

# University of North Carolina Greensboro

## *Documentation of the Teachers for a New Era Learning Network*

April 2009

### INTRODUCTION

The Academy for Educational Development (AED) sent a research team to the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG) on October 23-24, 2008, to conduct interviews with individuals who play important roles in the university's teacher preparation program. These interviews, along with additional documentation provided by UNCG and identified by the AED research team, provide the basis for this case study.

This case study is one of nine prepared by AED to document evidence of institutional change in teacher preparation at nine of the 30 universities that took part in the Teachers for A New Era (TNE) Learning Network, an initiative supported from 2005-2009 by a grant from the Annenberg Foundation, with additional funding from Carnegie Corporation of New York. AED selected the nine universities based upon a variety of factors, including their degree of engagement in the Learning Network and their willingness to specify a program objective and indicator(s) of change that reflected important work underway and provided a focus for this case study.

*Institutional change*, for the purposes of this study, means change that goes beyond adjusting course curricula, or degree requirements, or even holding meetings across university departments. It means change that transforms a teacher education program's organizational structure, culture, external relationships, and ways of assessing the outcomes of its work. Such change is often based on research evidence, involves sustained partnerships with school districts and personnel, establishes cross-college and cross-departmental pathways for work and communication, increases the quality and length of time that candidates spend in school settings, and assesses its teacher candidates on their effectiveness in the classroom. Institutional change is not change for change's sake, but a mission-driven effort to refocus the activities of the teacher education program on the effectiveness of their graduates in helping pupils learn.

Based upon the nine case studies, the AED research team has prepared a cross-case study that documents and analyzes evidence related to four broad research questions:

1. Is there evidence of institutional change along the lines of the TNE design principles in the preparation of teachers at these institutions?
2. In what categories of change does this evidence appear?

3. Around which indicators do these appear?
4. What aspects of the Learning Network, if any, are reported to have triggered or enhanced the occurrence of change or supported its continuation?

The nine case studies will be made available to the Annenberg Foundation and to Carnegie Corporation of New York. The cross-case study will be published as part of a major publication, also funded by the Annenberg Foundation, which will serve as a final report and recommend next steps for the TNE Learning Network.

### DETERMINING THE FOCUS FOR THIS CASE STUDY

University-based teacher preparation is a complex enterprise with many elements and many players, and this is especially true for universities attempting fundamental change. To provide a manageable focus for these case studies, AED staff asked the TNE Learning Network universities to select one program objective by which they would wish to document their progress. AED asked that this objective (1) reflect an important aspect of teacher preparation at their institution, (2) address one or more of the TNE design principles, and (3) logically connect to pupil success. They were also asked to specify indicators that the change sought was occurring.

The authors of the UNCG statement selected a two-fold objective that addresses the TNE principle of “teaching as an academically taught clinical practice profession.” This objective identified two ways in which UNCG would strengthen its working relationships with K-12 schools and teachers:

1. Build more effective collaboration between UNCG and the K-12 schools where our students are placed for clinical experiences.
2. Develop a network of exemplary K-12 teachers who serve as professional partners.

In addition, UNCG developed four performance indicators that could be used to gauge progress toward this objective:

1. Regularly scheduled, productive meetings between UNCG and the school districts
2. Systems of accountability and communication that facilitate collaboration
3. A retreat for exemplary teachers prior to the start of school, fall 08. The retreat will incorporate the following: time for the teachers to provide feedback to the program re: how to improve and an orientation to the UNCG program that will prepare the teachers to be clinical faculty.
4. A system for credentialing the exemplary teachers who participate in the orientation and a means of perpetuating the credentialing process.

The performance objective identified by UNCG was seen as offering tangible benefits to partner schools and districts as well as the university’s teacher education programs. The statement submitted by UNCG indicated that “that both teachers in the system and candidates in training will receive more system support and additional training” as a result of improved collaboration between UNCG and the school districts. In the longer-term, the additional support and training were also projected to yield increases in pupil performance and higher retention rates for exemplary teachers.

This case study documents the university's efforts to build more effective collaboration between UNCG and K-12 clinical sites and to develop a network of exemplary K-12 teachers. Because this work occurs within the context of UNCG's extensive history with innovative teacher preparation and collaborative partnerships, the case study also describes key aspects of that history.

### HISTORY OF INNOVATION

UNCG was one of thirty universities selected by the Annenberg Foundation and Carnegie Corporation of New York to take part in the TNE Learning Network, whose most basic purpose was to encourage a broader circle of universities to adopt the three principles of Teachers for a New Era as the guiding directions for their work. Originally published in the *Prospectus* for TNE in 2001, the three design principles are: 1) decisions driven by evidence; 2) engagement with arts and sciences; and 3) teaching as an academically taught clinical practice profession. UNCG, like many of the other Learning Network institutions, had already demonstrated considerable progress along these lines at the time of its selection.

