THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHARLOTTE
DIVISION OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS
ACADEMIC PLAN 2016-2021

INTRODUCTION

The Academic Affairs Plan ("Plan") builds on six important themes:
- Liberal education;
- Arts and the creative economy;
- Business and finance;
- Health and society;
- Science and technology; and
- Successful schools.

Although the themes are intentionally interdisciplinary, they may resonate most strongly with particular disciplines and are evident within the College plans. The programs that emerge from the themes underscore the importance of our location and the synergy that exists between a large, research university and the life of the city.

The Plan recognizes the opportunities and challenges that stem from the fact that the state and region are growing both more diverse and more urban. Our commitment to providing access means that we must address the needs of a complex student body. We have the opportunity to be recognized as a national leader in meeting the challenges of combining access with an exceptional educational experience that leads to successful degree completion. Our urban location means we experience the benefits and challenges of urban life with respect to transportation, energy, housing, healthcare, public education, and land use—to name a few. However, as an urban research university, we can play a leading role in problem-driven research, interdisciplinary programs of study, and collaborative engagement with the community in ways that promote understanding and solutions to urban challenges that are global in scope.

We recognize that to execute the plan effectively we must:

- Demonstrate our institutional values of access, inclusion and diversity in the recruitment and retention of students, faculty, and staff as detailed in the UNC Charlotte Plan for Diversity, Access, and Inclusion.
- Provide a supportive infrastructure for our faculty and staff that includes excellent opportunities for professional development and mentoring.
- Embrace transparency, flexibility, collaboration, and efficiency in the administration and delivery of services and programs.

- Exercise both creativity and efficiency in the use of our space.
- Define useful and reliable measures and methods for evaluation to improve our instructional and support programs.
- Engage alumni and the community in support of programmatic goals.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal 1: Educate a diverse student body through an integrated academic experience that positions graduates for personal success and civic responsibility in the global environment of the 21st century.

We currently offer a broad range of programs at all levels, including twenty-two research and professional doctoral programs, sixty-one master's programs, sixty graduate certificates, and seventy-eight baccalaureate programs. We will continue to build a portfolio of programs responsive to changing times that will prepare students for their futures. We will explore opportunities for new areas of study at all levels, although in some cases it may be as important to revisit the programs we already have to ensure that they remain current and viable.

Our growth in enrollment has been paralleled by an increase in degrees and certificates awarded. Over the past five years, the number of degrees and certificates awarded has grown from 5,067 to 6,455. This growth has been marked by modest improvements in graduation rates; this remains an area in which improvement is essential, particularly at the baccalaureate level. The first step in improving graduation rates is improving retention. In the past five years, we have devoted significant attention to our incoming freshmen and increased retention rates from 77% to 83.4%. Graduation rates have only begun to show improvement as success in the freshman year is propagated.

As an institution that values access and welcomes a diverse student body that includes a high percentage of transfer students, we also must take into account the nature of support services that are responsive to students of different backgrounds and needs. All of our students need robust opportunities for engagement to help them connect their studies to the communities beyond the classroom. Given the size of our institution, curricular support and enrichment must be scalable. Increasing the participation of students in authentic research experiences, service learning, or international experiences will require thinking beyond boutique programs to conceptualize accessible programs and opportunities for all students. In all areas, we must commit to an environment that is respectful of differences and seeks to benefit from the diversity of our campus community.

Goal 1 Objectives:

1. Complete the implementation of the Graduation Initiative. As part of this initiative, we will
   - Increase the retention of first time freshmen in all colleges by 5%;
   - Achieve a six-year graduation rate over 60% for students entering as first-time full-time freshmen;
   - Ensure seamless transfer for those holding Associates degrees to increase four-year graduation rates to over 80% by integrating students into their programs of study by the second semester of enrollment;
   - Expand the Passport Program and add a residential component to facilitate successful transfer from North Carolina Community Colleges; and
   - Implement The Graduate School's Compact for Completion for new and returning graduate students.

   To reach these targets, we will
   - Revamp advising programs to address the needs of transfer students, including internal transfer students and early college high school students;
   - Link academic advising to financial aid and career advising;
   - Examine the potential for a "one-stop shop" to streamline transactional processes around registration, financial aid, and other administrative functions;
   - Work with University Advancement to increase scholarship aid;
   - Fully deploy advising tools to enable more proactive advising;
   - Examine degree programs and course offerings to remove unnecessary barriers to progression;
   - Reduce DFW rates in key progression courses through course specific support or revision;
   - Install a new degree audit system to increase the ability of students to track progress; and
   - Identify and assist 10-20 graduate students annually to return to complete degrees.

