Faculty Assembly Report
October 25, 2013

The UNC Faculty Assembly met on October 25, 2013 at the UNCGA Building in Chapel Hill.

Meeting Agenda and Materials (UNC Faculty Assembly Web Site)

President's Remarks
Tom Ross, President

President Tom Ross gave remarks to the assembly and answered questions. He began with an update on the status of the ongoing search for a vice president for technology-based learning. The search has been narrowed to four people, and the process continues. Some have criticized the appearance that this item is being moved out of Academic Affairs. President Ross maintains that it is not being moved out of academic affairs. Ross stated that this person will work with academic affairs and that the system leader on this matter will have a higher profile because he/she will report directly to Pres. Ross.

President Ross addressed the General Education Council core competency requirements. He said that this topic comes from an interest of members of the UNC Board of Governors (as well as nationally) about whether people are learning anything. Some see our curriculum as so broad that students do not learn. There are many different views of what the core curriculum should be. Business leaders want core competencies including writing, communicating, and working in teams. If we want an effective system, we must be clear what we are teaching, and we must have a way to determine what our students learn. This part of education is changing. We used to emphasize teaching content. What helps our graduates is the understanding of how to find the information they need to make decisions. President Ross stated that he is not interested in ineffective assessment for the sake of having assessment.

Questions and Discussion

Q: Some kinds of competencies require one-on-one interaction. This is contrary to many trends like massive open online courses (MOOCs) and requires increased funding.

A: MOOCs and online courses are not going to close campuses if we are doing it correctly. Online courses are not as effective as face-to-face instruction. A key aspect of education is the depth as opposed to the breadth.

Q: How engaged is the General Assembly on this issue?

A: This varies from member to member and depends on the current hot news topic. *Academically Adrift* (Richard Arum and Josipa Roska, *Academically Adrift: Limited Learning on College Campuses*, University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 2010.) had a great influence, and many people took it as the truth. We have some uphill battles with the legislature. They are focused more on efficiency than on educational excellence. Ross mentioned that he appreciates the time it takes to interact with students about writing and what an effort it takes to do writing across the curriculum. He said that we are fighting anecdotal arguments and concerns such as the rapid inflation of the cost of education. The issue is that the cost is being shifted away from the state and to the student.

Q; Part of the problem is the growth of administration. It seems to keep growing.
A: This is a good point. For example, we have thousands of people employed to do nothing but compliance. We do audits and other activities as a result of legislation. There are many things we do (such as financial aid) that require people classified as administrators to support those activities. We need to determine how many people we have focused on compliance and make adjustments where possible. We also have faculty with administrative assignments, and we do not count these people consistently.

Q: Competencies are usually not about things we teach directly in our classes. We have to look at other things our students do outside of classes. How can we think more productively about the college experience beyond the curriculum?
A: There are a lot of people who think our students should be studying more than they are and that we should demand more (*e.g.*, more rigor). Running a campus is much like running a small city. Students need all aspect of life such as recreation, health services, dining, etc. We try to provide a lot of options for students and students take advantage of these. This is an important time in the lives of traditional students. They learn reasonability and emotional maturity. These are important, but we cannot force everything on students.

Q: There is a very serious concern about a recent reclassification of the number of hours to be teaching to be classified as full time. Fixed term faculty are having their assignments reduced to prevent them from having benefits.
A: There should be a discussion with the people involved in this. This is a question that faculty and universities across the country are trying to answer due to the Affordable Care Act.

Q: Do we want to incentivize the university to prevent faculty from having health insurance while requiring students to have health insurance.
A: We use the terms of the State Health Plan to determine eligibility for coverage. It is not an intention of GA to deny people health insurance.

President Ross seemed surprised by this question and suggested that we have conversations with those involved.

Comprehensive Articulation Agreement Update
Karrie Dixon, Senior Associate Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs

See Faculty Assembly documents:
        Attachment 1 CAA Materials
        Attachment 1a AA and AS Standard Curriculum DRAFT

In 1995 there was legislation requiring a plan for community college transfer of courses to the universities and a common course library for the community college system. As a result, we have the Comprehensive Articulation Agreement (CAA). There have been no changes to the library or the plan for 16 years. We are reviewing the community college course library and looking at course alignment.

One question we are asking is are universities adhering to the CAA? There is a legislative mandate requiring adherence to the new CAA and two reports to the legislature each year. The current CAA has 642 courses, and they are proposing elimination of 125 courses from the new agreement. There is a joint review steering committee (which includes Provost Sheerer of ECU) for the new CAA.

