Board of Trustees  
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro  
February 19, 2015

**Action Item**

Request to Establish the Center for Housing and Community Studies

**Background Information**

Home is the launching point for everything else in a person’s life. To be without a safe and dependable home makes every aspect of daily living more complicated. The availability of fair, affordable and safe housing plays a critical role in the economy and in communities by creating jobs, attracting new industry, reducing the incidence of foreclosures, increasing local tax revenues, and allowing working families to spend more on health, education, food, and other needs. Suitable housing stock, stable communities with few vacant properties, well-planned public spaces, and strong “collective efficacy” among neighbors have also been linked to reducing crime and enhancing quality of life.

While the relationship between housing and community outcomes are clearly documented, there is a need for comprehensive and systematic research focused specifically at addressing the relationship among housing, community, and social issues in the Piedmont Triad. Increasingly, UNCG is being asked to assist local, regional, and state partners in generating this research, applying research to develop strategies and solutions, and in educating undergraduates and graduate students who are knowledgeable about these issues and skilled in engaging with the community in generating sustainable solutions.

To address the social problems of homelessness, substandard and unaffordable housing, and sustainable community development demands a multidisciplinary and multi-method approach. In response, there is a growing network of community-engaged scholars. These researchers are currently without the institutional infrastructure and focus that would maximize the impact of their efforts to study, evaluate, and resolve housing-related problems in the region.

The proposed Center for Housing and Community Studies (CHCS) would bring together faculty from multiple disciplines and backgrounds to focus on the issues of housing, segregation, and community development. CHCS would stimulate the development and facilitation of social and community-based housing research, evaluation, and practice in the context of institutional and community collaborations. The Center would also expand opportunities for students at undergraduate and graduate levels, drive enrollment of students interested in community engaged research fields, and bring together faculty from multiple disciplines and schools to work on community-engaged scholarship.

Three well-funded research projects will serve as the foundation for the Center. These include: the intersection of housing practices and health outcomes; homeless Continuum of Care (CoC) assessments; and HUD Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice studies. Projects templates have already been developed in previous funded research and can be readily
adapted to new funding situations and jurisdictional areas. Potential funders include HUD/CDBG funding available through local governments; contracts from local housing authorities and state housing coalitions (ongoing); and direct application to federal and local grant sources.

**Recommended Action**

That the Board of Trustees of The University of North Carolina at Greensboro approve the Center for Housing and Community Studies.

Dana Dunn  
Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor