January 11, 2013

To: Friends of The University of North Carolina at Charlotte

Re: Update on Current Issues and Activities

Dear Colleagues:

Welcome to 2013 and Happy New Year to all. I’m pleased to help you get caught up to date on all of the doings at UNC Charlotte as our students return from the holiday break.

As always, if you want additional information on any specific item mentioned in this newsletter, please contact my executive assistant, Shari Dunn (shari.dunn@uncc.edu). You may also find the Chancellor’s Outbox to be another useful information source (http://administration.uncc.edu/chancellor/chancellors-outbox).

**A Productive End to 2012**

**Happy New Graduates**

Many of us think of this time of year as both a culmination and a beginning. As the year winds down, we take time to reflect on the previous year and to focus on the new year coming at us at full speed. This is especially true at UNC Charlotte because mid-December was commencement time, a celebration of the attainment of an academic degree and the beginning of a new chapter in the graduate’s life.

On December 15, approximately 3,200 students, along with family and friends, gathered for the 2012 fall commencement at Halton Arena. Almost 2,200 undergraduates and nearly 1,000 graduate students were awarded their degrees, including 70 doctoral students. That’s 200 more graduates than at last December’s commencement.

Among those graduates were 34 students who have earned their bachelor’s degree with the help of our prolific and award-winning 49er Finish Program. The program began in fall 2006 as a UNC Charlotte initiative to proactively reach out to senior-level students who stopped short of completing their bachelor’s degrees even though, at the time of their departure, these students were in good academic standing. The program develops personalized solutions to help those students earn the college degree toward which they had made so much progress. 49er Finish has now reached an amazing threshold, having shepherded more than 500 students to achieve a degree many of them may have considered out of reach. That’s a fantastic result for the graduates and an important and enriching outcome for employers and the community at large.
49er Finish is earning national acclaim. In 2009, it was named Outstanding Institutional Advising Program by the National Academic Advising Association. This fall, the program was recognized by the American Association for Adult and Continuing Education with the Malcolm Knowles Award for the nation’s outstanding adult education program.

Happy Newly-Elected Public Officials

Every other year, January is also the time when freshman legislators at the state or federal level are sworn into office along with their more experienced new colleagues. The 2012 election ushered in many new faces among the elected officials who serve the Charlotte region and our state. Among them are two 49ers who are blazing trails among our alumni.

This past week, Richard Hudson, Class of ’96, was sworn in to Congress to represent North Carolina’s 8th congressional district. He is the first UNC Charlotte alumnus to serve in Congress, having earned his Bachelor of Arts degree with majors in history and political science. I was fortunate to get to know Richard in his younger years when he served as Student Body President and I was serving as Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. Richard is still a young man and a promising leader; me, I’m not so young anymore!

We also take special 49er pride in the election of Dan Forest, ’93 and ’94, to the post of Lieutenant Governor of North Carolina. Dan is a former senior partner of Little Diversified Architectural Consulting. He holds two undergraduate degrees from the School of Architecture at UNC Charlotte, and I believe is the first alumnus elected to a statewide office in North Carolina.

Our ranks of alumni in the NC General Assembly continue to grow. We are proud of the following alumni serving in the legislature:

- Rep. Dean Arp ’99, M.S. Civil Engineering, Anson/Union
- Rep. Bill Brawley ’78, B.S. Accounting, Mecklenburg
- Rep. Tricia Cotham ’01, B.A. History, Mecklenburg
- Rep. Mike Hager ’87, B.S. Mechanical Engineering, Rutherford
- Rep. Kelly Hastings ’09, Graduate Certificate in Teaching (History Concentration), Gaston
- Sen. Gene McLaurin ’78, B.A. Psychology, Richmond
- Sen. Bob Rucho ’94, M.B.A., Mecklenburg
- Rep. Jason Saine ’95, B.A. Political Science, Lincoln

We also take great pride in the many UNC Charlotte alumni who serve in local elected positions. Forty-niners are making their marks at all levels of government.

Satisfied Conventioneers

Of course, last fall’s elections were conducted in the aftermath of both national presidential nominating conventions. The Democratic National Convention (DNC) has come and gone and Charlotte scored high marks hosting this major event.
UNC Charlotte took maximum advantage of this special opportunity to host visitors from all over the country and, indeed, all over the world. Both in our Center City facility and on the main campus, we hosted lectures and other special events, including PBS’s “Washington Week” with Gwen Ifill. Our faculty experts were quoted in national and international news media.

