

Attachment 4: *Our University, Our Future: A Faculty Vision for UNC Strategic Directions* (FACULTY ADVISORY COUNCIL REPORT TO THE UNC STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS COMMITTEE)

Note from the Chair:

The attached report was written by the members of the *Faculty Advisory Council (FAC)*. As outlined below, the report was prepared under extremely tight time constraints and represents the only formal faculty input provided to the working group during the creation of the draft strategic plan.

*The Faculty Advisory Council* was created in early October, as a direct result of a resolution passed by the Faculty Assembly during its September 12<sup>th</sup> meeting (see Resolution #2012-03 UNC Strategic Plan Input – [http://www.northcarolina.edu/fa\\_resolutions/index.php](http://www.northcarolina.edu/fa_resolutions/index.php) – and Rigsby-Ross letter and attachments from the Oct 012 FA Meeting – [http://www.northcarolina.edu/fa\\_meetings/index.php?pg=dl&id=s13867&format=pdf&inline=1](http://www.northcarolina.edu/fa_meetings/index.php?pg=dl&id=s13867&format=pdf&inline=1)). The group had its first meeting on October 29<sup>th</sup>, produced a first report draft on November 18<sup>th</sup>, and presented the final (updated and expanded) report to the Strategic Directions Committee (the “working group”) on November 25<sup>th</sup>. Although the *FAC* was too small (12 members and the chair) to have members from every system campus, we strived to act as “representatives of the system faculty” in all of our work. In addition to preparing this report, members of the *Council* solicited faculty input via a web-based survey instrument (and paid attention to that input!), hosted faculty forums on both their own campuses and on campuses that were not directly represented on the Council, attended the regional listening sessions (you may read their reports on the Faculty Assembly web page: <http://www.northcarolina.edu/facultyassembly/index.htm>), sat in on Advisory and Working Committee meetings. The chapter titled “The UNC Guarantee for Baccalaureate Study” was included in the meeting materials for the November 30 FA discussions on General Education ([http://www.northcarolina.edu/fa\\_meetings/index.php?pg=dl&id=s14067&format=pdf&inline=1](http://www.northcarolina.edu/fa_meetings/index.php?pg=dl&id=s14067&format=pdf&inline=1)). Members of the *FAC* participated in that discussion.

*The Council’s* report was sent to the “working committee” in the hopes that much of it would be incorporated into the strategic plan. A close reading of the draft strategic plan (Attachment 3) reveals that, indeed, some of the *FAC’s* wording and recommendations were incorporated into the working group’s draft. I wish they would have used more of the *FAC’s* work, but am pleased that they used some of it.

At that January 18 meeting, the Faculty Assembly will discuss and provide feedback to the draft strategic plan. The *FAC* document is provide as background because it represents the work of a FA-requested group and is the only formal faculty input that was available to the Strategic Directions Committee (the “working group”) as it prepared its draft. Members of the *FAC* will be present for the FA discussions on the 18<sup>th</sup> because their work on this project has made them very familiar with the topics to be discussed, hence they may be able to answer questions and to provide insights about items in the draft strategic plan.

# Our University, Our Future: A Faculty Vision for UNC Strategic Directions

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

*"I have always believed that dedicating one's life to the common effort of advancing our democracy and making life a little better each generation is the noblest of callings."<sup>2</sup>*

## I. Our Mission

The University of North Carolina (UNC<sup>3</sup>) Strategic Directions Initiative began its process to develop a five-year plan in September 2012 with President Emeritus William Friday as the most experienced member of its advisory board. His thirty years as President of UNC and lifetime of work on behalf of North Carolinians gave him the wisdom, leadership, and vision to discern the necessary direction of the UNC system. A tireless coalition-builder, he was able to get the necessary resources to transform North Carolina from a predominantly rural state with few sustainable economic development prospects and significant poverty to a state that is routinely rated as one of the best places to live, work, raise a family, and retire. North Carolina is now a source of innovative economic enterprises, creative arts and ideas, and a destination for businesses offering high quality work to a well-prepared labor force. As part of its mission of serving the state, the UNC system offers vast networks of professional services including health care, business and government support, libraries, continuing training across the disciplines, and the development of cultural resources.

This success was accomplished through President Friday's unwavering dedication to improving public higher education as provided for in North Carolina's Constitution of 1776. The Constitution provides that "all useful learning shall be duly encouraged and promoted in one or more Universities."<sup>4</sup> The Continental Congress of 1787 articulated the reason for this essential need for public education in the young democracy: "knowledge, being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged."<sup>5</sup> Only two years later, this commitment to improving society through the support of public higher education was imbedded in the University Charter and has served as the guiding principle and first strategic plan of the University of North Carolina: "In all well regulated governments it is the indispensable duty of every legislature to consult the happiness of a rising generation, and endeavor to fit them for an honorable discharge of the social duties of life by paying the strictest attention to their education."<sup>6</sup> The key to the success of UNC was the constitutional guarantee in Article 9 of Section IX that "education be as free as practicable."<sup>7</sup> The University has accomplished this throughout its 219 year history by maintaining low tuition, and thus, preserving the affordable access to higher education that is critical to improving civic engagement and participation in our democracy.

Although President Friday departed this world on University Day – and before this report could be developed – his extraordinary stewardship of North Carolina resources in providing for public higher education is our model: to plan for UNC to advance our democracy and hope for a better future for our children. His noble calling is now ours.

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<sup>2</sup> Bill Friday, February 7, 2001

<sup>3</sup> UNC refers to North Carolina's public multi-campus university, which is composed of 16 institutions of higher education (baccalaureate and graduate degree-granting institutions), and the NC School of Science and Math (the nation's first public residential high school for gifted students).

