September 5, 2013

Dear Colleagues,

In April 2013, President Ross announced appointments to the three system-wide committees formed to assist with implementation of UNC strategic planning initiatives. The General Education Council, the Efficiencies Workgroup, and the e-Learning Workgroup are comprised of faculty, deans, and chief academic officers nominated by Faculty Assembly and Provosts from each campus. As co-chairs of the General Education Council, we would like to share our charge, information on the activities of this council to date, and our plans for the future which include soliciting feedback from our colleagues across the UNC System.

The General Education Council (GEC) is comprised of faculty and administration from each of the institutions in the UNC System. As a council, President Ross has charged us with undertaking a comprehensive review of existing general education architecture and recommending a limited set of student learning outcomes appropriate to all UNC institutions. The GEC is to also explore qualitative and quantitative methodologies appropriate to assessing these outcomes, and will make its first set of recommendations to President Ross by January 2014.

In order to best accomplish our tasks, the GEC has balanced its membership across five subcommittees (Core Competencies, Engaging Experts/Quantitative Assessment, College Learning Assessment (CLA) Pilot, Qualitative Analysis, and Communications). As co-chairs, we developed charges and timelines, and appointed chairs for each of these subcommittees in the early summer. Since mid-June each of the subcommittees has been working independently on their charges, and the Council held a follow-up meeting in Chapel Hill on July 30, 2013.

Our first priority is to identify a short list of (five or fewer) core competencies to be shared across the general education programs of all UNC institutions. These shared learning outcomes will form only part of each institution's general education program and be supplemented locally to address each institution's mission. The Core Competencies Subcommittee will be sending a message in the near future outlining the background of their work and their initial recommendations, and asking for feedback and suggestions. Although there is no slow portion of your week, please make time to share your comments, suggestions, and concerns with the GEC through an online survey that will be made available, or through communication to members of the GEC. The Faculty Advisory Council on Strategic Directions included recommendations for core competencies in Section II of its November 2012 report to the Strategic Directions committee. Those recommendations were discussed and endorsed by the Faculty Assembly, the Association of Student Governments, the Staff Assembly, and at least 15 of the 17 campus senates. It is vital that the GEC's recommendations are informed by this work and are vetted by the faculty, staff, and administration who support these programs. The GEC hopes to have recommendations ready to share with the campuses and the Faculty Assembly in October or November.

Other subcommittees are working in parallel with the Core Competencies Subcommittee. The CLA subcommittee is working with representatives from the five campuses (ASU, FSU, ECU, WCU, and UNCP) participating in the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA+) pilot this year, The Qualitative Assessment Subcommittee has recommended funding for an e-portfolio pilot in 2014 into 2015, with a call for proposals to come this fall. GA has agreed to provide the necessary funding for this pilot. The Engaging Experts and Qualitative Assessment Subcommittees are working to identify existing methods of assessment in general education programs across the system as well as identifying experts, both internal and external, to develop assessment strategies that best reflect and support the student learning outcomes to be shared across the system. Finally, our Communication Subcommittee is organizing an informational website (*an Active Collab site at https://collab.northcarolina.edu/public/index.php?path_info=projects/general-education-council-feedback/files that will require you to log in using your campus credentials*) to provide updates on the work of the GEC as well as avenues for feedback to the Council.

Though this council of thirty members has been charged with recommending a set of student learning outcomes appropriate to all UNC institutions to President Ross, it is important that its recommendations reflect the overall intentions and vision of the faculty of the constituent institutions of the UNC System, respecting each institutions identity and mission. We need your help to assure our recommendations reflect this. Thank you for your help in making this process work for all of us.

