Report on the UNCP Listening Tour

prepared by

the Scholars Council for

Chancellor Kyle Carter

January 2011
Executive Summary

Dr. Kyle Carter, UNCP’s fifth chancellor, conducted a **Listening Tour** during October and November 2010. During this tour, which involved nine sessions on community college campuses and UNCP’s campus, community members had the opportunity to offer their feedback and their suggestions for how UNCP could better serve the region. Accompanying Chancellor Carter were five UNCP faculty members, who together constituted the Scholars Council. This report documents the feedback and input that came from community members during the sessions on the Listening Tour.

**Feedback:** Participants praised UNCP for existing programs and its role in strengthening local communities and economies. Many believe that UNCP enhances the region through entertainment and athletic activities, as well as partnerships with regional community colleges and employers. UNCP also received high marks for its “personal touch” approach to education and its support for non-traditional students. Some participants suggested that UNCP be more visible in some counties and enhance its marketing strategies.

**Academic Programs:** Participants made several suggestions for modifying or expanding academic programs. In the field of **health care**, some encouraged Chancellor Carter to offer undergraduate and graduate programs in physical therapy, particularly at the doctoral level, as well as a master’s degree in nursing. Several other programs or areas of specialization, such as health administration and occupational therapy, were also mentioned. Suggestions for **education programming** included undergraduate programs that prepared teachers for the reality of social issues facing many children and youth in the region, graduate programs that specialized in early childhood education, and programming that includes communication and/or speech language pathology. It was suggested that mechanisms or programs that encourage the transition from associate’s degrees in education to a bachelor’s of education at UNCP were also needed. Related to **business, industry, and governance**, participants recommended that academic programming be inclusive of sustainable technologies, that it be connected to workforce and business development in the region, and that it respond to the impending need for local government administrators.

**Student Success:** Participants suggested UNCP help **transfer students** with the transition to UNCP by expanding online course offerings, providing campus tours, and providing liaisons between UNCP and community colleges. Some suggested that UNCP serve **distance education students**, including working adults, by increasing the availability of courses offered through video-conferencing and by offering more online courses and programs. Participants suggested that UNCP respond to military and veteran students who have a specific need for 8-week classes and who would also benefit from a veteran-specific orientation to UNCP.

**Regional Engagement:** Participants identified two ways in which UNCP could help with accommodating an **aging population** in the context of youth migration out of the region. One is to focus on elder care and gerontology through academic programming and research. The other is to focus on programs and initiatives that engage youth as a means of promoting their retention in the region. Suggestions for youth engagement include service-learning.
through internships and vocational education, the establishment of ambassador or other programs to attract high-school graduates to UNCP, the development of initiatives that respond to the specific needs of first-generation college students, and the establishment of an Early College program. The participants offered Chancellor Carter several ways in which UNCP could encourage regional economic development. These include creating partnership between students and faculty (internships and research) that promote local and small business development, strengthening partnerships with local chambers of commerce, and engaging in economic revitalization initiatives, such as the creation of regional research parks. Several specific topics related to governance included grant-writing training and services, as well as leadership and internship in public and non-profit sectors.