<sup>4</sup> North Carolina Constitution, Article XLI, 1776

<sup>5</sup> Northwest Ordinance, adopted July 13, 1787, by the Second Continental Congress

<sup>6</sup> North Carolina Charter, Section IX, Section 1, 1789

<sup>7</sup> North Carolina Charter, Section IX, Article 9, 1789

## Public Education in North Carolina: The Need for Expansion and Strategic Planning

The first public University in the nation, UNC developed along with many private and parochial schools throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Morrill Land Grant Act of 1862 expanded public education as it provided federal resources to develop “colleges for the benefit of agriculture and the mechanic arts.”<sup>8</sup> This national commitment to advance job training supplemented the critical first mission of educating citizens for a stronger democracy and led to the development of diverse campuses with *distinctive missions* throughout the state during Reconstruction and well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Great Depression resulted in the first consolidation of the University in 1931, joining UNC at Chapel Hill with North Carolina State College and The Woman’s College in Greensboro (now UNC-Greensboro). As the population grew and later colleges and universities were desegregated, the system grew to better serve all citizens of the state and use public funding more cost-effectively. With the final consolidation of public higher education institutions in 1971 into the system that exists today,<sup>9</sup> UNC had a clear strategic mission: “the development of a well-planned and coordinated system of higher education to improve the quality of education, to extend its benefits, and to encourage an economic use of the State’s resources.”<sup>10</sup>

This was the same challenge before the UNC Tomorrow Commission in 2007 and it remains the work of the UNC Strategic Directions Initiative today. The extensive listening process, comprehensive findings, and pro-active recommendations developed in the most recent plan have been very useful in enabling the University to make extensive progress in articulation agreements, coordinating assessment measures that are appropriate to institutions by mission and size, and stimulating successful collaborations that serve the state. The articulation of needs and opportunities for the University to contribute to solutions remain accurate and timely. The Final Report of 2007 provides a more detailed long-run agenda for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, but in the report that follows we offer the President and the Board of Governors of the University of North Carolina recommendations that enable our system to better prepare students for civic participation, good work, and a higher quality of life that can be shared by all in an era of limited resources. These initiatives for 2013-2018 require a heightened focus on performance and accountability. Both the 2007 proposals and those presented here will enhance UNC’s teaching, research, and service to North Carolina. Together, they reflect the opportunities and challenges ahead.

Our specific recommendations for 2013-2018 are detailed in the remaining three sections of this report. Section II, *The UNC Guarantee for Baccalaureate Study*, outlines the components for an undergraduate degree and suggests minimum common General Educations competencies among UNC graduates. Section III, *Strengthening and Assessing Academic Quality*, discusses national and UNC assessment practices and suggests ways to strengthen academic assessment and accountability without diminishing academic quality. Section IV, *Faculty Scholarship*, highlights the importance of all forms of research, scholarship, and creative activity on our campuses and suggests way to strengthen faculty scholarship and its economic, cultural, and educational benefits. And, Section V, *Responsible Partnerships*, examines the importance of UNC’s service to North Carolina and suggests ways to enhance participation in service activities. All of our recommendations encourage the UNC system to more effectively honor the Constitutional guarantee for baccalaureate study; to more efficiently strengthen and assess academic quality; to better collaborate among campuses, while recognizing each the campus’ mission in light of institutional history; and to better leverage of the expertise of the faculty in partnership with others to create new knowledge and enhance our ability to serve North Carolina.

Implementing these recommendations will require more efficient utilization of the facilities, programs, and human resources of all the campuses; employment of diverse education strategies; and, most importantly, looking beyond our state borders to a global world. It will require a renewed commitment to diversity, full participation, and access for all.

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<sup>8</sup> Morrill Land Grant Acts of 1862 and 1890: Donating Public Lands to the several States and Territories which may provide Colleges for the Benefit of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts Chap. CXXX, 1862

<sup>9</sup> The North Carolina School of Science and Math, a two-year residential public high school in Durham, NC, became a full member of the UNC system in 2007.

<sup>10</sup> North Carolina General Statute 116, 1971

We often hear that “we train for certainty and educate for uncertainty.”<sup>11</sup> Never has that uncertainty been more guaranteed. The primary goal of the strategic plan must be to develop and retain the talent needed to drive innovation and meet the unknown challenges ahead.

## Shared Principles

It is clear to the *Faculty Advisory Council to the UNC Strategic Directions Committee* (FAC) that this goal can only be reached by embracing and building upon the principles on which the UNC system was founded. Throughout the report it is possible to identify a core set of beliefs that are shared, not only by the members of the FAC, but by all organizations and foundations dedicated to the study of higher education (as the studies quoted in this report indicate):

- We must respect the missions of each of the constituent institutions. These missions are institutionally driven and complementary in nature. Only by nurturing the strengths of each institution can the UNC system thrive.
- Research, teaching and service endeavors must be supported at all of our campuses. The weight given to each of these areas differs according to campus mission, but no institution of higher learning can define itself as such without all of three of these endeavors.
- Any strategic plan must be concerned with the social value of higher education, as well as with its private and market values.
- Academic productivity must be defined in terms of quantity *and quality*.
- Campus faculty must be involved in the design and implementation of strategic goals concerning academic outcomes, scholarship, and service. Because of their expertise, they are the best placed to know how to move their institutions forward.

Keeping this last principle in mind proved instrumental in shaping the FAC recommendations. That is why the report addresses four key areas that are eminently academic: general education, assessment, research, and community engagement.

Finally, it is important to note that the FAC has made every effort to base our report on feedback received from the faculty. But, as a result of time pressures, we have not had the chance to systematically compile all of the faculty recommendations we have received. One thing is clear: the principles shared by the FAC represent our best summary of the faculty input received during our work on this report.

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<sup>11</sup> Source generally attributed to United States Marine Corps Strategic Training, original author unknown.

## II. The UNC Guarantee for Baccalaureate Study

*“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>1</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>2</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>3</sup>

While the faculty of the UNC constituent institutions are responsible for course conception, development, content, and assessment;<sup>4</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 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>5</sup> Effective general education programs do the following:

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

<sup>2</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>3</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>4</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].

