

**The Educational Benefits of Diversity and Inclusion
for
Undergraduate Students at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill**

Report Submitted

to

Chancellor Carol L. Folt

by

Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost James W. Dean, Jr.

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Carolina's Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion

The University of North Carolina is committed to creating and sustaining a diverse and inclusive community of students, faculty, and staff. This commitment derives from our experience that our differences strengthen our educational programs, enhance the development of our students, and enable us to achieve our mission as a public university—one that strives for excellence in teaching, learning, creating, and discovering, and in serving all the people of North Carolina.

Diversity, Inclusion, and Excellence as Pillars of Our Mission

In the words of our current mission statement, adopted by the Board of Trustees and approved by the Board of Governors in 2009, UNC-Chapel Hill “embrace[s] an unwavering commitment to excellence as one of the world’s great research universities.” As “the nation’s first public university,” we exist to “teach a diverse community of undergraduate, graduate, and professional students to become the next generation of leaders,” even as we “invest knowledge and resources to enhance access to learning and to foster the success and prosperity of each rising generation.” We commit to these educational objectives in order “to enhance the quality of life for all people” in our state.

Inscribed within this mission is the conviction and proved experience that diversity, excellence, and service to the people of North Carolina are integrally and inextricably connected. The University puts into practice what a significant and growing body of educational and organizational research has established: that diversity enhances learning, fosters discovery, and strengthens service, especially in a community in which all individuals are valued for the unique combination of attributes that make them who they are. Of course, learning, discovery, and service require other resources, including intellect, integrity, and a capacity for hard work, especially if they are to be conducted at the highest possible level. But none would flourish without diversity and inclusion and the benefits that the two, taken together, provide.

This understanding—that diversity, inclusion, and excellence are mutually reinforcing pillars of our mission to achieve academic excellence and to prepare graduates to succeed and lead—has been embraced by our faculty for decades. As early as 1998, in its *Statement on Principles of Service, Diversity and Freedom of Inquiry*, the Faculty Council made explicit the connections among the three, affirming that the University had an obligation to “create and sustain an environment of educational excellence,” “promote intellectual growth through intense and rigorous educational dialogue,” and “foster mutually beneficial interactions among students, faculty, staff, and administrators who possess diverse backgrounds and wide varieties of perspectives and life experiences.” These connections were further explored and defined in the 2003 and 2011 academic plans, the former stating explicitly that “Diversity is critical to the University’s effectiveness in fully preparing students for the world,” and the latter affirming “how much Carolina’s learning environment is enhanced by students, faculty, and staff from multiple backgrounds and ethnicities interacting together.” These themes were in turn echoed by Faculty Council in its November 2016 resolution, *On Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion*, which reinforced that “student body diversity is a vital and necessary component of academic excellence,” and which enumerated several specific educational benefits conferred by such diversity. The 2016 resolution also noted the critical role that inclusion plays in securing the educational benefits of diversity, since “students from all backgrounds

[need] to feel welcome, supported, and prepared for academic success” if they are to thrive academically and personally and contribute to the education of their classmates.

We hope this document will contribute substantially to this lived experience and ongoing conversation about diversity and inclusion on our campus, and to our continued development as a public university whose high calling is to strive for excellence in teaching, learning, creating, and discovering, and in serving all the people of our state.

It is worth noting that our understanding of these issues has changed and deepened over time. Although the University enrolled its first student in 1795, it was another full century until we enrolled our first female student, and another thirty years until we enrolled our first American Indian student, and another twenty until we enrolled our first black student. The student body at the University has changed dramatically since then—partly because our state and nation have changed, but also because those who came before us on this campus came to realize that the differences we had resisted were in fact crucial to the excellence we sought. Without their vision and wisdom, and without their sacrifice, the contribution we now strive to make would not have been possible.

Our Broad Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion

The University seeks, welcomes, and benefits from diversity in all its forms. No list can fully express the rich variety of backgrounds, experiences, identities, and perspectives that comprise our community, much less our state, nation, and world. We may focus on certain elements of diversity for good reasons, including current conditions or a sense of where our state and world are heading. This focus often leads us to describe diversity in terms of background, belief, and experience; socioeconomic status; race and ethnicity; veteran or military status; physical ability; sexual orientation; or sex, gender, gender identity, or gender expression. But we recognize that human experience and identity cannot be fully captured in any of these ways, and we respect and welcome other differences that likewise strengthen our academic programs and campus by enhancing our individual and collective learning experiences.

We also seek, welcome, and benefit from diversity in all its combinations. Rather than think of people categorically, we recognize that no person is one-dimensional and no two people the same in every respect, even if they identify with one another along a particular dimension. Although the University is often required to report categorically about elements of diversity in our student body and faculty, and although such reporting can offer important perspectives about our campus, we owe all members of our community the opportunity to be recognized as the capable and complex individuals they are, rather than reduced to a single identity or interest.

If this respect for difference, and for difference within difference, is a crucial component of inclusion, then inclusion itself is crucial to our ability to extend the educational benefits of difference to every member of our community. When people feel welcome to bring their unique combinations of experiences and backgrounds into their interactions with their students, classmates, and professors, then discussions become richer, discoveries go deeper, and perspectives grow broader. This is the educational experience we strive to create, and it depends on both diversity and inclusion.

