

# UNC Faculty Assembly

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Thomas W. Ross, President  
The University of North Carolina  
General Administration  
Post Office Box 2688  
Chapel Hill, NC 27515-26888

January 19, 2013

Dear President Ross,

The UNC Faculty Assembly met on Friday, January 18<sup>th</sup>, to discuss and formulate a response to the draft of the strategic plan, “Our Time, Our Future: The UNC Compact with North Carolina,” that was distributed on Thursday, January 17<sup>th</sup>. The *Faculty Advisory Council* met the previous evening (January 17) for the same purpose. Our formal response is contained in the attached documents. Please note that the faculty worked hard to provide the requested response as quickly as possible. The faculty remain committed to continuing to work with you as we move into the final stages of this planning process.

Our major recommendations for and concerns with the draft strategic plan can be summarized as follows:

- The Faculty Assembly endorses the *Faculty Advisory Committee* Response Report and requests that the recommendations in that report be incorporated into the strategic plan.
- The Faculty Assembly is very concerned about the insufficient acknowledgment that faculty have primary responsibility for design, delivery, and assessment of the curriculum – no matter how or where that curriculum is delivered. Our accrediting bodies require us to actively demonstrate this faculty oversight. Our campuses risk losing accreditation if this faculty oversight is lacking.
- The Faculty Assembly is alarmed by the recommendation for the use of a single instrument to assess student learning. Single measures, such as the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) or other standardized exams, are inadequate measures of the depth and breadth of general education programs. In fact, institutional average scores on the CLA and similar exams are highly correlated with the institutions’ average SAT scores; hence these instruments provide no new information (and add to the cost of our students’ education). The strategic plan must endorse the expertise and control of the faculty in selection of the appropriate method for assessment of academic programs.
- The Faculty Assembly is concerned that the e-Learning section of the draft does not adequately address effectiveness and efficiency issues; assessment of e-learning instructor qualifications; means of determining appropriate e-learning student populations; and development of an investment policy that can leverage system-wide expertise and efficiencies in software deployment, instructional and information technology infrastructure cost and support, and other infrastructure considerations.
- The draft plan fails to capture the variety of research and scholarship underway on our campuses and the impact of such research and scholarship on student learning. The plan would be enhanced if the experience and expertise of existing UNC faculty were given greater influence in determining the direction of the individual campuses and if the specific mission of each of those campuses was a central presupposition in any decisions that result in prioritization of research areas. Research and creative activities in all fields – including the sciences, liberal arts, social sciences, humanities, creative arts and professional disciplines – are essential to a healthy University and to well-educated students.

The emphasis in the draft plan on a very few new hires, regardless of the terminology used for those hires (rainmaker, national leader, etc.), is misplaced. Increased support for existing faculty would be a much more effective use of state dollars.

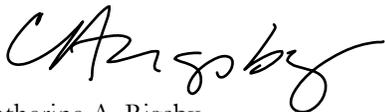
- Finally, the draft document contains many inconsistencies that could make implementation difficult:
  - The most valuable asset of the University, as stated on page 5 of the draft, is the knowledge and expertise of the faculty. Nevertheless, the plan spells out an educational future that is determined without sufficient faculty consultation and consideration.

- Although the plan suggests that the proposed strategies are data-driven (page 2), it is full of preconceptions. The facts do not drive the outcomes. For example, what current or historical data support the assertions that we need more on-line Liberal Arts majors; that e-Learning is less expensive than face-to-face, on campus delivery of curriculum; that MOOCs are effective ways to ensure student learning; or that the business community is the appropriate authority for determining our University's research agenda?
- The plan notes that there are 17 constituent institutions, but it fails to recognize the unique mission of each of the universities. For example, the plan discusses research priorities for the UNC system, but it does not establish how each of the universities, consistent with their missions, will benefit from these priorities. Nor does it establish the role the faculty on each campus will play in identifying the priorities.
- Although there is much focus on increasing attainment goals, the plan does not realistically resource the expansion of enrollments necessary to meet its long-term goals. Many of the students in this expanded pool of matriculants will be less qualified and less prepared than current students, thus will require additional support services and advising – because they will likely be drawn from the lower ends of the admissions pool. Retention and graduation rates may be adversely affected if the additional resource needs are not met. Furthermore, a potential conflict with current MAR policies that may affect the number of these students that can be admitted.
- The plan acknowledges the constitutional mandate to keep costs as low as possible, but it does not address how the financial needs of the students will be met. The combination of recent budget cuts and increased attention to efficiency means that any further increases in efficiency will be relatively small. The need for increases in financial aid, particularly grants-in-aid and fellowships, must be addressed to ensure that UNC can meet its constitutional mandate without overly burdening our students with debt. Any increase in student loan debt will act as a drag on the economic growth benefits derived from the additional graduates.

