



NORTH CAROLINA AGRICULTURAL AND TECHNICAL STATE UNIVERSITY

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Strategic Plan: Building Upon the Legacy Interdisciplinary – Globalization

Internal Scan Team Report

Team Charge

The Internal Scan Team will examine internal data bases for information pertaining to the University's faculty, students, administration, staff, revenue and expenditures. They will also study the exiting academic niche, academic support services, administrative processes and physical structure. Upon review of this information, the team's role will be to discern trends, driving forces, and comparative advantages.

Team Work Plan

We formed four mini-teams (see Appendix A, p. 8) to review data for: (1) Faculty; (2) Students; (3) Administrative and Staff, and (4) Finances (see Appendix B, p. 9). The mini-teams each developed a SWOT analysis that summarized the findings of their review of the assigned data. Questions: What are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats confronting the University in the area(s) of your research? What current trends are we positioned, or can be positioned, to exploit to comparative advantage? What are the driving forces that could expedite or impede progress in implementing the proposed strategies?

Faculty Data Summary

If the University is to achieve progress toward the nine Legacy goals outlined in the strategic plan, current faculty strengths should be leveraged to take advantage of existing and future opportunities. Even more, the weaknesses we acknowledge must be addressed and obviated.

Clear opportunities exist for the University to capitalize on faculty productivity by enhancing the scholarship of engagement with the local community. This would not only serve the community, but could lead to stronger partnerships and image building that could positively influence enrollment trends.

Additionally, in order to further develop the University's Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching classification as a "high research activity" institution, we should continue to recruit highly qualified faculty, who combine the pursuit of scholarly research with a commitment to helping first-generation college students to succeed. We know from the COACHE (Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education) report the serious issues that need to be addressed if we are to retain and develop high quality, tenure-track junior faculty. In particular, the COACHE results highlighted the pressures on the junior faculty to balance heavy teaching loads, research expectations,

and service commitments, especially when there is a perceived lack of support for research and grant writing. Further, the junior faculty expressed a lack of clarity with respect to performance expectations and the overall promotion and tenure process. [Specific remedies included implementation of a junior faculty development program to address the concerns raised.](#)

[With tenured faculty, the revision of the post-tenure review process, and reward system, should ensure that faculty recognize the need for continuing to be productive in scholarship and research.](#)

Student Data Summary

According to the Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education, the fall 2007 cohort of freshmen have very high, life aspirations. They want to be professionals, own their own businesses, and make lots of money. Yet, overall, there is an unrealistic understanding of the time and effort required to be successful in college and in their careers. Wabash reveals that freshmen do not, particularly, like to read and do not spend much time studying. They, also, self reported being uncomfortable in classes and settings that challenge their worldviews. In addition, the A&T freshmen scored relatively low on performance tests of their critical thinking, moral reasoning, and writing. Students' high aspirations are in sharp contrast to their skills and dispositions. [The University must help students understand early on what it means to be a college student in order to achieve high aspirations.](#)

According to another study, the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), A&T students reported high levels of collaborative learning and, also, perceived their courses to be academically challenging.

The fact that A&T is participating in the Wabash assessment, NSSE, Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA), and Critical Thinking Assessment Test (CAT) is evidence of administrative and program commitment to student assessment and program improvement. Opportunities that derive from these assessments include program changes that can help our students succeed in the 21st century. [Challenges include designing and implementing pedagogies that will enhance students' self-motivation and self-understanding of the importance of academic study, reading, writing, and moral reasoning.](#)

Retention rates are high among Honors Program students, and rising among first- to second-year students for the past two years. There are a number of programs that contributed to this gain in the past two years, but there are areas that need more attention. [The University should link the various efforts throughout the campus and increase their impact by developing academic support services needed, as identified from the data collected. For example, a sophomore retention program could be designed to address issues such as the "Sophomore Slump."](#)

Student Programs Data Summary

In terms of programs, continue the University's participation in the Wabash study because it provides an opportunity for robust, longitudinal data collection that can be used to improve programs. We have a strong foundation in student-faculty interactions as reported in NSSE. Our first-year and senior students report interactions with faculty significantly above those reported by other public colleges in the Southeast region, other institutions in the same Carnegie classification as A&T, as well as all schools that participated in the 2008 NSSE. We need to share these results with the public to boost our reputation.