Our Commitment in Action

This commitment to diversity and inclusion—driven by our conviction that the two are integral to one another and to the excellence we seek as an institution—has most recently manifested itself in our recommendation regarding the new University Office of Diversity and Inclusion. This office will be charged to build understanding across differences, promote the free exchange of disparate ideas, and create conditions to ensure that the educational and social benefits of diversity are equitably realized. This office will also address the issues of our contemporary society and strive to position all students, faculty, and staff to reach their greatest potential. We believe that this vision is consistent with the University's experience and understanding of diversity and inclusion, and we are excited about the difference this office will make, over time, in the education of our faculty, staff, and students, and by extension in the life of our state.

But this is just one recent manifestation of the University's commitment to realize and secure the educational benefits of diversity and inclusion. This commitment has long been borne out in many other ways: in our work to attract and enroll outstanding students from widely diverse backgrounds, including, but not limited to, those from low-income households and those whose races and ethnicities are underrepresented on our campus; in our efforts, both in and out of the classroom, to foster debate, discussion, collaboration, and other engagement across differences; and finally, in our efforts to encourage success for students of all backgrounds, so that they will leave our campus prepared for the intellectual, civic, and personal challenges and opportunities they will face, and ready to make important contributions in every walk of life, both across North Carolina and beyond.

These actions belong to no one division, school, department, or individual. Rather, they depend on the involvement of our community as a whole. All of us are responsible for attracting, challenging, and supporting great students who will contribute to the education and experience of everyone on our campus; and for engaging in earnest and respectful debate and discussion; and for drawing on the strengths and differences of our classmates and colleagues as we develop new and creative solutions to the problems we face as a state and as a society. In these ways, our institutional commitment to diversity and inclusion reinforces our commitment to excellence and propels us forward in all that we do.

Such sustained action to secure the benefits of diversity and inclusion has long been recognized as crucial to our success as a public research university. In 2011, our academic plan, recognizing that a “community that welcomes difference as a vital ingredient of creative change will thrive in manifold ways,” reiterated the call to action. The November 2016 Faculty Council resolution – the result of the Diversity Syllabus, a series of purposeful conversations at monthly Council meetings held over a period of two years – called on the University to continue “creating and sustaining a diverse and inclusive environment” and urged ongoing action to prepare “a diverse group of students to work together to meet the broad range of complex challenges facing North Carolina, the Nation, and the world.” More recently, Chancellor Carol L. Folt, speaking at the University's March 2017 Diversity in STEM Conference, called on our community to continue to act to foster diversity and inclusion, reminding her audience that “it increases our educational impact to have a room full of people with different ideas” who “come from different backgrounds” and “walked a different path into that very moment of debate and learning.”

The need for sustained and purposeful action to foster diversity and inclusion, and to secure their benefits for our community and especially our students, cannot now be overstated. We live in a time of extraordinary challenge and promise. All around us—across our campus, state, country, and world—are causes and controversies, opportunities and obstacles, and potential and predicaments that require creative thinking, different perspectives, and rigorous and respectful debate. Diversity and inclusion not only enable these practices; they help them lead to innovative answers and shared understanding.

The need for understanding, too, cannot be overstated. The last several years have revealed fundamental challenges in our civic life, in the form of real and urgent concerns about issues involving race, religion, identity, culture, and intellectual diversity. Events and circumstances arising across the country, including some in Chapel Hill, have sparked important discussions about discrimination, bias, and equity. On our own campus, students, faculty, and staff have expressed frustration with the prejudice they have experienced or witnessed on campus and across our state and nation. In the face of these controversies, which are both urgent and painful to many in our community, our success as an institution will depend on our ongoing actions to foster diversity and inclusion and secure their full benefits.

The Benefits of Diversity and Inclusion

The University's commitment to diversity and inclusion reflects our lived and learned experience that they yield lasting and transformational educational benefits—an understanding informed not only by a substantial and growing body of literature but also by feedback from our own students and faculty. These benefits are interrelated; each reinforces the others. Together, they strengthen the educational experience we provide to our students, and they enable our excellence in teaching, learning, creating, and discovering, and in serving all the people of North Carolina.

The 1998 and 2016 statements by Faculty Council, and the 2003 and 2011 academic plans, outlined several specific benefits deriving from diversity and inclusion. The following description is consistent with these statements, elaborating on some of the benefits as a means of providing a clear basis for action and assessment in the future. Just as this description builds upon the previous work of our colleagues, we expect future colleagues to build upon our own work, since our understanding of these benefits is dynamic and developing over time.

Promoting the robust exchange of ideas. Living and learning within an environment of diverse classmates, faculty, and staff encourage the vibrant exchange of ideas, perspectives, and visions, especially when all feel included and encouraged to share their points of view. Students, faculty, and staff need practice in articulating their perspectives to others, just as they need practice in hearing the perspectives of others. This practice of exchanging and engaging with ideas, including those we do not necessarily share, is essential to higher learning in general. It is also particularly important for the nation's first public university, for whom *lux* and *libertas*—light and liberty—are founding principles.

Broadening and refining understanding. In similar ways, discussion and dialogue with classmates, professors, and colleagues of different beliefs, backgrounds, preferences, cultures, races, ethnicities, and the like—differences of every kind—inform, modify, and expand our own understandings, opinions, and visions. We often leave conversations on campus—whether they take place in classrooms, laboratories, or libraries, or during meals or workouts or walks—seeing things differently from the way we saw them before. Sometimes a problem, or its possible solution, has snapped into sharper focus; sometimes it has come to seem still more complicated, with many more shades of gray than we had previously recognized. Regardless, in being exposed to, and in trying to account for, the diverse perspectives of the other parties to our conversation, we have broadened and refined our own understanding. In a very real sense, this is the essence of the education we strive to provide to each student, and it is consistent with our mission to serve as “a center for research, scholarship, and creativity.”

