

# Program Evaluation Division Review of the North Carolina Guaranteed Admissions Program Report

---

A presentation to the Joint Legislative  
Program Evaluation Oversight Committee

April 11, 2016

John Turcotte, Director



# Presentation Preview

- **NCGAP is a deferred admissions program effective with the fall 2017 admitted class**
- **PED cautions the General Assembly against overrelying on the NCGAP report's conclusions because:**
  - Methods of measuring student intent for potential NCGAP participants could have been improved and the projected impacts of NCGAP on graduation rates are not conclusive
  - Savings to students and the State may be understated because of a lack of available data and inclusion of limited costs
  - The NCGAP report lacks detail on potential incentives to encourage participation and the necessity of “tens of millions” in additional funds for counseling



# Background of NCGAP

- S.L. 2015-241 created the North Carolina Guaranteed Admissions Program (NCGAP)
- Establishes a deferred admissions program for academically at risk students who are less competitive than other students admitted to UNC institutions
- UNC institutions will provide a deferred admission to certain students who will first attend a community college and earn an associate degree before transferring to the same UNC institution



# Background of NCGAP

- Five legislative goals for NCGAP:
  1. Assist more students in obtaining a baccalaureate degrees within a shorter time period;
  2. Provide students with college educations at significantly lower costs for both the students and the State;
  3. Help decrease student loan debt;
  4. Provide student with an interim degree if they choose not to continue postsecondary education; and
  5. Provide easier access to academic counseling that will assist students in selecting coursework reflective of their goals and help students succeed academically.



# Background of the NCGAP Report

- NCGAP legislation required UNC BOG and SBCC to jointly study and report by March 1, 2016 to the General Assembly on how NCGAP will:
  - accomplish goals stated in the legislation
  - financially affect students and the State
  - affect enrollment at 16 UNC constituent institutions and 58 community colleges
- UNC GA contracted with RTI International to assist in developing the report
- UNC BOG and SBCC issued their report in March 2016, and the SBCC included an addendum to the joint report to clarify its concerns



# PED's Charge

- JLPEOC amended the 2015–17 Work Plan to direct PED to:
  - Review the NCGAP report's methodology
  - Review the accuracy of the NCGAP report's conclusions
  - Report our findings on April 11, 2016
- PED staff contributing to the review included Dr. Brent Lucas, Sara Nienow, and John Turcotte



# Overview of the UNC Board of Governors/State Board of Community Colleges NCGAP Report



# NCGAP Report

- The report attempted to determine the effects of NCGAP, which is not set to be implemented until the 2017–18 academic year
- Random sample selection was not feasible; researchers had to use existing data to predict student behavior
- Report's sample used a DPI dataset of spring 2009 graduates
  - Data was readily available
  - Information available on six-year graduation





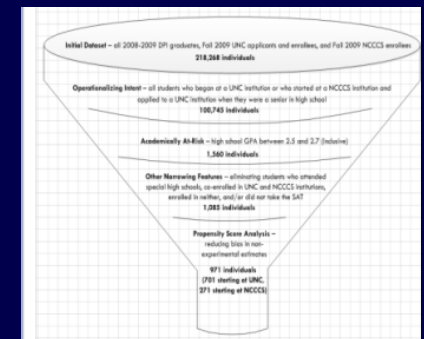
# Selection of the NCGAP Report Research Sample

- The researchers applied two primary criteria to determine potential NCGAP participants:
  - Intent to attend a UNC institution—2 way screen
    - Measure 1: a student applying to a UNC institution for the fall 2009 semester
    - Measure 2: a student taking the SAT
  - Academically at risk student
    - A student with a high school GPA between 2.5 and 2.69



# NCGAP Report Study Sample

- Began with DPI data on 218,000 spring 2009 HS graduates
- Applied criteria to only include students:
  - intending to attend a UNC institution
  - defined as academically at risk
  - meeting technical considerations
    - (not enrolled in either system, not dually enrolled, etc.)
- Final Sample of 971 students
  - 701 direct entry UNC students
  - 270 community college students