Chartered by the North Carolina (NC) legislature in 1891, the university opened its doors as the State Normal and Industrial School on Oct. 5, 1892, with a faculty of 15 and 223 students in three departments—business, domestic science, and teaching. A number of name changes ensued (State Normal and Industrial College, North Carolina College for Women, and Women's College of North Carolina) as the institution evolved and expanded, but the preparation of teachers remained central to its mission. The school of education was formally established in 1921. The final name change took effect in 1963, shortly after the UNC trustees recommended that the Greensboro campus become coeducational at all levels of instruction. Today, UNCG is one of 16 baccalaureate institutions in the University of North Carolina (UNC) system and classified as a research university with a total enrollment of more than 17,000 students (almost 70 percent of whom are female).

UNCG offers 20 teacher education programs (encompassing 32 content areas in which students can pursue licensure) in the School of Education (SOE), the School of Music (SOM), the School of Human Environmental Sciences (HES), the School of Health and Human Performance (HHP), and the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS). Total enrollment in teacher education programs averages 1960 students annually, with approximately 41 percent at the undergraduate level. In addition, UNC is an active participant in NC Teach, the state's alternative licensure program for individuals who already hold a baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university. Each year, UNCG produces 488 to 564 teachers—approximately 483 through traditional teacher preparation programs and the remainder through NC Teach. A significant percentage of these teachers find employment in local school districts, thereby creating something of a closed loop in which UNCG alumni are preparing the next generation of UNCG students.

With more than a century of experience in preparing teachers for NC schools, UNCG has a rich and distinguished record of innovation and institutional change. Since its earliest incarnation as a normal school, UNCG has developed and sustained a national reputation for its commitment to the preparation of high-quality teachers. Within the past two decades, the college of education at UNCG has initiated major partnerships with local school districts, dramatically restructured its clinical practice continuum, and collaborated with arts and sciences colleagues on comprehensive revisions to teacher education programs and curricula.

According to Dale Schunk, dean of the school of education (SOE), “One major change is our expanding perspective on the period of time for working with people.” He explained that this change encompasses expanded teacher recruitment that begins in middle and high school, increased exposure to teaching through all disciplines, identification of a full-time director of recruitment and retention, greater emphasis on recruitment from community colleges, and designation of a transfer advisor who works with community college advisors to develop continuous academic plans for prospective teachers and to ensure transfer of credits. He also cited the importance of a grant from the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation that supported the recruitment of more students (particularly those with undeclared majors) into teacher education from within the university.

While UNCG’s well-earned reputation is derived in large measure from its consistent emphasis on improving teacher education and teaching, the institution also benefits substantially from its status as one of the three original members of the UNC system. With 15 of its 16 member institutions offering teacher education programs, the UNC system is known for its long-standing commitment to meeting the needs of NC’s public schools. Erskine Bowles, the current chancellor of the UNC system, has made teacher education a priority and acknowledged the system’s responsibility for helping to address the state’s teacher shortage. In addition, the NC legislature, the NC Department of Public Instruction (DPI), and a series of “education governors,” have introduced a number of policy initiatives aimed at strengthening the preparation of teachers and creating stronger working relationships between university-based teacher preparation programs and public school districts. As described in greater detail below, several UNC system and state initiatives provided a platform for innovations and reform strategies implemented effectively at UNCG.

### **INTRA-UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS**

UNCG’s selection of an objective related to clinical practice reflected significant progress and momentum that had already been achieved on this front. In essence, UNCG sought to build upon a foundation that had already been established through changes to clinical fieldwork requirements for teacher candidates; previous interactions with the New Teacher Center (NTC) at the University of California, Santa Cruz; the state’s Beginning Teacher Support Program; the creation of the Wachovia Mentoring Network; and collaborations with arts and sciences (A&S) faculty on both school-based projects and “re-visioning” of university curricula. In seeking to expand its approaches to K-12 partnerships, UNCG made the somewhat risky determination to pursue an objective in which the outcomes were heavily dependent on the SOE’s collaborators within and beyond the university community.

#### ***The UNCG Teachers Academy***

The Teachers Academy serves as the administrative and governance unit for all professional education programs offered at UNCG. Established in the late 1990s to create an umbrella across all schools and colleges involved in teacher preparation, the Teachers Academy provides a governance structure that strengthens the university-wide approach to education of prospective teachers and other school personnel. The vision for the Teachers Academy is that of an “invisible university” that admits all students interested in teaching, regardless of their majors. Their applications, placements for student teaching, and licensure requirements are coordinated by the Teachers Academy rather than spread out across the university.