Fostering innovation and problem-solving. The opportunity to study and learn within a diverse and inclusive environment serves as a catalyst for new insights and solutions. By hearing a different idea, merging elements of two separate ideas, or formulating an outside-the-box hypothesis, we shine light on the right answer, move closer to a potential solution, or see an entirely new dimension of a challenge we first thought was less complex. Moreover, diverse and inclusive teams bring different problem-solving approaches to bear on difficult challenges, pushing team members to dig deeper and achieve better results. In all these ways, diversity and inclusion foster innovation, fuel creativity, and drive development and advancement across all disciplines and courses of study—enabling the University to fulfill its mission of “leading change to improve society and to help solve the world’s greatest problems.”

Preparing engaged and productive citizens and leaders. Our students come from every corner of North Carolina, all fifty states, and countries around the world. To help them prepare to thrive as citizens and leaders, as well as employees and employers, in the increasingly diverse communities and workplaces that await them, the University strives to offer them the opportunity to live, learn, and work within a campus community that is itself diverse. When students collaborate effectively with classmates whose backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives differ from their own, they prepare themselves to serve and work with people of all backgrounds no matter where their personal and professional paths might lead them. The competence and confidence they gain in interacting with diverse constituents, and the legitimacy they earn as a result, position them for engaged and productive lives as citizens and leaders. This is a crucial opportunity that the University must provide to students, given that its mission is in part to teach them “to become the next generation of leaders.”

Enhancing appreciation, respect, and empathy. These same learning opportunities, within and beyond the classroom, offer the distinct but related benefit of deepening appreciation for others, awakening students to the ways in which differences of upbringing, culture, identity, and experience combine to contribute to our differences as individuals. Within a community that is both diverse and inclusive, this appreciation of difference leads to greater respect, both for the various groups with which students identify and for individual students themselves, who like all human beings are irreducible and unique. By allowing us to step regularly into someone else’s shoes, diversity and inclusion destroy stereotypes, bridge divisions, and promote empathy—experiences that

enable our students to understand not only each other but also “all people in the State,” whom our mission obliges us to serve.

These educational benefits of diversity and inclusion are substantial, essential to our mission, and borne out daily through our common life together. But beyond our own conviction and experience, these benefits are well recognized in an expansive and growing body of scholarship, and they are shared, with mission-specific variations, by many other institutions of higher learning. They have also been validated by the Supreme Court of the United States, in its decisions affirming the limited and nuanced consideration of race and ethnicity as one factor among many in student admissions.

Realizing the Benefits of Diversity and Inclusion

The achievement of these crucial benefits requires sustained and purposeful action. From pipeline programs and recruitment initiatives that reach students as they consider whether to apply to the University, to admissions and student-aid practices that allow us to enroll an outstanding and diverse student body, to the many programs that encourage excellence once students arrive, to the ways in which teaching and learning are being reinvented to optimize outcomes—in all that we do, we seek to act out our commitment to diversity and inclusion.

These efforts combine to help us achieve our overarching goals for diversity and inclusion: attracting and enrolling a diverse student body and creating an inclusive environment in which students learn, live, interact, and thrive. And these goals in turn help us secure the educational benefits of diversity: promoting the robust exchange of ideas; broadening and refining understanding; fostering innovation and problem-solving; preparing engaged and productive citizens and leaders; and enhancing appreciation, respect, and empathy.

What follows are examples of some of the many specific programs and initiatives that the University has undertaken in order to achieve these goals and realize these benefits.

Attracting Students from Diverse Backgrounds

Building a community of students with rich and varied backgrounds begins long before students submit their applications. For this reason, the University takes deliberate steps to ensure that talented students from all walks of life are considering the opportunities we offer and preparing themselves to compete for admission.

Our 1st Look program, for example, introduces low-income middle-school students to the idea of college as a pathway to a successful career and a satisfying life. While most college outreach begins in high school, research has shown that students who experience a college atmosphere by middle school are more likely to enroll in postsecondary education and to prepare for college while in high school. To promote these outcomes, 1st Look welcomes low-income middle-school students to our campus and helps them envision the long-term reward for academic achievement, using UNC-Chapel Hill as a setting to illustrate the experience of college. Although 1st Look takes pains not to promote prematurely any specific university, aiming instead to help students believe that college is both possible and worth pursuing, one important benefit of the program is that it allows

students from low-income households to experience our campus first-hand and talk with current University students.

A second outreach effort, Project Uplift, has for more than 40 years welcomed 1,000 rising high-school seniors to Chapel Hill each summer, offering them the opportunity to live and learn on our campus. Led by the University Office of Diversity and Inclusion, with support from the Office of Undergraduate Admissions and other campus departments, Project Uplift aims both to enhance the diversity of the University's applicant pool and to help students stay focused on postsecondary enrollment. The program works through a network of partner high schools to invite high-achieving low-income students, as well as African-American, Native-American, Latino/Latina, Asian-American, and rural students, to spend two days on campus experiencing the academic and social climate of the University. Staffed by current students, staff, and faculty, many of whom come from backgrounds similar to those of the students the program serves, Project Uplift helps students forge lasting relationships and gain confidence in their ability to navigate the University and other schools. Through a companion program, Uplift Plus, a smaller number of students receive scholarships for five weeks of summer-school study at the University.

