Notes from the 11/20 Faculty Assembly Meeting

Incoming Faculty Assembly Chair Sandie Gravett led a discussion on retreat rights. The Board of Governors will address this issue in January. Present Chair Judith Wegner then led a discussion on the linkage between graduation/retention rates and enrollment growth. Questions about best measures of retention or program success will be undertaken by the FA Research Committee.

Senior VP for Academic Affairs Alan Mabe addressed the Assembly on planning and evaluation. Panels are reviewing new programs proposed under UNC Tomorrow; however, there is concern about funding for new programs. There is a draft white paper on online learning. The committee on non-tenure track faculty will consider the shift to tenure track faculty during spring semester, 2010. The strategic plan is being revised to include UNC Tomorrow themes. The teacher quality study is ongoing. Data will be collected to show how well graduates of UNC teacher preparation programs are helping their students learn.

Vice President for Finance Rob Nelson discussed proposed tuition increases. The legislature has proposed a $200 increase for fall 2010, with the money going into the general fund. Chancellor Bowles has proposed an alternative 6.5 % tuition increase cap, with the money raised going to the campuses. Up to 50% of increased tuition would be put toward need-based aid; 25% would go toward faculty salaries with the goal of having UNC salaries at the 80th percentile of schools in their Carnegie classifications; remaining funds would go to critical campus needs. The 5% holdback initiated in August 2009 could be used to offset an anticipated 2% cut in the 2010-2011 budget. He stated that he sees no state funds for new buildings for the next several years.

Acting VP for Human Resources Laurie Charest discussed the state health plan. Much of the plan is determined by statute. The plan is costly and has limited benefits, when compared to some other states, because the insured population in North Carolina is older than many other states, as NC state retirees are on the BCBSNC plan. Blue Cross/Blue Shield is paid from a contract to process claims; premiums go into the state health plan. Concerns had been expressed about BCBS using our premiums to lobby against the national health care plan proposal. It was explained that the money they used for lobbying did not come from our premiums, but from their administrative fees. HMO’s have quit bidding for the state health because guidelines require them to provide the full range of benefits. The proposed changes that center on smoking and obesity are part of a comprehensive wellness initiative. It is not clear how compliance will be monitored; monitoring will be contracted to a vendor and random testing is likely. The HIPAA waiver does not pertain to privacy regulations, but is a Title One waiver to allow smokers and people with BMI > 40 to be treated as groups that are treated differently than the general population (which HIPPA prohibits).

Research Director Courtney Thornton pointed out that campus-based teams can assist with a range of technology transfer, from designed products through teaching innovations. The published report “Innovate Collaborate Accelerate” (attached) lists six recommendations to advance innovation and technology development.

Senior Associate VP of Student Affairs Bruce Mallette reported on student health insurance and financial aid. General Administration is moving toward a hard waiver model, in which students must have a non-campus health insurance plan or purchase the University plan. A common base health insurance plan is being proposed for all UNC campuses. WCU is already on the hard waiver model; UNCCH and four other UNC campuses are not. Scholarships for the neediest students have decreased, but revenue raised by tuition increases will be used for student aid.

Assembly Resolutions:

From the Research Committee: The committee presented a resolution in support of centers and institutes. Resolution was approved.