

John A. Delaney Self-Report July 2007 – June 2008

In keeping with our practice, I am submitting my 2007-2008 self-report as a first step in my annual performance evaluation. As you suggested last year, the format of this report differs from that used in previous years. It is briefer and provides a broader overview, highlighted by a few examples and data points. The report is structured around the five goals you approved when you adopted the University of North Florida's new vision and mission statements. With the inevitable overlap among these goals, there are times when my commentary under one goal also provides measures related to a second goal.

During 2007-2008, we made great progress advancing the university. We have confirmed and solidified the mission. We did well on the typical metrics: fundraising, PECO, construction, freshman profile, operational financial management, hiring of quality faculty and staff. And we accomplished all of this despite enormous budget challenges, the biggest such cut in the state's history. Though it's gratifying to celebrate our successes, we can quite frankly also take great pride in the way we handled those challenges. Certainly we would have preferred to have the resources that flow from a vibrant state economy. And we made a misstep with regard to our investment in the state's investment pool that was hit by the sub-prime mortgage implosion. (We still may get these funds back, but it was a lesson.) Yet, given the circumstances, I would assert that the university handled the state budget cuts well. Other institutions imposed lay-offs and curtailed travel for faculty. I would also offer that the actions we followed in managing these cuts, including closing/merging programs and deciding to limit enrollment, were taken only after thorough consideration of the long-term future of the institution as well as the needs of our students, faculty and staff. Our continual assessment of personnel and programs meant that many of the more difficult budgetary decisions had already been made, freeing resources to deal with the cuts. I commend the Board for your guidance and oversight.

As difficult as they were, our challenges should not overshadow our institutional accomplishments across multiple fronts. We are engaged in a major building construction program. As has been our track record, in the immediate past legislative session we received more than our share of construction dollars, meaning we will continue to see cranes on campus. We have established new and strengthened existing community connections within the region and the state, and have increased our national visibility. In concert with an intentional slowing of enrollment growth, we kept our attention on the ideal UNF student profile as presented in our February 2007 workshop: e.g. improving the freshman profile, recruiting lower division students from across the state, increasing minority and graduate student enrollments and preparing for an increase in the percentage of residential students. Fundraising was again terrific, despite the slowing economy. And most important to our core mission, we have enhanced the quality of our academic programs.

GOAL 1: Cultivate a learning environment that supports intellectual curiosity, academic achievement, and personal growth.

As stated in our vision, the University of North Florida aspires to be a preeminent public university, allowing us to serve as an invaluable resource in regional growth and raising the visibility and reputation of the UNF diploma. To achieve this ambitious but attainable goal, it is imperative that even in difficult years we maintain and improve the quality of our academic offerings. We took a number of steps in this direction over the past year, ensuring the integrity of our academic programs and capitalizing on our

unique strengths. Five examples of the steps we took under this goal were (a) recruiting additional and replacement faculty – despite the budget cuts; (b) developing a new community-based learning initiative [see goal 4]; (c) adding, suspending and modifying programs based on various measures of program need and strength; (d) pilot testing a new program for supporting student success, and (e) aligning enrollment numbers with funding dollars [see goal 5].

As a result of our internal budgeting process and despite the state budget, we were able to recruit for critical faculty positions for both fall 2007 and 2008. Utilizing fiscal resources set aside in our 2006/07 budget, we began fall 2007 with 32 more faculty than we had the previous year, reducing our student-to-faculty ratio from 33 to 1, to 32 to 1. We also made the decision to continue ongoing searches for new faculty for fall 2008 despite the budget reductions. The funds for these latest searches had been set aside for future faculty recruitment in the 2007/08 budget. Both of these actions were taken to protect the instructional integrity of our academic programs – programs in which students have the opportunity to interact on an individual basis with faculty mentors. Due to the unfavorable job market elsewhere, this allowed us to attract a number of higher quality applicants.

In building strong academic programs, we also must ensure that these programs meet community needs while making judicious use of resources. We use various measures to guide us in accomplishing this objective, including community needs assessments and periodic program reviews. These reviews involve both internal and external examination of program resources, quality and capacity.

Here are three examples of how we used the data from these different measures during the past year: First, based on community needs assessments, in fall 2007 we successfully opened two new doctoral programs – the Doctor of Nursing Practice and Doctor of Physical Therapy degrees. The DNP helps address the need for more nursing faculty and the DPT responds to changing standards in the profession. Enrollments and student evaluations document the initial success of both programs. Second, after reflecting on the results from one program review, we made the decision to suspend admissions into the Masters of Arts in Applied Sociology. Unlike the two new doctoral programs, enrollments in this program have failed to demonstrate a compelling community need. Third, the program review in biology indicated that we needed to change the time of our course offerings to evenings for our Master of Arts in Biology to meet student demand.

