



It is a daunting task to summarize succinctly the curricula, programs, and activities of a vibrant, comprehensive university and how they serve the needs of a region and state. The task is somewhat simplified by using selected examples, with the understanding that they reflect the proverbial “tip of the iceberg.” In the sections that follow, using the UNC Tomorrow “Campus Visit Questions” as a general template, examples are provided to illustrate: how numerous organizational units at UNCW identify regional and statewide challenges; how they communicate with external stakeholders and incorporate external input into university planning processes; what programs, curricula, and activities currently address regional and state needs; how those programs are organized and delivered; how those programs and the need for additional programs are assessed; and what barriers exist that limit or inhibit the university’s responsiveness to current and future challenges.

Although generally structured by organizational unit, it is necessary in many sections to cross-reference other organizational units that work collaboratively to identify and address the complex challenges facing the university and the state. Preparation for the UNC Tomorrow campus visit has already yielded dividends at UNCW, in terms of the strategic thinking that went into the preparation of this overview and its appendices, as well as the additional solicitation of external input and the identification of additional collaborations that have resulted or will result from the preparation process.

Admissions and Enrollment Management

UNCW’s admissions office and processes are focused on identifying, recruiting, and enrolling bright young students who will benefit from the powerful undergraduate experience provided at UNCW and who then will help create a brighter future for the region and the state. Nothing that UNCW does is any more important than enrolling, educating, and graduating tomorrow’s citizens and leaders.

In the admissions process, UNCW gives particular attention to recruiting within southeastern North Carolina, a region that includes numerous inland counties that are rural and lack the same levels of educational opportunities and performance that exist in many parts of the state. Despite the challenge, UNCW continues to recruit significant numbers of freshmen and community college transfers from the region. Using an eight-county definition of region (Bladen, Brunswick, Columbus, Duplin, New Hanover, Onslow, Pender, and Sampson), the number of regional students enrolled at UNCW has increased from 3,731 in fall 1996, to 4,355 in fall 2006. At the same time, UNCW is increasingly serving the needs of students in the fast-growing metropolitan areas of the state, with enrollment from Wake, Durham, Forsyth, Guilford, and Mecklenburg counties increasing from 1,523 in fall 1996, to 2,478 in fall 2006. For historic data on enrollment by county, see Appendix A. Both freshmen and transfers attend UNCW from throughout the state. UNCW is second within UNC in the number of community college transfer students who enroll each year.

Diversity is another factor that receives particular emphasis in the admissions process, as well as in the curriculum (see, for example, “The Indomitable Spirit of

Africa” beginning on p. 16 of *Arts & Sciences* 2007 magazine). Within the admissions office, recruitment of the growing Hispanic population is a focused effort. Diversity is also a core component of strategic planning and UNCW’s progress measures.

Yet another current emphasis in the admissions process is the intentional focus on the recruitment of future teachers and nurses. UNCW’s planned enrollment growth is demand-driven and thus will occur largely in teacher education, nursing, and selected graduate programs of high demand in relation to the region and the state. This will result in steady yet modest growth, with enrollment reaching approximately 15,000 by 2017.

Enrollment management functions have been integrated at UNCW since 1990 and were recently restructured to reflect an even more comprehensive approach to admissions, transition programs, the first-year experience, and other activities critical to retention and graduation. In 2004, UNCW set specific and aggressive goals for retention and graduation rates as a part of its strategic planning process. Progress towards those goals has been substantial, yet barriers to continued progress include, in the short term, the need for additional personnel in institutional research and assessment, and, longer term, funding for strategic initiatives that will result in higher graduation rates.

College of Arts and Sciences

As the largest organizational unit at UNCW, the College of Arts and Sciences is replete with examples of connections to community, regional, and state needs (see Appendix B, which focuses primarily but not exclusively on the College and is the initial draft for a new web presence devoted to the UNC Tomorrow initiative, entitled “UNCW Today and Tomorrow”). Needs are identified and served by individual faculty members and individual departments, as well as through collaborations between departments, with other academic and administrative units, and with external partners.

