



## **President's Report - March 2017**

Good morning. It's been a busy few days—and it's fair to say a busy year. It's hard for me to believe that a full year has passed since I arrived.

I never envisioned a quiet start to this job, but I'm really pleased at what we've been able to accomplish together—the capacity of this University is extraordinary.

I came to North Carolina because I knew this was a place eager to tackle the biggest challenges in education, and that's exactly what we're doing together.

Since last March, we've formally welcomed highly capable chancellors in Cecil Staton at East Carolina and Thomas Conway at Elizabeth City—and I am looking forward to their installations this month.

We also mourned the loss of our dear friend and leading light Chancellor Deborah Saunders-White at NC Central and thanks to Johnson Akinleye for serving as Acting Chancellor as we look to fill the position permanently.

Our citizens reaffirmed North Carolina's historic commitment to education through the ConnectNC bond, a resounding vote of public confidence in our mission; we took one of the biggest strides anywhere in the nation in advancing college affordability through the NC Promise tuition plan; and you're about to vote for very limited tuition increases, our first year of approving rates under a fixed tuition plan that will hold tuition steady for students who stay continuously enrolled.

It's a major step forward to advance predictability and confidence for students and families.

Through your leadership and with your unanimous support and, with significant Chancellor and stakeholder input, we developed an ambitious Strategic Plan that will reaffirm this state as a leader in answering the core challenges of higher education.

Our partners at the NC Community College have enthusiastically endorsed our Access Goals and we look forward to partnering with them, the K-12 system, and all of our partners across the state to educate more students to higher levels more affordably.

You'll find an "Advanced Readers Copy" of the Plan in your folder, and we'll be distributing the final product to stakeholders across the state in the coming weeks. I could not be more grateful for the work and advocacy you've put into this. Thank you.

Together, we helped our eastern institutions weather one of the worst natural disasters in state history with poise and generosity; we had an excellent and productive short session at the legislature; and we've made real progress on some of our biggest long-range challenges.

One of the joys of working in higher education is that we can bring together such remarkable talent, using our intellectual firepower to improve opportunity and quality of life for all of our citizens, especially our students.

In that spirit, we assembled a task force to examine the future of health care needs in North Carolina, consider how we deal with shifting demographics, changing technology that may expand our capacity to treat patients and promote public health, and most importantly educating the human talent we will need in health care—a key part of our core mission.

We tasked a working group with exploring the ever-evolving role of technology in education, and we assembled an expert group to move Elizabeth City forward—an effort that is already paying dividends in improved application numbers and renewed focus on the value of that institution to that region.

On a personal front, I kicked off my time in North Carolina by touring all of our institutions and affiliates in less than 65 days. Jonathan Kappler's Subaru Outback was basically my home away from home when I got here.

And with your input and support, we reorganized General Administration and put in place a stellar senior team that I am proud to serve with, we built stronger relationships with the Chancellors, and spent time with lawmakers, business leaders and community advocates from every part of the state.

I registered to vote as a North Carolinian, had a student call the police during my Inauguration party, and got a dog named after the founder of the University whose approval ratings and Twitter following clearly exceed mine.

It's been a privilege and pleasure to work with you and serve our system's students, faculty, and staff, and the citizens of this great state —and I am looking forward to year two!

We have much work to do in the P-16 continuum, putting our resources to work for North Carolina's teachers and students at every level.

We will begin to implement the Strategic Plan. And we will put forward a statewide approach to medical education, and a more effective utilization of technology-based platforms to help meet our goals.

Supporting all of that work will be a much more proactive communications effort — I've heard too much about “hidden gems” in this University. No more of that.

Lastly—and perhaps most importantly—we have a legislative agenda that focuses on investments in modern data infrastructure, innovative strategies for student success, and regulatory reform. At the end of the session we will work to implement the various legislative priorities of our elected policymakers.

We have lots of work to do together and I'm excited about the days and years ahead—let's get to it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.