments have built UNC, and indeed American higher education itself, would agree. The names of some of these people are perhaps familiar enough: Friday, Chase, Graham, Venable, Battle and Caldwell, not to mention Jefferson, Madison, Hamilton, Adams and Franklin. Most important, however, are those many thousands of North Carolinians, rich and poor, educated and illiterate, native born and immigrant, black, brown, red, yellow and white, who sacrificed so much of their blood and treasure – and for many, life itself – so that their fellow and sister citizens might develop their unique talents and abilities, and use them to make their state a better place.

It is just this sort of popular common sense that informed the commitments of the university’s founders, that has been sustained by many of its favorite sons, like the late Bill Friday, and that has been supported by generations of elected officials of every political stripe. They knew that an

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educated citizenry was the bulwark of social happiness, economic prosperity, and political liberty.

That is why these ideals are enshrined in our state constitution.

And our predecessors have been proven right, right down to the present. North Carolina colleges and universities have been magnets for entrepreneurial energy and engines of prosperity that cultivate talent and send it to every corner of the state. The institutions of UNC are part of the reason that so many North Carolina cities and towns are listed as among the “best places to live” in America.

This is because we expect our colleges and universities to educate citizens who are adept, adaptable, inventive, creative, motivated and confident in their ability to make a real difference in their communities. Not surprisingly, this is also what the most dynamic job creators today expect from their employees, and from the communities where they invest.

The university system is a major reason why North Carolina has been consistently ranked among the top states for business climate. And our return to the No. 1 spot this year is no doubt due in part to the fact that while other states have slashed their support for public higher education, North Carolina citizens have told their elected officials to hold the line.

Despite all of this history and all of this evidence, the proponents of radical change have somehow failed to grasp what so many thoughtful North Carolinians value most about their university.

Perhaps some of the reformers don't understand the debates North Carolina has been having since the founding of the university: that the right changes for UNC have to be those our constitution demands, and that is that “knowledge being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools, libraries, and the means of education shall forever be encouraged.”

--Steven Bachenheimer and Stephen Leonard both teach at UNC-Chapel Hill. Eight children from their respective families have been students in North Carolina public colleges and universities.



Commentaries  
**Essential Knowledge**

**College general education programs should focus on the purposes for which they were intended instead of mocking them.**

By Jay Schalin

**November 13, 2012**

Colleges and universities spend a great deal of time and effort deciding upon their general education requirements. General education's purpose is to give students a solid grasp of generally essential knowledge and skills in an efficient manner; while their degree major gives them depth, or expertise, in a particular field, and often forms the basis for their career, the general education curriculum is supposed to provide breadth.

The results of general education programs in recent years have been suspect, at best. The book *Academically Adrift* cites an alarming statistic that, according to Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) tests, 45 percent of students "did not demonstrate any significant improvement in learning" during the first two years of college. Much of that failure can be attributed to weak general education requirements, as they provide the skills tested by the CLA and are often completed in the first two years of school.

Additionally, at a time when higher education is necessarily becoming more focused on the eventual employment of graduates, the main complaints employers have about recent graduates is about their so-called "soft skills," the very proficiencies that general education programs are supposed to improve.

The problem has many roots. One is the absence of strong, visionary leaders who see the need to restrict the general core curriculum to truly essential topics and who also have the necessary spine to make hard judgments in the face of intense opposition from entrenched interests. Where [good core curriculums](#) exist, one is likely to find strong leadership, such as Belmont Abbey College's president, Bill Thierfelder.

Another is faculty control over the general education curriculum, which leads to too much self-interested input from too many vested interests. As a result, general education programs often wind up as bizarre confusions of overly broad and sometimes petty criteria, slapped together with processes that feature the worst aspects of campus politics, design-by-committee inclusiveness, and political correctness. Students at many colleges can satisfy general education requirements by choosing among hundreds and even thousands of courses—many of them best described



as minutiae or extravagances—or must navigate through a maze of confusing and overlapping criteria.

Sometimes, the simple approach is better, and, in my view this is one of those cases. General education is best when based on a single question: what knowledge and skills are essential for thinking, productive, and engaged workers and citizens to possess?

The answer can be boiled down to three broad areas. One is the ability to reason; another is an awareness of the world's most important ideas, the ones that have affected the course of history and the modern world; the third is a high degree of cultural awareness.

Many general education programs claim their purpose is to teach reason, or "critical thinking" as it is commonly called today, but they do so in ways that defy their goal by expecting students to pick it up in context of other subjects. Reason is best learned directly and arduously, not by osmosis.

There are four subject areas that will efficiently provide students with sufficient reasoning prowess. The first is logic—pure reason—which teaches how to draw proper conclusions from a sequence of statements. The second is laboratory science, which grounds students in the scientific method that employs empirical experimentation to draw a conclusion. The next is statistics, which teaches students how to reason using trend patterns and probabilities.

Writing is also important to one's ability to reason (as well as being an essential skill for success after college). Writing is applied thinking—learning to write well also means learning to organize one's thoughts coherently. It can be subdivided into two courses; one to focus on the primary building blocks of writing, composition and grammar, and the other to foster the use of rhetoric (argumentation). The ability to argue properly is often absent in today's students, and in professionals in the public arena as well. Too often, people today rely on emotions when faced with contrary opinions, or confuse ad hominem attacks with reasoned arguments.

