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## COMPARISON OF VCAA'S PRODUCTIVITY INDEX AND VARIOUS ECU STRATEGIC PLANNING DOCUMENTS

- ECU's 1999 Mission Statement reminds us that the university's motto is "servire," meaning "to serve," and it seeks to meet this obligation through the following three interrelated components of its mission:
  - To Serve through **EDUCATION**
  - To Serve through **RESEARCH** and **CREATIVE ACTIVITY**
  - To Serve through **LEADERSHIP** and **PARTNERSHIP**

The first component might be said to lead to the use of student credit hours and undergraduate degrees conferred as a measure of productivity. The second component might lead to counting the number of publications and even the number of grant proposals or awards. The third component does not appear to play any role in productivity as currently defined by the VCAA.

Let's look more closely at this third component:

"The service mission of East Carolina University, as an institution with a tradition of strong regional ties and public outreach, is to provide leadership and to engage in partnerships supporting public education, health care and human services, cultural activities, and regional development."

This third component would lead us to engage in outreach and community enhancement activities. The only way for them to enhance productivity is if they lead to increased student credit hours or if they are tied in some way to grants or gifts. While they may indeed do so, the cause and effect relationship between these activities and credit hour increases would be unverifiable, and thus impossible to factor in. Furthermore, they cannot even lead to publications that are valued since these publications would not usually be considered genuine scholarship or research, at least not in our field.

Because they do not figure in the calculations of the productivity index, we are being urged to eliminate any activities tied to this component of ECU's mission in order not to jeopardize our funding.

- In the **CHALLENGES FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING** we find the following statements.

- "Technology will change what we do in instruction, scholarship, service and administration. Therefore, the university will need to have appropriate training opportunities for its students, faculty, and staff. All segments of the university will need to be open and ready to adapt to rapid change. The university will require an anticipatory mindset in making its resource allocation decisions."

According to the productivity index, the retraining and adaptation that are necessary to meet this challenge would be considered "unproductive" unless they lead directly to increased enrollment, grants or publications. Again, while they may indeed do so, the cause and effect relationship between these activities and credit hour increases would be unverifiable, and thus impossible to factor in. Thus, the productivity index is not informed by "an anticipatory mindset."

Consequently, we should refuse to devote time to meeting this challenge in order not to jeopardize our funding.

- "Learning as a university process is changing. It will no longer be defined solely by the achievement of degrees.  
Attention will need to be given to life-long learners and processes.  
Attention will need to be given to the needs of non-traditional students."

Addressing the needs of learners of all sorts can only be taken into account by the productivity index if it leads to an increase in the number of student credit hours or to the number of grants. The time and effort necessary to realize such an increase (e.g. advertising such opportunities, advising and other "customer focused" activities) is not factored in. As mere service it has no place.

Consequently, we should refuse to devote time to meeting this challenge in order not to jeopardize our funding.

- "The university will need to be more customer focused."

In order to be more customer-focused, we would have to devote more time to outreach, advising, co-curricular activities, etc. These are all activities that do not figure in the productivity index.

Consequently, we should refuse to devote time to meeting this challenge in order not to jeopardize our funding.

- In the 2000-2005 STRATEGIC PLANNING GOALS, we find among the strategic goals and associated strategies for change and improvement in the following.

- "Goal 1: Expand - on and off campus - the educational opportunities provided by 20%;

To expand educational opportunities, East Carolina University will

- Develop and implement an integrated university marketing plan.
- Improve its competitiveness for superior undergraduate and graduate students.
- Improve recruitment, retention, and graduation rates.
- Enhance responsiveness to the needs of non-traditional students and life-long learners."