The Department of Film Studies is a perfect example of UNCW’s responsiveness to local and state needs. This department was created due to the importance of the film industry to Wilmington and to the state and has grown over the past decade into one of the most popular majors on campus, with graduates finding increasing opportunities for local employment given the resurgence of the industry due to competitive film incentives being available. Frank Capra, Jr., and many other notable figures in the film industry are closely associated with the film studies program.

The graduate program in public administration is another classic example of identification of needs followed by creation of a focused and responsive academic program. The Department of Political Science, through its work with regional partners, identified a need for local government planners and managers with specific knowledge of issues important to coastal environments and governments. The MPA program was tailored to meet that need. Graduates are employed throughout coastal North Carolina.

As an example of collaboration between departments in the College and other organizational units, faculty from various departments (Political Science, Social Work, Sociology, Geography and Geology, Health and Applied Human Sciences, et al), along with faculty from the schools of Business, Education, and Nursing, have collaborated for the past several years to produce conferences on the quality of life in southeastern North Carolina. More recently, faculty members from throughout campus have planned a major regional engagement conference for June 1, 2007, entitled “Improving Civic Engagement

and Public Policy: The State of the Cape Fear Region.” This conference creates an opportunity for presentation of research findings in wide-ranging areas, from health and wellness to public education to fisheries, film, and the proposed international port, and is designed to solicit input from regional leaders regarding future research agendas and the development of strategies and priorities for UNCW’s civic engagement initiatives.

Cameron School of Business

UNCW’s Cameron School of Business (CSB) is currently responding to a wide range of regional and statewide needs through its various undergraduate and graduate degree programs, with strong programmatic emphases on entrepreneurship, international business and education, programs for managers and professionals who are currently employed, collaborative programs with other academic and administrative units, and outreach to the business and economic development sectors (see Appendix C for detailed responses to the guiding questions for the campus visits). CSB is proactive in identifying current and future needs through its external and internal advisory boards and committees and through its public service units (especially the Center for Business and Economic Services, SBTDC, and SBTDC’s Boating Industry Services). Annually, the Cameron School hosts the Economic Outlook Conference, which brings together public and private sector partners to discuss issues important to the region’s economy.

Two of several collaborative programs worthy of special note are the MBA program for postdoctoral researchers in marine biotechnology (see Appendix D) and the MS in Computer Science and Information Systems. The latter is a joint program between the College of Arts and Sciences and CSB, housed in the newest building on campus, the Computer and Information Systems Building. This building also houses a partnership with the Department of Film Studies, for students and faculty involved in computer-generated animation, and the Center for Business and Economic Services, which works closely with the regional economic development partnership and helps to produce its Web-based regional data book.

Barriers to greater success cited by the leadership of CSB include faculty resources and compensation that are not competitive with the marketplace, inadequate direct and indirect program support, and the need for additional space. These are the primary challenges for numerous UNCW programs.

School of Nursing

The academic programs in the UNCW School of Nursing are responsive to local, state, and national needs, particularly the shortage of baccalaureate-prepared nurses. In addition to undergraduate programs, which are delivered through traditional, Web-enhanced, and online formats, the MSN program addresses the need for additional nursing faculty, as well as family nurse practitioners. In addition, the Clinical Research Program was specifically designed, with cooperation and funding from PPD (Pharmaceutical Product Development, Inc.), to provide the skilled workforce needed by the growing local and statewide biopharmaceutical industry (see Appendix E, a story recently featured on the Web site of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities).

The School of Nursing is a leader in simulation technology, instruction, and research and works closely with community colleges and other UNC campuses in this region. Additional research and outreach activities such as Camp Special Time in Onslow County, as well as comments on other guiding questions, are contained in Appendix F. Not surprisingly, the major barrier to greater success in this area is the faculty shortage.

