



November 14, 2016

University of North Carolina Wilmington participated in a UNC Board of Governors Strategic Plan Public Forum on November 7 with approximately 175 attendees. Attendees included faculty, staff, students, and members of the UNCW Board of Trustees, members of the General Assembly, and members of the UNC Board of Governors. The written comments and spoken comments from that event were synthesized and compiled by UNC Wilmington Faculty and Staff, and the executive summary of the themes, key issues, and remarks are reported below.

1) Access

- One important goal is to increase talented educators in NC. The Watson College has been an exception to decreasing trends in education college enrollments.
- We have to be aware of the declining source of teachers in our state. Lots of teachers are leaving, and we have data on why. We're close to the state border here, and some teachers are going to South Carolina for a more supportive environment and salary, and more support for additional college training. This means that our source of teachers is drying up. We have a real concern with how we can increase our pool and support our teachers, making their jobs more appealing so they will stay in the profession and not leave.
- Does our plan for increasing diversity go all the way through – from students to faculty and even to facilities? Response: Yes, and this also applies to efficiency and flexibility. This issue is very dear to the Chancellor and Cabinet. We are in the process of hiring many faculty, and we insist on search committees that are as diverse as possible, to be more representative of our state. This is part of UNCW's strategic plan. Diversity also matters for student success.
- How does access intersect with readiness for a four-year academic experience? Response: We need to put trained professionals in the public schools to really make a difference – teachers and counselors, etc. Not all public schools are doing that currently. Lab schools and other pilot projects are looking for improved methods. Issues locally in terms of attracting students from this region have resulted in us working closely with the community colleges to get students who are prepared. Partnering should be part of the new strategic plan process, and the lab schools are little incubators trying to come up with some answers. We need to work on teacher pay. Teachers are asked to do a lot outside of the scope of their actual job. The lab schools should allow for experimentation. Job satisfaction and job responsibilities have to be made more attractive – it's not economics alone.
- We've had diversity goals for many years, but it always comes down to money. We can't compete with other universities, so we fall short. We need special funds for diversity hires, as we have for retention.
- As a parent, I would like to see encouragement of Masters degrees in K-12.
- We used to have a Teaching Fellows program, but it was discontinued. This was a great mechanism for getting teachers into the schools. We need programs like that again, especially for STEM. More internship programs would be important too.
- There are important concerns about quality versus accessibility. In the plan's goals, rigor in education seemed to be missing. Many parents really want the quality education.
- Need to train teachers about dyslexia. Teachers need to know how to identify it and how to teach with multisensory structured literacy instruction.

2) Student Success

- Student success is based on the quality of faculty instruction and advising. A great pride among students on this campus is the quality of our faculty. We have small class sizes so we can get to know our faculty, and they mentor us. Our strategic plan needs to include a solid pitch to keep our faculty. We have the intellectual capital that other campuses cannot match. The advisors help with navigating the curriculum, and students have good advising experiences, but when some faculty have large teaching loads and too many advisees, things can get stretched. What steps will be taken here, to keep post-graduation in mind?
- The strategic plan has focused primarily on time to graduation and skills for the 21st century. Not as much time has been spent yet on engagement with the student, engagement with the faculty and with resident and professional advisors. This operational aspect is critical, and we should probably discuss it more. The BOG does have a task force on student advising and will make a report at some point.
- Degree completion rates are high at UNCW - we have the second highest 4-year graduation rates among state universities. Our completion rates for students who come to us from community colleges are the highest in the state. What might help us improve these rates further?
- One important concern is that with increased emphasis on access, the critical resources we provide outside of the classroom will be stretched too far. This is especially important for first-generation college students. Contact with support systems is critical, and there seems to be a lack of dialogue about support outside of the classroom. We've done well so far with our exponential growth, but there could be a negative impact. Without support for these service (beyond faculty), we run the risk of losing faculty and staff. We need measurable marks for support services. Response: We want to grow with the state and population needs, but we want to have the resources in place. UNCW is investing in the library, and the faculty/student ratio to maintain close proximity to faculty. We aren't targeting more graduates just for the sake of numbers – we want more high quality students. This is what we're targeting. We could do a better job within the system to share what's working.
- The long-standing enrollment growth formula generates faculty positions based on student data, and numbers are also computed for the dollars necessary to support a quality education once a student is on campus. The formula recognizes a broad-based requirement of support.
- In discussing retention and graduation rates, we have to think about the individual. Mental health is critical; there are high rates of anxiety and suicide as pressures increase. We have strong services here, but those will need more support too as we move forward, so that we can catch personal problems before they get in the way of student success.
- Satisfaction with educational experience is another important part of success. Did you work with a professor; did a professor take an interest in you? These are emblematic of a quality education and engagement. How much were your ideas and expectations challenged? This issue will probably need to be dealt with at the institution level, as

there are differences across our institutions, but rigor should probably receive more attention.

