

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

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Presentation Preview

- **NCGAP is a deferred admissions program effective with the fall 2017 admitted class**
- **PED cautions the General Assembly against over-relying 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 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 student and the State;
 3. Help decrease student loan debt;
 4. Provide students 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



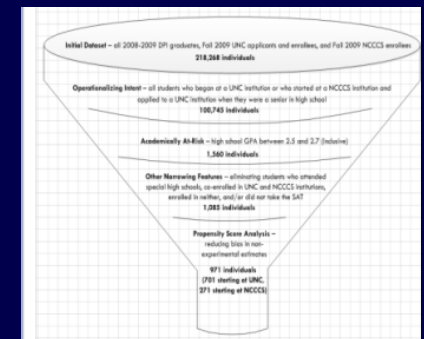
Selection of the NCGAP Report Research Sample

- 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 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 73% 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
Total Difference	\$1,296	\$2,231	\$3,010	-\$125	\$6,412



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. **Only 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 who 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