**Partnerships with Community Colleges:** Several participants called on faculty, administrators, and transfer students to work together to strengthen the partnerships between UNCP and Community Colleges (CCs). To streamline the transfer of academic credit, UNCP could evaluate articulation agreements to maximize transfer credit, appoint a UNCP representative to each CC to advise students on transfer issues, and offer more UNCP courses on CC campuses. To improve the transition of community college students, UNCP could expand students’ and administrators’ access to admission and transfer information, provide mentorship opportunities to CC students, provide campus tours for transfer students, and work with CCs on improving academic skills required for university study. **Faculty-faculty partnerships,** through research and educational initiatives, as well as through exchange visits and formal luncheons, were identified as a way to strengthen ties among institutions. Finally, it was suggested that there be more opportunities for UNCP faculty, CC faculty, and CC students to engage in courses that assist in accreditation or degree requirements.
Executive Summary........................................................................................................... 1
Introduction.......................................................................................................................... 4
Feedback on UNCP's Performance .................................................................................. 6
Suggestions for Program Offerings .................................................................................... 7
  Suggestions Related to the Health Care Industry ......................................................... 7
  Suggestions Related to Education .................................................................................... 8
  Suggestions Related to Business, Industry, and Governance ....................................... 9
  Suggestions Related to Other Areas .............................................................................. 10
Ways to Promote Student Success .................................................................................. 11
  Transfer Students ............................................................................................................ 11
  Distance Education Students ........................................................................................ 12
  Military & Veteran Students .......................................................................................... 12
  International Students .................................................................................................. 13
  Local Students ................................................................................................................ 13
Ideas for Regional Engagement ....................................................................................... 14
  Aging Populations .......................................................................................................... 14
  Economic Development ................................................................................................ 14
  Governance ..................................................................................................................... 15
  Rural Health Care ......................................................................................................... 15
  Youth Development ....................................................................................................... 15
Ways to Strengthen Partnerships with Community Colleges ........................................ 17
  Streamlining the Transfer of Academic Credit to UNCP ............................................. 17
  Transition of Community College Graduates to UNCP ............................................... 17
  Creating Faculty Partnerships ....................................................................................... 18
  Improving Existing Opportunities for Students and Instructors .............................. 18
Other Remarks .................................................................................................................. 20
Acknowledgments ............................................................................................................ 20
Appendix ............................................................................................................................ 21
Introduction

On July 1, 2010, Dr. Kyle R. Carter became the fifth chancellor of the University of North Carolina at Pembroke. One of his early actions was to plan a “Listening Tour,” using the model Erskine Bowles, UNC System President, employed in 2007 for his UNC Tomorrow tour. UNCP's Listening Tour encompassed visits to nine locations during October and November. Dr. Carter intentionally selected community college campuses as the venues to signify the importance of the relationship between UNCP and our partnering community colleges. A list of the dates, locations, and attendance totals for each of the Listening Tour stops appears in the Appendix.

Dr. Carter’s purpose in leading the Listening Tour was to learn how community members believe UNCP can best serve its region. Discussing his intentions, Dr. Carter told audiences, “As UNC Pembroke’s new chancellor, I am keenly interested in learning how we are serving our constituent communities and how we can best serve them in the future” and “Your responses will help provide the foundation of a strategic visioning process for the university.”

To assist him in the data collection and reporting process, Dr. Carter appointed five faculty members to what he called the “Scholars Council.” Joining Dr. Carter on the tour were Dr. Mark Canada, Professor, English and Theater, and Associate Dean, College of Arts and Sciences; Dr. Eric Dent, Professor, Management, Marketing, and International Business; Dr. Warren Eller, Associate Professor, Public Administration; Dr. Angela Holman, Assistant Professor, School Administration and Counseling; and Dr. Patricia Sellers, Assistant Professor, Biology. In addition to the Scholars Council, UNCP vice chancellors, deans, and other administrators were available to field questions at each Listening Tour stop.

Each session on the Listening Tour began with a brief introduction, in which Dr. Carter identified four themes for UNCP’s vision:

1. **Being an institution of choice** – UNCP should be the first choice of students in the region and beyond.
2. **Focusing on student success** – UNCP wants students to succeed and, working with its community college partners, wants to ensure every student has an educational pathway to success.
3. **Serving the region** – UNCP’s mission includes outreach and engagement to strengthen Southeastern North Carolina.
4. **Working with the “new normal”** – Public universities in North Carolina have implemented and are facing additional substantial budget cuts, which require streamlining of resources to accomplish their missions.
After this brief introduction, Dr. Carter turned to the people in the audience for their comments and feedback. He offered the following questions for respondents to consider:

- What are your challenges and how can the University help?
- What programs should we offer?
- How can we help improve economic opportunities in your area?
- What knowledge and skills do our students need to be prepared for jobs of the future?

The sessions proceeded with audience members addressing Chancellor Carter and the council one after another. Occasionally, a speaker made a specific request for information about UNCP, and the most knowledgeable administrator or faculty member present provided the information. The focus of each session, however, was on hearing the voice of the community, as represented by those in attendance.