A third outreach program, the Carolina College Advising Corps, places recent University graduates in partner low-income high schools, where they work closely with students to help them search for, enroll in, and succeed at colleges and universities that will serve them well, including, when appropriate, our own University. Housed since its inception in the Office of Undergraduate Admissions, the Carolina Corps has expanded dramatically in its ten-year history: from four advisers, eight partner high schools, and 1,400 graduating seniors in 2007, to 51 advisers, 71 partner high schools, and 14,000 graduating seniors in 2017. Our advisers—trained over the course of the summer by Corps leaders and staff members from the admissions and student-aid offices at the University—work intently on behalf of all students who seek their aid, helping them aim high in the search for schools and scholarships, complete admissions and financial-aid applications, and enroll in colleges and universities where they will thrive. The Carolina Corps continues to yield outstanding results: last year, new partner high schools experienced an average increase in the college-enrollment rates of their graduating seniors of 19 percentage points; longer-term partners, most of which have hosted advisers for four or more years, experienced continuing gains averaging 1.5 percentage points. The program represents a major commitment on the part of the University, and it operates at significant scale, serving approximately 23 percent of all low-income students enrolled in public high schools in North Carolina, as well as 45 percent of all American Indian, 22 percent of all African-American, and 17 percent of all Latino/Latina students. Although the program focuses on helping all its students find appropriate postsecondary enrollments, many of these students find their way to the University, with an estimated 1,000 enrolled as undergraduates during the current academic year.

A fourth outreach program, North Carolina Renaissance, reflects yet another collaboration between the University Office of Diversity and Inclusion and the Office of Undergraduate Admissions. The program brings 35-40 rising high-school juniors from rural communities to campus for a four-day enrichment program in which students participate in sessions on leadership, team-building, college admissions, financial aid, and community service.

A fifth program, the Chuck Stone Program for Diversity in Education and Media, sponsored by the School of Media and Journalism, is a week-long workshop for rising high-school seniors who are interested in careers in journalism. Named for Professor Chuck Stone, a champion of diversity in journalism who died in 2014, the program introduces students of varying backgrounds to multi-platform storytelling and writing through classroom study, mentorships, and reporting practices.

A sixth program, the Pre-College Expo and Symposium, led by Carolina Higher Education Opportunity Programs (CHEOP), with support from the Office of Undergraduate Admissions and other departments, provides high-school students of varying backgrounds with opportunities to learn about college preparation and admission in workshops, panels, poster presentations, and a college fair. CHEOP also sponsors a longstanding seventh opportunity, a federally funded Upward Bound Program that annually helps 99 underrepresented, first-generation, and low-income high-school students build the skills and motivation needed to pursue and succeed in college.

An eighth program, sponsored by the American Indian Center, hosts 75 Native American high-school students each summer in a three-day crash course that prepares them for the college application process. This program is consistent with the Center's annual forum on the role of higher education in Native nation-building, which focuses on the partnership between the University and the state's tribal nations and ways that they can work together to support students' access to higher education and their development and educational attainment.

In addition to these exemplary programs, the Office of Undergraduate Admissions recruits extensively throughout North Carolina. Last year, for example, the office led or participated in 395 outreach events in 98 of the 100 counties in North Carolina. It also produced and distributed a publication about preparing and searching for colleges, featuring advisers from the Carolina College Advising Corps, to more than 10,000 low-income high-school seniors statewide.

Admitting and Enrolling a Diverse Student Body

The University seeks to admit and enroll entering classes of students that are diverse in every way. We achieve this objective through a carefully designed and implemented process that provides a comprehensive, holistic, and individualized evaluation of every application; by recruiting energetically to yield the students we have admitted; and by creating alternative pathways to enrollment for transfer students and members of the military.

The process of comprehensive, holistic, and individualized review affords each candidate a thorough and thoughtful evaluation, all undertaken to admit and enroll a diverse class of well-qualified students.

- This year the University received nearly 41,000 applications for roughly 4,200 places in the entering first-year class, as well as another 3,000 applications for approximately 800 places in the entering transfer class. The ratio of applications to places necessitates a highly selective admissions process. Eighty-two percent of each entering first-year class comes from within North Carolina, as does between 70 and 75 percent of each entering transfer class.

