Welcome and Introductions

I’m delighted to welcome you to North Carolina Central University, where our highest priority is to create and sustain a culture of student success.

It’s a culture characterized by higher levels of learning, retention and graduation.

I would like to begin by asking each of our guests, the new members of the Board of Governors, and then my colleagues, to introduce themselves.

NCCU Strategic Directions

My colleagues and I thought carefully about how to make the best use of your time at North Carolina Central University and what we might share with you to enable you to discharge your responsibilities to the university system and its 17 constituent institutions.

We concluded we need to convey to you:

What we do really well;

The key challenges that we face;

Our strategic directions; and

What we need from the Board of Governors to achieve the university’s mission.

[PAUSE]

First, here’s what we do really well.

1. We help students succeed at beating the odds in college and in life.

   North Carolina Central University has been cited in two national reviews that found

   only a handful of colleges or universities that graduate in the numbers that we do low-wealth students whose academic profile reflects under-preparedness in one or more areas.
One was by the Southern Regional Education Board and, just released, Bill and Melinda Gateses’ Beating the Odds report.

2. **We do a good job integrating learning, public service and leadership development.**

   Our graduates personify the institution’s motto of Truth and Service.

   Many of you know or have heard of Julius L. Chambers, Dan Blue, Dudley Flood, Ambassador Mattie Sharpless, Eva Clayton and Jeanne Lucas, just to name a few.

3. **NCCU was one of the first in the UNC System to require 120 hours of service for graduation.**

   Last week, *Washington Monthly* ranked NCCU in the top 40 of more than 600 master’s-level universities in the country,

   for contributions to the public good.

4. **We do an excellent job in science research related to health disparities.**

   We have two nationally recognized biotechnology institutes,

   the Biomanufacturing Research Institute and Technology Enterprise or BRITE and the

   Julius L. Chambers Biomedical Biotechnology Research Institute or BBRI.

   Combined with our colleges of science and technology and behavioral and social sciences,

   last year, we garnered more than $25 million in sponsored research dollars.

   That includes our $7 million share of a National Cancer Institute grant in collaboration with the UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center.

5. **We’re good at producing law graduates who serve throughout the Southeast as lawyers and judges.**

   An estimated 75 percent of all black judges in North Carolina are NCCU Law graduates.

   Just last week, the NCCU School of Law placed fourth in the nation in clinical opportunities for students
in the latest rankings compiled by National Jurist’s *preLaw* magazine.

6. **We graduate students through our biotechnology program who are prepared for the work world, on day one, post graduation.**

   Since its inception, 60 percent of the bachelor’s-level graduates from our BRITE program have gained employment

   and the remaining 40 percent entered graduate school.

7. **No list of what we do well would be complete without mention of our nationally renowned jazz program under the leadership of Dr. Ira Wiggins.**

   We have none other than Branford Marsalis as an artist-in-residence!

   This is not to say that these are the only things we do well.

   They’re simply my top seven.

   [PAUSE]

   I’d like to turn now to our key challenges.

   1. **Infrastructure…infrastructure…infrastructure.**

   We have technology infrastructure issues ranging from the supply of electricity to campus buildings

   to the provision of wireless capability across the entire campus.

   Then, there are physical plant issues such as handicapped accessibility and deferred maintenance.

   Although we’ve made strides in improving the quality of student housing, this continues to be a grave concern.

   For example, Baynes Hall, a 380-bed residence hall, is at risk for closure in 2012 without the installation of a sprinkler system at a cost $2.6 million.

   But to bring that 1966 building up to contemporary living standards would require upwards of $10 million.

   If we’re forced to close this building, it negates the gains we made with the construction of Chidley North.
2. **We must review, realign and expand our programs and services at a time of scarce resources and do it in a timely manner.**

   I’ve adopted the term the New Normal to describe this operational reality…

3. **We must change the culture and academic profile of the institution in a climate of budget cuts and intense competition for students.**

   During the past decade, the focus within the UNC system was on access.

   But now we’ve shifted to a greater emphasis on success:

   An 80 percent first to second year retention rate

   and 53 percent six-year graduation rate.

   It’s been difficult for traditional constituencies to embrace that shift, but that’s the only way we can become more competitive and responsive.

   I am convinced that equity and excellence are core principles of our democracy and that both are achievable.

   You don’t have to sacrifice one for the other.

4. **A critical and defining challenge is the lack of facilities needed to enhance the quality of student life**

   — like a state-of-the-art student union, and a health and wellness center.

   These are not nice-to-have but need-to-have if we’re to remain competitive, particularly with the online universities.

   The real-life college experience is the edge that we provide and they don’t.