These concerns are more fully explained in the *Faculty Advisory Council* Response Report and Faculty Assembly Resolutions (attached). I will also provide, separately, a compilation of the faculty feedback I have received as of today, January 19<sup>th</sup>. Additional faculty feedback will be forwarded as it becomes available.

Faculty around the state know that you value their hard work and commitment to assuring the best university system in the nation. The Faculty Assembly recognizes that strategic planning is an ongoing process and we look forward to working with the General Administration and with the Board of Governors as we continue to refine and implement the 2013-2018 strategic plan.

On behalf of the UNC Faculty Assembly,



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Enclosures: Faculty Assembly Resolution 2013-01  
 FAC Response Report  
 Faculty Assembly Resolution 2013-02  
 Faculty Assembly Resolution 2013-03

cc: UNC Faculty Assembly Delegates and Alternates

2013-01

**Resolution in Response to the January 16, 2013 Draft Strategic Plan**

Approved by the UNC Faculty Assembly

January 18, 2013

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**Whereas**, the Faculty Assembly of the 17 constituent campuses of the University of North Carolina has met and considered the January 16, 2013, draft report of the five-year strategic plan “Our Time, Our Future: The UNC Compact with North Carolina;” and

**Whereas**, the Faculty Assembly and President Ross constituted a Faculty Advisory Council (FAC) which submitted a set of recommendations in the document “Our University, Our Future: A Faculty Vision for UNC Strategic Directions;” and

**Whereas**, the Faculty Assembly affirms the goals of the strategic plan to increase the population of college educated North Carolinians; to provide excellence in teaching, research and service; and to serve the people in North Carolina by ensuring access to the University for all qualified students while maximizing efficiencies and effectiveness; and

**Whereas**, the Faculty Assembly endorses the commitment to North Carolina as articulated in the “UNC Compact” section of the draft Strategic Plan; and

**Whereas**, the Faculty Assembly asserts that the commitments of the UNC Compact require the experience and expertise of faculty in determining the direction of the UNC system’s constituent institutions to ensure that administrative decisions reflect the missions of each institution; and

**Whereas**, the Faculty Assembly understands that strategic planning is an ongoing process and looks forward to faculty and student involvement in the implementation of the strategic plan’s programs and initiatives;

**Therefore, Be It Resolved That** the recommendations articulated in the FAC response report and in Faculty Assembly resolutions 2013-02 and 2013-03 be incorporated into the final strategic plan.

# Faculty Advisory Council<sup>1</sup> Response to *Our Time, Our Future: The UNC Compact with North Carolina* Strategic Directions for 2013-2018 (January 16, 2013 Draft)

*"The campuses' faculty and administration and General Administration shall assure a continuing commitment to academic excellence."<sup>2</sup>*

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In the short timeframe provided for feedback to the draft UNC system 2013-2018 strategic plan – *Our Time, Our Future: the UNC Compact with North Carolina* – faculty on the UNC system campuses have worked to understand and thoughtfully consider the goals and action items posed in the plan and whether those goals and action items would assist in our UNC system mission to discover, create, transmit, and apply knowledge to address the needs of individuals and society<sup>3</sup>. Whereas many of the values and goals in the plan resonate with faculty, we recommend some specific alternatives to the plan's action items. Our recommendations will improve the plan.

This Response Report is a product of the *Faculty Advisory Council (FAC)* and is intended to fulfill the Council's charge by providing input to President Ross and the UNC Strategic Directions Committee. Faculty recognize The University of North Carolina system as a transformative organization that brings national and international recognition to North Carolina. We conscientiously work as faculty to fulfill the constitutional mandate that "education be as free as practicable."<sup>4</sup> We are pleased that the draft strategic plan also recognizes this important goal.

While this Response Report focuses on points of critique with the draft strategic plan, we acknowledge that the plan also contains initiatives that would move us forward as a system and are of critical interest to faculty. We agree with many points of the plan:

- We are aware of the pressures on state budgets and their effects on the delivery of educational content and the traditional approach to support higher education.
- We agree that the increasing cost of higher education negatively impacts the degree attainment goals of both students and the system.
- We likewise agree that our responsibility to the citizens and taxpayers of North Carolina is to maintain and improve access and to add value to the students' education.
- We recognize that technology has a positive effect on the role of faculty and their delivery of educational materials.

