East Carolina University

STRATEGIC ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT TASK FORCE

Preliminary Report To Faculty Senate

October 2008
Task Force Challenge

• Develop a plan to direct ECU’s efforts in enrollment management and student success

• Ensure recommendations are consistent with ECU Tomorrow, UNC Tomorrow, the Engaged University Carnegie Classification, SACS accreditation and the expectations of a graduate research university

• Solicit input from a broad range of constituencies across the university through vigorous and informed debate

• Utilize special topic subgroups to provide expertise in key areas

• Recommend strategic initiatives for enrollment, retention, and graduation which build upon ECU’s reputation as a university of choice

Key Overarching Principles

• SEM involves making choices

• Strategic decisions that support ECU’s commitment to providing a quality university experience to many people will not allow us to be all things to all people

• ECU must squarely face the tradeoffs and make decisions through informed thought and action rather than deciding through inaction

• The process is not without risk, but the benefits are far greater than the risks

• SEM is an iterative process – ever changing and flexible

• The SEM process must be driven by hope in the future, not by fear of tomorrow
Current Enrollment Data

• ECU’s 2017 enrollment projections submitted to UNC General Administration are:

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<table>
<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduates</td>
<td>26,082</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters/Doctoral</td>
<td>10,989</td>
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<tr>
<td>First Professional</td>
<td>578</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>36,018</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>DE Only</td>
<td>11,805</td>
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• ECU’s fall 2008 census of 27,703 exceeds Fall 2008 projections by 1,052 students. The 2008 incoming freshman class of 4,516 exceeded our year 2012 FT/FT freshman projection of 4,510 students.

• **The challenge is to determine a recommended enrollment growth process consistent with our mission and the quality experience we desire for students**

Critical Issues Identified

• The most critical issues impacting Strategic Enrollment Management in our institution are:

  ➢ Defining and Embracing our Access Mission
  ➢ Improving Student Retention and Graduation
  ➢ Determining Effective Academic Mix
  ➢ Providing Optimal Infrastructure

• These issues are inter-related and a recommended solution for one issue will affect another

• Thus, the recommendations need to be considered in the context of the whole and implemented with an understanding of the impact of one on the implementation of others

• The committee purposefully does not provide specific enrollment targets since that decision must be informed by faculty and programs and data.
ISSUE 1: Defining & Embracing our Access Mission

- We are known for our commitment to “access” for students throughout the state, particularly in Eastern NC
- More than 60% of our students come from west of I-95
- ECU must adopt a common definition of access as it implies different things to different people
- For the purposes of SEM:  
  *Access is defined as setting reasonable admissions standards and admitting those who meet those standards*
- Those academic standards will become more rigorous over time, with a tension between improving quality and sustaining our commitment to access
- With an increase in standards, ECU may experience an initial enrollment decline in first time/full time freshmen and transfer students.
- A proactive plan to assist potential students in meeting ECU’s admission requirements is critical to honoring our commitment to access.

**GOAL:**

To be the leader in providing a quality university experience to students who meet reasonable admissions expectations while ensuring that all students are prepared to meet these standards and to succeed academically.

**Representative Recommendations:**
- Create gateway programs targeted at under-represented students and families
- Continue to expand statewide outreach through distance education programs
- Increase integration and cooperation with Community Colleges and UNC institutions
- Increase students and faculty from under-represented groups
- Establish the “Pirate Promise” Scholarship Fund
ISSUE 2: Improving Student Retention and Graduation

- Our admissions and retention standards, as well as pressure to grow, often conflict with the political, financial and social realities of improving student retention and student graduation

- In the future, our success and state funding will be measured by how well we attract, keep and graduate our students

- We must maintain and improve the academic standards that faculty believe are appropriate to our programs and student body

- Task force recommendations are appropriately more-focused on the undergraduate population

GOAL:

Increase student retention and graduation rates

Representative Recommendations:

- Slow the rate of growth

- Admit students with increased academic qualifications

- Create programs targeted at recruiting and retaining high performing students

- Support students in achieving academic success

- Implement academic policy changes

- Enhance student financial and operational support services

- Expand and enhance programs and support functions in Student Affairs
ISSUE 3: Determining Effective Academic Mix

- Decisions are often made based on the overall mix of academic programs, specifically the balance between graduate and undergraduate and their relative funding streams.

- ECU can no longer afford to make significant program resource allocation decisions without obtaining and using program – related financial and operational data.

GOAL:

Strategically evaluate and re-evaluate the breadth and depth of our programs and degrees.

Representative Recommendations:

- Support graduate programs without negatively impacting undergraduate programs, undergraduate teaching, or ECU’s mission.

- Establish and implement program financial and capacity metrics and standards.

- Assess efficiency and effectiveness of current support structures and operations of graduate education.

- Improve ECU’s position as the predominate provider of online and off-campus distance education in the UNC system.
ISSUE 4: Providing Optimal Infrastructure

- ECU’s academic, support services and physical infrastructure has not kept pace with its rapid growth

GOAL:

Rebuild a university infrastructure sufficient to meet the needs of students, faculty, and staff.

Representative Recommendations

- Create and appropriately staff an Office of Enrollment Management
- Provide resources to accommodate space needs
- Enhance Instructional Technology services
- Strengthen the Office of Institutional Planning and Research
- Implement industry best practices with respect to responsiveness, accuracy, customer satisfaction, timeliness and operational accountability
- Enhance all aspects of safety for faculty, staff, students and visitors
- Create university-level operational process review and improvement team to evaluate cross-unit policies and operations to identify and eliminate bottlenecks, redundancy and inefficiency
**Report Format:**

- Draft report is organized by the 4 primary issues with each issue having a set of recommendations
- Timeline (immediate, short term and long term) is proposed for each recommendation
- Responsible parties are identified for each recommendation with office/unit listed first being one to initiate work on recommendation
- Appendices are provided that list the recommendations without discussion and also classify the recommendations by timeline and by responsible parties.

**Task Force Timeline:**

- SEM Task Force will solicit input through various means, including faculty, staff, and student forums. Comments may also be sent to the Task force at SEMTF@ecu.edu
- Forums are scheduled on:
  - October 15, 2008, 2-4 pm at Mendenhall Great Rooms 1 and 2
  - October 16, 2008, 3:10 – 5 pm at Health Sciences Building 1120
  - October 23, 2008, 3-5 pm at Mendenhall Student Center 244
  - Students/Grad Students forum:
    - October 28, 6:30-8:30 pm at Mendenhall Student Center 221
- Draft report is available on Enrollment Management website at www.ecu.edu/enrollment
- Preliminary report to Trustees in November 2008
- Final report to Trustees in February 2009