The University of North Carolina Regional Listening Forums 2012

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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 mgt, 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.”
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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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 exec 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.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Top Regional Development Priorities
Target sectors for development (retention/expansion/recruitment and startup) include value-added agriculture, life science, advanced manufacturing (aerospace, transportation), military/defense-related industries, marine trades, tourism, logistics and back office (financial services/call centers). Active initiatives focused on continued development of logistics infrastructure, entrepreneurial community development, integrated educational pathway for STEM, facilitation of research activity at ECU & connection to business community and workforce development initiatives.

“A lot of people when it comes to economic development think about bringing folks from outside in; we need to spend more time figuring out how to develop talent from within.”

Top hard skills (degree programs/technical skills) needed from UNC campuses over the next five years
Information technology, chemistry, biology, engineering (especially cross-discipline application engineering)

“Technical graduates: especially great would be computer science majors with scientific (chemistry/biology) backgrounds. Graduate degrees are a plus.”
Basic math skills, automation engineers/instrumentation, trouble shooting, problem solving

Top soft skills (global/creative/entrepreneurial) needed from UNC campuses over the next five years
Analytical problem solving, communication and professionalism.

“Cultural Competency – understanding and awareness of generations, cultures, (including global cultures.)”
“We see a lot of people who know the theories, but we need to emphasize more of the problem solving or trouble-shooting side of things.”
“We can train anybody we hire for exactly what we want them to do. We want people who show initiative and gumption and want to come to work.”

How the University help you grow business and/or communicate about business needs and interests
Create the training pathways for skill enhancement and improve degree completion options for those already employed
Executive level training to grow businesses
Support internships and faculty/staff engagement with business
Central website to promote university services to the community

“Internships/co-ops should be a win/win for us and universities.”

What is your “one great idea” on the best ways the university can help businesses be successful?
University service distributed geographically and multidisciplinary teams to solve business problems (collaboration).
Focus on getting students prepared for work through more formal internships/co-ops programs
Create a multi-university aerospace R&D program at or near GTP to support aerospace companies in the Eastern region (including serving the needs of FRC East – the largest aerospace employer in NC).
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**Top Regional Development Priorities**
In the Hickory metro region, key sector priorities include: sustainable energy, data management facilities, furniture and home furnishings, cable and communications equipment and materials, entrepreneurship, automotive manufacturing, and logistics support.

**Top hard skills (degree programs/technical skills) needed from UNC campuses over the next five years**
Chemical, ceramic, optical, BS in business and finance with entrepreneurial skills, IT – CRM, software, pathways for technical, BS/MS mechanical, electrical engineering, physics & optics, Chinese language skills, design engineers, rapid prototyping capacities, mechanical sensibilities and design aesthetics, controls engineers Siemens ability, internships & practicums to ensure applications ability and context, ROI capacity to apply to tech disciplines, appropriate entrance requirements, affordability and access, double major options‌ available across UNC entities “There is high pressure to move AAS nurses to BSN nurses, but UNC campuses don’t have the capacity.”
“People don’t care as much about the ‘degree’ as about whether the person has the credentials to do the job. That’s a responsibility for both the community colleges and the universities.”

**Top soft skills (global/creative/entrepreneurial) needed from UNC campuses over the next five years**
Negotiation skills, ethics/integrity, leadership development, selling skills & sales mgmt., teambuilding, internships, co-ops, practicums – evidence of application is key in hiring, social skills and work environment skills, communication skills/techniques differences – ‘right now’ influence, written communication – skills have significantly deteriorated – enhance ability to capture essence of message (“Our students these days are thumb communicators; they are going to need a lot more than that as they get out into the workplace.”).
Perhaps more dedicated focus on soft skills rather than diffusion across disciplines, reaching this generation through joint problem solving e.g. Davidson grant reference “A lot of times we have people coming out who are prima donnas. They shouldn’t be. There should be some sort of hard knocks class that shows them how things really work before they get out.”