In addition to publicizing the good news from studies and surveys, we should systematically use the data to improve the educational processes, such as intentionally integrating writing, reading and critical thinking across the curriculum. We should, also, align our curriculum with best practices by focusing on study and work habits, and integrating writing, critical thinking, analytical and moral reasoning throughout the curriculum.

The success of our students may, also, be increased by enriching their educational experiences through complementary learning provided by internships, community service, and other opportunities to integrate and apply knowledge. The Senior and Sophomore surveys, as well as the NSSE results, showed opportunities to improve campus support services, especially in the areas of technology, financial aid, food services, and health care.

Two major threats to student-related programs are financial impediments to program development and implementation and a pervasive unwillingness to change programs and practices. Without adequate programmatic financial support it is impossible to develop and sustain the programs needed for academic success of our students. Without a University-wide cultural evolution to change and adapt our programs and practices to the changing needs of our students, the University risks becoming obsolete and dispensable. We must provide funds and an atmosphere that rewards innovation.

Finally, we urge senior administration to provide a vision for the University that will attract wide support and, in particular, bring the campus together to solve student problems by breaking down the barriers between various units.

Administrative and Staff Data Summary

According to the University Staff Senate, there are three main staff concerns: (1) the elimination of mediation in the grievance process; (2) job security, and (3) budget cuts. The recommendation is to reinstitute the mediation of grievances. Staff appreciate that the University is engaging in strategic planning to address present and future workforce needs through UNC Tomorrow, the UNC General Administration's (UNC-GA) overall strategic plan whose goals drive the planning of system institutions.

A University asset is the dedicated, motivated, well-educated and knowledgeable administrators willing to go the extra mile. However, there is a lack of professional development and comprehensive employee training, or workforce planning programs to address upcoming retirements of administrators and staff. With a heavy reliance on

temporary employees, we sometimes lack appropriately skilled staff, especially in technical and customer service areas. It is suggested that the University consider converting qualified temporary employees to permanent employees.

Overall, the University should continue to promote and foster an environment to encourage diversity and inclusion in order to correct ethnic imbalances in the workforce. Training would also improve communications between and among units and provide for a better quality of customer service. Ongoing civility training should be part of a training program.

The University should embrace providing underperforming employees with the opportunity to retrain, or relearn, required skills. We recognize that budgetary constraints prevent adequate staffing and competitive salary and compensation packages. However, even in lean financial times, employee recognition is important. The University could implement a recognition and rewards system in lieu of monetary incentives. We should also encourage staff involvement with on-campus activities and in the community. Finally, the University should embrace empowerment through shared governance to promote free thinking.

Financial Data Summary

The recent financial history of North Carolina A&T demonstrates that the University has a sound financial base and demonstrated financial stability to support the mission of the institution and the scope of its programs. Revenues have remained strong, investment in facilities is on-going, and new gifts are growing the University's endowments. The University's net assets have increased by 68 percent over the five years from 2004 to 2008.

Audits

The University received unqualified audit opinions on its audited financial statements for fiscal years ending June 30, 2004 through June 30, 2008, which demonstrates that the financial statements fairly present the financial condition of the organization. However, audit findings were noted in each of these fiscal years. The University works diligently to address audit findings as soon as they become apparent, and an independent review procedure is in place that involves the University's Internal Audit staff, a representative from the UNC-GA, the system governing body, and the State audit team to assure that findings are addressed in a timely manner.

The Office of Internal Auditing (OIA) develops an annual audit plan, which includes audits of high risk areas and/or where management has expressed concern. The OIA performs a risk assessment, which aids in the development of the audit plan. The results of the assessment are used to prepare the audit plan, which is approved by the Chancellor and the University Board of Trustees Audit Committee. The University submits the approved plan to the UNC-GA for presentation to the board of governors audit committee as outlined in the UNC Policy Manual (100.1, 301G).

Budgeting

The University's internal budget allocation process is designed to provide an open, inclusive, and objective process by which to allocate A&T resources. The University prepares its budget based on a strategic plan, which is based on the University's mission and strategic directives from the UNC-GA, the Chancellor, and the University Board of Trustees.

Impacts on the budget development process include:

- changes in tuition and fees;
- enrollment projections;
- levels of state appropriations;
- institutional financial condition;
- UNC-GA Board of Governors requirements;
- authorizing tuition and fee statutes, and
- priorities defined through the A&T Strategic Plan.

