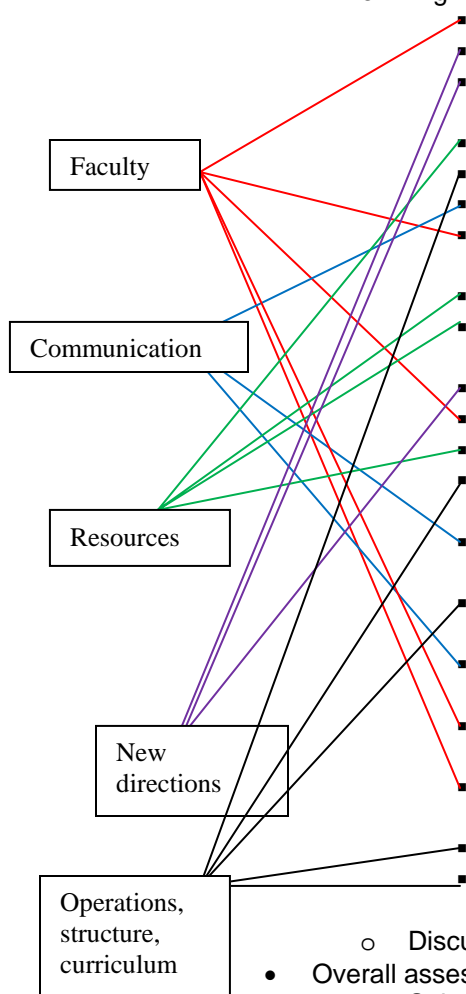


UNC-Asheville
Strategic Planning and Undergraduate Research
November 12, 2008, 9am Laurel Forum
Meeting Agenda

Introductions

- Summary and review of group members' input regarding strategic plan (i.e., how to become a national leader in UR): MARK
 - Highlights
 - Indoctrinate new faculty with divisional forums
 - Promote nontraditional UR (CBR; collaborations)
 - Arts and Humanities UR still relatively unique—UNCA should lead this (CUR) initiative
 - Advocate for and improve funding
 - Admissions should promote UR to prospective students
 - UR must work closely with University Relations
 - To promote UR we need concomitant promotion of faculty research-scholarship with a system of rewards & incentives
 - Recognize that some projects require more resources than others
 - Allocate UR resources on a more qualitative (competitive) basis rather than an egalitarian award structure
 - Identify, recognize and encourage discipline specific research projects
 - Support faculty travel to meetings at which student researchers present
 - Streamline award disbursement process
 - Align UR with other important components of the SP and UNC Tomorrow (CBR and sustainability)
 - Establish a clear idea of what UR is at UNC Asheville for a common, adhesive thread
 - Identify key action steps for meeting SP's larger goals for UR—identify benchmarks to measure progress—develop a timeline for action steps
 - Create an effective information gathering and communication plan for sharing UR intel with colleagues
 - Improve faculty commitment to and involvement with UR through faculty development that aims at a global perspective
 - Provide faculty academic (teaching) credit for undergraduate research to lighten teaching load to free time to mentor students
 - Incorporate UR more effectively into the regular curriculum
 - Integrate research into classroom by having UR students lead lower-level classes
 - Discussion (20 minutes)
- Overall assessment goals:HERMAN
 - Subgoals and benchmarks (
 - How to create realistic ones that promote progress toward goals
 - Need two (2) before Dec.5 (need convergence with other Strategic Plan components; e.g., Community-based research)
 - UPC will report to the BOT meeting (12/20) "What will we measure?" Recommendation from UPC:
 - Count how much participation
 - Count how much community-based research is being done, and
 - Count and qualify credit hours for undergraduate research (not really related to benchmarking, but something to consider).
- Future work—develop longer range strategic planning in Spring 2009: ED



From the inside (or a way to develop more of a culture, rah-rah attitude about UR on campus).

