



CONNECT, COMMUNICATE, CREATE: Helping Carolina Attract and Inspire the Best Students

INTRODUCTION

In October 2008, following a year-long study of the likely impact of enrollment growth at the University, Provost Bernadette Gray-Little established the Enrollment Excellence Task Force. She charged the task force with “developing comprehensive strategies that will improve our ability to enroll a talented and diverse student body” and “making specific recommendations about new programs we might develop, or existing programs we might strengthen, in order to ensure that the University remains a compelling choice for outstanding students—especially from North Carolina, but also from around the nation and the world.”

In his installation address later that month, Chancellor Holden Thorp called upon the task force to “strengthen the Carolina undergraduate experience,” so that the University might continue to “attract and inspire the best students” despite the pressures generated by enrollment growth and by increased competition from other schools. This imperative—to enhance quality even as we grow, and even as we face strong competition for our best prospective students—has informed the work of our task force at every turn.

In keeping with our instructions from the Chancellor and Provost, the report that follows makes specific recommendations about existing programs that could be strengthened, and new programs that could be implemented, so that Carolina can enroll the best students from North Carolina and beyond.

As our title suggests, these recommendations follow three major themes. First, we recommend that the University connect our best prospective students with opportunities that are available on our campus. Over the course of our work together, we have been consistently impressed by the range and quality of the programs and experiences that the University offers to undergraduate students once they have enrolled. By committing a share of these opportunities to prospective students at the point of their admission, we believe we can provide a persuasive and educationally sound incentive to enroll at Carolina, in ways that are consistent with the values of the University and at little additional cost.

Second, we recommend that the University marshal a broad effort to communicate effectively both with prospective students and with those who shape their perceptions of Carolina—of the strengths of our campus and the full array of opportunities we offer our students. There are both truths to be conveyed and myths to be dispelled, and effective communications can contribute significantly to the excellence in enrollment that we seek. This will require a sustained and campus-wide effort—one that will need shared discipline and commitment but little or no additional funding.

Third, we recommend that the University move quickly to create new opportunities that are intellectually rigorous, consistent with our strengths and values, and attractive to the students we most want to enroll. Although it may seem unwise to plan new programs, given the budget constraints that we are facing, we believe the time is right at least for bold planning, and in some cases for bold action. Many of our recom-

mendations can be implemented quickly and inexpensively, especially if we view them as experiments or pilot programs. Moreover, we are confident that funding can be found to support the development of our more elaborate, innovative programs that contribute substantially to the enrollment, education, and experience of Carolina students.

MEETINGS

In response to our charge, the task force met with experts and stakeholders to seek advice and to generate, develop, and refine specific recommendations. Our conversations with these experts, documented in Appendix 1, proved enormously helpful, and we acknowledge with gratitude the contributions that our colleagues have made to our work and to our recommendations. Based on these conversations, we have found general consensus across campus about the importance of recruiting the best students to Carolina and of strengthening the experience of these students once they have enrolled. Our colleagues are motivated to begin implementing several of our recommendations immediately, and also to begin laying the groundwork for other, longer-term strategies.

BACKGROUND

In addition to these meetings, the task force reviewed a wide array of previous reports that proposed goals, principles, or programs pertaining to enrollment or undergraduate education. Each of these reports has strengthened the experience that Carolina offers talented undergraduates, and each has contributed to the University's current position as an attractive choice for outstanding students.

The Report of the Chancellor's Task Force on Intellectual Climate (1997) led to expanded opportunities for "mentored, research-oriented, learning experiences; connect[ed] in-class and out-of-class activities; and service and community-based learning."

The Academic Plan (2003) recognized the strategic importance of undergraduate recruitment and called upon the University to "provide the strongest possible academic experience" for all students by "integrat[ing] interdisciplinary research, education, and public service," "increas[ing] diversity," and "enhanc[ing] public engagement."

The Proposal to Revise the General Education Curriculum (2003), in order to "integrate ... approaches to knowledge" in ways that "cross traditional disciplinary boundaries," emphasized the role of research and other experiential education and called for the creation of clusters of courses that approach a shared theme (for example, "Landscape," "Race," or "Chaos") from a variety of disciplinary perspectives.

The Diversity Plan (2006) encouraged Carolina to foster "opportunities for intense dialogue and rigorous analysis" and "mutually beneficial interactions among members of the [University] community."

