

**STRATEGIES FOR DISTINCTION**

**A Report to Chancellor Richard R. Eakin**

**by**

**The Strategic Planning Advisory Group**

**East Carolina University**

**October 1989**

**DRAFT**

Dr. William A. Bloodworth, Chair  
Mr. John S. Bell  
Mr. Donald B. Boldt  
Dr. Rosina C. Chia  
Mr. Virgil S. Clark  
Dr. Roger G. Eldridge  
Dr. DoriAnn Finley

Mr. Kenneth R. Hammond  
Mr. David R. Hart  
Ms. Kelly Jones  
Dr. James M. Joyce  
Mr. Max R. Joyner  
Dr. James L. Smith  
Dr. Sam N. Pennington  
Ms. Sue A. Hodges, Ex-officio

October 6, 1989

**Members of the University Community:**

This report of the Strategic Planning Advisory Group reflects many hours of work by individuals who brought a variety of perspectives to the task of identifying strategic directions for East Carolina University.

I commend the members of the Group not only for the results of their work but also for its basic qualities: candor, open-mindedness, intelligence, and--in dealing with the chair of the Group--a distinctive mix of indulgence and pertinacity.

Please read the report carefully and reflectively. Discuss it with your associates, and attend one of the forums on October 30 and 31 to discuss it with members of the Advisory Group.

Also, direct any written comments to Ms. Sue Hodges, Office of Planning and Institutional Research. Such comments will be carefully considered. The Advisory Group now needs your advice in order to complete its work.

Sincerely yours,

*William A. Bloodworth, Jr.*  
William A. Bloodworth, Jr.

## Introduction

The Strategic Planning Advisory Group recommends that East Carolina University become *a doctorate-granting, culturally pluralistic, service-oriented institution offering a rich undergraduate education.*

As a way to achieve this potential, the Advisory Group proposes ten strategic goals for the University:

- *To enhance our elements of distinction*
- *To achieve distinction in undergraduate education*
- *To become pluralistic in ethnicity, gender, and culture*
- *To enroll academically proficient and talented students*
- *To expand research activities and doctoral programs*
- *To rededicate ourselves to the improvement of teacher education and public schooling*
- *To promote the University to external publics in effective and aggressive ways*
- *To develop a master plan for campus facilities*
- *To increase and improve the use of information technology*
- *To manage the University strategically*

While these goals have separate identities, they are also interdependent. For instance, the members of the Advisory Group believe that our distinction in undergraduate education must grow in large part from a faculty capable of expanded research activities and doctoral-level instruction. We believe that we can attract better students only through effective promotion of a University which has committed itself to undergraduate education that is high in quality and distinctive in nature. The goals related to facilities, information technology, and strategic management are also means of assistance to other goals. Success in all areas must be guided by a sincere interest in cultural pluralism.

Some goals will seem more important than others. In fact, the members of the Advisory Group believe that the goal of distinction in undergraduate education is of overarching importance. Yet we do not think that this goal can be achieved without commitment to and success in other areas. Please note that although the goals are numbered later in the report, the numbers are provided for convenience only and do not indicate priority. Each goal is important, and the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

Taken together, these goals provide the strategic directions which, in the view of the Advisory Group, will ensure a truly distinctive public university.

## The Work of the Group and the Format of the Report

The Advisory Group arrived at its understanding of strategic goals through study of the earlier planning reports and long, intensive sessions of reflection, discussion, and writing. From the beginning of the process, thanks to the efforts of the three initial planning groups, the members of the Advisory Group were able to understand and agree upon widely shared hopes for the University.

We were aided by several self-imposed exercises, the most important of which was an effort to identify what we call our "elements of distinction," the continued enhancement of which we present as a strategic goal. This effort drew not only on the earlier identification of strengths and weaknesses but also on the analysis of external factors and the assessment of institutional values.

A second exercise was our effort to understand the various groups, especially students, whom the University serves. Our effort resulted in the later section of this report entitled "Students and Other Clientele." While this section does not present goals, it states some anticipated trends and offers a brief description of University clientele.

