To: Faculty, Staff, and Friends of The University of North Carolina at Charlotte

Re: Update on Current Issues and Activities

Dear Colleagues:

Happy Holidays! As the calendar year nears its end, another semester at UNC Charlotte has concluded. In addition to the celebratory holidays that come at this time of year, we at the University are celebrating the latest group of graduates who will go forth to fulfill their futures. At our December 14 Commencement we awarded nearly 3,400 degrees, including 940 Master’s and 73 doctoral degrees.

Commencement at UNC Charlotte highlights one of the fundamental components of our mission: to serve the public good by producing well-educated men and women. It also adds to our sense of having completed a good semester, and helps to energize us for the challenges of the New Year. I hope you have some time to slow down, cozy up with this newsletter (and your favorite warm beverage), and share in our pride with respect to the University’s most recent accomplishments. And, as always, if you would like more information on any specific item mentioned in this newsletter, please feel free to contact my executive assistant, Shari Dunn (Shari.Dunn@uncc.edu). You may also find the Chancellor’s Outbox as another useful information source: http://administration.uncc.edu/chancellor/chancellors-outbox.

FALL ENROLLMENT

Enrollment was at another all-time high with 26,571 students enrolled for the fall semester. Our 21,503 undergraduate students rank as the third highest in the UNC system – just a handful of students short of being tied with East Carolina University as the second largest behind NC State. Demand for a UNC Charlotte education is stronger than ever before.

As evidence of UNC Charlotte’s popularity, a record-high 5,300 students and families attended UNC Charlotte Explore (the University’s open house) in October and November. Demand was so strong in November that we were compelled to stop registration early.

Freshman applications are up 5% overall compared to last year. Applications from in-state students are up 13% compared to last year at this time.
NEW ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

As our enrollment has grown and in response to demonstrated regional or statewide needs, we have continued to add academic programs. In recent history, this growth has occurred at the graduate level.

For example, the College of Health and Human Services received approval from the UNC Board of Governors to offer the Doctor of Philosophy in Public Health Sciences. The program, housed in the college’s Department of Public Health Sciences, is the University’s 21st doctoral degree. With a concentration in behavioral sciences, this doctoral program will focus on the social and cultural factors that influence health and behavior—in particular, those factors that contribute to health disparities among minority and vulnerable populations. Students in the program will engage in coursework and cutting-edge research to understand and address health determinants related to the prevention and management of disease and disability. This program will be of significant importance to the community and a broad spectrum of health and human service organizations serving the greater Charlotte region, and it marks an important step toward creating a School of Public Health. The program will enroll its first class of Ph.D. students in fall 2014. Previously, an undergraduate major (2007) and a master’s program in Public Health Sciences (2006) were approved by the Board of Governors and have since received accreditation by the Council on Education for Public Health.

Another notable recent addition to our graduate program is the M.S. in Applied Energy and Electromechanical Systems. Building on our Energy Production and Infrastructure Center (EPIC) initiative, this program will offer innovative opportunities to meet current technology needs and will prepare students to enter the energy and power workforce.

Soon to come is an expanded set of academic and executive education programs related to our initiative in Data Science and Business Analytics (DSBA). Just two years ago, McKinsey Global Institute said that the capacity of organizations and businesses to understand and use large data sets pertaining to their operations would become “the next frontier for innovation, competition, and productivity.” The UNC Board of Governors has identified data analytics as one of six “game changing” areas for research and talent development.

The opportunity presented to the University is to build its capacity in data science and business analytics in collaboration with business partners in a wide variety of economic sectors that have significant presence in the Charlotte region, including retail, financial services, healthcare, and energy. The initiative spans several of our academic colleges and has brought us into promising conversations with prospective business partners. UNC President Tom Ross has also invested $200,000 over each of two years to provide us with seed funding to support joint University-business projects that explore the potential for analytics and visualization technologies to provide actionable information that will lead to improved business operations or customer relations.

UNC Charlotte has submitted its proposal for a Professional Science Master’s degree in Data Science and Business Analytics for approval by the UNC Board of Governors. Pending approval and formal launch of the PSM, we have made available a graduate certificate program in DSBA. This collaboration between the Belk College of Business and the College of
Computing and Informatics will provide post-baccalaureate students with the opportunity to pursue graduate studies in this rapidly-growing field.

The DSBA certificate is open to all students who hold a bachelor's or master's degree in any scientific, engineering, or business discipline and who are currently enrolled in a graduate degree program at UNC Charlotte or who have completed an undergraduate degree with a minimum 3.0 GPA. More information on the DSBA graduate certificate curriculum and admissions requirements can be found here.

