



**UNC Tomorrow Listening Forum  
Summary of Public Input  
Asheville (UNC-Asheville)  
October 4, 2007, 9:00 am**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Main themes expressed by the public:

- ◆ Environment / Climate Change – Exercise leadership through campus and UNC system sustainability and conservation programs; take advantage of climate change movement to make Asheville the national center for climate change research; use faculty expertise to focus on alternative energy research; increase educational programs, community programs and workshops in environmental science, sustainability, and conservation; teach environmental literacy across the curriculum; research and promote biodiversity of region
- ◆ Health care – Help make the region a “wellness mecca;” establish 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> year medical school program and increase residency slots to address physician shortage; focus clinical research efforts on natural medicine, natural products, and gerontology; need more nurses, pharmacists, allied health professionals, nursing faculty, and dentists; fully develop the Health and Wellness Center
- ◆ Maximize use of existing resources such as the NC Arboretum and Bent Creek Institute
- ◆ K-12 – More diversity among teachers, more math and science teachers, increase recruitment of teaching students, address high school drop-out problem; increase educational attainment of Hispanic students and African American male students
- ◆ More entrepreneurship programs for small business development; stimulate economic development with more tech transfer
- ◆ Increase minority contractor participation in UNC building programs
- ◆ Encourage development of more arts and crafts programs and specialized manufacturing
- ◆ Develop a “seamless” relationship with Community Colleges and strengthen the articulation agreement
- ◆ Student skills - Provide global education programs to enhance global awareness; strengthen “soft” skills (oral and written communication, creative thinking); provide more student internships



- ◆ Expand distance education offerings
- ◆ UNC campuses should offer affordable child care to students and employees, and should pay a living wage to UNC employees and require the same of employees of UNC vendors and contractors



## DETAILED SUMMARY

### K-12 Issues

- Global education
- Asheville High has a relationship with high school in Denmark
- Collaboration with UNCA and the high schools
- Academic enrichment in summer programs especially in math and science
- Partner with school system in dealing with drop out rates
- The role of people in protecting natural resources
- K-12 begins at home
- More teachers
- Drop-out rate needs to be addressed, especially for African American males
- GED program needs to be more accessible
- Financial burden on parents to provide Internet service to students too great
- Teacher's math and science, special education.
- Math and science needs to begin to excite young minds at Pre-K
- More teachers and nursing program
- Initiatives to take students into the community
- Focus on math, science, and technology
- Get more involved with elementary schools and students.
- Support "gap prep" program that helps K-12 graduates prepare for community college (use UNC students as interns or have campus house the program)
- Outreach to K-12 as part of UNC faculty members' jobs
- UNC should get students on their campuses more and their faculty into schools more (starting in the early grades)
- UNC students should have a community service requirement
- We need to focus more attention on the nearly half of our high school students who are dropping out.
- Stronger collaboration with K-12 system. Focus on schools without resources and on students of color and students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds.
- UNC system should be more proactive in addressing multiple ways of learning and in training teachers how to apply different teaching methods based on student needs.
- Center for International Understanding is critical to providing global skills to K-12 students and Latinos.
- Diversification of the curriculum at the University - Missing opportunities to discuss and understand diversity of students, including in K-12
- In one school system in the region, the math teacher was shared between schools, and as a result, some students did not have the opportunity to take additional math courses.



## Economic and Workforce Development

- Need a knowledge based economy - such will bring national and international funding for research
- Mobilize UNC system's best talent to help region develop a sustainable economy based on the climate initiative. Develop a master's degree program in climate and atmospheric sciences. Collaborate with other UNC campuses with Ph.D. programs. Explore partnerships with other centers of climate change research outside of the UNC system.
- Need more funding for the arts
- Natural bio technology is a major opportunity for the region
- Natural bio technology – how plants can be useful for the Cherokee
- Expand Bent Creek Institute – it is the only one of its kind in the country; need the UNC system to continue support it with base funding; champion talking with other Universities who have natural products; non traditional model of a leadership team with the University but need UNC advise
- Climate control industry major opportunity for the region - need the assistance of the UNC to focus research efforts on climate change in WNC; want assistance with active program development on state and national level
- Educated work force creates quality of life.
- Need best intellectual capitol to transform economy based upon climate control economy.
- Master's program in atmospheric science and climate sciences
- Ph.D. programs in conjunction with other Universities
- Explore partnerships with other Universities even outside of state
- Atmospheric climate control Center will receive \$ from the feds. Must act very quickly bring 2500 new jobs, leader in the sustainability movement, bring in national and international communities
- Support and expand programs at NC Arboretum
- Support NC Biotechnology Center
- Build Climate Sciences and Technologies (“Running for Daylight”)
- PhD in climate science
- Need to bring natural biotech research to area. Examine folk wisdom on natural products from modern medicine research. Bent Creek experimental forest is a tremendous opportunity for the region. A \$150,000 UNC General Administration investment at Bent Creek has turned into \$1.5 million sponsored research program. Nutraceuticals (natural pharmaceuticals) is a huge economic opportunity for region. Bent Creek needs base operating support to take advantage of this opportunity.
- A driving force in guiding the future economic development in the region is the HUB Alliance – public private partnership focused on competitive advantages - technology, health and wellness, biotech, sustainable use of land, small business development, and strengthening the arts. The region's future will be built around the National Climatological Data Center if the UNC system invests in its development. Rather than invest more in the Research Triangle region, UNC should devote its climate research efforts in Asheville. Already, some of the top climate scientists in