The Teachers Academy brings together faculty from across the campus for interdisciplinary communication, planning, and problem solving. Since it is not an academic unit with formal lines of

administrative authority, the Teachers Academy relies on collaboration and cooperation to accomplish its mission “to prepare and support the professional development of caring, collaborative, and competent educators who work in diverse settings.”<sup>1</sup> According to Schunk, “The Teachers Academy has brought continued growth and definition to our understanding of what teacher preparation is.”

The Teachers Academy houses a variety of special projects and initiatives, many of which are operated under the aegis of the University-School Teacher Education Partnership (USTEP). Launched at member institutions by the UNC system in the late 1990s, USTEP supports continuous improvement of both public schools and their faculties and university-based professional education programs and their faculties. Although USTEP is not a formal body, it receives funding from the NC legislature to promote partnership activities, and relatively few restrictions are placed on use of these funds.

Current USTEP initiatives include: annual summer leadership institutes for Triad teachers; the Preparing Outstanding Science Teachers (POST) program that uses a train-the-trainer model to strengthen science instruction in the middle grades; and NC Quest, an NSF-funded initiative that engages A&S (chemistry and biology) and education faculty to work with local schools on curriculum and professional development. The NC QUEST grant enables science faculty from UNCG to work on site with 10-12 high school science teachers who earn continuing education credits for participation in monthly content sessions.

Within the Teachers Academy, the Council of Program Coordinators (CPC) bears responsibility for the quality of UNCG’s licensure programs. The CPC is the policy-setting body that approves any changes to professional education programs. Each professional education program is represented on the CPC, which has more than 40 members, including a significant number of A&S faculty members who are designated as program coordinators for secondary education in their respective disciplines. (Ownership or housing of secondary education programs at UNCG is idiosyncratic, with some located in education and others located in A&S departments. For example, secondary English education is housed within the English department in the College of Arts and Sciences while secondary social studies education is housed in the department of curriculum and instruction in the School of Education.) A smaller executive committee guides the work of the CPC by setting agendas, developing work plans, and drafting policy recommendations.

### ***Re-visioning of Professional Education Programs***

Since 2008, a state-mandated re-visioning of all professional education programs has been a major focus of the CPC. As one component of an effort to streamline and simplify the approval process for teacher education programs in NC, all public and private institutions have been required to re-vision their programs to meet new standards for teachers and school executives. Four guiding principles were adopted by the NC board of education to guide the re-visioning process:

1. Focus on outcomes rather than inputs
2. Elimination of barriers and obstacles
3. Increased rigor/accountability with increased flexibility
4. 21<sup>st</sup> Century programs producing 21<sup>st</sup> Century teachers<sup>2</sup>

1) UNCG Teachers Academy Mission Statement ([www.uncg.edu](http://www.uncg.edu))

2) NC Board of Education

The NC board of education also placed explicit emphases on content, assessments, and K-12 partnerships. In re-visioning their teacher education programs, colleges and universities are required to develop “power standards” for each specialty licensure area (e.g., math, science, or English) that reflect expected candidate learning outcomes and align with both the NC K-12 Standard Course of Study and the standards of appropriate national professional associations. Components of the final report that must be submitted to the NC board of education by July 1, 2009 include: a description of how each program has been re-visioned (i.e., how it is different from the current program); the assessment measures the institution will use for electronic evidence; and documentation of how public school partners were involved in the re-visioning process and the roles they will play in delivery and evaluation.

CPC members have assumed leadership responsibilities in the re-visioning process and played critical roles as conduits to their departments. The process began with a series of cross-university faculty retreats with school district partners that explored possible changes in curricula, assessments, field placements, and program sequence and requirements. A re-visioning committee was established for each program, with members drawn from education, A&S, and K-12 schools. The committees’ work included changes in courses and course sequences, creation of integrated or interdisciplinary courses, development of electronic assessments, and identification of strategies for coordinating upper-level content courses with student teaching. In addition to the state standards to which the re-visioned programs must be aligned, data sources included surveys of students, faculty, and cooperating teachers. These data helped pinpoint the need for specific program changes such as greater emphasis on math for elementary education students, more time in the field for secondary programs, and greater emphasis on preparing candidates to work with students who speak English as a second language and students with special needs.