# NCGAP Report Conclusions

- NCGAP program:
  - may not increase the six-year graduation rates for this population
  - will decrease bachelor's degrees
  - will decrease the cost of a college education to both the student and the State.
  - will lower accumulated student debt
  - will require “tens of millions” in additional resources for university counseling



# NCGAP Report Presents Two Implementation Options Plus an Alternative

- **Option 1: Raise the minimum GPA** for admission to UNC institutions from 2.5 to 2.7
- **Option 2: Decrease** each UNC institution's admitted class by 2.5%
- **Alternative: Delay implementation** of NCGAP until the fall of 2010 to see the effects of recent BOG/SBCC efforts



# Program Evaluation Division Review of the NCGAP Report



# Report May Underestimate Six-Year Graduation Rates

- *NCGAP Report Conclusion: NCGAP may not increase graduation rates and will decrease the number of bachelor's degrees*
- **PED observation: Graduation rates may be understated and may be higher because**
  1. **Measurement of intent not fully developed**
  2. **Model's limited predictive power to explain graduation rates. The .27 R-squared statistic (coefficient of determination) means 63% of variations that may predict those rates are undetermined or unexplained**
  3. **Report failed to consider the effects of recent efforts to enhance transfer student success (articulation and ACA 122 university prep)**



# Report May Understate Savings to the State

- *NCGAP Report Conclusion: NCGAP will save the State \$8,000 per student*
- **PED observation: Report based savings to State only on lower cost Option 1**
- **Option 1 would reduce the number of deferred students disproportionately and primarily at lower cost universities**
- **Option 2 reduces the number of deferred students proportionately and would affect all universities including higher cost schools.**



# Report Underestimated ANNUAL Student Savings

| Institution                                | Tuition        | Fees           | Room and Board | Books and Supplies | Annual Total Cost of Attendance |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|--------------------|---------------------------------|
| Winston Salem State University (WSSU)      | \$3,144        | \$2,439        | \$8,621        | \$900              | \$15,104                        |
| Forsyth Technical Community College (FTCC) | \$1,848        | \$208          | \$5,611        | \$1,025            | \$8,692                         |
| <b>Total Difference</b>                    | <b>\$1,296</b> | <b>\$2,231</b> | <b>\$3,010</b> | <b>-\$125</b>      | <b>\$6,412</b>                  |





# Inadequate Measurement of Student Debt

- *NCGAP Report Conclusion: NCGAP students will have \$4,600 less accumulated debt*
- **PED observation: Report does not adequately measure all forms of student debt**
  - 1. 43% of community college students had access to Title IV loans**
  - 2. The report did not consider other forms of student debt (private loans, etc.)**



# Failure to Estimate the Number of Associate Degrees

- **Report Conclusion:** No explicit estimate provided
- **PED observation:** Because NCGAP requires students to earn an associate degree
  1. **PED estimates between 133 and 491 students will earn an associate degree and therefore have higher earning potential**
  2. **The number of degrees will depend on how diligently NCGAP is implemented by community colleges and universities**



# Lack of Implementation Detail

- Report Conclusion: UNC advising costs may total “tens of millions of dollars”
- **PED observation: Based on information in the report**
  1. There is limited detail substantiating the need for significant UNC advising costs
  2. PED estimates UNC advising costs between \$133,000 and \$491,000 using cost figures similar to the ones the report presents
  3. Community College system officials predict limited financial impact for advising



# Additional PED Observations

## ***Issue 1: NCGAP report's definition of academically at risk students***

- Using high school GPA influenced the report's findings. Definition could have been more broadly defined.
- Noting disproportionate negative institutional funding impacts on universities serving low performing students failed to note corresponding disproportionate gains from student cost and debt savings and funding shifts to community colleges at lower costs to the state

## ***Issue 2: Report indicates low program participation, potentially indicating the need for General Assembly consideration***

- Report did not suggest ways to overcome report's predicted problems with NCGAP. General Assembly may wish to consider tuition incentives and other ways to provide a university experience for NCGAP students that will attend community colleges.



# Legislative Options

- Refer report to any appropriate committees
- Instruct staff to draft legislation based on the report



Report available online at  
[www.ncleg.net/PED/Reports/reports.html](http://www.ncleg.net/PED/Reports/reports.html)