We renewed faculty commitment, we are poised to meet the needs of the state and the challenges of cost and access to higher education while delivering the highest quality curriculum to our current and prospective students. We are a faculty with diverse research interests and a wide and deep range of disciplinary expertise, committed to meet the mission of our respective institutions and the region. In this context, we offer feedback intended to help inform and improve the draft plan and ensure constituent buy-in and effective implementation.

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

<sup>2</sup> The UNC Policy Manual 400.1

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.northcarolina.edu/about/mission.htm>

<sup>4</sup> North Carolina Charter, Section IX, Article 9, 1789

## Response to Goal 1: Degree Attainment Goals

The FAC believes in the value of higher education and agrees that everyone deserves access to higher education. We especially hope that the Board of Governors and the state legislature will commit to the substantial resources necessary to sustain enrollment and meet the attainment goals described in the plan.

As North Carolina envisions its future, planning for an educated citizenry is a necessity. However, simply filling current market demand without a strategic discussion about building a sustainable education future for this state will short-change the citizens. While the state must position itself to take advantage of developing fields, markets, and technologies; educators must aspire to develop students who are creative, versatile, adaptable, holistic, and ever-learning.

The FAC asserts the need to ensure that adequate resources are available to make possible achieving these goals. The current draft of the plan inadequately addresses this resource need, which must include both state financial support and continued strong collaboration with the K-12 and NCCC systems to ensure the development of a strong pipeline of academically prepared students.

The previous strategic plan, *UNC Tomorrow*, placed emphasis on both teacher preparation and global-readiness. The FAC urges a renewed commitment to these two important promises to the state, which remain unmet.

The UNC system must have actionable plans to make higher-education attainable for all citizens of North Carolina. Those plans must reflect the cultural diversity present in North Carolina's student, staff, faculty, and administrative populations. Attention to facilitating success for our culturally diverse populations is not addressed in the current draft of the strategic plan.

## Response to Goal 2: Strengthening Academic Quality

The FAC asserts that academic quality should be the primary focus of our efforts in higher education. We reject the notion that the industrial education complex can devise better assessment tools than faculty. We reject the idea that a single standardized test will provide better assessment of student learning or better transparency. We reject the adequacy of the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) to assess general education. We have serious concerns about the aggressive e-learning/MOOC agenda described in the plan, especially in regard to how academic quality, efficient use of resources, and faculty responsibility for the curriculum will be sustained. We assert the uniqueness of each of the 17 campuses in the UNC system and the need to respect their individual missions when considering general education programs, program duplication, and assessment methods.

### **Assessment**

The plan recommends development of a "robust competency-based general education learning outcomes assessment strategy," and "quantitative measures of...student learning" in collaboration with Educational Testing Service (ETS) and focuses on the CLA as a pilot project which may be expanded to other campuses. We assert, as we did in our original report to the UNC Strategic Directions Committee,<sup>5</sup> the primacy of multiple methods of assessment to capture the complexity of student learning on our campuses.

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<sup>5</sup> *Our University, Our Future* [http://faccoun.unc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/OurUniversityOurFuture\\_FAC-Strategic-Directions-Report\\_2012Nov25.pdf](http://faccoun.unc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/OurUniversityOurFuture_FAC-Strategic-Directions-Report_2012Nov25.pdf)

The CLA is an inadequate measurement of students' critical thinking skills and an inappropriate tool for measuring other general education strategies. It correlates directly with SAT scores<sup>6</sup>, thus provides no new information about students – at a high cost to those students. Moreover, the raw data from the CLA are not directly available to campus instructors. This lack of transparency makes it especially difficult to use CLA results to improve the curriculum.

We urge a revision of the draft to support useful assessment that is aligned with the missions of the constituent institutions (as reflected through their General Education program), is conducted by the respective faculty of those institutions, and uses multiple methods and instruments. We agree with the plan's emphasis on the need for clarity about our student learning measurements and accountability for student learning outcomes. However, to reduce the complexity of student learning in college to the scores on a standardized test is to inaccurately portray the nature of learning to stakeholders. Moving toward standardized testing for assessment and investing in the education industry to assess students is a devaluation of the faculty expertise in student learning throughout the system and an inadequate way to clearly portray student learning.

### **General Education**

In our original report, the FAC pointed out commonalities among general education programs, as well as the importance of honoring the unique missions of each university.