Drawing on detailed notes they took during the Listening Tour, members of Dr. Carter’s Scholars Council produced this report, which summarizes the numerous suggestions and other comments made by community members at the various sessions. The authors have organized these remarks in the following six categories:

1. Feedback on UNCP’s Performance
2. Suggestions for Program Offerings
3. Ways to Promote Student Success
4. Ideas for Regional Engagement
5. Ways to Strengthen Partnerships with Community Colleges
6. Other Remarks
Feedback on UNCP’s Performance

It was gratifying to hear that so many people in the region are pleased with what UNCP is offering and delivering. Many mentioned that UNCP “opens the world” to the community and region by hosting art exhibits, offering entertainment, featuring renowned speakers, and bringing citizens of the world to UNCP’s student body. Participants mentioned many aspects of UNCP’s mission, including the uniqueness and importance of the “personal touch,” the support for non-traditional students, the community and economic engagement, and the positive, intentional relationships with the regional community colleges. UNCP “uplifts the region” and has an opportunity to play a role at the grass-roots level for promoting education at every stage of life.

Others commented that UNCP provides important professional degrees for regional employment and that the addition of a football team had helped the region. More specific comments included feedback about the great value of having UNCP employees on community college campuses, the enhancement of the dialogue between the town of Pembroke and UNCP, and the beauty of the campus.
Suggestions for Program Offerings

UNCP has long been committed to providing students with a strong liberal arts education. In keeping with Chancellor Carter’s theme of being an institution of choice, high quality academic programs are essential to UNCP’s competitiveness with other institutions. Specific program offerings also provide service to the region by contributing to workforce development. UNCP offers 41 bachelor’s degrees, 17 master’s degrees, and one certification program. Additionally, UNCP has a new partnership with East Carolina University to offer an Ed.D. in Higher Education and an Ed.D. in K-12 Administration. Under this partnership, UNCP graduates also are reserved two of 78 available seats in ECU’s Brody School of Medicine.

During the Listening Tour, Chancellor Carter solicited suggestions for new program offerings. General suggestions related to program offerings focused on flexible scheduling to meet the needs of diverse students; for example, participants mentioned online and distance learning opportunities, internships and field-based learning, and increased ease of transition from community colleges to UNCP. Those suggestions will be addressed in greater detail under the headings of “Ways to Promote Student Success” and “Ways to Strengthen Partnerships with Community Colleges.”

Listening Tour participants emphasized that local students sometimes enroll in out-of-state online degree programs because the degree programs they are seeking are not offered at UNCP or other area institutions. The specific program offering suggestions made by Listening Tour participants can be largely grouped into three categories: suggestions related to the health care industry, suggestions related to education programs, and suggestions related to business and industry. Other suggestions that fall outside of these categories will also be noted.

Suggestions Related to the Health Care Industry

A consistent theme across all Listening Tour stops was a request for expansion of program offerings in the area of health and human services. The health care industry is a rapidly expanding field. Access to health care across the country is expected to increase with new legislative changes. Also, the population is aging and requiring additional health care services. UNCP offers a bachelor’s of science nursing degree and undergraduate interdisciplinary health professions degree programs. A new Health Professions building is under construction and expected to be complete in January 2012.

Changes in the professional credentialing standards of various health care occupations necessitate that the education and training of students in these areas keep pace with the new standards. One such change that was discussed at nearly every Listening Tour stop related to the field of physical therapy. Representatives from local hospitals and medical practices strongly encouraged Chancellor Carter to consider offering a doctorate in physical therapy,
now required for entry into the profession. There are numerous position openings for physical therapists in the local area, and recruiting outsiders to the region can be challenging. A representative from a large health care organization who attended the Raeford event shared that his office has five openings for physical therapists. Another participant, a Board of Trustees member, suggested that the existing partnerships with the 13 regional hospitals would be a potential source of funding to help establish such a program. In addition to the graduate degree in Physical Therapy, a participant at the Pinehurst Listening Tour event suggested an undergraduate degree that would prepare physical therapy assistants.

