

University of North Carolina Tomorrow Commission FINAL REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

What was the purpose of this study?

The purpose of the University of North Carolina Tomorrow Initiative was to determine how the University of North Carolina can respond more directly and proactively to the 21st century challenges facing North Carolina both now and in the future through the efficient and effective fulfillment of its three-pronged mission of teaching, research and scholarship, and public service. The outcomes of this Initiative will guide and shape current and future priorities, resource allocations, existing and future programs, and strategic plans and missions of the University of North Carolina, its 17 constituent institutions and its affiliated entities to ensure that UNC¹ not only *becomes* more proactive and responsive to the needs of our state, but *remains* so in the years to come as the people of North Carolina continue to confront the myriad challenges of the rapidly changing, knowledge-based global economy and environment of the 21st century.

How did we collect the data?

The UNC Tomorrow initiative was guided by UNC Board of Governors Chairman Jim Phillips, UNC President Erskine Bowles, and the UNC Tomorrow Commission, a 28-member blue-ribbon group including business, education, government, and nonprofit leaders from across the state. The Commission was charged with the responsibility of learning what the people of North Carolina need from their University and making relevant recommendations to the UNC Board of Governors. The Commission's work was guided by the expert research, analysis, and advice of the UNC Tomorrow Scholars Council, a diverse 14-member panel of faculty from across the UNC system.

To become more responsive to the needs and challenges of our state, UNC first had to identify what those needs and challenges are. This was accomplished through visits to all 17 UNC campuses, 11 Community Listening Forums held across the state attended by approximately 2,700 members of the public, 11 Faculty Forums involving all 17 UNC campuses attended by almost 1,000 faculty, students, and staff, an online survey to which approximately 6,700 people responded, and a blog hosted on the UNC Tomorrow website. Through these efforts, UNC Tomorrow listened to what the people of North Carolina, our faculty, and our students told us they needed from their public University to help address the significant challenges facing their own future and that of their communities, regions, and our state as a whole.

¹ "UNC," as used in this summary, refers to the University of North Carolina, its 17 constituent institutions, and its affiliated entities established under Chapter 116 of the North Carolina General Statutes.

What are our major findings and recommendations?

4.1 Our Global Readiness

Major Finding: *UNC should educate its students to be personally and professionally successful in the 21st century and, to do so, should enhance the global competitiveness of its institutions and their graduates.*

4.1.1. *UNC should prepare its students for successful professional and personal lives in the 21st century, equipping them with the tools they will need to adapt to the ever-changing world.*

4.1.2. *UNC programs, especially research programs, should be globally competitive to ensure that they are globally relevant and significant.*

4.1.3. *UNC should promote increased partnerships between its own campuses and international universities and enhance the global awareness of its faculty and students.*

4.2. Our Citizens and Their Future: Access to Higher Education

Major Finding: *UNC should increase access to higher education for all North Carolinians, particularly for underserved regions, underrepresented populations, and non-traditional students.*

4.2.1. *UNC should increase access to its educational programs – including academic courses, degree programs at all levels, and certificate programs – for traditional students, non-traditional students, and lifelong learners.*

4.2.2. *UNC should continue ongoing efforts with the North Carolina Community College System to strengthen and streamline articulation between the two systems to develop a more seamless relationship.*

4.2.3. *UNC should be a model for accommodating the needs of persons with disabilities, including students, faculty, staff, and the general public.*

4.2.4. *UNC should maintain affordability and increase financial aid options.*

4.2.5. *UNC should increase the educational attainment of all underrepresented populations, especially African-American male and Hispanic students.*

4.2.6. *UNC should help ensure that all students are better prepared to enter and succeed academically in college.*

4.3. Our Children and Their Future: Improving Public Education

Major Finding: *UNC should be more actively involved in solving North Carolina's public education challenges.*

4.3.1. UNC should improve the quantity, quality, and geographic distribution of public school teachers.

4.3.2. UNC should help address the shortage of science and math teachers, especially in rural areas.

4.3.3. UNC should strengthen efforts, in cooperation with the North Carolina State Board of Community Colleges and the Community College System, the North Carolina State Board of Education, and the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, to enhance the teaching skills of public school faculty and the leadership skills of public school administrators.

