

Section 5 – Education Issues

The Continuum of Education Programs and Intersystem Governance

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THE CONTINUUM OF EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND INTERSYSTEM GOVERNANCE

ISSUE STATEMENT

Historically, like in many other states, North Carolina's education delivery has evolved in three systems--the public school system, the community college system, and the university system. Each has its unique history and today each has its unique governance and organization model. Together, in a State that has been devoted to improving educational attainment, these systems account for \$4.8 billion, or 64 percent of General Fund expenditures.

The Phase I higher education study identified potential redundancies in higher education and gaps in educational program delivery. Therefore, the Government Performance Audit Committee requested that Phase II education studies include a study of intersystem issues. The two objectives of this study were to describe program issues identified and to analyze intersystem governance. Accordingly, the first section of the paper addresses program issues and the second addresses intersystem governance issues.

CONTINUUM OF EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Formulating solutions to complex program issues that might change the content of education delivery is beyond the scope of GPAC analysis. Therefore, the purpose of the following material is to identify many possible areas for further study in a strategic redesign of education for North Carolina's future.

Background

Children begin informal learning at birth and begin formal learning early in life. All learning builds on prior learning and experience. Therefore, from the perspective of the learner, there is a continuous process of advancement, much but not all of which is supposed to occur in formal institutional settings, from pre-schools to postdoctoral programs, depending on the learner.

Not only is education a progressive process; it also is a lifelong process. While this notion is certainly not new, it is becoming increasingly meaningful in an age of rapid technological change, increased population mobility, and frequent personal job changes. Education systems more than ever must be designed to permit children, young adults, adults, and even mature adults, to reenter the system when their occupational or other needs require them to do so. For the learner, education must be viewed as a perpetually available resource. Therefore, the word **continuum**, as it is used here, applies not to a straight-line progression of the learner, but rather to the complement of programs delivered by the State to learners at all levels.

North Carolina has invested immense financial resources and enormous creative energy in development of its schools and colleges. In 1992, a "snapshot" view reveals:

- A public education system that is unique in its degree of state funding and state control but which stakeholders still find disappointing
- One of the largest community college systems in the U.S., having evolved from a mix of junior colleges and vocational/technical institutes, with intensifying pressures for an ever-broadening mission
- A large, diverse university system, comprised of old land-grant and research universities, younger comprehensive regional universities, historically black land-grant and younger institutions, and specialized institutions

Each of the three systems has its strengths and weaknesses, successes and failures, some of which are addressed in the various GPAC education issue papers.

Finding 1: North Carolina's three education systems do not provide education services in ways that promote lifelong learning and make most effective use of the vast resources applied.

Arising from the natural historical evolution of the systems, there are today material redundancies, gaps, and weaknesses in coordination that, together, undermine the effectiveness of investments in the individual systems and North Carolina's overall educational achievement.

A number of illustrative examples, although not an exhaustive inventory, were identified in this and other GPAC education studies. They include:

- Public pre-school and early childhood education
- Common data systems
- College transfer programs
- Intrasystem and intersystem articulation and transfer
- College-level courses in high school
- Remediation
- Vocational/technical education
- Apprenticeship programs
- Continuing education

- Teacher training/certification
- Literacy programs
- Library programs
- Avocational programs
- Cooperative extension youth programs

Public Pre-School/Early Childhood Education. North Carolina currently provides little funding for pre-school education. Currently, attendance in pre-school programs is limited to those who qualify for the federally-funded Head Start program and those who can afford private pre-school. At present, North Carolina children are not required to attend school until age 7, as kindergarten is not mandatory.

Numerous studies of Head Start have shown that it has tremendous positive impact on student achievement. For example, one source indicates that 65 percent of Head Start students graduate from high school, compared with only 52 percent of those in their neighborhoods who do not participate in the program.¹ In the long term, providing good quality, universally available public pre-school programs for children who need it may be one of the most important measures the State can take to improve educational achievement. As pre-school investments now will not help children already in the system, this would be an investment to be balanced with those that support children already in school.

