Mark Imperial welcomed everyone to the Advisory Committee meeting. Tom Barth thanked new board members and explained his research analyzing core values. Group went around the room for introductions.

Mark Imperial gave a summary of the Master of Coastal and Ocean Policy program.

Mark Imperial stated that they are looking to add new advisory board members. The program was re-accredited last July, which means they are now ready for new members. The re-accreditation included addressing the mission and learning competencies of the program. They realized they need to be more engaged with alumni and the advisory board.

Mark Imperial gave info on the current student body:

- 61 students
- 2/3 part-time, 1/3 full time
- Admissions on the decline
- Fall last year was lowest admissions in quite some time
- Spring lowest since 2003
- Average age 27
- Diversity is an issue: need to increase applicant pool, including apps from men

John Brennan was asked to speak on his local government class. He stated that this will address concerns that students aren’t educated on local government. It will be a seminar format with students and members of local government. He is trying to give students an applied perspective. The class will be held on Thursday nights. The idea for the class came as a result of a board retreat.

Donna Girardot: Think this is an excellent idea—maybe include customers’ points of view.

John Brennan agreed. The class will also discuss the role of city council and private/nonprofit sector. Contact John Brennan with comments/questions/suggestions.

Jeff Brudney was asked to speak on his Nonprofit Leadership Experience class. The class looks at the environment facing nonprofit leaders. It will feature guest speakers from the community. Each student performs a project for a nonprofit organization. QENO helps find projects. The class is held in intensive session for the first 3 weeks, and then students work on projects in the community. There is a capstone session at the end; the public is invited. He explained a film that was made about the class called Beyond the Classroom: Learning to Lead. Other films Jeff Brudney has been a part of include Building a Better Wilmington and Ripple Effect. Ripple
*Effect* is the effect of volunteering on the recipients. He says that films raise the visibility of the nonprofit sector and get the university involved. They build interest in nonprofits. Films are available on QENO’s website. Capstone will be in CIS Building on May 1st.

Mark Imperial stated that the MPA graduation brunch will be held May 10th and capstone will be May 1st.

Tom Barth discussed transitions in the program. He will be taking over as MPA Director in the fall. He recognized Mark Imperial’s leadership over the past 7 years as Director. Angela Douglas was also recognized for her significant contributions to the MPA program over the years. Jeff Brudney was recognized for receiving award from PAR for one of most significant articles. A SENCASPA wine and cheese reception will be held in the near future. Jeff Brudney will be presenting his selected paper at the reception. Tom Barth said it is a new day for the advisory board and there is a new mission statement. It is time to talk about recruitment. Why are there fewer applications?

Mark Imperial replied that applicants choose other universities, tuition is going up, there is more competition, the applicant pool is smaller with more seats available, and the university doesn’t spend a lot on marketing.

A question was asked about whether full time or part time students are best.

Mark Imperial stated that both would be ideal, but that the university wants more full time students.

**Ann Hardy:** Says she has been asked for tuition reimbursement from employees but employers cannot do that. Their organization can’t offer opportunities for advancement after graduation. There is less turnover in higher positions and no career ladder.

An idea was raised where local agencies provide part-time employment to student while the student is in the program.

Mark Imperial explained that there is a disincentive to be part time because mandatory fees are the same for both full and part time students.

Mark Imperial asked if employees know about the MPA program.

**Frank Blackley:** Not many do. Suggested giving examples of people who graduated and what they are doing now. He supports an in-class experience rather than online.

**Tim Owens:** Get the HR person to do an on-site recruitment at the facilities.

**Tom Barth:** We are looking at online options to compete, which only provide a partial answer.
Tom Barth opened up the floor and asked the group to brainstorm ideas to increase interest and enrollment in the MPA program. The following captures the comments from the group.

**Calvin Peck:** We need to supplement the program with on-line classes but we should remain unique and have face-to-face class offerings.

**Ann Hardy:** Online programs are less impressive to employers. I think the interaction between students and professors is important and it should be emphasized to potential new students.

- Chris Coudriet disagreed, and said, “I respect a UNC graduate degree regardless of whether it was earned online or in person.”
- Angela Douglas provided input that students often ask about online options ranging from a few classes to a complete program.

**Wanda Costin:** During open enrollment for benefits, you (students and professors) could come and promote the MPA program to NHC employees. It is a captive audience because every NHC employee is required to attend. Contact HR to schedule.

- Chris Coudriet agreed and gave approval to proceed.

**Chad McEwen:** You could put a flyer in the paycheck stub envelopes as a way to reach all the employees to plug the programs.

- Chris Coudriet said that would not work for NHC because of their payroll system.

**Ann Hardy:** She was not aware that the MPA program enrollment was down. She suggested to make a short 2-3 minute video of success stories that could be sent as a link. It would need to be easy to email and download. She said we also need alumni to advocate for the program.

  - Jeff Brudney said he could work on the video production.
  - Mark Imperial liked the idea and said a video could be sent to prospective students.

**Tim Owens:** I would like a handout of successful MPA alumni that I can pass out to help recruit.

**Chad McEwen:** Promote the fact that students can work a full time, 9-5 job and then attend classes.

**Jim Fletchner:** We are starting a mentoring program with our staff to help new employees create a career path. I could promote the program with them. I also want to start some internships. We can help more than we have had in the past.

**Dale Smith:** The promotional materials need to show the benefit to the employer. Also, show how their organizations will benefit from employees with MPA degrees. It is hard for prospective students to get excited about taking the time and added expense to further their
education when, upon completion of the program, there are no career advancement opportunities with their employer.

- Chris Coudriet agreed. He said he needs to know “what skills will I gain by having an employee go back to school and earn their MPA?’ Knowing that information, he may approve tuition reimbursement requests.

**Ed Parvin:** Recruit retired military, especially the Coast Guard b/c they are already interested in public service and have the GI Bill to help pay the tuition. Contact the stations at Wrightsville Beach, Oak Island, and the Diligence directly.

**Chad McEwen:** Put up a billboard in Jacksonville. There are billboards for other universities on US 17 and US 74.

**Wanda Costin:** What incentives can we offer minority students? We should be recruiting minority students through the churches. They could assist in getting the word out.

- Mark Imperial shared that the program has $6000 in scholarship money and some money for GTA positions. However, UNCW cannot compete with other schools, like NCSU, in offsetting tuition.

Tom Barth thanked everyone for their ideas and said this was the beginning of the conversation. He then adjourned the meeting.