Thanks to what we called “the 49er Democracy Experience,” dozens of students were placed in internships and volunteer opportunities throughout the year and during convention week. Our faculty did a great job of developing specific course content to help give students an historical perspective and contemporary political context for understanding the presidential nominating process.

A couple of post-convention events—the Chancellor’s Speaker Series on September 27 featuring presidential historian Michael Beschloss, and the “Solving It Together” forum hosted on November 30 in partnership with the Charlotte Observer and PNC Bank—were reminders of the role our University will continue to play as Charlotte’s convener of important, issues-centered events and activities.

View a series of posters that depict some of the legacy of the 49er Democracy Experience at this link: http://democracyexperience.uncc.edu/about/49er-democracy-experience-visual-archive/impact-poster-series

View a video that summarizes some of the University’s engagement in Charlotte in 2012 at this link: http://youtu.be/0mSfN8vvyTk

Continuing Recognition for 49ers

As I brainstorm with my staff every semester about what to include in this newsletter, we are always challenged with selecting individual members of our faculty, staff, and student body who have earned professional recognitions or important distinctions for their work. That, truly, is a challenge, because our institution is extremely fortunate to have a large number of talented folks.

With that said, this fall we knocked the recognition ball out of the park! Dr. Harold Reiter, Professor of Mathematics in the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences, was presented with the Award for Excellence in Public Service from the Board of Governors of the University of North Carolina system. The university system established the award in 2007 to encourage, identify, recognize and reward distinguished public service and outreach by faculty across the UNC system. Harold was honored for his selfless contributions to the development of pre-college students and teachers in North Carolina and around the country. He joins Professor Jim Cook of our Department of Psychology who was honored with the same award in 2009.

In addition to the singular recognition of Dr. Reiter, the remarkable talent across the ranks of our staff and faculty was never more evident than at the November ceremony to announce recipients of North Carolina’s Governor’s Award for Excellence. This is the highest honor bestowed upon state employees for meritorious service. This year, only a dozen individuals were honored from more than 300,000 state employees; and just four of those were UNC system employees. Having one employee honored at a single state agency or university
campus is quite noteworthy. Having three in the same year gave us reason to hold our heads especially high. Staff members Jo Ann Fernald (Director of Disability Services), Officer Jerry Lecomte (of Campus Police and Public Safety) and Connie Martin (Executive Director of Extended Academic Programs) were honored during a special ceremony at the Museum of History in Raleigh for their contributions to the citizens of North Carolina.

You can see brief video profiles of each of UNC Charlotte’s Governor’s Award for Excellence Recipients at the following links:
Jerry Lecomte: http://youtu.be/mVfyWXD15bY
Jo Ann Fernald: http://youtu.be/XAk8MokV4CE
Connie Martin: http://youtu.be/jEROixqZdiY

The significant state and national honors that seem to come our way with increasing frequency are testaments to the quality of the members of our campus community. Other recently recognized individuals include:

- **Associate professor Joanne Robinson** from the Religious Studies Department, who is the 2012 recipient of the highest teaching honor bestowed by UNC Charlotte, the Bank of America Award for Teaching Excellence. By virtue of this distinction, Joanne will be UNC Charlotte’s nominee for this year’s UNC Board of Governors Award for Teaching Excellence.

- **Dr. Nancy A. Gutierrez**, Dean of UNC Charlotte’s College of Liberal Arts & Sciences, has been elected President of the Council of Colleges of Arts and Sciences (CCAS), the nation’s most influential association for academic leaders in the liberal arts and sciences. Nancy will take office in November 2013. CCAS represents more than 500 member institutions and 1,600 deans, associate deans and assistant deans.

I can’t leave this section of my report without mentioning our students. Again, the students continue to pile up important recognitions too numerous to discuss here. But since we often talk about the success of student-athletes on and off the field, let me note one of our other important “teams” that wear the 49er green and white. UNC Charlotte’s Model United Nations team, led by Professor Cynthia Combs of the Department of Political Science, brought home two of the top awards presented at the National Model United Nations Conference in late October, winning an Outstanding Delegation Award and a Position Paper Award.

Meanwhile, 23 students in Professor Catherine Fuentes’ fall “Introduction to Anthropology” class who participated in a North American writing competition involving over 3,600 students from 25 institutions were recognized as winners by the Center for a Public Anthropology.

Of course, our student-athletes continue to do their part to enhance the reputation of UNC Charlotte. Freshman Patric King, who is also a Levine Scholar, served a summer internship at the University YMCA near campus and helped develop the plan for service at the entirely donated, wheelchair-accessible field—the only one of its kind in western North Carolina.

