



# Assessing Student ROI at the UNC System

SHEEO CoP: Defining and Measuring Postsecondary Value  
and Return on Investment

October 23, 2024 | Minneapolis, MN

# UNC System at a Glance



## Diverse University System with High Focus on Affordability

- **16 Universities + 1 Residential HS**
  - 5 HBCUs + 1 MSI
- **~222K student FTEs**
- **35% Underrepresented Minority**
- **Strong Affordability Focus:**
  - 8 yrs of flat tuition for UG Residents
  - 4 NC Promise Universities = \$500/semester UG tuition
  - Board Task Force on Pricing, Flexibility, & Affordability

# NC Legislative Mandate

## North Carolina General Assembly's Mandate to Assess ROI

### Timeline

- **Fall 2021:** General Assembly Mandate Issued
- **Spr 2022:** External Consultants Selected
- **Fall 2023:** ROI Report and Public Dashboards Due to General Assembly

### 3 ROI Studies

- **Student ROI:** incremental lifetime earnings, economic mobility (6-digit CIP codes)
- **State ROI:** state funding expenditures
- **Institutional Context/Production:** # of faculty/staff; cost to deliver program

### Study Parameters

- |                                 |                                                                                              |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ✓ <b>Cost analysis</b>          | ✗ <b>Student perceptions</b>                                                                 |
| ✓ <b>Student outcomes</b>       | ✗ <b>Civic outcomes</b> (i.e., community engagement, volunteerism, and voting participation) |
| ✓ <b>Institutional outcomes</b> | ✗ <b>Physical and mental wellbeing outcomes</b>                                              |
| ✓ <b>State outcomes</b>         | ✗ <b>Institutional connectedness</b> (i.e. alumni engagement and giving)                     |

# ROI Analysis Timeline & Stakeholders

## The Team

### External Consultants

**Deloitte.**

Led the development of the ROI dashboards in Tableau partnering with the UNCS, BGI, and RPK

**THE BURNINGGLASS INSTITUTE**

Led the Lifetime Earnings and Counterfactual analysis for the Student ROI dashboard

**rpk GROUP**

Led the Meta-department mapping and analysis for the Institutional Context dashboard

**N★C THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA SYSTEM**

1

UNC System Steering Committee

2

Advisory Council  
(Institution Leaders)

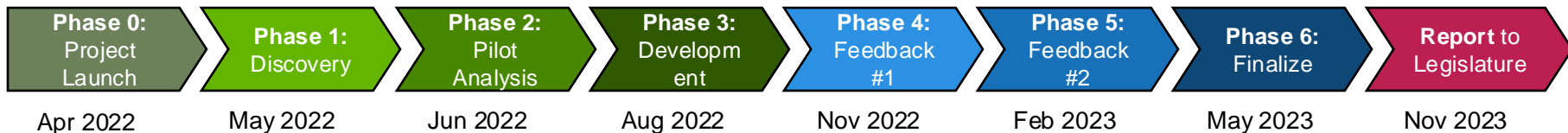
3

Data Owners Group  
(Institution Data Experts)



**NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT of COMMERCE**

## Approach



**N★C THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA SYSTEM**

# ROI Study Findings

## Overall Results: Strong Evidence of Value Across UNC System

Deloitte ROI Study found 93% of academic programs reported on the dashboards<sup>1</sup> had positive ROI:

	Undergrad Programs	Grad Programs	Total Programs
≥\$0 ROI	566 (94%)	285 (90%)	<b>851 (93%)</b>
<\$0 ROI	37 (6%)	30 (10%)	<b>67 (7%)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>603</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>918<sup>1</sup></b>

### Key Data Limitations & Campus Concerns

- **1099 Earners** – Grads in certain programs (i.e., visual/performing arts) often work as contractors with most of earnings coming via 1099 instead of W2. How do we capture 1099 earnings (or “non-UI” earnings) in a future iteration?
- **Out-of-State Earners** – Grads in certain programs (i.e., material science engineers) have high propensity to start their first job out of state. Need to capture these earnings (via US PSEO) in a future iteration

# ROI Study Findings (cont'd)

## Low ROI Programs Limited to Low Enrollment Programs

Enrollment % of Low ROI Programs			
	Undergrad Programs	Grad Programs	Total
# of Low ROI Programs	37	30	67
% of UNC System Enrollment ('19-20)	3%	5%	3%
# of Programs w/ >200 enrollment	6	0	6

### *Question for Consideration:*

*Is this evidence that most students show a preference for programs with positive ROI?*

# What Happened to Low ROI Programs?

## Review Process

- **UNC Institution ROI Review** - All UNC Institutions conducted a review of low-ROI programs and provided improvement plans to UNC System President (March 2024)<sup>1</sup>

Program Name & CIP Code	Add'l Contextual Info	ROI Drivers	Improvement Plan	Timeline

- **UNC System Review Panel** – UNC System Office assembled a review panel of staff from multiple divisions to review ROI responses.
- **Board of Governors Review** – BOG provided overview on Low ROI Programs in Spr 2024.

<sup>1</sup> Universities reviewed all programs, including small programs that were not reported on the dashboards due to privacy-suppression rules.

# What's Next?

## UNC System Launches Phase 2 of ROI Efforts

### Revised Academic Program Planning Policies

- **Campus-Level Academic Program Reviews** – Campuses will conduct APR on each program at least 7 years and include metrics on post-graduate success
- **New Academic Programs** – Applications will include data on labor force alignment
- **Biennial Academic Program Review** – UNC System Office conducts biennial academic program review to include student ROI metrics

### Join US PSEO

UNC System will join US Postsecondary Employment Outcomes initiative to obtain earnings info on out-of-state grads

### Educational Economist

Thanks to grant, UNC System will hire first educational economist to continue reporting and monitoring on post-graduate outcomes



# Resource Links & Contact

[UNC System ROI Report](#)

[UNC System Student ROI Dashboards](#)

[UNC System State ROI Dashboards](#)

[UNC System Institution Context Dashboards](#)

[UNC System ROI Data Files](#)

[mavarghese@northcarolina.edu](mailto:mavarghese@northcarolina.edu)