A second frequently made suggestion related to the health care industry was for a master’s degree in nursing. A master’s degree in nursing would not only prepare highly qualified nurses to work in the field, but also would provide local community colleges with a source from which to recruit teachers for their nursing preparation programs. A master’s degree in nursing is required of all community college level instructors. At least one participant recommended a specialization in rural nursing for the master’s degree in nursing. The master’s degree in nursing could offer several tracks leading to certification in a variety of areas. Some suggestions for these different tracks were provided at the Pembroke session. A participant suggested the following occupational choices could be represented by different master’s in nursing tracks: family nurse practitioner, certified nurse midwife, home health care, nurse educator, and certified registered nurse anesthetist.

Other suggestions for program offerings in the health care and related industries included the following:

1. medical coding,
2. health information management,
3. paramedics,
4. health administration,
5. audiology,
6. pharmacy,
7. gerontology (suggested in collaboration with the Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice),
8. occupational therapy,
9. master’s degree in public health.

Suggestions Related to Education

UNCP’s School of Education offers ten undergraduate and thirteen graduate degree programs, including some offered in collaboration with the College of Arts and Sciences. Several participants described the positive interactions that they have already experienced with the School of Education. Many participants expressed hope that the School of Education could help reduce dropout rates in regional high schools. Some suggested that UNCP specialize educator preparation programs to meet the unique learning needs of rural communities. A participant in Pembroke suggested specializing teacher preparation in a way that acknowledges and responds to social issues facing children and youth. A participant in Lumberton called on UNCP to elevate the overall value placed on education in this region.
A participant in Elizabethtown said that there was a need for a cohort program east of I-95. Cohort community college graduates would continue as a cohort at UNCP to complete their four-year degrees. A participant in Rockingham emphasized the need to have teachers that specialize in reading comprehension.

The partnerships between community colleges and the School of Education were discussed at several Listening Tour events. Representatives from local community colleges suggested improvements in the transition from associate’s degrees to bachelor’s degrees in education. Participants at several stops expressed a great need for instructors at the community college level. To assist in filling these openings, additional graduate degrees in several areas of education such as Early Childhood Education, specifically certification in Birth to Kindergarten, were suggested.

Interest in programs in communication disorders or speech language pathology programs was expressed at several Listening Tour stops. A speech language pathology program would be a collaborative initiative between the School of Education and the Health Professions. One participant at the Pembroke stop described how her daughter had to attend school out of state to get education and training in this field. She noted that area needs exceed area resources in addressing speech and language disorders.

Other suggestions in the area of education and social services included the following:

1. one or more offerings in the area of mental health for military populations,
2. program in addictions and substance abuse services,
3. doctorate in counselor education and supervision,
4. increased presence of School of Education faculty among the public schools.

**Suggestions Related to Business, Industry, and Governance**

Members of local chambers of commerce from several counties were present at many of the Listening Tour sessions. These participants provided suggestions for how university degree programs can enhance the economic redevelopment of rural communities and also support the local connection to military populations. A participant at the Scotland County session emphasized how the intellectual commodities that the university provides are seen by area businesses as resources in strengthening the area economy. Another participant at this session suggested that a signature program in technology would enhance local business and industry. A suggestion for an online MBA program also emerged.

Participants were also interested in programs that would develop expertise in innovative sustainable technologies. A representative from the Chamber of Commerce at the Sandhills Listening Tour stop suggested partnering with the Sustainable Sandhills organization, a local environmental group. Many participants saw the opportunity to develop and expand sustainable technologies as a way to revitalize areas that formerly supported manufacturing plants and farming.
The need for academic programs to be connected to workforce development was reiterated many times during the Listening Tour. Local business owners indicated that they would welcome student involvement in their business operations through internships or course projects.

Local leaders, such as a town manager who spoke at the Whiteville stop, stressed the importance of programs that help to develop graduates with expertise in local government management. He said his town has many government management leaders who will be retiring over the next five years and would welcome the energy and enthusiasm new graduates would bring to local governance and business. This theme was reiterated in Laurinburg, where a participant inquired about the possibility of a doctorate in public administration.