- Please consider your talented staff members as you think about student success and student engagement. As a personal story, I worked as a student worker in the area where I am now employed. The skills I gained as a student worker were just as important as the degree I received. Please remember the impact staff and jobs have on your students as well as their classes and faculty.

3) Affordability and Efficiency

- If you combine the energy consumption of all of the system schools, we are the second largest institutional energy user in the state. Energy savings could come about if flexibility is allowed. We would like the BOG to emphasize energy savings, because non-payroll energy outlay is huge.
- Some previous UNC performance metrics have had an energy savings metric.
- UNCW reached the state's goals several years ahead of what was required, and the Senate bill allows us to retain the savings. It's not a lot of money, but it helps, and it allows us to do more energy savings initiatives that would cost outside money otherwise. We're using less power, more efficient equipment, etc. In the long run, this keeps the university more affordable and keeps the costs of attendance down. Everything we do to reutilize the dollars is helpful and greatly appreciated. I have kids in college here, and costs are a pain, but a great investment. UNCW is a great deal. My concern is that we don't sacrifice the quality of the education our kids get. I don't want to sacrifice that quality and the quality of our faculty by emphasizing affordability.
- Our performance contract included a number of energy improvements. Lots of our efforts are behind the scenes. The most visible is that our outdoor lighting is being renovated. Performance contracting is an important funding mechanism. We were told to use this as a method to fund – we're pulling out 40-year old steam equipment in Trask as a result of this contracting, and we'll be able to show a reduction again as a result.
- The universities are incubators for new technologies, but we don't get to share in that because once developed, the technologies go elsewhere rather than staying in the universities. That sort of reinvestment in the system could be very useful.

4) Economic Impact and Community Engagement

- Research is linked to technology transfer, and most universities have improved on the transfer issue.
- UNCW's Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship also helps with our impact.
- Community engagement is very important to this university. It's central to what we do, and is the focus of our QEP. It is one of six central goals in UNCW's strategic plan. We need to talk about our community partnerships and projects, with both students and faculty. These sorts of community engagement, solutions, and feedback are important. These are critical to the learning experience for our students. Our ETeal (Experiencing Transformative Education through Applied Learning) Office works closely with

University College and the University Studies Advisory Committee to strengthen and promote our applied learning opportunities, and to get students out into experiences that encourage them to extend what is happening in the classroom to activities outside of the classroom. We also encourage faculty to move their teaching out into the community in various ways. We need to arrange for the word “citizenship” to be reflected in the measures and goals – this is critical for public institutions and makes a real difference in the communities. Student success here is an outcome made possible by engaged students, and applied experiences do that. Whatever comes of this process should emphasize these connections to the community. Citizenship is a way to say thank you to the taxpayers.

- With respect to community outreach, one metric is the number of faculty and students participating on community committees, and at the state and national levels as well as the local. You would see an amazing impact there, so you may want to look into this.

5) Excellent and Diverse Institutions

- Regarding areas of distinction, undergraduate research and creative scholarship are a great strength here. We have great opportunities here for our students thanks to our dedicated faculty. At the state symposium at NC Central for public and private institutions, we had 21 presentations from UNCW – all involving research with faculty. It is not just graduate students who are involved in research. And we do well with national fellowships.
- The BOG should look at the students graduating from NC high schools to determine if there is a subset who do not see a viable option for them here, taking them outside of the state or to a private institution. That could help us see where we need to add programs or make changes.
- UNCW offers the opportunities of a large campus, but the feel of a smaller private.
- There is an interesting study comparing states in terms of exporting students to other states. How we connect with the rest of the country and the world is important. It is not so good to export many students, but we also need to import new students. How do we do that, and become premier in the country, not just looking in but also looking out?
- There are differences across the UNC institutions in terms of out-of-state students. Some of our schools have high levels of demand, and others have very little. Schools are fined for going over the state limits, but we don’t need to turn down the opportunity to get very talented students from other states. Should we consider a 4-year rolling average? Do we move the numbers around across the state? By discipline and by school we have greater capacity for out-of-state students so we may be doing a disservice to the state.
- My daughter applied to many UNC schools but went out of state because of scholarships and because she was started right away in an NIH research project. Practices like that might help to maintain NC students in our system.
- We lost lots of students from the School of Science and Math when scholarships were dropped for those students to stay in state. This is an important issue to target. Our focus needs to be broad given that this is a growing state with a growing economy. It’s not just the harder to education students that need attention in terms of access.

- Diversity also is important in regard to the composition of leadership teams and governing boards.
- When considering retention of faculty and staff, please consider the impact of salary discrepancies across the UNC system. An issue at UNCW is that our talent is being “poached” not only by the private sector, but by other UNC campuses.