- The University has designed and implemented its admissions practices, including its careful and limited consideration of race and ethnicity, not only to advance our institutional commitment to securing the educational benefits of diversity and inclusion, but also to comply strictly with legal standards established by the Supreme Court of the United States.
- Every application is read in its entirety by at least one admissions officer, and applicants are evaluated along at least 40 criteria in eight categories. If an applicant chooses to provide information about race or ethnicity, the University may consider this information, but even then only as an additional factor among many others, applied in a non-numerical and non-rote way, and only as a part of the comprehensive, holistic, and individualized review afforded to every candidate. The University in no way establishes or observes quotas, but rather views race and ethnicity in the context of the entire application and against the backdrop of all contributions the student might make to the University community.
- The Faculty Advisory Committee on Undergraduate Admissions broadly oversees admissions practices, and its work includes examining whether race-neutral alternative practices could be adopted that would allow the University, without compromising other objectives, to achieve its goals for diversity and inclusion.
- The University practices need-blind admissions, in that we do not prefer students who can pay the cost of attendance over those who cannot. This approach to admissions, when combined with the University's scholarship and student-aid programs, furthers our ability to enroll a diverse and talented student body. Still, because we are a public university intent on improving lives, and because we value the ways in which high-achieving low-income students help us secure the educational benefits of diversity for everyone in our community, we take pains to evaluate candidates for admission in light of the whole of their socioeconomic circumstances. Rather than enforce rigid cutoffs for grade-point averages or test scores, we evaluate all our candidates individually, comprehensively, and holistically, and in light of the opportunities they enjoy and the challenges they face in their communities, schools, and families. In the words of our Statement on the Evaluation of Candidates for Admission, which the Faculty Advisory Committee on Undergraduate Admissions approved in September 2007, this practice requires "not only that we note the achievements and potential of each applicant but also that we understand the context within which achievements have been realized and potential forged." This method has borne fruit: between 2009-2010 and 2014-2015, the last year for which federal data are available, the number of Pell Grant recipients at the University rose by 23 percent—the third highest growth rate among the 76 leading colleges and universities that the Equality of Opportunity Project recently labeled "Ivy Plus" or "Elite."

After admissions decisions have been made, the admissions office works purposefully to recruit students who have been offered admission, with particular efforts for students who would contribute to the diversity of the student body and help the University secure the educational benefits of diversity and inclusion for all its students.

- Although approaches to increase yield vary from year to year, they typically involve print and email communications featuring current students; phone calls from current students, faculty members, administrators, and trustees; and special events, both on campus and in communities

across North Carolina and the United States, that are designed to connect students with the University community.

- The University has worked intently over the last several years to recruit admitted first-generation-college students. Since 2009, the admissions office has offered an annual series of recruitment events for such students, welcoming students and their families and featuring first-generation administrators and faculty members at the University. Last year these efforts culminated in *firstwelcome.unc.edu*, an effort to connect first-generation students with members of the University community who are themselves first-generation, including dozens of faculty members, administrators, and staff members.
- The admissions office also offers travel grants for admitted low-income students who could not otherwise afford to visit our campus, on the principle that no student should be prevented from making an informed choice about his or her enrollment for want of financial resources.

In addition to these practices for first-year and transfer admission, the Carolina Student Transfer Excellence Program (C-STEP) provides a pathway for talented low- to moderate-income students to transfer to the University from partner community colleges across North Carolina.

- C-STEP guarantees admission to students who earn an associate's degree from a partner college with a cumulative grade-point average of at least 3.2 and whose household incomes are at or below 300 percent of the federal poverty guidelines.
- C-STEP partnerships at three community colleges—Fayetteville Tech, Carteret, and Craven—are particularly focused on veterans and other military-affiliated students.
- C-STEP also provides students with special events and support services before and after they transfer, so that the transition from the home college to the University will be as successful as possible, and in order to pave the way to graduation.
- More than 625 students have enrolled at the University through C-STEP since its inception in 2006, and the overall graduation rate of C-STEP students is 85 percent.

Removing Financial Barriers to Enrollment

Admission is just one step towards enrollment at the University; other steps are necessary in order to secure diversity, and the benefits of diversity and inclusion, for our student body. One fundamental step involves breaking down financial barriers, so that no admitted student is denied enrollment at the University because of socioeconomic circumstances. For this reason, we commit significant institutional resources to maintain highly equitable aid policies.

- Almost alone among public universities in the United States, the University continues to meet the full demonstrated need of every admitted student who qualifies for federal aid.

- More than 70 percent of aid to undergraduate students comes in the form of grants and scholarships, including \$83 million in need-based grants funded by the University. Another 26 percent of need-based aid comes in the form of loans, and another 2 percent is awarded as work-study.
- In response to national research that indicated even small levels of debt deter enrollment for low-income families, the University in 2004 launched the Carolina Covenant, a commitment to debt-free financial aid for our lowest-income students. For qualifying students—currently dependent undergraduates from families at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level, indexed by family size—the Covenant offers a full-need aid package comprised entirely of scholarships and modest work-study.
- The Carolina Covenant is not just a financial-aid packaging policy; it also embodies a public promise, giving the University a concise message to assure low-income applicants that they will not have to worry about debt and loan repayment in order to attend and graduate. The Office of Scholarships and Student Aid maintains a separate website dedicated to the Covenant, *carolinacovenant.unc.edu*, and a description of the program is included in all outward-facing aid and admissions materials distributed by the University.
- The Covenant, in concert with other programs and initiatives, has proven effective in contributing to diversity and inclusion on our campus. Beginning with 224 students in the class that entered in 2004, the program now welcomes roughly 700 new students each year. For the past several years, more than 13 percent of all entering first-year students have entered as Covenant Scholars; the share among new transfer students, who also are fully eligible for the program, has been higher still—18 percent in the most recent entering class. In 2015, new first-year Covenant Scholars had a median parental income of \$25,960; 58 percent will be the first generation in their families to graduate from college.
- All of the programs described above are driven by our commitment to foster both excellence and equity, and in so doing, to secure the educational benefits of diversity and inclusion for all our students.

In addition to these need-based aid programs, the University sponsors the Chancellor's Science Scholars Program. Launched in 2011, this four-year scholarship program fosters diversity among future science and technology leaders by providing first-generation students, underrepresented-minority students, and other students committed to diversity in the sciences an annual merit-based scholarship, a six-week Summer EXCEerator program, intensive academic advising and mentoring, and research opportunities.