While teaching to reason is noncontroversial, or should be, learning about the great ideas and culture can be more problematic politically. However, some ideas obviously stand taller than others. Mankind has been wrestling with some central questions for thousands of years, including:

What is justice? What is truth? Is morality universal or is it relative? Does mankind have a purpose? What does an individual owe to society, and vice-versa?

Perhaps the best way to educate people to think deeply and consider the long-term implications of actions and events is to introduce them to these questions directly through a single, required philosophy course.

Politics and economics are also essential for one's understanding of the world of ideas. Too often today, students graduate without knowing much about either but feeling as if they do, as many social science and humanities professors teach their own brands of superficial or false economics and political theory. Students' lack of political and economic understanding is frequently appalling; they often condemn business and capitalism without being able to provide a simple definition of capitalism, let alone describe the key connection between private property and freedom.

A required course in comparative political and economic systems would address students' ignorance, so that when

they vote or discuss concepts like capitalism, they actually know what they're voting or talking about.

Other great ideas can be introduced via courses that also provide cultural context—the two concepts are closely tied together. History is the best starting point, giving students several key skills and perspectives. It is where thought and action join, a great laboratory of human cause and effect that leads to greater understanding of the possible or likely. Furthermore, it provides an awareness of the unfolding of events and ideas, creating an accurate timeline of events in students' minds that is crucial for knowledge of the world.

Not all history is equally valuable—the study of Western civilization is richer and more pertinent to U.S. students than other branches. Like it or not, we are part of the West and draw almost all of our culture from it. Furthermore, Western civilization, far more than any other branch of history, includes the vast range of ideas that influenced human events.

One thing history teaches is that, without unity, large nations such as ours crumble and fall. Our nation increasingly lacks a sense of the “contract between the generations,” as described by Edmund Burke, to hold us together. This implied contract suggests that the current generation should honor and preserve the wisdom of past generations and hand over to future generations lives of promise, while the more recent trend is to divide generations by regularly recreating the culture anew.

An understanding of how our country came to be and the underlying ideas behind its formation is central to such a contract. The United States is the first, most successful, and most benevolent example of a nation founded on ideas, and therefore it provides deep insight into the world of ideas. All American students should be exposed to the thought of Hobbes, Locke, Smith, Burke and read some of the U.S. canon of the Declaration of Independence, Constitution, and Federalist and Anti-Federalist Papers.

Another necessary reason for grounding students in the American founding and its subsequent history is social cohesion. The emphasis on the multicultural model, which glorifies separate cultural traditions, sets people at odds with each other. If we are to have a unified nation that pulls together when needed, one culture must dominate. Fortunately, the traditional American model is rooted not in ethnicity but in principles of individual rights, and therefore is ideal for that role. Since we currently have so many newcomers to our country, it is imperative that we introduce them to our underlying principles.

An extremely important part of the culture that is often ignored on campus is religion. It is fundamental to the world of ideas and to culture; most students could benefit from some type of comparative religion course. The goal would be a better understanding of basic beliefs and concepts rather than conversion. (This last statement obviously doesn't hold true for religious colleges.)

And that's about it. Certainly, it would be nice to include many other topics. But the need for efficiency means that many staples of existing general education programs, such as literature, foreign languages, or art appreciation, must be excluded. While desirable, they cannot truly be called essential for an understanding of the world.

Restricting general education courses to a select few will be extremely unpopular with some faculty. There are large numbers of teaching jobs at stake: many departments that now teach popular general education courses could lose half or more of their students. If that were to occur, financial sanity dictates that faculty jobs in those programs be

cut. (Of course, new jobs will be created at the same time for specialists in the essential subjects.)

But this is not about professors and their jobs; it is about the intellectual development of students. For a long time, academia has been hesitant to make judgments about what knowledge is the most valuable. As a result, many general education programs are of little value. Our institutions of higher learning can, and should, do better.

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our study.”

The Collegiate Learning Assessment, which was used to determine academic gains in the “Academically Adrift” study, is not an infallible tool. But it is perhaps the best measurement of collegiate achievement available. “Academically Adrift” also corroborates observations made by higher education critics from both inside and outside the ivory tower, that much of the nation’s higher education efforts are going for naught.

While the “Academically Adrift” study was national, it is fair to assume that a similar lack of progress occurs at UNC schools. This failure to educate is the sort of issue that has long needed attention but remained hidden from view.

Another example of the changing relationship between the board and the general administration revolves around UNC President Tom Ross’s highest priority for the new strategic plan: setting an actual numerical goal for increasing graduates from UNC schools. Several speakers invited by the general administration to both the board’s regular meetings and the strategic advisory committee have promoted the need to dramatically increase the number of graduates to meet the needs of the future economy.

Eshelman, however, made the case that projections of the future demand for college graduates are mainly conjectural and that such information should be viewed “with a jaundiced eye.” He emphasized that trying to be “clairvoyant” about future employment markets and establishing “overreaching” goals is likely to be counterproductive.

