



The University of North Carolina Strategic Plan  
Online Survey and Public Forums  
Executive Summary

The University of North Carolina General Administration  
January 5, 2017

## **Introduction**

The University of North Carolina (UNC) belongs to all citizens and constituencies of our state. Recognizing its obligation to all constituencies to contribute to an improved quality of life – economically and socially – UNC is in the process of developing a strategic plan for guiding decision making in the years ahead.

For any strategic plan to be meaningful and successful, it is essential to understand the perspectives of as many individuals and constituencies as possible. To that end, stakeholders (faculty, staff, students, alumni, and community members) have had two opportunities to provide feedback on the draft definitions, goals, and metrics: 1) an online survey and 2) one of seventeen public forums held at each UNC institution.

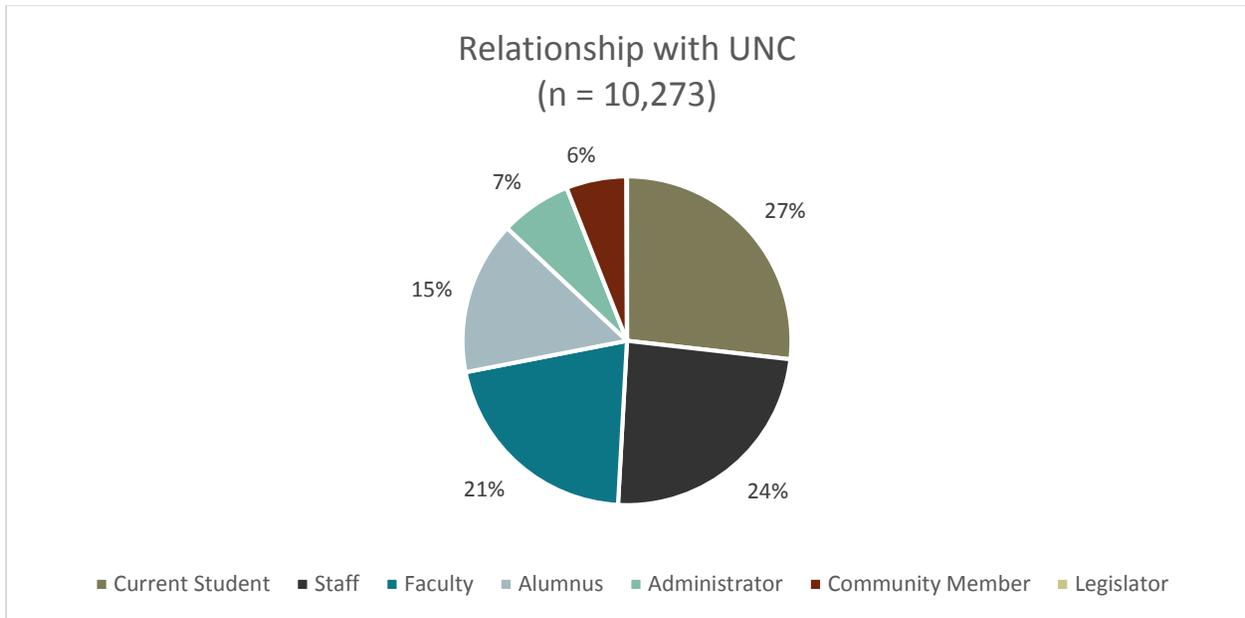
The strategic plan is centered around the following five themes: access; student success; affordability and efficiency; excellent and diverse institutions; and economic impact and community engagement. The feedback below is organized around these guiding themes.

The full results of the [online survey](#) as well as summaries from each of the seventeen [public forums](#) can be found on the UNC Strategic Planning website (<https://www.northcarolina.edu/strategic-planning>).