One outcome of the re-visioning process has particular relevance to UNCG’s Learning Network objective. As faculty from education, A&S, and K-12 schools worked together to revise course curricula and program sequences, consensus emerged on the need to expand field placements in other programs to the 1000-hour level currently offered in the elementary education program. By redesigning programs with significant increases in clinical fieldwork, faculty teams are creating opportunities to get teacher education candidates into schools far earlier in their course sequences. They are also revising sequences to draw tighter connections between methods and content courses.

For example, an English faculty member has added a fieldwork component to the teaching of writing course required for secondary English education. Her students, who are usually sophomores or juniors, work one-on-one for an hour each week with ninth-grade English students at Northern High School, one of UNCG’s professional development schools (PDS). She also works closely with the education faculty member who has responsibility for placement and supervision of the internships that secondary English education majors complete in the fall of their senior year. The coordination between these two faculty members allows them to align instruction and scaffold learning. As a result, the internship supervisor reported that students entering her course “have more tangible ideas about what it’s like to work with students, think more critically, and are better able to negotiate the conflict between state requirements and what they’re learning at UNCG.” In addition, more English majors are deciding to go into teaching.

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At UNCG, the re-visioning process was seen as a way to expand collaboration and develop mutual ownership of teacher education programs. One of the strengths of the comprehensive re-visioning process, according to one UNCG administrator, was that “it left nothing untouched.” Another administrator noted that UNCG was ahead of the curve because it had “the structure in place to bring together internal and external collaborators.” An A&S faculty member said that re-visioning “is challenging us to work in new ways across units and breaking down silos.” Another indicated that the re-visioning process is “helping greatly in improving individual courses.” Nonetheless, several A&S faculty indicated that education jargon sometimes poses a barrier to effective communication with A&S faculty and thus needs to be avoided.

The assessment requirements associated with re-visioning proved to be particularly challenging for some faculty collaborators. The new state requirements are forcing each program to identify six assessments—two in a content area and four in teacher education/pedagogy—that students will complete and include in their electronic portfolios. In future years, the state will conduct random monitoring of student performance (work products) on these assessments to ensure program quality. By connecting student assessments in content areas directly with program reviews at the state level, the re-visioning process has raised the stakes for collaboration and forced greater ownership of teacher education on A&S departments. As one A&S faculty member observed, “Departments are crawling into the assessment arena kicking and screaming.”

Betty Epanchin, director of the Teachers Academy since 2004 and associate dean for teacher education and school relationships, is widely credited with revitalizing the Teachers Academy and engaging both arts and sciences (A&S) faculty and K-12 partners more systematically in professional education programs. Tim Johnston, dean of the college of arts and sciences, noted that Epanchin “wisely got A&S faculty involved early” in the state-mandated re-visioning initiative. Schunk confirmed the critical role Epanchin played in “getting the ball rolling and bringing faculty together.” He also noted how important it was to get participants moved beyond details such as credit hours and focused on what students need and how UNCG can help them become better teachers.

### **PARTNERSHIPS WITH SCHOOL DISTRICTS**

Greensboro and the neighboring cities of Winston-Salem and High Point are the municipal anchors for NC’s Piedmont Triad, a 12-county region in north central NC that is home to more than 1.5 million people, 11 baccalaureate institutions, and nine community colleges. With a population approaching 250,000, Greensboro is the largest city in the Triad and one of the most diverse, with minorities constituting approximately 44 percent of the population. Greensboro is the county seat of Guilford County, which experienced an astonishing 52 percent increase in the number of children (ages 0-17) in poverty from 2000 to 2004. From 2000 to 2007, the growth rate for Latino or Hispanic citizens in Guilford County climbed exponentially to 75 percent.

UNCG works closely with 16 school districts in the Triad and adjacent counties—-but its strongest ties are to the Guilford County Schools (GCS). The third largest district in NC and the 4<sup>8</sup>th largest in the country, GCS serves more than 71,000 PK-12 pupils in 120 schools. Nearly 60 percent of the

GCS population is non-white and approximately half qualifies for free or reduced-price meals.<sup>3</sup> Collectively, the student body represents 109 countries and speaks 86 languages.<sup>4</sup> GCS is also the second largest employer in the 12-county Triad region.

