

University of North Carolina Wilmington

UNC Tomorrow Response Phase II Report Mission Review

January 2009

In accordance with guidelines provided by General Administration, the University of North Carolina Wilmington has conducted a thorough review of its mission statement. We propose a revised mission statement that is more concise, highlights our distinctiveness, and better enables our university to meet the goals of UNC Tomorrow.

Process

In response to UNC Tomorrow Phase II guidelines, and consistent with the UNC Wilmington Mission Review Policy, in July 2008 Provost Brian Chapman appointed a Mission Review Committee consisting of Stephen J. Demski, Vice Chancellor for Public Service and Continuing Studies; Robert D. Roer, Dean of the Graduate School and Research; and Kenneth W. Spackman, Director of University Planning. The Mission Review Committee was a subcommittee of the University Planning and Quality Council, the body charged with oversight of the mission review process. The Mission Review Committee developed a preliminary draft of a revised mission statement for initial review by the Planning Council. After modification by the Planning Council, a proposed draft mission was presented by online survey for comments to all faculty, all staff, and all student leaders. While the overall rate of support of survey respondents was 86.8%, 372 valuable suggestions for improvement were collected as part of the survey. Both the Mission Review Committee and the Planning Council considered these suggestions and acted on them by making substantial revisions in the draft mission statement. Two open forums were conducted to receive broad-based reaction to the latest draft, and yet more suggestions were received, followed by additional final modifications by the Mission Review Committee and the Planning Council. A status update was presented to the Faculty Senate in advance of the approval phase described in the next section.

UNC Wilmington conducted a similar process of mission review in spring 2005 in association with the former UNC General Administration long-range planning process. Because the UNC Long-Range Plan 2006-11 was never finalized, the resulting mission statement changes were never acted upon by the UNC Board of Governors. Many of the revisions arising from that process, also approved by the UNCW Board of Trustees at that time, have been incorporated in the present recommendation.

Approval

Pursuant to the University of North Carolina Wilmington Mission Review Policy, the proposed mission revisions in this document have received campus approvals as follows:

University Planning and Quality Council	October 21, 2008
Chancellor Rosemary DePaolo	October 22, 2008
UNCW Board of Trustees	October 24, 2008

UNC Board of Governors approval is anticipated in early spring 2009. Because of upcoming accreditation reviews (SACS Fifth-Year Interim Report in March 2009 and SACS Compliance Certification in September 2012), it is important that UNC Wilmington's mission statement is approved quickly and

that it remains stable , anticipating program changes planned for the coming four years, in order for the university to be in compliance with regional accrediting standards.

The Recommendation

The University of North Carolina Wilmington and its Board of Trustees recommend the following revised mission statement for the university.

The University of North Carolina Wilmington, the state’s coastal university, is dedicated to learning through the integration of teaching and mentoring with research and service. Our powerful academic experience stimulates creative inquiry, critical thinking, thoughtful expression and responsible citizenship in an array of high-quality programs at the baccalaureate and master’s levels, and in selected doctoral programs responsive to state and regional needs. Substantial research activity, combined with our hallmark teaching excellence and moderate size, advances distinctive student involvement in faculty scholarship. We are committed to diversity and inclusion, affordable access, global perspectives, and enriching the quality of life through scholarly community engagement in such areas as health, education, the economy, the environment, marine and coastal issues, and the arts.

Here are the changes, in track change mode, to the currently approved UNC Wilmington mission statement, approved by the UNC Board of Governors January 12, 2001, and as most recently amended by the Board of Governors June 8, 2007.

The University of North Carolina Wilmington, the state’s coastal university, is dedicated to learning through the integration of teaching and mentoring with research and service. Our powerful academic experience stimulates creative inquiry, critical thinking, thoughtful expression and responsible citizenship in an array of high-quality programs at the baccalaureate and master’s levels, and in selected doctoral programs responsive to state and regional needs. Substantial research activity, combined with our hallmark teaching excellence and moderate size, advances distinctive student involvement in faculty scholarship. We are committed to diversity and inclusion, affordable access, global perspectives, and enriching the quality of life through scholarly community engagement in such areas as health, education, the economy, the environment, marine and coastal issues, and the arts.

Rationale

All changes to the mission are descriptive of changes already realized at UNC Wilmington. Following is an itemized explanation of each of the proposed changes.

Sentence 1

Track change mode

The University of North Carolina Wilmington, the state’s coastal university, is dedicated to learning through the integration of teaching and mentoring with research and service.

Proposed “clean” version

The University of North Carolina Wilmington, the state’s coastal university, is dedicated to learning through the integration of teaching and mentoring with research and service.

Rationale for the change

This change simultaneously combines, in the lead sentence of our mission, the UNC Tomorrow thrust of student preparedness for success in the 21st century with UNCW's core value of student-faculty interaction. The change fundamentally shifts the focus of UNCW's mission to learning as the intended outcome of excellence in teaching.

While "The University of North Carolina at Wilmington" remains the university's statutory legal name, removal of the word "at" in the mission statement is consistent with the institution's name recognition. Adding "the state's coastal university" uniquely identifies not only our geographic location, but also our institutional responsibility for regional engagement and research involving coastal and marine issues. "Public" is an unnecessary descriptor given the name of the university, and "comprehensive" is a vestige of an outdated Carnegie classification no longer in use.