**How the University help you grow business and/or communicate about business needs and interests**
EDCs can utilize universities to help in recruiting process – e.g. applied research, cluster and sector focus & educational support can be explored/enhanced – Kenan Flagler’s Home Furnishings initiative has been discontinued – explore model – University can offer quality and honest broker of services, Information exchanges – university departments can be facilitators and conveners, help to address ‘how to help US mfg.?‘ Advanced mfg. principles are available within the university – are we getting the word out effectively? How can we extend focused resources beyond geographic boundaries? Development of biz intelligence and data mining

**University Communication:** Podcasts can be effective for instruction, industry info and offering announcements, The University must look for consistent and effective outreach messaging, Among the noise, personal phone call / contacts are powerful, University contact can be effective, funding is a constraint upon university marketing and info dissemination.

**What is your “one great idea” on the best ways the university can help businesses be successful?**
*Blur the lines* – community colleges ↔ University ↔ Business ↔ Community
“Academic neighborhood” – *pushing out* the resources, Celebrate the diversity – vocational education IS higher education – diversity and balance is key for community development. UNC needs to develop social media strategy to more effectively communicate with community. More flexibility in training and curriculum; predicting tomorrow’s education needs requires breaking some molds. Accreditation is a barrier to rapid change and flex in curriculum – university focus is on 18-22 yr. old – the university needs focus on serving all demographics.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Top Regional Development Priorities
Industrial recruiting with emphasis on automotive, aerospace, biotech/life science, marine, food, alternative energy and defense sectors; tourism promotion and development; existing business support. Active initiatives focused on “last mile” broadband deployment, developing agri-biotech assets, developing energy assets (wind power, biomass), development of remotely piloted aerial launch facility and maximizing NC Center for Automotive Research assets.

Top hard skills (degree programs/technical skills) needed from UNC campuses over the next five years
Chemistry, microbiology, biology and agricultural science and technology
“Need to make sure people with military experience can get some credit for that toward degree programs.”
Network management and other highly technical information technology skills
“Plant molecular and genetic training for residents and small farmers. Undergraduate and graduate programs that are interdisciplinary connecting biotechnology with business.”

Top soft skills (global/creative/entrepreneurial) needed from UNC campuses over the next five years
Communication, work ethic and interpersonal skills
“Need to be able to communicate – in English – but have the ability to communicate across global cultures and cross-generationally.”

How the University help you grow business and/or communicate about business needs and interests
Providing internships (“these are our best jobs prospects. It’s great to be book smart, but we need to get people experience so they know what they are doing when they graduate.”). Connecting university assets/resources to businesses. Providing regional access to existing resources within the University.
“Direct internship and research applications, market analysis, business leadership and CEO development would be helpful.”
“Occasional check-ins (like this forum) are valuable. I love your emails; I don’t read them. If you can’t tell me in 2-3 sentences, you’ve lost me.”

What is your “one great idea” on the best ways the university can help businesses be successful?
“Maybe you could create a ‘nerd squad’ of computer-savvy students who could help businesses throughout the region set up websites or wireless networks.”
Incentive to forgive on student loans for location in tier 1 and 2 counties. NENC needs stronger demographics; this could help recruit people, workers, growth.
Following is an executive summary of presentations from University and economic development partnership representatives and input provided by invited business leaders as part of the 2012 UNC System strategic planning process.

Top Regional Development Priorities
In the RTRP region, targeted clusters for development (retention/expansion/recruitment and startup) include: advanced analytics, advanced medical care, agriculture biotechnology, analytical instrumentation, biological agents and infectious diseases, cleantech, defense technologies, informatics, interactive gaming and e-learning, nanoscale technologies, pervasive computing, and pharmaceuticals. Active initiatives are focused on cleantech business & industry with RTRP staff assignment. RTRP also stressed ways in which higher education resources serve as major assets for economic development including international recruitment of organizations (“triple helix” advantage—business, government, universities).

Top hard skills (degree programs/technical skills) needed from UNC campuses over the next five years
Technical talent in identified clusters; international business degrees; STEM related master and PhD programs; “integrated” specialties needed to run a business (finance, accounting, marketing, supply chain management, HR); teach functions in “integrated” way so language of each can be understood—intersections in “white space” areas; recruit masters students to stay in region; engineering and sciences (biological, software, electrical, agricultural/biotech, chemical, polymer); hands-on/practical experience for students; mentorships, internships.