As in other parts of NC, school districts in the Piedmont Triad are struggling to keep up with enrollments that are constantly expanding. Historically, GCS has added 1200-1500 students each year—or roughly the equivalent of a high school’s total enrollment. The impact of this continuous growth on both school systems and the universities that prepare teachers for them is compounded by the fact that enrollment increases tend to be highest among populations with additional instructional needs (e.g., English language learners [ELLs]). In rural Chatham County, which is collaborating with UNCG on a \$1.4 million grant to increase English-as-a-second language (ESL) certification, the growth in ELLs has been staggering—from 15 students in 1987 to 1518, or approximately 20 percent of the district’s enrollment, two decades later.<sup>5</sup>

UNCG’s partnerships with school districts range from informal working relationships developed and nurtured by individual faculty to the 16-district Wachovia Mentoring Network and a revitalized group of PDS that is evolving and expanding, particularly at the secondary level. All of these partners contributed in some way to UNCG’s efforts to engage K-12 institutions and practitioners more deeply—and more effectively—in university-based teacher preparation.

### ***Wachovia Mentoring Network***

Established in spring 2006 to recruit, prepare, and support a network of 150 educational mentors in the 16 school districts in the Piedmont Triad region during a three-year period, the Wachovia Mentoring Network (Wachovia Network) has three goals: 1) increase retention of both novice and mentor teachers; 2) provide quality professional development for mentor teachers; and 3) increase pupil achievement in the classrooms of novice teachers. Although not explicitly reflected in its goals, the Wachovia Network played a significant role in UNCG’s Learning Network objective by helping build relationships with K-12 schools and providing a leg up in the identification of exemplary K-12 teachers who can serve as professional partners in teacher education. As of fall 2008, the Wachovia Network included 137 mentors from 10 districts and a full-time coordinator housed at UNCG.

Mentors selected by partner districts participated in a range of professional development activities, including a week-long Teacher Mentoring Institute in their first summer. Periodic follow-up meetings were held at the district level during the school year and additional institutes were held at UNCG during school years and in subsequent summers. An on-line community and listserv supplemented face-to-face communications among mentors and provided further connections to UNCG faculty. Partnership funds from the state were used to complement the Wachovia investment by covering the costs associated with faculty conferences and stipends for institute participants.

Although 11 or 12 districts ultimately responded to UNCG’s invitation to be a part of the Wachovia Network, they approached mentoring of novice teachers with different strategies and staffing configurations. At least one experimented with electronic mentoring while others used coaches

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3) Guilford County Schools Fact Sheet

4) Ibid

5) AASA web site



or lead mentors to provide additional support to school-based mentors. At a minimum, mentors in participating districts were expected to meet with novice teachers at least weekly and conduct classroom observations followed by feedback and discussion at least twice each semester. UNCG convened regular meetings with the districts' mentor or induction coordinators to promote sharing of challenges, successes, and lessons learned.

The creation of the Wachovia Network allowed UNCG and its district partners to come closer to realizing the NC board of education's goal for mentoring of novice teachers. The board's goal is for every first- and second-year teacher to have a full-release mentor with a ratio of one mentor to 15 novices—but the state has not provided the financial support needed to realize this ambitious goal. For example, there were only two mentors in the Guilford County Schools (GCS) three years ago and their focus was evaluative rather than supportive. The district now has full-time induction support coaches, each of whom works in the schools with 35-40 novice teachers. A recent retiree also serves as a half-time coach. The new teachers are expected to set the agendas for meetings with their induction coaches. Perhaps most important, the coaches are no longer seen as evaluators—they are supporters who have established trust.

UNCG's longstanding relationship with the NTC is widely credited for the initial success of the Wachovia Network. As described in greater detail below, the NTC provided initial mentor training as well as consultations with individual districts on development of induction programs. In doing so, the NTC helped the Wachovia Network jumpstart activities on two immediate and inter-related priorities: district planning and mentor training. While NC statutes previously required each district to develop an induction plan, one UNCG administrator reported that many of the plans were superficial—and only two districts in the region had made strong commitments to induction programs when the Wachovia Network was launched.

Since the Wachovia funding will end this year, the challenges associated with building a sustainable mentor network are a major concern shared by UNCG faculty and partner districts. The general consensus is that the Wachovia Network has had a significant impact and that momentum could be lost if some variation of it is not sustained. As one district coordinator observed, "Conversations are more learning-focused, coaches are acting as growth agents to help novice teachers move from dependence to independence, principals are providing extra support to struggling teachers, and the board of education understands that induction is related to retention."

Some districts are already exploring alternative strategies for maintaining a viable cadre of mentors. The GCS, for example, created a teacher-led mentoring coffee house series that attracted approximately 50 teachers. Wachovia mentors planned, facilitated, and received a stipend for leading this series of eight training sessions held at local coffee houses restaurants. The content of the training drew extensively from the Wachovia Network training offered by UNCG and the NTC. Participating teachers were required to attend at least five of eight two-hour sessions in order to earn credit toward continuing certification. Now in its second year, the coffee house strategy is showing evidence of roots within the district as some of the teachers who completed the training last year are now session leaders who've attended a UNCG session on assessing student work. To accommodate the GCS requirement that mentors have attained career status (i.e. at least five years of experience), the

coffee house organizers are now inviting fourth-year teachers to mentor training and meetings so they will be ready to work with candidates and novices next year.

