

Carolina Covenant®

2009 Program Update

Shirley Ort

Office of Scholarships and Student Aid

Dr. Lynn Williford

Office of Institutional Research and Assessment



THE UNIVERSITY
of NORTH CAROLINA
at CHAPEL HILL

The Carolina Covenant . . .

. . . Our promise

- ❖ To current and future generations of students
- ❖ Carolina is – and will remain – accessible and affordable for academically prepared students from low-income backgrounds
- ❖ To further the University's diversity goals (both economic and racial diversity)
- ❖ Nearly 1,800 Covenant Scholars have benefited since the start of the program in Fall 2004 (1,450 currently enrolled).

How the Covenant Works . . .

- ❖ “Need blind” admission to the University
- ❖ Covenant Scholars named based upon program eligibility and low-income status (200% federal poverty level or below)
- ❖ Resulting median family income of Covenant Scholars -- \$24,242
- ❖ Scholars’ financial “packages” composed of grants, scholarships, and a Work Study job (i.e., “no loans”) for up to 9 semesters
- ❖ Research demonstrates that large grants, when combined with a part-time job and limited borrowing, positively influence the academic success of low-income students (Jacqueline King, Crucial Choices, 2003)

Characteristics of Covenant Scholars*

	Fall 2004	Fall 2005	Fall 2006	Fall 2007	Fall 2008
Number of New Covenant Scholars	224	350	417	398	410
Average High School GPA	4.21	4.25	4.19	4.26	4.30
Average SAT Scores	1209	1223	1198	1202	1206
State of Origin: North Carolina	87%	89%	84%	87%	84%
North Carolina Counties Represented	68	74	72	77	74
Gender					
Female	69%	63%	61%	63%	60%
Male	31%	37%	39%	37%	40%
Students of Color	63%	60%	63%	61%	61%
First Generation	55%	52%	57%	53%	55%

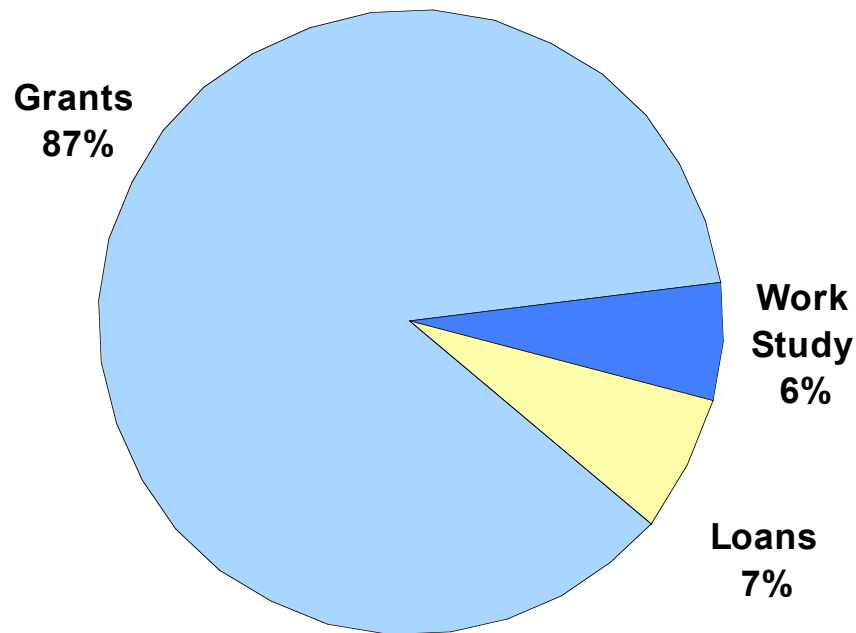
[*] The income threshold for consideration for the Carolina Covenant was initially established at 150% of federal poverty guidelines. Starting in fall 2005, it was increased to encompass students with parents' adjusted gross income up to 200% of the federal poverty standard.