Top soft skills (global/creative/entrepreneurial) needed from UNC campuses over the next five years
“The ‘softer’ the skillset the more important collaboration with industry. A lot of these things you can read in a book, but you need to actually do them in the workplace.”
Appreciation for multi-cultural/international travel/geopolitical knowledge/speak foreign languages; project management; critical thinking; written/oral/communication/negotiation; how to work in industry (motivational skills); on-campus engagement in entrepreneurial enterprise; teamwork; advanced leadership; “real world” internships (cross-functional); entrepreneurial/intrapreneurial mindset (“Not everyone is going to come out and start their own business. We need people who can come out and be entrepreneurial for us.”)
“’Working skills’ are really important. How do you talk to a colleague; how do you work on a team.”
“Any experience universities can give people with a foreign language, experience overseas or project management skills.”

How the University help you grow business and/or communicate about business needs and interests
“Triangle universities need to have skills in more than just ‘their’ field. A polymer scientist needs to understand how a biologist thinks. The degrees are just so siloed. The greatest opportunities come from the white space areas.”
Protect/promote reputation of university; more online; university-based service centers (access); national centers of excellence (cluster focus); research the next thing; affordable assistance to business; degree/certificate programs for professional growth; streamline tech transfer; pay-per-use facilities/equipment (e.g., NCSU electron microscope).
“We can come up with 100 million reasons why not to do a tech transfer deal; we’re really good at that. Why don’t we keep tech transfer simple and move as much stuff out as possible and get some real successes?”

University Communication: Have staff (point of contact) focused on marketing/business development so they can respond to business; have list of clusters/industries (like ICE @ UVA—project based); conduct focus groups (like this one) with industry; tools like REACH NC (increase awareness); have more “push” or proactive communication.

What is your “one great idea” on the best ways the university can help businesses be successful?
Every university should be “best in the world” at something; have relationship with specific department for industry collaboration/research/projects/recruitment; make RTP the caterer for “personalized medicine” and “companion diagnostics;” seek industry partners for gov’t funded research; create program to rotate students through different companies.
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**Top Regional Development Priorities**
Target sectors for development (retention/expansion/recruitment and startup) include advanced textiles, value-added agriculture, aviation/aerospace, biotechnology, building products, defense, distribution & logistics, energy/biofuels/biomass and metalworking. Active initiatives focused on continued development of logistics infrastructure, manufacturing “reshoring,” small business development, health care services & facility expansion, tourism and defense sustainability & growth.

**Top hard skills (degree programs/technical skills) needed from UNC campuses over the next five years**
Business, finance & accounting, business linked to technical degrees (e.g. masters in marine science), global business (linked to Certified Global Business Professional [CGBP] credentials), logistics, engineering, life science (chemistry, biology, clinical research & lab skills), health care.

“*Ability to read a spreadsheet.*”
“*Students have got to have some understanding of what it takes to succeed in global jobs. They need to graduate with a greater capacity to do business internationally.*”

**Top soft skills (global/creative/entrepreneurial) needed from UNC campuses over the next five years**
“*Everyone graduating from the system should learn to…actively listen.*”
Communications, critical thinking, planning, professional work skills, work ethic.

“*Graduates must have ‘social media maturity’ and be able to function in face-to-face work environment*”
“*The one thing this younger generation does not have is persistence. Everyone is going to fail; the question is what you are going to do once that happens.*”
“*This is a ‘now’ generation. Young people need to learn patience.*”

**How the University helps you grow business and/or communicate about business needs and interests**
Serve as a convener/facilitator/partner to listen to the needs of business.
Provide pathways through curriculum to enable students to obtain required professional and industry certifications.

“What about a common service portal that shows where people can go to access business services?”
Internship opportunities to build real world skills
Create more awareness of university assets, both capital equipment and people. Make these assets available to accelerate business’ R&D and growth.