He also indicated that North Carolina may already have considerable “underemployment” among its college graduates, as roughly 26 percent of the state’s workforce has bachelor’s degrees or above, while only 19 percent of the jobs require such degrees.

Raleigh businessman and advisory committee member Art Pope added that planning for specific quotas of graduates is the kind of “central planning” proven to fail everywhere it’s been tried. (Disclosure: Art Pope’s family foundation is the primary donor to the Pope Center for Higher Education Policy.)

To his great credit, Ross, who is also the chair of the advisory committee, said that the committee would revisit the decision about the degree attainment goal – including “whether to have such a goal.” Ross’ willingness to rethink the issue was the sort of leadership the system now needs.

After four decades of one-sided governance and rapid growth, members of the Board of Governors are showing a welcome awareness of the need to reassess old assumptions, fix current problems and avoid future errors, rather than blindly pushing for further growth. They—and Ross as well for not obstructing them when they raise new issues and express alternate opinions—should be applauded.

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# Pathways to Success -- Pat McCrory's Plan for Higher Education

*“Starting in high school and continuing through our higher education system, we must ensure our students are on the right path to acquiring marketable skills that will lead to a productive and satisfying career. My goal is for every student to get a job after they graduate – not move back in with his or her parents. To do that, we must emphasize skill attainment in our community colleges and universities, use our resources more efficiently and measure success in a comprehensive way.”*

- Pat McCrory

## Introduction

With a network of excellent community colleges, renowned state universities and some of the most outstanding private institutions of higher learning in the world, North Carolina has a strong educational foundation that gives North Carolinians numerous paths to success. Higher education has always been, and must continue to be, the great transmitter of cultural, intellectual and technical resources from one generation to the next. Our state's world-class research and medical centers are also vitally important to our state's economy and attract billions of outside dollars to the state. A McCrory administration will encourage this critical academic and research mission to attain ever-greater heights of achievement through the application of scholarship, rigorous standards and a strengthened competition in ideas and ideals.

Despite our strong higher education system, our state is saddled with one of the worst unemployment rates in the country. In these tough economic times, we must not narrow the focus of North Carolina's higher education system; instead, we must strengthen and improve our universities and community colleges. A McCrory administration will work with education and business leaders to make sure our community colleges and universities more effectively and efficiently help North Carolinians complete a degree program to attain marketable skills, find a job and help grow our economy.

Starting in high school and continuing through higher education, it is essential to help students find the path to success that is right for them because simply having an advanced degree no longer guarantees a job. A recent study found half of recent graduates with bachelor's degrees nationwide are unemployed or underemployed. In North Carolina, there also has been an unacceptable rise in the number of citizens with some college coursework but no degree, poor job prospects and mounting student debt.

To ensure that North Carolina's higher education system provides every citizen a pathway to success, a McCrory administration will work to:

1. Help Students Find the Path to Success that is Right for Them;
2. Ensure Students Are Attaining Marketable Skills to Enter the Workforce;
3. Encourage Degree Completion;
4. Integrate Resources Across Campuses and Expand Use of Technology to Improve Educational Quality and Drive Down Costs.

Pat McCrory wholeheartedly believes we must constantly strive to improve our higher education system to make sure every North Carolina degree and certification is worth more than the paper it is printed on – that a North Carolina degree constitutes a ticket to personal achievement, skill attainment, academic advancement and employment in the North Carolina and global economy.

## 1) Help Students Find the Path to Success that is Right for Them

North Carolina has a proud tradition of supporting higher education in all its forms. Pat McCrory's plan for K-12 education would provide two pathways to a high school degree: one that prepares students for a four-year degree, and a second vocational path that would prepare students for the work force or additional technical training. A McCrory administration will make it a primary focus in higher education to ensure that students are on the right path to acquiring the skills that will help them find a job, whether that path is in the liberal arts or technical training.

If we're going to connect our citizens to the jobs in demand and solve our unemployment crisis, we must stop propagating the myth that everyone has to go to a four-year university. A McCrory administration will fight to end the stigma often associated with vocational occupations. In many cases, an individual with vocational or technical training can earn more than someone with a bachelor's degree or even a law degree. A McCrory administration will:

## Strengthen Higher Education by Strengthening K-12 Education

By strengthening our K-12 schools and providing multiple paths to a high school degree, a McCrory administration will free up resources in our community colleges and universities by spending less on remediation for those who have completed high school. Millions of taxpayer dollars are diverted every year at community colleges and universities to re-teach students the basic skills they should have mastered in high school. In all, some 65 percent of high school graduates entering North Carolina community colleges in 2010-11 needed remedial coursework. Pat McCrory believes this is unacceptable, and as governor, he will work to break down the silos and strengthen the system as a whole.

### **Provide More Aggressive Community College Career Counseling**

A well-trained and educated work force is required if we are to have strong economic development and good jobs in our state. That includes vocational training, technical training and educational training for those who want to matriculate to one of our four-year institutions. If ever community colleges needed to be strong, it is now. Community colleges will be a priority in the McCrory administration, and Pat McCrory will work with North Carolina's community colleges to provide aggressive career counseling to high school students not planning to attend four-year colleges, especially those in schools with low graduation rates.