The Making Critical Connections Quality Enhancement Plan (2006) led to the creation of Maymester, an intense educational experience offered in a concentrated period, and advocated an increase in research-intensive courses and expanded opportunities for all undergraduates to engage in research, scholarship, or creative performance.

Two other more recent reports deserve particular mention. The 2008 enrollment-growth study, commissioned by the Board of Trustees and conducted by the Art & Science Group, outlined with bracing clarity the challenges that would be evoked by a substantial increase in enrollment over the next decade. The study found that the University's success in recruiting outstanding students from within its home state, unparalleled among colleges and universities nationwide, depends heavily upon student perceptions of the

quality of Carolina's undergraduate student body. The study also demonstrated that because almost all of the top students in North Carolina are already applying to Carolina, our best opportunity to strengthen the undergraduate student body rests in increasing the percentage of admitted students who decide to enroll. Although early outreach remains important, and we must continue to encourage talented students to apply, the Art & Science Group study suggests that our efforts must also focus on developing the resources that would encourage top admitted students to enroll.

At the beginning of the 2008–2009 academic year, partly in response to these findings, the Board of Trustees charged Trustees John Ellison and J.J. Raynor with the task of identifying steps that the University should take to strengthen its standing as an excellent place to teach, learn, and discover. The Ellison-Raynor report, released in March 2009, recommended that the University renew and strengthen its efforts to improve the quality of the entering class. Specifically, the report recommended intensified one-on-one recruitment on the part of the Chancellor, the Board of Visitors, the faculty, and current students, as well as admitted students who have committed to Carolina but have not yet matriculated. The report also urged the University to raise additional funds for merit-based scholarships and to develop “academic opportunities not available elsewhere”—for example, 3+1 programs that would allow students to earn a bachelor's and a master's degree in four years; a minor concentrated on “solving world problems”; expanded offerings in Honors, First Year Seminars, and in the Carolina Research Scholar Program; and guaranteed admission, with appropriate qualifications, to undergraduate and graduate professional programs such as law, medicine, and business. Finally, the report encouraged the development of focused, consistent communications that highlight the quality of the Carolina student body and dispel myths about the University's size and geography.

These efforts have established an enduring foundation for enrollment excellence at the undergraduate level and have informed our present recommendations, which would hardly have been conceivable without the understanding and analysis that these reports have provided, or without the programs, expectations, and culture that they have created, shaped, and nurtured.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We have organized our recommendations into three themes—connect, communicate, create—that closely follow the contours of our charge. Many of our recommendations can be implemented quickly, with little additional planning and at little or no cost to the University. Other recommendations will require more analysis, coordination, and resources before they can be established. And all of our recommendations are likely to evoke additional ideas from within the University community. Thus, our report concludes with suggestions about next steps, including timelines, possible sources of funding, and suggestions regarding the various roles that students, faculty, and administrators might play.

We see this report as a starting point consistent with our original charge from Provost Gray-Little, which asked us “to begin to explore how we might enhance excellence even as we grow” (emphasis added). To continue our task force's momentum and to honor and cultivate the excitement that we have sensed among our colleagues, we recommend the establishment of an Enrollment Excellence Implementation Committee charged with identifying, organizing, and implementing specific steps that the Provost and the Implementation Committee deem appropriate. All of the members of our task force would be honored to serve on such a committee at least through Fall 2009 semester, and many would be glad to serve beyond. With new members gathered from the faculty, as well as from key administrative offices, we believe that this implementation committee would quickly make significant progress towards the goals we have identified.

I. CONNECT

Connect students with specific opportunities that will encourage them to choose Carolina and help them thrive once enrolled.

Once students enroll at Carolina, they enjoy an enormous range of opportunities—courses, programs, and experiences that help them prosper during their undergraduate years and graduate on track for successful careers and lives. While these offerings transform the undergraduate experience of the students who take advantage of them and contribute to the intellectual vitality and overall liveliness of our campus, we believe that these opportunities could and should contribute more directly and significantly to enrollment excellence. It is difficult, if not impossible, for high-school students, even those who are exceptionally motivated and talented, to sort through the vast array of programs at Carolina and understand them fully, especially if they perceive these programs to be remote opportunities that may or may not be available to them. With the notable exception of our Honors Program, which welcomes a share of its students upon their admission to the University, our current method of apportioning these programs reinforces this sense of remoteness, since students must apply to participate, and since they may do so only after they have enrolled at Carolina. For these reasons, although we think that these programs have the potential to be appealing to top students, we doubt that many top students currently choose Carolina specifically because of them. The opportunities are too numerous, and too distant, to outweigh the specific and immediate offers—for example, guaranteed access to research groups and specialized programs—that these students are receiving elsewhere.