2. Support curricular integration by
   - Enacting the General Education revisions proposed by the Task Force on General Education as approved by the faculty;
   - Increasing departmental participation in Communication Across the Curriculum;

- Expanding the use of portfolios as a tool to integrate General Education and major requirements;
- Revising assessment practices to emphasize instructional improvement in core competencies for General Education; and
- Developing interdisciplinary curricula that may include linked courses, team teaching, and undergraduate to graduate bridge programs.

3. Increase opportunities for students to engage in high impact practices by
   - Increasing funding for research experiences for undergraduates;
   - Expanding internship opportunities;
   - Expanding opportunities for international experiences;
   - Increasing the availability of courses incorporating service learning;
   - Increasing the availability of early entry and fast track graduate programs; and
   - Engaging students in all fields in honors opportunities.

   To support these initiatives, we will
   - Create an Office of Undergraduate Student Research;
   - Build and renovate classroom, laboratory, and library space to create student-centered learning environments;
   - Renovate and expand the Career Center to facilitate implementation of the Career Curriculum;
   - Adopt innovative models for honors programming that will permit the participation of larger numbers of students;
   - Seek a Phi Beta Kappa chapter to recognize outstanding students in the arts and sciences;
   - Complete the installation of the Honors College and Levine Scholars Program in Levine Hall;
   - Expand professional development programming in the Center for Graduate Life; and
   - Reorganize support for the use of instructional technology to promote innovation for both residential and online education.

4. Expand the portfolio of programs offered to meet student need and demand by
   - Launching the Doctor of Business Administration (DBA);
   - Pursuing approval for degrees in
     o Education Research, Measurement, and Evaluation (PhD)
     o Cyber Security (MS)
     o Health Systems Management (BS)
     o Respiratory Care (MS)

- o Architecture (MS)
- o Management (MS)
- o Civil Engineering (PhD)
- o Athletic Training (MS);
- Conducting feasibility studies for programs in
  - o Bioengineering (MS, PhD)
  - o Master of Fine Arts (MFA)
  - o Systems Engineering (MS, PhD)
  - o Rhetoric and Writing (certificates and minor)
  - o Women and Gender Studies (BA)
  - o Global Studies (PhD);
- Exploring partnership opportunities with international institutions for collaborative degree programs, particularly in the humanities;
- Expanding the impact of the Data Science Initiative through new concentrations in existing programs;
- Developing international conduits through the Office of International Programs to support the recruitment and exchange of undergraduate and graduate students;
- Deploying resources to support distance and summer programs as recommended by the Distance Education and Summer School Task Force report; and
- Increasing faculty lines to support the growth of curricular offerings. In support of this objective, we will,
  - o Continue analysis of faculty workload to identify areas of need;
  - o Ensure effective onboarding of new faculty, including adjunct faculty;
  - o Support the Multicultural Postdoctoral Fellowship Program to increase faculty diversity, particularly in STEM; and
  - o Expand mentoring and training opportunities for graduate faculty to ensure guidance for new faculty and excellence in mentoring and advising for all graduate students.

5. Develop Library programs, collections, and services for a diverse student body that integrate with and support the curriculum at all levels by
- Aligning collections and equipment budgets with identified campus needs;
- Creating a robust and strategic presence online and in distance education programs;
- Implementing library technologies that strengthen the integration of library instruction into the curriculum;
- Increasing access to e-books and open educational resources;

- Creating functional, innovative, and specialized library spaces to meet faculty and student needs;
- Assisting faculty and students in integrating Special Collections and other primary source materials into course activities; and
- Integrating assessment practices across the Library.

Goal 2: To expand the frontiers of knowledge and leverage discovery for the public benefit through innovative programs that span the disciplines in research, creative activities, and graduate education.

Our research programs have expanded with the addition of major new programs such as the Data Science Initiative and the Energy Production and Infrastructure Center and expansion in areas including urban education, public policy, nanoscale science, new media, and health analytics. These are inherently interdisciplinary areas and interdisciplinary research will continue to be a strong focus on the campus.

Research and graduate education are mutually supportive enterprises and growth in research has supported both the expansion of existing graduate programs and the development of new master's and doctoral degrees. In the past decade, we have increased the number of doctoral degrees awarded annually from 43 to 128 and master's degrees from 852 to 1,413. Extramural funding has grown in several areas in the Colleges of Liberal Arts & Sciences, Computing and Informatics, Education, and Engineering.