The most crucial change needed to the strategic planning draft is a clear assertion that faculty must drive the effort to create and develop curriculum, including the general education curriculum and our e-Learning agenda.

In Goals Two and Four of the draft strategic plan, there are competing versions of how the system-wide general education programs should be revised. Those conflicts must be resolved.

The plan's action steps must that campus faculty retain responsibility for the creation and delivery of our General Education programs; including program requirements, specific courses, and assessment. As we have previously pointed out, and as has been endorsed by both Faculty Assembly and campus resolutions, faculty should frame these efforts within the three foundations upon which public higher education in North Carolina is built: 1) the requirements of our regional accrediting body, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC); 2) the UNC Statement of Mission; and 3) the complementary missions of each of the constituent institutions. We respectfully demand a faculty-led process to consider shared General Education competencies and transferability and a revision of the general education section in Goal Four that removes references to specific General Education program requirements and the suggestion that the General Education programs on our campuses be "standardized." This faculty-led process would alleviate many of these deep concerns.

### **Response to Goal 3: Serving the People of North Carolina**

The FAC affirms the significance and ongoing import of serving the state and being responsive to the needs of its people. The FAC is concerned about the emphasis in the draft plan on hiring *new* superstar faculty in "priority" research areas. Instead, we assert that research in the UNC system will be better served by nurturing in-place faculty researchers by providing adequate support (release time, laboratories, equipment, etc.) and hiring new, young, creative, entry-level faculty through our standard and very rigorous process.

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<sup>6</sup> Roger Benjamin and Marc Chun "A New Field of Dreams: The Collegiate Learning Assessment Project." *Peer Review*, Summer 2003: 26-29. Association of American Colleges and Universities.

Furthermore, new star faculty are extremely costly and their hire often results in dysfunctional departments where the emphasis is on new faculty earning grants rather than collaboration and student success. Simply put, it is more expensive to hire and support new star faculty than to enhance support those we already have. We recommend the plan eliminate the action item to create these new highly-paid positions and use that funding to build structural resources and support for faculty more globally and to continue to recruit entry-level faculty through the normal, rigorous hiring process.

Another shortcoming of the plan is the very limited set of research areas highlighted for priority funding and the lack of faculty input used to determine those fields. These shortcomings limit the flexibility of the system and the campuses and diminish our ability to respond to the need to create graduates who can build fields of knowledge that are not even on the current horizon. While we embrace the ideal of promoting priority research areas, we assert that research priorities should include innovative, creative, and flexible initiatives developed by faculty and should be consistent with each university's mission.

The plan should support basic research for its own sake, as well as for the more practical benefits of knowledge, profit, and training. Basic research sustains and fosters development in a wide range of fields, trains students to develop solutions in areas of inquiry, and creates networks of thought. Basic research attracts the innovators of the future.

We must also acknowledge that research in the arts and humanities goes hand-in-hand with scientific inquiry. Without strong support of research in these areas, students will not learn critical awareness and will not develop historical and political consciousness, social sensibility, and aesthetic perception. Scholarship in the arts and humanities also directly enhances our economy and our communities. Hence, the FAC urges the specific inclusion of the creative arts, the liberal arts, the social sciences, professional disciplines, and the humanities as “game-changing” endeavors.

#### **Response to Goal 4: Maximizing Efficiencies**

The FAC found many points of agreement in the efficiencies section of the draft. We agree with the idea of centralizing common financial information review. Sharing IT infrastructure and resources among smaller campuses has also been useful, but only when the sharing does not harm fast turnaround on needed, location-specific IT services and when it does not impede the engines of innovation on our campuses that aid in developing online programs and technology-based curricula. Most importantly (and greatly needed), we applaud the recommendation for carry-forward budgeting reform which will incentivize savings practices.

However, some specific recommendations for centralization are problematic, especially when they affect the curriculum. Not only is it best practice that faculty take ownership of the curriculum, our accrediting bodies require that “the institution places primary responsibility for the content, quality, and effectiveness of its curriculum with its faculty.”<sup>7</sup> When efficiency standards affect curriculum, faculty must lead the process.

#### ***Active portfolio management***

Management of frequency of specialized classes and class sizes in disciplines for purposes of efficiency is best done at the department level with oversight by the dean. Centralized principles and data are desirable and should be provided to the campuses and deans. As expressed in the plan, section size considerations target need to “respect campus and program prerogatives to set course schedules” and the need to take into consideration the capacity of the physical classrooms. The main consideration should be maintaining high-quality instruction.