In examining the data on student success, we noted that while our retention and graduation rates exceed those of our peers, these measures have not changed over the past several years. As a result, we have targeted improvements in these metrics as a measure of our long-term success. In meeting this objective we are engaged in a study to determine what variables best predict UNF student graduation. Over the course of the past year, we also conducted a pilot test of a program we are calling Academic Roadmaps, a student tracking system that will enable us to provide students better academic advising and support. A third mechanism we are using to address this issue is that of building a stronger first-year experience for our freshmen class. The first-year experience is one method of connecting students to the institution. The UNF Reads program, which we have discussed in our Board meetings, is one example of this first-year experience.

Various sources of information point to our successes in building ever stronger academic programs. Among these are the national recognition given to our programs in logistics, community nursing and jazz, as well as our international travel programs. The university once again climbed in its U.S. News and World Report rankings and for a third year in a row was recognized by the Princeton Review. External assessments of those programs that underwent review this past year and our own internal assessment

of students' performance on specified learning outcomes further support our successes in meeting this goal.

GOAL 2: Recruit and support a diverse community of students, faculty, and staff who will contribute to and benefit from the university's mission.

Over the past year we have engaged in a number of initiatives in support of this institutional goal. Perhaps the most visible of these is the development of the Jacksonville Commitment, which was publicly announced this past spring.

As the first step in the Jacksonville Commitment, we brought together all four of Jacksonville's higher education institutions, as well as the Duval County Public Schools and the City of Jacksonville. The Commitment guarantees that students from low income families will have the resources to attend one of our local colleges, and that they will have the academic support in high school to guide them to a diploma and then on to a college degree. The mayor's proposed budget includes \$1 million for the Commitment, with a pledge to increase this in each of the next 3 years. At that level, that would equate to an \$80 million higher education endowment for Jacksonville. Some 40% of the proceeds will flow to UNF students. Viewed differently, in 3 years UNF will have secured the equivalent of \$32 million increase in our endowment thanks to the City's support of a program that addresses core needs.

In addition, we employed a number of other approaches to help student access. In the past year, we once again increased funding for need-based scholarships. We were able to increase attendance at recruitment events targeted at minority applicants. Nat Glover has been invaluable in his role as an envoy in the minority community. And we also continued our Academic Potential Program, a highly successful initiative that provides special support for new freshman admitted in the summer term.

We use a number of different metrics in assessing our institutional progress under Goal 2 including measures of student enrollment and student success. This past year, we were once again able to grow ethnic/racial minority student enrollment. In fall 2003 ethnic/racial minorities made up 15.3% of newly admitted freshmen. By fall 2006, 21.9% of newly admitted freshmen identified themselves as minorities. And this past fall, that number climbed to 22.7%. When we look at overall student enrollment we see a similar trend. In fall 2003, ethnic/racial minority students composed 20.8% of our student body. In fall 2006 this number had grown to 22.7% and this past fall we again saw an increase, with minorities constituting 23.1% of the student body. Retention rates of minority students are very strong.

Recruitment and support for minority faculty and staff is also an ongoing priority for this institution. At my request, the Provost empanelled a taskforce to examine and offer suggested methods for addressing these objectives. Based on their initial work, I will be reformulating the taskforce into a university-wide commission, which will be charged with operationalizing the strategies that have come out of the taskforce.

As we report each June, we are making progress in our efforts to hire minority faculty and staff and to achieve gender-balance across all faculty and administrative ranks. When we compare ourselves to national pools we find that we are at or above expected percentages in most categories. One of our more significant successes has been our effort to achieve gender balance among faculty. This past year we went from 40% to 42% female representation.

Perhaps the most dramatic improvement in supporting diversity relates to our services for disabled students. We have developed plans to take what is an ever-improving disability resource center and build it into a national model. Over the past year we have been fund raising to support this effort and will continue to do so over the upcoming year. The progress we have already realized has resulted in increased graduation rates for our disabled students. These rates now track close to the campus wide rates.

In all cases we will continue to strive to do even better.

GOAL 3: Support and recognize research and creative endeavor as essential university functions.