Due to UNCP’s proximity to the large Army base at Fort Bragg, several participants suggested programming related to the military community. Specific suggestions for programming in this area included programs related to intelligence and homeland security. Participants also suggested that UNCP avoid duplicating programs offered by Fayetteville State University.

Suggestions Related to Other Areas

1. agricultural development,
2. engineering and engineering technology,
3. media science,
4. construction management (to help students with two-year degrees in trades such as welding and electrical engineering to achieve undergraduate degrees),
5. cohort bachelor’s degree program east of I-95;
6. doctorate or master’s degree in criminal justice (to help train law enforcement personnel),
7. master’s degree in marketing,
8. master’s degree in humanities.
Ways to Promote Student Success

As a teaching institution, UNCP exists primarily for its students, and serving these students is a top priority. As noted above, Chancellor Carter has identified “student success” as one of the four themes of his administration. UNCP has long been committed to retaining students and promoting their success through programs and initiatives such as the Freshman Seminar, academic advising, and the Center for Academic Excellence. For example, in fall 2009, Chancellor Charles Jenkins convened a Student Success Steering Committee, consisting of faculty and staff from across the campus. In spring 2010, this committee produced a list of recommendations supported by research. Soon after taking office in July, Chancellor Kyle Carter charged the appropriate campus offices to begin implementing recommendations from this list. These early actions are evidence of Chancellor Carter’s commitment to student success at UNCP.

Over the course of the Listening Tour, participants from the various communities on the tour contributed observations and suggestions that UNCP can consider as it works to identify ways to serve students in general and promote their success in particular. These observations are organized here according to particular kinds of students.

Transfer Students

In part because most of the Listening Tour sessions took place on community college campuses and tended to draw faculty, administrators, and students from those campuses, much of the discussion about student services and student success centered on community college students who transfer or wish to transfer to UNCP. Participants encouraged UNCP to take strides in two particular areas:

**Preparation:** Community colleges play an important role in preparing some students for education at a four-year institution such as UNCP. A participant associated with Sandhills Community College noted that community colleges can provide assistance with developmental skills. Another participant indicated that transfer students are “behind” when they come to a four-year institution and noted that they are “lacking in writing skills.” At least one participant in the Listening Tour suggested that UNCP, in recruiting students, should make sure that these students complete their work at a community college before transferring to UNCP.

**Transition:** Some community college students could benefit from greater assistance in making the transition from the community college environment to four-year institutions. One administrator at Southeastern Community College suggested that UNCP could “smooth” the transition to the university and make it “more seamless and more user-friendly.” For example, providing more online courses and one-day-a-week classes might be helpful for these students. Furthermore, these students may benefit from more exposure to a four-year institution. One participant noted that many students are intimidated by education and suggested that there be more
opportunities to be on a college campus. Yet another participant, a communications instructor at Southeastern, suggested that UNCP might establish a contact person who could speak to her students “one on one” to discuss opportunities in the field or show how a four-year institution is the “next step.”

The theme of partnerships between UNCP and community colleges also emerged during the Listening Tour and is the subject of another section of this report. Such partnerships may lead to better service to students and more student success, particularly if they can help community college faculty identify key skills their students will need at UNCP and guide their students toward developing these skills.

**Distance Education Students**

Distance education has become extremely popular as working adults and other potential students have looked for ways to obtain a college education while balancing other responsibilities or pursuing majors not available close to their homes. Serving these students with a quality education is another theme that emerged on the Listening Tour.

**Availability:** UNCP may want to explore the possibility of offering more opportunities for distance education. Some specific ideas that were expressed include offering courses to military personnel stationed around the world, considering sites that can be used to broadcast courses, and offering more online degree programs, including online graduate programs, such as an online MBA program, as noted under “Suggestions for Program Offerings” above.

**Quality:** One participant, an instructor at Sandhills Community College, asked about ensuring the quality of online courses. Last year a task force that included UNCP’s director of distance education and several faculty members worked on initiatives to ensure quality and promote student success in online courses. The university is drawing on criteria from the vendor Quality Matters for the evaluation of online courses, developing an orientation for potential online students, and considering a self-assessment tool that can help students determine whether they are suited for online education.