We recommend committing a share of these existing opportunities to our strongest prospective students as an incentive to their enrollment at Carolina. To be effective, these commitments must be made well before the May 1 enrollment deadline. They must also align closely with the interests, goals, and experiences of individual students, so that they might connect those students with the programs that will excite and inspire them and thus encourage them to enroll. To identify these interests, goals, and experiences, we further recommend that the Office of Undergraduate Admissions develop an online form that will encourage top prospective students to explore available opportunities and to indicate the ones they would most prefer. Such a form might be offered at the point of application and to all candidates, or it might be offered once applications have been reviewed and top candidates identified. Regardless, we believe it would foster closer matches between student and opportunity, and it would also strongly communicate the rich array of opportunities that await students at Carolina.

We recognize that a commitment of any existing resource, even if the commitment is for a small share of that resource, may seem to reward prospective students at the expense of students who are currently enrolled. At the same time, we see a priori commitments as a wise and reasonable investment, given the strategic importance of maintaining and enhancing the overall quality of our undergraduate student body. Moreover, setting aside a small share of the spaces in existing programs preserves eventual access for other students and enhances the level of engagement in each resource. This approach has precedent in several ongoing and successful programs at the University, including the Honors Program and the assured-enrollment programs in the Kenan-Flagler Business School and the School of Journalism and Mass Communication.

Finally, we believe that this approach is educationally sound, in that it matches students to opportunities for which they are well suited, allows them to pursue experiences they may not otherwise have been aware of, and encourages them to make optimal use of their years at Carolina. In our conversations with current and recent undergraduates, we have repeatedly heard Carolina described as a place of incredible

but also daunting opportunities—choices so rich and so varied that students often feel at a loss as to where to begin. By systematically connecting our strongest prospective students with specific opportunities, we help them realize that Carolina offers, in the words of one current undergraduate, an intellectual community where “whatever you want to do, you can do it.” We also put them in a position to take purposeful advantage of the other opportunities they will enjoy at Carolina and thus make the most of their time at a great public research university.

As we note below, many of these connections will require little or no financial investment on the part of the University, and many can be implemented quickly—as early as the Fall 2010 admissions cycle, which begins next August. Others—especially the program of summer connections—will require resources and may take longer to implement. We recommend a goal of assembling, by no later than Fall 2017, a collection of connected opportunities extensive enough to include at least 20 percent of the entering first-year class, or approximately 900 students, including those who receive merit-based scholarships and/or invitations to join the Honors Program.

Examples, Years 1-2

- Seat in a specific First Year Seminar. First Year Seminars offer new students the opportunity to study an intriguing topic in a small class taught by our best instructors. Because these seminars are especially appealing to highly motivated students with ample curiosity, the prospect of a guaranteed seat in a First Year Seminar might make such students more likely to enroll.
- A guaranteed seat in Modes of Inquiry (IDST 195) and recruited participation in the Carolina Research Scholar Program. The successful Modes of Inquiry course introduces talented students not only to research methods but also to research opportunities at Carolina. Because many of our strongest prospective students have already participated in research while still in high school, offering these students an immediate and guaranteed connection to an undergraduate research opportunity at Carolina would both encourage their enrollment and improve their experience once enrolled.
- Recruited participation in the orientation session for the Public Service Scholars Program, coupled with a seat in a service-learning class. Almost all of our admitted students, including our strongest, participate in public service while in high school. Connecting these students to the Public Service Scholars Program and offering them a seat in a service-learning class during their first year at Carolina would attract them to Carolina.
- Space in a Connected Learning Program. A joint project of the Department of Housing and Residential Education and the Johnston Center for Undergraduate Excellence, the Connected Learning Program offers students the opportunity to combine their personal and academic interests by developing events and activities—research trips, lectures, performances—in collaboration with their peers. Currently, first-year students may apply to the program but do not receive invitations until well after May 1.
- A seat in an existing summer program, such as Wilderness Adventure for First Year Students (WAFFYS). These programs do not currently recruit students until after they have paid their enrollment deposit, but guaranteeing some of our top admitted students an opportunity to participate in them might be a significant incentive to their enrollment.
- Recruitment into student organizations such as Student Government and the Campus Y. Many of our high-profile student organizations would welcome the chance to inform prospective students

about the opportunities that they offer, and perhaps recruit some admitted students for specific roles and responsibilities.