### ***Rebuilding the Professional Development School Network***

In addition to efforts to sustain the mentoring network, UNCG has also embarked on an ambitious effort to rebuild its PDS network. More than a decade ago, UNCG revised its elementary education program to require 1000 hours of fieldwork and adopted a cohort model that grouped approximately 25 candidates in a single PDS for a two-year series of clinical experiences ranging from observations and tutoring through student teaching. One result of these revisions was a well-developed, but haphazardly constructed, PDS network consisting primarily of high need elementary and middle schools in Guilford County. The nature of UNCG's relationship with some of these schools later changed as a result of staff and administrative turnover, district concerns (and later policy revisions) related to placement of students with non-tenured teachers, and principals' requests for more defined roles in clinical fieldwork.

These changes have required UNCG and school and district administrators to "return to the drawing board" and revisit what it means to be a PDS. Some important lessons and criteria have emerged from UNCG's work with Northern High School, which unlike the previous elementary PDS, was literally envisioned as a PDS from the earliest stages of construction and design. To date, UNCG and its K-12 (primarily GCS) collaborators have agreed upon structured processes for placing students and selecting schools, but a new list of PDS has yet to emerge. Ironically, a leading candidate to join the revitalized PDS network is another secondary school—E.O. Smith High School in Greensboro, which now owns the dubious distinction of being the lowest performing high school in the state of NC.

Other partnerships with individual schools or school districts are numerous—and less formal. In many instances they are built around personal relationships and/or specific projects. Nonetheless, they have contributed individually and collectively to the effort to build more effective collaboration between UNCG and the K-12 schools where students are placed for clinical experiences. Two examples noted previously are the NC Quest and POST programs, both of which have generated external funding to improve science education at the secondary level. Other examples of partnerships serving specific schools include the Teachers Leading Teachers project that brings science teachers to the UNCG campus to learn how to use a lesson-study model to integrate science topics and the Cumulative Effects program in which UNCG faculty train teachers from Guilford County's *Mission Possible* schools in an effort to raise student achievement.

Partnership activities developed without the stimulus of external funding include two study groups for on-site teacher educators (i.e., cooperating teachers) that the elementary education coordinator had convened at one PDS and the interest they sparked in other schools. She also described a process by which pupils identified as needing extra academic support are tutored by math and reading methods students from UNCG. In addition to supplementing the instruction provided to these pupils in their regular classrooms, the tutoring sessions created opportunities for UNCG students to use assessments to identify pupils' needs.

GCS faculty and administrators are generally positive in their assessments of UNCG's efforts to collaborate. "One strength of UNCG is that university personnel, including the coordinating professor for student teachers, are on campus regularly, accessible, and willing to talk with school personnel about any issue," observed one GCS administrator. She also noted that GCS teachers are serving as adjunct professors at UNCG—and that many UNCG faculty members come out to the schools. While acknowledging considerable overlap between UNCG and GCS efforts, she also noted that there are opportunities to do more.

### EVIDENCE OF INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE

At the outset, this case study described UNCG's proposed program improvement objectives as well as the indicators of change and evidence of pupil achievement and increased teacher retention that they hoped would result. In 2008 and 2009, UNCG made demonstrable progress on its dual objectives of building more effective collaboration with the K-12 schools in which its students are placed and developing a network of exemplary K-12 teachers who serve as professional partners. The Wachovia Network proved to be an effective vehicle for identification of approximately 150 exemplary teachers who are ready and willing to collaborate with UNCG, and activities within the member districts helped to establish pipelines for development of additional exemplary partner teachers.

Through the Wachovia Network and other partnership activities, UNCG achieved two of its performance indicators—regularly scheduled, productive meetings between UNCG and school districts and systems of accountability and communication that facilitate collaboration. In addition, both the state-mandated re-visioning process and the 2008 Yopp summer institute provided opportunities for K-12 teachers and administrators to provide constructive feedback on how to improve UNCG's teacher education programs. In short, UNCG appears to have made dramatic strides toward a cultural transformation in which partnerships are an institutional responsibility rather than a personal goal for individual faculty members.

