

PACE Update
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
April, 2008

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro embraces PACE as an important and continuing focus. For more than a decade, UNCG has placed an emphasis on "Students First" and has advanced a vision of being a diverse, student-centered research university, linking the Triad and North Carolina to the world through learning, discovery, and service. There is a tone at the top which permeates the campus to effectively and efficiently utilize our resources and abilities to the utmost in achieving our mission while serving our constituencies. This tone and attitude existed prior to PACE, as UNCG has undertaken a number of initiatives to improve functions, systems, organizations, and services. What is most appreciated about PACE are the actions being taken centrally to remove barriers, and to reduce and/or eliminate external constraints and other impositions which allow for significant improvements in efficiencies to be made.

UNCG has taken a holistic approach in achieving our mission and meeting the needs and expectations of our constituencies. The quality of the environment and the provision of the right level and efficiency of services directly affect our long term success. Accordingly, PACE at UNCG is a long term necessity, where initiatives are undertaken to continue to invest in improvements of infrastructure and services to achieve efficiencies which will allow UNCG to serve a growing student population with less proportionate funding in the non-core areas in the future. Recognizing that openness and communication are important, a PACE web page was created for the campus to provide information on PACE initiatives and plans, to emphasize the focus on efficiency, and to solicit new ideas for savings initiatives. An excerpt of the Chancellor's message on the web site says: "I encourage the campus community to share ideas for cost savings and cost avoidance through the use of this web site. Cost savings must continue to be a way of doing business at UNCG." Numerous communications regarding our PACE program have been delivered to the campus via the Staff Senate and Campus Weekly newsletter.

Following are some of the many initiatives that have been undertaken at UNCG related to PACE, with most originating from Business Affairs, Information Technology Services, and Student Affairs.

Energy Saving: UNCG entered into an Energy Performance Contract which is reducing utility consumption and related utility costs. It is estimated that in excess of \$700,000 will be saved on an annual basis after the installation of new equipment. The savings will be used to repay the funds that were borrowed to fund the equipment. Once the loan has been repaid (12 year term), the savings will accrue to the state and therefore cannot be redirected within the UNCG budget. In addition, an energy savings campaign was initiated to encourage people to turn off lights when not in a room, prohibit the use of space heaters, and be more aware of energy use and its cost. As a result of additional funding from the state and these initiatives, there will not be a utility budget shortfall for the first time in a number of years at UNCG.

HEAT – Higher Education Area Transit: The creation of a new transit system with the City of Greensboro has diminished our current and projected need for on campus parking. This should be considered an energy savings and green initiative as well as a PACE initiative. The HEAT buses serve the greater community around UNCG with easy access to apartments and other housing within a few miles of the campus as well as convenient stops on campus. As a result of the success of this transportation service, UNCG has been able to delay plans to construct additional parking on campus.

Enterprise Administrative Systems: Major investments have been and continue to be made in infrastructure and process improvement including automation and staffing. The investment in the Banner Finance and Human Resources systems and related interfaces and automated processes will pay dividends as we move forward. Implementing more complete solutions will enhance the availability and access to information for timely decisions and actions as well as providing efficiencies and better services. Other UNC campuses are also benefiting from the work done at UNCG, with the sharing of our chart of accounts and year-end process methodologies.

Student Billing, Payment, and Refunds: UNCG is in the process of making significant changes in student billing, payment and refunds with the help of an existing vendor. Beginning in fall 2008, electronic bill statements will be sent in lieu of paper bills, eliminating the need to send out thousands of pieces of paper each semester. This will include an automatic notification to the student when new bills are issued or have been paid. A student account center is coming on line in July to allow students to more easily view their balances and account activity, and make electronic payments. Beginning in July, there will be a convenience fee charged for credit/debit card payments. However, students will continue to have the option of paying online using an electronic check without a convenience fee. The new processes will make it easier for parents to make payments while at the same time complying with FERPA. Also, beginning in July, students will be able to choose to receive student refunds as paper checks or direct deposit. These initiatives allow greater flexibility for student billing and account access, allow for quicker and more secure refunds to students, reduce UNCG's use of paper and energy to produce and deliver documents, and allow the university relief from the burden of covering the unbudgeted costs of credit card fees.