The DSBA initiative took its first step in executive education with a two-day seminar in October focused on customer analytics and data science. Keynote speakers for the program were the chief data scientist for Verizon Inc. and the co-director of the Center for Business Analytics at NYU’s Stern School of Business. Panelists and presenters included UNC Charlotte faculty members, along with industry experts from PricewaterhouseCoopers, Belk Inc., Bank of America, and Huron Legal.

PROGRESS ON CAMPUS FACILITIES

As we grow our student population, optimize our academic offerings, and expand our research interactions with businesses, it has been necessary to develop creative solutions to our space needs. Although state appropriations have built many of the buildings on campus, the last state funding received by UNC Charlotte—to build the EPIC facility—was more than six years ago. But using a variety of alternative funding sources, UNC Charlotte’s building program continues.

Opening in January, the building we call PORTAL (for Partnership, Outreach, and Research to Accelerate Learning) embodies the University’s commitment to university-industry partnerships designed to spur business growth and job creation, and to promote research and innovation in the Charlotte region. PORTAL is located at the North Tryon Street/Hwy 29 entrance to campus and will be just a short distance from the light rail stop that will serve the University beginning in 2017. PORTAL will provide 96,000 square feet of state-of-the-art space where business partners will have daily exposure to the creative mix of students, faculty, and specialized facilities that we can offer.

Funded with bonds paid with revenues we receive from federally sponsored research grants, PORTAL will house a sensitive compartmented information facility (SCIF) for defense and security projects, commercial research space, business incubator offices and support services, and a retail café and additional commercial business rental space. PORTAL will also be the new home to Ventureprise, Inc. (formerly known as the Ben Craig Center), a non-profit corporation established in 1986 that provides direct support services to start-up and early-stage businesses in the Charlotte region.

On the other side of campus, South Village continues its rapid build-out. UNC Charlotte’s Campus Master Plan (http://masterplan.uncc.edu) adopted in 2010, embraced the village concept as an innovative solution for an aggressively dynamic and growing University. Once completed, the complex will feature three new residential halls, renovation of the four high rise halls, a new residents’ dining hall, a parking deck, a utility plant, and car/pedestrian connectivity from High Rise Road to Cameron Boulevard. Funding to support the construction of
these facilities comes from revenues generated by residence and dining contracts, parking permit sales, and the campus infrastructure fee paid by students.

Thus far, completed projects include the new Hunt Hall (opened this fall), the new parking deck, and the regional utility plant. The dining hall – South Village’s central hub – opens in the fall of 2014. First- and second-year students are the area’s primary residents, allowing the University to focus specifically on their needs. In addition, the Phase XIV residence hall, which will be located here and open in the fall of 2016, will house a learning community of Levine Scholars and Honors College students, with academic and administrative space to support these important programs.

**EARLY-COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL**

In collaboration with Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, plans are under way to open an Early College High School on the UNC Charlotte campus in the fall of 2014. To be operated as a district-wide “magnet” school, the Early College High School at UNC Charlotte will focus on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) education, with an emphasis on energy. Current plans call for the school to be located in modular classroom units to be placed near the Energy Production and Infrastructure Center (EPIC) to take advantage of the faculty, facilities, and equipment available there. The CMS and UNC-Charlotte partnership will help increase access to college as well as provide intentional exposure to career pathways in the engineering and energy sectors. The school is also intended to serve as a research and professional development site for STEM education and teacher preparation. It will feature a five-year curriculum that will enable students to earn their high school diploma and up to two years of transferrable college credit.

Michele Howard, UNC Charlotte’s former dean of students, serves as the Director of Early College Programs and is the liaison to Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. Approval for the program and the new facilities are required by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School Board and the NC School Board. UNC Charlotte’s Board of Trustees has already unanimously endorsed the concept and authorized us to negotiate the final terms of the collaboration.

**SOLAR DECATHLON**

In late September and early October, UNC Charlotte was honored to be one of 20 academic teams from around the word selected to compete in the U.S. Department of Energy’s “Solar Decathlon” competition. The Solar Decathlon features a series of ten contests for each team. The teams are tasked with building a solar-powered house that incorporates energy-efficient construction and appliances as well as renewable energy systems.

Faculty and students from the College of Arts + Architecture, the Lee College of Engineering, and the Belk College of Business comprise the UrbanEden team. Work on the design started in October 2011 and construction began in March 2013. A wide variety of corporate partners, including Duke Energy, Ingersoll Rand, Edifice General Contractors, Hall Architects, Electrolux, Metromont, US Airways, and others, provided funding, building materials, equipment, appliances, and in-kind gifts and services to construct UNC Charlotte’s entry, an 822-square-foot solar house called UrbanEden.
Envisioned as an urban infill project, UrbanEden incorporated revolutionary approaches to sustainable design and construction, including the choice of the primary building material (geopolymer cement concrete), an innovative active/passive hybrid cooling system integrated into the walls and roof of the house, and responsive technology that allows the house and its inhabitants to adapt to changing environmental conditions. A series of connected indoor and outdoor rooms combine into a single environment that adapts to maximize comfort and minimize energy use.