Last summer and this fall there were UNC Disciplinary Team Meetings comprised of faculty from UNC institutions to determine the courses at each institution to which the community college courses will transfer. There was another group that worked to determine a common 30 courses that would transfer to all institutions as part of the general education core. There will be meetings this fall to discuss course alignment and extend the list of common courses to 41. The revised CAA will have a universal 30-hour core as part of a larger general education requirement, which can vary by institution.

There are new curriculum standards for associate of arts (AA) and associate of science (AS) degrees. It is important that the community college advisor and student identify the university to which the student will transfer and ensure the student meets the requirements at that university.

The final CAA will be approved at a joint Board of Governors/State Board of Community Colleges meeting in February 2014.

Questions and Discussion

Q: There has not been a lot of communication about campus vetting. How and when
    will this occur?
A: Information was sent to the chief academic officers with instructions that it be
    shared with the faculty senates and other campus constituencies.

Q: How is the curricular alignment being handled, and how can the North Carolina
    School for Science and Mathematics (NCSSM) participate for its courses?

A: Soon there will be a conversation with the NCSSM faculty. The alignment piece consisted of identification of the general education courses and disciplinary teams of faculty that identified the common courses at the universities. Then there have been conversations between university faculty and community colleges about student learning outcomes for those courses.

Q: What is the difference between a general education and a pre-major course?

A: It could be that some courses listed as pre-major courses satisfy general education requirements. Send corrections if necessary, and the course lists will be updated.

Panel Discussion: System-wide Core Competencies
Panelists
Erin McNelis – Co-Chair, General Education Council (Assoc. Prof. of Mathematics, WCU)
Andrew Morehead – FA Vice-Chair; Member of the GEC Engaging Experts Committee (Assoc. Prof. of Chemistry, ECU)
Mike Wakeford – Faculty Assembly Executive Committee (FAEC) Member; Co-Chair, GEC Qualitative Assessment Committee (Liberal Studies Faculty, UNCSA)
Katharine Stewart, Associate VP for Academic Affairs and Learning Strategies
Moderator – Till Dohse (FAEC Member and Co-Chair of the FA Gen Ed Subcommittee)

See Faculty Assembly Documents:
> Attachment 2 Background Information For Core Competencies Discussion
> Attachment 2a System-wide Core Competencies: Recommendation to the General Education Council from the Subcommittee on Core Competencies
> Attachment 2b AAC&U Rubrics For Critical Thinking And Written Communication
> Attachment 2c Final Core Competency Survey Results Overview 9-26-13
> Attachment 2d GEC Timeline and Food For Thought Re: Core Competencies
> Attachment 2e Listening Sessions Summary

Q: What was the process that led up to these recommendations?

A (Erin): The process started with the strategic directions initiative. The faculty promoted strong faculty advice in the process. There was not a lot of faculty representation in the original process, but we had a faculty advisory committee. One of the recommendations was strengthening academic quality. Gen Ed leaders had a conference at ASU to identify common values in Gen Ed programs. A lot of what was in the faculty Gen Ed document was included in the final strategic plan. We advocated for a set of competencies across the system with respect for the missions and requirements at individual institutions. In September there was a system-wide survey listing the common seven competencies that asked faculty to rank the competencies. The response was that critical thinking and written communication were the most important to the

institutions. Last week the group decided to recommend these two competencies be used and assessed across the system. These are not meant to be exclusive of other competencies.

Q: What is the timeline?
A (Katherine): The goal in the strategic plan is to become a national leader in assessment of general education goals. The goal is that there would be competencies and an assessment plan drafted for the board by the end of January. In September 2014 we will pilot the assessment. To do this we must identify an assessment tool by late spring (i.e., May). By September 2015 we will bring the assessment to the system. She is hopeful that we will be able to make the case to the board that we can either meet the larger goal of becoming a national leader or the timeline but not both.

Q: What are the (structural) obstacles to implementing the core?
A: (Mike): The powers that be are most interested in quantitative assessment. The Faculty Assembly worked to ensure that there would be an emphasis on multiple modes of assessment. The conversation on qualitative assessment has focused on E-portfolios. There has been a survey on these in the last month. One of the payoffs from this was a list of individuals interested in a request for proposals (RFP) asking for interest in campuses on quick starting digital pilots at implementing an aspect of this. This is moving fast out of political necessity. The pilots will begin by fall 2014 (very soon). We do not want this to be simply a standardized test.