the country are in Asheville. However, there is stiff competition from other locales who want this distinction

- Unlike the rest of the state, the number of farms in Buncombe Co. has actually increased in recent years. This is due to the demand for locally grown produce and the willingness of local farmers to diversify their crops. More research is needed on crop diversification.
- Cannot depend only on tourism and services to wealthy homes and retirees to propel the economy forward. Asheville Hub Alliance is an attempt at job creation and a strong workforce development program focused on specific industry clusters (e.g., media and technology, visual tools, climate data analysis, health and wellness, nurturing entrepreneurs, specialty manufacturing, and arts and crafts) BUT only Chancellor involved in Alliance from campus.
- NC Biotech Center wants to bring natural biotechnology to western region given plant and animal diversity (e.g., Bent Creek Institute and Arboretum which sponsors research projects) and establish a nationally recognized brand BUT need base support, partnerships with other universities, and active program development. ALSO needs better recognition since core staff is on soft money. Center is recognized at Kew Gardens in UK. Needs better links to UNCA faculty and Institute appears to have been 'lost' Climate and weather technologies companies need a graduate program in atmospheric science to attract R&D related activity and talent pool, and lack physical space for collaborative activities on a campus setting, not necessarily on existing campus.
- Recognize wealth of small business and UNCA will not allow them into the bidding process. Look locally for providers and prioritizing small business.
- See Arboretum as part of the University system: we're programming for children; we're doing education at all levels and we do collaborate with business community; biotechnology, sustainability, plant, science; we too just need to get the message out.
- Education needs to link business development with biotech industry
- Share intellectual capital (Resources, Relevance, and Relationships)
- Tailor educational programs to regions' economic development strengths
- Regional collaboration on a decentralized basis

## Health

- Educate persons about how to take care of themselves and improve their health; better educated people are healthier
- Mountain Area Health Education Center has residency slots but not enough students serving in them
- Need to recruit Minority faculty, then need medical school
- Need to expand the nursing program to address shortage of nurses in the region
- Opportunity for Asheville to become a center for health and wellness—UNC should be involved
- Shortage of physicians in rural WNC—having last two years of med school here would bring in students who are likely to stay



- Over 20% of population in region is older than 65; need research in gerontology, especially clinical research on aging and health.
- Because of the region's abundant natural biodiversity (some of the greatest on the globe) research in natural biotech and integrative medicine is a logical and needed focus for research in the region. One critical area is research on natural products to scientifically demonstrate that they really work.
- There is a need for 50 additional residency placements in the region. These residents would need financial support to move to region to do their work. The thinking is that they are more likely to stay in region if they have worked there already.
- Encourage and support research on aging and health—20% of the population is over 65—especially clinical research on cancer and other diseases as well as on the use of natural products in medicine (referred to as the natural biotech industry). Link with ongoing research in UNC system.
- \$35 million Health and Wellness Center is crucially important
- Greater movement of medical residence positions
- Nursing professions-continuation of investment in graduate nursing programs
- Increase all the allied health professions
- Integrated medicine compliments traditional medicine embark on research for complementary medicine

### **Community Issues**

- New York Times listed as a best place to live, but many citizens are working two jobs
- Need for better access to health care
- Work with community to deal with housing problems
- Strengthen ties between the college students and the community students-bring them on the campus-support these applied initiatives provide transportation. Give credit for community service
- Build a summer Center for Entrepreneurial development for high school students.
- Broadband internet driven by fiber optics and not the phone company.
- Special place for natural resources and the new discoveries, few children get out into the natural resources and learn how to protect the environment.
- Crime is most important challenge, and we need sustainable community efforts that reach out to our lower class population (public transportation etc.) We need to bring them into the conversation. Focus on how important leadership and collaboration.
- UNCA should feel like a place that everyone can go to, and that all of our kids know that this is what the world is going to look like and it's not just for certain classes of people.
- Need to be marketing the arts and crafts in the area as a business, artists need to learn how to be a self-supporting (business advise and technical assistance)
- Support UNC-A's Crafts and Design programs and Craft & Design Campus
- Show community how the environment can be improved