<sup>5</sup> Laird, Niskode-Dossett and Kuh, 2009. What general education courses contribute to essential learning outcomes. *Journal of General Education*, 58(2), p. 80.

- 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>6</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.

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.

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<sup>6</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.

## 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>7</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>8</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>9</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.

## 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.

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<sup>7</sup> See <http://www.northcarolina.edu/about/mission.htm>.

<sup>8</sup> See SACS Principles of Accreditation at <http://sacscoc.org/pdf/2012PrinciplesOfAccreditation.pdf>, p. 2.

<sup>9</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.

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>10</sup>.

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**

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<sup>10</sup> SACS Statement on Transfer of Academic Credit at <http://sacscoc.org/pdf/081705/transfer%20credit.pdf>.

- 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>11</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];
  - 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

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<sup>11</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.

- 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

### III. Strengthening and Assessing Academic Quality

*“Teaching and learning constitute the primary service that the university renders to society.”<sup>1</sup>*

The faculty of the UNC system is committed to delivering high quality programs designed to create graduates who have the skills, competencies, attitudes, and knowledge to be well positioned for success in a global, ever-changing society. To ensure quality, each campus engages in rigorous, varied, and frequent assessment of student learning. Multiple methods of assessment are employed to correlate with the unique nature, mission, and student body of each institution and to capture the complexity of student learning on our campuses, including the following:

- Embedded pre- and post-learning assessments to determine the level of content-learning in our courses;
- Standardized testing in nationally-used assessment tools such as the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) or the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), locally developed assessment tools, and discipline-specific tests;
- Writing-across-the-curriculum and writing-in-the-discipline programs which employ teams of faculty to evaluate of student improvement as they progress from freshman to graduates;
- Student achievement rates after graduation (including rates of employment, employer surveys, licensure/certification pass rates, and acceptance rates in graduate school);
- Surveys of student's self-assessment of the college experience including the Graduating Senior Survey and locally-developed tests;
- Capstone experiences such as internships, community service projects, or other experiential learning situations in which students have the opportunity to use cross-disciplinary skills and knowledge in projects that both support the state and offer students real-world experience;
- Portfolios which capture multiple projects across the course of a student's college career;
- Overall assessments of retention and graduation rate of students (such as the 4-, 5-, and 6-year graduation rates, the freshman-to-sophomore retention rate, and graduation rates disaggregated by discipline or other category of student); and
- External peer review of academic programs and of assessment plans.

Peter Ewell, in his *The ‘Quality Agenda:’ An Overview of Current Efforts to Examine Quality in Higher Education*, outlines multiple and complex assessment methods – including non-standardize assessments – and urges universities and university faculty to actively pursue multidimensional, authentic, and meaningful assessment.<sup>2</sup> The UNC system, with its use of multiple methods of assessment for aligning with compliance standards of the Southern Association of Colleges<sup>3</sup> and for disciplinary accreditations in multiple subject areas, is already aligned with best practices in higher education.

One of the keys to assessing the success of any program is to define specific outcomes related to the mission of each institution. Each campus’ faculty and administration is best situated to assess student learning for both degree-specific skills and the broader outcomes that are anchored in General Education, communicating-across-the-curriculum, global diversity, leadership, service learning, and capstone requirements. This coupling of core competencies (e.g., strong General Education competencies) and disciplinary content knowledge has been cited by employers of UNC graduates as critical to success.<sup>4</sup>

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

<sup>2</sup> Peter Ewell, Discussion Paper at [www.nchems.org/pubs/detail.php?id=152](http://www.nchems.org/pubs/detail.php?id=152)

<sup>3</sup> See SACSCOC Principles of Accreditation at [www.sacscoc.org/principles.asp](http://www.sacscoc.org/principles.asp)

<sup>4</sup> Panel discussion, UNC Strategic Directions Advisory Committee, October, 2012

(<http://elvis.mediasite.mcnc.org/mcnc/SilverlightPlayer/Default.aspx?peid=85285d9ae5dc4d268fccce60eade44461d>). Also cited in UNC Tomorrow [http://www.northcarolina.edu/nctomorrow/reports/commission/Final\\_Report.pdf](http://www.northcarolina.edu/nctomorrow/reports/commission/Final_Report.pdf).

Appropriate assessment processes must not be limited to any one measure that attempts to capture all of the complexity of the desired competencies. Useful assessment – assessment that results in a full picture of what is working (and not working) to prepare college students for their careers and lives – uses multiple methodologies, includes longitudinal studies of student performance, is formative in nature, is coupled with a continuous cycle of improvement designed to maximize the success of our students, and must “embody creativity, adaptability, reliability, and validity.”<sup>5</sup> Two groups with recently proposed models for assessment, the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AACU)<sup>6</sup> and the Lumina Foundation,<sup>7</sup> both suggest that assessment models should be viewed (and used) as springboards for institution-adapted, mission-tailored assessment processes.

The *Faculty Advisory Council to the Strategic Directions Committee* (FAC) asserts that, because faculty members are most familiar with both the core functions of the institution and with the process of learning in their disciplines, they are also best placed to make recommendations that would improve teaching and research and enhance overall academic quality. We also consider, as stated in the previous section of this report, the use of uni-dimensional and standardized measures of student learning inappropriate. Hence, and in agreement with similar suggestions by Ewell, the AACU, and the Lumina Foundation, we recommend that the UNC system create a *Faculty Assessment Council* that will become the system’s experts on assessment best practices; will distribute best practice information to campuses, so that each campus can consider how to adapt those practices for their unique mission and their unique student populations; and will collect, evaluate, and make public, assessment practices and data from all of the UNC system campuses.

