

PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS & DATA

Demographics

- The population of North Carolina will continue to grow. Between 2000 and 2004, NC population growth was the 6th largest in the nation. The state is predicted to experience a 55% increase (12 million people) between 2000 and 2030, which would make NC the 7th most populated state in the nation. Most of this growth is occurring in metropolitan areas within the Piedmont corridor (e.g., Charlotte, RDU) although the Wilmington metro area has also recorded substantial increases. Some rural counties on the coast or in the mountains (popular retirement areas) grew faster than the state in general (although several counties in northeast NC lost population).
- Much of the state's population growth is being fueled by in-migration (people moving into the state) of (primarily) Hispanics and Asians. In-migration accounted for 71% of NC population growth between 1990 and 2000. Between 2000 and 2010, the fastest growing segments of North Carolina's population were Hispanic (at 111% growth), Multi-racial (up almost 100%), and Asian (with an 84% increase). In fact, the Hispanic population of NC is the second fastest growing of any state in the nation.
- Echoing changing demographics in the state, the makeup and diversity of the enrolled population within the UNC university system as a whole are changing. Overall, the white population is declining (by 7.9% over the last decade) and the minority population is growing, with a minority population of 30% in fall 2010 and a white population of 62.2%.
- Changes in age distributions will also be seen, both in the state and nationally, as the average age increases. Older adults are the fastest growing segment of the population in North Carolina. This is due both to aging of Baby Boomers and an influx of retirees. State residents aged 65 and older accounted for approximately 10% of NC total population in 1980 but will account for 18% in 2030. Global, national, and state demand for products and services aimed at the elderly will continue to grow quickly. There may be a critical shortage of U.S. nurses and doctors specializing in diseases of the elderly.
- North Carolina colleges and universities will have to develop succession plans to address the aging faculty challenge. UNCP has a faculty that is 10.8% Pre-Boomer, 63.4% Boomer, and 25.8% Generation X. We will continue to face a challenge in the ability to attract, hire, and retain qualified employees.
- Although elderly adults are the fastest growing age segment, the under-18 segment is the most racially/ethnically diverse. North Carolina is among several states on the east coast where between 36 and 45 percent of people under the age of eighteen were members of a traditional minority group at the time of the 2000 U.S. census.
- Younger and older North Carolinians will be distributed across the state in different patterns. Younger residents (median age of less than 34) will most likely be located in metro regions, college & universities areas, and on military bases. Older residents (median age of more than 42) are most likely to be located in the western mountains or coastal counties.
- Sex ratios in the 2010 census indicate that North Carolina continues to have a greater number of women than men.

Economy

- State resources have declined resulting in fewer dollars for education, particularly higher education. Between 2007-08 and 2011-12, funding per student within the UNC system declined from \$13,000 to \$11,292, a decrease of 12.9%.
- Given the current fiscal situation in most U.S. states, the traditional higher education funding model is unsustainable. The states' ability to be generous to higher education in times of economic growth will most likely recede. Even as the economy recovers, the increased demand for funds (for unfunded pension liabilities, health care, corrections, etc.) will make it difficult for recent higher education cuts to be restored. Higher education will face continuing competition from other state programs for scarce resources. Many U.S. state budget experts anticipate a "new normal" of state spending growth that will be much lower than what states were accustomed to in the past.
- The UNC system will adopt a performance-based funding model. The core factors used in that model, on which campuses will be assessed, include retention & graduation rates, degree efficiency, space utilization, financial integrity, and energy efficiency. Additional measures will be campus-specific; for UNCP, those may include enrollment of military personnel and dependents, number of transfer students, number of freshmen who complete their first year in good academic standing, and number of Distance Education student credit hours.
- Robeson County's unemployment rate went above 10% at the beginning of the current recession and is currently around 13 to 14 percent. In most of the counties immediately surrounding Robeson County, unemployment rates remain in the double digits. The state's unemployment rate is slightly under 10 percent. The state's poverty rate is 13.8% and in Robeson County, it is 23.8%, the highest in the state. Manufacturing job loss has been a prime cause of poverty in Robeson County.
- Stimulating economic growth outside North Carolina's metropolitan and resort areas will continue to be a challenge. Estimators in North Carolina expect that revenues in the state won't recover (return to peak levels) until FY 2014.
- Wages lagging behind cost-of-living increases, rising tuition rates, increasing textbook prices, and possible competition from private non-profits for Pell and other Federal financial aid funds are making higher education less affordable. As the cost of higher education continues to increase, public institutions can expect increased scrutiny from state legislatures and Congress. Student learning outcomes and assessments are going to continue to be a priority.
- Federal support for higher education will be increasingly constrained. Federal student financial aid programs are being restructured to place more emphasis on loans than grants. The programs may place more financial burden on students and may operate with an overall reduction in funds.
- UNCP remains one of the most affordable institutions in the state; however, students still struggle to accumulate enough financial assets to pay tuition without significant financial aid.