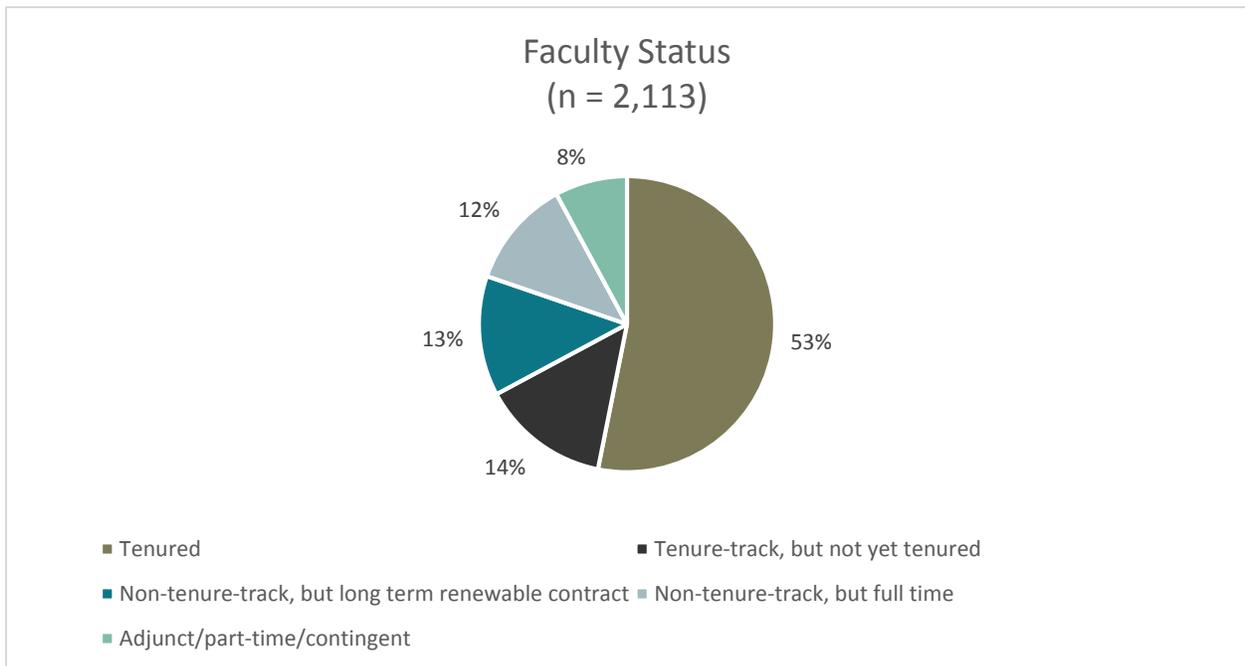
## Summary of Respondents

We received 8,559 responses from September 23 to November 20, 2016. A summary of the respondents is below.

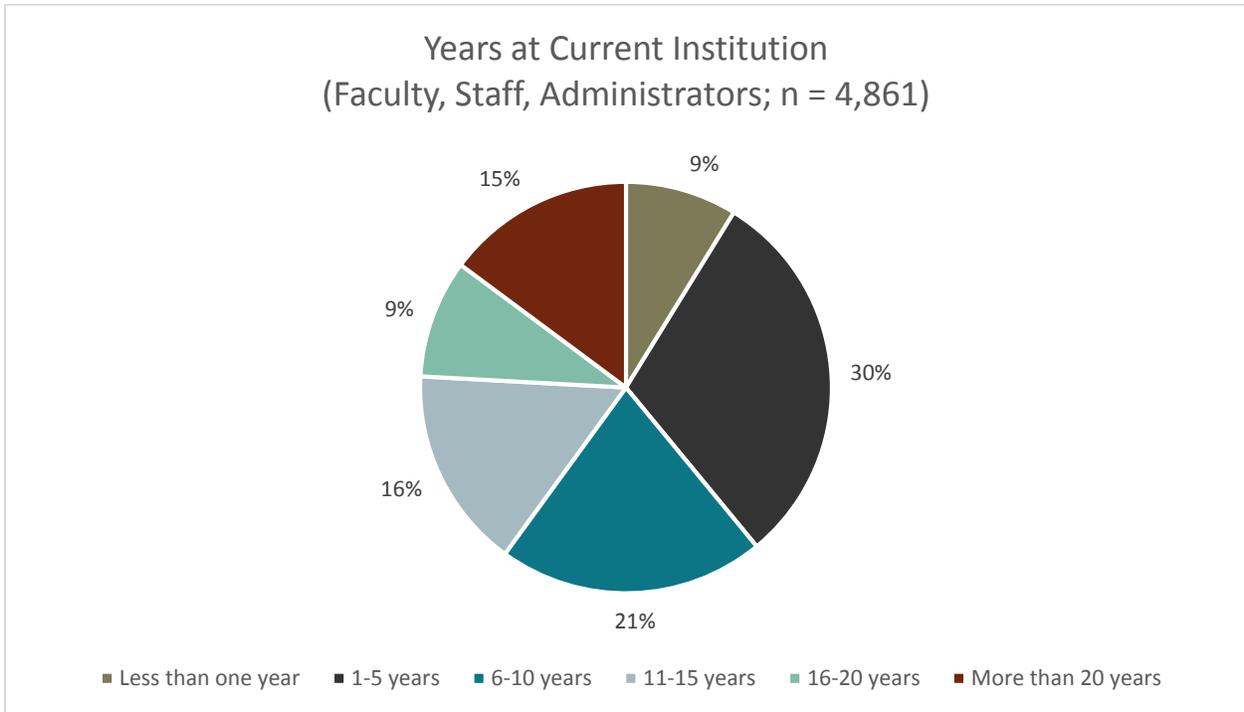
Question: Which one of the following describe(s) your relationship with the University of North Carolina System? Please select all that apply. (Note that the count for responses on this item exceeds the total number of respondents because more than one option could be selected.)



