The current policy structure at UNC Asheville appears to have grown over an extended period of time without conscious design. Although serviceable, it could be much improved. In this report we have identified the major issues with the current structure and then have proposed a plan to address those concerns in a systematic way. Once the project is completed and approved we envision a seamless and intuitive system with clearly defined protocols and processes.

A. The Current Situation

We have identified five major issues regarding the current policy scheme at UNC Asheville. These are:

- No definition of what is a “University Policy”
- Lack of a uniform process of adopting and approving new University policies
- No designation of responsibility for ownership, maintenance and review of existing University policies
- No designation of responsibility for ownership and maintenance of the Policy Manual
- No logical structure of the Policy Manual

1. Definition of “University Policy”

There is no definition of what constitutes a University policy as opposed to a departmental policy. We believe that University policies are those that have broad campus wide relevance or that require approval by the chancellor or Board of Trustees. For example, Policy # 28, the “Duty Weapons Policy” narrowly addresses what weapons may be carried by UNC Asheville Police Officers. While this policy is entirely appropriate for inclusion in the SOPs
of the Campus Police, it has no real place in a University policy manual. By contrast, Policy 
# 36, the “Policy on Illegal Drugs,” approved by the Board of Trustees on May 5, 1988, 
applies to the entire campus community and is properly placed within the University policy 
manual.

2. Development and Approval Process

While some departments on campus have a clearly defined protocol for developing policies 
others do not. For example, the Human Resources Department has a well established 
process for (1) formulating a policy (2) review by the University General Counsel, (3) 
opportunity for campus wide review, and (4) approval by the Chancellor and Senior staff, 
and by the Board of Trustees as required. Other departments operate on a more ad hoc 
basis.

Other concerns include the lack of a clearly defined approval process and the question of 
whose approval is needed for certain policies. For example, The Code of The Board of 
Governors of UNC delegates certain policy making authority to the Board of Trustees, most 
notably in the areas of personnel and athletics. While the Trustees may further delegate their 
policy making authority to the Chancellor, we need to obtain clarity on approval authority 
for various University policies.

3. Ownership, Maintenance and Review of Individual Policies

Of the 94 policies in the UNC Asheville Policy Manual, we estimate that only 40% are up to 
date. There needs to be a regular schedule for periodic review of existing policies to ensure 
that they are up to date and accurate. In order for that to occur there must be some 
designation of policy ownership. Currently ownership is clear for some policies but not for 
others. For example, Policy #81, the “Leave Policy” indicates that ownership belongs to 
Human Resources. In contrast, Policy # 32, “Signatures on University Contracts” has no 
designated owner. Therefore there is also no designation of responsibility for periodic 
review of that policy. Additionally, there should be a designated point of contact for 
questions about each policy. Some policies have that contact noted, while most do not.

4. Ownership and Maintenance of the Policy Manual

The Policy Manual itself currently has no locus of ownership. Anyone can upload material 
to the manual. Additionally, several electronic copies of each policy may be located at 
different University websites which leads, inevitably, to inconsistent versions. There needs 
to be one definitive and penultimate web site for the official University Policy manual. Any 
references to a policy should be only by link to the official manual. No revisions should be
permitted except to the official manual. There needs to be a designated “owner” of that manual to ensure compliance.

5. Logical Structure

The current numbering system is completely arbitrary. Each new policy simply gets assigned the next number in sequence with no grouping by topic or functional area. This makes policies hard to find and increases confusion about ownership. (See attached listing of policies)

B. The Plan

Step 1 – Create a Policy Project Working Group

The first step to resolving the problems in our current system is to establish a Policy Project Working Group staffed by the University General Counsel. The Policy Group would include both faculty and staff members to ensure broad views from across the campus. The Policy Group would be charged with developing a “Policy on Policies” for our campus to include, in part, the protocols for developing a new policy, the protocols for reviewing current policies, an overhauling of the current numbering system, and creating a uniform formatting for all policies.

Step 2 – Obtain Approval of the Policy on Policies

It is important that the Policy on Policies have top level support as a University-wide mandate. Therefore approval would come from the Chancellor and Senior Staff and Board of Trustees.

Step 3 – Implementation of the Policy on Policies

Once in place, the Policy on Policies would be followed for all new policies. Additionally, a review schedule for all existing policies will be established along with responsibility and deadlines assigned for that review. Review needs to include updating old policies, assuring that the proper approval authority has been obtained and elimination of policies that are no longer needed or that should not be in the University Policy Manual.

Because of the many complexities of this project, we anticipate a timeframe of at least one year.

Questions and suggestions are welcomed.