Our unique characteristics as a university suggest that the UNF faculty member must be a teacher-scholar. While focused on her or his students' education, this faculty member must demonstrate a passion for the discovery and application of new knowledge. Thus, one measure of the strength of our faculty is their individual scholarly productivity. A second measure is the degree to which they involve the UNF student in research and creative endeavors.

Reflecting the critical role scholarship will play in the university's development, we decided the funds we allocated to faculty scholarship would not be reduced, despite the budget situation. Faculty members who are actively involved in scholarship bring a sense of vitality and engagement to the classroom. This often translates into better teaching and improved student learning. Second, by keeping these funds intact we were able to demonstrate to our faculty the value we place on their work. This seemed especially critical in a year when we could not offer the raises they deserved. We were alone in the state in preserving this funding for our faculty.

The support we provide and value we place on our faculty's scholarly and creative activities is paying off. In looking through the dossiers for faculty promotions, it is apparent that the best of our faculty members have aggressive research or creative performance agendas. The results we are achieving in scholarly productivity are also documented by increases in the number of published books and referred papers and presentations and by the fact that direct federal research awards increased by 15% from 2007 to 2008. But the real story is told by the breadth and depth of their scholarship – women's health, water management, fuel cell technology, early literacy, vestibular disorders in children, remote sensing technologies, weather monitoring systems, criminal rehabilitation, etc – and by our student involvement in research within their discipline – community nursing, anthropology psychology, engineering, coastal biology, physical therapy, and several others. What is also telling about the scholarship in which our faculty and students engage is the amount of research that focuses on regional issues. As noted in Goal 4, as the university attains national prominence, we know that a part of our reputation will be based on UNF's response to local needs.

GOAL 4: Affirm the university's public responsibility through civic engagement and community-based learning and research.

In developing its newest classification system for colleges and universities, the Carnegie Foundation established a special category for select institutions that are actively involved in their local communities: the Community Engagement designation. Unlike the other Carnegie classifications, colleges and universities must apply to be recognized in this category. It is our hope that in meeting our fourth goal we will position ourselves to become a member of this distinguished group of sixty plus colleges and

universities (e.g. Bryn Mawr, Elon, Emory, Portland State, Tufts, University of California Los Angeles, University of Massachusetts – Boston, University of Pennsylvania, etc). In saying this, it is important to stress that seeking this Carnegie classification is not the major impetus for focusing on this goal. Nonetheless, we have been near obsessed with zeroing in on a set of peers, and benchmarking against them, so this is a useful exercise.

UNF's history and the emerging literature on post secondary learning both demonstrate the value that is to be gained by building close connections with our regional communities. These communities serve as living laboratories where students can develop the skills and dispositions needed to put theory into practice. Through our institutional involvement with these communities UNF can also serve as a key resource in addressing community needs and supporting economic and cultural growth. Finally, and on a somewhat different note, through civic engagement we can help influence public policy in support of higher education.

Over the past year we have undertaken a number of activities related to this goal. The most salient example of this at an institutional level is the selection of Community-Based Transformational Learning as our quality enhancement plan (QEP), a required element of our accreditation review. Building on the well recognized success of our current Transformational Learning Opportunities program, in the Community-Based Transformational Learning (CBTL) program we will be asking academic departments to develop one or more CBTL courses that will become a standing, and in some cases required, part of their curriculum. These course offerings will engage students in working in a community-based setting and/or solving a community-based problem. Other examples of our institutional commitment to building strong community connections include much of the research described under Goal 3 and our numerous community outreach programs (e.g. the World Affairs Council speakers series, our annual Martin Luther King luncheon, and the work of the Center for Global Health, the Florida Institute for Education, the Small Business Development Center, and the UNF Public Opinion Research Laboratory).

On an individual level, I have had a number of opportunities to work on public policy issues that affect higher education (e.g. working on a BOG committee to find a framework for mutual agreement on the responsibilities that belong to the Board of Governors and the State Legislature, working closely on various initiatives with the Chancellor and Chair Roberts, securing city and school board support for the Jacksonville Commitment; board of the Florida Association of Colleges and Universities, etc), our community (e.g. Jacksonville Journey, Alliance for World Class Education, etc), and the state (Nature Conservancy, St. Johns River Alliance, etc), and I serve on numerous local and statewide non-profit boards and have a heavy public speaking agenda. In each of these I hope to strengthen inter-institutional ties and raise UNF's profile.

GOAL 5: Secure fiscal, physical, and technological resources aligned with the university's mission and values.