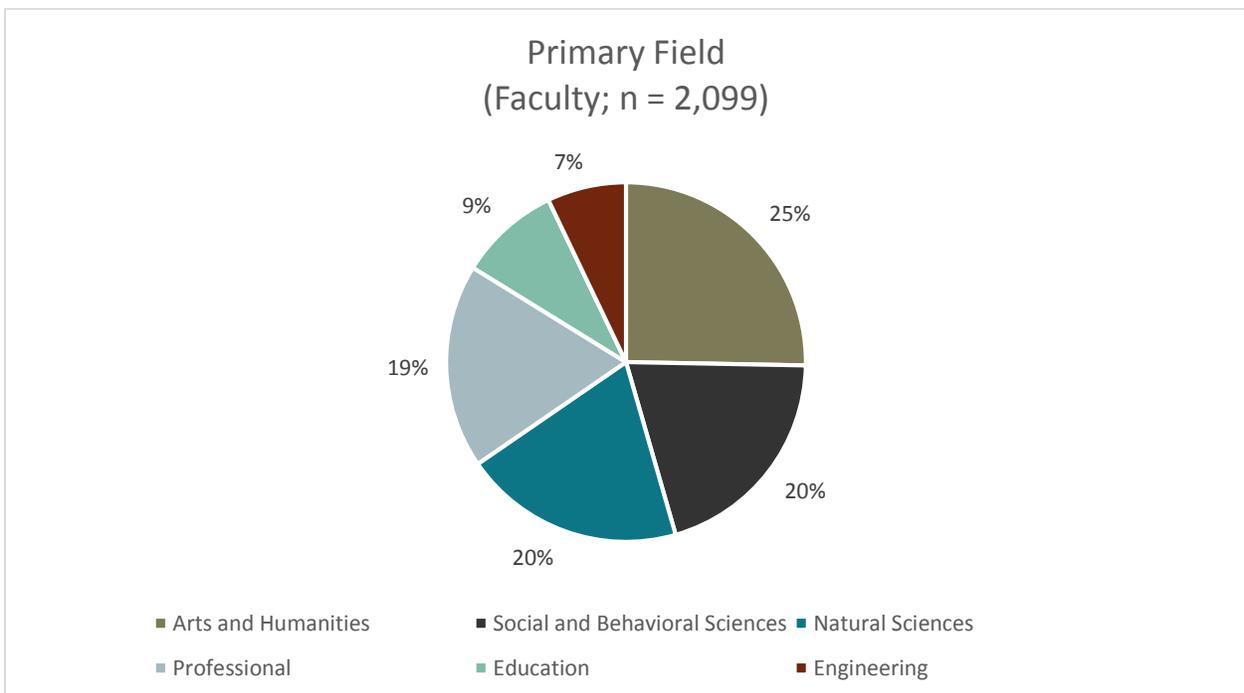
Question: What is your faculty status? (for those who selected faculty)



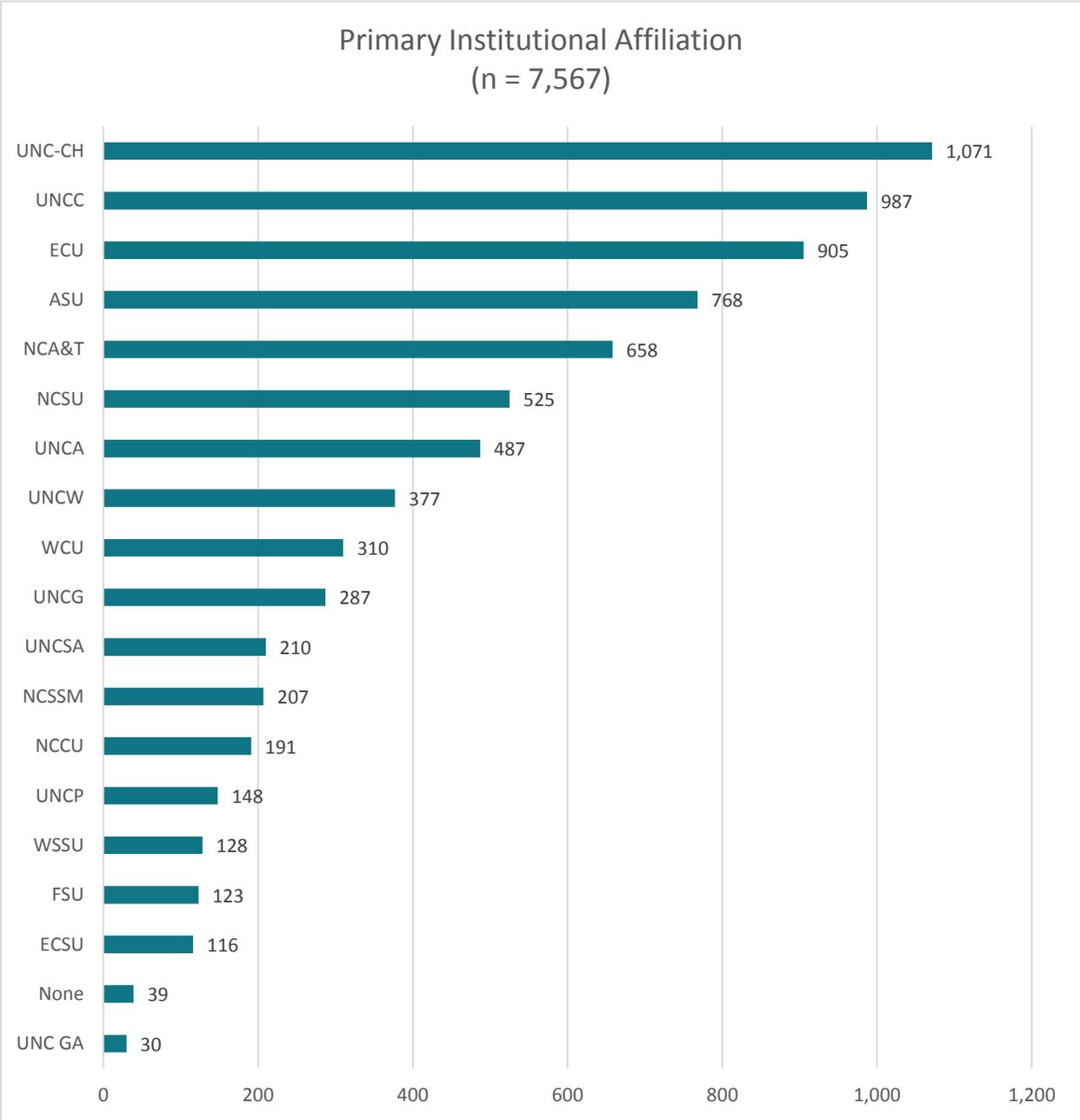
Question: How many years have you been at your current institution? (for those who selected faculty, staff, or administrator)



Question: Which of these groups includes your primary field? (for those who selected faculty)



Question: Which of the following would you consider your primary institutional affiliation?