**Satellite Sites:** One participant at a session in Scotland County suggested that UNCP consider establishing a satellite campus in Laurinburg.

**Military & Veteran Students**

Another special audience for UNCP includes veterans, as well as students who are currently in the military. Serving these populations sometimes requires special considerations in the availability and timing of courses, as well as childcare and basic guidance.

**Timing and Availability:** Some participants noted that some soldiers are looking for eight-week classes and mentioned classes at the 1000 and 2000 levels, as well as biology classes. As noted above, online education can serve students in the military, as well.
**Child Care:** One participant asked about the availability of childcare in the evenings for military spouses enrolled in evening classes.

**Transition:** One UNCP student who attended a Listening Tour session called on the university to prioritize providing a transition for veterans coming to UNCP and suggested that the university offer a “campus orientation” for these veterans. UNCP has funding from a grant for work in this area and has two students who are working with veterans, but there may be more to be done to ease the transition for veterans.

**International Students**

Over the past decade, UNCP has reached out to students overseas and greatly increased the number of its international students. There may be more to be done in this area. One participant in the Pembroke session expressed an interest in seeing more interaction between American and Chinese students and suggested that a “friend” system might promote relationships between these groups of students.

**Local Students**

As a regional university, UNCP draws largely from the local area. One participant at the session in Laurinburg suggested that the university offer scholarships for students from neighboring Scotland County and asked whether UNCP targets first-generation-college students early in the ninth grade.
Ideas for Regional Engagement

Unanimously, participants at all stops on the listening tour praised UNCP for being a university that was engaged with the region. As many speakers indicated, the support and service of UNCP has been a net positive for the region in the past and will become a necessity as regional economic conditions continue to present challenges. Participants looked to UNCP to provide strong leadership in coping with crime, illiteracy, and other problems and in confronting new challenges on the horizon. Thematically, the bulk of the recommendations can be summarized in six broad categories: aging populations, economic development, governance, rural healthcare, and youth development.

Aging Populations

The United States has experienced an aging trend over the last century, seeing a dramatic increase in both the median age and percentage of the population over the age of 65. Participants in Listening Tour sessions mentioned a drain of the region’s youth and high dropout rates among high school students. Suggestions to deal with these phenomena are twofold. First, respondents suggested that UNCP would benefit from developing an Elderhostel, perhaps something that was a partnership with a private company, but could be used as the basis for a program in gerontology. This would not only provide a resource for the aging population in the area, but also create unique educational opportunities for UNCP students in the form of cooperative education. Similarly, some respondents suggested increasing access for the elderly though reduced cost/free courses and educational programs.

A second suggestion for dealing with aging issues is to help encourage the youth to stay in the region. Suggestions for this included increasing student exposure to service learning in the region to help develop strong ties between the youth and the area. Specifically, respondents indicated that enhanced internship opportunities could aid in this area. Similarly, the concept of the “living classroom,” in which the region itself is a teaching aid, was mentioned several times.

Economic Development

A major concern in the area is the struggling local economy. Attendees indicated the enhanced need for regional coordination and support for business development, as one attendee stated, “The future of Columbus County is small business.” Participants suggested that UNCP:

1. provide enhanced support for small businesses,
2. use MBA students and faculty for regional development,
3. create research opportunities for faculty interested in local business development,
4. improve ties with regional chambers of commerce to provide marketing for UNCP and market support for businesses,
5. help with revitalization of downtown Laurinburg,
6. promote research park development.
In a similar vein, attendees said that a number of regional vocations lack robust academic support through the regional educational partnerships. These included mostly service careers such as firefighting, emergency medical services, metal fabrication, and light engineering.

**Governance**

Governance was a key issue in many stops. Many participants were interested in seeing UNCP take a stronger role in local and regional land use planning. Some participants hoped that UNCP could play a greater leadership role through the following:

1. grant writing training and services,
2. leadership development in the public and non-profit sectors,
3. internship opportunities for students interested in local governance, as well as regional public and non-profit organizations.