4.3.4. UNC should leverage its expertise, and increase collaborations with the State Board of Education and Department of Public Instruction, to lower our state's dropout rate and improve academic achievement in all public schools in North Carolina, especially those that high-priority and low-performing.

4.3.5. UNC should strengthen partnerships with the State Board of Education, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, the North Carolina Community College System, and our state's Independent Colleges and Universities to develop a seamless educational continuum from pre-K through higher education ("Birth-20").

4.4. Our Communities and Their Economic Transformation

Major Finding: *UNC should be more actively engaged in enhancing the economic transformation and community development of North Carolina's regions and the state as a whole.*

4.4.1. UNC should increase its capacity and commitment to respond to and lead economic transformation and community development.

4.4.2. UNC should focus specific effort in meeting the needs of rural and underserved areas of the state.

4.4.3. UNC should seek to align appropriate campus programs with the strategic economic plans (including sector and cluster plans) of their regions and the state, recognizing the unique differences and challenges of our state's economic and geographic regions.

4.4.4. UNC should promote the arts and cultural enrichment in all regions of the state.

4.4.5. UNC should facilitate inclusive discussions on important community issues.

4.5. Our Health

Major Finding: UNC should lead in improving the health and wellness of all people and communities in our state.

4.5.1. UNC should lead in improving health and wellness in North Carolina.

4.5.2. UNC should educate more health professionals.

4.5.3. UNC should lead in utilizing health information to improve health and wellness in North Carolina.

4.6. Our Environment

Major Finding: UNC should assume a leadership role in addressing the state's energy and environmental challenges.

4.6.1. UNC should embrace environmental sustainability as a core value among its institutions.

4.6.2. UNC should leverage its existing research expertise to address critical environmental and energy issues.

4.6.3. UNC should increase community awareness of environmental and sustainability issues.

4.7. Our University's Outreach and Engagement

Major Finding: UNC should become more directly engaged with and connected to the people of North Carolina, its regions, and our state as a whole.

4.7.1. UNC should apply, translate, and communicate research and scholarship to broader audiences.

4.7.2. UNC should develop a strategic plan for scholarly public service on each campus that is detailed and specific in definition and scope.

4.7.3. UNC should create a mechanism for applying research and scholarship to addressing significant regional and statewide issues.

4.7.4. UNC should communicate its resources and expertise to wider audiences.

What changes should be made within UNC to respond to the needs of our state?

5.1. UNC should examine the missions of its 17 constituent institutions in light of state and regional needs from a “system” perspective so that the programs and resources of all institutions serve the state and its regions in a manner that complement each other, maximize resources, and avoid unnecessary duplication.

5.2. UNC should review the academic planning process to ensure that the needs of North Carolina are fully considered in establishing and discontinuing degree programs.

5.3. UNC should lead the campuses in a refinement and adjustment of the tenure, promotion, and incentive system to place greater value on faculty involvement and engagement in applied research and outreach that will enhance the state’s competitiveness without decreasing support for teaching, basic research and scholarship.

5.4. UNC should prepare for wide-scale faculty retirement and increase efforts to recruit and retain high-quality faculty.

5.5. UNC should increase efforts to attract and retain high-quality staff at all levels.

5.6. UNC should continue to seek an efficient use of available resources in the fulfillment of its mission.

5.7. UNC should encourage and facilitate interdisciplinary and inter-institutional collaboration among its institutions.

5.8. UNC should continue efforts to establish accountability and performance measures that ensure and demonstrate transparently its success in carrying out its missions.

What are our next steps?

UNC is committed to not just *learning* what challenges face North Carolina both now and in the future – it is committed to *meeting* these challenges. Upon receipt of the UNC Tomorrow Commission’s report, the UNC Board of Governors and President Bowles will begin working with UNC institutions, affiliated entities, and General Administration to develop specific plans for how UNC will respond to the Commission’s recommendations, and in doing so, respond to the challenges facing North Carolina both now and in the future.

A full copy of the UNC Tomorrow Commission report is available at <http://www.nctomorrow.org/>.