## Access

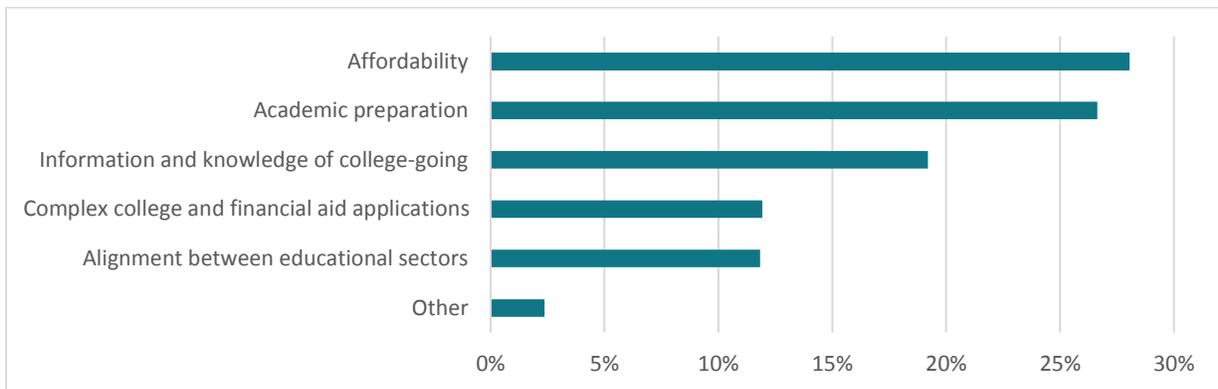
### Survey Feedback Summary

Overall, 96% “agreed” or “somewhat agreed” with the definition.

Summary of the 1,513 comments related to the definition of access:

- Clarify the term “multiple access points”\*\*
- Affordability is related to access\*\*
- There are elements of access not controlled by UNC (K-12/NCCCS preparation)\*\*
- UNC is one option in North Carolina’s higher education landscape\*\*
- Who is included in “underserved”? (e.g., race, income, physical disabilities, etc.)
  - Why include “underserved” when “all North Carolinians” above captures all?
- Tension between serving in-state students and more out-of-state and international students
- The word “prepared”: who determines this and how? Some say omit and others want it kept\*\*
  - Concern over students who are not prepared through no fault of their own

When given the option to identify up to the three most significant issues related to college access, respondents chose the following:



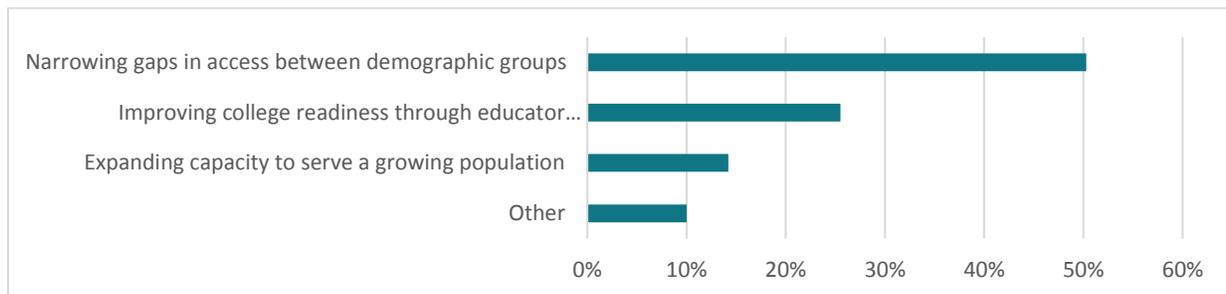
Summary of the 427 comments included in “Other”:

- Funding: State funding, financial aid, grants, and scholarships\*\*
- Student motivation\*\*
- Diversity: access for racial and socioeconomic groups\*\*
- Lack of support and information about college at home/ from families: especially for first-generation and rural students\*\*

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\*\*Denotes feedback that was incorporated into the definition and/or draft goals and metrics as of January 5, 2017.

When asked what the UNC System should focus on if it wishes to improve college access, respondents indicated:



Summary of the 608 comments included in “Other”:

- Funding, cost of attendance (including fees), affordability, financial aid\*\*
- College readiness, adequacy of preparation\*\*
- Online or distance learning\*\*

### Campus Public Forums Feedback Summary

Below is a synthesis of the feedback from the 17 campus public forums related to access:

- Enhance college readiness and improve K-12 students’ preparedness for college-level work by
  - aligning K-12 curricula with college coursework\*\*,
  - increasing the availability of college “experiences” in high school\*\*, and
  - identifying the academic areas in the K-12 system that need improvement\*\*
- Provide better college planning, advising, and counseling services\*\*
- Recognize that increased recruitment of underrepresented students also entails providing a diversity of support needs
- Strengthen the community college to university transfer pipeline\*\*
- Work to produce and retain K-12 teachers through increased pay, training, and professional development\*\*
- Consider how enrollment increases will impact demand for university services and institutional quality
- Waive tuition for children of university employees
- Increase the use of online and distance education programs\*\*
- Access and success cannot be separated\*\*