A third exercise was an examination of the mission statement approved by the Faculty Senate. As a result of this examination, we offer a slightly revised statement. We believe that the only substantive change lies in our use of "doctorate-granting" rather than "comprehensive regional" as our institutional category, but we think that our editorial work has improved the clarity of the statement. The last section of the report presents the revised statement; the original document is attached as an appendix.

We hope, however, to draw primary attention to the strategic goals and to recommendations for specific action. To do this, we have arranged the next section of the report in such a manner that it first restates and briefly explains each of the goals introduced above. Then, in the case of every goal except the one regarding elements of distinction, the section lists recommended action. The actions listed under each goal represent steps which, in the opinion of the Advisory Group, *must* be taken in order for the University to accomplish its goal. These may not be the only steps to be taken, but for the Advisory Group they are necessary ones.

Following the section on goals, we present the discussion of students and other clientele and then the revised statement of mission. There are two appendices: one providing summaries of the three earlier planning reports, and the second one providing the statement of mission as recommended by the Faculty Senate.

We hope that readers of this report will find it to be a practical and reasonable step forward in our strategic planning effort.

### Strategic Goals and Actions

In this section the goals are numbered only for the sake of reference. Recommended actions are lettered for the same reason.

#### *1. Goal: Enhance our elements of distinction.*

As of the Fall semester 1989, we enjoy a number of institutional advantages, the most significant of which we list below. They all deserve careful development in the future. The foundation of this list, we believe, is our tradition of public service. Although nowhere in this report have we listed public service as a separate goal, our level of achievement in public service

and as a cultural center is a general matter of proud distinction for the University. Under no conditions should we retreat in the slightest from our motto, *servire*.

Also, members of the Advisory Group came to feel strongly that in the future the University must be more selective in the use of resources for enhancement than it has in the past. This opinion is specifically reflected in the goal of strategic management, but it is also a factor in the listing of elements of distinction.

The following individual elements of distinction are especially important to note and to build upon:

- A long institutional history of teacher education and the largest teacher education program in North Carolina
- A School of Medicine with a growing national reputation and an effective focus on primary care and regional service
- A tradition of academic program development which has been responsive to regional needs in a wide range of human service and health professions
- A strong, accredited School of Business that is highly valued within the regional business community
- Widely recognized programs in the performing and visual arts
- Individual faculty of national distinction in the College of Arts and Sciences
- Particular faculty strength and initial planning for doctoral programs in the areas of coastal resources management, rhetoric and composition, biophysics, maritime history, and educational leadership
- Recognition as the cultural center for eastern North Carolina
- A highly visible and academically reputable athletic program
- Recent distinction in international studies
- Constant improvement in the number and total dollar amounts of research grants and contracts
- Increasingly effective efforts to expand private financial support
- Nationally recognized efforts in business-university cooperation and successful initiatives in regional economic development
- Strong alumni, community, and political support
- One of the nation's largest cooperative education programs
- A strong, widely recognized tradition of faculty governance
- A small-college atmosphere in a major university, with individual, caring attention to students
- A commitment to strategic planning

## **2. Goal: Achieve distinction in undergraduate education.**

This is a primary goal for the University and the foundation for all else that we do. In order to meet the basic mandates of our mission, to attract superior students, and to have a positive impact on systems of education below the university level, we must ensure undergraduate education of the highest possible quality.

The following actions must be taken in order to achieve the goal of distinction in undergraduate education:

- a. Commitment to the total growth of students, with particular efforts to aid students in the development of self-confidence, a sense of accomplishment, and integrity
- b. Faculty development, valid assessment measures, and other means which guarantee teaching effectiveness and promote excellence in teaching
- c. Full development of the superior faculty resources of a doctorate-granting university, with a commitment by each University faculty member to excellence in all areas of performance, including (1) teaching, (2) research, scholarship, and creative activity, and (3) service
- d. Appropriately small classes at the freshman and sophomore levels
- e. Accessibility of senior faculty by freshmen and sophomores
- f. Orientation programs and other student support activities, including academic advising, dedicated to the concept of total student development and aimed at improving retention
- g. Undergraduate instruction which includes the following emphases throughout the curricula:
  - International awareness
  - Understanding of and respect for cultural diversity
  - Values and ethics in the making of decisions
  - Communication, analysis, and critical thinking
- h. A general studies program which provides (1) a substantial and consistent core of studies in the liberal arts, mathematics, and sciences and (2) strict limits on the specification of general studies courses by department and school curricula as part of major degree requirements
- i. The development of distinctive, campus-wide initiatives in (1) writing, (2) mathematics, and (3) science intended both to improve the learning of our students and to establish models of institutional initiative in these areas of national concern
- j. Superior library resources incorporating the best available information technology