Early childhood education is not a new subject of discussion for North Carolina, but the issue may need reconsideration, including how to structure and fund it.

Common Data Systems. Not surprisingly, the three public education systems do not have compatible data. In earlier times, there was neither the pressing need nor the available technology to create unified data systems. But today, lack of common or integrated information systems makes transfer of student records more difficult than it needs to be, given available technology. Unintegrated reports hinder tracking of student progress through the three systems; hinder measurement of student and system performance; encourage duplication of course offerings; hinder transfer of students between systems, and make the financial aid process more confusing.

The General Assembly already has recognized the importance of common information systems and has directed the Board of Governors, the State Board of Community Colleges, and the State Board of Education, in consultation with private higher education institutions, to develop a student information system that will enable the State to follow and report the progress

¹Cetron and Gayle, *Educational Renaissance*, St. Martin's Press, 1991.

of high school students who attend college. Data that the General Assembly has required include:

- Number of high school graduates who apply to, are admitted to, and enroll in institutions of higher education
- Student performance for the first year of college, including the need for remedial education and whether students stay enrolled the subsequent year
- Progress of students who transfer between higher education institutions
- Consistent and uniform public school course information including, course code, name, and description

The General Assembly also required that public schools use standardized transcripts that can be transmitted electronically.

In addition to student data, compatible course numbering systems in UNC and NCCCS would be helpful to students planning to transfer.

College Transfer Programs. Many North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS) institutions offer college transfer programs which allow students to enroll at community colleges for two-year programs and then transfer to a four-year college or university to complete the balance of their baccalaureate degree work. According to data provided by The University of North Carolina (UNC), as of March 1990, 40 community colleges offered college transfer programs: eleven of them contracted with a UNC institution for all or part of the general education portion of instruction; a twelfth was negotiating with UNC Greensboro for the instruction; and another contracted with a private institution for the instruction.²

Some interviewees report that NCCCS's college transfer programs are a major redundancy in education delivery because the programs duplicate UNC programs. However, significant support for college transfer programs exists in the State, too. More than three years ago, the Commission on the Future of the North Carolina Community College System recommended that:

"The State Board should expand the effectiveness of college transfer programs as bridges to additional higher education. Access to college parallel courses should be provided on each campus. A special emphasis should be placed on reversing the decline in the percentage of minorities participating in these programs. Each college should establish numerical goals for increasing the number of students who successfully matriculate at public and private four-year colleges and universities."

²More recent NCCCS data indicate that 45 of 58 colleges offer college transfer programs. A discussion of college transfer programs can be found in the issue paper "Program and System Structure--North Carolina Community College System."

Most states' community colleges offer associate degree programs (A.A. or A.S.) aimed at preparing students for transfer to four-year institutions. California directs large segments of college-bound high school students into college-parallel programs at community colleges to save money. In Michigan, community college students are simultaneously enrolled in the state university system to facilitate transfer.

In North Carolina, there remains a divergence of opinion as to whether NCCCS should be solely a technical/vocational system, its primary mission, or whether it should provide a large proportion of the delivery of the first two years of collegiate education. This is an important dimension of NCCCS's mission that would be useful to clarify and the clarification, in either direction, could save costs.

Intrasystem and Intersystem Articulation and Transfer. College transfer raises issues of UNC and NCCCS coordination on curricula to facilitate the transfer of students. Currently, individual NCCCS institutions or programs have articulation agreements with academic departments of neighboring UNC institutions and private colleges and universities. (Neither NCCCS nor UNC has an inventory of existing articulation agreements.) Systemwide articulation agreements between UNC and NCCCS do not exist. For this reason, there are no guarantees that a student's credits or degrees will transfer. A recent report prepared by MDC, Inc., for the Department of Community Colleges called for guaranteed admission to UNC institutions for community college graduates with A.A. and A.S. degree **without** loss of credits.³

The following are illustrations of the issue:

