Following is an executive summary of presentations from University and economic development partnership representatives and input provided by invited business leaders.

**Top Regional Development Priorities**
In the Advantage West region, key sector priorities include: advanced manufacturing, entrepreneurship, green economy/energy, film commission, and agribusiness. Current initiatives include a revamped Stanly Furniture Company in Graham County; the Advantage Opportunity loan fund; the Advantage Green program (alternative energy for buildings); recent filming of the “Hunger Games;” and the Blue Ridge Food Ventures cooperative (AB Tech)—a natural products manufacturing facility.

**Top hard skills (degree programs/technical skills) needed from UNC campuses over the next five years**
Rural economic development; project management; international business; web/software/game design (augmented reality); sales skills; financial/investment; provide open courseware (a la MIT); diversified MBA (healthcare, project mgmt, marketing); cross pollination between degree programs (break silos—see Clemson); economics and market forces; nonprofit expertise; social enterprise; holistic health; engineering-manufacturing efficiencies; basic math/accounting; science/biochemistry; healthcare (pharmacology; natural products chemistry; bio-manufacturing; nutritional genomics; molecular medicine)

“I wonder if universities could group majors differently so that (students) can see different ways that problems can be solved...take different approaches to work.”

**Top soft skills (global/creative/entrepreneurial) needed from UNC campuses over the next five years**
Real-world experience for students; strategic development skills; emotional intelligence/interpersonal; mentorships-interns; ethics (personal ethical framework); team/conflict/negotiation; service leadership; resilience in face of failure; business etiquette (use of email, conduct, protocols); evaluate social enterprise as a workforce model; provide knowledge re: “socially dependent” economies vs. “market economies;” strong motivation; flexibility; work ethic; social connectivity; foreign language (e.g., Mandarin); principles of disruptive innovation; listening skills (understand opposing views); need students who are widely read (global).

“Universities need to figure out a way that they can teach people about innovation. With the speed that the world is changing, we all need to be able to be our own CEO’s.”

**How can the University help you grow business and/or communicate about business needs and interests**
Partner with Silicon Valley (Asheville could become “Silicon Mountain”); replicate the Family Business Forum model; buy/contract local; bring in known speakers; research (e.g., rain gardens, porous paving, stream bank, trends); produce competitive candidates with “soft skills” to be successful; take more interest in needs of business community; integrate internships with degree requirements; evaluate career services (target collaboration); utilize “living classrooms” (bring students onsite); visit mfg. plants; produce graduates who understand entrepreneurial innovation (and are multidisciplinary); need R&D (universities are where new ideas start).

**University Communication:** Operate with the “speed of business;” need a gateway/invitation to participate in events; customize communication to specific fields; create mobile apps for info access; quarterly business forums; use chambers/civic/business groups; use social media (but no substitute for personal contact; streamline IP disclosure/licensing process.

**What is your “one great idea” on the best ways the university can help businesses be successful?**
Be the center of the “deep wellness” paradigm in integrative medicine/natural products/mfg./and specialty agriculture; consult business re: curriculum development; revitalize rural communities (business, infrastructure); online courses/video lectures (use class time for interaction); create facility where students can interact with business; host technology conference; create “Storyworld” (a la Disney); wellness training/sustainable green medicine; job-ready students through internships; support Arboretum/WCU Rapid Prototyping Center.

“Internships may already be huge, but you need to increase those more. That helps (students) and it helps us too.”