In 2016, the University also became a founding member of the American Talent Initiative, a national campaign launched by leading colleges and universities with the collective purpose of increasing enrollments and graduation rates among high-achieving, low- and moderate-income students. The goal of the initiative is to enroll and graduate an additional 50,000 such students at the nation's top 270 institutions of higher learning by 2025. Although member institutions set their

own goals, focusing on recruitment, enrollment, and retention, they share a commitment to prioritizing need-based financial aid and reducing gaps in achievement among students of different socioeconomic backgrounds.

Learning, Living, and Thriving at the University

Diversity in enrollments alone is insufficient to realize fully the benefits of a diverse and inclusive community. In recognition of this reality, the University invests in a host of programs to provide opportunities—both in and out of the classroom—for students from different backgrounds to interact with one another and enjoy the benefits that diversity and inclusion can provide. We also operate a broad range of programs to ensure that all students have the support and encouragement they need to succeed at the University. We know that students must be welcomed, included, and supported to maximize their potential and their contributions to the campus community. As Stephen Farmer, Vice Provost for Enrollment and Undergraduate Admissions, said in his 2016 University Day address, “All of our students come from somewhere, and all of them travel their own paths to Chapel Hill. But they belong at the University, and the University belongs to them.”

Creating a learning environment that leverages diversity and inclusion to spur growth, fuel creativity, and spark intense dialogue. Everyday learning that takes place in lecture halls, seminar rooms, and laboratories across campus and in every area of study—from art history to business to physics to sociology—draws upon the diversity of our students’ backgrounds and perspectives to provoke better understanding and more innovative exploration.

- Class discussion is made more enlightening by the inclusion of diverse voices. The University embraces the freedoms of thought and expression as part of striving to provide classroom atmospheres where students feel comfortable bringing their unique perspectives to the table. Such perspectives benefit the entire classroom, allowing each student to gain new insights and fostering the dismantling of stereotypes.
- Collaboration in study groups, labs, and group projects provides students with the opportunity to gain valuable experience working in diverse teams—a skill that is essential for their futures in increasingly diverse workforces and communities. These collaborative experiences also demonstrate to students the important role that diversity plays in reaching creative and innovative solutions to pressing problems.
- Course offerings in many departments and curricula include classes that are focused on the topics of diversity and inclusion. These classes range from “Intersectionality: Race, Gender, Sexuality and Social Justice,” launched in Spring 2017 and co-taught by faculty members in English and Comparative Literature, Political Science, and American Studies, to “Diversity and Equality in Cities,” taught in the Department of City and Regional Planning.
- Faculty-led diversity initiatives also take place all over campus, sparked by professors who value and cultivate the educational benefits of diversity in their classrooms, discussion groups, and laboratories.

- Professor Kelly Hogan in the Department of Biology modified her teaching methods in large introductory courses to focus on high-value activities instead of lengthy lectures, resulting in improved results for all students, including black and first-generation-college students. Professor Hogan and others are sharing this innovation in teaching through the Center for Faculty Excellence and other University structures, spurring the adoption of more interactive and effective teaching methods throughout introductory science courses. To support these initiatives, the University is reconfiguring classrooms to make them more effective for interactive group learning.
- Professor Joseph DeSimone of the Department of Chemistry, winner of the 2008 Lemelson-MIT Prize, has publicly recognized diversity as a “fundamental tenet of innovation,” recruiting nearly 40 percent of the postdoctoral scholars in his research laboratory from underrepresented minority groups. Professor DeSimone has also given speeches and lectures on the importance and power of diversity in the advancement of science and society, and he has co-written an essay on the subject, “Driving Convergence with Human Diversity,” published in *Science Translational Medicine*.
- Faculty also lead and participate in other events and programs to reinforce the importance of diversity and inclusion, such as last year’s day-long THINKposium program, which included nearly 400 faculty and staff members. The University’s diversity-liaison program engages approximately 60 volunteers within schools, institutes, centers, and departments who work to advance efforts to foster diversity and inclusion.

Providing opportunities for students to experience the benefits of diversity and inclusion outside the classroom. The University launched Carolina Conversations to create a forum for students, faculty, and staff to engage in robust and honest discourse on topics related to race, intellectual diversity, religion, identity, and culture. The series, initiated by Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Winston Crisp, fosters an inclusive environment that promotes productive dialogue across differences of opinion. For example, an event in March 2015 that focused on racial issues and current events was attended by more than 150 students, faculty, and staff, including Chancellor Folt and Vice Chancellor for Workforce Strategy, Equity, and Engagement Felicia Washington. Subsequent events have included student-only conversations, discussions about inclusive classrooms, a dialogue about the First Amendment and hate speech on campus, and a discussion about sexual assault. The series has also extended funding to students who wish to hold their own Carolina Conversations.

The University has hosted town hall meetings to allow students, faculty, and staff the opportunity to voice their opinions on campus issues. In November 2015, for example, a town hall allowed our community to come together in the wake of events across our country to discuss present challenges to our ongoing efforts to enhance inclusion. The town hall generated frank exchanges of views, expressions of urgency, and clear calls to renewed action. Chancellor Folt, who participated in the town hall discussion, responded by appointing a Special Assistant, Dr. Rumay Alexander, to convene a group of senior leaders to develop and implement further efforts to make the University more welcoming and inclusive, including an extension of the Carolina Conversations series into the following year.