- **Between NCCCS and UNC.** A nurse with an associate degree from a community college in the eastern part of the State who moves to the Western part of the State and decides to seek a BSN may have to retake courses that he or she already took at the community college.
- **Between NCCCS Institutions.** Course credits of a student with a certificate from one community college who moves to another part of the State may not transfer when he or she goes back to school for an associate degree.
- **Between UNC Institutions.** Sources at UNC stated that course credits typically can be transferred but because of quality differences of program offerings between institutions, the final decision rests with the faculty at the receiving institution.
- **Between NCCCS Institutions and High Schools.** Lack of articulation agreements is not limited to the two higher education systems. One interviewee pointed out that students in Richmond County's Tech Prep Program must retake some courses, such as drafting, that they took in high

³*Enhancing Transfer from Community Colleges: An Idea Whose Time Has Come*, MDC, Inc., August 1992.

school at Richmond Community College. (Tech Prep is discussed below.) The interviewee blamed the redundancy on the "FTE chase" for additional funding by the community colleges.

Some steps toward resolution have been taken at the system level. For example, UNC studied the problems nursing students were having in transferring from NCCCS to UNC. UNC found that 90 percent of the students were accepted but that all of their credits did not transfer. As a result of the study, UNC directed NCCCS to have nursing students take college transfer courses instead of technical courses so that credits would transfer. Also, in 1990, the State Board of Education, the State Board of Community Colleges, and the Board of Governors committed themselves to increase the number of transfers from NCCCS to UNC by "no less than seven percent annually over the next five years." UNC's long-range plan for 1992-1997 calls for: continuing to staff the Joint Committee on College Transfer Students sponsored by the North Carolina Association of Colleges and Universities; facilitating transfer of students from community and technical colleges to the University by completing the study of transfers from community colleges to UNC institutions; improving transfer student performance reporting process; establishing an electronic transcript network to facilitate transfer and improve information exchange with the community college system; and encouraging constituent institutions to collaborate with two-year institutions in their service regions in development of transfer agreements.

Systemwide articulation is a massively complex problem, not one capable of facile solutions. But lack of systemwide articulation incurs huge financial, human, and other hidden costs; therefore, it may be a large problem worth tackling. The financial cost is high because the State and the student must pay twice for the same course. The human cost is high because students must take courses twice or are discouraged from continuing their education. As worker mobility and needs for retraining increase, transfer of credits between institutions and systems will become more of an issue in the future.

College-Level Courses in High Schools. Currently, both NCCCS and selected UNC institutions offer college-level courses to high school students. Funding for the program is provided under the Huskins Bill. Many of these courses are taught by high school faculty and approved by the community colleges. Both systems get funding credit for the students. Several UNC institutions have a program that allows qualified public school students to take college courses on campus. UNC-Wilmington for example, has between 50 and 60 high school students who are participating in the program.

Several interviewees believe that the Huskins Bill program may not be of sufficient quality and usefulness to merit continued State funding. Sources at UNC-Wilmington indicate that they are pleased with the success of their program and believe it should be expanded to all UNC institutions. A problem with expanding the UNC program, however, is limited access; the program can only serve high school students in the immediate vicinity of one of the UNC institutions, until the CONCERT network is expanded to allow widespread use of this technology.

Remediation. Both UNC and NCCCS provide remedial instruction to entering high school graduates whose preparation was inadequate. Many believe that community colleges, by their culture, are better equipped to do remediation and do so at lower cost. Already East Carolina University, UNC-Charlotte, and Winston-Salem State University have contracts with community colleges to provide remediation to their students. This approach merits further applications. Of course, an even better solution, in terms of using resources effectively, would be to improve the output of high schools so that no remediation would be required.