Q: Is there anything more about structural or cultural obstacles?
A (Andrew): We need to be careful that we are not ranking these competencies above all others. There is a significant financial cost associated with this effort. There is a motivation to settle on a single score, but this is not the best way to do this. It is important to understand that if we do not pick the competencies now, it becomes much harder to meet the timeline. If we do not do this, the competencies will be imposed on us.

(Erin) We tried to avoid competencies that are tied to any one discipline but emphasize those that are broad. The purpose is to improve the educational opportunities for our students.

(Katherine) Simply having summative assessments is not really useful to us. It is important to have both summative and formative aspects in the assessment. It would be good if we could capture all aspects of the student experience.

(Mike) Many of the responses to the e-portfolio survey indicate that people understand the cultural obstacles involved in this effort. The first obstacle is that not everyone understands what an e-portfolio is. Another obstacle is how to do this correctly so we can enhance our student learning. Training, willingness, faculty buy-in are important issues.

(Andrew) There are clear issues with faculty buy-in. We all do some type of formative assessment every day. The other barrier is that we are being judged on whether our students get jobs rather than understanding of items we see are important. We will succeed in the larger sphere only if this has a positive impact on our students. Another issue is whether we have time to do this. We also have to deal with student buy-in.

(Mike) Something like e-portfolios becomes more significant than a way to turn things in only if there is method of reflection on the contents.

Q: What are the types of assessment instruments and what is the role of the faculty in developing these instruments?

A (Katherine): The first step is discussion and agreement on competencies. Are there standardized measures we think are strong? Are there ways we can match these competencies to classroom activities and grades? This topic raises the issue of sampling questions. How do we ensure our students are represented in the sample (e.g. students in an individual program)? We must begin considering that the Board of Governors (BOG) has been asked for tutorials and information about the contents of these assessments and what is going on. We must consider how we should work with GA leadership about interacting with the BOG on these topics.

(Mike) In front of the implementation challenges, we do need to help our colleagues understand that what is leading this forward from the start is a mandate from the BOG that we have to do this.

Delegate Q&A: System-wide Core Competencies

Q: What systems are recognized as national leaders in this, and what do they use?

A (Andrew): There are systems south of us and west of us that use the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) test, which tends to be quite reductive. We do not want to do this if we want to be national leaders. There is nobody who does this right.

A delegate made the comment that Clemson is recognized as being a leader in comprehensive assessment for their university.

(Mike): Those identified as leaders are not necessarily the ones we want to emulate. The University of Wisconsin is an example of this. They are emphasizing alternative learning and credit for prior experience.

Q: There must be a clear understanding of how to mainstream the process. We are not often clear and consistent in our language and understanding.

A (Erin): We have leaned heavily on definitions and rubrics to be sure we understand the terms.

Q: It is important to avoid problems with cultural interpretations.
A (Mike): This is a very important point. The language in the AAC&U value rubrics
has been well vetted and they include extensive explanations.

(Andrew) The other constituency is the external one, and the two competencies
we chose are the most important to that group.

Q: We should consult with SACS before we begin any new system-wide assessment.

Q: We need to consider that the connotation of assessment is quantitative, and we
should consider other language to emphasize other modes as well.
A: We use the term multimodal assessment.

Q: Do these two competencies really satisfy the external audiences? If they do not,
more competencies will be imposed on us.
A (Mike): We are thinking about these things. We have indications that two is
enough. This is probably not the time to leverage this upon things we are not
doing well right now. We should use it to show that we are doing well in some
important things.

(Erin) Two could seem small, but consider that we are going to build something
that we are going to do well. Institutions should be able to identify their cores.
This is very important. These are just common competencies among all
institutions.

(Katherine) Keep in mind that these are the competencies that employers have
identified as being important. We have national and state level data on what
employers want.

(Andrew) These competencies are meant to be important to what we all do, but
they are not exclusive of other competencies. There is a broad amount of
literature on how to assess written communication but not on how to assess
critical thinking.

Q: What kind of assessment are we doing? Is this student self-assessment or faculty
assessment of critical thinking? An e-portfolio is a filing cabinet. How do we
assess the contents?
A (Mike): Those questions are an accurate portrayal of where we are in this. We are
not trying to consider all aspects of e-portfolios. We are going to try to make
them function as a meaningful assessment tool for our chosen competencies.

(Andrew) In one model the students were required to interact with a faculty
coach to help them select and assess what was in the portfolio. Faculty would
then use a rubric to assess the contents of the portfolio. The assessment would
drive program improvement.