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## Student Success

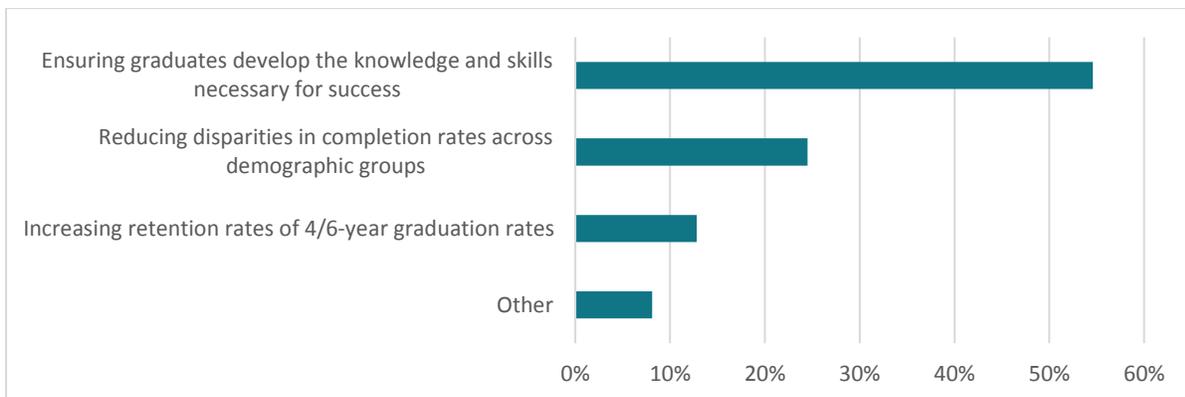
### Survey Feedback Summary

Overall, 95% “agreed” or “somewhat agreed” with the definition.

Summary of the over 1,336 comments related to the definition of student success:

- Timely degree completion is not applicable to many students today
  - Measure student learning\*\*
- Tension between those advocating for more/less alignment with specific job/technical skills
- Concern around the order of the bullets (assumption is that order indicates priority)\*\*
- Add/modify components: cultural competencies, moral/ethical, civic/community, financial literacy, etc.\*\*
- Concerns about measurability and vagueness of many terms in definition\*\*

When given the option to identify up to the three most significant issues related to student success, respondents chose the following:



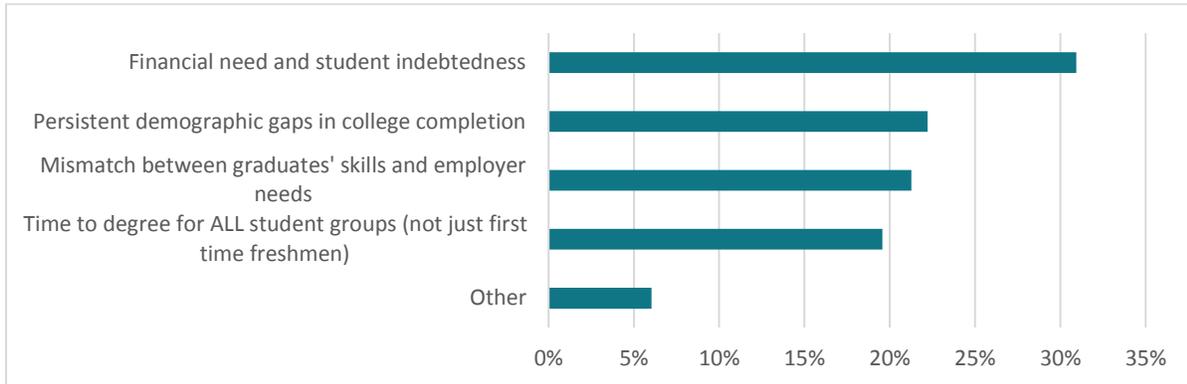
Summary of the 894 comments included in “Other”:

- Inadequate preparation\*\*
- Quality of instruction\*\*
- Grade inflation/ Loss of rigor\*\*
- Resources and supports available to students (advising, etc.)
- Student work ethic, maturity, motivation, and apathy; college “party” atmosphere

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\*\*Denotes feedback that was incorporated into the definition and/or draft goals and metrics as of January 5, 2017.

When asked what the UNC System should focus on if it wishes to improve student success, respondents indicated:



Summary of the 442 comments included in “Other”:

- Financial aid, cost of attendance\*\*
- Preparation for college\*\*
- Tension between maintain or increasing rigor/ raising admission standards and limiting the access for those who could benefit from a University education\*\*

### Campus Public Forums Feedback Summary

Below is a synthesis of the feedback from the 17 campus public forums related to student success:

- Avoid defining and measuring student success too narrowly. Traditional metrics of degree completion do not fully account for limitations of nontraditional learners or for differences in demographic characteristics. Further, competency, not just degree completion, should be measured; holistic approaches should be pursued instead of relying solely on standardized test scores\*\*
- Improve coordination and communication between universities, the community college system, and the K-12 public school system\*\*
- Emphasize critical thinking, problem solving, and communication skills\*\*
- Require more high-impact experiential learning that leads to intellectual growth and work to make these experiences more affordable and available, especially to low-income students\*\*
- Provide better and more sustained advising, mentoring, and tutoring
- Reconfigure and improve the first-year experience to set students up on the path to success
- Raise faculty pay and lower faculty-to-student ratios
- Increase engagement and recruitment of international students and provide more global context in curricula
- Focus more on student mental health issues and on student wellbeing in general
- Promote and cultivate student entrepreneurialism
- Prepare students to be work-force ready by improving “soft” skills\*\*

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## Affordability and Efficiency