Importantly, high quality programs of study require high quality, full-time faculty with a commitment to the institution and adequate resources. Such programs, and the assessment of those programs, are labor and resource intensive. However, this labor is worthwhile if assessment and attention to academic quality is not used merely as a requirement for reaccreditation or for advocating for resources, but as a tool to analyze the effectiveness of our curriculum and student services and to improve higher education programs.

## Recommended Strategic Goals and Directions

### ***GOAL 1: Ensure student readiness for career and life.***

#### **Strategic Directions**

- 1.1 Provide an experiential learning experience for every graduate.
  - 1.1.1 Examples might include student teaching, internships, practica, clinical experiences, service learning, or collaborative research.
  - 1.1.2 Evaluate the impact on student learning of these experiences using multiple measures (*e.g.*, employer surveys of internship experiences; NSSE scores; improvement in retention and graduation rates; measure of impact on community or state).
- 1.2 Guarantee global readiness in our graduates.
  - 1.2.1 Measure and increase, for example, the percentage of students participating in international internships, the percentage of faculty members participating in international experiences, the number of student exchange participants, the infusion of global education into curricula, and the ability of our students to communicate in non-English languages.

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<sup>5</sup> See [http://assessment.uconn.edu/docs/resources/AAHE\\_Principles\\_of\\_Good\\_Practice.pdf](http://assessment.uconn.edu/docs/resources/AAHE_Principles_of_Good_Practice.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> See <http://www.aacu.org/VALUE/rubrics/index.cfm>

<sup>7</sup> See <http://www.aacu.org/VALUE/rubrics/index.cfm>

1.3 Ensure that every graduate has an educational experience that is designed to integrate aspects of their degree major with concepts and General Education competencies developed throughout their undergraduate studies.

1.3.1 This experience could be manifested in a capstone experience or an e-portfolio. Examples of such capstone experiences include, for example, a major project or thesis completed during a senior seminar course, a site-based, disciplinary summer-semester field experience with required disciplinary output (reports, etc.); an internship and reflection on that internship; or a performance or public presentation relevant to the student's discipline.

1.4 Enhance resources for career centers on campuses and integrate career counseling with academic advising.

***GOAL 2: Become a national leader in high-quality assessment that captures and reflects the complex nature of student learning.***

**Strategic Directions**

2.1 Use the university system's programs in higher education, psychology, and beyond to develop more sophisticated tools for assessing student learning and to become a national leader, as a system, in student learning outcomes assessment methods, strategies, and tools.

2.1.1 Scrutinize the evidence supporting reliability and validity of assessment methods.

2.1.2 Share new tools broadly and freely across UNC System campuses.

2.1.3 Use multiple instruments to effectively capture the complexity of student learning. Use at least two assessment techniques to analyze any learning outcome.

2.1.4 Disaggregate results by academic program to discover strengths and replicable practices.

2.2 Focus in a balanced way on assessing multiple areas of learning.

2.2.1 Develop a faculty-led, representative committee – a *Faculty Assessment Council* – to design competencies shared by all of the campuses. Possibilities include AACU's learning outcomes or those in the Lumina Foundation Degree Qualifications Profile.

2.2.2 Use a shared approach to learning outcomes for basic areas of learning: describe what a student should be able to do or demonstrate to exhibit attainment of the outcome.

2.2.3 Emphasize assessment conducted and "owned" by faculty and assessment that is formative in nature (*i.e.*, designed to inform and continually improve the quality of programs).

2.2.3.1 Provide support and faculty development opportunities to encourage faculty to use pedagogical methods that have been proven more effective (active learning, blended classrooms, e-learning, collaborative learning, etc.).

2.2.4 Create a statewide group of faculty from across UNC to identify successful strategies for writing programs and to work with appropriate faculty to improve campus programs and enhance students' writing and oral communication competencies.

2.3 Enable campuses to attract and retain faculty members who make a positive impact on student learning.

2.3.1 Support the efforts of faculty and staff to identify activities with the greatest potential for success in fostering student learning.

2.3.2 Support faculty in initiatives to create meaningful capstone experiences, experiential learning, assessment methods, and collaborative research projects.

***GOAL 3: Ensure the transparency of assessment data and open communication with stakeholders about academic quality.***

**Strategic Directions**

3.1 Demonstrate transparency to stakeholders by making more information visible to the public including learning outcomes, assessment methods, and assessment data.

3.1.1 Develop or better utilize shared containers for faculty and student publications, university white papers, student e-portfolios, course syllabi, and a system-wide assessment database portal.

3.1.2 Publish all campus SACS evaluations and reports on campus assessment websites and publish links to those websites on a system-hosted assessment website.

3.1.3 Make more information available for public feedback via the web, listservs, social media, and portals.

3.2 Demonstrate the value-added per student of a four-year degree from a UNC System school by tracking graduates for 5, 10, 20, 30, and 40 years past graduation.

3.2.1 Track our graduates using multiple metrics such as the following:

- Economic status (*e.g.*, income, tax base, charitable giving);
- Employment and career mobility (*e.g.*, career ladder within a field or ability to move among multiple fields);
- Civic wellness (*e.g.*, participation in voting, volunteering, service work, reliance on government. programs, incarceration, involvement in children’s education and development); and
- Individual benefits (*e.g.*, health, happiness, stress).

## IV. Faculty Scholarship: Partnering with North Carolina for a Vibrant Future

*“The mission of the university . . . is to discover, create, transmit, and apply knowledge to address the needs of individuals and society. This mission is accomplished [in part] through . . . research, scholarship, and creative activities, which advance knowledge and enhance the educational process.”<sup>1</sup>*

Scholarship includes a multitude of faculty activities that seek to advance human knowledge for the betterment of society.<sup>2</sup> In the UNC system, scholarship includes intellectual contributions in basic and applied sciences, humanities, arts, social sciences, and professional disciplines (*e.g.*, healthcare and medicine, education, law, and business).