## **3. Goal: Become pluralistic in ethnicity, gender, and culture.**

This goal uses the term *pluralism* in the sense used by a 1986 report by Brown University to describe an active process where members of all ethnic and racial groups are asked "to explore, understand, and try to appreciate one another's cultural experiences and heritage." In this sense, pluralism means not just *having* diversity but also *creating* it and drawing institutional strength from it.

Pluralism as a goal must guide all activities of the University. We must take the following positive and active steps to promote the acceptance, understanding, and appreciation of human diversity not only at East Carolina University but also in the society at large:

- a. Active programs, with specific goals, to recruit and retain minority students, faculty, and staff
- b. Sensitivity to matters of gender, ethnicity, and culture in policies, procedures, and curricula
- c. Programs and services, especially in Student Life, to meet the special needs of minority and non-traditional students and to assist all students to understand and respect cultural diversity

**4. Goal: *Enroll academically proficient and talented students.***

There is wide agreement that we should strive to attract better students. We must ensure that all of our students are able to meet the demands of the curricula, challenge the faculty intellectually, and become independent learners for the rest of their lives.

The following actions are necessary to accomplish this goal in the future development of the student body:

- a. Standards of admission intended (1) to assure that every student admitted will be capable of college-level work and (2) to encourage better academic preparation in grades K-12
- b. Student recruitment efforts, including increased scholarships, and procedures designed to attract an increasing proportion of superior students
- c. Increased emphasis on the effective recruiting of minority and non-traditional students
- d. Focused efforts on the recruitment of graduate students and an increase in assistantships, fellowships, and tuition waivers

**5. Goal: *Expand research activities and doctoral programs.***

The mission of the University mandates advances in research and graduate education. While ensuring its commitment to undergraduate education of the highest quality and to master's degree programs of a comprehensive nature, we must also expand our doctoral programs in a careful and selective manner and increase our research efforts.

Advances in research and doctoral programs require the following:

- a. Superior libraries, information technology, and services to support faculty research, scholarship, and creative activity
- b. Incentives and rewards, including the effective use of overhead receipts from grants and contracts, to encourage and support research initiatives
- c. The fostering of collaborative investigations by faculty from different disciplines
- d. Establishment of new doctoral programs in coastal resources management, rhetoric and composition, biophysics, maritime history, and educational leadership
- e. Continued, targeted growth in programs at the doctoral level that capitalize on institutional strengths and respond to environmental opportunities

**6. Goal: Rededicate ourselves to the improvement of teacher education and public schooling.**

This goal should be understood as a crucial reiteration of a point made in the list of elements of distinction. East Carolina University was founded to prepare teachers and maintains the largest teacher education program in North Carolina. Yet state and national needs for better teachers and better schools require that we reinvigorate our efforts.

One of the most important contributions that this University can make to the region is to assist in the strengthening of the public schools. In general, we must encourage public school reforms, provide necessary leadership in the form of innovative ideas and concepts for school teachers and administrators, and dedicate research efforts to a better understanding of public education.

