MINUTES
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
Board of Trustees
Educational Quality and Fiscal Affairs Committee
August 28, 2013

MEMBERS PRESENT:

OTHER BOARD MEMBERS/GUESTS:
Peter Alexander, Nikki Baker, Gabe Bermea, Alan Boyette, Linda Brady, Bonita Brown, Kelly Burke, Cherry Callahan, Sarah Carrigan, Imogene Cathey, Mark Davenport, Jim Eddy, John Foreman, Stacy Kosciak, Lee Odom, David Perrin, Lee Phillips, Laura Pipe, Nell Pynes, Kim Record, Cindy Reed, Steve Rhew, Steve Roberson, Dana Saunders, David Schaefer, Jim Settle, Terri Shelton, Kim Sousa-Peoples, Mike Tarrant, Reade Taylor, and Jan Zink

PROCEEDINGS: Sprinkle welcomed members/guests. Greetings were exchanged and agenda items were addressed.

Approval of the Academic Student Affairs Committee and Business Affairs Committee Minutes of May 1, 2013 were unanimously approved.

Sprinkle stated that the newly created Educational Quality and Fiscal Affairs Committee will follow a similar framework as the August 6-7, 2013 Trustees’ retreat, which includes two or three in-depth discussions. Action items will be approved by the full board on the second day. Sprinkle said the new format will be re-evaluated after two board meetings. If the new format is approved, the by-laws will be modified accordingly (“The Code, Board of Trustees of The University of North Carolina at Greensboro http://policy.uncg.edu/code/)”

Strategic Discussions

What is the role and future of intercollegiate athletics at UNCG?

Kim Record introduced select student athletes from a variety of team sports, who shared their success stories and welcomed the opportunity to speak with Trustees.

Lucy Mason – freshman of the year – women’s basketball
Taylor Coalson – freshman of the year – men’s golf
Lindsay Thomas – freshman of the year – softball
Paul Chelimo – cross country runner of the year and All American national runnerup
Paul Katam – national runner up and All American

She stated that our coaches discovered their talent, introduced them to UNCG and now they are members of the Spartan family. They are students who represent the best of UNCG!
Record highlighted the role of athletics and presented a general overview of the goals, challenges, and future direction of athletics at UNCG (handouts). She discussed the history of the Division I program from its inception in 1991. She explained that college athletics is generally facing fairly significant critical issues. There are increasingly financial pressures, with rising scholarship and operating costs, making it difficult to maintain comprehensive programs without finding alternative sources of revenue to supplement University support. In addition, efforts are underway to allocate existing resources in a manner that allows us to achieve our strategic goals. The handouts provided represent a snapshot of our financial profile. She indicated fundraising efforts are not closing the gap in the short term. We are raising more money each year but it is not keeping pace with the cost of tuition and inflation. As good stewards of our resources, we must have a sustainable model for our program. Athletics can make a positive difference financially because alumni and donors are more likely to contribute not only to the program but the University and all departments as a whole. We should focus on our educational mission in providing young people with opportunities to learn and grow through sports. We can be proud of our graduation success and academic performance rates, which sets us apart from the professional sports model. Athletics helps mold young people into future leaders with similar skill sets e.g., drive to succeed, good work ethics, sense of responsibility, knowing how to win and lose, understanding the rules of the game, and treating others/competitors with respect. Competition in the marketplace will demand us to be creative, innovative, in order to position UNCG as a player in the college sports market. Athletics promotes good health habits that can last a life time and provides something constructive for students to do in their free time. Athletics is a major means to promote connection, enthusiasm, a positive spirit, a passion toward the University and our statewide/national brand.

Record invited meeting participants to consider how these values impact UNCG today. We are a very young Division I program, compete in the Southern Conference, offer 17 sports and support 200 plus student athletes, and 80 coaches and staff. Our values are important. We want to win, play by the rules, and operate with integrity, honesty, personal responsibility, foster academic success, good sportsmanship, fiscally responsible, collaborators, and offer continual learning for our students and staff. We are committed to quality service to all those who support us.