Faculty of the UNC system strive for the highest level of scholarship, recognizing the crucial role that research and creative activity plays in the overarching mission of higher education: assimilation and dissemination of new knowledge, and promotion of understanding of particular and general topics related to individuals, organizations, communities and societies. The University system and other major institutions, such as the National Research Council,<sup>3</sup> consider faculty scholarship to exist synergistically and intrinsically with teaching. The research, teaching, and service activities in which faculty engage enhance the knowledge-base of the faculty, the students, and the disciplines; and society reaps the gains from application of this knowledge.

Faculty at the constituent institutions of the UNC system have built a solid reputation for scholarship that supports the needs of the state and its industry and creates the new technologies, ventures, and programs that attract businesses to our state. The system’s dedication to joint endeavors of scholarship and teaching has enabled us to further the economic, social, and cultural well-being of the state and to provide our students opportunities to develop the necessary skills for a successful future in North Carolina. It has enabled us to move beyond simply training our students for the certainty of a single pursuit, to educating our citizens for an uncertain future.<sup>4</sup>

### Basic Research

Basic scientific research is the curiosity-driven pursuit of knowledge to gain an understanding of the world around us. Knowledge is the most important asset we can pass to future generations and is intrinsically valuable regardless of immediate practical applications. At the same time, knowledge gained by basic research has often resulted in spectacular and unexpected practical applications, proving that “knowledge must precede application.”<sup>5</sup> There are countless examples of important applications of basic research, including the most recent Nobel Prize in Chemistry to Robert Lefkowitz and Brian Kobilka for their discovery of G-protein coupled receptors, against which many therapeutic drugs have been developed. Other examples include the curiosity-driven study of the theory of gravity, which provided the knowledge that led to the development of GPS and weather monitoring satellites; basic optical physics research that provided the knowledge for the development of the laser and new methods of communication; and the mathematical study of number theory that provided the knowledge for cryptology.

In all cases the applications of new knowledge were unforeseen at the time of discovery, there was a long interval between the discovery and its application, and the application was ultimately highly profitable. Although basic research is often justified because it may turn into practical applications, it is important to recognize that the pursuit of

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

<sup>2</sup> Earnest L. Boyer, 1990, *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 147 pp.

<sup>3</sup> National Research Council (<http://www.nationalacademies.org/>).

<sup>4</sup> Source generally attributed to United States Marine Corps Strategic Training, original author unknown.

<sup>5</sup> Max Planck, 1919 ([www.mpg.de](http://www.mpg.de))

knowledge for its own sake is an important activity that must be supported as a long-term investment, laying the foundations for future innovation and prosperity. Therefore, the UNC system must strongly support basic research for its own sake; as well as for the more practical benefits of knowledge, spin-offs and training. Basic research sustains and fosters technological development, trains scientists who work in industry, and creates networks of researchers, industries, and academia. Basic research also attracts the innovators of the future into science.

## **Research in the Arts, Humanities, and Professional Disciplines**

It is important to recognize that research in the arts and humanities goes hand in hand with scientific inquiry.<sup>6</sup> Commerce and industry, as a portion of human life, are financial transactions; but they are also about understanding human beliefs and needs in the broadest sense. Humanities and social science research addresses these beliefs and needs by reflecting on the world and the individual through multiple lenses. Humanities systematically reflect on differences in meaning, mentality, and worldview. Researchers in the humanities and social sciences challenge themselves and their students to help consider alternative ways of seeing, feeling, and understanding things. Without strong support of research in those areas students will not learn critical awareness, will not develop historical and political consciousness, social sensibility, and aesthetic perception. In other words, they will not acquire the complete set of skills necessary to function in the 21<sup>st</sup> century world.

Examples of the types of research being conducted by humanities, social science, and professional discipline researchers in the UNC system include investigation of the psychological trauma of adolescents in single-parent homes; how language, writing, and understanding are shaped by new media; how the lessons of history can be used to better understand (social and scientific) climate change; how North Carolina and United States constitutional jurisprudences address the needs of a diverse society; what pedagogical skills are required to address the various needs of our multicultural and multinational student population. Creative activities of UNC faculty improve the quality of life in our communities by providing the music, theater, art, and other cultural activities that enrich human lives and make our state an inviting place to live. Scholarship in the arts also directly enhances the economy, for example, by expanding cultural activities in support of North Carolina's tourist industry and expanding the public arts presence to assist in attracting emerging knowledge-based industries.

## **Maintaining Excellence**

While our nation transitions from a regional industry-dominated economy into a globalized, technology-driven economy, the role of knowledge, research, and technological development – precisely the domain of university scholarship – becomes ever more prominent. To keep our competitive edge, UNC must continue to lead in research and scholarly activity, ensuring that the faculty has the appropriate infrastructure to be competitive to attract extramural support both nationally and internationally and the expertise needed to prepare students for success in an increasingly data-rich world. Our applied research must be able to respond to the needs in pharmaceutical, financial, telecommunication, energy, transportation, computer, and cyber industries, among other local, national, and global needs. And, our scholarship must extend into our schools and communities, to help our citizens develop the expanding and evolving sets of skills that they will need to compete and succeed in a world defined by creativity, intangible assets, global issues, networked digital structures, and electronic media. While many citizens are already prepared and are positioned to take advantage of our changing world, UNC must be mindful of the various constituents around the state and assure that no group is left unprepared. We must strive to prepare the citizens of our state to be creative and critical thinkers with both knowledge of the world and the ability to forge pathways to excellence.

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACS) requires that each of our campuses provide “ongoing professional development of faculty as teachers, scholars and practitioners” and “facilities and learning/information resources that are appropriate to support [the institution's] teaching, research and service

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<sup>6</sup> For an in depth look at the role on Humanities in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, please see *Reflecting on the Humanities*. A special edition of *Daedalus*. Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Winter 2009.

mission.”<sup>7</sup> If we are to succeed in our mission to the state, it is important that we recognize the unique missions of our constituent campuses and that mission-appropriate research and creative endeavors be supported on all of those campuses.