The Division of Student Affairs provides programs and services for students that complement their academic pursuits, with the aim of enabling students to become responsible citizens in their communities, a goal furthered by the cultivation of a diverse and inclusive campus. Student Affairs advances inclusion through initiatives across its departments, including:

- Carolina Housing and Residential Education, which provides housing for more than 10,000 students and works to foster an inclusive and accessible residential environment through various programs;
- The Campus Y, a 150-year-old public-service student organization, jointly led by students and staff, that houses more than 30 student-initiated social-justice committees and supports roughly 2,000 student volunteers annually, with a particular focus on community inclusion, education and youth development, public health, global issues, and advocacy; and
- Carolina Union, which offers cultural, social, educational, and entertainment programs to the entire University, and which serves as a hub for student organizations such as Ahmadiyya Muslim Student Association, Asian Students Association, LGBTQ Center, and others.

The Minority Student Recruitment Committee, the student arm of the University Office of Diversity and Inclusion, is made up of students who coordinate academic, cultural, and social programming with the goal of cultivating an inclusive campus. The committee partners with other student organizations, including the Black Student Movement, the Carolina Indian Circle, and the Carolina Hispanic Association, to create workshops and seminars and to support student organizations on campus.

Ensuring all students have the support necessary to thrive at the University. As noted above, the newly reconstituted University Office of Diversity and Inclusion—housed within the Division of Workforce Strategy, Equity, and Engagement, but integrally connected to the Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost, the Division of Student Affairs, and other key elements of the University—is charged with positioning students to reach their full potential. In keeping with this mission, the office will continue to operate a range of programs to promote and maintain a diverse and inclusive environment on campus, including Achieving Carolina Excellence, a pre-orientation program that assists new undergraduate students from underrepresented populations in their transition to the University through sessions on academics, cultural activities, and service-learning projects, and Carolina Latinx Collaborative, which raises awareness of Latinx issues and cultures, in addition to supporting Latinx students through various services, including a mentoring program and bilingual support.

Thrive@Carolina is a University-wide initiative to strengthen success for all students, led by a working group convened by Provost James W. Dean, Jr., and drawing on the resources of offices and departments across campus. The initiative seeks to build support for all students, with the specific goals of helping the University achieve the highest overall graduation rates among public universities in the Association of American Universities and eliminating gaps in graduation rates between low-income, first-generation-college, and underrepresented students and the student body at large. As a result of this initiative, the University has funded and filled positions that support first-generation-college students, staff a tutoring hub for students enrolled in STEM courses, and make

transition courses more widely available to all students. The initiative has also provided grants to faculty and staff members for collaborative projects that strengthen student success.

Carolina Firsts is an initiative in the College of Arts and Sciences, with support from schools and departments across the University, to encourage and support the nearly 20 percent of University undergraduates who will be the first generation in their families to graduate with four-year degrees. The program helps students make the transition to University life by collaborating with the Office of Undergraduate Admissions in the recruitment of admitted students, connecting enrolling students with faculty and staff advocates, hosting events during orientation and at graduation, and providing awards and recognition. The program also includes a student organization of the same name that offers students a supportive network of peers.

Men of Color Engagement is another initiative in the College of Arts and Sciences that works to foster excellence among male students of color at the University. The program helps students secure research opportunities, facilitates introduction to graduate and professional programs, and provides a forum for discussion of race-related issues. One initiative of the program, Carolina MALES, hosts monthly networking gatherings with alumni and campus professionals, connects students with mentors, and organizes an annual summer immersion trip to a major city. Each of these initiatives complements the University's ongoing efforts to enhance the academic success of minority male students, as reflected in the *Provost's Minority Male Workgroup: Recommendation Report*.

CHEOP offers the NC Health Careers Access Program, which supports underrepresented and low-income undergraduate students who aspire to enter the health professions through an intensive, nine-week summer Science Enrichment Preparation Program, a health careers club, and information about careers in the health professions. The office also sponsors the Ronald E. McNair Scholars Program, a federally-funded TRiO program that provides programming and support for undergraduates who are either first-generation-college students from low-income backgrounds or members of an underrepresented group and who plan to pursue doctoral studies. Thirteen rising juniors are chosen each year to participate in the two-year program, which includes an intensive summer research experience, counseling and advising, faculty mentorship, graduate school tours, and other activities.

In addition to these programs and initiatives, several University centers sponsor programs that provide essential encouragement to, and raise awareness of, students who are diverse along many different dimensions; these centers include, for example, the LGBTQ Center, the American Indian Center, and the Sonya Haynes Stone Center for Black Culture and History. The University also provides dedicated support to student veterans through the Student Veterans Assistance Coordinator in the Office of the Dean of Students and through a Veterans Resources Team that includes specific points of contact in various departments, including academic advising, student wellness, accessibility resources and services, campus recreation, housing and residential education, and more.