Record summarized our envisioned future and stretch goal is to build a model mid-major program that competes for championships and we call that “The Spartan Way.” In the last four years we have made some significant decisions that affect athletics. In 2009 we moved our men’s basketball program to the Greensboro Coliseum. In 2010 we lost out-of-state tuition waivers and made a decision to honor scholarship commitments but that depleted our reserve. In 2011 we made a decision to eliminate wrestling as a varsity sport. In 2012 we transitioned the men’s basketball coach and made a renewed commitment to build that program but not at the expense of our other teams. As the 2013 academic year begins, we continue to focus on the University’s current goal of increasing the visibility, accessibility, and competitiveness of existing programs. Keeping student athletes at the center of our decisions is critical to our future success. We must leverage the things we do well to meet future challenges. Done right – athletics compliments the academic mission – the core of the University.

Chairman Sprinkle facilitated the board in an open discussion on the future of sustaining a strong athletics program and addressed related topics regarding financial resources, academic performance, facilities, recruitment, positioning UNCG in the college sports market, increasing the visibility/competitiveness of UNCG sports, and maintaining a positive marketing message. Chancellor Brady addressed the impact of tuition increases on the ability to fund scholarships for
athletics and academics. Every time there is a significant tuition increase those are dollars that have to be found by the University and athletics to cover scholarships. The constant erosion is one of the most significant challenges facing the University in terms of developing a viable financial model. The financial aid need of our students is enormous and every time we raise tuition it erodes our ability to successfully recruit and retain students.

Record emphasized the importance of weaving the discussion into strategic priorities of the University emphasizing the message, brand, and financial impact while encompassing the larger picture. Discussion followed on the need for an in-depth study on the future direction of the Athletics Program and developing a three or five-year study. It was suggested to engage a consultant to help develop a bold plan and changing the existing culture with recommendations for best options for a mid-major intercollegiate program and return findings to Trustees with a proposal for moving forward. Trustees expressed the need to develop a bold academic plan as a priority noting that athletics should be integrated with academics given the constraints throughout the University.

**Framing Retention Strategies**

Provost Perrin introduced Steve Roberson, Dean of Undergraduate Studies, and colleagues with expertise in areas of retention, graduation, and student success, who explained high-touch programs predicated on academic achievement. He presented ACT’s “National Collegiate Retention and Persistence to Degree Rates” report, pointing out that universities like UNCG (public, doctoral-granting, “traditional” admission standards”) had an average retention rate last year of 72.2%, compared to UNCG’s 76.1%. The same report indicated that national 4- and 6-year graduation rates for similar institutions were 22% and 46.5%, respectively. Again, UNCG compares favorably with 4- and 6-year rates of 32.2% and 55.4%. Thus, UNCG is outperforming its national cohort in student persistence. However, the ACT report cited an alarming decline nationally in retention and graduation rates for all public institutions.

Further, when compared with UNCG’s fifteen official peers, as determined by GA, UNCG’s retention rate last year was sixth best while its 4- and 6-year graduation rates were fourth best.

A worrisome trend at UNCG, however, is a growing inability of students to afford to remain in school. Since 2008, the median family income of financial aid applicants has declined from $60,127 to $53,479 in 2012. Further, the number of UNCG undergraduate students receiving Pell Grants, which are a marker for financial distress, increased from 26% in 2009 to 42% in 2011, a large increase of poor students. Also, the amount of “unmet” need for students who are dropping out grew from $2175 in 2009 to $3315 in 2011, large increases for the most vulnerable students.

Roberson reported that for students whose gross family income is at least $90,000, the chance of earning a degree by the age of 24 is 1-in-2. For students whose gross family income is below $35,000, the chance drops to 1-in-17. Clearly, decreasingly family income, when overlaid with the increasing cost of attendance, is an indicator that UNCG is likely to face declining retention rates.

He contextualized methods to promote enhanced learning and activities that lead to high persistence and suggested ways for assistance, which exists on a continuum. Importantly, he highlighted the faculty’s role in improving retention and graduation by employing progressive
pedagogies. Specifically, he discussed AAC&U’s “High Impact Practices,” such as Learning Communities, Undergraduate Research, Capstone Courses/Experiences, and Servicing Learning. Each member received a copy of Five High-Impact Practices, an AAC&U publication.

Discussion followed.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:50 p.m.