- "Goal 2: Enrich the learning environment of students

- Preserve ECU's tradition of being a large institution with a small campus feel.
- Create an environment that fosters the recruitment and retention of a more diverse student body, faculty, staff, and administration.
- Provide opportunities and experiences that encourage students to develop to their fullest potential both in and out of the classroom.
- Ensure that students have frequent access to and interaction with faculty.
- Promote a balanced educational experience for students to develop their skills in inter-personal interaction, communication, technology, and leadership.
- Ensure that students have regular and easy access to quality advising.
- Strengthen opportunities for faculty to develop and apply innovative teaching strategies and for students to learn through new, innovative experiential settings.
- Develop interdisciplinary curricula at the undergraduate and graduate level that integrate knowledge, theory, and practice across the traditional disciplines."

- "Goal 4: Extend external leadership and partnership roles in eastern North

To extend its external leadership and partnership roles in eastern North Carolina, East Carolina University will

- Work collaboratively with local communities, industry, health care, and education to address problems of mutual interest that directly affect the well being and quality of life of the citizens of the region.
- Provide leadership and information for sustainable economic development and improvements in education, health care, social and human services, and the natural and cultural environment of the region, especially for under-served populations and rural communities.
- Develop partnerships with health care, education, government, public service agencies, and industry for the coordination and application of information technologies to their needs.
- Explore how to better link people in the region with others outside the region who have successfully dealt with comparable concerns.
- Incorporate more student community service activities in instructional and co-curricular activities.
- Increase collaboration with city, county, and other regional governmental and non-governmental agencies to address growth related issues.
- Support the transition of the region to a technology-based economy through increased commercialization of its basic and applied research.
- Seek targeted federal funds and other external funding to help meet regional needs.

- "Goal 6: Improve the quality and efficiency of its services and operations

Continuous improvement in the quality and efficiency of university services and operations is a critical dimension for the institution's future success. The university will face serious financial and space constraints; therefore, it is essential that the campus assess its instructional and administrative processes on a recurring basis, that it reengineer those processes to improve service and efficiency, and that it build on its tradition of service by adopting a culture of customer focus. In addition, the university will need to strengthen its infrastructure for securing external financial support, both from private donations and from grants and contracts. Similarly, the university must meet the challenge of focusing its resources to create "centers of excellence" and to provide the infrastructure for continued growth of its educational programs and scholarly activity. "

All of the goals and strategies in the first group are directly related to increasing enrollment. Consequently they are also directly linked to service in one form or another, including advising, outreach, efforts to recruit and retain students, mentoring, co-curricular activities. Nonetheless, the faculty will not receive any credit for engaging in these activities using the formulas of the productivity index, unless these activities lead quickly to an increase in the number of student credit hours (or to external funding --see Goal 4 in particular). Yet again, the cause and effect relationship between these activities and credit hour increases would be unverifiable, and thus impossible to factor in. Moreover, these are the very activities that we are being urged to eliminate in order to focus on Goal 3.

- "Goal 5: To be a leader in the development and application of information technology to higher education, East Carolina University will

- Provide faculty, students, and staff with appropriate access to state-of-the-art services and technological infrastructure. "

**Meeting Goal 5 will require faculty members to devote time to retraining and developing skills (especially in the area of technology) and new course materials. Once again these activities will figure only indirectly and unverifiably in the measure of productivity and then only if they lead to increased enrollment or external funding.**

- "Goal 3: Increase the productivity of faculty, staff, and students in research and creative activity

Being an outstanding doctoral university will require the campus to place increased effort on research and creative activities. This means providing faculty, students and staff with time and resources to pursue funding, execution, and publication of research and creative activities.

- Encourage the development of university and system-wide collaborative and interdisciplinary research programs.
- Enhance support and publicity for research and creative activities that bring national and international recognition to the university.
- Increase recognition of and resources for faculty and student research and creative activity.
- Increase by 50 % the grant and contract dollars secured over the next five years.
- Strengthen the campus infrastructure that supports the application for and implementation of grants and contracts.
- Increase student involvement in research and creative activity processes across the curriculum."

**In the productivity index, 40% of the total comes from activities related to this goal.**