

Provost Report for Faculty Senate

September 2016

Submitted by Alison Morrison-Shetlar, Provost

SACSCOC / QEP

- *DegreePlus* - Western Carolina is in the business of changing lives. We do that not simply by delivering degrees but by teaching, mentoring and inspiring students to discover their passion and their life path. Our students learn more than the content of their discipline; they are taught to lead, to work in teams, to be professionals, and to respond appropriately to cultures different than their own. DegreePlus aims to educate students on the value of their experiences through the use of an experiential transcript that not only logs their extra-curricular activities, but also organizes them according to student learning outcomes associated with these professional skills.
- *Skills* - We've settled on four skill areas: teamwork, leadership, professionalism and cultural responsiveness. The Core Tenets Subcommittee (or the Definitions Subcommittee, as I've been referring to it), is taking a blended approach to pulling together definitions for these. That is, they are combining some of the thoughtful, more formal definitions that came out of the literature and the August 5th DegreePlus retreat, with outcomes to be distilled from actual activities that already exist.
- *Proposal* - We have hired a writer to put together the official 75 page (+ 25 page appendix) proposal to be turned in to SACSCOC on Feb. 2nd. Drew Virtue is an assistant professor in the English department and specializes in technical writing.
- *Pilot* - The committee has identified the pilot student population: Honors College and Academic Success Program students and is debating whether to roll this out to all those students or just the first year students. We also welcome the Office of Leadership and Student Involvement in the Department of Campus Activities to the committee discussion. Under Mike Corelli's direction, they have well-established activities that focus on leadership, one of our four skill areas. Additionally, they have extensive data on student participation in those activities which can serve as a control for comparing to participation in this new pilot group.
- *Assessment* - The assessment subcommittee has been focusing on reviewing nationally recognized rubrics and the DegreePlus assessment process. A current working model (subject to change!) is a three-level assessment: (1) exposure and experience – students earn points by participating in recognized events until they reach some threshold level of participation, (2) reflection and articulation – students attend a special DegreePlus conference as they complete level one where mentors help them reflect and respond to their experiences. Reflections would be submitted to a trained (and paid) group of evaluators (faculty/staff/grad students), (3) integration and application – students participate in some form of a capstone experience that requires them to utilize one or more of their acquired skills. The assessment group is working on the details with the understanding that what is created as an assessment plan must be achievable with the resources we will have.
- *Recent Events* - An open forum for questions and feedback is scheduled Sept. 28th, 3-4:30 in the UC Theater. Also, Carmen will be doing a piece for the October *Faculty Forum* to address some faculty concerns that have been expressed.

- *Compliance Certification* - Thanks to everyone for the contributions to our SACSCOC accreditation reaffirmation thus far. Our compliance certification was submitted on September 6th and the off-site review will occur in November.

As you may know, we expect to hear the results from the off-site review in early December. We will submit a Focused Report in February to address any concerns raised by the off-site committee. We have less than two months to interpret the off-site results, contact affected units, and develop a written response with appropriate evidence. To be proactive in anticipating potential SACSCOC-related work, I am asking deans and division-heads to make sufficient leadership in their colleges or divisions aware and available to help create adequate responses during December and January. We will do our best to avoid work during the official university holiday period.

Enrollment Projections Process

The biennial enrollment projections process is mandated by the UNC system, and is utilized to prepare 2017-19 budget priorities for the system. The system utilizes an enrollment change funding model which depends on the enrollment projection data we provide. Data elements include student headcounts, student credit hours, and average annual FTE (full-time equivalent) enrollment.

At WCU, an interdisciplinary team of academic and administrative leadership participates in the enrollment projection process, and the team includes expertise in institutional research and data analysis, budget and finance, and enrollment planning. While it is often easier to think in terms of enrollment headcount, it is actually generated student credit hours (SCHs) which is utilized in determining funding growth for both the system and WCU.

This is a high-stakes project, as all new funding for the institution relies on accurate enrollment projections. If we under-project enrollment, we don't receive as much funding as we could. If we over-project enrollment, we risk having to return funds to the system.

Final projections will be submitted to the UNC system on Friday, October 14, 2016.

Fall 2016 Census Report

Information regarding the fall 2016 Census Report can be found at the following link:

<http://www.wcu.edu/learn/office-of-the-provost/oipe/student-body-profiles.asp>

NC Promise current status

Several individuals at each of the three NC Promise campuses have been working with their respective counterparts to try and get clarity around a number of outstanding issues in 3 different buckets: Financial, Legislative, and Marketing. From WCU, those individuals included, in addition to the Chancellor and Provost are Melissa Wargo, Mike Byers, Meredith Whitfield, and Robin Oliver. The teams issued summary white papers on each of the three buckets of questions to Chancellors Belcher, Cummings, and Conway.

