



UNIVERSITY *of* NORTH CAROLINA
ASHEVILLE



UNIVERSITY OF
NORTH CAROLINA
A SYSTEM OF HIGHER LEARNING

11/21/2016

UNC Asheville participated in a UNC Board of Governors Strategic Plan Public Forum on Nov. 2, 2016 with 45 attendees. Attendees consisted of faculty, staff, students, Trustees, Foundation and Athletic Board members. The sign-in sheets are included as an appendix to this report. The written and oral comments from the forum have been synthesized and compiled by staff, and the executive summary of the themes, key issues and remarks are reported below.

1) ACCESS

- Access isn't necessarily a straight line or a pre-prescribed formula. A graduate's first year salary - after college - isn't necessarily a full and accurate measure of eventual success – earnings increase over time.
- A four-year degree may not always be easily attainable for all, specifically non-traditional students. The university shouldn't be penalized for students not completing in 4 years – we should understand the roadblocks and barriers and what we can be doing to address them, but the focus should be on completion.
- We must recognize the value that comes with being a part of a 17-campus system, but we can't forget that our students are diverse in many different ways. We shouldn't just have one program at one school because not all students can move to different parts of the state. Efficiency should not exclude the value of face-to-face education.
- There is a promise of the UNC System that if you work hard and live in the state, you can go to a state school and receive an excellent education at an affordable rate – in the face of budget cuts and increase costs that promise may be at risk for lower income students and families.
- There must be more intentional work with the high schools and community colleges that supports college readiness and strengthens the relationship between the education sectors.
- There needs to be more need-based scholarships from the state to support access.
- Provide better access to students who want to take advantage of online learning across the UNC System.
- Current guidelines regarding how students with petty criminal offenses are treated should be reviewed.
- Revisit current minimum academic requirements (MAR) to ensure greater access.
- Additional support for key staff – such as guidance counselors would be helpful. Ensuring that they have accurate information to best advise students as they are considering college choices

2) STUDENT SUCCESS

- The system should incorporate high-impact practices as a requirement to graduate.
- Critical thinking is core to a UNCA education and is something that should be a focal point across all of our institutions.
- This plan has the potential for success as it is focused on fewer, key strategic objectives – where we can measure success and progress (not all things may be measurable).
- Student success is not just preparing students for statewide, work force success, but global workforce success.

UNC BOARD OF GOVERNORS STRATEGIC PLAN PUBLIC FORUM: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- We need to revisit what we mean by success – if a student transfers to another UNC campus that is a better fit and successfully graduates, isn't that a success? We need to also work with the community college system to ensure educational system success.
- Timely degree completion does not always meet students where they are. Some students will not complete in a "timely" way, but that degree will be a huge success for their life.
- Increase support, both resource and financial, for academic support service, tutoring services, connecting services, and career centers.
- Additional resources to support mental health services as well as support for other issues of violence on campuses would be of help.
- Increasing selectivity is one way to increase graduation rates, however, schools that are willing to increase access to a wider range of students should not be penalized for their commitment to working with a higher risk but very important group of students.

3) AFFORDABILITY AND EFFICIENCY

- Think about barriers to degree completion when considering student success, for example: financial resources. Students who lack financial resources may have to work multiple jobs but this delays or prohibits degree completion.
- There is a need for online programs that better fit the lives of working adults. As a liberal arts institution face-to-face education is at the heart of how we teach and how we engage with our students. Technology has a place in the liberal arts, but we should be careful that we don't assume that it is actually more efficient than face-to-face.
- The current goals (within the strategic plan) focused on tuition are better than previous goals, which include all elements of cost attendance. By national standards, the schools in the UNC System are very affordable.
- Financial incentives need to be in the right place. When we require budget monies to be given back to the state, rather than rolling over to the next fiscal year can be a disincentive. With a cap on tuition, we must recognize that one size does not fit all.
- Smaller schools are often at a disadvantage when it comes to affordability and efficiency. Economy of scale negatively affects the smaller UNC System schools.
- Affordability and efficiency don't necessarily correlate. If there is an incentive to act efficiently, then a school may become more affordable.
- Funding for micro-grants and micro-loans can help keep students enrolled and on track.

4) ECONOMIC IMPACT & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- We value and appreciate the statement made by President Spellings that education is the new civil right and with rights come duties.
- We prepare students to be successful over a lifetime in their work, their communities, and their civic lives – higher education has a broad and deep impact.

- We need to articulate the full economic impact of the campuses and the system. We teach students, we prepare them for success in their chosen professions, conduct research, and engage in a wide range of service. Each institution makes a difference in the community they call home – for some, the University is the largest employer.
- Universities are stewards of place. They contribute to the vibrancy and well-being of the areas they serve.
- Increase public and private partnerships.
- Include an emphasis on multiple aspects of sustainability (not just environmental).
- We need to set up more internships to help our businesses and to connect our students.

5) EXCELLENT AND DIVERSE INSTITUTIONS

- Recruitment of a diverse faculty and staff allows for successful recruitment of a diverse student body.
- Expanded funding for support programs for underrepresented students would be very helpful.
- Ensure that each campus has opportunities to be entrepreneurial and creative in pursuing their unique mission.
- Focus not only on STEAM, but also on design. It's not always about facts and statistics; it is about problem solving and solutions skills.
- Emphasis should be precisely on the liberal arts because if a citizenry doesn't have knowledge of history, government, ethics, or philosophy, the results can be catastrophic.
- We are nationally recognized.
- Curious as to why this priority area is called "excellent and diverse?" Is an excellent institution not a diverse one? Is a diverse institution not an excellent one?
- We want diversity within each institution. We also want diversity within the system, which means we cannot lose sight of the value of institutions with unique and special missions.
- Trust in latitude at institutional levels to do creative things—let the Chancellor effect what is going on at our level.

6) OTHER ISSUES TO CONSIDER

- As we are doing our work we must also find ways to measure progress and demonstrate results. As we look for ways to be efficient and strategic in our use of resources, we must also continue to make the case for public investment.
- Smaller universities are at a disadvantage in system budget models and planning. This impacts not only instruction and academic support, but facilities, construction of new buildings, and related areas that are critical to all campuses.
- If funding is being driven by metrics, we must make sure that these metrics are measuring the right things, are high quality and created with intentionality.
- When creating the evaluation metrics, it will be important to evaluate each institution based on its own unique character and mission – one size will not fit all.

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- Always refer back to the University system mission statement to ensure we do not lose sight of it.
- Student members of Board of Governors should be voting members.
- Diversity should be addressed as its own goal.
- Kudos for including community engagement.
- Improve and encourage partnerships between the UNC system intuitions.
- Thank you for the opportunity to share thoughts on UNC's next strategic plan.