Specific, necessary action includes the following:

- a. High expectations in all areas of performance for faculty involved in teacher education
- b. Ongoing evaluation of education curricula throughout the University to assure high standards and coherence
- c. A review of the structure and governance of teacher education to determine how best to prepare public school teachers and administrators at all career levels
- d. Establishment of a doctoral program in educational leadership
- e. Additional resources for the Teaching Fellows program and other intensified efforts to encourage highly qualified students to enter the profession of public school teaching
- f. Communication with alumni, friends, teachers, students, and school administrators about the needs of schools

**7. Goal: Promote the University to external publics in effective and aggressive ways.**

University advancement has been effective in recent years, but the effort must be University-wide and even more effective in the future. The manner in which the University is promoted to external publics affects our ability to attract students and gain funding. Moreover, the responsibility for effective promotion lies with *all* members of the university community. Our effort in the future will require the following:

- a. Increased efforts in marketing East Carolina University as an institution known widely for intellectual excitement and stimulation
- b. Consistent and frequent articulation of University goals
- c. An attractive, overarching, and coherent system of visual identity
- d. Effective advocacy for state resources by trustees and other supporters
- e. Greater involvement in fundraising by the entire University community
- f. Maintenance of a reputable and academically strong athletic program for both revenue and non-revenue sports
- g. Constant attention to the positive impact of the University on eastern North Carolina



**8. Goal: Develop a master plan for campus facilities.**

Future development of the University requires professional attention to buildings, landscaping, traffic, safety, and ambience. The following steps are required in this effort:

- a. Commitment to the idea of a campus which is welcoming, safe, comfortable, aesthetically pleasing, and conducive to learning
- b. Employment of a facilities planning firm to design a master plan, possibly involving an initial architectural competition

**9. Goal: Increase and improve the use of information technology.**

The Advisory Group recognizes that the teaching, research, public service, and support functions of the University must rely heavily on information technology. To increase and improve the use of such technology, we recommend the following action:

- a. Better accessibility, coordination, and support of information technology for faculty
- b. Increased opportunities for student use of computers
- c. Greater attention to the development of instructional software by faculty and recognition of such work as both instructional activity and research
- d. Improvement of all campus communications systems

**10. Goal: Manage the University strategically.**

The Advisory Group believes that no effort at strategic planning can be successful without strategic management. The University community must realize--as members of the Advisory Group realize--not only that management must function with specific goals in mind, but also that no university can be all things to all people.

The first action recommended below is especially important. In effect, it asks that all programs, both existing and proposed, be measured against our mission, our clientele, our opportunities for distinction as a university, and our strategic goals. Our faculty, administrators, and staff will want to marshal their efforts behind those programs which have the greatest chance of success, that is, those which score well against these measures. We fully expect that as a natural consequence of strategic planning, the University family may well see opportunities in the discontinuation or combination of some programs.

Strategic management at East Carolina University will require the following action:

- a. Ongoing review of academic programs to determine those to be enhanced for the future, those to be maintained, those that may need to be reduced or combined, and those that may need to be discontinued for such reasons as duplication with programs in community colleges or costs which exceed benefits
- b. Ongoing review of the University organizational structure and communications processes, with the initial results to be reflected in the organization implementation plan
- c. Greater flexibility to facilitate interdisciplinary efforts
- d. Replacement of the current system of periodic unit evaluation with one that staggers the schedule of evaluation, relies more upon goals and objectives, and incorporates the use of reviewers and consultants from outside the unit being evaluated

- e. Systematic processes to monitor institutional effectiveness and to evaluate overall student development
- f. A system of financial control that provides for flexibility in budgeting and effectively links the allocation of resources to University goals

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Members of the Advisory Group believe that these ten goals and accompanying actions, while ambitious and in many cases difficult to achieve, constitute a reasonable set of strategic directions for the next few years. Most of the goals, of course, should become permanent operational features of the University. But we also know that the nature of strategic goals allows for their deletion or revision if future conditions so dictate, and we certainly anticipate the addition of other goals in the coming years.

### **Students and Other Clientele**

Through teaching, research, and service, East Carolina University meets the needs not only of enrolled students but also those of other individuals and groups as well as the general public. For the sake of reference, all of those whom we serve may be considered our clientele.

#### *Students*

In Fall 1989 the total number of students at East Carolina University surpassed 16,000, increasing over the previous year by approximately three percent. Even with steady efforts to improve the overall quality of our students, we anticipate future enrollment growth between two and three percent per year. At an average growth rate of 2.5 percent per year, our total enrollment in Fall 1995 would be over 18,000 students, and the total would reach 20,000 by Fall 1999.