Sincerely,

Joan Lorden   Erin McNelis
Provost, UNC Charlotte   Associate Professor of Mathematics, Western Carolina University
Co-chair, General Education Council   Co-chair, General Education Council

General Education Council Membership

Campus	Name	Discipline	e-mail Address
ASU	Marie Hoepfl	Professor of Technology	hoepflmc@appstate.edu
ASU	Paulette Marty	Associate Professor of Theatre	martypjw@appstate.edu
ECSU	Dipendra Sengupta	Professor, Mathematics and Computer Sciences	dcsengupta@mail.ecsu.edu
ECU	Purification Martinez	Associate Professor of Foreign Spanish	martinezp@ecu.edu
ECU	Austin Bunch	Senior Associate Provost	BUNCHA@ecu.edu
ECU	Andrew Morehead	Associate Professor of Chemistry	MOREHEADA@ecu.edu
ECU	Catherine Rigsby	Professor of Sedimentology	rigsbyc@ecu.edu
FSU	John Brooks	Dean of the University College	jibrooks@uncfsu.edu
NCA&T	Scott Simkins	Director, Academy for Teaching and Learning	simkinss@ncat.edu
NCCU	Shawn Sendlinger	Associate Professor of Chemistry	ssendlin@nccu.edu
NCSSM	Bob Gotwals	Instructor of Chemistry	gotwals@ncssm.edu
NCSU	Hans Kellner	Professor of English	hdkellner@ncsu.edu
NCSU	Mike Mullen	VC and Dean for Academic and Student Affairs	mike.mullen@ncsu.edu
UNCA	Patrick Bahls	Associate Professor of Mathematics	patrick.bahls@gmail.com
UNCA	Kim Brown	Assistant Professor of Education	kbrown@unca.edu
UNCC	Kim Harris	Associate Professor of Mathematics	mkharris@uncc.edu
UNCC	Joan Lorden	Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs	jflorden@uncc.edu
UNC-CH	Valerie Pruvost	Senior Lecturer, Romance Languages	pruvost@email.unc.edu
UNC-CH	Abigail Panter	Professor of Psychology	panter@unc.edu
UNCG	Lisa Tolbert	Associate Professor of History	lctolber@uncg.edu
UNCGA	Kate Henz	Senior Director for Policy and Funding Analysis	kmhenz@northcarolina.edu
UNCGA	Suzanne Ortega	Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs	stortega@northcarolina.edu
UNCP	Richard Gay	Associate Professor of Art	richard.gay@uncp.edu
UNCP	Rachel Smith	Associate Professor of Chemistry	rachel.smith@uncp.edu
UNCSA	**Mike Wakeford	Social Science	wakefordm@uncsa.edu
UNCW	Jennifer E. Horan	Associate Professor of Political Science	horanj@uncw.edu
UNCW	Cara Cilano	Professor of English	cilanoc@uncw.edu
WCU	**Erin McNelis	Associate Professor of Mathematics	emcnelis@email.wcu.edu
WSSU	Stephanie Dance Barnes	Assistant Professor, Cell & Molecular Biology	dancest@wssu.edu
WSSU	Brenda Allen	Provost & Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs	allenba@wssu.edu

Key Dates on the General Education Council Timeline:
(based on Strategic Directions Action Steps and GEC imposed interim deadlines)

Deliverable/Milestone	Planned Completion Date
1. Identify at least one campus to pilot e-portfolio.	Fall 2013
2. Develop test protocols for administering CLA Plus	August 2013
3. Send communication to all campuses on GEC work and timeline	August 2013
4. Send out Request for Proposals for e-portfolio Pilot	August 2013
5. Send communication and request feedback from system on core competencies.	September 10, 2013
6. Pilot CLA Plus to Freshmen	Fall 2013
7. Preliminary recommendations on core competencies and value outcomes	October 15, 2013
8. Develop initial vocabulary and glossary of key definitions	Mid-November 2013
9. Bring recommendations to Faculty Senates and Faculty Assembly seeking endorsement before delivering to President Ross.	December 2013
10. Recommend list of core competencies and value outcomes.	January 2014
11. Analysis of CLA data (administrative constraints, policies addressing shortcomings)	January 2014
12. Develop operational definitions, tools, and research design	January 2014
13. Provide initial recommendations for quantitative and qualitative measures of student learning outcomes for the core competencies	January 2014
14. Pilot CLA Plus to Seniors	Spring 2014
15. Pilot e-portfolio approach to document student learning across general education and the major	Spring 2014
16. Propose tools and methodologies to measure core competencies.	May 2014
17. Pilot quantitative methods and develop test administrative protocols for use by the entire UNC system.	Fall 2014
18. Identify steps to scale project	May 2015
19. Bring to scale project	September 2015
20. Determine whether to adopt common e-portfolio platform & framework	September 2015