Infrastructure for research has been expanded with the renovation or construction of facilities and improvements in administrative processes for grants and contract support. The opening of the PORTAL building has created new opportunities for university-business partnership and the expansion of technology based entrepreneurship. Library resources have been expanded to provide greater access to research materials and to support digital publication of faculty and student research. The potential exists for a new science building to further expand research opportunities, create space for interdisciplinary science, and address critical space needs for growing undergraduate programs. In the near term, completion of the bioinformatics building would permit the creation of interdisciplinary space for related programs.

Goal 2 Objectives:
1. Continue the expansion of graduate education by
   - Developing and executing enrollment plans for all master's and doctoral programs;
   - Implementing an automated degree audit system to track progression and graduation;

- Seeking additional sources of funding for competitive stipends and tuition grants through research grants, fellowships, training grants, and philanthropic gifts;
- Balancing growth in domestic and international student populations to ensure diversity;
- Offering accelerated and early entry master's programs in all colleges;
- Identifying new opportunities for professional science master's programs;
- Setting expectations for external research support and training of graduate students; and
- Establishing a strategic number of new programs that meet state and national need and demand.

2. Grow the extramurally funded portfolio of research and scholarship by
- Continuing to support and invest in successful, funded areas that can achieve national prominence including advanced manufacturing, bioinformatics, cancer immunology, cyber security, energy, special education, and sociology;
- Expanding investment in emerging areas through focused hiring of new faculty in areas including applied GIS, bioengineering, data science, and community health;
- Building collaborative, interdisciplinary structures in targeted areas including environmental health science, nanoscale science, digital humanities, and science education;
- Enabling submission of large-scale collaborative proposals through effective pre-proposal support and post-award project management;
- Recognizing and publicizing faculty and student achievements; and
- Setting targets for proposal submission.

3. Support the conduct of faculty research, scholarship, and creative activities by
- Ensuring that all research administration personnel are positioned to deliver accurate, timely, and customer focused pre- and post-award support;
- Providing support and professional development for postdoctoral scholars;
- Streamlining research administration processes through adoption of improved systems for pre- and post-award functions, grants and

contracts reporting, and integration of regulatory functions such as conflict of interest;
- Supporting faculty applications and nominations for prestigious fellowships, such as the Guggenheim;
- Ensuring that compliance programs are accredited (e.g., AAALAC) as appropriate and meet national standards of best practices;
- Effectively deploying, and when possible expanding, the Faculty Research Grant Program, Charlotte Research Institute funding programs, and opportunities for reassignment of duties;
- Providing maintenance support for shared equipment;
- Consolidating animal use in Woodward Hall;
- Assessing the status of depreciating equipment and developing a plan for funding replacement;
- Continuing support of Project Mosaic's efforts to expand interdisciplinary research programs in the social, behavioral, and economic sciences; and
- Supporting research methods and statistical consulting services in Project Mosaic.

4. Increase collaboration with local industry to support research and enhance the student experience by
- Establishing startups, existing businesses, and business-related non-profits in the PORTAL building and other Millennial campus facilities;
- Expanding Ventureprise engagement campus-wide to promote exposure to and education in entrepreneurship and technology transfer for students and faculty;
- Promoting faculty research expertise to engage industry and other potential partners in collaborative research and scholarly activities, including centers and institutes; and
- Systematically connecting students through the Career Center and college programs to a broad range of professional development, internship and employment opportunities.

5. Develop Library programs, collections, and spaces that support research, discovery, and knowledge creation by
- Conducting a comprehensive space study to establish the basis for development of facilities and spaces that meet the needs of undergraduate and graduate students as well as faculty;
- Expanding the Library's presence in academic buildings to provide access to Library services;

- Implementing and maintaining an institutional repository to provide open access to the scholarly output of the University; and
- Developing and implementing plans for the life cycle of digital resources and physical collections, for collection development, and for digital preservation.

Goal 3: To engage community partners in mutually beneficial programs that enhance the economic, civic, and cultural vitality of the region.

Faculty, students, and staff have achieved significant community impact in a wide range of areas including arts and culture, education and literacy, healthcare, and housing and neighborhood development. For students, community engagement yields opportunities for service learning, internships, volunteerism, research, and leadership development. For the community, major initiatives like the International Festival or the NC Science Expo bring large numbers of community members to campus to experience the breadth and depth of campus life and experiences. College-based lectures, performances, and exhibitions and University-wide lecture series share the work of faculty or others with the community or use the convening power of the University to engage community members in issues of contemporary interest. Through the Charlotte Research Institute and centers such as the Center for Real Estate, University research and expertise promotes regional economic development. The programs of the Urban Institute, including the Institute for Social Capital, have had positive impact on the social and civic vitality of the region. Exponential: The Campaign for UNC Charlotte offers a new opportunity to promote awareness of the many ways in which the University integrates research and graduate education to meet the economic, technological, and societal needs of the community broadly defined.