“*Community engagement: service must become a priority for the campuses*”
“*Greater application of existing entrepreneurial resources*”

**What is your “one great idea” on the best ways the university can help businesses be successful?**
Form high-performance, multidisciplinary SWAT teams to address business and technology commercialization issues. A la carte courses: offer the best classes in the system regardless of which campus hosts them and regardless of where the student is enrolled.

“*Universities need to move at the speed of business; to adapt to change in the ways that businesses must.*”
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**Top Regional Development Priorities**
In the Triad region, key sector priorities include: healthcare occupations and certifications; furnishings; emerging technologies (e.g., nano); entrepreneurship; advanced manufacturing (transforming basic mfg.); and logistics/transportation/distribution.

“The university system should partner with critical industries that regions have identified to make sure that they really tailor what they are teaching.”

**Top hard skills (degree programs/technical skills) needed from UNC campuses over the next five years**
Cross-industry strategic planning; cross industry best practices; integrated knowledge (to deal with regulated industry, supply chain); retail design & innovation; project management; supply chain management; strategic planning; commercialization; business analysis (P&L, risk management, exit strategies, und how business works, ability to speak with CFO); flexible training to extend/refresh technical skills/certifications; improve quality of local university resources through partnering with other universities; skills training for small to midsize companies; “analyzing big data and market data.”

“The schools that can take business information and apply it are the ones that are going to succeed. Research on a university campus can provide a great platform to get students ready for that.”

**Top soft skills (global/creative/entrepreneurial) needed from UNC campuses over the next five years**
“Sales skills, negotiation skills, collaboration skills. Nobody does anything by themselves in our industry. The ability to network within our company with a lot of different individuals across a variety of departments is really critical.” Strategic visioning; global cultural understanding; cross-cultural communication; behavioral science; critical thinking/decision making/problem solving; self-awareness; writing/presentation skills; basic etiquette skills; time management; sales/negotiation; collaboration; expectation of lifelong learning; teach that free enterprise is cornerstone of democracy; address ways to “manage student expectations;” team building; bilingual communication; apply existing processes to nontraditional applications; how to take innovation to daily execution; understand concept of time; managing failure (resilience); ethics; getting work done through others.

“A lot of people graduate with a big ‘time’ problem. You’re on a semester schedule; I’m on a day-to-day, minute-to-minute schedule.”

“You need to learn what to do with failures — yours, mine and others.”

**How the University help you grow business and/or communicate about business needs and interests**
Ask top businesses what they need; determine what “success” means (# degrees? How many graduates are getting jobs?); partner with chambers to get university offerings to business; continuing education (skills and knowledge); commercialization of research (i.e., economic trends); create easy to use entrepreneur program for business; breakdown silos—integrate education; partner with industry to ensure a trained workforce; improve access to research—transfer research into practical applications; offer situation assessment—engage for addressing threats/opportunities; collaboration to resolve issues; more practitioner professors; help students define “success” in a variety of venues that contribute to communities

“Universities look at all the advances in technology and write great papers but you write to yourselves. We need you to be able to apply that knowledge and help us solve real problems.”

“Get faculty out of the campus and into the business setting. They can talk about our business but if they don’t see what it is like first hand, they won’t teach as well.”

**University Communication**: Make business aware of all the university offers; REACH NC is an excellent program—the business community is simply unaware it exists; break down barriers between educators and business community; partner with community liaisons (e.g. chambers) to bridge gaps; personal relationships

“You may think outside people know about what you are doing as universities, but trust me we don’t. You’ve gotta figure out a way to do that.”

**What is your “one great idea” on the best ways the university can help businesses be successful?**
Case studies using “live” business challenges; integrate classroom with partnership with business; mentorships; help with R&D; use business-to-business contacts to commercialize new products-processes; all entities agree on definition of “success” (getting a job)—this will make a huge difference in alignment; have direct relationships with local business leaders (not just “advisory” boards) but case study authors/guest lecturers; create an educational system that provides a multi-layer approach to reinforce fundamental building blocks (K-16); align university offerings to specific jobs; interactive forum for students/professors on knowledge learning transfer—or to assess & reinvent my company/products/people; expand education to involve business community—to create shared collaboration & understanding.