With a strong foundation now in place, UNCG is well-positioned to move forward on efforts to strengthen both intra-university and K-12 partnerships. UNCG faculty and administrators identified important steps that have been taken to sustain the work accomplished to date as well as the challenges that lie ahead. For example, one A&S faculty member expressed concerns about how to extend collaboration between A&S and education faculty after the re-visioning process ends and how to inform and engage new faculty. She suggested that the next step needs to be greater emphasis on improving the practice of teaching and learning. Her sentiments were echoed by a colleague who said, "It would help coordination of programs if UNCG would make scholarship of teaching and learning count for tenure."

The funding that launched the Wachovia Network will be expended by the end of 2009, but a high level of residual energy and commitment will remain. Both K-12 and university faculty articulated the critical importance of sustaining the momentum generated by the Wachovia Network—and expanding its work to provide induction support to lateral-entry teachers certified through NC Teach, the state's alternative teacher preparation program. UNCG has committed to supporting the Network coordinator's position and seeking additional grant funds, and as noted earlier, many of the participating districts are already

exploring alternative funding sources to support building-level mentors. Since the NC legislature has already made significant commitments to induction programs, some network participants are questioning whether state funds can be used more flexibly. The existence of state funding also provides a compelling leveraging opportunity to present to private funders.

### ***Elements of Learning Network Influence***

Epanchin cited the “incredible timing” that aligned UNCG’s participation in the Learning Network with the state-mandated re-visioning process. She credited the Learning Network with stimulating a closer working relationship with Denise Baker, the associate dean of arts and sciences. Baker participated in three of the Learning Network meetings and subsequently became a key player in the re-visioning process. Active leadership from A&S was seen as critical in this process—in part because some of secondary education programs are housed in A&S departments. The re-visioning process forced A&S faculty members to become familiar with state standards and provided a unique opportunity for the CAS to collaborate with education on the explicit priority of growing UNCG’s secondary education programs, particularly in the critical shortage areas of math and science.

**ANNUAL MEETINGS.** UNCG’s selection as a Learning Network member provided highly visible recognition of the quality of its teacher preparation programs and a forum in which administrators and faculty could learn with and from peer institutions. Even though the Learning Network brought only limited resources to the campus, participation was seen as highly valuable for a number of reasons. For example, administrators from both the school of education and the college of arts and sciences noted the benefits of attending the annual LN meetings. They explained that the meetings provided opportunities to learn what other institutions are doing and to explore problems they have in common.

As a result of presentations at the Learning Network meetings, UNCG also got helpful feedback and suggestions from peer institutions. For example, Epanchin cited guidance she received from the dean of education at California State University, Northridge as helpful in pushing UNCG to identify one “official” voice for each program on the CPC. Although some programs still send multiple representatives (some of whom are from different schools or departments) to CPC meetings, she reported that this change had eliminated problems that previously arose when the multiple representatives had differences of opinion on decisions affecting their program.

**COLLABORATION WITH THE NEW TEACHER CENTER.** UNCG’s initial collaboration with the NTC predated its invitation to join the Learning Network. As a springboard for planning the Wachovia Network, UNCG took a team of teacher leaders to one of the NTC’s institutes and brought an NTC team to campus to provide mentor training. As a result, UNCG was uniquely positioned to take full advantage of the opportunity provided by the Learning Network to develop a sustained relationship with the NTC.

With the additional support funded by the Learning Network, UNCG was able to offer a local NTC summer institute that provided training in observation systems, feedback to novice teachers, and other related topics as well as customized NTC consultation with individual districts. These

consultations focused on building consensus on the district's vision for induction and/or expansion of its induction efforts. In addition, NTC trainers worked intensively with mentors from the Wachovia Network. Both UNCG and district personnel were quick to point to the value of NTC involvement. Even as funding for the Wachovia Network began to wane, some districts were actively searching for ways to increase the number of lead mentors and to send a team to an NTC training conference. According to the lead coach in the GCS, "The NTC helped accelerate the pace of change and the nature of conversations; as a result of NTC participation there is a better understanding of the role of mentors as growth agents."

### ***Other Factors Contributing to Institutional Change***

As noted previously, UNCG had the necessary structures and relationships in place to begin to move forward on efforts to strengthen K-12 partnerships. In addition, the Teachers Academy had strong support from both education and A&S deans as well as faculty and administrators in many of the surrounding school districts. These factors contributed significantly to institutional change and are likely to prove critical as UNCG moves to sustain and expand its accomplishments.