How Carolina Supports Covenant Scholars

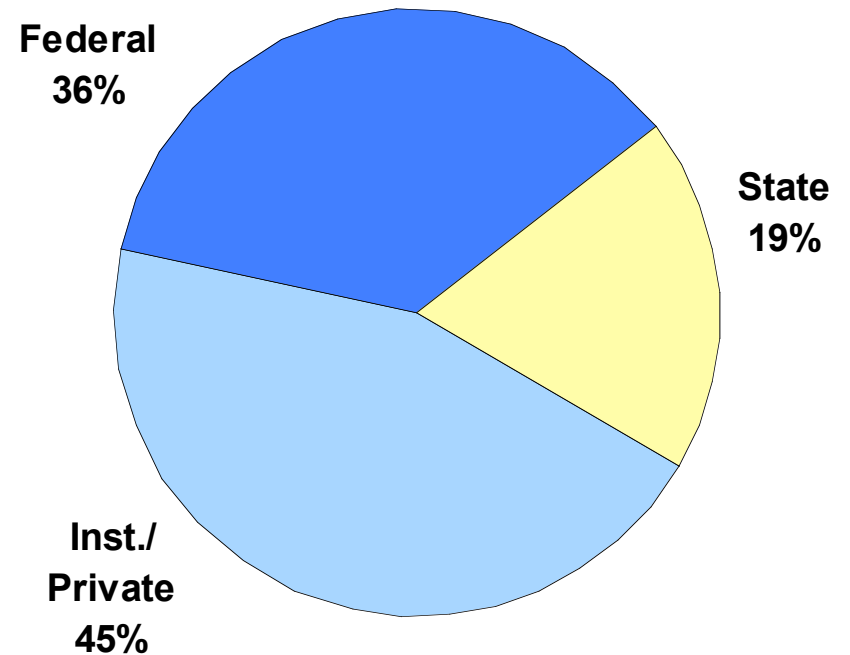
- ❖ Financial Aid
- ❖ University Embrace
- ❖ Programming and Mentoring

Financial Aid Awarded to Covenant Scholars, 2007-08

Financial Aid by Type



Financial Aid by Source



Community Embrace

- ❖ Comprehensive infrastructure of support services and special programming
- ❖ Some of our many **Covenant Partners**
 - ❖ The Administration – Leadership and support
 - ❖ Faculty – Mentoring and special care
 - ❖ Admissions and University Relations – Outreach and promotion
 - ❖ College of Arts and Sciences – Advising, Peer Mentoring and Academic Services
 - ❖ Office of Diversity and Multicultural Affairs – Outreach programs and leadership initiatives
 - ❖ Office of Student Affairs – Orientation, Career Services, Counseling and Wellness
 - ❖ Carolina Performing Arts – Vouchers for artistic events
 - ❖ Development Office – Fundraising (currently \$11 million)
 - ❖ Office of Institutional Research – Data and program evaluation
 - ❖ The Medical School – Seminars and mentoring
 - ❖ The Coach!

Programming and Mentoring

- ❖ Orientation (for Scholars and parents)
- ❖ Faculty / staff and peer mentors
- ❖ Special programming and opportunities
 - ❖ Learning skills workshops (time management, note taking, studying for math, writing skills, preparing for exams, etc.)
 - ❖ Business etiquette, dining skills, public speaking
 - ❖ Pre-med seminars
 - ❖ Financial literacy
 - ❖ Tickets to performing arts events
 - ❖ Receptions and celebration events
 - ❖ Academic tracking, “interventions” & learning contracts

Indicators of Student Success

- ❖ Retention Rates
- ❖ Graduation Rates
- ❖ Academic Achievement

Assessing Covenant Scholar Progress

- ❖ Approach to evaluating the success of Covenant Scholars is based on prior research findings:
 - Published reports from many studies across a wide range of institutions
 - Students from low income families do not persist or graduate at the same rates as their classmates (Edward St. John, 2008; Cliff Adelman, 2007).
 - Carolina's 2004 Retention and Graduation Study
 - Socio-economic factors (family income, parent education, etc.) were significant predictors of retention and graduation, even after controlling for entering academic characteristics.
- ❖ Goal: To determine if the Covenant award helps close the gap in degree attainment between low-income students and other students.

Evaluation Design

❖ **Group Comparisons:**

- ❖ 2003 Covenant-Eligible Control Group vs. 2004 Covenant Recipients
- ❖ Covenant Recipients vs. (1) Other Needy Students and (2) Non-Needy Students in the same entering class

❖ **Indicators:**

- ❖ Retention rates
- ❖ Graduation rates
- ❖ Grades

Retention Factors

- ❖ Number of 2004 Covenant Scholars who temporarily stopped out at least one fall or spring term dropped by 20% over 2003 Pre-Covenant Control Group
- ❖ Number of 2004 Covenant Scholars who stopped enrolling at some point during the first three years dropped by 24% over 2003 Pre-Covenant Control Group