- Assured enrollment in professional major or minor programs (in addition to current programs in the Kenan-Flagler Business School and the School of Journalism and Mass Communication). Each year the University admits first-year students who have a sincere and clearly defined focus in one of our professional majors or minors, and many of these students choose to enroll elsewhere because they worry that they will not eventually earn admission to the major or minor of their choice. Three years ago, to recruit the strongest of these students who are interested in business, the Faculty Advisory Committee on Undergraduate Admissions launched an initiative that assures a limited number of admitted first-year students eventual enrollment in the Kenan-Flagler Business School, provided that they meet certain qualifications after two years of study at Carolina. A similar program was initiated this year for students interested in Journalism and Mass Communication. Given the early success of these two programs, we recommend that this model be extended to other professional majors and minors—for example, nursing, education, and entrepreneurship.

Examples, Years 3-10

- Participation in new and cost-effective summer programs—for example, service opportunities, introductions to research in various disciplines, a North Carolina bus tour. Summer opportunities would help top students make the best use of their time between graduation from high school and enrollment at Carolina. Moreover, some of these opportunities might also be attractive to donors, who could provide students with full or partial scholarships in these relatively inexpensive programs as a further incentive to their enrollment.
- Guaranteed participation in Burch Field Research Seminars, the Singapore Summer Immersion Program, or other study-abroad opportunities, either before matriculation or at the end of the first year. These programs are good examples of life-changing opportunities whose recruitment value is limited because prospective students cannot assume that they will be able to enjoy them. Devoting a small share of the spaces in these programs to the cause of recruiting new students and enlivening their experience could have an impact on enrollment excellence.
- Focused recruitment and advising leading to enrollment in 3/1 master's programs. We support the creation of 3/1 master's programs, especially in disciplines (languages, health affairs, sciences) that highly talented high-school students will perceive to be consistent with their academic, professional, and personal goals. Identifying top admitted students—especially those who are leaving high school with substantial Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, or other college credit—and offering to work with them towards their possible enrollment in one of these programs would be a strong enrollment incentive for many top students.
- Assured enrollment in post-baccalaureate professional programs in medicine, law, and public health. Although this would be a major departure from our current practices, other well-regarded universities—for example, Brown—offer these opportunities to a small number of admitted first-year students each year. We believe this idea is worth exploring.

II. COMMUNICATE

Communicate clearly and consistently about the University.

Long recognized nationally as a leading public research university, the University is also perhaps the best-known public institution in North Carolina. This broad recognition offers significant advantages for undergraduate recruitment and enrollment. Among out-of-state students, it offers us an opening into many households and allows us to generate a large, talented, and diverse pool of candidates. Among North Carolinians, our reputation guarantees that almost every top student, along with thousands of other solid candidates, will at least consider applying.

At the same time, our broad and general familiarity poses some risks. Specifically, many students, and especially many North Carolinians, assume that they already know all they need to know about Carolina. The 2008 Art & Science study demonstrated that at least some of what people think they know about Carolina not only is inaccurate; it also makes them less likely to apply to Carolina or to enroll once admitted.

To dispel these misconceptions, and to help students make their application and enrollment decisions based on an accurate and complete understanding of Carolina, we recommend that the University focus intently on delivering clear, compelling, and consistent messages that address the fundamental concerns of our strongest prospective students. These concerns fall into three categories: the quality and composition of the undergraduate student body; the size and geography of the University; and the friendliness and sense of community on our campus. Addressing these three concerns substantively and consistently will counter at least part of the likely negative impact of enrollment growth, and it will strengthen our ability to recruit and enroll the best students across North Carolina and nationwide.