I still think we are missing a way to bring new faculty up to speed with UR. Certainly departments like chemistry and art (whose curriculum are built around UR) do a good job of this because it's woven into how courses are taught. I think other new hires may be clueless for quite a while. Having you and Herman go department by department is helpful but too time intensive. Plus this doesn't promote an interdisciplinary attitude. I think it would be a good idea to begin some kind of a "Forum" idea specific to the 3 academic areas at UNCA--one on Humanities, one Soc. Sci and one Science to discuss success stories, possible funding and ways to work with students in non-traditional UR ways (community based, arts collaboration, craft studies linked to the Craft Campus, etc.) It might not even be necessary for you and Herman to organize each one but maybe get the idea started. I know that there are new art faculty members wh would like to know more about how campus UR is structured and about team based possibilities. Just some thoughts.

I suppose this is more about promoting from the outside: Many more schools now do UR to a greater or lesser extent than 10 years ago. However, what continues to distinguish UNCA (in addition to longevity, leadership, etc.) is how well Humanities is represented. For example, when I talk to colleagues at other big art schools like Virginia Commonwealth, Vanderbilt, Georgia State Univ about my art students getting funding for UR projects (for materials, travel, technical research), they are floored. No one (except perhaps Colgate) does this as well as we do. And I suspect that is the case for other Humanities areas (such as Creative Writing, Classics) at UNCA as well. We really could become a national model for Humanities UR. IF CUR REALLY IS SERIOUS ABOUT BRINGING HUMANITIES INTO THE FOLD, WE COULD LEAD THE WAY. Again, not sure how to do this since I'm no longer a member of CUR but I bet you have some inroads.

I am really excited to be a member of the committee which is overseeing the Strategic Plan's emphasis on Undergraduate Research. I truly believe that UNCA will make, as it has in the past, its mark regionally and nationally by prioritizing undergraduate research. The Strategic Plan has rightfully made undergraduate research a priority – a priority for resources, and while the current economic situation may not make it possible currently for additional money to be put into undergraduate research, the committee is uniquely situated to advocate for funding once the economic situation improves.

Some universities and colleges just become identified and associated with certain programs, e.g. Centre College is just known for its study abroad programs (85% of its graduates do have some study abroad experience). UNCA can and should stake out its claim for being the place for undergraduate research regionally and nationally.

If we are to achieve such a reputation – in some quarters we already have this reputation – then a number of things will be necessary.

First, it is vital that Admissions be involved in our efforts from the very beginning. Prospective students should know that this is what we are about: if they come to UNCA, then they will have the opportunity to work with their professors on significant research projects.

Second, we also need to involve University Relations with our efforts. Undergraduate research should be our “face” to the community. Furthermore, University Relations is the office contacted by media, e.g. U.S. News and World Reports. Our University Relations office refers such entities to our Honors program, but if we are to succeed in becoming identified as the institution where students do undergraduate research, we need to make the appropriate students and faculty known to it.

Third, we will need to work diligently to change some attitudes at UNCA. The old adage, “students learn not by what we say, but by what we do” is indeed true: we, the faculty, need to be engaged in significant research projects, if we expect our students to learn how good research is done. Consequently, any emphasis on undergraduate research will need to be accompanied by an emphasis on faculty research. This would include the resources for faculty to do their research, and a system of support, rewards and incentives for faculty who are engaged in research. Faculty research should be celebrated.

Fourth, at UNCA we all have a concern for “fairness,” but fairness can be understood in different ways. For example, fairness may be understood in a strictly egalitarian way, e.g. if there is \$10K available to distribute among ten people, each should receive \$1K. Of course, a long time ago Solomon demonstrated that this is a flawed notion of fairness. A more adequate notion of fairness is that of Aristotle, namely like things are treated alike, but different things are treated differently. What this means is that some students, faculty, and departments may receive more resources than others. And, this leads to a fifth point.

Fifth, if some would receive more resources than others, we will need to justify these decisions by qualitative rather than quantitative means. We will need to be able to determine which projects and proposals are “better,” “more significant”, “at a higher level” than others.

Sixth, many faculty are engaged in discipline specific research projects. These are frequently “below the radar.” These need to be identified, recognized, and encouraged.

Seventh, there are faculty members who do involve students with research projects in their disciplines and there are times when these students have papers accepted at regional and national meetings. Although there are presently funding possibilities through our Undergraduate Research office for students to travel to these meetings, we do not have funds through Undergraduate Research to support the faculty member to travel to these same meetings.

Eighth, we will need the continuing efforts of Pat and the finance office to help streamline getting money to students to help with research projects. For example, not all of our students have credit cards on which to charge research related expenses, and then be reimbursed.