Retention

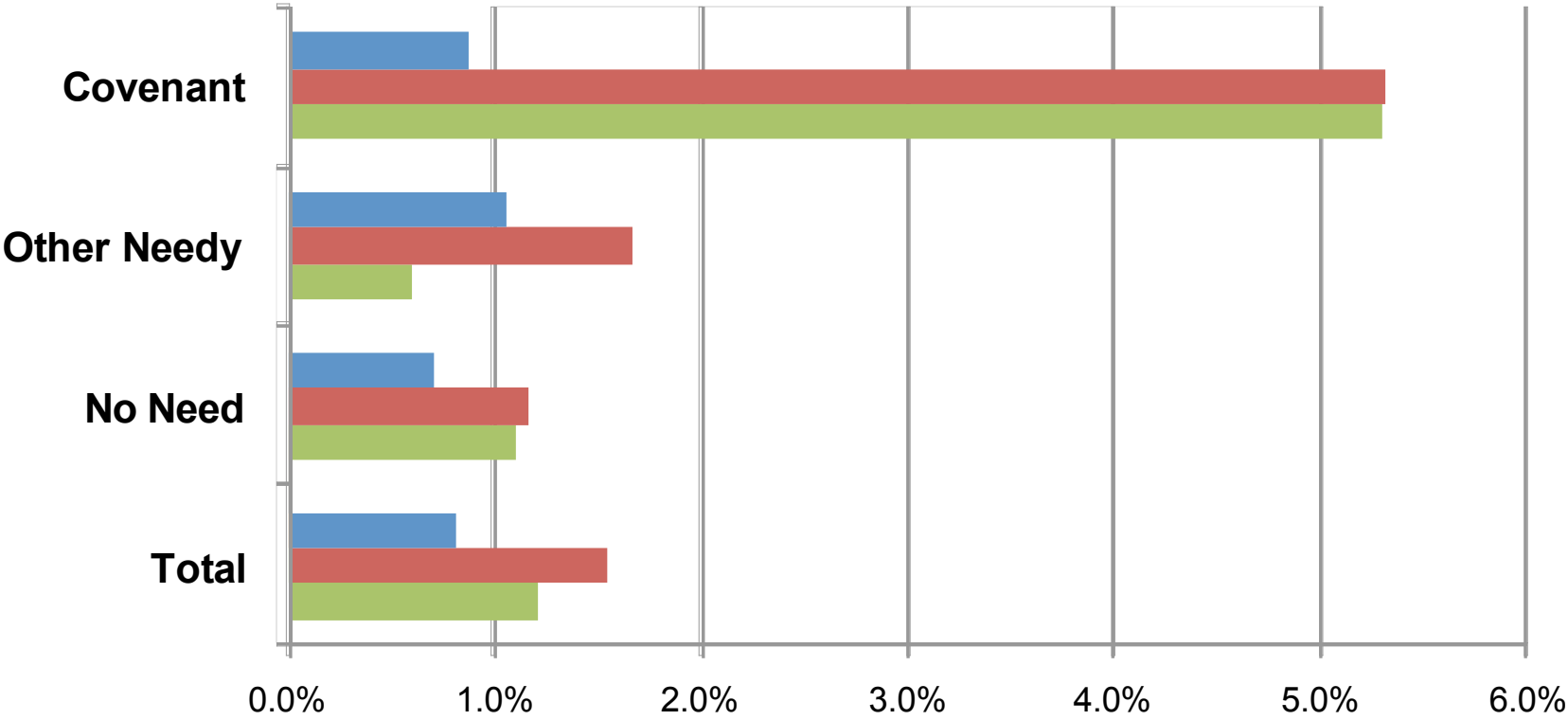
Group	Enrolled in Year 4		
	2003 Control Group	2004 Cohort	Improvement
Covenant	84.3%	89.6%	5.3%
Other Needy	87.6%	88.2%	0.6%
No Need	90.5%	91.6%	1.1%
All Students	89.3%	90.5%	1.2%

- ❖ By year four, the entering class of 2004 Covenant Scholars had persisted at a considerably higher rate than the Covenant students in the 2003 Control Group.
- ❖ The 2004 Covenant Scholars closed much of the persistence gap observed between the low income group and others in the 2003 Cohort.

Year 4 percentage adjusted for 3-year graduates.