You can read more at this link: [http://www.collegebaseballinsider.com/12Articles/UNCC_ML.html](http://www.collegebaseballinsider.com/12Articles/UNCC_ML.html)
On the court, both men’s and women’s basketball programs are off to a great start. In the men’s case, winning the Great Alaska Shootout tournament in Anchorage was an early-season high point. Preparation for that success was enhanced by time spent in a very different climate—a pre-season trip to the Bahamas. The Niners not only came together on the court during practices and a series of games with Bahamian teams, but they also reached out to a local orphanage, sharing their skills and gaining a special perspective from the kids they met there.

*You can see more about this experience in the video at this link:* [http://youtu.be/vp9ReG-4LgE](http://youtu.be/vp9ReG-4LgE)

**Important New Facilities**

Fall semester also marked the formal opening of UNC Charlotte’s much-publicized EPIC facility. The Energy Production and Infrastructure Center now provides the region and state with a leading-edge research facility to help advance North Carolina’s future in the energy sector. The $76 million facility, funded by the State of North Carolina, is frequently cited among the state’s top competitive advantages over neighboring states. In addition to the research that will take place in EPIC, the center will prepare UNC Charlotte engineering students who are focused on the needs of the energy industry—eventually about 100 graduates a year. The $5 million/year EPIC program, also funded by the General Assembly, adds a couple dozen faculty and technical staff to expand our institutional capacity in energy engineering. Private industry partners (including Duke Energy, Siemens, Westinghouse and Areva, among others) have provided more than $17 million thus far in contributions, equipment, and other forms of support for EPIC faculty, staff, and students.

*See a brief video of the EPIC Dedication by following this link:* [http://youtu.be/Sl0hthhlqHU](http://youtu.be/Sl0hthhlqHU)

The EPIC dedication ceremony on November 16 was preceded by the Charlotte Chamber’s annual Energy Summit, held this year in EPIC. Attendees heard several calls for greater collaboration between Charlotte’s power-generation interests and the Research Triangle’s producers of smart-grid technology. EPIC can serve as a catalyst for this collaboration.

Next door to EPIC on the east side of campus is the new football complex. The countdown to kick-off of UNC Charlotte football is now down to months, and this fall saw the first 49ers on McColl-Richardson Field for a series of practices and public scrimmages in the new stadium. We also opened the training and academic support facility at the west end of the stadium and officially named it the Judy W. Rose Football Center in honor of our athletics director whose UNC Charlotte career began on the coaching staff in 1975. Longtime 49ers’ supporter Dale Halton provided the football center naming rights.

*Read more about the stadium in coverage by the Charlotte Observer at this link:* [http://www.charlotteobserver.com/2012/09/08/3515727/its-game-day-baby-for-unccs-new.html](http://www.charlotteobserver.com/2012/09/08/3515727/its-game-day-baby-for-unccs-new.html)

I’m sure nearly all of us try to remember our own birthdays and our wedding anniversaries. Now commit this date to memory—August 31, 2013. Campbell University versus UNC Charlotte’s 49ers. Prediction by Chancellor: Charlotte wins, 49 to 0. (I just love it when I get to trash talk.)
As we move into 2013-2014, we look forward not only to our first football season, but also the completion of other key facilities, including our industry-partnership building (with a complicated name, but an easy acronym—PORTAL), the occupation of two new student residence halls, and a new dining complex. One of the residence halls and the dining complex will be located in what we are now calling “South Village.” For former students or others familiar with the campus, this is the area currently occupied by four high-rise residence halls. As we continue to implement our long-range plan for student housing, which will see the number of on-campus beds rise to more than 7,000, we will also renovate the high rise facilities inside and out. The renovations will include cladding the high rise buildings in brick, much as we did years ago with the Atkins Library tower. This should rid the campus for good of the last vestiges of Soviet-inspired architecture.

Another facility-related development that I’m really excited to share with you is that connecting WiFi-capable devices on campus has gotten easier. The Information and Technology Services (ITS) networking services team has implemented enhancements that provide a more convenient, secure, and reliable method to connect to the Internet wirelessly. The growing global demand for WiFi is particularly intense at a university like ours, where the numbers of laptops, smartphones and tablets on campus have increased dramatically as part of the evolution of technology. Launched during the fall 2012 semester, Niner WiFi offers the campus community a more robust wireless experience by providing automatic authentication and encrypted access. Planned enhancements will expand current “hotspot” access to pervasive WiFi coverage in academic buildings as well as certain outdoor areas. Developing this expanded capacity is expensive, particularly in campus buildings that have an older electronic infrastructure. The accelerated timing of these enhancements has been made possible through student leadership support of an infrastructure improvement fee which was initiated this past fall. The next phase of the project, with expanded WiFi coverage, is expected to begin in 2013.

