Dear Faculty Assembly Delegates and Alternates,

As I am sure most of you have read in the press, President Ross and Chairman Hans both responded positively to our resolution concerning faculty input into the Strategic Planning Process.  That resolution asked that “a mechanism be created to solicit input at the campus level throughout the process” and that “the Faculty Assembly be informed during the strategic planning process, and that the President of the University, in collaboration with the Chair of the Faculty Assembly, create a faculty group to interact and collaborate with the Business/Political community advisory committee for the University’s strategic planning.”  All of these requests are being honored.

As outlined in the attached letter, President Ross and I have agreed to establish a “Faculty Advisory Council” that will work to ensure that faculty are informed during the process and that the voice of the faculty is heard through the process.  The Faculty Advisory Council, which I will chair, will be the main conduit for faculty input in the strategic planning process.  It will work in cooperation with the Faculty Assembly Executive Committee (FAEC) to provide input to the UNC Strategic Directions Committee (the “working group”).  I and/or members of the Faculty Advisory Council will attend *all* of the Strategic Directions working group meetings.  In addition, we will make working group documents and data available to both the Council and to the faculty at large.

The Council will report to the FAEC.  The FAEC and I will work to ensure that there is transparency in the process and that there is ample opportunity for input from faculty on all of the campuses.  A major conduit of information exchange with the campuses will be FA’s Senate Chairs group.  There are 4 Senate Chairs and one Chair-elect on the Council and one Senate Chair is a member of the FAEC; this should help speed the information exchange between GA and the campuses.  All campus Faculty Chairs, aided by their association with the FA’s Chairs Group, will be responsible for communicating the activities of the Council and the working group to their respective campuses and for funneling information and input back to the FAEC.

I have attached the Council roster and a list of the Council functions to this message.  Although communications have been slow because it is Fall Break season on our campuses, all of the faculty listed on the roster have been invited to serve and they all fully understand both the time constraints (this is a *very* short strategic planning process!) and the importance of openness and of providing coherent and clear recommendations to the working group – recommendations that are based on broad faculty input.  Putting together the roster was more difficult than I expected.  The group needed to relatively small, but also needed to cover all of the major geographic sectors of the state and include a reasonably wide range of academic disciplines.  I put together the Council roster with these constraints in mind and after consultation with the FAEC.  I appreciate the suggestions made by the FAEC (and others) and am grateful that we have faculty willing to serve.

I urge all FA delegates to spread the news that we now have a “Faculty Advisory Council” that will provide a faculty voice in the strategic planning process.  If all goes as planned, we will also soon have a web-based feedback site where all faculty can provide written feedback to the Council.

Please feel free to share the attached letter from President Ross, the attached Council Roster and functions sheet, as well as any other information that you receive about the strategic planning process with your colleagues.  Do not forget that all of the materials distributed to the Strategic Planning Advisory Committee are available on the GA web site (there is a link to these materials on the FA home page:  [http://www.northcarolina.edu/facultyassembly/index.htm](https://email.wcu.edu/owa/redir.aspx?C=0eeffa4483b445e2b98ed50f1c1c1fc0&URL=http%3a%2f%2fwww.northcarolina.edu%2ffacultyassembly%2findex.htm)).  When new working group materials become available I will forward them as well.  All of these materials are public documents and should be treated as such.

To-date, the topics around the working group and Strategic Directions Advisory Committee tables have focused on degree attainment goals (how many citizens should we expect to obtain post-secondary education and at what level); the jobs outlook for NC and the types of skills that those jobs are likely to require; measuring “competencies” of our graduates; and using new (“disruptive”) technologies to make the “business” of higher education more efficient (reaching more students at a lower cost cost).  Please discuss the strategic planning materials and topics with your colleagues and formulate feedback that the Faculty Advisory Council can use to make recommendations to the working group.  Providing concrete, usable feedback is the only way we have to participate in the process.  As the University’s academic and disciplinary experts, we must take advantage of this opportunity to help shape our students’ educations and to maintain the outstanding (and deserved!) reputation of the UNC system.

Processes like this one are rarely perfect.  Nevertheless, this is a big step and a significant opportunity for faculty voices to be heard.  It is also a very good indication that President Ross, the General Administration, and the Board of Governors understand the importance of faculty voices in shaping the future of our university system.  Thanks for helping to make this happen.  I look forward to the dialogue and to everyone’s efforts as we move forward!

Catherine

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[www.ecu.edu/geology](https://email.wcu.edu/owa/redir.aspx?C=0eeffa4483b445e2b98ed50f1c1c1fc0&URL=http%3a%2f%2fwww.ecu.edu%2fgeology)

[http://www.northcarolina.edu/facultyassembly/index.htm](https://email.wcu.edu/owa/redir.aspx?C=0eeffa4483b445e2b98ed50f1c1c1fc0&URL=http%3a%2f%2fwww.northcarolina.edu%2ffacultyassembly%2findex.htm)