

*Remarks by Bob Wilhelm, Vice Chancellor for Research and Economic Development*

*Presented at the UNC Charlotte Faculty Council, February 20, 2014*

Good afternoon, I appreciate the opportunity to talk with you today and look forward to doing this on a regular basis in the future. A few times in my career at UNC Charlotte, I served on faculty council – it's been a few years since I been with the group though. I see a few old friends have returned.

In August 2011, I began the work of merging the research organization with the Charlotte Research Institute. Today, I want to spend a little time talking about that process, about newer plans that have emerged, and our progress.

The organization that I lead is called Research and Economic Development. Our mission is to advance the quality, diversity and growth of research at UNC Charlotte while placing special value on the translation of research results that impact our social, cultural, and economic communities.

The new organization of Research and Economic Development includes the Charlotte Research Institute along with the offices of Research Compliance, Research Services and Outreach, Grants and Contracts Administration, Proposal Development, Technology Transfer, Animal Care Research Facilities, and Research Communications as well as the Small Business & Technology Development Center and Ventureprise Inc./The Ben Craig Center Incubator. Research and Economic Development also took on the leadership of the steering committee for the Research Administration Project (RAP) which is now known as AURA – Advancing University Research Administration. Responsibility for interaction with federal agencies remains with Research and Economic Development. Responsibility for interaction with federal delegations has been assigned to Constituent Relations.

With this reorganization, the UNC Charlotte Institutional plan was revised to call for *a comprehensive plan for the expansion of the University's extramurally funded research programs to a sustainable level of \$50 million annually by 2020.*

The planning effort that we have undertaken is intended to address the broader mission of Research & Economic Development – quality, diversity, and growth. The funded research goal is merely one metric.

We gathered input and information from many people during this planning effort and continue to gather feedback as we work on the objectives of the plan. Faculty focus groups, input from deans, chairs, and center directors all helped us. The College of Liberal Arts & Sciences produced a report "Enhancing the Research Environment at UNC Charlotte, A Needs Assessment from the CLAS Faculty Council". We also brought in a peer review team from NCURA, the national council of university research administrators, to assess the current organization.

Our current plan is available on the Research & Economic Development website and provides details beyond what I will cover today.

Using all of this input, we formed a plan that includes six strategic goals for research and economic development.

- Focused Research - To put resources and infrastructure into place to support a finite number of large-scale focused research areas.

- Emerging Research - To provide a menu of services and resources to support faculty in all disciplines as they pursue new research efforts and develop as nationally prominent scholars.
- Collaboration and Culture - To provide programs, services, and resources that promote collaboration and a culture of research.
- Alignment - To provide programs, services, and resources that connect UNC Charlotte research goals and outcomes with regional and national objectives that impact social, cultural, and economic communities.
- Customer Service - To be highly responsive to the needs of faculty, student, and partner research efforts and be known for efficient and friendly customer service.
- Research Integrity - To provide programs, services, and resources so that all UNC Charlotte researchers can operate with integrity and satisfy all requirements for research.

We are making progress in each of these areas – let me recount some of our steps forward.

Focused Research, we have made funds available to support large scale research proposals and research engagement in both advanced manufacturing and data science and business analytics. Our faculty members have led a multi-state team in a competition for a national institute for manufacturing where federal funds would total \$70M over five years. For our proposal we assembled an additional coinvestment of \$105M. We made a very competitive proposal and will continue pursuing this direction with future opportunities.

We are also now beginning discussions for identifying future focus areas.

Emerging Research, We have employed a number of different seed funding programs to support new research efforts in interdisciplinary research and digital humanities. We have also supported the organization of Project Mosaic. Professor Jean Claude Thill has joined as the director of Project Mosaic, a university-wide initiative to support interdisciplinary teams centered on social and behavioral science research. The work initially will center on two timely themes, 1) Human and Social Capital, Innovation, and Quality of Life, and 2) Metropolitan Centers, World Trade, Transportation and Communication.

As Professor Thill describes, “Project Mosaic is designed to be an incubator for social and behavior science research and to strengthen the infrastructure social scientists need to conduct their research in the 21st century.”

We are beginning new efforts to work with the College of Health and Human Services and the College of Education on proposal development activities.

We also now have 6 research consortia that draw faculty from a number of different colleges – metrology, cybersecurity, robotics, sustainable building systems, metamaterials, and freeform optics. Two more consortia in bioinformatics and smart grid are now in development.

Collaboration and Culture, we continue to support the Faculty Research Grant program and as I mentioned earlier several different additional programs for research initiation. We have continued to work with academic affairs, the graduate school, the library, and all academic units on programs to

recognize and support research and creative works with programs like the Graduate Research Symposium, the Undergraduate Research Conference, and Charlotte Research Scholars.

We are also now organizing a Faculty Research Council for Research and Economic Development – final details will be announced later this semester.

Alignment, our focus currently is on startup of the PORTAL building and recruitment of more research partners who want to locate at UNC Charlotte. The building has been open since February 1 and we have 8 Ventureprise companies with a total of 40 employees in the building. The building will be dedicated next Friday, February 28.

Customer Service, during this planning effort, we also worked to refine the plans for a campus wide project that has been known as the Research Administration Project (RAP) – we have added a program manager for this effort and defined it as an going program called Advancing University Research Administration AURA. We documented the completion of a number of RAP projects addressing:

- Reorganization of central research administration
- College level budget system (SAM)
- Paperless hiring systems
- Processes for budget establishment
- Spending reports
- Certificate program for research administrators
- BANNER improvements for position records

We have since completed a new system for conflict of interest reporting and external activities. Current projects focus on travel expenses, effort reporting, and more sophisticated reports for faculty investigators.

Research Integrity, We continue to work with the graduate school to expand the current course offering for responsible conduct of research. This year, as mentioned earlier we have implemented new systems for conflict of interest and hired a conflict of interest manager.

So with that I have given you a brief thumbnail of our plans and some of our current efforts. My team is working hard with faculty, staff, and students to realize all of the objectives in our plan. We are also and receiving further suggestions to refine this plan. Be sure – we value your suggestions and work hard to address your concerns.

I am proud to be part of the UNC Charlotte research community and will continue working hard to support the diversity, quality and growth of research at UNC Charlotte. Thanks!