In addition to the many singular events that are hosted by the campus or the many faculty led initiatives that are conducted on a daily basis, significant partnerships have been forged with major local institutions such as the Levine Museum of the New South and Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools. The challenge for the campus is not a lack of presence in the community, but a lack of understanding of our contributions and their impact.

Charlotte is experiencing an economic and demographic transformation. As we continue to expand our contributions to the community, we have the opportunity to achieve a position of national leadership through community engagement designed to promote learning and to strengthen research to address the challenges of urban communities.

Goal 3 Objectives:
1. Build a comprehensive understanding of the role of the University in the community by
    - Establishing practical data collection strategies to identify the range of community engagement activities conducted throughout the region;
    - Analyzing data to categorize and assess the impact of engagement in broad categories;
    - With the collaboration of University Advancement staff, publicizing, both internally and externally, engaged scholarship, partnerships, and impact; and
    - Reconfiguring the Distinguished Service Award to highlight the engagement of faculty and external partners in the life of the community.

2. Translate basic research into applied knowledge for dissemination to the public by
    - Increasing offerings in Continuing Education and Executive Education;
    - Offering a robust program of public talks, symposia and public speaking engagements for faculty in the community through college programs and centers; and
    - Providing technical assistance to community partners and agencies.

3. Serve as the trusted source for information and research for regional issues by
    - Creating a Charlotte Community Partnership Portal through the Urban Institute to partner colleges and community-oriented research centers for reciprocal engagement of campus and community organizations;
    - Expanding the use of the Institute for Social Capital community database for evaluation of county-wide programs;
    - Increasing formal relationships between units in Metropolitan Studies and academic departments and programs to support and disseminate research on regional issues; and
    - Developing outreach through the Military Affairs Committee and partnerships with local support groups to meet the educational needs of veterans.

4. Identify mechanisms for sustained presence in the community in select fields by

- Exploring the potential for co-location of research and outreach teams in community agencies;
- Taking advantage of the light rail connection to expand the use of the Center City Building to offer degree programs and a variety of informal educational experiences to non-traditional students;
- With active participation of community partners, create library services and programs that acquire, create, preserve, and provide access to resources documenting the history of the Charlotte region; and
- Using the Mobile Arts Experience model to bring programs and performances to communities in the region.

5. Build on successful models of student engagement such as the minor in Urban Youth and Communities, the Charlotte Community Scholars, and the Charlotte Action Research Project to expand the opportunities for service learning, informal education, and action research by
   - Creating a funding program to seed research directed at urban issues; and
   - Working across colleges and support units to build a structure for reciprocal learning relationships with community stakeholders to identify the critical needs of the community to address through research, degrees, and certificate opportunities.

Across all three goals, we depend on our information technology infrastructure and recognize that our **Information Technology Services** (ITS) division must have a commitment to the following objectives that advance the goals of the IT Master Plan adopted by the University,

1. Building and sustaining reliable and secure systems by designing, implementing, and managing all services and systems to produce predictable system behavior, reliable service delivery, competitive costs, data integrity, and integrated security.

2. Enhancing teaching, learning, and research excellence by
   - Providing and supporting enterprise level instructional and research computing technologies to support both residential and distance education;
   - Designing and delivering programs which meet the pedagogical goals and needs of the faculty and instructional staff of the University; and
   - Providing high quality faculty professional development to improve learning and the advance the scholarship of teaching.

3. Ensuring technical innovation, agility, and alignment by
   - Using advanced information technology and expertise in cyber security, and data analytics to solve problems in new ways and at new scales to serve our academic goals and inform our administrative operations;
   - Supporting rapid response to our customers' changing educational and business needs; and
   - Ensuring effective use and alignment of enterprise resources.

4. Implementing proactive customer service and solutions by
   - Providing the highest quality of customer service to our students, faculty, staff by responding to customers' needs in a timely and effective manner; and
   - Maintaining open communication with campus constituencies.

5. Valuing collaborative engagement by partnering with the colleges and administrative units in the use of information technology to develop fully accessible, cost-effective, innovative, and comprehensive solutions and services to advance the University's mission.