At three sessions, attendees indicated an interest in playing to the regional strength offered by the proximity of Fort Bragg and Pope Air Force Base. This included both services to veterans and participation in programs focused on Homeland Security. The Chancellor of Fayetteville State University, who represented his institution at the Listening Tour session in Fayetteville, indicated that the Department of Defense was one of the last big government agencies with resources for regional education and that not many organizations were pursuing these resources.

**Rural Health Care**

One of the most frequently discussed topics was health care. Rural health care service delivery is a challenge that many attendees believe UNCP can address. Specifically, participants suggested that UNCP:

1. place health care interns in facilities other than primary care facilities,
2. maintain partnerships with 13 area hospitals,
3. grow health care offerings to address regional problems, such as veterans’ issues and substance abuse.

**Youth Development**

Youth development was a key issue for many regional stakeholders. Concerns ranged from prevention to enhanced access to the regional educational system. Participants suggested that UNCP:

1. use ambassador programs to help make top students in regional schools aware of the educational opportunities right here in the area,
2. develop programs to help educate regional youth on the diversity of educational opportunities that are available through UNCP and the community college network,
3. enhance opportunities for vocational education in the regional network,
4. focus its research efforts on regional problems, such as substance abuse and illiteracy,
5. create enhanced ways for non-traditional and first-time students to engage with the campus,
6. devote resources to improving cooperative education programs throughout the region.
7. establish an Early College on campus.

Finally, participants made other comments related to regional service, suggesting that UNCP help the town of Pembroke to be more attractive and bring speakers to other areas of the region, not just the campus.
Ways to Strengthen Partnerships with Community Colleges

Eight of the nine sessions on the Listening Tour took place at community colleges, suggesting the continuing importance of the relationship between UNCP and regional community colleges (CCs). Strong partnerships between UNCP and CCs increase the likelihood that CC graduates will choose UNCP for further study and succeed here, enhance the ability of UNCP and CCs to collaborate in serving the region, and create opportunities for these institutions to work together and to share resources in the financial climate of budget cuts. Participants on the Listening Tour mentioned four main ways to strengthen partnerships between UNCP and regional CCs.

Streamlining the Transfer of Academic Credit to UNCP

UNCP is already widely recognized by instructors and administrators as an institution of choice for many students and graduates. At the same time, participants reported that some CC students experience frustration in the transfer process, as well as disappointment when they become aware of the degree to which their CC courses count for credit at UNCP. During one stop on the tour, it was noted that some nursing students choose another institution for these reasons.

Participants suggested that UNCP:

1. review and evaluate articulation agreements between CC and UNCP to maximize credits transferrable as general elective credit and/or as course-specific credits and improve communication and education about such agreements among CC representatives;
2. appoint a UNCP representative and advisor who would visit CCs, not only to advise CC students about transfer of general credit or credit to specific programs such as nursing but also to communicate effectively with students and CC representatives on issues regarding transfer of credit;
3. offer more UNCP courses on CC campuses to ensure course-specific credit for students intending to transfer;
4. explore ways in which UNCP and CCs can highlight transferability as a means of promoting UNCP as an institution of choice for CC graduates.

Transition of Community College Graduates to UNCP

Several participants on the Listening Tour mentioned the difficulty that CC students and graduates have in making the transition from a local, small community college to a regional institution the size of UNCP. Some of these difficulties are related to technical skills and/or social dynamics, both of which can affect student success at UNCP. The areas of difficulty identified could help to explain why some transfer students do not complete their degree program at UNCP. To maximize the ease with which students can make the transition from CC to UNCP, participants suggested that UNCP:
1. work with CCs to improve preparation of CC graduates in terms of academic skills (reading, writing, critical thinking, math, etc.) needed for success at UNCP;
2. improve access to admission information (in terms of skills required and expectations) needed by potential transfer students;
3. join CCs in encouraging students to complete their CC programs before attending UNCP, thus providing more opportunities to develop skills and, in some cases, responsibilities needed for success at UNCP;
4. provide mentorship opportunities at UNCP for CC students interested in research, thus providing exposure to and familiarity with specific programs and people at UNCP;
5. provide campus tours for potential transfer students to provide exposure to academic programs, student life, and student services on campus;
6. provide CCs with data on retention of transfer students at UNCP, thus helping CC administrators in planning with respect to transfer students;
7. provide a mechanism for UNCP Counseling and Testing Center to work with CCs to assist in assessment and social issues that help improve retention.

