



UNC Tomorrow Public Input

Summary of Major Issues Identified by Scholars Council

The UNC Tomorrow Commission received input from the people of North Carolina on the major issues and challenges facing their region and our state through a series of eleven Community Listening Forums and survey responses. Approximately 2,700 people participated in the Forums, and over 6,000 people responded to the survey. The members of the UNC Tomorrow Scholars Council have identified the major issues that emerged from this public input. The summary of these major issues (in no priority order) is followed by notable regional issues.

Engagement and Outreach

- Apply resources and expertise of UNC faculty to addressing important community and statewide issues, both by individual campuses and collaboratively across the UNC system (*develop stronger inter-institutional collaborations, create system-wide structure for collective faculty research on major issues and applied public policy*)
- Communicate resources and expertise of campuses to broader constituencies, and develop easy mechanisms for accessing those resources and expertise (*web-based portal*)
- Improve quality of life through cultural enrichment and community educational programs
- Facilitate community dialogue on important issues (*racism, social justice, cultural diversity, housing, civil society, immigration, gang activity*)
- Institutionalize mechanisms for campus/community interaction
- Target public service programs and projects on identified community, regional, and statewide issues and needs
- Apply and translate research and scholarship more directly to broader constituencies focused on identified needs

Access

- Improve access to higher education for students and adult learners through varied and innovative delivery mechanisms (*online, distance education, non-traditional class schedules such weekends and evenings, adult learning centers, satellite campuses, course delivery through cooperative extension, promote increased broadband access*)
- Enhance relationships with higher education partners (*More 2+2 programs, UNC course delivery on Community College campuses, joint programs with private colleges*)
- Make relationship with Community Colleges “seamless” (*stronger and more consistent articulation between colleges and campuses; better academic advising at both levels*)
- Improve educational attainment of underserved and at-risk populations, including males, African American males, Hispanics (both resident and undocumented students), low-income and first generation students
- Maintain affordability and increase financial aid options

Impacting the K-12 system

- Improve both quantity (more) and quality (better) of teachers, especially in math and science fields
- Prepare teachers for teaching in today's classroom environment (*increase technology competencies, enhance diversity and global awareness, innovate Colleges of Education, focus on 21st Century skills and knowledge*)
- Approach public education from a "B-12" ("birth to gradation") perspective, and enhance early childhood education
- Focus research and scholarship efforts on educational issues such as drop-out rate, improved pedagogy, and juvenile crime/gang issues
- Recruit more minority students into teaching profession
- Provide improved professional development programs (content-based and pedagogy) for K-12 faculty and administrators
- Upgrade and increase college readiness programs and motivate students to attend college (*orientation programs, early college, more information about financial aid, advising and counseling*)
- Address resource disparities and inequities in rural and underserved regions-

Economic Transformation and Community Development

- Promote and educate entrepreneurship
- Align campus' programs with strategic economic plans of their regions, new and emerging business and industry, and service-oriented economy
- Develop stronger partnerships with business and industry, economic development organizations, government agencies, and non-profit sector
- Link faculty expertise with regional economic needs (*strategic planning*)
- Streamline dissemination and commercialization of university technology and discoveries
- Facilitate access to university expertise in economic development (*single portal and point of contact*)
- Provide leadership training and programs to enhance leadership within communities across all sectors (business, non-profit, government)

Global Readiness

- Revise curriculum to educate students in skills needed in 21st century (*critical thinking, problem solving, oral and written communication, creativity and innovation, teamwork and collaboration, work ethic, professionalism*)
- Incorporate experiential learning opportunities in all degree programs (*internships, study abroad, undergraduate research, community service projects*)
- Expand students' exposure to different cultures and increase cultural awareness
- Increase student proficiency in STEM subjects (*science, technology, engineering, math*)
- Increase foreign language proficiency

Health

- Educate more health professionals (*nursing, physicians, dentists, allied health, mental health*)
- Educate more health care faculty (*especially nursing*)
- Increase diversity among health professionals
- Improve the health and wellness of the state (*address health care disparities among minority populations; improve distribution of health care professionals in underserved areas of the state, increase focus on gerontology*)
- Increase development and utilization of health information systems and databases

Environment

- Focus research on sustainability and alternative energy
- Take leadership role in energy conservation on UNC campuses and among UNC institutions
- Provide environmental education/literacy for both UNC students and the community at large

Higher Education Issues and Innovations

- Remain focused on core mission of teaching, and move students effectively and efficiently to degree completion (*improve retention and graduation rates*)
- Support and enhance research activities at Research 1 campuses and other campuses
- Eliminate and avoid unnecessary duplication of programs, and tailor internal processes such as funding and faculty rewards to campus' responsiveness and achievement of measurable goals (as opposed to abstract measures such as Carnegie classifications)
- Increase diversity and global awareness of UNC faculty
- Restructure faculty reward system to promote civic and community engagement
- Remove barriers to and promote inter-institutional collaboration and multi-disciplinary collaboration among faculty and students
- Improve minority business participation in UNC building, contracting, and procurement
- Develop specific strategies to serve underserved regions and populations of the state
- Become more nimble, flexible, and responsive to regional and statewide needs in curriculum and program offerings and administration
- Prepare for wide-scale faculty retirement as baby-boomer generation ages

Major Regional Issues

Listed below are specific issues that emerged at each Forum that are not already captured in the summary of major themes listed above:

Greenville

- Increase engagement in rural economic development in eastern NC
- Address shortage of dentists
- Support development of ECU Family Practice Center to address shortage of family practice physicians in the region
- Focus research and engagement on poverty of region
- Prepare for increased retirement population in coastal communities
- Strengthen Cooperative Extension services

