

East Carolina University

STRATEGIC ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT
TASK FORCE

Preliminary Report To Faculty Senate

October 2008

Task Force Challenge

- Develop a plan to direct ECU's efforts in enrollment management and student success
- Ensure recommendations are consistent with ECU Tomorrow, UNC Tomorrow, the Engaged University Carnegie Classification, SACS accreditation and the expectations of a graduate research university
- Solicit input from a broad range of constituencies across the university through vigorous and informed debate
- Utilize special topic subgroups to provide expertise in key areas
- Recommend *strategic* initiatives for enrollment, retention, and graduation which build upon ECU's reputation as a university of choice

Key Overarching Principles

- SEM involves making choices
- Strategic decisions that support ECU's commitment to providing a quality university experience to many people will not allow us to be all things to all people
- ECU must squarely face the tradeoffs and make decisions through informed thought and action rather than deciding through inaction
- The process is not without risk, but the benefits are far greater than the risks
- SEM is an iterative process – ever changing and flexible
- *The SEM process must be driven by hope in the future, not by fear of tomorrow*

Current Enrollment Data

- ECU's **2017** enrollment projections submitted to UNC General Administration are:

Undergraduates	26,082
Masters/Doctoral	10,989
First Professional	578
Total	36,018
DE Only	11,805

- ECU's fall 2008 census of 27,703 exceeds Fall 2008 projections by 1,052 students. The 2008 incoming freshman class of 4,516 exceeded our year 2012 FT/FT student projection of 4,510 students.
- **The challenge is to determine a recommended enrollment growth process consistent with our mission and the quality experience we desire for students**

Critical Issues Identified

- The most critical issues impacting Strategic Enrollment Management in our institution are:
 - Defining and Embracing our Access Mission
 - Improving Student Retention and Graduation
 - Determining Effective Academic Mix
 - Providing Optimal Infrastructure
- These issues are inter-related and a recommended solution for one issue will affect another
- Thus, the recommendations need to be considered in the context of the whole and implemented with an understanding of the impact of one on the implementation of others
- The committee purposefully does not provide specific enrollment targets since that decision must be informed by faculty and programs and data.

ISSUE 1: Defining & Embracing our Access Mission

- We are known for our commitment to “access” for students throughout the state, particularly in Eastern NC
- More than 60% of our students come from west of I-95
- ECU must adopt a common definition of access as it implies different things to different people
- For the purposes of SEM:
Access is defined as setting reasonable admissions standards and admitting those who meet those standards
- Those academic standards will become more rigorous over time, with a tension between improving quality and sustaining our commitment to access
- With an increase in standards, ECU may experience an initial enrollment decline in first time/full time freshmen and transfer students.
- A proactive plan to assist potential students in meeting ECU’s admission requirements is critical to honoring our commitment to access.

GOAL:

To be the leader in providing a quality university experience to students who meet reasonable admissions expectations while ensuring that all students are prepared to meet these standards and to succeed academically.

Representative Recommendations:

- Create gateway programs targeted at under-represented students and families
- Continue to expand statewide outreach through distance education programs
- Increase integration and cooperation with Community Colleges and UNC institutions
- Increase students and faculty from under-represented groups
- Establish the “Pirate Promise” Scholarship Fund

ISSUE 2: Improving Student Retention and Graduation

- Our admissions and retention standards, as well as pressure to grow, often conflict with the political, financial and social realities of improving student retention and student graduation
- In the future, our success and state funding will be measured by how well we attract, keep and graduate our students
- We must maintain and improve the academic standards that faculty believe are appropriate to our programs and student body
- Task force recommendations are appropriately more-focused on the undergraduate population

GOAL:

Increase student retention and graduation rates

Representative Recommendations:

- Slow the rate of growth
- Admit students with increased academic qualifications
- Create programs targeted at recruiting and retaining high performing students
- Support students in achieving academic success
- Implement academic policy changes
- Enhance student financial and operational support services
- Expand and enhance programs and support functions in Student Affairs

ISSUE 3: Determining Effective Academic Mix

- Decisions are often made based on the overall mix of academic programs, specifically the balance between graduate and undergraduate and their relative funding streams
- ECU can no longer afford to make significant program resource allocation decisions without obtaining and using program –related financial and operational data.

GOAL:

Strategically evaluate and re-evaluate the breadth and depth of our programs and degrees.

Representative Recommendations:

- Support graduate programs without negatively impacting undergraduate programs, undergraduate teaching, or ECU's mission
- Establish and implement program financial and capacity metrics and standards
- Assess efficiency and effectiveness of current support structures and operations of graduate education
- Improve ECU's position as the predominate provider of online and off-campus distance education in the UNC system

ISSUE 4: Providing Optimal Infrastructure

- ECU's academic, support services and physical infrastructure has not kept pace with its rapid growth

GOAL:

Rebuild a university infrastructure sufficient to meet the needs of students, faculty, and staff.

Representative Recommendations

- Create and appropriately staff an Office of Enrollment Management
- Provide resources to accommodate space needs
- Enhance Instructional Technology services
- Strengthen the Office of Institutional Planning and Research
- Implement industry best practices with respect to responsiveness, accuracy, customer satisfaction, timeliness and operational accountability
- Enhance all aspects of safety for faculty, staff, students and visitors
- Create university-level operational process review and improvement team to evaluate cross-unit policies and operations to identify and eliminate bottlenecks, redundancy and inefficiency

Report Format:

- Draft report is organized by the 4 primary issues with each issue having a set of recommendations
- Timeline (immediate, short term and long term) is proposed for each recommendation
- Responsible parties are identified for each recommendation with office/unit listed first being one to initiate work on recommendation
- Appendices are provided that list the recommendations without discussion and also classify the recommendations by timeline and by responsible parties.

Task Force Timeline:

- SEM Task Force will solicit input through various means, including faculty, staff, and student forums. Comments may also be sent to the Task force at SEMTF@ecu.edu
- Forums are scheduled on:
October 15, 2008, 2-4 pm at Mendenhall Great Rooms 1 and 2
October 16, 2008, 3:10 – 5 pm at Health Sciences Building 1120
October 23, 2008, 3-5 pm at Mendenhall Student Center 244
Students/Grad Students forum:
October 28, 6:30-8:30 pm at Mendenhall Student Center 212
- Draft report is available on Enrollment Management website at www.ecu.edu/enrollment
- Preliminary report to Trustees in November 2008
- Final report to Trustees in February 2009