EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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 Charlotte region, key sector priorities include: energy, health care, motorsports, aerospace, data/analytics. UNCC is a key resource in each of these industries. Regional priorities for economic development include: access (people getting to and from the campus); quality of workforce (esp. for recruiting efforts); and quality of higher education (need a critical mass of academic options).

“Big data is the next big opportunity.”

Top hard skills (degree programs/technical skills) needed from UNC campuses over the next five years
Bridge technical skills gap between university & community college graduates; polymer related undergraduate degree (no such program in SE); engineering; accounting/P&L; hands-on skill sets for engineers; internships & co-ops through academic year; joint degree programs with UNC schools; more evening/weekend/online degree programs; film production; graphic arts; fine arts; photography / videography; short/targeted programs on single topic; industry certifications; align the campuses; build on EPIC’s success; address STEM deficiencies; how to interpret data.

Top soft skills (global/creative/entrepreneurial) needed from UNC campuses over the next five years
“The biggest weakness we see in our young people is writing skills. They are vital.”
Business acumen in undergrad programs; entrepreneurial thinking (entrepreneur ‘eco-system’); decision making (how to analyze problems-solutions); strategic direction; focus on global analysis; awareness; communication-writing skills; focus students on jobs after school; integrate ‘soft’ skills into curriculum; social skills across demographic groups; context of history; interdisciplinary knowledge; internships; foreign language skills (int’l, study abroad); leadership/thinking/creative (e.g., Davidson); make 4th year of HS blend into 1st year of undergrad; corporate environment skill set.

“The people we need are the ones with intuition and creativity.”

How the University help you grow business and/or communicate about business needs and interests
Professional education linked to graduate programs; partner with professors; R&D; growth strategies; market development; identify changing needs of dynamic economy; respond to employers’ workforce skill needs; align thought leaders with entrepreneurial firms (Stanford model); talent pipeline
University Communication: University should market its programs; get past that university communication is just about fund raising; involve faculty in the community (ask what needs are out there); conduct more open houses on initiatives; use local gov’t or NGO to get info to community; use the chancellors; have top level execs visit campus; guest speakers; “faculty dating” (talk with startups); strategic conversations with senior university leaders; externships.

What is your “one great idea” on the best ways the university can help businesses be successful?
“People don’t just wake up one day and decide they are going to be entrepreneurs…if we want to have more strategic entrepreneurs we have to expose people to that way of thinking.”
Integrated UNC offerings; open IP policy to attract start-ups to university; innovation/creativity incubator; improved job placement department to create focus on community; involve faculty with area companies (experience goes back to classroom also); serve as liaison between industry leaders/small business/and public schools; sponsor job shadowing events for teachers/students; support strategic sectors in the Carolinas; scholarships for STEM.