Faculty Assembly Report - 16 September, 2011 meeting

I. President Tom Ross introduced Susan Ortega, the new Chief Academic Officer, then discussed the current budget situation and repercussions for the UNC system. Unemployment in NC is expected to remain at 7.5 – 8 % for the next several years and it is unsure if we will return to a growing economy. We are unlikely to see new, additional state appropriations and demands will need to be met by shifting priorities; we must figure out the best mix of state resources, tuition, and other revenue to create the best financing model for UNC. We should pay attention to the following: 1) increasing demands for accountability; must demonstrate performance and success to obtain state resources; 2) cannot rely on retention and graduation rates; need to be attentive to enrollment growth funding; 3) financial aid policies and resources are under pressure in Washington; Pell Grant funding might not be sustainable; 4) need to retain good employees who have gone four years without a raise; and 5) must find ways to be more efficient. He posed the following list of questions to guide forming new academic policies:

* + Academics first initiative – issues have been brought to chief academic officers
	+ Can some policies be merged across campuses
	+ How to balance faculty workload when some people think should we just teach more
	+ How to attract, retain, and reward faculty
	+ How to enhance focus on teaching excellence; have to do this without underemphasizing research
	+ How to keep a focus on rigor and writing; are falling behind and must be willing to demand more (raise admissions standards, academic progress standards)
	+ How to assess student learning and faculty success
	+ Can we streamline academic administration
	+ How to reward full time faculty? Compensation packages
	+ How to clear up misunderstandings about the way we work
	+ Seamless pathways from community colleges
	+ How to serve nontraditional students – which are coming in large numbers
	+ What is our responsibility to work with public and private schools
	+ How to expand use of technology (not just online)
	+ How to develop collaborations and consortia among institutions to keep/expand offerings
	+ Have to be more of a system……

Questions for President Ross included the following:

* + Can policies be changed, for example for purchasing, to reduce costs? *GA has asked campuses to forward any ideas for cost saving measures; for example, are looking into system-wide epurchasing*
	+ Is there a big, innovative vision? *Historical approach has been to have a vision and get money to pay for it; now have to prove we can be successful, than can get money, Need to develop new ways of delivery; sharing across campuses*
	+ Is there a proposal to require NC students take ACT without writing? *The proposal is to take the ACT in 10th grade, but it will be with writing. Will be offered this March for all 11th graders.*
	+ How can we reach legislators who think, for example, that public education is socialism? *Can we collaborate more with parents, alumnae, and business? Ross has been speaking to the business community to elaborate on what the university contributes and GA is trying to present facts to the Legislature.*

II. Lyons Gray, Senior Advisor to the President, reported on legislative challenges. Of the 40 new members of the Legislature, few have thought about the value of the University to the state; session is more numbers driven than policy driven; all agencies took the same cuts – so everyone fighting for smaller piece of a smaller pie; have big Medicaid shortfall, and how can deal with that given smaller revenues. For 18 years UNC had two protectors in the senate – both are gone. This system worked well, but we didn’t have to make our case; now we have to tell legislature why they should care about the university. GA is seeking input on how to convince legislators to back education when they are asking why we pay large money to someone teaching just two courses; send all suggestions to: lyonsgray@northcarolina.edu. Redistricting, which must happen each 10 years, is another issue. The last 3 cycles have been challenged by the party not in power, so changes have not taken place until the next term. This year is fast-tracked; if changes get approved we will have these groups of legislators for the next 10 years. The speaker pro-tem has said legislators ‘need the one-pager that says who we are and why we are important.’

Questions from the floor:

* + Would a short document that says who we are and what we do be helpful? *Some campuses are doing that on a departmental basis. There is an underlying cynicism that we must overcome; good ideas come and go, which go depend on who can convince a politician to go forward (need a champion). We have had champions in the senate – do not have them in the house.*
	+ We have been discouraged from interacting with the legislature; so there is perception that we cannot talk to legislature; can we revise policy so that it says we can talk to legislators (not what we can’t do); e.g., if we run for school board must resign our Assembly position?
	+ HMI meeting – legislative tuition grant; historically instituted because institution could not handle the number of students; why can’t that money role only into financial aid? *This aid will be need-based going forward; LGG – has been reduced and need based, but will go only to private universities*
	+ Can you elaborate on the cynicism? And is there a group we can reach? *Most will not listen.*

