Executive Summary of the report of the Task Force on Children at UNCG
Submitted to Chancellor Linda P. Brady, February 8, 2013

INTRODUCTION
Responding to what came to light in 2012 about a pattern of child abuse at Penn State University, Chancellor Linda P. Brady determined that UNCG should devote a major effort to identifying both best practices and risks that all UNCG programs that serve children should be aware of. This was a proactive step, to make UNCG’s good programs better, and to minimize risk even further. Chancellor Brady charged a task force, with 28 members from across the campus, to provide a report by February 15, 2013.

UNCG has a long history of distinguished leadership in instructional and research programs related to children and child development. UNCG has a wide variety of special programs and camps that involve children and other vulnerable persons. (Although the focus was children, we recognized that the same principles apply to what we are calling “vulnerable persons,” and so they were included in the scope of the study.) UNCG faculty, staff, and students work in the community in various credit and non-credit ways. Children and other vulnerable persons use UNCG’s facilities in a variety of ways.

State and federal laws provide some requirements designed to safeguard children and other vulnerable persons from abuse, universities have policies and procedures, and those were reviewed. The report discussed training for persons who work with children and other vulnerable persons, and recommended steps that UNCG can take to strengthen existing safeguards.

PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES AT UNCG
Through several waves of inquiries, the task force identified 125 UNCG programs and activities that annually serve approximately 22,200 children and vulnerable persons. They range from long-standing and well-known programs such as the UNCG Music Camp to recent, well-known programs such as the Middle College, as well as many smaller programs.

UNCG programs and activities fit into six categories:

1. Camps
2. Centers/clinics serving patients or the public
3. UNCG employees in the community
4. Hosting events and connected activities
5. Research
6. Student placements

RECOMMENDATIONS
The Task Force on Children at UNCG (TF) was impressed with the care and expertise with which many of our colleagues develop and manage these programs and activities. None of the TF recommendations should be taken as a negative reflection upon the high quality and careful safeguards found in many programs. The TF recommended:

1. That the Chancellor issue a public statement of UNCG’s commitment to the safety and well-being of children and other vulnerable persons participating in University programs and activities, and encourage
other University leaders with responsibilities in these areas to do the same.

2. UNCG should **develop and adopt a University policy** describing how University-sponsored programs and activities serving children and other vulnerable persons should be operated. Current Federal and State laws contain gaps such that, in many situations, there are no legal requirements that suspected abuse be reported. Thus, the UNCG policy should expand to all University employees and students the duty to report suspected abuse of children and other vulnerable persons in connection with University-sponsored programs and activities. Failure to follow its requirements could result in disciplinary action, including termination (employees) and sanctions under the Student Code of Conduct (students). It should be emphasized that everyone in every “chain of command” has the responsibility to see that proper standards are followed and that any complaints are reported up the chain to be handled appropriately. This policy also should emphasize the protections for “whistleblowers” already existing in law and University policy. Every program should have a clear and documented plan for handling situations where any harm occurs or is suspected to have occurred.

3. Existing University policy requires that volunteers who will be working with children or other vulnerable persons undergo a background check. UNCG should also require that all faculty, staff, and student employees who will be working with such populations in connection with UNCG programs and activities **undergo a background check** at the beginning of their involvement. Best practices should be examined to determine when a previous background check should be considered “stale” and thereafter repeated.

4. UNCG should utilize existing training materials and/or develop UNCG training materials, to see that all faculty, staff, and students who have regular involvement in University programs and activities serving children and other vulnerable persons have up-to-date training. We recommend that such individuals be required to successfully complete **on-line or in-person training** on a frequency to be determined.

5. We realize that both the programs offered by UNCG and best practices for programs will change over time. For example, if Intercollegiate Athletics camps are privatized, this would present new issues, though the camps likely would remain so closely associated with UNCG that they would continue to be covered by University policies. With such considerations in mind, we recommend that the Chancellor name **a standing committee of faculty and staff experts** (including several members who operate camps and related activities, faculty and staff with expertise in working with children, risk management, human resources, athletics, and legal) to meet as needed to share best practices, make recommendations for updates to University policy as necessary, and act as an advisor in this area. To keep the inventory of UNCG programs and activities current, we recommend that the Chancellor give an individual (perhaps the Chief Risk Officer) and this committee the responsibility of updating the TF report’s inventory every year.

6. We recommend that all senior officers be provided (by the individual or committee in recommendation 5) the **lists of program/activity administrators** in their areas each year, as a reminder of their responsibilities for oversight of those programs, including safety of participants and adherence to applicable University policies.

For additional information, contact the Task Force chair, Vice Chancellor James Clotfelter, james_clotfelter@uncg.edu, or Helen Hebert helen_hebert@uncg.edu.