It is worth noting that much good work is already being done in this area, thanks to the efforts of the Office of University Relations. We are confident that many of the following recommendations could be implemented quickly and at little additional cost by making sure that these themes are included on the UNC website and in any University-wide marketing campaign; by encouraging members of the Campus Communicators group to employ these messages in their work; and by explaining these ideas, and their importance, to new faculty and staff during their orientation to the University.

Quality and Composition of the Undergraduate Student Body

The Art & Science study found that prospective students are heavily influenced by their perceptions of the quality of the student body at Carolina. Numerous previous studies have found that students also are influenced, to a lesser but still significant extent, by their perceptions about the composition of our community—about where our students come from, how they identify themselves, and who they hope to become.

This deep interest in the quality and the composition of the student body represents a significant opportunity, because the University has made great strides in both these areas. To take advantage of this opportunity, we recommend that the University:

- Identify and communicate the achievements of outstanding students at all stages in their Carolina careers. Because the recognition of outstanding undergraduate students is now widely dispersed across departments and programs, the achievements of our students are seldom well known even within the University community. At least partly as a result, our current efforts to publicize the achievements of exceptional students typically focus on seniors who have earned major national awards such as the Rhodes or the Truman. We recommend that the University systematize the collection and dissemina-

tion of stories of talented students of all levels. Several existing events—for example, the Annual Celebration of Undergraduate Research—may provide a good starting point. A searchable website that prominently features undergraduates and is oriented toward the perspective of prospective students would not only enhance enrollment but also demonstrate appropriate appreciation for the wide array of stellar accomplishments attained by Carolina students.

- Encourage all units at the University to feature current undergraduate students, along with facts about the quality and diversity of the student body, on their websites and in their publications and public statements. These messages do not need to be obtrusive or hold center stage, but they will be effective over time if they are consistent. For example, one brief anecdote during an interview or one quick comment during a press conference will make a substantial difference, especially when seconded at every opportunity by a variety of speakers.
- Issue regular press releases and news advisories that highlight the quality and diversity of the undergraduate student body—for example, at the start of the academic year and at each of the two admissions notification dates. While these solicitations would not likely be reported on beyond North Carolina, we believe they would be well received by news organizations across the state. Consequently, their primary audience should be top North Carolinians and their families.

Size and Geography of the University

The Art & Science study demonstrated that our top prospective students are less likely to apply to and enroll at “large” universities than at others; they also believe that the University is substantially larger than it already is. Since this combination of perceptions works to our disadvantage, we believe it is crucial that the University be disciplined and purposeful in referring to the size of our enrollment.

The study also found that top students do not wish to enroll at a university that stretches across multiple campuses—and that many top students already believe Carolina to be such a campus. This is another misperception that the University will need to work consistently to dispel.

- Emphasize that undergraduate education at Carolina is located exclusively on one unified campus in Chapel Hill. University leaders should attempt to develop an alternative to the current nomenclature of “North Campus,” “Middle Campus,” and “South Campus,” and enlist the help of Student Government, University Relations, and other administrative units across campus in leading a gradual shift toward this alternative. If it is not feasible to develop alternative terms, we should at least consistently frame our current language so that prospective students will understand that Carolina is a single walkable campus.
- Describe the size of the University and its programs concretely rather than generally. For example, instead of referring to Carolina as a “large” or “medium-sized” university, we should simply state that the University enrolls 18,000 undergraduate students, or welcomes 3,900 entering first-year students, or graduates 400 students with the bachelor’s degree in psychology. Whenever possible, references to student enrollment should focus on undergraduate enrollment rather than total enrollment. When we must refer to total enrollment, we should distinguish carefully among undergraduate students, graduate students, and professional students.

Friendliness and Sense of Community

The Art & Science study demonstrated that students associate “large” universities with a number of com-

munity characteristics that they find undesirable. Specifically, applicants perceive that students who attend “large” universities lack personal attention, do not enjoy close relationships with classmates and faculty, and are often treated less as an individual and more as a number.

We are confident that these phrases do not describe Carolina, which students and faculty alike describe as an exceptionally vital, friendly, and welcoming place. However, given that prospective students already think that the University is larger than it is, we recommend a renewed effort to communicate and convey Carolina’s strong and vibrant sense of community to our prospective students.