III. Bruce Mallette, Senior Associate Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs, reported on Academics First. This initiative had 3 goals: academic attainment and progress; seamlessness; maximize resources. We want to be able to reward students serious about making progress toward degree; found a UNC Policy that has these same ideas. Part of the initiative is to answer what we can do for the average citizen to aid seamlessness; this can include, for example, making the fafsa filing date the same for all institutions – as of 2012 undergrad date will be 1 March. In terms of maximizing resources, there needs to be a cap on how long a student can continue to receive aid; cap was removed then put back at 9; this will start 2013. But are thinking of this in units (can get up to 9 units – going half-time in one semester uses 0.5 units whereas being full-time one semester uses 1.0 unit). Note that this is state aid; other aid, such as lottery funds, is different (EL funds are mandated to stop at 8 semesters). In terms of progress, encourages campuses to monitor satisfactory progress (SAP) every term rather than annually; 10/12 are monitoring after every term as defined by a quantitative and qualitative measure (e.g., have earned a total of x number of credits and gpa > x). The recommendation is to do this every term; will be reaching out to orientation directors to have them emphasize the seriousness of academic progress. A federal policy exists to measure 150% of normal time to graduation; this now varies between 160 and 189; agreed upon 180; if a student takes more than 180 hours, this will trigger a review to see if the major requires an additional semester. Note – this is about federal aid, can ask if should also apply to institutional based aid. For dual degree students, the clock stops when they finish the first degree requirements.

Progress is being made on academic policies related to the points above: 1) setting a satisfactory progress standard of 2.0 (note – if on federal aid have to be at a 2.0 after 4 terms). Now have to look at levels of probation, warning, etc; 2) current standard high school 2.3 gpa, 750 SAT, 16 ACT for admission requirements; going toward a 2.5, 800 minimum; note – models based on NCAA have been discussed. Note – campuses could have higher standards, just couldn’t be below the minimum; 3) are defining a maximum load; what are the rules for exceeding that load; drop-add and course withdrawal policies; now – are losing up to 1500 credit hours because of the lag between census and withdrawal dates; course repeat and replacement policies;

The Assembly heard the following reports:

* Faculty workload study
	+ BOG August meeting – educational planning committee established a subcommittee to discuss faculty workload
	+ One of the BOG members will chair: will be asking for information from campuses
	+ This is a workload study, not a teaching load study
	+ Want to be able to talk more effectively to the legislators
	+ Asking do the Delaware data capture everything
	+ Committee has no content structure yet
	+ Summer 2012 report back
* Program duplication
	+ Final report will be presented in December
	+ Found program duplication is not a major problem at UNC
	+ Have an every other year process of self-examination; in 2010, unnecessary programs were eliminated; we already do a good job of identifying unnecessary programs
	+ Program approval is backlogged, so can’t develop new initiatives
	+ Have a new subcommittee to look at program approval process
	+ Will revisit process for establishing consortia
	+ Says program review could be strengthened, but needs to be an internal process for each campus
	+ Online education purposes have to be clearly determined and policy structures developed to support those purposes
* Grievance training – Raymond Burt
	+ Would a viewpoint from Assembly on grievance procedures be useful?
	+ Can provide a video resource that explains the UNC code, evidentiary standards, etc; would also include best-practices
* Standards of shared governance
	+ Partitioning what administrators decide vs what is shared
	+ Various implementation among campuses
	+ Could consolidate best-practices and place on website
	+ Could have calls with faculty leaders to discuss particular issues
	+ E.g., does a campus need help setting up committee structure
* Letter about process for conducting chancellor searches
	+ Only search committee allowed to know candidates through whole process
	+ Ask GA to reconsider UNC policy on search procedures
* HMI report
	+ Shared governance; workload; tpr
	+ Oct – raised admission standards, lack of financial aid, student progress
		- E.g., 55 % graduates with most students not meeting 800 SAT
	+ Tuition grant to private schools
* Potential changes to the bylaws
	+ Change to two representatives per institution was discussed, but consensus from the body was to not move forward with these proposed changes at this time.