As I mentioned above, 2008 was a year of contradiction when it comes to managing resources. At the same time that we were engaged in the biggest building program since UNF first opened its doors, we also faced the largest cuts in the university's operating budget. Each of these presented different challenges in managing university resources and in both instances I think we can take pride in what we have accomplished. Because I have provided detailed analyses on both our budget cuts and our building program at Board meetings throughout the year, allow me to use this forum to offer the briefest of overviews on the basic principles we followed and critical actions we took.

In preparing for and carrying out our current building program, we began with our 10-year master plan which speaks to immediate and long term needs. We used this plan as the starting point in making each decision, except when unique circumstances presented themselves, as was the case with both UNF and Alumni Halls (the “old” AOL and Auchter Buildings). In these instances we assessed the long term benefit of exploiting these one-time opportunities contrasted against the long term costs if we walked away. In both cases, it was apparent that we needed to take advantage of the prospects before us. Taking into account the financial, political and bureaucratic logistics required to acquire the properties, we pulled off quite a coup!

When seeking PECO funding for academic buildings, we lobbied strongly and successfully. Once again, we received more than our aliquot share and at historic levels for UNF.

Our current building program addresses immediate and long term needs: more classrooms, more faculty offices, and moving administrative services to the periphery of the campus. It also advances our commitment to build a stronger student life program: student union and student residence halls. By use of these basic principles we have been very fortunate in being able to meet the most pressing of university needs and in positioning ourselves for future growth.

Further, we have become more ambitious in terms of architectural design and campus aesthetics. Each year the place simply looks better, and I’m committed to continuing these improvements.

As we considered cutting the budget we were determined to do so in a strategic and thoughtful manner. To accomplish this we established certain principles. First among these was the need to safeguard the integrity of our academic programs. This meant we would not require equal across-the-board reductions; instead our smallest percentage cuts would come from Academic Affairs. In saying that, our Provost was aggressive at assessing cuts. It also meant that we would put a moratorium on overall enrollment growth. We also took certain initiatives off the table before we began the budget cutting process [for an example see goal 3].

In executing budget cuts we began by using the reserves we set aside each year in case of a state-mandated callback. This was a reserve we created when I arrived that I hoped we would never need to use, but it served its purpose well. Next we asked vice presidents to identify potential budget cuts within their respective divisions. Because the exact amount of the cuts was unknown at the time, we used calculations based on the highest estimates. We then reviewed the proposed cuts trying to balance these suggestions against our long term goals for the university. In executing our moratorium on enrollment growth we made every effort to honor our commitments to AA and AS transfers from public community colleges, to increasing graduate enrollments and to working toward an ideal student body profile. This meant that we cut freshman admissions and restricted transfer admissions.

As I mentioned earlier in this document, our budget cuts have certainly put a strain on the university’s operations; most notably by limiting our ability to give faculty and staff raises. Nonetheless, we were able to improve the quality of our academic offerings. But to accomplish this we had to place strategic limits on enrollment. We anticipate similar limits in the upcoming year.

When we consider our private donations, the past year has been strong. Gifts totaled \$12.2 million and pledges were \$7.2 million. Within these we received \$350,000 to support five counselors and \$2 million in gifts and pledges for the endowment for the Jacksonville Commitment.

Reflections

Even with the challenges we faced in 2008, we made great progress in our long term and short term goals. Our work with Terry MacTaggart has led to a sharper definition of our vision and mission. We clearly handled the budget cuts with professionalism. Profiles of students and faculty improved again. Fundraising and lobbying efforts were also exceptional.

I am personally proud of a number of things, some seemingly mundane. The aesthetic appearance of the campus is dramatically different from just a few years back. Landscaping, signage and the quality of architectural design have been improved. The entrance road off of 9A now announces that a major university is just beyond. More substantial improvements are coming in the next year.

I am also excited about something we haven't even started to build yet – a new sanctuary/chapel. Fundraising has gone well toward that project. My hope is that this particular building will be a wonderful work of art and a place of peace, prayer and meditation for our students as they grow.

Although mundane, I think these things speak to the happy, successful maturing of a young campus. In some ways, these are symbolic, but along with these improvements to our appearance has been an unspoken improvement in our self-esteem. And along with that, our reputation has dramatically improved. Considering all of the metrics that we assess, I suspect that these are as good as any.

I hope that throughout the year, I have been able to convey how much the university benefits from your service and support, and how much I appreciate your friendship.

John