Vocational/Technical Education. Both NCCCS and public high schools offer vocational/technical training in different forms and varying levels. In FY 1990-91, North Carolina spent \$143.4 million in the community colleges and \$184.7 million in the high schools on vocational education.⁴

In 1986, the Center for Education Studies of Research Triangle Institute (RTI) conducted a study of vocational education for the Joint Legislative Commission on Governmental Operations. Based on an assessment of future workplace and occupational skill needs, the study advocated fundamental restructuring of vocational education in North Carolina's public schools. In essence, the study recommends redesigning a core vocational education curriculum that emphasizes basic skills development and instills a broad range of work-related knowledge and skills critical to adaptability, transferability, and upward mobility. Such skills, the report says, should be applicable to a broad range of occupations. A major recommendation of the RTI Study is transfer of all occupation-specific vocational training to the community colleges and phasing out all such training in high schools.

This model already exists in North Carolina. Richmond Community College initiated a vocational/technical program with local high schools called "Tech Prep." The College developed the program, based on a federally-developed model, to serve the "75 percent neglected majority" in public education. It eliminated occupation-specific education from the high schools and replaced it with a program that emphasizes basic skills that are critical in today's work places and that prepares the student for direct entry to a community college. In the past six years, Richmond County's high school drop out rate declined from 29 percent to 12 percent and the college-going rate has increased from 50 percent to 70 percent.⁵

The State is slowly moving to the Tech Prep model. At their second annual joint meeting (March 8, 1990), the State Board of Education, the State Board of Community Colleges, and the Board of Governors recognized the success of the Richmond Community College program and called for the expansion of tech prep programs at the rate of at least ten a year during the next five years.

⁴*Workforce Development Inventory*, Governor's Commission on Workforce Preparedness, July 1992. The \$143.3 million figure assumes a narrow definition of vocational education.

⁵*Greater Expectations: The South's Workforce is the South's Future*, MDC, Inc., Chapel Hill, NC, September 1992.

Feedback on the skill levels of North Carolina workers indicates that concentration on basic skills is necessary. One interviewee reported that, at a meeting on what employers are looking for in workers, a representative from General Motors reported that when North Carolina dealers send their best mechanics to GM's training center in Flint, Michigan, the mechanics usually require at least three weeks of training in basic skills such as math. The National Alliance of Business and other business organizations also advocate that generic skills are what matter most for schools; employers prefer to provide specific skill training. North Carolina may want to confront the question of how to deliver vocational education defined for the modern workplace more forcefully and more quickly than a slow pace of Tech Prep implementation would bring. To do so, the continuum study would need to assess how to redeploy the nearly \$400 million or more currently used for traditional vocational education or how to implement Tech Prep more globally.

Apprenticeship Programs. Other models than those currently employed by North Carolina for preparing a highly skilled, competitive workforce exist. For example, Germany, Austria, and Switzerland successfully employ apprenticeship programs. Germany, whose apprenticeship model has been widely emulated, is in the process of redesigning and expanding its program. The continuum study might include analysis of whether this is an entirely new model that North Carolina should implement.

Continuing Education. North Carolina has a large number of continuing education programs. These include programs offered by UNC and NCCCS and those offered by other state departments that are targeted to specific populations. At UNC and NCCCS, state support to the programs is limited to covering some administrative costs. If one views education in terms of a lifelong model, the State may need to develop a new model for delivering and funding continuing education.

Teacher Training/Certification. Instances of lack of coordination between the Department of Public Instruction (DPI), which is responsible for teacher certification, and UNC, which prepares teachers for the State, hinder efforts to improve the quality of new teachers. In 1986-88, UNC General Administration reviewed its education programs and developed and implemented measures to improve the quality of new teachers. One of the changes was to require that education majors take a second major in an academic discipline. UNC General Administration proposed that DPI adopt the double major as a certification requirement so that private college and university programs would be required to strengthen their requirements also. DPI did not adopt the new requirement, thereby lessening the benefits of UNC's efforts to improve teacher education statewide.