Watson School of Education

The curricula, programs, research, outreach, and professional development activities of the Watson School of Education are designed to foster educational excellence in the region and beyond. The Watson School is one of the top four producers of teachers for the state. Collectively, ASU, ECU, UNCC, and UNCW graduate approximately one-half of the teachers who are trained at our state's public universities.

As discussed in Appendix G, numerous strategic partners, from the local through the national levels and at all levels of P-16, are engaged with the Watson School and are key to the identification of needs and the development of programs to address those needs. Of special importance are: 2+2 collaborative programs with community colleges, the Teaching Fellows Program and other state recruitment efforts, extension programs offered in Onslow County, the First Years of Teaching Support Program, Professional Development System partnerships with public schools throughout the region, and regional educational leadership that will be fostered through the new doctoral program to be implemented in fall 2007.

The Watson School is focused on the changing demographics of our region and works with UNCW's Centro Hispano, the Department of Social Work, and three public school districts to help them work more effectively with the increasingly diverse population. A regional needs assessment resulted in the collaborative design of an ESL Add-on Licensure program.

Challenges include funding for needed personnel (in addition to faculty, on-site advisors are needed at community colleges and additional personnel would enhance outreach efforts with public schools) and for student recruitment. Funding for the Fast Track Trimester initiative would allow students to obtain a degree in teacher education in three years, thus accelerating our production of teachers for the public schools.

Graduate School and Research

UNCW's graduate programs are responsive to regional needs and are developed only after careful analysis of need, demand, and sustainability. The Graduate School is a recognized national leader in developing professional master's programs. In response to the initiatives of the Council of Graduate Schools, the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, and the Ford Foundation, UNCW submitted seven degree proposals (more than any other university in the country) and was awarded six planning grants. Five of these degree programs (Computer Science and Information Systems; Gerontology; Criminology and Public Sociology; the Applied Behavioral Analysis option in Psychology; and Environmental Studies) have received implementation grants. Each professional master's program must have an external advisory board, with business, industry, government, or

non-profit representatives, which provides input into the design of the program and continuing input regarding its effectiveness and modification.

Research at UNCW is housed organizationally with the Graduate School, yet one of the hallmarks of UNCW is the extensive involvement of undergraduates in research. Several buildings, such as Dobo Hall, were designed with this in mind. To facilitate the involvement of both undergraduate and graduate students in research and the mentoring relationships that evolve from that arrangement, faculty offices are located between that faculty member's teaching laboratory and research laboratory.

External research funding at UNCW far exceeds what is typical at comprehensive universities and is greater than what is found at many doctoral institutions. The vast majority of research activity at UNCW is in response to regional and state needs in areas such as marine science, marine biotechnology, environmental studies, education, or economics (e.g., a recent economic impact analysis of the Atlantic Intra-coastal Waterway). A great deal of UNCW's research is interdisciplinary, addressing regional issues such as obesity (see "Obesity: The Statistics are Staggering" in *UNCW Magazine*, Winter 2007, pp. 14ff). The staff of the Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs provides bridges between faculty researchers in various departments with complementary research interests, as well as between external funding sources and those researchers. The Office of Technology Transfer, established three years ago in response to the increased level of research with commercial potential, also provides bridges to external partners.

Center for Marine Science

Through an intentional and sustained effort, in response to the needs and challenges facing coastal North Carolina, the marine sciences at UNCW have developed into a nationally and internationally recognized center of excellence in teaching, research, and outreach. The Center for Marine Science (CMS) integrates into its programs the faculty and students from numerous departments and schools and is thus fertile ground for interdisciplinary learning and discovery. Collaborations throughout UNCW and partnerships with numerous external agencies and institutions result in programs that are responsive, productive, multifaceted, and externally focused.