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<sup>7</sup> SACSCOC Principles of Accreditation (<http://www.sacscoc.org/principles.asp>) Comprehensive Standard 3.4.10 (responsibility for curriculum)

Setting more consistent expectations for Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) is desirable if it is connected to a set of minimum competencies expected from all General Education programs. This would enhance portability of courses. But, both SLOs and the “framework of coursework” must be developed by faculty. Administrators should not be involved in the development of SLOs, unless they are active and credentialed instructors in the specific courses.

Common instructional resources have only limited practicability. The development and selection of course materials by individual instructors enhances the quality of instruction. This is because instructor-prepared course materials coincide with both the expertise of the faculty member and the approach that faculty member takes in presenting the course content.

The expansion of online instruction should not be based solely on anticipated savings. The calculations of savings should be linked to the assessment of the SLOs of online courses. Savings should only be considered real when the respective online courses have equal or greater SLOs than traditional classes.

Because UNCW’s Predictive Analytics Project is being currently designed and constructed, it should be studied and evaluated in operation before being considered for implementation at other campuses or throughout the system.

As stated above, inconsistencies between Goal Two and Goal Four with regard to a common core or a shared General Education set of courses and requirements must be addressed. Sharing general education competencies, developing those shared competency expectations with a faculty-led group, and assessing those competencies with a variety of assessment methodologies and strategies is a goal that the FAC Council can support. The FAC cannot support a shared curriculum developed by non-faculty, the use of a single standardized test for assessment, or an administrator-led initiative that fails to place primary responsibility for the curriculum in the hands of the faculty.

## **Response to Goal 5: Ensuring an Accessible and Financially Stable University**

The FAC supports the draft plan’s acknowledgement of the constitutional mandate of low cost to students for higher education. The goals within this section to enhance private fundraising, sustain robust support for need-based financial aid, and benchmark tuition rates with other states could help us provide access to education for all.

## **Overall Concerns with the Draft Plan**

There are several overarching issues in the draft strategic plan about which both the FAC and faculty on campuses across the UNC system have expressed concern:

- Accreditation standards from SACSCOC mandate that each institution place primary responsibility for the content, quality, and effectiveness of the curriculum with the faculty. SACSCOC mandates that the curriculum and programs offered correspond directly to each of the campuses’ mission. We affirm the need to understand the SACSCOC standards, requirements, and mandates, and ensure that the UNC Strategic Plan does nothing to negatively affect individual institution’s accreditation status. Accreditation affects federal (and state) funding, the ability to attract and retain students, the ability to transfer credit among institutions, and the reputation of the university.
- A liberal arts education has the power to create graduates ready for the jobs of the future. The draft plan focuses too specifically on a narrow range of fields that seem to be of importance in current economic forecasts. However, we reassert that the faculty in the UNC system educate students for jobs that may not exist yet with skills that cannot yet even be imagined. This education provides a transformative experience, increasing

students' knowledge, skills, and abilities to adapt to the widest possible scope of societal and personal needs. A liberal arts education is a true driver of innovation.

- The ongoing work of students and faculty in the UNC system is about more than immediate economic benefit. We offer opportunities to gain knowledge and insight into the human condition of our time and to find what sustains us intellectually and inspirationally while we are in the midst of all the complexity of human experience.
- Innovation, as any business leader knows, is almost entirely a process driven by “bottom-up” thinking and creativity. The draft plan had a markedly top-down approach. This approach can quash the type of innovation, creativity, and “entrepreneurial spirit” that the plan aspires to engender. The plan misses the opportunity to inspire creativity and innovation by focusing away from the students, the faculty, and the diversity that is embodied in the varying missions and constituents of our campuses.
- The most valuable asset of the University is its people. The knowledge and experience of faculty at Appalachian State University, East Carolina University, Elizabeth City State University, Fayetteville State University, NC Agricultural and Technical State University, North Carolina Central University, NC State University, UNC Asheville, UNC Chapel Hill, UNC Charlotte, UNC Greensboro, UNC Pembroke, UNC Wilmington, UNC School of the Arts, Western Carolina University, Winston-Salem State University, and the North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics is tremendous. These faculties have worked – alongside students, staff, and administrators; community members and alumni; state legislators and business people; members of non-profit organizations; and others – to make the UNC system an international leader in higher education and to offer transformational experiences to students. Consult and collaborate with these professionals, and the system will find a world of innovation which will drive student achievement and success and offer a return on investment to the state's citizens which is unmatched by any other.