In a brutally competitive field of institutions from all over the world, UNC Charlotte emerged with the “People’s Choice” award and tied for third place in the juried engineering contest. It also received kudos as the first house built using concrete produced with a reduction of 90% in carbon emissions compared to the standard mixture.

See more of UrbanEden on Youtube.

CHANCELLOR’S SPEAKER SERIES

It’s hard to believe that the third edition of the Chancellor’s Speaker Series has come and gone already. This is the annual event that celebrates the University’s role as our region’s thought leader with high caliber speakers addressing current topics in public affairs.

Jeffrey Toobin, CNN senior analyst and staff writer for The New Yorker, was this year’s speaker on Oct. 15, following Erskine Bowles and Alan Simpson at our inaugural event in 2011, and Michael Beschloss, the renowned presidential historian who spoke last year between the Democratic National Convention in Charlotte and the 2012 presidential election.

Toobin, one of the country’s most esteemed experts on politics, media, and law, treated a capacity audience in the Student Union to a lively afternoon discussion of current events. He even offered career advice to some of the future attorneys and journalists in attendance. That evening, at Center City, Toobin took the audience through an informal history of the U.S. Supreme Court from about the mid-20th century to today, and shared several insights into Washington and national politics.

The Chancellor’s Speaker Series has quickly become a UNC Charlotte tradition and one of the highlights of fall. See a gallery of images from this October’s event on Flickr.

FULBRIGHT SCHOLARS

UNC Charlotte is now one of the top producers of Fulbright Scholars, according to a recent article in the Chronicle of Higher Education. This is a significant achievement, ranking UNC Charlotte alongside other major research institutions such as the University of California Berkeley, the University of Georgia, and the University of Michigan. This recognition showcases the University’s focus on the world’s interconnectedness and how competitive our faculty members are on a national and international level. The Fulbright is a prestigious honor, and every level of the University’s leadership recognizes and values the importance of international engagement.
Extending the University’s global reach is an important aspect for UNC Charlotte’s mission as the state’s urban research institution, and having a robust number of Fulbright Scholars on campus certainly furthers that mission.

The Fulbright Scholar Program is sponsored by the U.S. Department of State and administered by the Council for International Exchange of Scholars. Click here for a CIES article about the Chronicle of Higher Education story.

During the 2012-13 academic year, Maja Godlewska, assistant professor of art and art history, and Alan Freitag, professor of communication studies, served as Fulbright Scholars in Poland; James Douglas, associate professor of political science and public administration, spent the summer in Estonia; Vivian Lord, professor of criminal justice and criminology, completed a term in India; and Spencer Salas, assistant professor in the College of Education, was in South Africa.

For the 2013-14 academic year, Christine Haynes, associate professor of history, is serving as a Fulbright Scholar in France; Suzanne Lamorey, associate professor of special education and child development, is in India; Tanure Ojaide, professor of Africana studies, is in Nigeria; and Jordan Poler, associate professor of chemistry, is in Russia.

In addition to UNC Charlotte faculty members serving as Fulbright Scholars abroad, the University has become a destination for international students awarded a Fulbright scholarship. Yudo Anggoro, a doctoral student in Public Policy from Indonesia, is on campus for the 2013-14 academic year, along with fellow Public Policy doctoral students Mauricio Dominguez and Nahida Khudadad from Colombia and Pakistan, respectively. Also on campus this year is Hanne Duindam from the Netherlands, who is working toward a master’s in Clinical Psychology.

UPCOMING CAMPAIGN

Our last major comprehensive fundraising campaign, "It Takes a Gift," was completed in 2005 and the $115,000,000 raised has helped with many aspects of our institutional development over the past eight years. Thanks to an improving economy and a growing list of opportunities on the campus, we are in the early stages of planning our next major fundraising campaign. Later this winter, Bentz, Whaley, and Flesner—a national fundraising consulting firm—will conduct an external feasibility analysis and we anticipate that the early leadership phases of the campaign will begin in 2014.