Q: What is your sense of how the BOG wants to use the assessment information?
A (Katherine): There is a legitimate anxiety about how assessment results will be
   used. This is very important. It is important that we get ahead of the context and
   implementation issues. There are experts on our campus that could advise the
   BOG on limitations on interpretation of the results. Acting on bad data or
   interpretations could be a problem.

Q: We are really talking about a major social engineering experiment (without IRB
   approval). We need an IRB that will look at what we are doing and ensure that it
   will be used in a legitimate way. We must be careful about this.
A (Katherine): This is something that the GEC must consider. Privacy issues are
   important but also sticky and problematic. We must create an environment that
   facilitates a useful process while respecting privacy concerns.

(Mike) We understand that Clemson uses undergraduate students as a large part
of the assessment team for the e-portfolios used for a graduation requirement.
This could be problematic.

(Andrew) One of the cultural issues is that there is a mismatch between what the
business community expects and what we want to do. A negative of this is also
the risk that scores could go down stifling creativity.

Q: There is a concern that this is to set up a competition between institutions, and
   this will cause the legislature to doubt our authenticity. This could drive a push
   for summative instruments or system-wide common assessors.
A: Most of the members of the BOG subscribe to the idea of continual improvement.
   We must make the effort to be sure that the assessment will be used properly,
   and the leadership of the BOG will help with this.

(Chair Rigsby) The GA has done a good job of educating the new BOG members. It
is always possible they will make extreme funding decisions based on this, but it
is likely that the leadership will reign in this effort.

Q: What about the preparation of the external constituency (i.e., the legislature) for
   this.
A (Andrew): You cannot avoid this. There has been some consideration of how we
   will interact with each group.

(Katherine) The January report will be presented at the February joint board
meeting (with the community college board). We do not know exactly how the
presentation will look, but it will likely be more educational.

(Mike) Perhaps the most important consideration is that the BOG wrote the
template for us.

(Erin) The timeline includes expectations from the strategic planning document that has driven this.

(Andrew) The FA communications committee also has a role to communicate with our constituency.

Q: How will we use feedback from the individual campuses in this report?
A (Erin): We have emphasized that this process has included faculty and that we have faculty consensus on this. This is important to Pres. Ross.

(Chair Rigsby) Faculty have been asked for feedback at every stage in the process. It is clear that the faculty across the system agree that these are two competencies that we can assess.

Q: How will this be used?
A (Katherine): The full GEC will put together the report in December. The faculty could provide feedback (prior to the November 26 meeting). Each campus has a member on the GEC. These people should be invited to the Faculty Senate meeting.

(Andrew) We think as hard as we can about how this will be used. We must develop this or we will have no control of the assessment or the use of the results.

The council will likely make a recommendation insisting that the assessment be used for formative purposes.

Committee Meetings

The delegates broke into committees including the Academic Standards and Policies Committee – General Education Subgroup, the Academic Standards and Policies Committee – Instructional Efficiencies Subgroup, the Academic Resources Committee, the Communications Committee, and the Governance Committee. Committee reports are summarized below in the Plenary Session.

Plenary Session

Chair's Report

Chair Catherine Rigsby reported that the February Faculty Assembly meeting date has been changed to February 14 due to a conflict with the February BOG meeting. She also reminded the delegates that committee documents are available on the committee pages on the Faculty Assembly Active Collab site.

Committee Reports

Communication Committee

Drew Moretz (VP for Government Relations) and Joni Worthington (VP for Communications) met with the committee to share how they do their jobs. There was a consensus that we should have Drew and Joni share their issues and processes with the FA. The committee discussed repairing the breakdown in communications between the FA and the faculty senates as well as the faculty at-large. Some campuses have regular FA reports, but many do not. One suggestion is a quick summary memo of each meeting released on the same day as the meeting.

Academic Resources Committee

The committee discussed the definitions of important terms such as full time faculty and how they are defined. The committee is considering updates to the Academic Core white paper from the 2010-2011 academic year. The committee discussed a resolution that was passed last year asking for the university to increase its contribution to the optional retirement plan so it matches the state retirement plan.

Instructional Efficiencies Committee

There was a preliminary discussion of the advising portion of the planning documents. Three areas of concern include demographic target groups, infrastructural initiatives, and campus processes and practice.