## **Recommended Strategic Goals and Directions**

To ensure that all UNC students continue to receive the educational benefit of the research and creative activity of UNC faculty and to ensure that the state of North Carolina continues to benefit from the UNC faculty’s scholarly productivity, the *Faculty Advisory Council to the UNC Strategic Directions Committee* recommends the adoption of the following system-wide strategic goals and directions:

***GOAL 1: Maintain and enhance faculty research and creative productivity to ensure that the UNC campuses remain competitive and innovative.***

### **Strategic Directions**

- 1.1 Attract and retain the best faculty to UNC campuses. The UNC system faces strong competition from other states and internationally. To attract and retain the best faculty at all of our campuses UNC must ensure that faculty salaries, benefits and infrastructure remain competitive.
- 1.2 Ensure UNC research is nationally and internationally competitive. Research infrastructure on many UNC campuses (*e.g.*, laboratory and studio space, shared equipment/core facilities, computational and IT resources) must be continually maintained and upgraded.
- 1.3 Increase opportunities for collaborative research among UNC campuses. Because of the various campus missions, research and creative endeavors vary among the campuses. There is, however, much scope for collaborative research that capitalizes on the unique and complementary strengths and resources of each institution. Inter-institutional collaboration will maximize existing resources, avoid unnecessary duplication, and strengthen UNC’s ability to be responsive to the state’s needs.
- 1.4 Enhance the excellence of our system’s libraries.
  - 1.4.1 Increase UNC campus-wide access to digital scholarly resources and core facilities. This will avoid duplication of effort, help reduce library costs across the UNC system, and enable faculty access to all core facilities at any institution at the subsidized rate of the host institution.
  - 1.4.2 Ensure that every campus has a research library that is consistent with its mission and is staffed by professional, research- and teaching-active librarians.
- 1.5 Enhance the faculty’s ability to conduct interdisciplinary research.

***GOAL 2: Maintain and enhance translational research and creative activities that provide guidance and support to local, national, and international economic, political, and cultural development.***

### **Strategic Directions**

- 2.1 Build faculty expertise through research and creative endeavors at our regional campuses, consistent with the campus missions, to prepare for future challenges and enhance our communities and our state.

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<sup>7</sup> See SACSCOC Principles of Accreditation at <http://www.sacscoc.org/principles.asp>.

- 2.1.1 Leverage faculty research expertise and scholarship to address the state's energy and environmental challenges, as well as other regional and statewide economic and developmental needs.
- 2.1.2 Encourage, reward, and provide support for faculty research in applied public policy analysis, focusing on important regional and statewide issues, including research done in partnership with or on behalf of non-profit and public-sector organizations.
- 2.1.4 Enhance support for creative arts endeavors to forge partnerships with regional art and music venues.
- 2.1.5 Support humanities-based research to foster the exploration of humankind in an ever-changing, diverse world.
- 2.1.6 Support faculty research and outreach that promote functional and cultural literacies.
- 2.2 Coordinate regional and cultural economic development needs, initiatives and opportunities with UNC expertise, university research, and potential funding sources.
  - 2.2.1 Develop strategies and mechanisms to facilitate better interaction between UNC and business, industry, community, government, and nonprofit sectors.
  - 2.2.2 Enhance the ability to transfer new ideas into commercial opportunities. Forge closer partnerships among research universities, for-profit industrial research, technology transfer, and entrepreneurial activities.
  - 2.2.3 Develop cooperative relationships between faculty and students and the health care industry to assure that the research efforts are consistent with the changing health care needs of North Carolina.
  - 2.2.4 Develop cooperative relationships between faculty and students and the business community to assure that the research and creative efforts of the UNC faculty are available to, available for transformative use by, the local, national and international business world.

***GOAL 3: Enhance research-based education and outreach to assure that students and faculty are able to collaborate in research activities and disseminate their results locally, nationally, and internationally.***

### **Strategic Directions**

- 3.1 Educate a workforce for the future that has been exposed to the latest in current technologies.
- 3.2 Create a well-informed and critically engaged public through both curriculum and productive engagement with the community.
- 3.3 Prepare students for work in an interdisciplinary environment.
- 3.4 Enhance the opportunities for undergraduate research experiences across the UNC system.
  - 3.4.1 Provide financial support for summer undergraduate research experiences exchange programs and internships programs across the UNC campuses.
  - 3.4.2 Facilitate international research experiences for undergraduate and graduate students via inter-institutional exchange programs.
- 3.5 Enhance competitiveness in graduate education.

- 3.5.1 Increase the number of graduate assistantships and the stipend levels available to both Masters- and PhD-level students on our campuses to ensure we are nationally competitive.
  - 3.5.2 Create incentives for state residents enrolled in graduate programs on our campuses, and for industry funding of graduate study for employees.
  - 3.5.3 Provide in-state tuition waivers to qualified graduate students so that we can remain competitive with our national and regional peers.
  - 3.5.4 Increase the number of out-of-state tuition waivers available to graduate students on our regional campuses to ensure that we continue to educate students who can serve both our region and our state.
  - 3.5.5 Develop professional Master’s degree programs that provide a solid foundation in basic science, engineering, and/or arts, while training students for work in emerging technologies, analytical methods, and complex societies.
- 3.6 Apply, translate, and communicate research, scholarship, creative endeavors to the public in an accessible and understandable form – on a local, national, and global scale.

