11/9/2016

Appalachian State University participated in a UNC Board of Governors Strategic Plan Public Forum on November 9, 2016 with 51 attendees. Attendees consisted of faculty, staff and students. The sign-in sheets are included as an appendix to this report. The written comments and spoken comments from that event were synthesized and the executive summary of the themes, key issues and remarks are reported below.

1) **ACCESS**
   - Addressing participation gaps among low-income groups: The UNC system should invest resources in outreach to K-12 institutions at their locations, and on-site at university campus, such as summer exploration camps geared toward an awareness of academic programs and pathways to enrollment. Put UNC system staff in offices on community college campuses to guide "2+2" students.
   - Provide better college advising programs and support systems in high schools.
   - Need for location based student enrollment goals. Appalachian does not need or have the ability to grow. The quality would decline without increased funding.
   - Collect data on performance of students by NC high school and provide that feedback to NC high schools in order to help them prepare students better and thereby increase student access.
   - Provide opportunities for high school students to "try out" college
   - What resources are there for low income students and how do we get them to use those resources?
   - Respect and pay teachers more so quality students will want to be teachers.
   - What happened to teaching fellows?
   - Increasing online degrees and course offerings will increase our reach globally
   - Improving access for diverse students is not just about increasing the number of students from underrepresented groups. Access also means supporting programs, building a campus culture that is welcoming and inclusive and respectful of differences. It is not just about recruiting. Need complicated metrics for diversity. Suggest consulting with diversity offices.
   - Please consider enrollment growth limits that are realities at institutions such as Appalachian. Success could well be measured by the actual impact of programs on campus.
   - Improve access by developing a system-wide articulation plan with the community college system whereby any student receiving an AA at a community college with an appropriate GPA is given access to a UNC institution at the Junior level- Please examine the Florida plan. It works very well. Approximately half of the undergraduates at UCF, USF and UF have AA degrees and transferred for the final years. I studied if for almost three years while developing a grant for a pipeline to STEM graduate programs.
   - Impact after students leave
   - Each campus should develop clear standards of what a student needs to have accomplished to be admitted. To develop these standards we should use past assessment report to predict who will and will not be successful on that campus.
   - How will you target low income students? Will each institution be given a set of attainment metrics? How will you increase the number of student teachers? Will you marker the critical value of education across the state and to the legislature?

- Ensure that students have portability of credits within the UNC system for degree/ Program of Studies
- Graduate/ PhD opportunities in more fields throughout the State and not centralized
- Continue to advocate for grants (federal/ state) to all students
- Include access for veterans - ensuring opportunities and support of this population
- Goals- Provide online access to a new generation of students. Provide quality online access to a new generation of students

2) STUDENT SUCCESS

- The UNC system needs to allow for more innovation and creativity in academic programming. The very rigid faculty workload models constrain our ability to do meaningful, transformational applied learning (e.g., community-based projects with associated co-working time and space).
- Have universities work closely with high schools in all content areas
- Measure innovation and creativity
- The need for experiential learning was mentioned, however UNC system has decreased funding. Experiential learning needs to be accessible for everyone but the problem is the high cost of these experiential learning programs.
- Monitor the number of students obtaining degrees in fields less than five years old and try to increase that percentage as a measure of innovation.
- "Timely degree completion" is less about student success and more about efficiency. It is not necessarily an accurate measure of success to boast how fast we matriculate students. Some students are more successful at slower rates. By penalizing students for not graduating in four years, we may jeopardize their success because they cannot pay those penalties.
- Why wasn't community service included in the list of possible metrics regarding the topical area of undergraduate experiences? Students determine their ability to communicate and to contribute in various settings when they employ their skills outside the classroom.
- The increased number of transfer students from community colleges and students with early college credit have brought to light a challenge. Students come in with "equivalent" coursework but may not be ready to perform at the advanced college level. There should be more communication between community colleges and 4-year institutions. There needs to be resources for remedial help. Universities should be able to reject some transfer applicants if their record does not indicate they can perform as well as our native students.
- Student success metrics- are these aligned with more contemporary measures of success from engaging in an educational experience? For example, success (from ASU's standpoint) is very focused on the subsequent impacts student have in their communities and society at large. There are metrics we could use to measure student impact. This would align with goal #4 (economic impact) as well.
- Need to better support students with a state of art facilities
- Commitment to creating better learning environments in terms of classrooms and buildings
- Funding issues addressed
- Add a metric recognizing innovative experiential learning, student run projects
- Set freshman to sophomore goals – make sure these are challenging, but accomplishable. Do the same with 4, 5 and 6 year graduation rate

- How will you assess competencies in a holistic manner to ensure retention of an inclusive system? Not via standardized testing mode. Collaborations across departments for interdisciplinary aspects of the educational experience.
- Provide full-time academic advisors for all students. This would provide deeper and more meaningful advising and help students be successful.
- Possible metric - engaged in student research while on campus; undergraduate research in labs leads to student success
- Employment partnerships to help with the value of a degree.
- We need support for student employment on campus, both work-study and other programs. Students are benefitted in many ways including being better in their academic work and making their college years more affordable. On campus jobs help with student retention and their preparation for jobs. Also support undergraduate student research and creative endeavors through libraries, writing centers, and encouragement of faculty sponsorships of student research.
- Student success should also be measured by what students do beyond their time on our campuses. Success is not just about job placement and starting salaries, but about entrepreneurs who start their own businesses, social entrepreneurs that are going abroad and making a big difference in those communities.