The budget process is key to ensuring effective management and efficient response to unforeseen, contingency, or emergency events such as State-wide decreased revenue collections, reductions in appropriations, or natural disasters. At the outset of the internal budget process, the University Budget Office will reserve a percentage (generally 3%) of the State appropriated funds with approval of the Chancellor. [If additional funding is needed, the Budget Office conducts analyses and recommends the most efficient remedy, which may include not filling vacant positions or restriction of travel, or other expenditures review.](#)

Operating Revenues

Total operating revenues increased from 2004 through 2007, a result of increased enrollment levels in 2004 and 2005, increases in charges for tuition, fees and services, and increases in sponsored program receipts. Fiscal year 2008 saw a 1.2 percent decline in total operating revenue resulting from a decrease in enrollment while the University maintained student charges for tuition, fees, and services at the 2007 level. [University officials anticipate that enrollment will rebound by 2010.](#) Income received from federal, state, local, and private contracts, grants, as well as federal appropriations increased by 15 percent from 2004 to 2008, a result of the growth in the University's sponsored programs.

[Non-operating income from State appropriations, non-capital grants, and investment income supplements operating revenues.](#) State appropriations, based on enrollment levels as well as program expansion, covered from 38 to 43 percent of total operating costs. Revenues for contracts, grants, and gifts from all sources increased during the five years from 2004 through 2008.

Unrestricted Revenues

State appropriations, student tuition, fees, and services, recovered overhead costs associated with sponsored programs, and other unrestricted receipts compose the

unrestricted revenues. Unrestricted revenues remain more than sufficient to cover the university's associated unrestricted expenses.

A&T has ranked third in sponsored research funding in the UNC system for the last five years behind UNC-Chapel Hill and North Carolina State University. Major projects include the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Interdisciplinary Scientific Environmental Technology laboratory cooperative for \$12.2 million from the U. S. Department of Commerce and several multi-year million dollar awards from the National Science Foundation (NSF), and from the U. S. Office of Naval Research. A&T also has over \$1 million a year in funding from private companies. In September 2008, A&T announced that the NSF had awarded the University an Engineering Research Center (ERC). The ERC is considered the "crown jewel" among NSF awards. In the past 25 years, approximately 30 ERCs have been funded by the NSF.

Endowment

The University's endowment fund has experienced steady growth from 2004 through 2008, including a positive total return through 2007. Gifts received in 2009 totaled \$3.5 million through January, exceeding the 2008 level of gifts by over \$1 million. The market downturn in 2008 resulted in a total net loss on the portfolio of \$371,642 by June 30th and that loss increased to \$2,569,459 by December 31st. The change is primarily due to the unrealized loss on the endowment investments as a result of the volatile and unstable world-wide financial market. It is expected that this downward trend will continue into the foreseeable future. The University's management, along with their investment management advisors, plans to continue monitoring the investment portfolio to minimize any significant losses.

Debt Service

The University Board of Trustees is responsible for approving the issuance of new debt. At June 30, 2008, the University had outstanding revenue bonds on its stadium, dining, student union, and parking facilities. Over the five years from 2004 through 2008, the University issued bonds to build a 500-car parking deck and to refund dining system and student union revenue bonds. Short-term financing of \$6,168,000, secured in 2006 to begin construction on the parking deck, was retired when long-term bonds were issued in 2007. The University's debt balance of \$18,420,000 is very low compared to total net capital assets of \$283,998,651.

Enrollment

The University experienced a decline in undergraduate student enrollment; however, graduate students actually increased over the same period. The number of advanced degrees offered by the University has grown over the years to include doctorates in six (6) disciplines, as well as master's degrees in 48 disciplines.

Grants and Contracts

Although the dollar value of awards has been increasing, the number of awards has not been keeping pace. In fiscal year 2005 A&T received 268 awards but, by fiscal year 2008, despite some improvements, that number was down to 225, representing a negative 5.6 percent compound annual growth rate in awards. This is a concerning trend as the

University attempts to increase its research presence locally and nationally. We believe it would be useful to also include data on sponsored research award applications so that we could isolate whether the trend indicates growing impediments within the University or a growing lack of externally available funding sources. Without such data it is impossible to accurately interpret these data.