INAUGURAL FOOTBALL SEASON

As I hope all of you know by now, UNC Charlotte fielded an intercollegiate football team for the first time this fall. From almost any perspective, the inaugural season ranks as one big touchdown! We fielded a talented and competitive team against a schedule of tough opponents. The experience at our sparkling Jerry Richardson Stadium was consistently dynamic, with big crowds, vociferous support, plenty of 49ers gear on sale, extensive use of the water bottle refill stations, and delicious fare.
The 2013 football season will be remembered for a collection of milestones.

The season included an impressive 45-point victory in the inaugural game, a 45-21 road win at Presbyterian, a 29-point fourth quarter comeback over 24th-ranked Gardner-Webb for a 53-51 victory, and a 61-point outburst in the season finale at Morehead State. The schedule featured six ranked opponents, including four Football Championship Series top-25 teams. The offense was typically potent, with 49ers scoring 45 or more points in each of their five wins and over 50 points three times. But, the defense did its part, scoring our very first touchdown from an interception return.

Overall, the team assembled some impressive statistics. The 49ers ranked 7th in the FCS in takeaways, 4th in fumbles recovered, 22nd in interceptions, and 30th in tackles for loss. Charlotte averaged 448.5 yards of total offense and ranked 26th in the FCS in rushing offense (206.8 yd/game), 27th in scoring offense (33.4 pts/game) and 12th in fewest sacks allowed (0.91 per game).

And Niner Nation turned out. With several standing-room only crowds, an average of 15,541 fans filled Jerry Richardson Stadium for 49ers home games, above the actual stadium seating capacity of 15,314. In addition to our students and alumni, who threw themselves headlong into the tailgating and cheering the team, others from throughout the Charlotte region supported the home team. Friends of the University came from far and wide to share the on-campus experience, and the local TV broadcast of the home games by WCCB drew consistently high viewership.

**IMPRESSIVE ACCOLADES EARNED**

We close the fall semester with note of some important individual and institutional recognitions.

At the core of our effort to provide a high-quality, high-value education are our professors. One of our finest is psychology professor Kimberly Buch, who is the 2013 recipient of the highest teaching honor bestowed by UNC Charlotte, the Bank of America Award for Teaching Excellence. Other nominees included several other outstanding members of the faculty: Ted Amato, professor of economics; John David Smith, professor of history; Hui-Kuan “Alice” Tseng, associate professor of economics; and Mark West, professor of English.

I have known Kim for well more than twenty years and it is easy to understand why she has been honored. Since joining the faculty at UNC Charlotte in 1987, she has consistently emphasized with her students that learning is more than grades and assignments—that true learning is growing through life-changing experiences like studying abroad or impacting the lives of others and one’s community through service. Well known for engaging students in community issues and partnerships, Kim is the faculty advisor for Niner Neighbors, a student-led organization that provides temporary housing for the homeless. She also is actively involved with one of the University’s most visible campus-wide community service initiatives, Stop Hunger Now.
Dr. Buch has served as chair of 70-plus graduate thesis committees, supervised more than 60 undergraduate research projects, and managed internship placements for more than 50 graduate and undergraduate students. Relationships developed with students have resulted in more than 40 jointly-authored professional presentations and publications.

Kim is now serving a two-year term as a faculty fellow in UNC Charlotte’s Center for Teaching and Learning, where she will work with faculty interested in exploring innovative teaching and learning practices. As the recipient of the Bank of America Award, Kim becomes this campus’ nominee for the Board of Governors Award for Teaching Excellence to be awarded next spring.

Images from the Bank of America Award ceremony can be found on the University’s Flickr site:

Our staff members have been hard at work as well, and receiving nice accolades for their efforts. Retiring staff member Steve Clark, who has been responsible for the construction and placement of technology smart podiums in all of our more than 500 classrooms, was recognized in November as one of the recipients of the Governor’s Award for Excellence.

And, finally, on December 3, UNC Charlotte was named as the first nonprofit recipient of the Belk Innovation in Diversity Award, presented by the Charlotte Chamber and Belk Inc. The award honors “outstanding leadership and practice by driving business and community results through innovative diversity and inclusion in the workplace, economy, and beyond.”

In naming UNC Charlotte as the nonprofit winner of the award, the Charlotte Chamber cited the positive results seen at the University in recruitment of students from minority groups, our work with supporting minority- and female-owned business, and the Chancellor’s Diversity Challenge Award program for enhancing intercultural activities on campus and in the community.

The law firm of Moore and Van Allen received the Belk Innovation in Diversity Award in the for-profit category.

Learn more about the award in this clip on the UNC Charlotte YouTube Channel. The segment will air in the upcoming edition of Inside UNC Charlotte, on January 5 on WTVI-TV at noon.

I’ll close by wishing all of you a very healthy and productive New Year. Go Niners!

Cordially,

Philip L. Dubois
Chancellor