Retention Rates By Need Status and Year in School

Improvement in Percentage Retained: 2004 Cohort vs. 2003 Control Group

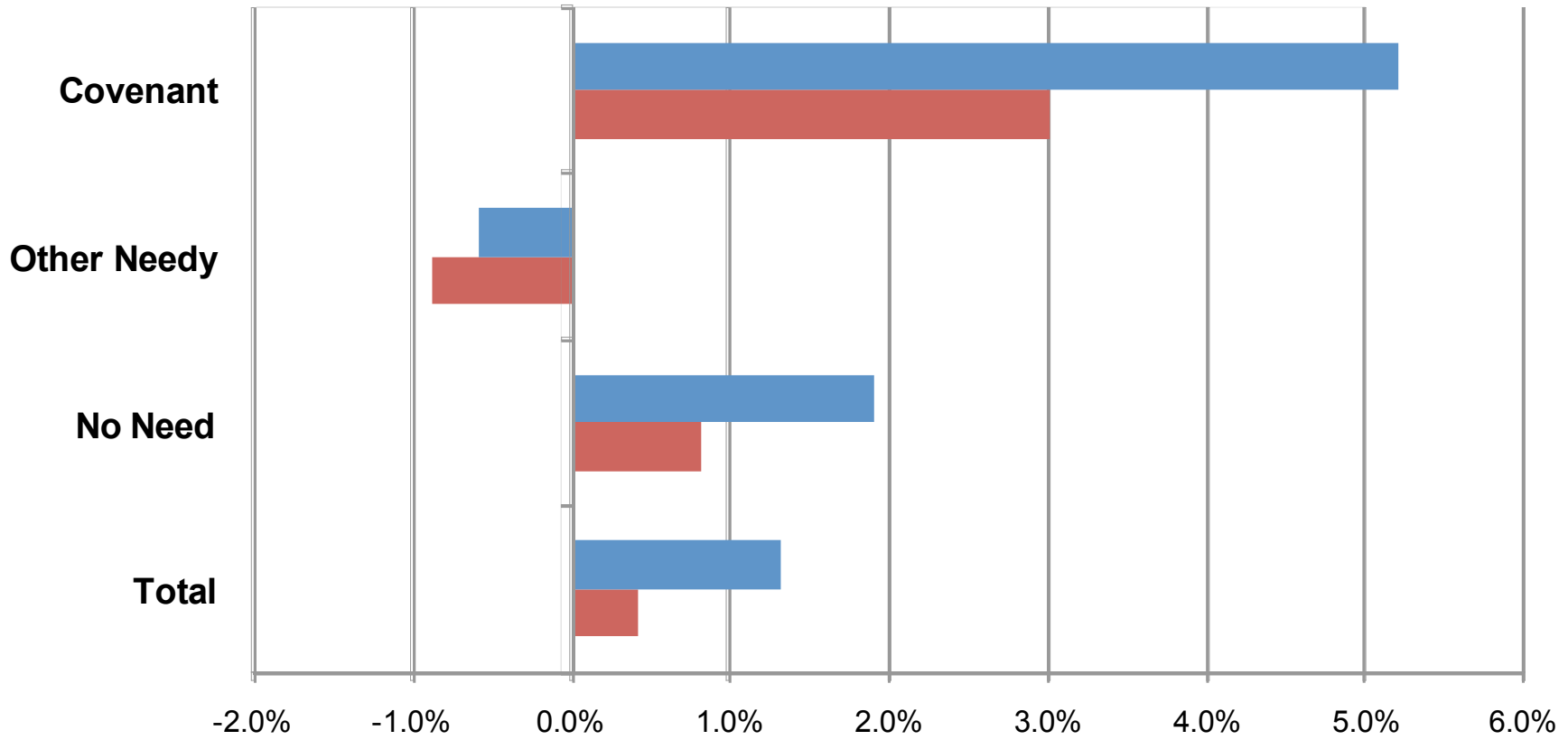


	Total	No Need	Other Needy	Covenant
■ Year 2	0.8%	0.7%	1.1%	0.9%
■ Year 3	1.5%	1.2%	1.7%	5.3%
■ Year 4	1.2%	1.1%	0.6%	5.3%

Year 4 percentage adjusted for 3-year graduates.

Graduation Rates By Need Status

Improvement in Percentage Graduated: 2004 Cohort vs. 2003 Control Group



	Total	No Need	Other Needy	Covenant
■ 8th Semester	1.3%	1.9%	-0.6%	5.2%
■ 9th Semester	0.4%	0.8%	-0.9%	3.0%

Academic Achievement

❖ **Grade Point Average:**

- Average GPA for Covenant Scholars at graduation is within 2/10ths of a point of the average for all students.

❖ **Academic Eligibility:**

- Number of 2004 Covenant Scholars who became academically ineligible dropped by 17% over 2003 Pre-Covenant Control Group

Research and Evaluation

- ❖ Internal Evaluation
- ❖ Independent Research Study
- ❖ Changes and Program Development

The Carolina Covenant

❖ Discussion