The number of non-traditional students has increased steadily in recent years. This general increase should continue. Students in this category tend to be older, commuters, enrolled on a part-time basis, and female more often than male. We anticipate future efforts to attract more non-traditional students, especially those of high academic ability.

The number of students served by off-campus undergraduate courses has declined dramatically over the last fifteen years. However, we continue to enroll large numbers of graduate students in specific off-campus programs, especially in education, social work, and nursing. This trend should continue. Also, we anticipate an increase in self-supporting, non-credit courses both on and off campus.

In Fall 1989 approximately eighty-three percent of our students were undergraduates. The remaining seventeen percent were graduate or medical students. With the expansion of research efforts and doctoral programs, we anticipate growth in the proportion of graduate students. The emphasis on recruiting medical students interested in primary care medicine should continue.

Out-of-state students come mostly from the eastern seaboard. We anticipate that the current eighteen percent limit on out-of-state freshmen will continue. Ninety-four percent of our graduate students are in-state; many are regional professionals pursuing degrees on a part-time basis. We can expect selective standards of admission to apply to both in-state and out-of-state students. Out-of-state admissions will be used increasingly for students with outstanding special talents.

Half of our students come from outside the thirty-three eastern counties of North Carolina. Among our North Carolina students, many come from ten counties with excellent school systems. Despite the low per capita income in the state, our students tend to come from families of higher income and educational levels than those of students from similar universities nationally.

In Fall 1989 only nine percent of our students were black. This percentage represents a decline in black students over the past few years. Efforts to increase this percentage must continue and should be aided by our commitment to cultural pluralism. We anticipate concerted work aimed at the recruitment of outstanding black and other minority students.

Finally, we anticipate the development of better articulation agreements with two-year schools to accommodate the needs of students in eastern North Carolina who initially do not meet the higher admission standards of the University.

### *Other Clientele*

Our research programs serve government, business, industry, and health organizations in addition to the international community of scholars in each field of study. We give special emphasis to research and scholarly activity which benefit eastern North Carolina. Over the past five years, faculty research awards in both numbers and dollars have increased more than fifty percent. We anticipate a continued increase in research awards.

Our public service grows out of teaching and research efforts. The University serves cultural, health-related, educational, and economic needs of the region by providing assistance to businesses, government, public schools, community groups, and individuals. We expect to continue our leadership in university-business cooperation.

We anticipate that the health care needs of eastern North Carolina citizens will increasingly be met by the various programs and agencies of the Division of Health Sciences.

For residents of the region in general, the University will continue to serve as a center for culture and public activities, including performing arts, intercollegiate sports, lectures, conferences, and exhibits.

Alumni, donors, and other friends of the University are especially important clientele. The University must continue to encourage these groups to take active roles in the life of the University and must involve them as much as possible in outreach programs.

## **Statement of University Mission**

The Advisory Group recommends that the following statement of the University mission be adopted. It involves only one substantive change in the statement recommended by the Faculty Senate: that we identify ourselves as a doctorate-granting university. The other changes are essentially stylistic. For the sake of comparison, the statement recommended by the Senate is Appendix B of this report.

### *Preface*

The University Mission Statement expresses the purposes and character of the University. The Statement is the basis for all University planning. It guides the actions of the University and directs the development of criteria for periodic evaluation.

### *General Mission*

As a public, doctorate-granting institution, East Carolina University is committed to education, research, and service. Its primary mission is to provide students and the public with the means to pursue knowledge and its application. Academic units and other University programs cultivate scholarship, advance knowledge, and promote beneficial public service in order to raise the quality of life in eastern North Carolina and discover solutions to the significant problems of human society. Undergraduate, graduate, and post-graduate programs emphasize education, research, and creative activity in the arts and sciences and in a selected range of professional studies.

### *Educational Mission*

The fundamental educational goal of the University is to provide students with a substantive general education and to enable students and other constituents to secure specialized and multidisciplinary knowledge. Through instruction and other educational activities, the University is committed to developing each student's ability to discover, evaluate, and communicate knowledge, to make informed decisions, and to recognize a decision's ethical dimensions. The University is committed to imparting a sense of responsible citizenship, nourishing an understanding of the interdependencies of humankind and the environment, enhancing individual potential, and fostering a lifelong commitment to learning, self-discipline, and human well-being. The University strives to serve all who can benefit from these commitments, and to address the educational needs of the mid-Atlantic region.