To start using Niner WiFi right away and realize an improved wireless experience on campus, go to this link for instructions on how to reconfigure your mobile devices: ninerwifi.uncc.edu

Moving into 2013

Our holiday break ended just over a week ago, but we began moving ahead into the spring even before the students got back.

Meet Us in Raleigh

Most immediately upon our horizon is the 2013 session of the North Carolina General Assembly. The formal legislative session just opened this week, on January 9.

In the wake of the deep national recession, the state’s economy remains sluggish and most reports indicate slow growth in revenue for 2013, possibly only 2%. Additionally, North Carolina owes $2.4 billion in unpaid debt to the federal government for unemployment insurance and Medicaid budget overruns.
Given these challenges, we have limited our legislative requests to the UNC Board of Governors to the most mission-critical items. In the continuation budget, we are seeking $7.1 million in Enrollment Funding to reflect the significant increase in students who enrolled this past fall semester. Notably, total applications received for freshman admission for next Fall (of 2013) are currently up 12% from last year at this time.

We have also renewed a long-standing request for planning and site development funds for a new Science Building. Although the Burson building has served us well for many years (since construction in 1985), it is simply no longer cost-effective to renovate or retrofit that facility for the modern science laboratories now essential for providing students with state-of-the-science education in the physical sciences. The requested funding ($12 million) is ten percent of the entire project ($120 million). Once that new facility is underway, we will request funding to re-purpose Burson for other academic support or administrative purposes.

Our only request for expanded operational funding focuses on an initiative that we call “Data Science and Business Analytics” (DSBA). Like EPIC, DSBA was developed in collaboration with industry partners in retail, healthcare, financial services, technology, etc. These partners share challenges in finding employees and managers well-prepared to deal with vast amounts of data that can be converted into insights about their customers or their business operations, thereby helping those enterprises to become more profitable, competitive, efficient, and better equipped than ever before to make better decisions. DSBA is led by the College of Computing and Informatics and the Belk College of Business, with additional applications in the area of Health Informatics in the College of Health and Human Services.

To assist in the implementation of this initiative, we have requested $3 million for FY 2014 and an additional $2 million in FY 2015 to recruit new faculty, technical staff and administrative support. The FY 2015 request will be a match investment contingent upon UNC Charlotte securing private sector investments of $4 million by December 2014. As with the EPIC program, we are confident that the industries that have partnered with us will invest in it.

The Board of Governors will consider these requests early in the new year. If approval is given, the programs and projects will be presented to the NC General Assembly for their consideration as they develop the 2013-14 biennial budget.

Meet Us Around the Region

Another major activity in 2013 will be the continuation of community visitations to strengthen public awareness of and support for this region’s only public university. It is also very helpful for me to hear directly from community and business leaders about how we can better respond to their needs, including those related to workforce preparation and applied research.

Following upon successful day-long visits to Gaston and Cleveland Counties in the spring of 2012, we are very pleased with the level of support shown during our recent meetings in Cabarrus and Rowan Counties. Each visit included valuable meetings with industry and elected leaders and community college partners, a keynote speech and dialogue with a civic group, media interviews, and an alumni reception to cap off the day.
With over 15,000 of our 26,000 current students coming from the 12-county region surrounding Charlotte, and nearly 60,000 of our 100,000 alumni located here, we have deep ties and partnerships to these communities. We have planned a visit to Lincoln County in the spring and expect to add a visit to Union County by the end of May.

So Long For Now

Those of you who regularly receive or read this newsletter may know that it does tend to go on a bit! Brevity has never been a personal strength of mine.

With that said, we are trying to shorten these updates and to focus on the more notable pieces of news or the issues that are most on our minds. We are continuing to move forward on the implementation of our five-year Institutional Plan (http://administration.uncc.edu/chancellor/chancellors-outbox/institutional-plan) and will make annual course adjustments as we complete the implementation strategies for each goal. Later this spring, we will begin posting the metrics we have developed to assess our progress.

In the meantime, I wish you a healthy and happy 2013. Go Niners!

Cordially

Philip L. Dubois
Chancellor

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