At last BOG meeting, a number of individuals from the three NC Promise campuses met with Andrew Kelly, UNC Senior VP for Strategy and Policy, and Jonathan Pruitt, UNC Senior VP for Finance and Budget, to debrief those white papers, get clarity from GA staff directly, and to outline a path forward. Here is an update on the questions we've gotten some clarity or new information on and those still outstanding:

Financial Questions that we reached consensus on:

1. Do the NC Promise rates apply to Distance Education?
ANSWER: Yes, rates apply to regular delivery and distance education.
2. Do the \$500 and \$2,500 rates apply to only the first 8 semesters, per § 116-143.9? Or are the rates statutory in perpetuity?
ANSWER: The rates are statutory and would only change with a change in legislation. The rates do not expire and would apply to all students for any/all semesters attempted.
Note: The assumption that the NC Promise rates might expire was tied to the Fixed Tuition legislation, which legislatively, is a completely separate program. General Administration has pointed out that it should not be assumed that the two are connected.
3. How should the rates be implemented for non-freshman during the 2018-19 year?
ANSWER: The rates do not expire and would apply to all students for any/all semesters attempted. This would include non-freshman.

Financial Questions still outstanding:

1. On September 19, 2016, CFO's discussed with OSBM the \$40 million appropriation, who in turn confirmed that the funding is recurring only and not additive. As a result, NC Promise Schools:
 - a. Must rely on the full funding of enrollment growth model in future years.
 - b. Are exposed to disproportionate funding risk if enrollment growth is not fully funded by the legislature.
2. Is there flexibility on the \$40 million in Year 1?
 - a. OSBM said we would have to request the General Assembly to increase the amount as part of the expansion budget request.
 - b. Campus officials will have to work with UNC General Administration and the Governor's office to make this a budget priority in the long session.
3. Do the NC Promise rates apply to summer school?
 - a. If yes, the state must fund the gap.
 - i. The state currently does not fund summer school
 - b. If no, NC Promise schools anticipate that students will (almost immediately) abandon participation in summer school. This will have the unintended consequence of slowing student progress toward degree completion (contrary to legislative intent).
4. What will be the NC Promise parallel to campus tuition increases?
 - a. What objective benchmark should increases in our "Real Rates" of tuition be tied to? NC Consumer Price Index?

Legislative Questions that we reached consensus on:

- We must lobby for an adjustment to the \$40M appropriation even if only for Year 1
- We should begin conversation with legislators about funding for summer enrollment for the 3 NC Promise campuses.
- WCU and UNCP will NOT lobby for an increase in the 18% cap
- Draft proposed language for tweaks to the legislation
- Target senate and house leadership: Rep. McGrady, Rep. Horn, Rep. Brawley, Rep. Moore, Sen. Tillman, Sen. Barefoot, Sen. Berger, Sen. Rabon and Sen. Robinson

Legislative Questions still outstanding:

- How will BOG incorporate NC Promise into strategic plan?
- Who will be the 'champion' for NC promise moving forward?

Marketing Questions that we reached consensus on:

- NC Promise will be a separate program from the fixed-tuition program.
- Each campus will have their own marketing strategy
- Must develop a student/parent oriented FAQ

Marketing Questions still outstanding:

- What is our capacity?
- What is our response to NCCCS?
- What is GA's role in marketing?

There are four EPiC sub-committees, with membership from Student Affairs, Academic Affairs, Faculty Senate, and faculty and staff from across the University that are working on NC Promise.

Merit Increase

The merit increase process for the Division of Academic Affairs provided delegation of the 1% pool to unit heads for distribution based on merit.

A New Look for WCU Graduates



Beginning in the fall of 2016, those graduating WCU with baccalaureate degrees will wear purple WCU-branded robes as they cross the stage. Pamela Degraffenreid, Director of Catamount Stores, brought the proposal for this robe change before both the Commencement Committee and the Executive Council. Both bodies have approved the new design, and we are all eagerly anticipating the new look for our graduating class of 2016!

Our fall semester Commencement ceremony is scheduled for Saturday, December 17, 2016; spring ceremonies will be held Friday and Saturday, May 5th and 6th of 2017.