### **Fix North Carolina's 'Reemployment' System**

Our higher education system, and community colleges in particular, are vital to North Carolina's 'reemployment' system that seeks to help North Carolinians get back on their feet. Our reemployment efforts are too often disparate; we must create cohesion and accountability to help North Carolinians gain long-term employment.

## **2) Ensure Students Are Attaining Marketable Skills to Enter the Workforce**

Too many graduates are finding that their degree does not provide them with a marketable skill set to get a job. We need to work more closely with businesses and educational leaders to guarantee the quality of a North Carolina degree for every course of study. To this end, a McCrory administration will work to create an important feedback loop for students and parents as they choose their educational path, measure and ensure the quality of North Carolina degree and ease the ability to share best practices between campuses and industries. A McCrory administration will:

### **Expand Partnership Between Higher Education and Economic Development**

In a McCrory administration, community college and university leaders will have a seat at the table as North Carolina creates and executes an economic development strategy. North Carolina's community colleges and universities both have a strong tradition of partnering with business and research institutions to better align educational programs with current and future market demand. Pat McCrory will work to spread and amplify these practices across the state.

### **Promote Enrollment in High-Demand Fields**

North Carolina has earned a reputation as a world leader in many advanced fields such as nanotechnology and biotechnology. North Carolina universities must continually reassess and improve plans to make sure our state has a workforce trained in vital industries such as Agriculture; Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (*STEM*) fields; and Healthcare.

### **Measure Program Success and Share Best Practices**

As governor, Pat McCrory will work with education and industry leaders to develop a comprehensive and innovative approach to measure program success rates and student job attainment. This approach must encompass both community colleges and universities, and draw on existing resources from North Carolina's already substantial performance measurement systems to create a single, transparent operation.

### **Define Expected Skill Attainment for Each Course of Study**

Every student who invests in a higher education and earns a degree in North Carolina should be assured they will attain a certain set of skills relevant to the marketplace. Pat McCrory will promote an initiative across North Carolina's higher education system to clearly define the skills attained in every course of study.

### **Require Curricular Input from Employment Decision-Makers**

In designing curricula, community colleges and universities must standardize interaction between instructors, business leaders and human resource specialists in their field. This common-sense approach draws on the industry knowledge of those who actually hire graduates.

### **Fight Grade Inflation**

We must ensure that a degree from a North Carolina institution continues to signify a quality education. North Carolina's higher education institutions must fight grade inflation where it exists because it curbs the demand for excellence and denies students a return on investment. If students receive the same grade for outstanding work that they get for average work, they are not motivated to excel. A McCrory administration will work with North Carolina institutions to develop policies to combat grade inflation.

## **3) Encourage Degree Completion**

Graduation rates for associate degree programs are often well below 40 percent and are below 50 percent at many of our four-year institutions. Low completion rates indicate we are either not doing enough to help students succeed on their chosen path or are not doing everything possible to help students find the path that's right for them. This is a disservice to students and taxpayers. A McCrory administration will:

### **Foster Performance-Based Initiatives**

Pat McCrory will work with education leaders to expand and develop performance-based initiatives for universities and community colleges to improve accountability, program completion and overall student achievement. It is important for North Carolina to develop a funding mechanism to reward schools that lead students to employment.

### **Incentivize Students to Graduate Early**

A McCrory administration will work with North Carolina schools to provide financial incentives to students who finish their degree program early while meeting a minimum grade level.

### **Encourage Transfer Students to First Complete Associate Degree**

Students who first complete their associate degree before transferring to a four-year program have greater success and save taxpayers money. As governor, Pat McCrory will work with education leaders to encourage this route for students who hope to transfer from community college to a university. This will help keep the college transfer programs in our community colleges strong and provide students a dependable path to a four-year degree and the workforce.

## **4) Integrate Resources Across Campuses and Expand Use of Technology to Improve Educational Quality and Drive Down Costs**

North Carolina must break free from the silos that divide our education system and share resources and expertise to provide students the best possible education in the most efficient manner. The North Carolina Education Cabinet is important for coordinating education efforts in our state, but it has been underutilized. Our next governor must show leadership by bringing the Education Cabinet together regularly to address long-term issues facing higher education in North Carolina and to ensure good communication, cooperation and results. To ensure the most efficient use of our state's \$3.5 billion investment in education, a McCrory administration will:

### **Expand Use of Technology**

Currently, our colleges and universities are only scratching the surface of potential interactive, multimedia and diagnostic teaching technology. There are still many barriers preventing students from gaining access to the best teachers and professors across the state. Pat McCrory will work with North Carolina's education leaders to continually improve distance learning capabilities across campuses and to avail college courses to mid-career professionals and others who cannot attend a brick and mortar classroom.

### **Develop a Strict Approval Process for New Capital Projects**

Across North Carolina, many classroom facilities are already underutilized. We must use our existing resources to the fullest before authorizing expansion. Pat McCrory will require schools to provide a stronger practical justification for more space before new capital projects are approved on university and community college campuses.

