INFORMATION ITEM: Division of Continual Learning “DCL Modifications, Massive Open Online Courses and Entrepreneurial Activities”

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:
The September 6, 2012 report documented headcount growth of more than six percent among students engaged in distance learning at UNCG. Overall, this increase reflects a nationwide trend of students with some college credits or a degree from a two-year institution seeking to complete a bachelor’s degree. It is anticipated that in the future, the national and statewide pool of students seeking degree completion programs will be relatively stable. It is also anticipated that the proportion of this student population seeking degrees from four-year public institutions will increase significantly as the interest in degrees from for-profit universities declines.

The Board has already been provided with a significant amount of information regarding the important changes implemented within UNCG’s Division of Continual Learning, the office designated as the primary distance learning support center. These changes, which help to create a much more entrepreneurial and business plan-oriented approach to online course and program development at UNCG, suggest that we should expect continued distance learning growth in the future.

DCL Modifications – DCL has modified its operating procedures to enhance capacity to meet the present and emerging demand for online courses and programs. Some DCL modifications include, but are not limited to:

- A change in service delivery protocol to work with all academic units with an approved business plan;
- A more clear focus on building sustainable courses and programs that increase SCH, meet UNCG Strategic Plan Goal, and generate additional revenue;
- Fostering close working collaborations with the Faculty Teaching and Learning Commons and the academic units; and
- The implementation of a metric driven Customer Relation Model (CRM) to resource programs that demonstrate student demand.
Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) – MOOCs have received substantial media attention in recent months. MOOCs do have some advantages and unique features that could serve the educational mission of a college or university including UNCG. For example, a MOOC could serve:

1. As a massive educational laboratory to deliver content to a large audience;
2. To assist in mainstreaming competencies to a wide audience;
3. To serve as a “try it before you buy it” approach to course selection;
4. To enhance the recruitment of the international students;
5. To allow universities to use “free agent” faculty from other universities; and
6. To support other university activities and goals.

At UNCG, it is believed that MOOCs could support other UNCG activities and goals and potentially provide a return-on-investment. For example, UNCG MOOCs would allow alumni, potential students, and other collaborators to view a UNCG course or courses. The MOOCs could be linked to the Degree Matters initiative and support the prior learning assessment and examination process.

Entrepreneurial Activities – DCL has proposed a collaborative with SERVE, Inc. to enable DCL to incubate new course and program initiatives under the SERVE, Inc. umbrella with the proceeds reverted back to UNCG. The incubation process would create “working capital” to design and sustain programs until proven effective and cost effective.

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