Despite recent review and revision of teacher education programs, the quality and adequacy of teacher training remains an issue of concern. As shown in Exhibit 1, most UNC institutions, except UNC-Asheville (UNC-A) and the North Carolina School of the Arts, offer education programs at the baccalaureate, masters, intermediate, and doctoral level. In addition, graduate centers offer masters level courses at two institutions and doctoral level courses at two others. Three UNC institutions have special teacher education programs: UNC-Wilmington, UNC-Greensboro, and Western Carolina University. Despite the plethora of education courses,

Exhibit 1
The University of North Carolina
Current and Planned Programs in Education
FY 1992-1993

12.9

	CURRENT				PLANNED			
	<u>Bachelors</u>	<u>Masters</u>	<u>Intermediate</u>	<u>Doctoral</u>	<u>Bachelors</u>	<u>Masters</u>	<u>Intermediate</u>	<u>Doctoral</u>
Appalachian State University	9	14	6	1	2			
East Carolina University	8	12	6	1				
Elizabeth City State University	6							
Fayetteville State University	5	4						1
North Carolina A&T State University	7	9						
North Carolina Central University	4	8				1		
North Carolina State University at Raleigh	6	10	7	8				
Pembroke State University	8	5			1			
UNC-Asheville								
UNC-Chapel Hill	5	12		6	1			1
UNC-Charlotte	3	7	5		1			1
UNC-Greensboro	8	14	5	6				
UNC-Wilmington	4	5			1			
Western Carolina University	11	14	5		1			1
Winston Salem State University	6							
Total	<u>90</u>	<u>114</u>	<u>34</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>4</u>
 TOTAL-CURRENT	 90	 114	 34	 22				
TOTAL-PLANNED	<u>7</u>	<u>1</u>		<u>4</u>				
 GRAND TOTAL	 97	 115	 34	 26				

more than one interviewee remarked that "not one UNC institution offers a truly high quality education program."

Another GPAC issue paper, "Academic Program Planning - The University of North Carolina" recommends a strategic review of teacher education programs in terms of reducing UNC program redundancy. Another major study is already underway; the Joint Education Committee of the General Assembly is awaiting an interim report, due in mid-February, from its Teacher Training Task Force. This group already has developed 39 recommendations for revising teacher training.

The State of Maryland is considering revamping its teacher education programs by doing away with undergraduate education programs all together.⁶ Future teachers would receive a degree in their field of study and then go on to a fifth year of schooling, to take education courses and receive a graduate degree in education. Students would have to pass competency tests in their fields of study to be admitted to the program. UNC has 14 undergraduate education programs. Implementing such a program as that proposed in Maryland may free significant resources for strengthening the program. It should be noted that there is significant opposition to this idea in North Carolina, the rationale for which needs to be evaluated.

Literacy Programs. Currently, funding for literacy goes to NCCCS as a special categorical funding and to literacy councils, through the Department of Cultural Resources. Under the current definition of literacy--any adult without a high school diploma--North Carolina will have great challenges in providing literacy programs that meet the entire need. At issue is whether all funding for adult literacy should be channeled through one agency or if better coordination is needed for literacy programs. Thus, the question of overall funding levels also may need reconsideration.

Library Programs. Library planning, coordination, and sharing on a regional basis could result in reduced collection duplication. Currently, UNC, NCCCS, public schools, and local libraries do not coordinate collection development and acquisitions. Lack of coordination may result in redundant collections or failure to acquire books that may be needed by students or the public. Augmented use of technology also might be a means to reduce collection expenditures.

Avocational Programs. NCCCS offers many avocational classes designed to meet personal and leisure needs. Similar programs may be offered by local departments of recreation, public schools, senior citizen centers, and other community resources. Given enormous demands on NCCCS to support workforce development, the issue is whether NCCCS should be offering these programs. Considering the State's financial constraints and the need to invest in other, high priority education programs, a study might reveal that the State is replicating funding unnecessarily for these types of programs.

Cooperative Extension Youth Programs. The National Cooperative Extension Service is undertaking new initiatives and North Carolina's Cooperative Extension Service (CES) is

⁶"Maryland Panel Urges Revamping of Teaching Degree," *The Washington Post*, 12-2-93, Metro section, p. D5.