Continuous Evaluation of Our Progress

While substantial work remains to be done, the undergraduate student body today is more diverse than ever before. The University enrolls students from all 100 counties in North Carolina, all 50

states across the nation, and more than 100 countries around the globe. The undergraduate student body is 58 percent female and identifies as 12 percent Asian or Asian American, 8 percent black or African-American, 8 percent Hispanic of any race, 4 percent two or more races, and 0.5 percent American Indian or Alaska Native. The University is also one of the most economically diverse institutions among elite universities in the United States, with nearly 20 percent of all undergraduate students being first-generation-college students and more than 40 percent receiving need-based financial aid. Today the University has the most veterans on campus since World War II, and 7 percent of the student body identifies as military-affiliated. Taken together, these students bring to our campus varying perspectives, experiences, beliefs, and goals, and they come from households headed by immigrants, small-business owners, physicians, unskilled laborers, pastors, community activists, police officers, lawyers, homemakers, and teachers.

The range and diversity of interest in our student body, and the range and depth of talent, are substantial. Our students come to us aspiring to lives in public service, business, community development, health affairs, military service, research, teaching, the arts, and athletics. Last year alone, 3,000 undergraduate students produced original research in 140 courses in the humanities, natural sciences, and social sciences. Others studied around the world, with nearly a third overall participating in study abroad during their careers at the University. Our students also engaged deeply with communities across North Carolina, the nation, and the world, recording more than 500,000 hours of community service last year alone. By virtue of these and other educational experiences, our students are graduating fully equipped to make differences in the varying paths they will travel within and beyond North Carolina.

While these results are remarkable, our work is far from complete. Although our commitment to diversity and inclusion will remain unwavering, we recognize that our efforts to achieve these ends must be constantly reevaluated and improved, especially in the face of present challenges. Progress is an iterative process: it requires persistent effort and evaluation. Likewise, assessing the effectiveness of our efforts to secure the benefits of diversity and inclusion requires the active gathering of information from across our campus regarding how diverse the University is; how included our students, faculty, and staff are and feel; and how fully our students are experiencing the important benefits of diversity and inclusion both within and outside of the classroom. Collecting quantitative data is just one aspect of this assessment; a full picture of diversity and inclusion at the University will also require that we provide students with opportunities to tell us their stories and experiences, and for the University to then act upon this feedback.

Towards this end, the University will continue tracking the diversity of our student body, using measures such as the Carolina Metrics database and other efforts from the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment. But recognizing that diversity and inclusion cannot be captured in quantitative data alone, we also commit to hearing our students' experiences of diversity and inclusion through means such as senior surveys, Carolina Conversations, climate assessments, leadership surveys, and other instruments, including revised course evaluations that will invite feedback on matters of diversity and inclusion. Our various schools, divisions, departments, and groups across campus will continue their own efforts to assess, and they will communicate their results through reports and conversations with senior leaders.

We will also expand the ways in which we gather information about diversity and inclusion. Collecting broader data through additional surveys and climate studies, creating more opportunities for students to express themselves to campus leadership, and developing more refined assessment criteria for our diversity and inclusion programs are among the efforts in which we will invest. Indeed, this need for expanded assessment is one of the reasons we have chosen to strengthen and refocus the University Office for Diversity and Inclusion.

Our work will not end with the launch of this office. We will search for new ways to measure and assess the progress and impact of diversity and inclusion at the University, and this search will require that we identify other areas in which we will need to collect information, as well as other opportunities for careful development and considered judgment of the many ways in which our students experience the educational benefits we must offer. Substantial input from students will be essential to these efforts, as will the broad engagement of faculty and staff.

Moving Forward, Achieving More, Always Improving

Now is the time for bold and renewed commitment. Diversity and inclusion are now as important as ever, and their benefits, as our experience continues to show, are real, transformative, and lasting. Our mission requires that we do all we can to provide these benefits to every student who chooses to enroll at the University.

Steady progress, while sometimes uneven, marks the success of all great institutions. This progress will never come easy or fast; history proves that reality, as do the challenges of recent years. Advancement along any dimension may be difficult, tedious, and exhausting, and often accompanied by passionate debate, frustrating confusion, and substantial trial and error. These dynamics, however messy they might feel in action, are the ingredients of long-term progress, especially when driven by commitment and the strength of resolve. Experience has shown that, in the pursuit of progress, a new idea, hypothesis, or insight emerges from diverse perspectives and robust discussion.

To further our mission, and especially our service to all the people of North Carolina, we will continue to invest substantially in ensuring broad access to the University for talented and hard-working students from diverse backgrounds. We will foster this access by maintaining and improving our outreach and recruitment efforts, our holistic admissions policies and practices, and our broad program of need-based financial aid. We will also continue to build and sustain an inclusive campus community through opportunities for robust dialogue and through programs that encourage excellence for all students.

In all instances, we will ensure strict compliance with our obligations under the law. Advised by the Office of University Counsel, and benefiting from the oversight of the Advisory Committee on Undergraduate Admissions and the advice of its Committee on Race-Neutral Strategies, we will continue to confirm that our admission practices adhere to the legal standards defined by the Supreme Court. We will also evaluate continuously whether any alternatives to present practices would allow us to achieve our diversity objectives, along with other mission-critical objectives, in new ways.

Through the creation of the University Office for Diversity and Inclusion, and in the naming of a new Associate Vice Chancellor for Diversity and Inclusion to lead this office, we will enhance the oversight, coordination, and assessment of the many efforts to foster diversity and inclusion on our campus. All of this work will inform, and align fully with, the University's new strategic framework, which is currently in development.

In all of these ways, the University will continue to focus on diversity and inclusion as crucial components of the excellence that our mission requires us to pursue and to achieve. We must continue to strive to ensure that the University is a place where individuals from every background are welcomed, respected, and included. Our students expect no less of us, and our mission demands no less from us.