

**FOR POSTING DRAFT: OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT**  
**(4/17/08)**

## **4.7 Outreach and Engagement**

**Major Finding: UNC should become more directly engaged with and connected to the people of North Carolina, its regions, and our state as a whole.**

Carolina has a long history of direct engagement with the people of North Carolina. We recognize that the needs of the state continue to be great, however, and for that reason the University has increased its emphasis on applying faculty expertise to important policy issues. In 2006 the Chancellor's Task Force on Engagement anticipated many of the issues identified by UNC Tomorrow—education, health, and economic development. One outcome was the creation of the Office of Vice Chancellor for Public Service and Engagement, a senior leadership position to promote and facilitate greater faculty involvement. Carolina's response to the recommendations of the UNC Tomorrow Commission builds on many initiatives already underway.

### **4.7.1 Apply, translate and communicate research and scholarship to broader audiences.**

#### New Programs

1. North Carolina Translational and Clinical Sciences (TraCS) Institute. Carolina is creating the TraCS Institute to eliminate barriers that prevent the efficient translation of innovative discoveries into improved health for the people of North Carolina. TraCS will develop diverse teams of scientists and who will partner with and listen to the community, learn about its health-care needs, develop new knowledge in response to those needs, apply the knowledge in clinical practice, and use that experience to inform new research. In order to implement this continuous cycle of innovation to improve health for all North Carolinians, we must pay particular attention to understanding and addressing racial and cultural disparities in health care. We will be attentive listeners to every voice in our widely diverse population. TraCS will create an environment that enables proven advances to be rapidly disseminated and employed to change health outcomes. Carolina will create a new academic and community infrastructure to translate evidence-based interventions, technologies, therapies, and diagnostics to all stakeholders, particularly minority and lower socioeconomic groups, and the practitioners and health organizations that serve them. We will apply measures to evaluate how effective we are at communicating and implementing interventions to guide the success and speed of the translation of research findings from discovery to bedside to communities.
2. Faculty Engaged Scholars Program. The Faculty Engaged Scholars Program is an important new initiative of the Carolina Center for Public Service and the Office of Vice Chancellor for Public Service and Engagement. It is designed to advance faculty involvement in the

scholarship of engagement by guiding and supporting them to apply their expertise in addressing important community issues. The two-year program incorporates interdisciplinary research, education, mentoring, and public service. Faculty scholars interact with their peers from a variety of different disciplines, and they also receive support and mentoring from a diverse group of experienced faculty and community partners. In addition they receive modest funding to support a project. The program is co-directed by a senior faculty member and a community leader who has experience working with faculty members on community-based research projects. The diverse pilot class of eight Faculty Engaged Scholars was selected from a very competitive pool and started January 2008. The program is designed to add another eight new Faculty Engaged Scholars at the start of each calendar year. The early feedback on the pilot class has been very positive, and we have implemented an evaluation system to assess the effectiveness in meeting the stated goals for both individual scholars and the program as a whole. We intend to develop a growing and supportive cohort of faculty engaged scholars at Carolina. The program already has received national attention as a model for developing scholarly work that touches our communities, and it might be expanded to other interested UNC campuses.

#### **4.7.2 Develop a strategic plan for scholarly public service on each campus that is detailed and specific in definition and scope.**

##### New Programs

3. Campus Dialogue and Planning Process about Engaged Scholarship. The Office of Vice Chancellor for Public Service and Engagement has created the Carolina Engagement Council to recommend policies, programs, and actions to promote greater public service and engaged scholarship by Carolina's faculty, students, and staff. The Engagement Council is composed of representatives from the College of Arts & Sciences and the professional schools. It also includes two other categories of members: (1) representatives who have campus-wide administrative responsibilities related to public service and engagement, and (2) at-large members appointed by the Vice Chancellor based on their substantial experience in public service and engagement. The Engagement Council is chaired by the Vice Chancellor for Public Service and Engagement.

The Engagement Council will design and lead a campus dialogue and planning process about engaged scholarship at Carolina during the 2008-2009 academic year. One outcome of the dialogue will be a detailed strategic plan for each academic unit that clearly indicates how it will apply the expertise of faculty, staff, and students to meet the needs of North Carolina reflected in the recommendations of UNC Tomorrow. This effort will be closely coordinated with the Provost's Office as it leads the development of a new academic plan for Carolina and examines the tenure, promotion and incentive system for faculty engagement with North Carolina in Phase II of the UNC Tomorrow response.