**UNIVERSITY COMMITMENT TO TEACHER EDUCATION.** As suggested previously, active A&S engagement in the education of prospective teacher and the governance of teacher education programs is a strong indicator of university commitment. A&S faculty and administrators acknowledge that support for teacher preparation varies considerably within academic departments—but note that many have developed a strong sense of ownership. As one might predict, A&S engagement in teacher education is generally strong at the secondary level but less consistent at the elementary level. Johnston (the A&S dean) is credited with encouraging A&S department heads to value the role of teacher education, particularly the program coordinators who are housed in academic disciplines. He recently collaborated with the dean of education to convene a forum on math and science education attended by 45 faculty members who wanted to hear what others are doing and find ways to coordinate their efforts. Providing further evidence of CAS commitment to teacher preparation, the associate dean now joins education administrators for meetings with the Guilford County school board to facilitate discussions of A&S contributions to local schools. SOE administrators also cited strong support for teacher education from both the current provost and his predecessor, who had previously served as dean of the SOE.

The new SOE building, which is slated to open 2012 or 2013, is expected to become a highly visible symbol of the university's commitment to teacher preparation. The plans for the new building reflect the priorities and mission of the SoE and the messages it wants to send to the outside world. For example, both the outreach office and the dean's office will be located on the first floor to demonstrate accessibility and openness. A math and science institute open to K-12 partners will also be housed on the first floor. Similar analyses of purpose and function guided decisions to connect all support services (e.g., the advising center, the transfer advisor, information technology, and the Teachers Academy) on the third floor--and to bring education research and methodology together on the second floor to provide enhanced opportunities for hands-on interactions with and among students at all levels (undergraduate through doctoral).

**NATIONAL RECOGNITION OF UNCG.** Although UNCG is neither the flagship of the UNC system nor the largest producer of teachers in the system, its teacher education programs have consistently attracted national recognition and funding. Both within the state and across the country, UNCG has developed a reputation for quality and innovation in the preparation of teachers. UNCG is consistently rated in the nation's top 50 schools of education in the annual rankings prepared by *US News and World Report*. The collaboration with Chatham County, which is well beyond the borders of the Piedmont Triad, exemplifies UNCG's leadership in teacher education and professional development as well as its responsiveness to the needs of NC school districts and the pupils they serve.

**OTHER EXTERNAL COLLABORATIONS.** UNCG is a member of the Guilford County Teacher Education Alliance, which attempts to promote collaboration among the six universities in the county that offer teacher preparation programs. The alliance brings together public and private institutions including two HBCUs, North Carolina A&T and Bennett College. UNCG administrators reported that the six institutions work well together but struggle with questions about the mission of the alliance and a shared vision for how coordination might lead to improvements in teacher education and clinical practice across the county.

## APPENDIX A

### INTERVIEWEES

Denise Baker, Associate Dean, College of Arts and Sciences  
Chris Bronson, MSP Grant Coordinator, Guilford County Schools  
Judi Craven, Beginning Teacher Coordinator, Randolph County Schools  
Elizabeth (Betty) Epanchin, Director, Teachers Academy and Associate Dean for Teacher Education/School Partnerships, School of Education  
Jim Evans, Director of Undergraduate Studies, English Department  
Melissa Harrelson, Retired Principal, Guilford County Schools  
Amy Holcomb, Adjunct Instructor, College of Teacher Education and Higher Education  
Tim Johnston, Dean, College of Arts and Sciences  
Debbie Kraszeski, Secondary Science Specialist, Guilford County Schools  
Barbara Levin, Professor, Elementary Education, Department of Teacher Education and Higher Education  
Catherine Matthews, Professor, Department of Curriculum and Instruction  
Karen Matthews, Teacher, Guilford County Schools  
Sam Miller, Chair, Department of Curriculum and Instruction and Program Coordinator, Elementary Education  
Faye Patterson, Participant, Wachovia Mentoring Network  
Sarah Pratt, Adjunct Instructor, College of Teacher Education  
Sue Renn, Beginning Teacher Coach, Greensboro Public Schools  
Jeanie Reynolds, Director of English Education, English Department  
Dale Schunk, Dean, School of Education  
Carol Seaman, Associate Professor, Mathematics and Statistics Department  
Tom Sharpe, Participant, Wachovia Mentoring Network  
Sue Shelmerdine, Professor, Classical Studies and Coordinator, Latin Program  
Jennifer Smith, Guidance Counselor, Asheboro High School  
Martha Snavely, Principal, Guilford County Schools  
Lisa Tolbert, Associate Professor, History Department  
Ada Vallecorsa, Associate Dean, School of Education  
Amy Vetter, Assistant Professor, Department of Teacher Education and Higher Education  
Jerry Walsh, Professor, Chemistry Department  
Sandy Webb, Clinical Faculty Member, Teacher Education and Development