As examples, the marine biotechnology program (MARBIONC) includes: the MBA postdoctoral program mentioned earlier to develop entrepreneurial scientists and business start-ups, in partnership with the Cameron School of Business; cutting-edge biopharmaceutical discoveries resulting in patents for drugs from the sea, in partnership with the private sector; path-breaking research into the breeding and grow-out of high value marine species leading to commercial mariculture operations, in partnership with NCSU, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and others; and much more. To enhance outreach efforts, CMS partners with the Division for Public Service and Continuing Studies and the Watson School of Education to provide educational programs of the highest quality to K-12 students. The Coastal Ocean Research and Monitoring Program (CORMP) recently was awarded the Public Service Award by the National Weather Service for enhancing marine safety through the marine weather web portal that CORMP created and made available to the general public, using real-time data from buoys deployed by CORMP and data from seven partners (see Appendix H). For a broader

discussion of how CMS is serving and plans to serve the needs of the region, the state, and beyond, see Appendix I.

Division for Public Service and Continuing Studies

Few universities except for land grant institutions have established at the vice chancellor level a division responsible for community engagement, as was done at UNCW in the early 1990's. This division identifies and addresses regional needs, using volunteer boards of advisors, in the areas of lifelong learning, youth programs, event and conference management, media production, workforce and economic development, and scholarly community engagement. The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute enrolls over 9,000 individuals each year in non-credit courses. Over 2,000 youth participate annually in summer camps and after-school learning experiences. In partnership with educational partners and Time Warner, *The Learning Network* provides educational programming to the region. Media production also includes PBS-quality documentaries on topics of regional and national interest, such as *The Montford Point Marines*. Conferences based on market research attracted over 25,000 individuals to UNCW's Executive Development Center this past year.

The UNCW Economic Transformation Council has been formed to develop an economic transformation strategy, under the direction of a newly-hired assistant vice chancellor for economic and workforce development. The council is concentrating on where UNCW's strengths and competencies are or are not aligned with an assessment of regional needs, as determined by county-by-county visits with strategic partners in both the public and private sectors. Faculty input is essential to this effort as well as to scholarly community engagement, through initiatives related to non-profit management, violence prevention, obesity prevention, and other important components of regional quality of life.

Other Academic and Administrative Divisions and Units

The UNCW Onslow County Extension Program crosses academic units, offering degrees in criminal justice (B.A.), elementary education (B.A. and M.Ed.), teacher licensure, clinical research (B.S.), nursing (B.S.), and liberal studies (M.A.), at Coastal Carolina Community College and MCB Camp Lejeune. Other partners include Onslow County Schools, Onslow County Department of Social Services, MCAS New River, Naval Hospital, SBTDC, and local pharma companies. Needs assessments are updated regularly to identify demand for new courses and programs (see Appendix J).

The Division of Student Affairs holds social responsibility as one of its main core values. During the last academic year, students completed over 31,000 hours of community service programming, service-learning, and volunteer activities. Each year, over 2,000 students complete internships for academic credit, working in for-profit, not-for-profit, and governmental organizations. UNCW's nationally recognized CROSSROADS Substance Abuse Prevention and Education Program partners with four regional counties and three other states to train high school peer educators who mentor their fellow high school students. The website for UNCW's Career Services received national press for its value to both employers and graduates seeking employment. For

additional details regarding how Student Affairs serves the needs of the region and the state, see Appendix K.

Within the Division of Business Affairs, UNCW is a regional and national leader in the areas of emergency management and the development of disaster resistant universities (see Appendix L). More locally, UNCW is a model university in regard to its partnerships in public transportation with the Wilmington Transit Authority and its mutual aid agreements with local law enforcement agencies. Outreach from Business Affairs also includes seminars for local small businesses and contractors, especially historically underutilized businesses, on doing business with state government.

The Information Technology Systems Division not only meets the academic and administrative needs of campus constituencies, but also serves the needs of the region by providing connectivity to the North Carolina Information Highway as the Regional Point of Presence. ITSD also supports *The Learning Network*, facilitates personal networking within the local information technology community, and fosters innovation through internal grant programs (see Appendix M for more detail).