Rocky Mount

- Significant concern about loss of best and brightest students from the region (“brain drain”)
- More delivery of higher education in the region (in lieu of converting NC Wesleyan to a UNC campus)
- Consider establishing specialized institute in Rocky Mount, such as a Teacher Education Institute
- Maximize Gateway Center as means to stimulate economic transformation and increase access to higher education courses and programs
- Expand SBTDC’s ability to provide services to small businesses
- Bring value-added expertise to agriculture community
- Work with 3 Community Colleges in the area

Wilmington

- Address shortage of engineers in the area by establishing a 4-year engineering degree program at UNC-W
- Establish special programs to meet the needs of the military at Camp Lejeune (Onslow County) which currently has 50,000 personnel and family members with an \$18bil impact and is slated to expand as a result of BRAC(140,000 people in region directly connected to Camp Lejeune.)
- Offer more programs in transportation, supply-chain management and logistics (connects to expansion of NC Port in Wilmington)
- Provide more support for research and programs in marine sciences, coastal management, biodiversity and pharmaceuticals
- Utilize faculty expertise to help address problems associated with rapid growth (transportation, water & sewer, infrastructure)
- Increase focus on gerontology to respond to increase in retirees moving to the area

Fayetteville

- Special programs should be established in FSU to serve the training needs resulting from the Base Realignment and Closure Act (BRAC), which will result in the transfer of 6,366 positions to Fort Bragg by 2011, or approximately 25,000 to 30,000 people to the area
- Need for more licensed social workers in southeastern NC
- Focus on mental health issues, both in educating more mental health professionals and increasing access to mental health services
- Increase town participation in campus planning
- Facilitate community conversations on racial issues
- Need doctoral level programs in public administration and educational administration

Elizabeth City

- Tap Tidewater Virginia region for student recruitment and business partnerships
- Develop new education and training programs that fit the region, including aquaculture, fisheries, biofuels, biotech, construction management, hospitality & tourism
- Support continued development of Aviation Research Park and aviation sciences programs
- Significant concern about loss of best and brightest students from the region (“brain drain”)
- Advocate for expansion of broadband internet infrastructure so entire region has high-speed internet access
- Stimulate biotech research and development to capitalize on rich farmland of the region
- Address health disparities in region, particularly among minority and low-income groups
- Enhance the nursing program; address nursing shortage
- Educate more teachers; address teacher shortage in K-12

Charlotte

- Establish a medical school in Charlotte, and focus on translational medicine
- Expand research capabilities at UNC-C in nanotechnology, photonics, and bioinformatics should be enhanced
- Stimulate development of arts community
- Plan for significant student enrollment growth
- Stronger connections and partnerships with business community, including financial institutions (ex: proposed Center for Quantitative Finance)
- Kannapolis Research Center provides major opportunity for the area

Hickory

- Establish a UNC campus in Hickory
- Establish a School of Science and Math in the Western part of the state
- Recognize significant ethnic diversity in the region (Hispanic and Hmong communities) and increase educational attainment of minority students
- Help community transition from loss of textile and manufacturing jobs, and change cultural tradition of being able to secure good employment in these industries without higher education
- Significant concentration of working mothers (with children under the age of 6) in the area – increase educational access for this group
- Need more engineers and workers with high technical skills

Asheville

- UNC Asheville should become a national center for climate change research, including establishing advanced degree in atmospheric sciences
- Increase research and programs in environmental sciences, sustainability, and alternative energy
- Focus research and programs on health wellness and natural medicine; support development of Health and Wellness Center
- Establish 3rd / 4th year medical residency program in Asheville
- Capitalize on biodiversity of the region; expand research activities and programs at the NC Arboretum Bent Creek Institute, UNC Center for Craft, Creativity and Design
- Strengthen programs for arts and crafts, and stimulate specialized manufacturing
- Become more engaged with Asheville HUB economic strategies (strategies include technology, health and wellness, biotech, sustainable land use, small business development, and the arts)

Sylva

- Establish a satellite campus of WCU in Hendersonville
- Establish a Center for Aging in Hendersonville, and develop research and programs responsive to in-migration of retirees into the region
- Increase educational attainment of first-generation students in rural mountain communities
- Specific programs needed in the west include a masters in communication, degrees in financial planning, pharmacy, energy conservation, universal design, health and fitness, and law enforcement
- Tap into Georgia and South Carolina to attract intellectual capital and maximize economic development opportunities (consider tuition reciprocity with these areas)
- Address shortage of social workers in the region

Triad

- UNC assistance needed in developing regional planning and helping strengthen regional collaboration and focus, especially in light of significant job losses in manufacturing, textiles, and tobacco industries
- Become more engaged in economic transformation by helping existing industries like furniture evolve in modern economy)
- Focus research and curriculum on region's 5 economic strategic clusters (aviation, transportation & logistics, advanced manufacturing, biotechnology & life sciences, and finance)
- Support further development of Gateway Research Park; Joint School of Nanotechnology can serve as system-wide model for inter-institutional collaborations
- Serve as facilitator of community dialogue on racial issues
- Maximize existing UNC resources before developing new programs (ex: NCA&T School of Engineering)

RTP

- Support and enhance research at Research Extensive campuses to continue to develop world-class, cutting edge innovations that historically have been strong economic drivers in the region and the state
- Stimulate development of the arts
- Increase collaborations with non-profit sector
- Develop stronger marketing programs involving campuses to generate new jobs in pharmaceuticals, biotech, advanced medical industries, nanotechnology, vehicle component parts and logistics
- Strengthen collaborations between public and private HBU's in the region, and increase support for public HBU's
- Increase partnerships with international institutions and foreign countries