Another trend of note is that the number of awards per full-time equivalent (FTE) is declining over recent years. From fiscal year 2005 to fiscal year 2006 the ratio decreased from an average of 33 percent awards per FTE down to only 30 percent. By fiscal year 2007 that ratio had decreased to only 26 percent. This suggests that the sponsored research activity at A&T may be more and more concentrated in fewer faculty arenas. If this is the case, it reduces opportunities for exposure of a broader range of junior faculty to sponsored research and may make it less likely that sponsored research is equally embraced across the University. On the other hand, this statistic may simply be a logical consequence of fewer, but larger dollar amount, awards. We suggest that the distribution of sponsored research across the University and across faculty is an area for future investigation.

We did not identify an area in Sponsored Programs that regularly assesses how A&T does relative to benchmarks, either established internally with its peers within the UNC system, or regionally, or nationally. Benchmarking would be highly instructive, providing ongoing exposure and visibility for the sponsored research at A&T.

Additionally, there is probably increasing opportunity to do interdisciplinary research. However, this will require faculty training and outreach across the varying units of the University. This should be a priority item as the operating climate improves, and the need for non-State funding becomes increasingly pressing. Aligning our auditing and other administrative processes could result in a more competitive posture for the University in grant awards. For example, the Sponsored Programs office should provide principle investigators with a concise outline of the support available. This would help faculty develop proposals and manage grants.

Summary

The financial crisis faced by the nation and the State of North Carolina will have an impact on North Carolina A&T in the near term and through the next biennial budget cycle. This will present challenges to growth and development of strategic projects. Yet, extraordinary times present extraordinary opportunities. The challenge for A&T is to find innovative opportunities within the present fiscal constraints. This will require strategic consideration in deciding which of the Legacy goals in the A&T strategic plan to pursue and what aspects. Since we are a learner-centered institution, student learning and enhanced opportunities in recruitment and retention of students should be the driving forces guiding the selection of priorities.

Appendix A
Internal Scan Team
Mini-Teams

Chair, Lea E. Williams, Academic Affairs

Faculty Data Mini-Team

- Trent Larson, *School of Education*
- John R. Slade, **facilitator**, *School of Business and Economics*

Student Data Mini-Team

- Gary L. Bailey, *University Studies*
- Ayanna Boyd-Williams, *Graduate Studies*
- Eric Cheek, **facilitator**, *Summer School and Outreach*
- Tracey D. Ford, *Center for Academic Excellence*
- Catherine Sykes, *School of Nursing*
- Ashley Nicole Minter, *sophomore, Public Relations major*

Administrative/Staff Data Mini-Team

- Godfrey A. Gayle, *School of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences*
- Lester Lugo, *Registrar*
- Doris Mitchell, *Bluford Library*
- Vijay Verma, **facilitator**, *Division of Information and Technology*

Financial Data Mini-Team

- John A. Cole, **facilitator**, *School of Business and Economics*
- Susan M. Houghton, *School of Business and Economics*

Appendix B

Internal Scan Team Documents Provided

Faculty Data

- Comparative Statistics Between Fall 2005 and Fall 2008
- Delaware Cost Study
- Delaware Out-of-Class Activities
- Faculty Status Data
- FSSE Survey; <http://qed.ncat.edu/ir&p/fsse06.xls>
- List of Peer Institutions
- Preliminary Data Report – Intellectual Life Report
- University College Portrait

Student Data

- Center for Academic Excellence Fall 2008 Retention Data and Initiatives
- Consortium for Student Retention Data Exchange (CSRDE)
- Delaware Cost Study
- High Failure Rate Courses
- Honors Program Retention/Graduation Study
- List of Peer Institutions
- NSSE 2008 Survey; <http://qed.ncat.edu/ir&p/nssemean08.xls>;
- Senior Survey 2000-2006
- Sophomore Survey 2000-2006

Administrative/Staff Data

- Comparative Statistics Between Fall 2005 and Fall 2008
- List of Peer Institutions
- Personnel Data File of administrators, staff and faculty
- Preliminary Data Report - Intellectual Life Report
- Staff Senate Concerns

Financial Data

- Delaware Cost Study
- List of Peer Institutions
- SACS narrative for *Principle 2.11.1* – Financial Resources
- SACS narrative for *Principle 3.10.1* – Financial History
- SACS narrative for *Principle 3.10.3* – Financial Aid Audits
- SACS narrative for *Principle 3.10.5* – Financial Control
- University College Portrait