3) AFFORDABILITY AND EFFICIENCY

- The UNC system needs to balance affordability and efficiency with the ability to attract and retain high quality faculty who can deliver high quality academic programs that lead to student success, along with the necessary infrastructure and staff to support the academic mission.
- There is a need to examine where we are spending money to ensure it reaches academics.
- Identify functions that can be centralized at the system level and can increase efficiency/lower counts by taking advantage of economies of scale (e.g., central systems for course registration, accounting, etc.)
- Tuition could be kept low if state appropriations were increased.
- Fixed cost 4-year tuition has unintended consequences of faster and larger increases. See what happened at William and Mary.
- State allocations should be increasingly used whenever possible to offset student cost. University resources (faculty and staff) and their costs should be competitive, without forcing student tuition increases.
- Cost of college has gone up, in part, because state support has drastically decreased, especially when we consider the increased cost of services offered by universities and the increased kinds of services our students need and want. If we want to keep our quality it will cost – new buildings, labs, professor pay, student support, research support, etc. It's not reasonable to think that we can provide all this with low tuition unless we get more state support.
- The system wide articulation plan described in the access model above will reduce cost of students acquiring degrees due to first two years will be at the community college while acquiring an AA. This model will require a common course numbering system shared with the community colleges
- S.T.E.A.M. initiatives
- Allow each campus the autonomy to set tuition, fees, room and board rates. Allow there to be less expensive and more expensive options.

- Use #2 above to see if they are using cost and admission standards to achieve success.
- Better preparation in K-12 or community colleges for four year degree programs (rigor)
- Goal to pursue online courses at more affordable prices.
- Efficiency can be interpreted as asking employees to do more with fewer resources, work harder with fewer rewards. I would like to see an efficiency discussion that incorporates sustainability-environment, economic and equity. Asking our institutions to consider efficiency within this context feels more like real problem solving and less like an imposition on people who sacrifice much for their institutions. Budget year-end often leads to frantic spending as people who worry about budget revisions save/reduce spending throughout the year find the need to spend down their funds to avoid reduced budget allocations the following year. Flexibility/ability to roll over would improve efficiency.
- Keep costs and tuition in line with inflation. How will you benchmark and adjust regionally? How will improving value be defined and measured? Do we have data readily available to measure appropriately and correctly?
- Look at tying tuition to family level of income but how will you measure a family's ability to pay? Who makes up the difference in cost?
- Add language about efficient use of available resources. Resources ae there for us to use, preserve and replenish. Don't just describe resources in a consumptive manner.

4) **ECONOMIC IMPACT AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**
- Possible metric on Goal 3: continuing education offered to community members who have gaps in knowledge, skills, and/or abilities for current workplace needs. This could be in the form of graduate certificates, non-credit coursework, and/or seminars/workshops.
- Job placement and starting salaries are good metrics of student success/impact, but some students' impact will be realized later in their careers if they follow an entrepreneurial path, start their own businesses and then hire a workforce of their own.
- Use technologies to connect high school and college classrooms to experts and cultures globally
- By focusing only on STEM you are directly ignoring liberal arts/humanity fields.
- Collect data from employers of UNC system graduates and seek to improve employee satisfaction with our graduates.
- Humanities are necessary for everyone.
- Expand the definition of STEM to reflect the current emphasis on the arts – STEAM
- Include "creative activity" in discussions of scholarship and research
- Include "cultural resources" in the definition, reflecting institutions' primacy in providing opportunities for artistic and other creative engagement.
- Suggest renaming to "community impact" to capture all the economic, social, community, etc. impact
- Include sustainability efforts. Defining metrics might be a challenge. Sustainability is alive and well and has a real impact on the state. Should focus on economic, social, cultural, and environmental impacts.
- Does UNC have a commitment to preparing citizens of the world beyond our borders? Our students serve around the world and have an impact beyond the state.

5) **EXCELLENT AND DIVERSE INSTITUTION**
   - On goal 2, human capital: The peer institutions identified for Appalachian in terms of benchmarking for faculty salaries are not a true indication of the market rates for our faculty. Our faculty are marketable across the nation, not just in the state of NC or in the SE region of the country. The benchmarks we are given routinely fall short of offers our faculty or faculty candidates are receiving at other regional comprehensive universities.
   - This goal should be dropped. Strong institutions are a means for achieving goals. It is a mistake to make them a goal. Doing so locks the UNC system into particular means for achieving goals. It dramatically lowers flexibility and innovation in the UNC system.
   - Honor location as part of "diverse institutions"
   - Recruitment should be increased in areas with underrepresented groups and we also need to ensure a safe and welcoming environment for these students, faculty, and staff.
   - If we want the UNC system to be excellent, we need to be willing to pay for it.
   - Need appropriate infrastructure of buildings on campus to support housing for all students
   - Include a focus: engagement of faculty and staff to implement support services to engage faculty and staff and implement measures and metrics on that engagement and its effect on retention. Support services to include social gatherings, with and without families (sports events, hiking, etc.)
   - Diverse institutions should also mean diversity of faculty, staff and students in their ethnic background and other differences. Academic and learning differences need to be appreciated and supported.

6) **OTHER ISSUES TO CONSIDER**
   - Advocate for all of these goals at the state level. Many of these I feel are out of your control. These cannot be actualized without advocates on the state level!
   - Communication about the value of a degree. Where is this? How are we telling our story about the importance of higher education? Need to communicate value to the public.
   - What is the UNC's commitment to preparing citizens of the world beyond the borders of North Carolina?
   - Some things cannot be placed into one silo. It's important to see connections between these areas. For example, in interdisciplinary work STEM and humanities are linked. Don't just consider funding specific faculty lines but look for ways to blend over time.
   - Need for innovative metrics and ways to create ways for institutions to remain flexible and adaptable to change
   - Need for clear definitions that lead to metrics that will show whether we are achieving standards