

## Academic Plan Steering Committee Update May 2007

The Academic Plan Steering Committee continued its work during spring semester. The following eight goals, shared with campus in December 2006, remain the framework for the plan: investment in academic excellence; inclusive decision-making; recruiting and retaining faculty, staff and administrators; improved facilities and infrastructure; student success; resource management; improved identity and reputation; and increased community and state partnerships and relationships. The Committee will continue its work through the summer to further refine goals and develop measurable objectives for the Academic Plan. We will have a draft for campus comment when faculty return in August.

These broad goals have already been used to inform University planning. Early this semester, the President's Planning Council—a group that works to link budgeting with planning and includes all faculty on the Steering Committee—used the goals to help identify institutional priorities for fiscal year 2007-08. Academic and administrative areas explicitly linked their budget requests to the priorities, which are evident in the proposed budget the Board of Trustees discussed at its May 11<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Simultaneously, the Steering Committee worked throughout spring semester to refine the goals and develop objectives. The Committee used information from 29 fall semester campus conversations, work done by academic planning subcommittees in spring semester 2006, and other recent planning and self-study documents. Near the end of the semester, we realized that in an effort to maintain consensus, we had simplified or broadened some goals and objectives to a point where they carried little meaning unique to the University of Northern Colorado. Indeed, it was quite easy to find a dozen other university academic plans that read virtually the same as our draft.

The Committee believes strongly that the Academic Plan should reflect the uniqueness of the University of Northern Colorado. While current goals provide a broad framework from which to begin, the plan must aim high, foster excellence, and encourage meaningful change. Therefore, we agreed to revisit the goals and objectives over the summer and have a draft for campus comment in August. We also agreed not to force consensus on every element of the plan as we move forward.

As we discussed how to approach our summer work, it became clear that committee members had interpreted the broad goals differently—perhaps because we have different visions for the university. Like the Academic Plan goals, UNC's mission and vision are broad enough to allow for interpretation. There is a crucial need for a well-articulated university mission and vision—a statement so strong that employees and students can see exactly where the University stands, so universally accepted that it is unaffected by changes in personnel or governance.

The Academic Plan can be further refined as the University hones its mission and vision. In the meantime, as the Steering Committee develops measurable objectives, it will also identify key questions that must be answered in order for the academic plan to be effective. (e.g., Who should UNC serve? What is the ideal balance between graduate and undergraduate programs? What is the role of research, publication and grant writing at UNC?).

In the fall, we will have more campus conversations to get feedback, refine the Academic Plan which will include identifying the committees/offices/people responsible for implementing the plans and a timeline to receive updates on the progress of implementing the goals and objectives. The developed plan will be presented to the Provost and President by December 15, 2007.

If you have any questions about the AP process please feel free to contact the chair of the APSC, Robbyn Wacker at 1-1582.

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