### **Require Institutions to Share Best Practices, Expertise and Administrative Resources Across Campuses**

A McCrory administration will work with university and community college leaders to facilitate the sharing of resources across campuses. For example, savings could be achieved by streamlining the application process. Our higher education system must also look to reduce academic duplication by consolidating courses and degrees to achieve cost savings and greater efficiency.

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	ASU	ECU	ECSU	FSU	NC A&T	NCCU	NC State	UNCA	UNC-CH	UNCC	UNCG	UNCP	UNCSA	UNCW	WCU	WSSU	How Many Campuses?
Written Communications	Yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	YES	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	All
Quantitative Analysis	Yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	YES	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	All
Scientific Inquiry	Yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	YES	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	All
History and Society	Yes	Yes (social sciences)	yes	yes	yes	yes (social sciences)	yes	yes	yes	YES	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	All
Human Expression	Yes	Yes (humanities and arts)	yes	yes	yes	yes (arts and humanities)	yes	yes	yes	YES?	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes (humanities)	yes (social/behavioral sciences)	All ??
Health and Wellness	Yes	yes	yes	yes (phys ed from "life skills")	No	yes	yes	yes	yes	YES?	No	yes	No	yes	possible - one of possible curricular themes		12 to 13
Global and Community Responsibility	Yes	No	no (not directly)	yes	yes	yes (ethics)	yes	yes	yes	YES?	yes	yes	yes	yes (social sciences)	yes (foreign language and culture)		14 to 16
First Year Seminar or other Seminars	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No			Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	8
Oral Communications	Yes (from Learning Outcomes)	No	Yes (Fine Arts & Communication)	Yes	Not Specifically	Yes	Yes	Not Specifically	Yes	Yes		Yes		Yes	Yes		11
Foreign Languages/World Culture	Not specifically	No	Yes (Language & Lit)	Yes (Global Literacy)	Yes (Global Studies)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes, for some				Yes	Yes		9
Information Literacy	categories into a single "Global and Cultural"	Not Specifically	Not Specifically	Yes	Not Specifically	Not Specifically	Yes	Yes	Not Specifically					Yes	Yes		4 to 8
WI or WAC	Yes	Yes					Communication in the Major			Yes		Yes			Critical reading		5
Senior Capstone	Senior Capstone in the major	yes, most programs						experiential education									2 to 3
Other		Cultural Diversity	computer and information literacy	life skills	student success	technology/computer proficiency	U.S. diversity	5 courses from 2 topical clusters	diversity req., north atlantic world req		reasoning and discourse		digital media	fine and performing arts	At least 60 hours outside of major		
Other						social and career enhancement development	Technology fluency	Art and the creative process			technology		students have flexibility to choose an individual path of study		Two courses from among Globalization, Diversity, Civic Engagement, Sustainability, Moral and Ethical Reasoning, and Healthy Living		
Hours	44 -	42	46-48	38-39	33	38-49	39	48	40	39-44 hours	36-37	44	36-42	42	42	39+	

Note: Could we combine Global/Community, FL/World Cultures, and Cultural Diversity into a single category?

Note: Information Literacy category could be broadened to include all things technological (Information and Technological Literacy).

Note: It is possible that many more campus utilize some kind of internships, study abroad, or other capstone experience. This may be hard to ascertain without contacting each campus.

# The UNC Guarantee for Baccalaureate Study

prepared by the *Faculty Advisory Council to the UNC Strategic Directions Committee*<sup>1</sup>

*“The mission of the university . . . is accomplished through instruction, which communicates the knowledge and values and imparts the skills necessary for individuals to lead responsible, productive, and personally satisfying lives.”<sup>2</sup>*

North Carolinians expect students seeking a UNC undergraduate degree to master the knowledge and skills necessary for 21<sup>st</sup> century competitiveness.<sup>3</sup> To accomplish this mission, UNC’s sixteen undergraduate degree-awarding institutions require their undergraduates to engage in a lower-division course of study (commonly known as General Education) that is focused on speaking and writing effectively, mastering skills in science and mathematics, participating effectively in a global environment, behaving ethically, learning to think critically, and maintaining personal well-being. Utilizing these basic competencies, students proceed beyond the lower-division course of study to acquire a degree in a specialized field of study (*i.e.*, a major).

This “UNC Guarantee for Baccalaureate Study” encompasses two components: minimum General Education competencies and a degree in a specialized study.<sup>4</sup>

While the faculty of the UNC constituent institutions are responsible for course conception, development, content, and assessment;<sup>5</sup> the creation of a set of minimum General Education competencies, along with a system-wide course equivalency portal, will provide a thematic architecture for course alignment and articulation among campuses and make it possible for UNC students and constituent institutions to accomplish the following objectives:

- Easily transfer earned courses/credit hours within the UNC system;
- Facilitate greater efficiency with available financial resources; and
- Enhance seamlessness between UNC and community college, military, and K-12 partners, by providing a framework for identifying transfer equivalencies among these groups.