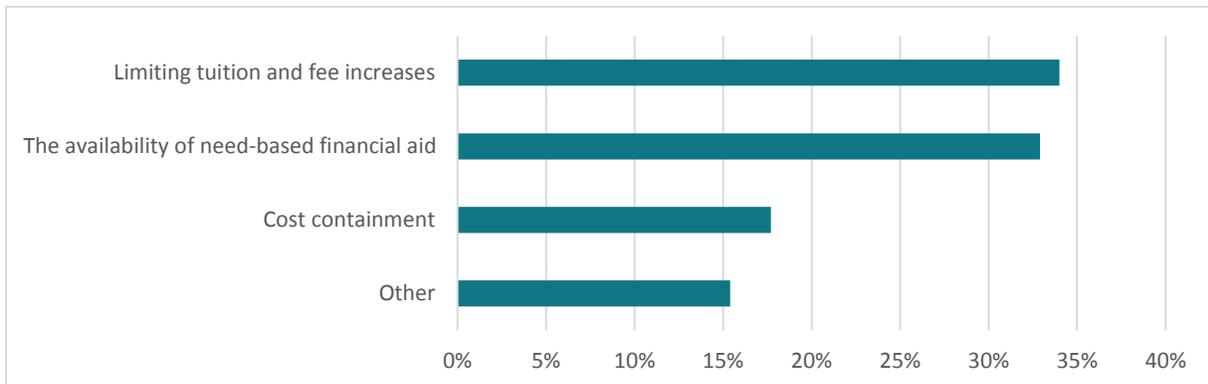
### Survey Feedback Summary

Overall, 87% “agreed” or “somewhat agreed” with the definition.

Summary of the 1,341 comments related to the definition of affordability and efficiency:

- Comments about the Constitutional phrases “free of expense” and “as far as practicable”
  - Some agree and some disagree
- General Assembly (through state funding) has not maintained a commitment to higher education
  - Should actually carry out the Constitutional mandate\*\*
- Tension in respondents questioning the value of something offered for “free”
  - Students should have some investment/ skin in the game or it should be free
- Access to financial aid, grants, scholarships, etc.\*\*

When given the option to identify up to the three most significant issues related to affordability and efficiency, respondents chose the following:



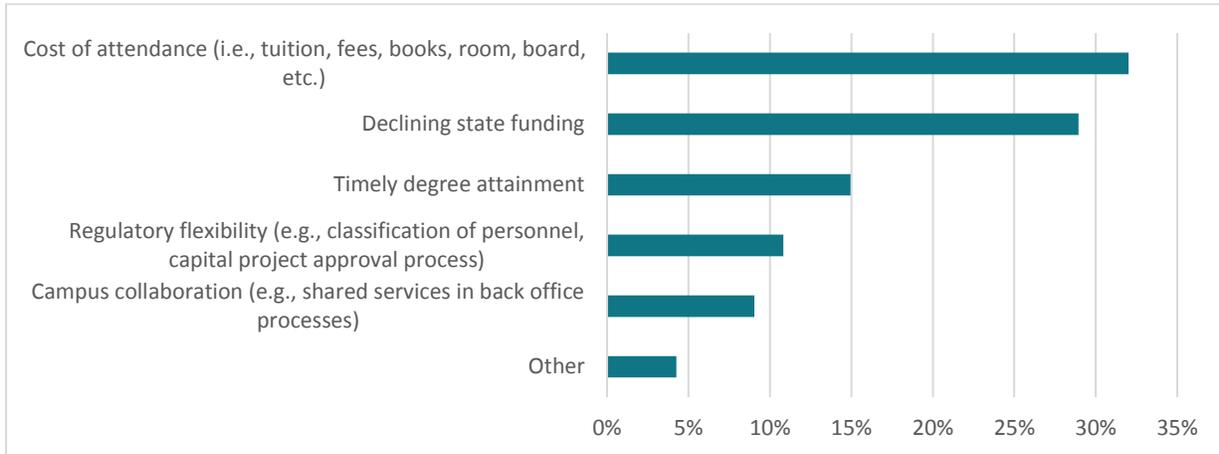
Summary of the 665 comments included in “Other”:

- Loss of state and federal funding
- Administrative bloat; salaries for administrators too high
- Insufficient financial aid
- Regulatory compliance costs\*\*

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When asked what the UNC System should focus on if it wishes to improve affordability and efficiency, respondents indicated:



Summary of the 865 comments included in “Other”:

- Increase state funding; reverse or reduce cuts and avoid future cuts
- Administrative salaries and number of them
- Increase grant or scholarship aid

### Campus Public Forums Feedback Summary

Below is a synthesis of the feedback from the 17 campus public forums related to affordability and efficiency:

- Increase state appropriations to keep tuition low while maintaining quality
- Centralize some functions and operations at the system level and make use of collaborative technologies\*\*
- Grant campuses and chancellors more autonomy to determine the most efficient use of their resources\*\*
- Reduce regulatory and compliance burdens, duplicative reporting, and redundancies\*\*
- Provide more scholarships to students, especially to those students who fall just above financial aid thresholds
- Build stronger relationships with local businesses and corporations and explore creative funding sources and alternative models to complement state funding
- Lower fees and reduce the number of annual fee increases
- Increase the availability and reduce the cost of online learning programs\*\*
- Tie tuition to family income or ability to pay\*\*
- Educate parents and students about college costs and financial aid options\*\*
- Ensure increased efficiency does not mean faculty and staff work more for less rewards