1. We need to align UR with other important components of the SP and UNC Tomorrow, in order to generate as much momentum as possible by leveraging the energy of others who are also involved in these initiatives. Examples include, community-based research and sustainability, both of which are at the heart of SP and UNC Tomorrow.

2. We need to have a clear idea of what UR is at UNC Asheville, so that all of our contributions have this commonality.

3. We need to identify a few key action steps (3-7) for meeting SP's larger goals for UR, and then identify benchmarks that will help us measure progress. We should develop a timeline on when we will bring each of the action steps online.

4. We will need to create an effective communication and information gathering plan so that we can know what is happening in UR across the campus, and so that we can communicate it effectively back to our colleagues.

One additional way to improve UNC-A faculty commitment to and involvement with UR is through faculty development that aims at a global perspective. I was reading a Chronicle of Higher Education article this morning, from which the following is an excerpt:

"Fervent testimonials to the power of overseas study are not uncommon, of course. But at Rollins College, a liberal-arts institution with a mission to educate students to be more globally minded, these paeans come from professors.

The college's president, Lewis M. Duncan, has pledged to send every faculty and staff member with teaching duties abroad once every three years. Since 2006, 128 Rollins employees, about two-thirds of those eligible, have used the \$3,000 grants to conduct individual research projects or to travel internationally with faculty-led groups to destinations including China, Ecuador, and Tanzania.

"I'm a big believer in the symbolic power of leadership," says Mr. Duncan, who came to Rollins in 2004. "Faculty need to model the lives of global citizenship we want for our students."

The article goes on to cite numerous professors from various institutions who credit overseas study with sparking their research and teaching agendas. The url, if you want to read the entire article, is: <http://chronicle.com/weekly/v55/i10/10a00102.htm>

Our Humanities program faculty development trips to Italy (which I attended) and India in recent years, and the new one planned for Ghana next summer, are an excellent start; but I would like to see more of our faculty, especially those not already involved in global expeditions--FL department, International Studies, and so forth-- having this sort of experience.

I also agree with what Gordon has written. I think his third point is especially important. I know from my personal experience that it is hard to actively involve students in quality research (or to conduct research on my own) while teaching the heavy loads that we have at UNCA. If there were some way to give faculty academic credit for undergraduate research and, thus, maybe a lighter teaching load to free time to mentor students, then I think the quality of that research will increase. In the Biology Department, we have a competency requirement that students successfully complete an undergraduate research project (formalized by our BIOL 498 Senior Research course) or BIOL 480 Senior Seminar. Often times, we as faculty mentor undergraduate research students for several semesters culminating in the one semester BIOL 498 course. To better recognize student's work prior to this course, we developed BIOL 298 and BIOL 398 which are special topics courses so that students can earn credit hours while doing literature review, experimental design or data collection leading to their final research project that is finalized in BIOL 498. These new course offerings give academic credit to the student for their research efforts, but they do not count towards their faculty mentor's teaching load. If there were some way to reward the faculty mentor, this might enable more faculty to become active in undergraduate research mentoring, leading to more involvement in UR by our students.

Another strategy to increase undergraduate participation in research is to integrate research into the classroom. In our department, my colleagues, Dr. David Clarke and Jen Rhode, have begun a project on campus (funded by summer UR) testing different methods for removing invasive exotic plant species. This fall, we had these summer research students come into our teaching laboratories and lead activities with our students pertaining to this project. The undergraduate researchers can expand their projects and collect more data, while gaining leadership experience, and the laboratory students actively participate in a "real" research project and not some "off-the-shelf" laboratory.

We are trying to integrate this approach into other classes. We hope that this research experience will motivate students to want to conduct research on their own.

On another note, I have just gotten approval for UNCA to co-host with Western the 2010 annual meeting of the Association of Southeastern Biologists. This meeting will be held at the Crown Plaza Hotel near downtown in April, 2010 and will bring close to 1000 biologists (faculty, graduate and undergraduate students) from all over the southeast to Asheville and UNCA. While planning this meeting, we have begun a program to have special sessions (both oral and poster) specifically to highlight undergraduate research. So, if you have any students doing research related to the Biological Sciences keep this meeting in mind as an outlet for presenting your student's research.