## V. Responsible Partnerships: UNC Engagement with the Community

*“The University of North Carolina is . . . dedicated to the service of North Carolina and its people. . . . The mission of the university . . . is accomplished [in part] through public service, which contributes to the solution of societal problems and enriches the quality of life in the State.”<sup>1</sup>*

Public service as a principle mission of higher education has a long tradition in the United States and especially in North Carolina. Since its creation in 1971, the critical connection between the UNC and communities – local and global – was so apparent and essential that the enabling legislation of UNC explicitly detailed *public service* as the third direct way in which the University meets the needs of the state.<sup>2</sup>

Today, ten of our sixteen four-year institutions are classified as Carnegie Community Engaged institutions,<sup>3</sup> fourteen belong to Campus Compact,<sup>4</sup> and virtually all have programs that incorporate service-learning, community outreach, and other forms of community-based learning that engage students in outreach and help ensure that graduates of our institutions are better prepared to be globally and locally aware citizens and employees.

### Serving our State, Region, and Communities Through Mentored Student Engagement

Service to society is intimately linked with teaching and research and is often an important impetus for, and an externality of, effective teaching methods and engaged scholarship.<sup>5</sup> Several studies (*e.g.*, Bhaerman *et. al.*<sup>6</sup> and Eyler *et. al.*<sup>7</sup>) link engaging students in outreach and service-learning activities with sharpened academic skills, higher and more complex levels of thinking, increased motivation to learn, improved retention, and other noteworthy skills that enhance chances for success in the workplace and in citizenship. Involving students in active economic enterprises, regional businesses, government agencies, public schools, non-profit organizations, and other community matters makes students more aware of current advances and issues and better prepares them for success in a rapidly changing and global society. The importance of engaged learning is such that engaged learning experiences are integral to many disciplines and programs, particularly those with licensing requirements such as the health sciences and education. These external learning experiences take various forms including residencies, internships, co-operative education programs, student-teaching, and service-learning placements. Supervision – from faculty and from participating partner mentors – is essential to the success of these engaged learning opportunities; it is required if credit is to be awarded for the activity.

In addition to discipline-focused, credit-bearing learning experiences, most UNC campuses offer students additional service learning opportunities through Student Affairs programs, co-curricular and extracurricular clubs and organizations, and university-sponsored centers and outreach groups – all of which are supported by the faculty, staff, and administration of the institution. Inherently, the mission and history of each constituent institution impacts the

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

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

<sup>3</sup> Community Engagement describes the collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity. From the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching ([http://classifications.carnegiefoundation.org/descriptions/community\\_engagement.php](http://classifications.carnegiefoundation.org/descriptions/community_engagement.php))

<sup>4</sup> Campus Compact is a national organization that fosters public service through teaching and engaged scholarship. It is committed to building the capacity of colleges and universities to produce civically-engaged graduates and strengthen communities.

<sup>5</sup> Earnest L. Boyer, 1990 *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 147 pp.

<sup>6</sup> Bhaerman, Robert, et.al., 1998. What are the Purported Benefits and Results of Service-Learning, in *The Role of Service-Learning in Educational Reform*. NC: Simon & Schuster Custom Publishing, pp. 37-49.

<sup>7</sup> Eyler, Janet, et. al., 2001. At a Glance: What We Know About the Effects of Service-Learning on College Students, Faculty, Institutions and Community. Third Edition, August 31, 2001.

content and form of its engaged and experiential learning opportunities, as well as the expectations regarding student participation.<sup>8</sup>

### **Serving our State, Region, and Communities Through the Application of Faculty Scholarship**

Service that grows out of faculty research can range from medical services as new treatments are developed, to creating or nurturing young enterprises into sources of community development, to providing pro bono services to indigenous clients involving national issues. Faculty often partner with students and the community in efforts to analyze and address issues of local concern such as emergency and disaster preparedness, town planning, energy management, preservation of native species and resources, watershed management, creation of historical databases, and identification of artifacts and remains. Frequently, faculty offer indirect assistance by responding to the needs of society through the pursuit and articulation of research problems which require more time for resolution and impact on the community. Not only does engaged scholarship directly serve the community, it often brings in a significant amount of grant and gift resources to support the University because the resolution of problems and services it provides is highly valued by beneficiaries, the government, and non-profit agencies and foundations.

The public service that institutions of higher education provide through their engaged scholarship and their service-learning and engaged-learning offerings is deemed so important that assessment of that service is part of the SACS accreditation process for institutional effectiveness. In particular, each institution must “identify expected outcomes, assess the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provide evidence of improvement for public service based on analysis of the results.”<sup>9</sup> Efforts to measure the impact of this work are well under way in a collaborative cross-campus UNC initiative on community and economic development.<sup>10</sup> It is clear that “Outreach and Engagement” is one of the most powerful ways that the University serves all North Carolinians and should remain an essential part of the 2013-2018 Strategic Directions for the UNC System.

### **Serving our State by Increasing Access, Diversity, and Global Awareness**

Past decades witnessed increases in migration to the State and an increase in population. The demographics of North Carolina have changed and will continue to change in decades to come.<sup>11</sup> To advance the well-being of the entire state, the UNC system must adapt to the needs of an increasingly global citizenry by fostering access to higher education for an increasingly diverse North Carolina population.

Access to higher education for all remains both the key to political participation and the surest road the emancipation of the individual. In recognizing the service higher education provides toward the advancement of the State and its citizenry, the Constitution of North Carolina stipulates that the benefits of higher education are to be extended to all people of the State.<sup>12</sup> Hence, UNC must draw from our nation’s history and find ways to make higher education available to its internal migrants, to its new immigrants of Ethnic European, Latino/Spanish-speaking, Asian and African origin, and to persons who are differently abled or traditionally excluded from complete integration in the American public sphere.

As a currently minor, but increasingly important part of educating our citizens for this newly global population, the majority of the UNC campuses have international programs that allow faculty and students to travel around the world to

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<sup>8</sup> For example, North Carolina Central University undergraduate degrees require 120 hours of community service and UNC- Chapel Hill has a graduation distinction of Public Service Scholar,

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

<sup>10</sup> Combined Report from the Community Engagement Metrics Taskforce and the Economic Development Metrics Taskforce. This is currently in draft form.