- Encourage departments across campus to remain open and friendly to prospective students—for example, by ensuring that all units understand the priority that the Chancellor and Provost assign to recruitment, by clearly communicating the importance of the campus visit in the decision-making of talented students, and by recognizing and rewarding departments that offer a consistently warm welcome to guests.
- Seize every opportunity to highlight the broad diversity of the University community at all levels—students, faculty, and administration—as well as the University’s commitment to welcoming people of all backgrounds.
- Find innovative ways to represent the richness of intellectual and cultural life on campus—for example, by making the University special-events calendar more prominent, accessible, and functional, and by clearly denoting those events that are free and open to the public.

Again, we believe that these three broad themes can be emphasized, and many of the specific steps implemented, at little or no out-of-pocket expense. But because perceptions of Carolina—especially among North Carolinians—are forged well in advance of any specific interest in admission, this effort will succeed only if it extends well beyond the Office of Undergraduate Admissions. To be truly effective, the University’s key messages will need to be communicated at every opportunity, across all units, in a variety of settings, and to all audiences.

III. CREATE

Create new programs and initiatives to enhance the quality of Carolina’s educational experience.

Our task force has been enormously and consistently impressed by the breadth and depth of the resources that Carolina already offers to our students. Many of these existing opportunities—for example, the Honors Program and merit-based scholarships—have proven their value not only in recruiting new students to Carolina but also in enlivening the experience of students once they have enrolled. Other programs—for example, First Year Seminars, summer study abroad, and the Carolina Research Scholar Program—are integral to the strategy of connection that we describe above. We strongly recommend continuing to develop the resources that will allow these proven programs to expand and achieve their full potential. Although the current economic environment is challenging, we believe that these programs can attract the interest of individuals, corporations, and foundations whose goals and values are consistent with theirs, especially if the University continues to communicate to its supporters the strategic importance of recruitment and enrollment excellence.

With so much already offered, and with such substantial restraints on our resources, we can appreciate that now may not seem the time to plan and initiate new programs—that it may seem as though our first impulse should be to maintain rather than enhance the quality of the undergraduate experience. This approach would certainly be defensible, but our deliberations lead us to suggest that Carolina must think and act boldly, for three reasons.

First, although the recession may lessen or even eliminate the expectation that our enrollment should continue to expand, this expectation will someday return, and we would be well advised to prepare for growth that encourages quality and not just quantity.

Second, we should expect the competition for the best students to intensify rather than diminish. This competition will be driven partly by the aspirations of other institutions, since virtually every college and university hopes to improve the quality of its entering class. But it will be fueled also by broad demographic shifts that will see the number of high-school graduates fall dramatically in half of the states in the union. The public and private universities in these states will invest heavily in recruitment to fill their seats, and their most coveted recruits will include top students from North Carolina.

Third, and perhaps most important, we believe that one or more bold new programs would send a strong signal to our best prospective students that Carolina will value and nurture their creativity and their capacity to change the world. Over the last five years, as the Art & Science study demonstrated, Carolina has dramatically improved its position among the very best high-school students across North Carolina and nationwide. The practical effect of this improvement is that the students who are now interested in Carolina are better prepared and more ambitious, and enjoy more and better choices for their undergraduate education, than those we once enrolled. To earn the allegiance of these students, and to help them fulfill their considerable potential, we should move quickly and boldly to plan and implement several signature programs. In the words of one of our interviewees, these programs would “plant a big stake in the ground” to demonstrate that Carolina is serious about attracting and inspiring the best undergraduate students in the world.

The ideal programs will recruit these students not only to the University but also to the University’s broad mission: to serve North Carolina, the nation, and the world by educating students in a commu-

nity engaged in original inquiry and creative expression. These programs will also help students develop new skills; meet fellow students with similar or complementary interests; use their experiences to explore their possible vocation; create new works that are appreciated by the campus community and beyond; experience the joys of scholarship and the thrills of discovery; watch with pride as their ideas are implemented and adapted by others; and gain confidence that they can undertake original work of significance to society in the future. These programs will draw upon the strengths of the entire University, including the College of Arts and Sciences and the professional and graduate schools. They will strengthen the connections between undergraduate students and faculty, postdoctoral fellows, and graduate students. They will be flexible over time, and adaptable to changes in the world and the University. And they will be shrewd in their use of resources, and cost-effective in both the short and the long term.