The Office of the Chancellor and the Division of University Advancement, with involvement from other areas, work closely with numerous volunteer boards, such as the Board of Trustees, Board of Visitors, Foundation of UNCW, Friends of UNCW, Student Aid Association, Parent's Council, Alumni Association, International Cabinet, Cameron Executive Advisory Board, and many more, to identify needs, opportunities, strategies, and challenges. Members of these boards provide invaluable assistance linking the university to the community, the region, and the state.

University Planning

The many ways outlined above that UNCW identifies and serves regional and state needs are the result of a focused strategic planning process, one which has been revised and occasionally overhauled over time in response to the identification of needs and the transformation of the institution. As recently as twenty years ago, UNCW was a relatively small, somewhat complacent, moderately selective university. Through strategic planning with appropriate linkage to the allocation of resources, it has emerged as the high quality, mid-sized, comprehensive university that it is today.

The current strategic plan was preceded, in 2003, by an extensive benchmarking analysis, comparing UNCW to its peers and aspirants on over 100 indicators. With extensive internal and external input (through numerous open forums, the University Planning and Quality Council, and various volunteer boards), the conclusions drawn from the analysis were used to develop statements of core values and identity, which in turn laid the groundwork for the revision of the university's mission statement, the strategic plan, and the priority progress measures.

Significant recent improvements have been made as a result of strategic planning and assessment of institutional effectiveness through the progress measures. Examples include expenditure of \$3.6 million to create 44 new faculty positions in just the past year (toward the \$11.3 million needed to reduce the student-faculty ratio to 16 to 1 by 2010); expenditure of \$63 million by fall 2007 to open two new housing complexes and bring the percentage of undergraduates living on campus to 32% (toward the eventual \$89 million for more than 1600 new campus housing beds to increase the percentage of

undergraduates housed on campus to 35% by 2009); and increasing annual R&D expenditures from \$13 million in FY2004 to more than \$20 million in FY2005 (achieving a target originally set for 2010).

In a campus-wide system of integrated strategic planning, individual divisions and units have unit-focused strategic plans that directly support the university's strategic plan, and are monitored, reviewed, and used to make improvements based on assessment findings. In addition to unit-specific assessment often associated with disciplinary accreditation processes, university-wide assessment tools, such as NSSE, FSSE, and CLA, have received an increasing level of attention in recent years. Data from various levels, instruments, and processes are needed to assess and address core educational questions related to the level of academic challenge and to the development of skills such as critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving.

Additional details and documents regarding strategic planning can be found at:

Benchmarking: <http://www.uncw.edu/planning/benchmarks.htm>

Strategic Plan: <http://www.uncw.edu/planning/documents/StrategicPlan.pdf>

Progress Measures:

<http://www.uncw.edu/planning/documents/PriorityProgressMeasures.pdf>

Update presented at open forums and to the Board of Trustees in April 2007:

http://www.uncw.edu/planning/documents/ProgressMeasureTrends_April2007.ppt#1

Current estimates of resources needed to reach progress measure goals: Appendix N

Planning and budgeting calendar:

<http://www.uncwil.edu/budget/calendars/chronologicalcalendar.xls>

Minutes of the University Planning and Quality Council:

<http://www.uncw.edu/planning/Minutes.htm>

University Planning home page: <http://www.uncw.edu/planning/>

Conclusion

From the unit level through the institutional level, UNCW is proactively engaged in and responsive to the identification of regional and statewide needs, incorporating external input and demand into the creation and implementation of programs to address those needs. The UNC Tomorrow initiative provides an opportunity for UNCW to assess how it can continue to improve its responsiveness. A data-driven, inclusive, and integrated strategic planning process is in place at UNCW to facilitate continued institutional enhancement. The greatest barriers to continued progress are familiar ones: competitive compensation for faculty and staff; financial support for programs; and academic space. Despite these challenges, UNCW will strive to be a model for serving the state's needs in a responsive and effective manner, just as it is a model of efficiency.