- Strengthen cultural development through arts and crafts

### **Diversity Issues**

- Hispanic population not represented in the room and there is a need to address their educational need.
- Must consider how to get minorities in the educational system collaborate with K-12 develop programs
- Need minority faculty
- Work in public housing community
- Dreamers will pay for students to go to college if they earn a GED.
- Open up opportunities for undocumented students to attend college- they have to pay out of state tuition because they do not have papers but their families pay income tax, sales tax and property tax.
- Focus on diversity – UNC needs to get ready for influx of Spanish-speaking students
- The community needs to do a better job of offering services to the Latino population. How are we going to prepare for the future if we do not integrate this population into our society better?

### **Programs, Collaborations & Outreach**

- There is no University reward system for working with the community-University needs to provide expertise to the community and there needs to be a reward system to get persons in the community
- Decentralization of clinical research
- Marriage of art and science
- Broaden program offerings like religious studies could be through collaborations
- Recruitment and retention of minority faculty
- University work out a plan to reduce the energy consumption, buildings can be energy producers; buildings on campus should be made more energy efficient
- Master's program in the natural sciences.
- Arts and craft enrichment
- Campuses should establish childcare centers on campus for faculty, staff, and students.
- UNC should have a satellite arts and crafts program.
- Post Doc at UNCA.
- Increase 1<sup>st</sup> year retention rates; develop policies and programs to reduce the attrition rate among first year college students
- Continue collaboration with community colleges and bring UNC programs to community college campuses
- Match educational offerings with needs of the future; the following are needed:
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year medical school
  - More residencies
  - Nursing, more BSN and MSN



- Pharmacists
- Allied health including, physician assistants
- Wellness educators
- Long term care health care personnel
- Health informatics and information technologies
- Masters program in atmospheric sciences
- Keep lines of communication open to regions and to all NC citizens (not just campuses)
- The UNC system needs to work more closely with the private colleges and universities across the state to reduce duplication and extend its resources.
- There is no incentive for UNCA or the other system schools to conserve energy. Right now, if you spend less money because of energy efficiency and conservation, you lose that money the next year. Schools should be allowed to keep the funds they save through energy efficiency projects.
- Emphasize 2+2 programs
- Collaboration with other doctoral programs and Oak Ridge, Maryland, and Colorado climate research programs, a Asheville Climate Change Center, Washington DC lobbying assistance especially with forthcoming federal grant allocations (NOAA and EPA) to leverage National Climate Data Center. Integrates well with Asheville Hub Alliance strategic initiative and RENSCI visualization funding.
- UNC needs to provide their workers with a living wage
- Build on the natural products and build research
- There is no public service budget for faculty
- Comment to continuous learning
- Faculty needs to match research with the needs of the community
- Arboretum - need to enhance its development, research, educate community about environment; cannot even pay the gardeners to weed, which brings in tourists. It is a laboratory, teaches and conducts research.
- More university outreach
- Match research to what community needs
- All UNC System faculty should have outreach programs
- Provide continuing education in leadership across all sectors
- University should set the same goals for sustainability as the City of Asheville has done.
- Very large number of programs in UNC system BUT not effective communication of availability and in fringe areas the lack of broadband makes distance education less practical or it is too costly (\$120 a month) and K-12 children are often unable to complete assignments due to lack of internet.
- Undergrad institution; in addition to Masters in Education, Masters in Environmental Science would like to have and the impact those programs would have to keep students here and economic impact. When I hear reports about companies wanting to move here, they ask about our Masters' programs.
- UNC should be providing environmental literacy to students on all its campuses
- UNC needs to reduce energy consumption (by 80%) and build new buildings that do not soak up energy



- UNC needs to support first-year programs to aid retention the curriculum should be infused with environmental literacy, related technologies, and environmental ethics
- Integrate UNC into communities by having liaisons who serve on boards, commissions, etc.

### **Notable quotes:**

“We have too many users of our planet who haven’t read the owner’s manual.”

“Sustainability means taking care of the current generation’s needs without impacting the next generation’s ability to take care of its needs”

“You [UNC] can be the inspiration for our communities – you can help our children see the hope of the future.”

“If we can build multi-million dollar sports facilities, we can provide a few rooms for child care [for faculty, staff, and students].”

“Competition breeds excellence, but we can’t compete if we can’t even get in the door.”

“The 3 R’s of economic development are Resources, Relevance, and Relationships – we need all three from the University.”

“When we have more of our young [African American] men in prison than in college, we have a crisis. UNC must drive the train to the solution.”

“UNC should not be going into competition with community colleges – they educate the salt of the earth.”

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