The major discussion was on E-learning. There were concerns expressed about online education across the system. Some members of the BOG have advocated for increased presence of online education. One issue is the new VP of Technology, Learning, and Innovation position. Three important aspects are: certification of instructor competence to teach online, certification of student readiness to take online classes, and assessment of staff competence to support online classes.

Faculty Senate Chairs

There was a discussion of a reduction of fixed term faculty teaching assignments to avoid paying them benefits. There were also discussions of core competencies and assessment.

Historically Minority Institution (HMI) Caucus

The group discussed the different types of assessments that take place on the various campuses. The group wants to make sure that assessment guidelines include "qualitative and multimodal according to our missions." There was also a discussion of the effects of *Academics First* on their institutions.

Governance Committee

The committee distributed an updated Resolution on System-wide Student Success Policies. There was an extensive discussion, and the original resolution was significantly amended. It passed.

Full text of Faculty Assembly resolution 2013-10 - Resolution on System-wide Student Success Policies

There was a resolution requesting that all faculty senate chairs be able to present oral or written communication with the board of trustees. The resolution passed.

Full text of Faculty Assembly resolution 2013-09 - Resolution on Faculty Senate Communication with Boards of Trustees

General Education Committee

The committee discussed the core competencies resolution. The resolution was passed as amended. We need to discuss this resolution with our faculty senates and solicit senate endorsements.

Full text of Faculty Assembly resolution 2013-11 - Resolution on System-wide Core Competencies

Resolutions for ECU Faculty Senate in Support of UNC Faculty Assembly Actions

The ECU delegation to the UNC Faculty Assembly presents three resolutions to the ECU Faculty Senate in support of Faculty Assembly actions during the October 25 Faculty Assembly meeting.

Resolution in Support of System-wide Core Competencies

Whereas, the five-year strategic plan, "Our Time, Our Future: The UNC Compact with North Carolina" has defined as a major priority the implementation of system-wide assessments of academic core competencies; and

Whereas, the UNC Strategic Directions General Education Council has, after considered deliberation, recommended Critical Thinking and Written Communication as system-wide core competencies most appropriate for assessment; and

Whereas, <u>UNC Faculty Assembly resolution 2013-11</u> endorses the core constituencies recommended by UNC Strategic Directions General Education Council and requests campus votes to approve the competencies; and

Whereas, the UNC Faculty Assembly has resolved that the University of North Carolina, under the imprimatur of its constitutive faculty, must offer a general comprehensive education (as articulated in Resolution 2012-06); and

Whereas, the UNC Faculty Assembly has also resolved that an effective curriculum is essential to the development of critical skills necessary for students to become productive citizens and leaders of North Carolina, and that faculty recognize these core competencies as vital to student success (as articulated in Resolution 2012-07); and

Whereas, the core competencies of Critical Thinking and Written Communication are widely recognized by faculty as expressions of a general comprehensive education and as fundamental requirements for successful mastery in all academic disciplines; and

Whereas, economic leaders in North Carolina and nationwide agree that Critical Thinking and Written Communication are fundamental to career success as cited in the Listening Sessions Summary (Strategic Directions Initiatives 2013-2018, Appendices) and

Whereas, our regional accrediting agency, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), periodically and comprehensively examines and affirms the quality of educational programs and requires that the institution place primary responsibility for the content, quality, and effectiveness of the curriculum with its faculty;

Therefore, Be It Resolved That the ECU Faculty Senate endorses the General Education Council's choice of Critical Thinking and Written Communication as two system-wide core competencies for the UNC system; and

Be It Further Resolved That the faculty of ECU and other the constituent UNC institutions must have primary responsibility for the development and administration of assessment instruments consistent with the missions of their respective campuses.

Resolution in Support of UNC Faculty Communication with Boards of Trustees

Whereas, faculty communication is essential with every decision maker regarding the operations of each institution; and

Whereas, the faculty have established communication with provosts, chancellors, and UNC-GA administrators; and

Whereas, although the ECU Board of Trustees meetings include a report from the ECU Chair of the Faculty, some faculty governance bodies at UNC institutions do not have established avenues of communication with the Board of Trustees of their institution; and

Whereas, the Board of Trustees are key decision-makers regarding the operations of each institution; and

Whereas, UNC Faculty Assembly resolution 2013-09 calls for regular oral and/or written reports from campus faculty senate chairs to their boards of trustees.

Therefore, Be It Resolved That the ECU Faculty Senate endorses UNC Faculty Assembly resolution 2013-09 that each UNC institution Faculty Senate Chair should present an oral and/or written report to the Board of Trustees on a regular basis.