

CHARGE TO THE COMMISSION ON THE UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE
NOVEMBER 4, 2004

Thank you again for agreeing to serve on this commission. Your contribution will be critical to the future of our students and our institution. The Charting the Future plan is the map, but we have only begun the journey.

Attached are copies of some articles which I have collected over the last year as we have thought about the nature of liberal education. How can the dreary term “general education” be replaced with something which fulfills our promise of a liberal arts foundation, professional preparation and real world experience? How do we make the UNC academic experience “Colorado’s Best University Experience? And of course, how do we do all these things in the environment of fiscal constraint in which we find ourselves?

There are many and various public expectations of higher education and pressures for accountability. We are to provide high quality and broad access, and not raise tuition too much. Newman, Couturier, & Scurry (2004) provide a good overview of the current discussion (Attachment 1).

Some are cynical about the relevance of the liberal arts (Coplin, 2004) (Attachment 2). Others (American Council of Trustees and Alumni, 2004) are critical of the general education approach of the last generation (Attachment 3.) The optimists (Coy et al., 2004) appear in Attachment 4 from Business Week.

References 5-10 are calls to action of various sorts: for the full partnership of the sciences in the liberal arts and sciences (Walsh, 2004) (Attachment 5); for the integration of mathematics with other disciplines as quantitative reasoning (Taylor, 2004) (Attachment 6); for cross-disciplinary approaches to reconstruct the unity and value of knowledge (Gregorian, 2004) (Attachment 7); the establishment of themes in liberal education (Schneider, 2004)(Attachment 8); the integration of liberal learning and professional education (Lemann, 2004) (Attachment 9); the inclusion of civic learning with liberal education (Cantor, 2004)(Attachment 10).

More lengthy discussion can be found in the following sources:

1. Ferraiolo, K. (2004.) *New Directions in Civic Engagement: University Avenue Meets Main Street*. Pew Partnership for Civic Change.
2. American Association of Colleges and Universities (2002). *Greater Expectations: A New Vision for Learning as a Nation Goes to College*, National Panel Report.
3. Colby, A., Ehrlich, T., Beaumont, E., & Stephens, J. (2003). *Educating Citizens: Preparing America's Undergraduates for Lives of Moral and Civic Responsibility*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

4. Schudson, M. (1998). *The Good Citizen: A History of American Civic Life*, New York: Martin Kessler Books.

This is not, and cannot be, an exhaustive list of the publications on the topic. May they inspire thoughts.

The Charting the Future Final Report establishes the Commission on the University Experience to conceptualize an undergraduate experience that provides students with a solid liberal arts foundation, professional preparation, and real world experiences. The Commission will propose a core curriculum that builds on existing faculty strengths, integrating available relevant disciplines and resources to create an effective, comprehensive approach to prepare a well-educated citizenry whose understanding of issues enables them to be contributing members of a rapidly changing, technologically advanced, diverse society. This commission serves in an advisory role to the president. Toward this end, the Commission is charged to **recommend a proposed core curriculum, staffing procedures for implementation, and operating guidelines for a coherent, intentional, innovative and interdisciplinary academic program to enhance connectivity to majors and transferability between the institutions.** Following are specific areas for your consideration.

Colorado statutory requirements through CCHE

- **36 credit hours (fewer may be negotiated with CCHE)**
- **5 categories-Communication (2 course, 6 credit hours); Mathematics (1 course, 3-5 credit hours); Arts & Humanities (3 courses, 9 credit hours); Social Behavioral Sciences (3 courses, 9 credit hours) and Physical and Life Sciences (2 courses, 8 credit hours)**
- **A fully-transferable core curriculum**
- **The competencies are identified in the statute.**

Recommendations from Charting the Future

- **Delineate the competencies to be attained by students for each of the five required categories, and any additional competencies required by UNC.**
- **Ensure that curriculum prepares students to participate in a diverse society.**
- **Design a core curriculum with 36 credit hours and 60 courses.**
- **Integrate university experiences through measures such as participation in a Learning Community (one credit), an information literacy course (one credit), a Connection seminar (2 credit hours), Service Learning (one credit and internship one credit).**

- **Design a capstone course which applies a liberal arts perspective to each major. For details, please see page 38 of the final Charting the Future Report.**
- **Identify needs for faculty professional development.**

Assessment, Evaluation and Incentives

- **Design procedures and processes for assessing competencies.**
- **Build a system for data collection and how to use data to inform program process.**
- **Develop a system for accountability.**

The Commission should make its initial recommendations in writing to the president by March 31, 2005, with a final report due October 1, 2005. Your service on this commission is greatly appreciated. I thank you in advance for your hard work to promote student success at UNC.

Kay Norton, President