Our task force has heard and discussed many worthy ideas for new programs and initiatives. In our view, all of these ideas would strengthen enrollment, and all deserve serious consideration. However, we are confident that the following three programs best illustrate the approach we are recommending.

Greatest Problems of Our Time

We recommend that the University develop interdisciplinary experiences that focus on the greatest problems of our time. As Chancellor Thorp has said, these problems comprise the University's to-do list, and we must focus on them because doing so is consistent with our mission. But we should focus on them also because our best prospective students care deeply about them and want to work together to solve them. By developing interdisciplinary experiences that invite entering first-year students to put their shoulders to the wheel, we could differentiate Carolina from our competitors and provide a structure within which talented students might work together on issues that deeply concern them. A program on clean energy, for example, might invite sixty entering students to take one common lecture course that introduces them to the problem and to relevant ongoing research; these students could collaborate with each other and with their professor to organize guest lectures and colloquia, and they could work in teams to write proposals and conduct research. Other programs might focus on social justice, global medicine, economic development, education reform, conflict resolution, and world hunger. These experiences could be enhanced by the inclusion of interested doctoral students and postdoctoral fellows, or by linking them to the Connected Learning Program or to existing First Year Seminars and service-learning courses.

Like the existing Modes of Inquiry course, which introduces students to research methods, problems, and opportunities dispersed throughout the University, these first-year experiences would help students make fuller use of their years at Carolina. The experiences would also be consistent with our curriculum, which encourages original inquiry and connections across disciplines. Finally, they could be launched relatively quickly and simply, with first-year courses on one or two problems. Over time, these first-year experiences could evolve into the minor program in Solving World Problems recommended by Trustees Ellison and Raynor.

Pathway to Graduate and Doctoral Study

Carolina has long set the pace among comparable universities in the enrollment of African-American students, and it has also become known, through the groundbreaking Carolina Covenant, as an especially welcoming place for low-income and first-generation students. Thanks in part to our success in these areas, other universities, including elite private universities offering favorable financial aid, have redoubled their efforts to recruit and support these same students. Given Carolina's strong history and current challenges, we recommend developing an initiative that will recruit exceptionally talented low-income, first-generation, and underrepresented students by promising them focused support and mentoring as they

prepare for postgraduate study in professional and doctoral programs. Building on the strength of the existing Moore Undergraduate Research Program, such an initiative might enroll 100 entering first-year students annually, half of them drawn from North Carolina and half from the rest of the nation and world. Students demonstrating need would receive no- or low-loan aid packages; students with no demonstrated need would receive nominal merit-based awards—for example, \$2,500 per year, renewable for four years. As an enhancement or alternative to merit-based scholarships, students could receive funding for two to three years of summer study and/or internships. Although this initiative would require significant resources, we believe it would make Carolina a top choice nationally for low-income, first-generation, and underrepresented students who wish to pursue professional or doctoral study.

Investment Fund for Undergraduate Research, Creative Production, and Social Entrepreneurship

Many of our most talented applicants have attained a level of accomplishment in high school that, a generation ago, would have seemed advanced even for many college graduates. These gifted and disciplined students are looking for universities that will offer them not only outstanding courses and excellent professors, but also opportunities to continue their engagement in significant projects beyond the classroom. Carolina currently supports a limited number of excellent student projects and proposals, for example through its Burch Fellowships and Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowships (SURFs). However, the supply of truly excellent student proposals, and thus the demand for this kind of financial support, perennially exceeds our limited resources. We recommend that the University enhance its academic commitment to truly outstanding high-school applicants by developing new investments in the creative projects, scientific research, and social entrepreneurialship we expect and desire our students to become passionate about. The creation of a significant student-oriented endowment not only could double or triple the funds available to such highly successful existing programs such as SURFs but also could establish similar funding opportunities for students with truly outstanding proposals for creative endeavors and social entrepreneurship. More important, the creation of this fund would send an extremely powerful message that the work of truly excellent students at Carolina is something we value and in which we literally placing an investment.