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## Economic Impact and Community Engagement

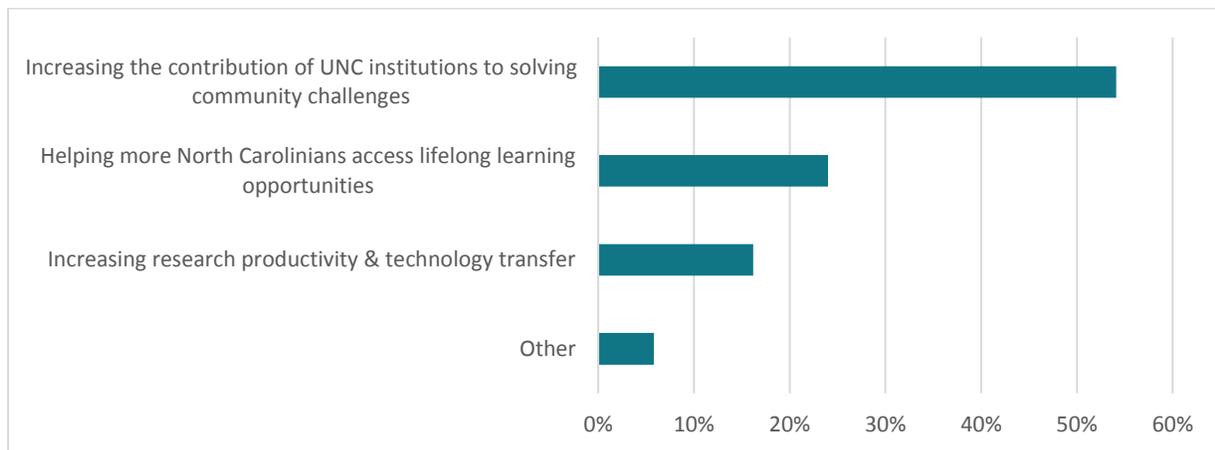
### Survey Feedback Summary

Overall, 96% “agreed” or “somewhat agreed” with the definition.

Summary of the 782 comments related to the definition of economic impact and community engagement:

- Tension between the University’s role being primarily vocational versus emphasizing generally applicable skills and lifelong learning\*\*
- Wariness around who defines “state’s long-term needs”
- Tension between a more community/local focus and a global focus\*\*
- Should include noneconomic factors (e.g., arts, personal fulfillment, community engagement, etc.)\*\*
- Tension between retaining graduates in-state and equipping them for success regardless of their destination

When given the option to identify up to the three most significant issues related to economic impact and community engagement, respondents chose the following:



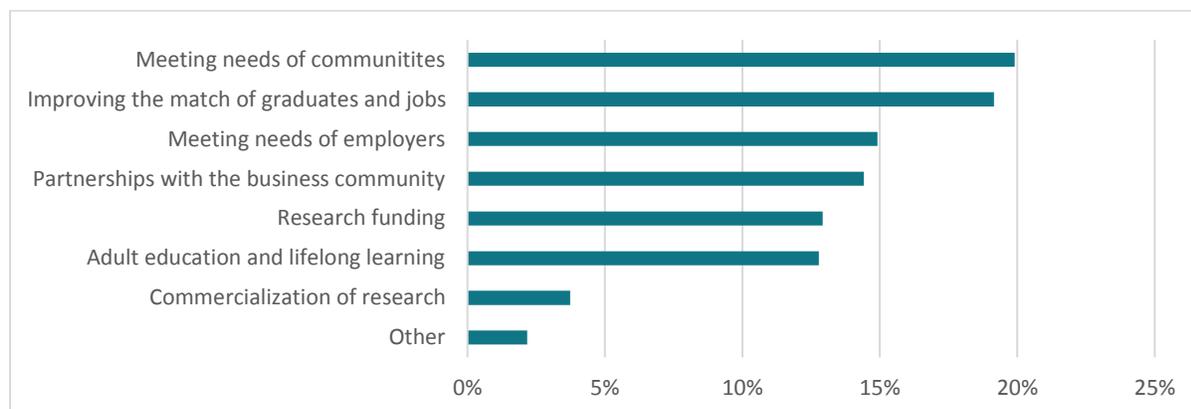
Summary of the 782 comments included in “Other”:

- Partnerships to support local economic development (perhaps with nonprofits)\*\*
- Critical thinking/broadly applicable skills\*\*
- Preparing productive citizens\*\*

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When asked what the UNC System should focus on if it wishes to improve economic impact and community engagement, respondents indicated:



Summary of the over 323 comments included in “Other”:

- Matching student preparation with high-employability skills
- Foster lifelong learning\*\*
- Partnerships/community engagement\*\*

### Campus Public Forums Feedback Summary

Below is a synthesis of the feedback from the 17 campus public forums related to economic impact and community engagement:

- Recognize the importance that the arts and humanities, and not just science, technology, engineering and math, also have on economic impact; Expand STEM to STEAM when devising metrics for economic impact\*\*
- Invest more in research infrastructure; Increase support for research that does not have immediate commercial potential and account for this research in proposed metrics\*\*
- Increase the retention of graduates in North Carolina and local communities. Provide incentives for graduates to remain in the state
- Ensure metrics are not overly narrow and account for long-term impacts
- Support K-12 teacher preparation through increased recruitment to university programs, increased teacher pay, and revival of the Teaching Fellows program\*\*
- Develop more reciprocal partnerships with business, industry, and communities\*\*
- Promote and reward more faculty and student community outreach, engagement, and service\*\*
- Provide better outreach and transparency to taxpayers on the community and economic benefits of the university system\*\*
- Include sustainability efforts when considering economic impact