   That’s why you’re beginning to see physical campuses take shape among some online providers.

5. **Our campus is landlocked.**

   But not only that, when you take the tour later today, you’ll realize that we find ourselves in a deteriorating neighborhood.

   Our master plan called for the acquisition of 136 properties, and we’ve made only a few of those purchases.
We need to acquire many more to accommodate our growth and address the aesthetic and security concerns in the neighborhood.

The estimated cost is in excess of $13 million.

(The students must cross highway #55 to get to Burger King.)

[PAUSE]

What are NCCU’s strategic directions?

1. Increase retention and graduation.

2. Improve the quality of student life.

3. Resolve the university infrastructure challenges — in technology, the physical plant, and in administrative and fiscal processes.

   For example, we need to move the physical plant operations unit away from the center of campus.

   We need to bring campus facilities to the standard of other UNC campuses.

   Again, this is essential if we are to be competitive and reach our retention and graduation goals.

4. Grow qualitatively and strategically.

   We’re seeking to enroll better-prepared students.

   We’re actively recruiting community college transfer students,

   graduate students,

   And online students.

   We’ve made a choice to grow qualitatively…

5. Expand graduate education and sponsored research.

   Of the $25 million in sponsored research we received last year, a percentage can be directed so as to reduce our dependency on the state.

   Next week, a team of NCCU faculty will meet with the Graduate Council at GA and in October,
we will ask the Board of Governors to approve our Ph.D. in integrated biosciences.

We feel confident about this proposal because all 32 faculty who will be engaged in the program have earned terminal degrees, most from top-tier universities.

And we have acquired nearly 150,000 square feet of state-of-the-art science space beginning with the opening of the BBRI in 1999.

[PAUSE]

What do we need from you?

1. The recognition that a one-size-fits-all approach related to tuition, facilities, program development and approval, simply doesn’t work.

   While the campuses are similar, they’re also markedly different.

   For example, declaring a moratorium on new graduate programs would negatively impact NCCU and go virtually unnoticed at a research-intensive institution.

   There are research dollars only available to Ph.D. programs.

   Without a Ph.D. program, NCCU is locked out of that competition.

   When I first came on board, I asked that a number of NCCU Ph.D. proposals be pulled back from review at GA.

   They weren’t ready.

   But our Ph.D. in integrated biosciences is on track and on target.

   It’s consistent with the UNC Tomorrow initiative, our mission and the needs of Research Triangle employers.

2. A willingness to embrace public-private partnerships as a means of addressing facility and property acquisition needs.

3. And please, do not consider eliminating program duplication where there is no duplication of access.

[PAUSE]
Let me close my overview with a graphic depiction of the North Carolina Central University of the future

From the perspective of strategic academic programs.

**PowerPoint**

**Slide One – LIBERAL ARTS**

It all began with the liberal arts, and the liberal arts continue to be at the core of this university’s offerings.

**Slide Two – NURSING**

This semester we opened a new state of the art facility for the nursing program.

It’s amazing!

It has a simulated hospital floor with simulated patients.

These computerized mannequins look so real, people have been caught talking to them, and expecting a response!

We also welcomed our new chair of nursing, Dr. Betty Dennis, who will shepherd the growth of the program to meet the needs of the state for highly qualified nurses.

**Slide Three – BIOSCIENCES**

At the June meeting of the Board of Governors, the request to plan NCCU’s Ph.D. in integrated biosciences was approved.

**Slide Four – LAW**

The NCCU School of Law is one of America’s most significant success stories in higher education.

It is excellent, diverse, competitive, responsive and relevant.

**Slide Five – BUSINESS**

We expect great things from our new dean, D. Keith Pigues, former senior vice president and chief marketing officer for PlyGem Industries.
Slide Six – EDUCATION

The Teacher of the Year for Durham was an NCCU graduate.

More than one-quarter, 15 of the 55 principals in Durham Public Schools, earned a degree at our School of Education.

[PAUSE] – End of Slide Show – Resume Speech

In closing, I am an optimist given all that I have witnessed in my 43 year-career in higher education, including in these last four years.

With budget cuts at all levels, I remain optimistic because of the relevance of the mission, the track record of success, the commitment of my colleagues at GA and on this campus and because of the men and women like you who serve on the Board of Governors.

I have faith that the citizens of North Carolina recognize the inextricable links between higher education, quality of life and economic vitality.

I look forward to working with you to strengthen opportunity in this state.

[PAUSE]

Here to tell you about the profile of our students and what we need to do to serve them more effectively,

are members of the leadership team, faculty and student body of North Carolina Central University.

Kevin?