Other Business Affairs Initiatives: A number of initiatives have been undertaken in the Division of Business Affairs for efficiency, cost savings and cost avoidance. UNCG switched the P-Card provider to obtain higher rebates, thereby reducing net costs. Direct deposit is now mandated for employee pay. Petty cash and travel advances have been eliminated except for certain situations. Telephone sets have been purchased rather than continued to be rented, and cell phones have been used to replace desk phones in appropriate instances. To avoid higher costs for multiple single ads, Newspaper advertisements for positions have been replaced by a weekly ad directing job seekers to the UNCG web page. A web-based application was developed and implemented to connect departments with surplus supplies or equipment with departments that are in need of such items. These initiatives helped to offset some of the legislative budget cut.

Academic Affairs Initiatives: Academic Affairs has historically experienced shortfalls in non-salary lines to support the academic units, which were covered by the use of lapsed salary funds. Beginning with the 2007-08 academic year lapsed salary funds previously set aside to cover unbudgeted costs in academic units were converted to use for additional graduate assistantships. This required academic units to explore additional ways to reduce and/or avoid costs without a negative programmatic impact.

Joint Primary Data Center: UNCG and NC A&T have announced a Joint Primary Data Center as a joint PACE initiative with cost avoidance in capital and operating costs versus the costs of building and operating separate data centers on both university campuses and at the South Campus of the Gateway University Research Park.

Wireless Refresh: Information Technology Services has taken a new approach and selected a new vendor to permit unbudgeted cost savings for Academic Affairs as compared to the cost of initial wireless deployment in academic buildings.

Course Management: UNCG's hosting of Blackboard for NC A&T went live in January. Savings are being realized by Academic Affairs at UNCG and by NC A&T.

Centralized Hardware Replacement: Information Technology Services is implementing a campus-wide central hardware replacement initiative this spring, which should result in significant savings across campus over what would be spent to replace computers and related equipment on a piecemeal basis. The largest savings are likely to be in Academic Affairs.

Other Information Technology Services Initiatives: The theme of Information Technology Services PACE initiatives is inter-institutional collaboration as well as intra-institutional collaboration. This spring, UNCG expects to go live with a Disaster Recovery initiative with Appalachian State University. UNCG equipment is installed at ASU which will ultimately allow for UNCG to operate off site from ASU in an emergency. Another initiative is to outsource student e-mail. The investigation, vendor selection, and student beta testing have been completed. UNCG is outsourcing student – email using Google this fall, and is now studying the possibility of outsourcing faculty/staff email. There is the potential for cost avoidance if faculty/staff email is outsourced.

Housing and Residence Life: Student Affairs initiatives are significant in the area of Housing and Residence Life. Internet access was outsourced to Time Warner beginning in the Fall 2007 semester. A decision was also made to eliminate student-room telephones beginning in the Fall of 2008. The cost savings from these initiatives will be reallocated to the UNC-mandated residence hall fire sprinkler projects between now and 2012, and/or other residence hall life-safety and critical systems projects. Although these initiatives do not affect state funds, they do impact costs and the resulting prices to students.

UNCG's highest priority relative to the utilization of savings from its PACE initiatives is to provide funding for additional Graduate Assistantships. For 2007-08, \$1,300,000 was redirected from lapsed salaries previously used for support of academic units, \$250,000 from the telephone services auxiliary, and \$162,316 from other divisions, for a total of \$1,712,316.

For 2007-08, the state funds portion of savings from the PACE initiatives, not used for graduate assistantships above, were used to cover a portion of the legislative PACE budget cut.