## The Purpose of General Education

At the UNC General Education System Summit at Appalachian State University, September 27 – 28, 2012, general education faculty and administrators from 14 of the 16 four-year campuses addressed the question of what are the

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<sup>1</sup> Susan Cannata, UNCP; Georgie Donovan, ASU; Vidyaranya B. Gargeya, UNCG; David A. Green, NCCU; Scott Imig, UNCW; Trudy F. C. Mackay, NCSU; Purificación Martínez, ECU; Erin McNelis, WCU; Catherine A. Rigsby, ECU; Brian Sims, NCA&T; Eddy M. Souffrant, UNCC; Rachel Willis, UNC-CH; and Linda Wilson-Jones, FSU

<sup>2</sup> North Carolina General Statute 116-1(b)

<sup>3</sup> Two of the “major findings” of the UNC Tomorrow Report read as follows:

- UNC should educate its students to be personally and professionally successful in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and, to do so, should enhance the global competitiveness of its institutions and their graduates.
- UNC should increase access to higher education for all North Carolinians, particularly for underserved regions, underrepresented populations, and non-traditional students.

To attain these goals, the final commission report highlights the importance of improved campus cooperation throughout the system and enhanced seamlessness with the North Carolina Community College System and North Carolina high schools.

<sup>4</sup> Although many specialized fields of study (majors) have specific General Education course requirements, campus disciplinary degrees do not entail common requirements unless structured in consortial paradigms.

<sup>5</sup> As with all curricula, primary responsibility for the content, quality, and effectiveness assessment is with faculty (SACS 3.4.10) [SACS Principles of Accreditation, p. 29].

essential competencies that students should develop through a general education program. Their responses to that question are in line with the literature regarding general education programs. Laird *et al.*, for example, affirmed the value of general education as a vehicle for more effectively delivering and assessing “intellectual skills . . . and individual and social responsibility.”<sup>6</sup> Effective general education programs do the following:

- Provide students with a broad view and multiple perspectives across the disciplines not achieved through individual majors;
- Develop intellectual preparedness, critical thinking, and communication skills through application and engagement; and
- Raise awareness of the full complexity of issues in our diverse global society through broad-based learning in order to prepare for meaningful participating citizenship.

These goals are directly aligned with UNC’s commitment to educate students to be contributing, productive North Carolina citizens and to educate multi-dimensional students who can adapt and compete in the face of an uncertain and unpredictable future.

There is not one particular course, or specific set of courses, that can prepare students to meet the various challenges they will encounter post-graduation. The citizens of North Carolina seeking a university education vary in academic preparation, and the campuses of the UNC System have varied missions and pathways to serve the needs of our state. Leskes and Wright defined three “anchoring concepts” related to general education programs: a) clear programmatic purpose for general education, b) resonance with the institution’s distinctive mission, and c) transparent, powerful goals and outcomes of learning.<sup>7</sup> Each UNC campus has implemented a general education program that supports the campus’s mission and addresses the needs and aspirations of its student population. It is critical that any system-wide General Education policies be both flexible and respectful of the unique mission of each campus, of the expertise of each campus’s faculty, and of the unique backgrounds, needs, and aspirations of each campus’s students.

### **Commonalities among General Education Programs Across the UNC System**

Credit hours for General Education programs in the system range from 35-44 credit hours, indicating that General Education is a substantial component of undergraduate education. Whereas the UNC campuses’ General Education programs vary in detail, they contain many commonalities in program curricula, learning objectives, and governance procedures. These commonalities should form the basis for a faculty-led discussion of potential system-wide General Education requirements.

Specifically, the following competencies are common to the General Education programs at ALL of the 16 undergraduate degree-awarding institutions:

- Critical thinking and quantitative analysis;
- Scientific inquiry;
- Communication skills;
- Historical and social perspective; and
- Human expression and creativity.

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<sup>6</sup> Laird, Niskode-Dossett and Kuh, 2009. What general education courses contribute to essential learning outcomes. *Journal of General Education*, 58(2), p. 80.

<sup>7</sup> Leskes, A., & Wright, B. D, 2005. *The art & science of assessing general education outcomes: A practical guide*. Washington, D.C., Association of American Colleges and Universities.

In addition, a majority of the campuses' General Education programs also address the following:

- Health and wellness awareness;
- Information and technology literacy; and
- Global and cultural awareness, diversity, and citizenship.

### **Accreditation Standards and Policies that Guide General Education Programs and Administration**

As indicated in the UNC Statement of Mission, “[t]he University of North Carolina is a public, multi-campus university dedicated to the service of North Carolina and its people.”<sup>8</sup> Each one of the constituent institutions “share[s] the overall mission (...) to discover, create, transmit, and apply knowledge to address the needs of individuals and society.” Based on this common objective, each of the constituent institutions has an appropriate mission, created with the ultimate common UNC goal to serve the state and its regions by developing institutions that complement each other, maximize resources, and avoid unnecessary duplication.

This goal of service to students and society is not unique to Higher Education in North Carolina. Rather, it is anchored in common shared values and practices among the diverse institutions that belong to The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACS), the regional body for accreditation of degree-granting higher institutions in the Southern States.