Creating Faculty Partnerships

The value of partnerships between CC and UNCP faculty was identified as a strength, based on existing partnerships in the areas of English and math. Existing partnerships in several disciplines, including business and English, strengthen communication about UNCP courses and programs, identify mechanisms and opportunities for development of skills among potential transfer students, and identify research and other collaborative opportunities.

Participants expressed a need for specific faculty-to-faculty partnerships in the areas of mass communication, nursing, history, local business & marketing, and environmental science, as well as a need for general faculty-to-faculty engagements in the form of exchange campus visits, face-to-face or video conferences, and luncheons. Such engagements would help to form and strengthen lateral ties among all institutions. At one session a participant noted that there is often no follow-up after initial meetings of UNCP and CC faculty; thus, there is a need for initiatives that would serve to maintain established connections.

Improving Existing Opportunities for Students and Instructors

Many of the nurses, K-12 teachers, and CC instructors who serve the region are UNCP graduates. This fact was widely recognized and applauded during the tour. It was also widely recognized that the region will continue to need qualified teachers, instructors, and nurses and that UNCP needs to respond by maintaining and enhancing existing programs. Participants suggested that UNCP:

1. expand opportunities—through more on-site courses, for example—for CC instructors and K-12 teachers to take and complete courses needed to satisfy accreditation requirements;
2. continue to work with CCs to identify and encourage adjunct UNCP faculty to teach at the CCs in specialized areas;
3. explore the option of creating a dual-enrollment agreement in nursing with Fayetteville Technical College for nursing majors;
4. work with CCs to create a mentoring program for CC students specializing in early childhood education.

Other Recommendations

There were recommendations in other areas, as well. Participants suggested that UNCP:

1. make greater use of videoconferencing, on-line courses, and virtual classroom technologies,
2. collaborate with high schools and CCs in creating a mechanism that targets students at risk and creates continuity among these institutions for these students,
3. develop a program for gifted high-school students to encourage their scholarly activities and later enrollment to UNCP,
4. participate in regional development meetings that the CCs currently have with industry and local business leaders,
5. promote a more constant presence of UNCP employees on community college campuses.
Other Remarks

Listening Tour participants made a number of helpful remarks that do not fall neatly into any of the categories mentioned above. The most common refrain was that UNCP does not “get the word out” and market itself well enough. Some noted that they received more frequent mailings from NC State University and the University of Phoenix than UNCP. Particularly in Scotland County, participants mentioned that they felt less aware of UNCP’s offerings than those in Robeson County. Moore County respondents also mentioned that UNCP should increase its visibility there. Participants also encouraged UNCP to foster pride among its alumni and promote pedestrian safety around campus. Finally, a number of comments encouraged UNCP not to lose sight, particularly in times of budget cuts, of what has been important to UNCP’s success. It was noted, for instance, that UNCP should invest in core faculty rather than administrators, maintain an American Indian presence on panels and committees, keep class sizes small, and continue offering arts exhibits, musical concerts, Broadway-style shows, and distinguished speakers.

Acknowledgments

The UNC-Pembroke community was gratified by the large number of people who attended the Listening Tour stops and offered their ideas about the future direction of the university. The Scholars Council would like to thank each of the gracious hosts who created a forum for the voice of the community to be heard, the University Relations personnel who organized the events, and other university staff who contributed to the success of the tour. Chancellor Carter has committed to taking all of these ideas under advisement as UNCP moves forward in ongoing planning to meet the needs of the region it is dedicated to serving.
Appendix

UNCP Listening Tour Attendance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tour Stop</th>
<th># Signed In</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Laurinburg – October 13, 2010</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lumberton – October 15, 2010</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pembroke – October 18, 2010</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whiteville – October 20, 2010</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fayetteville – October 25, 2010</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raeford – October 28, 2010</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinehurst – November 15, 2010</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabethtown – November 15, 2010</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamlet – November 17, 2010</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>