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## Excellent and Diverse Institutions

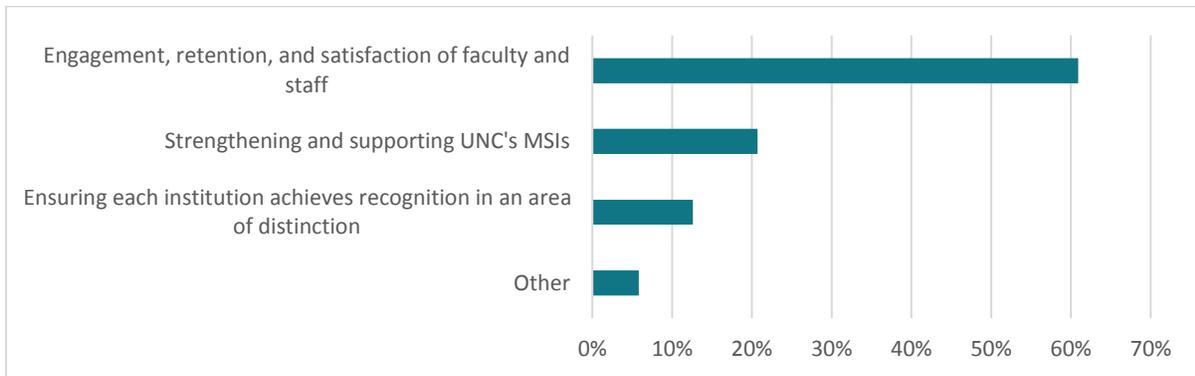
### Survey Feedback Summary

Overall, 91% “agreed” or “somewhat agreed” with the definition.

Summary of the 1,040 comments related to the definition of excellent and diverse institutions:

- Definition does not mention “diverse” or “diversity”\*\*
- Definition is too abstract
- Should acknowledge changing state and student demographics\*\*

When given the option to identify up to the three most significant issues related to excellent and diverse institutions, respondents chose the following:



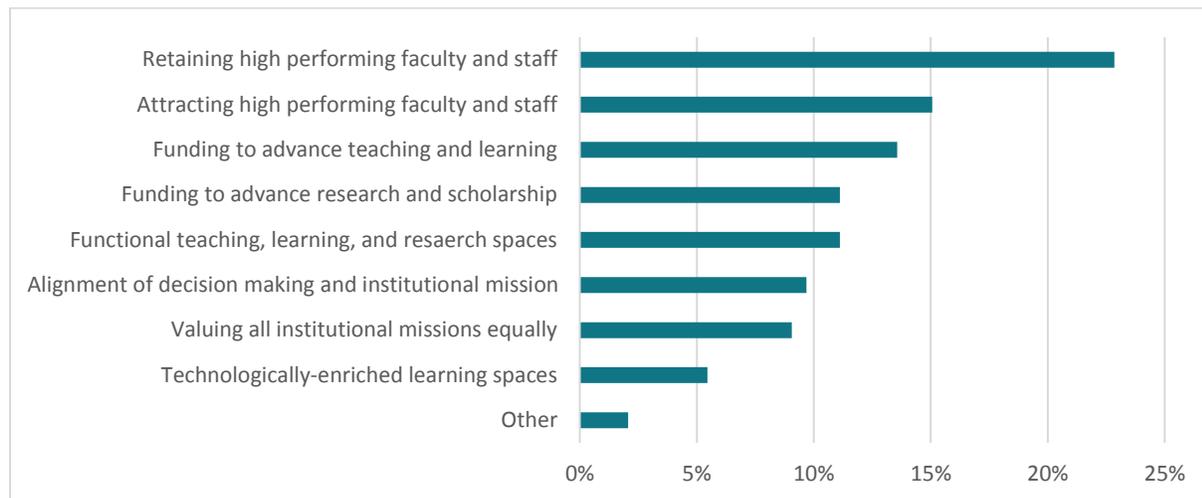
Summary of the 305 comments included in “Other”:

- Different strategies are appropriate for different institutions\*\*
- Promoting diversity among student, faculty, and staff, and ideas/viewpoints\*\*
- Attracting and retaining diverse faculty and staff\*\*
- Campus climate (welcoming to diverse populations)

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When asked what the UNC System should focus on if it wishes to improve excellent and diverse institutions, respondents indicated:



Summary of the 290 comments included in “Other”:

- Faculty/staff/student recruitment and retention\*\*
- Support for MSIs and their infrastructure\*\*

### Campus Public Forums Feedback Summary

Below is a synthesis of the feedback from the 17 campus public forums related to excellent and diverse institutions:

- Define diversity broadly to include ethnic backgrounds, points of view, academic and learning differences, etc.; Recruit diverse students, faculty, staff, and boards of trustees\*\*
- Support campus programs that increase understanding of diversity and differences in culture
- Create positive campus environments and cultures for all students
- Collect better data on campus climate
- Allow institutions to measure this goal individually and against their own missions and goals as excellence will look differently across different institutions\*\*
- Ensure resources are distributed equally across the system, especially to the system’s MSIs
- Increase faculty and staff retention and recruitment through increased pay, benefits, and professional development and training\*\*
- Provide better faculty and staff engagement\*\*
- Promote more collaboration, cooperation, and communication between institutions

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