Technology

- Students show up on campuses today with more electronic devices, and they expect technical applications, services, and support. Studies suggest that an increasing number of high school graduates will have completed a portion of their high school instruction online.
- Spending on IT in higher education, while still in the billions, is declining due to budgetary constraints. Unlike other IT spending, wireless access is on the rise in higher education. IT spending at private institutions is increasing at the same time IT spending is decreasing in public higher education. Within the past decade, private institutions were spending, on average, more than twice as much on IT per student as were public institutions.
- Nationally and internationally, information will become the primary commodity of more businesses. Technology provides access to information, yet new technologies require higher levels of education and training. Computer literacy will increasingly be required of all workers; information technology at all levels will be needed.
- There will continue to be challenges in NC's transition to a knowledge economy (from a "farm and factory" one). In the state as a whole and in southeastern NC in particular, jobs of the future will require greater training in the STEM disciplines (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math). Indications are that, within the state, most students enter ninth grade with inadequate reading, math, and science skills. Higher education institutions are faced with a situation where more STEM graduates are needed yet students are underprepared to enter these majors at the post-secondary level.
- Learning is the currency of the Knowledge Economy. For both people and places in the South, education and the ability to learn (and learn continuously) will be a prerequisite for economic and social success.
- Research and development will play a growing role in the economy as organizations try to remain on the forefront of technological advances.
- The demand for distance education courses is increasing in the face of dwindling budgets. DE, including hybrid and blended course offerings, will continue to multiply. Emerging technology will bring significant challenges to traditional faculty roles in the teaching/learning paradigm. Faculty must be well-trained and routinely updated in the uses of new technologies.
- Out of total U.S. venture capital, 20 percent is contributed to the software industry, which is established and growing in North Carolina compared to the Nation as a whole.

Competition

- Students, especially non-traditional students, are demanding flexibility (non-traditional classroom and pedagogical arrangements), a need that for-profit higher education providers (e.g., University of Phoenix) may be more willing and better able to provide than non-profit institutions. (Non-traditional students age 25 and older made up about 38% of all students enrolled in higher education in the U.S. in 2010. At UNCP, in most recent fall semester, 35.8% of our students body was 25 years of age or older.)
- For-profit higher education providers increasingly are offering degrees in occupational gap areas such as health care and computer technology.

- Of the students who left UNCP (without completing a degree) between the Fall of 2010 and the Fall of 2011, approximately one-fourth transferred to another school. Of these, approximately two-thirds went to two-year schools. Over 80% went to school elsewhere in North Carolina. Those schools to which 10 or more students transferred were:
 - ROBESON COMMUNITY COLLEGE
 - FAYETTEVILLE TECHNICAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE
 - FAYETTEVILLE STATE UNIVERSITY
 - RICHMOND COMMUNITY COLLEGE
 - BLADEN COMMUNITY COLLEGE
 - WAKE TECHNICAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE
 - SANDHILLS COMMUNITY COLLEGE
 - CAPE FEAR COMMUNITY COLLEGE
 - CENTRAL PIEDMONT COMMUNITY COLLEGE
 - GUILFORD TECHNICAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE
- Most of our undergraduate degree recipients who go on to graduate school do so at UNCP. A recent analysis of where our undergraduate degree recipients go to graduate school when they don't return to UNCP indicated that our top five competitors for these students are, in order of number of students attending: University of Phoenix, East Carolina, Webster University, Fayetteville State, and Grand Canyon University. A variety of degrees were obtained at these universities but the majority of them were Master's degrees and in programs available at UNCP.