### *Research Mission*

The primary research mission of the University is to advance knowledge, to encourage traditional and non-traditional creative activity, to solve significant human problems, and to provide the best basis possible for professional practice. To these ends, the University supports both pure and applied research. These activities enrich culture, increase knowledge and understanding, create an atmosphere of learning for the student body, and establish the University as a productive social resource.

### *Service Mission*

The service mission of the University is to provide leadership in the pursuit of educational, research, and cultural goals. Medical clinics, libraries, theatres, museums, athletic facilities, and other physical and human resources provide public services which guide and support the cultural, economic, education, health, and social aspirations of the public.

### *Nature of the University Community*

The University expects academic integrity of faculty, staff, and students. The University guarantees academic freedom and shared governance, and is dedicated to the pursuit and achievement of excellence. The University values the contribution of each member of the community, and guarantees equality of opportunity without regard to religion, race, national origin, sex, age, or handicap.

**Appendix A**  
**Summaries of Earlier Reports**

**[To be included in final report]**

## Appendix B

### Original Draft Mission Statement

#### *Preface*

The University Mission Statement expresses the University's primary functions. It is the basis for University, College, School, Unit, and Curricula planning documents, and so determines the results expected by the University. Together with the long- and short-term goals expressed in planning documents, the Mission Statement defines the University's character, guides its actions and activities, and directs the development of criteria for periodic evaluation.

#### *General Mission*

East Carolina University is a comprehensive regional institution committed to education, research, and service. Its mission is to provide its present and emerging constituencies the means to pursue knowledge and its applications. The University's programs endeavor to cultivate scholarship, advance knowledge, resolve problems, and promote beneficial public service. Through them the University seeks to address the challenges of an interconnected world. Undergraduate, graduate, and post-graduate programs emphasize education, research, and creative activity in the liberal arts, the sciences, and the professional disciplines. The University's educational, research, and service activities are available to those constituencies it can best serve given its resources, strengths, and priorities.

#### *Educational Mission*

The University's fundamental educational goal is to provide its students with a substantive general education, and to enable its student and other constituencies to secure disciplinary and multidisciplinary knowledge. Through instruction and other educational activities, the University is committed to develop each student's ability to discover, evaluate, and communicate knowledge, to make informed decisions, and to recognize a decision's ethical dimensions. Its educational activities undertake to impart a sense of responsible citizenship and to nourish an understanding of the interdependencies of humankind and the environment. They should enhance individual potential, and foster a lifelong commitment to learning self-discipline, and physical and mental well-being. The University strives to serve students who can benefit from its educational activities, and to meet the educational needs of the Mid-Atlantic region.

#### *Research Mission*

The University's primary research mission is to advance knowledge, to encourage creative activity, to resolve disciplinary and multidisciplinary problems, and to provide an empirical basis for professional practice. The University supports pure and applied research in those areas particular to its character. Applied research also aims to benefit constituents in geographical regions the University can serve effectively. Traditional and non-traditional creative activities propose to enrich culture, knowledge, and understanding. Through its faculty, staff, and students, and its material and information holdings, the University intends to be a productive resource for research and creative activity.

#### *Service Mission*

The University's service mission is to provide leadership in the pursuit of educational, research, and cultural goals. Coequally, the University resolves to be responsive to its members and to furnish public services that guide and support the cultural, economic, educational, health, and social aspirations of the people of eastern North Carolina, and of other regions it can benefit. The Institution's medical clinics, libraries, theaters, museums, and its athletic and other facilities provide important resources for continuing public service.

#### *Nature of the University Community*

The University endorses academic freedom and expects academic integrity on the part of faculty, students, and staff. It promotes shared governance and mutual respect. The University cherishes excellence and values the contribution of each member of the community. It guarantees equality of opportunity without regard to religion, race, national origin, sex, age, or handicap.