NEXT STEPS

Our interviews and deliberations have led us to a sense of eager urgency regarding the implementation of many of the initiatives that we have described in this report. As we have said throughout, we believe that many of these initiatives can be implemented quickly and at little cost. Others will require pilot efforts, additional planning, or significant additional resources. Regardless, we believe that the proposed initiatives are worth discussion within the broader University community. As one next step, our task force would be glad to meet and talk with any audience the Provost and Chancellor deem appropriate: for example, members of the Board of Trustees; Vice Chancellors and Deans; and members of the Faculty Executive Committee.

As outlined in our introduction, we also recommend that the Provost convene an Enrollment Excellence Implementation Committee charged with identifying, organizing, and implementing the specific initiatives that the Provost endorses. This committee should also be charged with developing a provisional assessment plan for these initiatives in order to evaluate the effectiveness of each initiative. All of the members of our task force would be willing to continue serving at least through the Fall 2009 semester. Our chairs would welcome the chance to consult with the Provost about other possible members for the implementation committee.

To implement the strategy of connection, we recommend that the Office of Undergraduate Admissions begin immediately to develop new mechanisms for discerning the interests of our best prospective students so that we can match those interests to the opportunities we offer, as noted above.

Finally, because some of the initiatives that we have described will require additional funding, we recommend that the University devote a share of the revenue generated by campus-based tuition increases, along with contributions from campus units such as the Division of Student Affairs, to create a venture fund for undergraduate enrollment excellence. Even a small fund, distributed by the Provost or her designee, would facilitate the design, implementation, and evaluation of innovative pilot programs. Pilot programs that demonstrate efficacy would then be in a much better position to receive permanent private support from outside the University. Despite the challenges posed by the ongoing economic situation, we believe that this venture fund has the potential to earn strong support within the University community, given the current deep interest in recruitment and in excellence more generally.

ENROLLMENT EXCELLENCE TASK FORCE

We acknowledge with gratitude the confidence shown in us by Chancellor Thorp and Provost Gray-Little, as well as the generosity of the colleagues whom we interviewed.

Archie Ervin, Associate Provost for Diversity and Multicultural Affairs

Steve Farmer, Associate Provost and Director, Undergraduate Admissions (Co-Chair)

Jonathan Hartlyn, Distinguished Professor, Political Science

Matthew Hendren, Office of the Chancellor

Joe Bob Hester, Associate Professor, School of Journalism and Mass Communication

Jennifer Ho, Assistant Professor, English and Comparative Literature

Don Hornstein, Aubrey L. Brooks Professor, School of Law

Peggy Jablonski, Vice Chancellor, Student Affairs

Ming Lin, Professor, Computer Science

Andrew Lu, Junior, Biology

Pat Pukkila, Professor, Biology, and Director, Undergraduate Research

J. Steven Reznick, Professor, Psychology and Associate Dean, College of Arts and Sciences (Co-Chair)

Kylie Spangler, Junior, English and Comparative Literature

Francesca Talenti, Associate Professor, Communication Studies

APPENDIX: MEETINGS

The Enrollment Excellence Task Force held ten meetings with students, faculty, and staff. Each meeting was organized around three questions:

- What are our most successful, interesting, and innovative current offerings in this domain?
- How might we best connect these offerings to our best prospective students, so that these students will be more likely to enroll?
- What new initiatives in this area might appeal to prospective students?

Date	Topic	Speakers
Friday, Jan 16	Research Opportunities	Pat Pukkila
Tues, Feb 3	Scholarships & Student Aid	Chuck Lovelace Tony Brown Shirley Ort Dan Thornton George Lensing
Mon, Feb 16	Entrepreneurial Opportunities	Buck Goldstein John Stewart Francesca Talenti
Thurs, Mar 5	Campus Life	Larry Hicks Gay Perez Marty Pomerantz Jon Curtis
Tues, Mar 17	Outreach & Community Engagement	Leslie Parkins Kenneth Janken
Tues, Mar 31	Honors Program	Jim Leloudis Ritchie Kendall
Fri, Apr 17	Art, Drama & Music	Emily Kass Carol Allmendinger Tim Carter McKay Coble
Tues, Apr 28	Diversity & Multicultural Perspectives	Archie Ervin Terri Houston Ashlyn James Rachel Reyes Kurt Lew
Thurs, Apr 30	International Opportunities	Peter Coclanis Friederike Seeger
Tues, May 12	3/1 Master's Programs & Assured Enrollment Graduate Programs	Bobbi Owen