2013-02

## **Resolution on Faculty Responsibility for Assessment**

Approved by the UNC Faculty Assembly

January 18, 2013

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**Whereas**, the UNC Board of Governors is proceeding through the strategic planning process for 2013-18, defining current and future priorities, examining resource allocation, and seeking efficiencies; and

**Whereas**, the faculty of the UNC system embody the University's commitment to help North Carolina respond to changing state needs and economic challenges; and

**Whereas**, our regional accrediting agency, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), requires that the institution place primary responsibility for the content, quality, and effectiveness of the curriculum with its faculty; and

**Whereas**, the University already applies a robust, diverse and mission appropriate set of student learning outcomes; and

**Whereas**, the faculty are leaders in the development and utilization of technology and new teaching pedagogies; and

**Whereas**, single measures such as the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) or other standardized exams have been established as inadequate measures of the depth and breadth of general education programs; and

**Whereas**, institutional average scores on the CLA and similar exams are highly correlated with the institutions' average SAT scores, hence provide no new information; and

**Whereas**, SACS and other accrediting bodies periodically and comprehensively examine and affirm the quality of educational programs, and require that the faculty lead the assessment of the academic programs of the University;

**Therefore, Be It Resolved That** the strategic plan must endorse the expertise and control of the faculty in selection of the appropriate method of delivery and assessment of academic programs; and

**Be it Further Resolved That** that the strategic plan must reflect that the faculty, in their role as educational experts and as those charged with ensuring the highest academic quality programs, are the primary body to select, design, and assess all academic programs.

2013-03

## Resolution on Concerns with e-Learning as Presented in the Draft Strategic Plan

Approved by the UNC Faculty Assembly

January 18, 2013

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**Whereas**, the UNC Faculty Assembly has serious concerns with the understanding of e-learning in the January 16, 2013, draft of the UNC Strategic Plan; and

**Whereas**, it is faculty who are responsible for curricular content and its delivery;

**Therefore, Be It Resolved That** the Faculty Assembly requests that the final version of the 2013-2018 UNC Strategic Plan explicitly address the concerns listed below.

1. *Concerns about effectiveness and efficiency of e-learning:*

We are concerned that the strategic plan be well-grounded in the extant evidence and research on the effectiveness of e-learning practices and the cost-effectiveness of those practices, as compared to traditional instructional delivery modes.

Although course learning outcomes must be consistent regardless of delivery mechanism, measures of that learning must be tailored to course structure and delivery mechanism. The use of appropriate measures for determining desired learning outcomes is crucial to successful assessment of e-learning courses. These measures should produce robust evidence for assessing learning outcomes in comparable institutional and discipline-specific settings, disaggregated by e-learning, traditional, and (where appropriate) hybrid (or 'blended') modes of instructional delivery.

It is essential to evaluate the time and financial costs, to both students and the University, of alternative instructional delivery methods. Such evaluations must employ appropriate, institution- and discipline-specific measures for assessing the cost effectiveness of alternative delivery methods.

2. *Concerns about instructor qualifications:*

The quality of e-learning opportunities is primarily a function of instructor skills. Expertise in the substantive intellectual content of course material is essential. Support for training and use of instructional technologies can also be important for successful delivery of e-learning opportunities.

Appointment to e-learning teaching positions requires demonstrated discipline-specific expertise and a capacity for effective management of instructional technologies. This expertise and instructional capacity must be assessed by appropriate disciplinary faculty using appropriate departmental policies.

3. *Concerns about appropriate target groups:*

There is an extensive literature demonstrating that success and completion rates for e-learning opportunities vary widely by the demographic characteristics of student populations. Extant studies also suggest that targeting e-learning opportunities to populations of students who have limited resources for pursuing other educational alternatives can maximize the potential usefulness of e-learning arrangements.

We recommend that e-learning opportunities be targeted primarily to student populations with demonstrated likelihood of success in an e-learning environment, and especially those in resource-limited situations.

4. *Concerns about infrastructure cost and support:*

Instructional and information technology is in very early stages of development. Rapid hardware and software obsolescence is the rule, not the exception. Institutional investment in these goods can be very risky. A thoughtful investment strategy should, wherever possible, maximize adaptability, compatibility, and serviceability.

We recommend the development of investment policy that can leverage system-wide expertise and efficiencies in software deployment and development (*e.g.*, utilizing open source programs where appropriate), and which promotes hardware and platform compatibility.