Sentence 2

Track change mode

Our powerful academic experience stimulates creative inquiry, critical thinking, thoughtful expression and responsible citizenship in an array of high-quality programs at the baccalaureate and master's levels, and in selected doctoral programs responsive to state and regional needs.

Proposed "clean" version

Our powerful academic experience stimulates creative inquiry, critical thinking, thoughtful expression and responsible citizenship in an array of high-quality programs at the baccalaureate and master's levels, and in selected doctoral programs responsive to state and regional needs.

Rationale for the change

Listing each college and school in the mission statement is unnecessary and cumbersome, particularly since UNCW has received approval for yet another college, the College of Health and Human Services. Instead it is the entire university, and the powerful academic experience we create—a reference to our first strategic goal—that is responsible for stimulating learning.

This sentence establishes four broad categories of learning—creative inquiry, critical thinking, thoughtful expression and responsible citizenship—from which are derived the more specific expected student learning outcomes of our general education program and of a UNCW graduate, including the essential "soft skills" mentioned in the UNC Tomorrow Commission Report as critical for the global competitiveness of our graduates. "Intellectual curiosity" and "imagination" are components of the more general "creative inquiry." The proposed revision changes "rational thinking" to the broader, more precise "critical thinking." "Responsible citizenship" is added as category of learning outcomes addressing diversity, global awareness, ethical behavior and teamwork.

Reference to an "array of high-quality programs" obviates the need for listing specific program content areas. Most institutions of higher education in the United States address the humanities, the arts, the natural and mathematical sciences, and the behavioral and social sciences in their undergraduate curricula, and therefore listing them in the institutional mission does not address UNCW's distinctiveness.

Moreover, listing specific doctoral programs in the mission statement is no longer practical, as UNCW has submitted a request to plan its third doctoral program, the Ph.D. in Applied and Experimental Psychological Science. As UNCW prepares its SACS Fifth-Year

Interim Report for submission in March 2009, and its SACS Compliance Certification in fall 2012, it is important that the university has a Board of Governors approved mission statement published in its catalogues and other documents, and that we are not in mid-process of yet another mission revision at the time of SACS review in order to accommodate our third doctoral program. UNCW has no plans to proliferate doctoral programs, but in order to meet the challenges of UNC Tomorrow, we have a responsibility to build on our strengths and, when appropriate, to initiate doctoral programs very selectively in response to regional and state needs.

Overall, the changes leading to the recommended Sentence 2 replace several merely factual statements by a much more concise and qualitative one. UNCW has demonstrated a record of quality, and quality has therefore become part of our institutional identity.

Sentence 3

Track change mode

Substantial research activity, combined with our hallmark teaching excellence and moderate size, advances distinctive student involvement in faculty scholarship.

Proposed "clean" version

Substantial research activity, combined with our hallmark teaching excellence and moderate size, advances distinctive student involvement in faculty scholarship.

Rationale for the change

The deleted sentence is replaced by the stronger proposed sentence 1.

The new statement reflects the evidence that UNCW provides opportunities for student involvement with faculty in research at a level that is unusual for institutions with primarily undergraduate and master's programs, and it reflects our core value of enhancing this distinctive institutional strength of combining teaching effectiveness and research activity. Based on data from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System and the National Science Foundation, UNC Wilmington is the only public master's university in the United States that has both a six-year graduation rate of at least 62% (one measure of undergraduate educational quality) and research expenditures at least 8% of total expenditures (a standard measure of research activity).

Sentence 4

Track change mode

We are committed to diversity and inclusion, affordable access, global perspectives, and enriching the quality of life through scholarly community engagement in such areas as health, education, the economy, the environment, marine and coastal issues, and the arts.

Proposed "clean" version

We are committed to diversity and inclusion, affordable access, global perspectives, and enriching the quality of life through scholarly community engagement in such areas as health, education, the economy, the environment, marine and coastal issues, and the arts.

Rationale for the change

Encouragement of public access is strengthened to a commitment to affordable access, a change in line with the principles of UNC Tomorrow. Our commitment to “diversity” is broadened to “diversity and inclusion,” and “international perspectives” is replaced by the more inclusive “global perspectives.” “Community and regional service” is changed to “scholarly community engagement” as the vehicle by which UNCW enriches the quality of life in our region, and which better describes the activities that recently resulted in UNCW’s selection for the 2008 Community Engagement Classification.

“Integration of technology throughout the university” remains important, but is a strategy for accomplishing our mission and achieving our goals, as is the entire next sentence to be struck. Technology, safety, and faculty and staff development are therefore not really appropriate as mission components, but rather means of supporting the mission.

Without changing its primary intent, the final part of the sentence is improved by making it simpler, more coherent, and grammatically correct (e.g., enriching the quality of life more accurately describes our focus than does celebrating, studying and protecting the quality of life). Consistent with UNC Tomorrow’s recognition of the future needs of the state, specific areas of community engagement are explicitly included in the mission, to include health, education and the economy. Finally, our signature strength in marine and coastal issues is an essential component of our regional engagement, and our commitment to the arts is an important feature of community engagement.