January 29, 2008

University Planning Council

Minutes for January 29, 2008

Present: Melissa Acker, Amanda Alvarez, Gwen Ashburn, Elizabeth Bagwell, Lothar Dohse, Archer Gravely, Bill Haggard, Herman Holt, Jim Kuhlman, Bruce Larson, Judi Leffe, Bill Massey, Adrienne Oliver, Dan Pierce, Anne Ponder, Christine Riley, Barbara Svenson, Kathy Whatley, Betsy Wilson, John Wood

Absent: Bill Haas

UPC met in the Whitman Room from 12:15-1:45

1. Dr. Wood distributed a draft definition of diversity for UPC to review:

As a public liberal arts institution, the primary business of the University of North Carolina at Asheville is the cultivation and instruction of diverse knowledge and ideas. This is how we prepare students and ourselves to thrive in a diverse world. Diversity is basic to a free and healthy society. Learning to live fruitfully with human differences is one of the most important responsibilities of a liberally educated person. It is not easy. It takes work and requires the skills of negotiation and compromise and such capacities as empathy, patience, listening, leadership, courage, and conviction. All societies have differences among them. A truly diverse society, however, affirms its differences and resists assimilation and conformity. Thus, diversity is not simply a matter of acknowledging or even appreciating differences at the table, but also changing how business is done at the table. The values and skills of diversity can and should be taught in the classroom, but since we all learn best through repeated daily experience, we must also insure that our community reflects the diversity of the wider community, state, and world, particularly in our case by increasing the presence of underrepresented populations on our campus.

UPC expressed concerns about: (1) whether resisting assimilation and conformity conflicts with community values; (2) what the role of common values should be; and (3) a lack of specificity regarding the kind of diversity we are seeking. Additionally, there were questions about whether this was a “definition” or a “mission” statement. Chancellor Ponder stated that the draft along with UPC’s comments will be passed on to the Diversity Action Council (DAC). The DAC will be asked to frame an external statement that is as aggressive as possible on race and ethnicity, complies with legal parameters, and includes campus-wide consultation. Additionally, the DAC will examine what resources are currently being allocated to diversity issues.

2. UPC discussed a new version of the strategic plan, an implementation plan, and planning benchmarks. The implementation plan identifies a coordinator and benchmarks for each goal. UPC discussion of the benchmarks indicated a need for more student outcomes and fewer input measures.

3. UPC will have a full day strategic planning leadership retreat on February 19. The primary purpose of
the retreat is to understand how we as campus leaders can promote understanding and support of the strategic plan. Chancellor Ponder distributed a strategic plan rollout schedule for 2007-08. She indicated that future all campus meetings will include information on strategic planning and UPC activities. UPC members were asked to begin thinking about how to link UNC Asheville’s plan to UNC Tomorrow (UNC-GA’s strategic plan).