<sup>11</sup> See, for example, the presentation to the UNC Strategic Directions Advisory Committee on *Disruptive Demographics*, by James H. Johnson, Jr., ([https://www.northcarolina.edu/strategic\\_direction/meetings/doc.php?code=strategic&id=32483](https://www.northcarolina.edu/strategic_direction/meetings/doc.php?code=strategic&id=32483))

<sup>12</sup> North Carolina Constitution, Article IX, Section 9.

participate in a variety of academic and service-oriented projects. Faculty and students have travelled to collaborate with African communities to solve issues of AIDS and famine, to collaborate with communities in the Middle East to study issues of political and religious unrest, and to collaborate with communities in Europe and Asia to solve election irregularities. Participation in international travel, engagement, and learning experiences as part of their academic training allows students to learn about issues of diverse cultures, economies, and societies, and prepares them for the competitive, diverse, and global world that awaits them in their home state and beyond.

## **Recommended Strategic Goals and Directions**

The *Faculty Advisory Committee to the UNC Strategic Directions Committees* (FAC) recognizes that public involvement can prompt conversations with and among communities who might not otherwise engage with such vehicles as scholarly publications and that, as such, engagement becomes a way of accessibly integrating scholarship and public life. We further recognize that involving students in engaged learning activities is important to their success in college and beyond. Hence, to ensure the success of our students in a globally competitive world and in support of the UNC's mission to serve the people of North Carolina, the FAC recommends the following system-wide goals and strategic directions.

***GOAL 1: Strive to identify, connect, and support collaborations between non-profits, government agencies, and economic enterprises that facilitate teaching and scholarship objectives and serve the community.***

### **Strategic Directions**

- 1.1 Develop a system-level, *academic* Service and Engagement Office that would work with the current office of International, Community, and Economic Engagement to facilitate, develop, and coordinate connections between service and community-based learning opportunities and interested UNC faculty and students throughout the state. This new office will be easily identifiable to the community and constituent campuses, and may serve as an access point for any needed engagement and service opportunities.
  - 1.1.1 Ensure that opportunities to collaborate with faculty and students are as transparent as feasible to the external communities.
  - 1.1.2 To the extent possible, each campus, college, or professional school will have central office that is easily identifiable by the public and can be used to make the initial connections between service and community-based learning opportunities and interested faculty.
  - 1.1.3 Make basic resources (*e.g.*, transportation, communication, and internet documentation of projects) available to faculty who interested in pursuing off-campus opportunities. (Note that, frequently, the timetable and scale do not permit matching a sponsored research or teaching project with the community needs.)
  - 1.1.4 Create a UNC system web site, similar to REACH NC ([reachnc.org](http://reachnc.org)), that will be maintained by the UNC Service and Engagement Office. This site will serve as a portal that allows users to identify potential collaborations with UNC campuses and faculty to solve problems of interest to the community.
- 1.2 Develop a strategic plan for scholarly public service on each campus that is detailed and specific in definition and scope and is consistent with the campus mission.

***GOAL 2: UNC should support expanding global engagement and service activities for students, faculty, and staff.***

- 2.1 Leverage the expertise and reputation of UNC faculty and programs to increase the number of academic and scholarly exchange programs for faculty and students.
- 2.2 Seek collaborations and funding sources that will make participation in study abroad or international exchange programs a financially feasible opportunity for students, faculty and staff.
- 2.3 Foster and promote multi-campus service-learning programs both abroad, nationally, and within the state.

***GOAL 3: Strive to complement traditional academic subjects through service learning projects that increase motivation among students and teach students the importance of civic engagement.***

- 3.1 Support service learning projects that enhance the students' awareness of the needs of their local community.
- 3.2 Support service learning projects that allow faculty and student participation in national issues.
- 3.3 Support service learning projects that allow faculty and student participation in international issues.

***Goal 4: Strive to increase access to higher education to all North Carolinians***

- 4.1. Maintain higher education affordability.
- 4.2. Help ensure that all students are better prepared to succeed academically in college.
- 4.3. Increase access to higher education to persons who are differently abled or traditionally excluded from complete integration in the American public sphere.
- 4.4. Increase access to UNC educational programs to traditional students, non-traditional students, and lifelong learners.

***GOAL 5: Strive to reward engaged scholarship in their promotion and tenure procedures.***

- 5.1 Recognize the output of engaged scholarship engagement as a significant component of a faculty member's professional achievements.
- 5.2 When it is possible to evaluate both quality and impact, consider engaged scholarship as part of a faculty member's scholarly achievement.

## VI. Concluding Remarks

*"I believe that the individuality of each institution should be recognized by the Consolidated Office [UNC], this means you should be free to work with your faculty committees in setting up the study you wish to make, implementing the work that should be done, and making the decisions and recommendations that must be made."<sup>1</sup>*

The *Faculty Advisory Council to the UNC Strategic Directions Committee* is in complete agreement with the UNC President's Office and Board of Governors about the need for coordination and collaboration between UNC campuses, the North Carolina Community College System, and our K-12 schools in order to more efficiently use NC resources, develop effective measures of progress, and plan for the uncertainty of a global world. We also believe that this can be most effectively accomplished by the leadership and faculty of each constituent institution together charting the course that is most relevant to the mission, resources, comparative advantage, and opportunities available on each campus.

The University of North Carolina is a cultural, social, scientific, and economic bridge that is rooted in its past values while working toward its future. Generations of North Carolinians have both benefitted from and contributed to the University's greatness. It is imperative that the University continues to adapt to each generation's changing needs and be a steady beacon of light for future generations.

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<sup>1</sup> Letter from President William Friday to Chancellor William Aycock of UNC at Chapel Hill September 17, 1957. Source: Snider, William, D., 1992. *Light on the Hill: A History of the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill*. UNC Press, p. 260.