Educational attainment

- North Carolina ranks 38th in the U.S. for students completing a high school education or equivalent, an increase over our position as 48th thirty years ago. However, Robeson County has a rate that is lower than the state average.
- North Carolina K-12 public schools are challenged by a number of issues including crumbling infrastructure, teacher shortages, deficits in teacher quality, changing demographics, and inadequate funding. Robeson County ranks among the lowest scoring counties in the state on K-12 performance measures.
- Although national projections to 2015 indicate a decline in the total number of high school graduates, NC's number of high school graduates are projected to increase 4.4% by 2015 and 14.4% by 2020.
- Given the national decline in high school graduates and the fact that more than 50 percent of first-year students choose a college within 100 miles of home, out-of-state recruitment efforts may yield little.
- The state is improving faster than the national average in the percent of the population 25 years of age or more having a bachelor's degree. However, North Carolina is equal to the national average in terms of post-secondary attainment by all residents, with 43 percent of the State's citizens not pursuing formal education beyond high school. In 2008-2009, NC trailed the national average in the number of graduate degrees awarded in science and engineering fields.

Occupational growth

- Statistics from Robeson County indicate that meeting the needs of the region will require training not only specifically in the STEM disciplines, teacher education, and geriatric services, but also generally in health (both physical and mental) and law. Robeson County has a higher diabetes rate and obesity rate than the state average, and is number 24 of 101 counties with the greatest number of people without health insurance. Robeson County's youth death rate is nearly double the state average, and the homicide rate is more than triple the state average. At least 80% of the legal needs of the poor and near poor are unmet.
- According to the Occupational Outlook Handbook, some of the fastest growing occupations in the U.S. (projected growth rate of 29% or faster and with 10,000 or more projected number of new jobs nationally) which require a bachelor's degree include:
 - Cost estimators
 - Database administrators
 - Health educators
 - Interpreters and translators
 - Market research analysts & marketing specialists
 - Meeting, convention, and event planners
 - Mental health and substance abuse social workers
 - Personal finance advisors
 - Software developers, systems software
- For occupations requiring a master's degree, the fastest growing are:
 - Healthcare social workers
 - Marriage and family therapists
 - Mental health counselors
 - Occupational therapists
 - Physician assistants
- The fastest growing occupations in North Carolina requiring a Bachelor's degree (according to a state 2006 to 2016 long-term projection) are:
 - Elementary school teachers
 - Business operations specialists
 - Accountants and auditors
 - Secondary school teachers
 - Construction managers
 - Middle-school teachers
 - Network systems and data communications
 - Child, family, and school social workers
 - Special education teachers
 - Employment, recruitment, and placement services
 - Civil engineers
 - Personal financial advisors
 - Graphic designers
 - Medical and public health social workers

- The list is similar for the projections of the fastest growing occupations requiring a Bachelor's degree for Robeson & surrounding counties (Lumbee River Workforce Development):
 - Elementary school teachers
 - Secondary school teachers
 - Middle school teachers
 - Accountants and auditors
 - Special education teachers
 - Child, family, and school social workers
 - Construction managers
 - Computer systems analysts
 - Adult literacy, remedial education, and GED teachers/instructors
 - Employment, recruitment, and placement specialists
 - Kindergarten teachers
 - Special education teachers
 - Medical and public health social workers
 - Network and computer systems administrators
 - Training and development specialists
- The 2012 Skills Survey of employers in North Carolina yielded the following key findings:
 - North Carolina employers indicate that, in reference to workplace soft skills, job applicants are most often lacking in communication/interpersonal skills. Critical/analytical thinking and problem-solving were also frequently indicated. Businesses see improved soft skills/personal effectiveness training an important future need.
 - Businesses are more often relying on in-house training resources to address their skill needs.
 - Employers say there is a strong need for standardized work readiness skills training and certification.
- The need for skills certificates and other short-term programs will continue to increase.

Planning Assumptions Work Group:

Dr. Beverly King, Institutional Effectiveness

Ms. June Power, Library