#### **4.7.3 UNC should create a mechanism for applying research and scholarship to address significant regional and statewide issues.**

##### New Programs

4. UNC Center for Applied Public Policy Research. State and local policymakers seeking to respond to public policy challenges often lack access to relevant data and deep analysis about complicated policy issues from a neutral vantage point. At the same time the UNC campuses have a reservoir of knowledge in different policy areas that could be applied to those issues. In January 2007 President Erskine Bowles charged a working group composed of representatives from ten UNC campuses to develop a proposal for a system-wide applied public policy center that would bridge the gap between the needs of policymakers and the expertise of faculty. It was co-convened by Mike Smith, Carolina's Vice Chancellor for Public Service and Engagement, and Leslie Boney, UNC Associate Vice President for Economic Development Research, Policy, and Planning. The working group has recommended the creation of the UNC Center for Applied Public Policy Research (Center). Although planning for the Center started before the UNC Tomorrow Commission was created, it anticipated this recommendation and the related strategy of "a system-wide structure . . . focused on significant applied public-policy issues facing the state." (4.7.3)

The Center's primary purpose is to contribute meaningful solutions on a wide range of policy issues through responsive research by university faculty. For many of the major policy recommendations from the UNC Tomorrow Commission, the Center offers a vehicle for accessing substantive public policy knowledge on all of the campuses. It will identify individual faculty members or it will partner with existing campus centers to bring their expertise to bear on identified policy needs. The Center staff will not conduct original research—it will facilitate and disseminate research conducted by others on the campuses. In order to be credible with the broad spectrum of policymakers, the Center will operate in ways that are neutral and nonpartisan—it also must be *perceived* as neutral and nonpartisan. It will not carry out advocacy activities. Instead, the Center will describe policy options and the most likely consequences of those options based on research, but it will not attempt to influence policymakers in choosing from among the options. Policymakers are responsible for making policy choices and they will choose based on some combination of experience, values, and information. The Center also will serve as a convener and provide a neutral forum to help policymakers and other stakeholders learn about the issues, discuss them openly, and strive for consensus if possible.

The Center will be formally established as a UNC system-wide entity located administratively at UNC-Chapel Hill, but not attached to any existing college or school. President Bowles identified Chapel Hill as the most appropriate location for the Center because of its broad range of faculty expertise in many different public policy fields, along with its proximity to state government and UNC General Administration. At the same time, however, a true collaborative partnership among the campuses is critically important for the Center's success. The Center will draw on strengths of each campus to provide comprehensive and relevant expertise for policymakers. As a result, the Center's governance structure relies on active participation from the campuses throughout the system and at various levels in the Center's organization. In addition, each campus will designate a liaison to the Center who will help connect their faculty with relevant opportunities for policy research, education, and facilitation.

#### **4.7.4 UNC should communicate its resources and expertise to wider audiences.**

5. Database of Public Service and Engagement at Carolina. The first step in communicating Carolina's resources to a wider audience is the creation of a database that regularly captures updated information about the public service and engagement activities of faculty. This information is not consistently reported by faculty within their administrative units and it is not collected centrally. Faculty are conducting a vast amount of public service and engaged scholarship, but the decentralized culture of Carolina, which in virtually every other way is a great strength, makes collecting and sharing that information difficult. Information about sponsored research is easier to collect because faculty must complete grant applications and reporting forms as a routine matter in generating support for their research. Those existing research forms can be searched electronically and the information can be compiled and sorted in ways that are accessible on line to many different kinds of audiences. There is no similar source of readily available information about public service and engagement by faculty. The Carolina Center for Public Service has created a partial database of these activities, but it has been difficult to maintain because much of the information has to be gathered and entered manually and there is no centralized way to communicate with campus units.

Carolina will convene a task force early in academic year 2008-2009 to plan and begin implementing a reliable and regularly updated database that includes information about public service and engaged scholarship by Carolina faculty. This will be one step in an overall effort to communicate our public service to a broader external audience and make it accessible in multiple ways.