The importance of SACS accreditation to the UNC System resides in the fact that accreditation is the only reliable way for UNC institutions to provide a means of continuing accountability to constituents and the public. Our strategic directions must be well aligned with SACS Accreditation Criteria to ensure that UNC institutions constantly engage in evaluation, improvement, and as previously indicated, accountability. Worth noting is the fact that UNC does not receive accreditation as a system, but each institution receives accreditation. In other words, each constituent institution must meet the Standards for Accreditation. These standards are uniform and flexible: uniform because all institutions in SACS need to demonstrate compliance and flexible because each of the constituent institutions must demonstrate this compliance “within the context of their resources and (...) appropriate to the mission.”<sup>9</sup>

### **Assessment of General Education**

As established above, diversity of institutional missions is a strength of the UNC system that must be preserved when developing a set of minimal competencies to be shared among the UNC General Education requirements, but also when assessing students' learning. Assessment of learning outcomes is mandated by SACS in principle 3.5.1: “The institution identifies college-level general education competencies and the extent to which students have attained them (General Education Competencies).” The Lumina Foundation, in its *Improving Measurement of Productivity in Higher Education*, recommends the construction of valid performance measures that take into consideration the different missions and student characteristics of each institution.<sup>10</sup> The *Faculty Advisory Council to the UNC Strategic Directions Committee* (FAC) considers the use of uni-dimensional measures of students' learning inappropriate. The FAC concurs with professional organizations, such as the Association of American Colleges and University, and expresses healthy skepticism regarding the use of standardized tests as assessment tools. Based on the evidence offered by members of the FAC whose institutions have recently completed or are currently preparing for SACS accreditation, UNC constituent institutions have diligent, rigorous assessment practices that document what learning is taking place on each campus. As with the obvious existing commonalities to the General Education programs, these practices might not be sufficiently public, transparent and coordinated.

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<sup>8</sup> See <http://www.northcarolina.edu/about/mission.htm>.

<sup>9</sup> See SACS Principles of Accreditation at <http://sacscoc.org/pdf/2012PrinciplesOfAccreditation.pdf>, p. 2.

<sup>10</sup> See [http://www.nap.edu/openbook.php?record\\_id=13417&page=R1](http://www.nap.edu/openbook.php?record_id=13417&page=R1), p. 3-7.

## Recommended Strategic Goals and Directions

General Education requirements and assessment at the constituent UNC institutions must be framed within the three foundations upon which public higher education in North Carolina is built: SACS, the UNC Statement of Mission, and the complementary missions of each of the constituent institutions.

Keeping these foundations in mind, the UNC system must ensure the excellence of General Education for all UNC students, as well as the “alignment” and “articulation” of General Education competencies across UNC and with the North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS). Importantly, this type of articulation and alignment requires that faculty in both UNC and NCCCS discuss the content and learning outcomes expected in each course.

To ensure that all UNC students continue to receive the highest quality undergraduate education, the FAC recommends the adoption of the following system-wide strategic goals and directions:

***GOAL 1. Provide seamless educational opportunities across the UNC system campuses and with their NCCCS, Early College, Military, and K-12 partners.***

### **Strategic Directions**

- 1.1 Create a system-hosted and publically available portal of course equivalencies.
  - 1.1.1 Develop a comprehensive “equivalencies library,” organized by General Education competency area, so that UNC campuses can share transfer information about General Education competency requirements.
    - 1.1.1.1 Because faculty on each campus will retain control over the learning objectives and outcomes in each course, content area, and General Education program; effective establishment of the equivalencies library will require that faculty groups from each campus convene to outline minimum objectives and outcomes in each competency area.
    - 1.1.1.2 The equivalency library should include ALL equivalencies (not simply General Education equivalencies or UNC campus equivalencies) that are approved by the various UNC campuses.
  - 1.1.2 Port the “equivalency library” to an Equivalency Portal – a UNC system-hosted platform that pulls data from campus platforms (*e.g.*, Banner and PeopleSoft) and is available to the public through the UNC system website.
  - 1.1.3 Ensure that current and prospective students, as well as academic advisors, can easily access and search this mega-database of course equivalencies.
  - 1.1.4 Ensure that both the “equivalency library” and the Equivalency Portal are continuously updated.
- 1.2 Expand the successful and ongoing collaboration with the NCCCS on the Comprehensive Articulation Agreement (CAA) so that courses included in the CAA (currently tracked via Transfer Navigator) are incorporated into the Equivalency Portal, hence allowing seamless transfer mapping across all access points to the portal and between UNC campuses and the NC Community College System.

**GOAL 2. Guarantee a set of minimal competencies for General Education programs, based on recommendations from faculty from across the UNC system, to assure seamless transfer opportunities between the UNC system campuses as well as the NCCCS.**

### **Strategic Directions**

2.1 Form a state-wide General Education Council of faculty charged with governance of the General Education programs from across the UNC System to undertake a comprehensive review of existing General Education programs across all sixteen UNC undergraduate degree-awarding institutions and recommend a set of minimal competencies for General Education programs that will strengthen and streamline learning outcomes in General Education.

2.1.2 Use the results of the General Education Council's review to form the basis for a system-wide discussion to determine a set of common General Education competencies across UNC.

2.1.3 Support General Education programs that incorporate the mission of each of the constituent institutions while considering adoption of common General Education competencies.

2.1.3.1 Consider the following General Education competencies for inclusion in the set of *common* General Education competencies:

- Critical thinking and quantitative analysis;
- Scientific inquiry;
- Communication skills;
- Historical and social perspectives;
- Human expression and creativity;
- Health and wellness awareness;
- Information and technology literacy; and
- Global and cultural awareness, diversity, and citizenship.

2.1.3.2 General education program competencies are not to be limited to these eight areas and should be aligned with the mission of each institution and the backgrounds, needs, and aspirations of their students.

2.1.4 Frame the establishment of a common set of General Education requirements for UNC within the three foundations upon which public higher education in North Carolina is built: SACS, the UNC Statement of Mission, and the unique and complementary missions of each of the constituent institutions.

2.2 Establish a UNC Military Course Equivalence Committee, made up of General Education faculty from across the system, and utilizing the American Council on Education (ACE) model, to work with the General Education Council to determine how specific courses articulate with any common General Education competencies.

2.3 By 2018, eliminate all artificial impediments or meaningless requirements on the transfer of academic credit among all 16 undergraduate degree-awarding constituent institutions<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> SACS Statement on Transfer of Academic Credit at <http://sacscoc.org/pdf/081705/transfer%20credit.pdf>.

2.3.2 Ensure that transfer specialists on each campus will utilize the Equivalency Portal in assessing credits for students transferring into the UNC system from private schools in North Carolina, from non-state schools, and from students with military experience and coursework.

***GOAL 3. Prepare students for success and citizenship in a rapidly changing world and global economy.***

**Strategic Directions**

- 3.1 Improve student proficiency in 21<sup>st</sup> century life skills such as critical and creative thinking; analytical reasoning; problem solving; oral and written communication; team work; and information and technology literacy.
- 3.2 Increase students' ability to succeed in a diverse and global society by fostering historical, social, civic, global, and diversity awareness.
- 3.3 Foster intellectual habits of the mind that students will be able to apply to a wide variety of situations in their personal and professional endeavors.
- 3.4 Develop tools that assess and verify student's understanding, application, and mastery of the 21<sup>st</sup> century life skills needed in every professional endeavor.

***GOAL 4. Ensure the excellence of General Education for all UNC students.***

**Strategic Directions**

- 4.1 At all UNC institutions, all General Education courses will meet transfer-level quality SACS accreditation standards.<sup>12</sup>
- 4.2 Any change to a campus's General Education program must be assessed for mappability to the "equivalency library" and the CAA before the change is implemented.
- 4.3 Ensure that faculty in both the UNC and NCCCS discuss the content and learning outcomes expected in any General Education programs and create and promote continued collaboration and discussion, such as dual-system summits, open to all faculty supporting and administering General Education programs in the UNC and NCCCS system.
- 4.4 Ensure that the General Education requirements in all UNC institutions have the following minimum characteristics:
  - A minimum of 30 semester hours or equivalent with at least one course from each of the following areas: humanities/fine arts, social/behavioral sciences, and natural science/mathematics (SACS 2.7.3) [SACS Principles of Accreditation, p. 12];
  - Articulate across all institutions as part of each campus' General Education requirements;
  - Consist of courses that do not narrowly focus on those skills, techniques, and procedures specific to a particular occupation or profession (SACS 2.7.3) [SACS Principles of Accreditation, p. 12];

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<sup>12</sup> See SACS Policy on Quality and Integrity of Undergraduate Degrees at <http://sacscoc.org/pdf/081705/Quality%20and%20Integrity%20of%20Undergraduate%20Degrees.pdf>, p. 1.

- Be directly related and appropriate to the mission and goals of the institution and the diplomas, certificates, or degrees awarded (SACS 4.2) [SACS Principles of Accreditation, p. 39];
- Permit the historic diversity and strengths of the UNC campuses to build upon the common core courses with additional General Education requirements that are institution-specific (not exempted by transfer credit) and which together represent the full General Education requirements; and
- Articulate with other state-wide initiatives that exist for achieving college course credit toward undergraduate degrees, *i.e.*, the Comprehensive Articulation Agreement (CAA) that began in 1997 and outlines the transfer of course credit from the 58 campuses in the NCCCS to UNC campuses, the Career & College Promise initiative, and Early College High School programs.

4.5 Ensure that, in addition to normal campus-based General Education assessment, any common system-wide General Educational competencies will be evaluated and assessed periodically by an interdisciplinary group of faculty using appropriate shared governance structures and procedures.

4.5.1 Inventory instruments currently used to assess general education.

4.5.2 Increase efforts toward the establishment of statewide data collection of student learning to better illustrate the scope and magnitude of postsecondary assessment. The results of the assessment should also be made public.

4.5.3 Assess students' learning of commonly agreed learning goals at the institutional level, ensuring that institutions make public both their assessment methods and the results of those assessments.

4.5.4 Enable the General Education Council to take the following assessment-related actions:

- Consider the creation of standardized definitions for General Education Competencies (*i.e.*, standardized definitions for critical thinking, quantitative analysis, etc.), and
- Consider the development of a template for reporting of assessment of student learning gains in General Education