

THE BLUE BANNER



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State shortfall leads to UNCA budget cuts

Commission looks to diversify

Stuart Gaines
Staff Reporter

UNCA will sustain a budget cut of over a half-million dollars this year, according to a new budget ratified by the general assembly of North Carolina, and signed by Governor Mike Easley.

"If there was a perception that education would be treated gently in this dire budget situation, that's a false perception," said Brunswick County House Representative David Redwine, in an *Asheville Citizen-Times* article dated Oct. 15. "It's unfortunate, very unfortunate, that we are going to have to take the steps we have to take."

While the final specifics of this year's budget have not yet been released, UNCA administrative departments will be affected by this latest budget cut for North Carolina schools, according to Steve Honeycutt, University Budget Officer.

The budget cut comes out of a state budget shortfall for the 2000-2001 fiscal year, which is estimated to be about \$830 million.

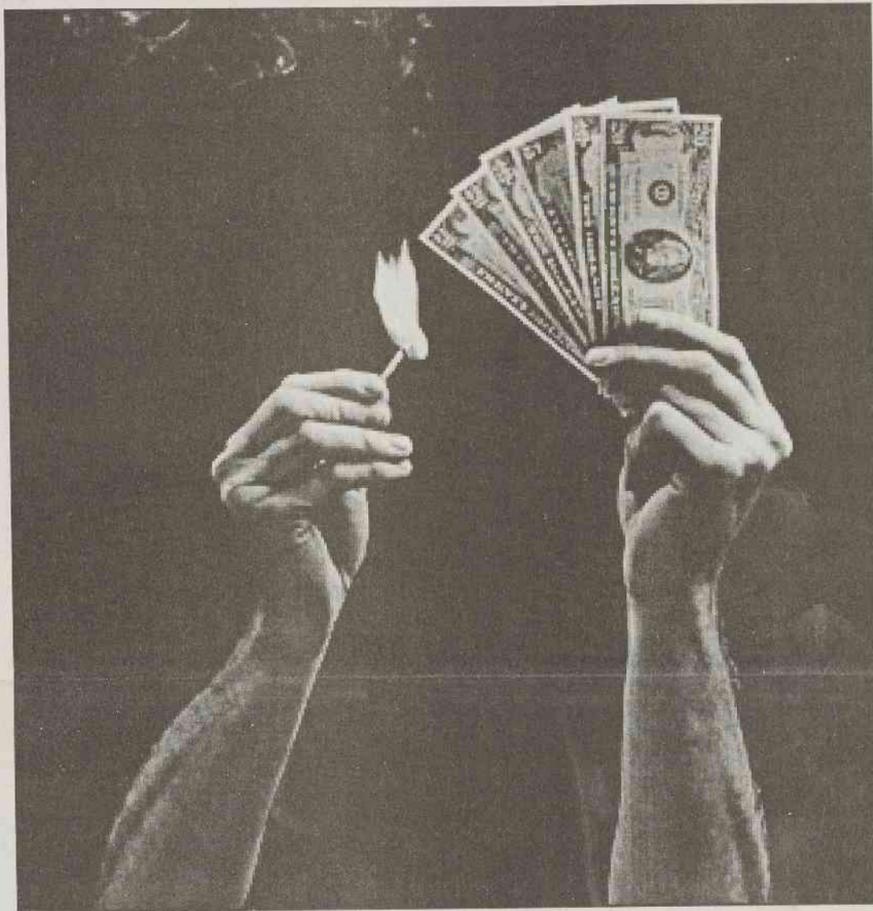
Large legal settlements and the Hurricane Floyd relief effort have contributed to the depletion of state reserves that had been set up to deal with such a financial crisis, according to the *Citizen-Times* article.

"We feel very fortunate," said Leith Tate, an Access Librarian at the Ramsey Library. "Other libraries in the UNCA system have suffered more from this than we have."

Budget cuts affecting the UNCA library will result in less spending for library resources, which includes purchasing new hardcopy and electronic materials, according to Tate.

The total cut for UNCA's annual budget amounts to \$543,189.

UNCA system and local efforts



UNCA's annual budget will be cut by \$543,189, due to the depletion of North Carolina's state reserves.

were able to defeat an earlier proposal from the spring that would have entailed a \$750,000, three percent budget reduction, according to a University e-mail about the new budget cuts.

"The most honorable and decent thing that our government can spend our money on is education," said Matt Brooks, a senior ecology major at UNCA.

"If cuts are going to be handed down, they should first make sure

that education spending isn't affected," said Brooks.

Approximately \$85,000 of the actual reduction is an "efficiency" cut, totaling 32 percent of UNCA's annual budget of approximately \$25 million.

The total budget cut equals approximately two percent.

"I'm sick and tired of education being the least important thing on government agendas," said Suzanne Parenti, a junior literature major. "If

they had a better education themselves, then the money would not have been mismanaged in the first place."

The Kenan-Flagler Business School at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill recently suggested to the N.C. General Assembly that it take over budget forecasting for the state, according to an Oct. 11 article from *The Raleigh News and Observer* Web site.

"I'm sick and tired of education being the least important thing on government agendas."

-Suzanne Parenti,
junior literature major

The proposal was not accepted, but its message to the state representatives was clear.

"What has made my job the hardest is the delay in approving the budget," said Honeycutt. "We had to operate during the fall semester based on some assumptions, and some of those assumptions were wrong."

The campus-based tuition increase and an enrollment increase at UNCA will result in budget increases that should help offset some of the impact of the new budget, according to the University e-mail.

"Education is one of the most important things in someone's life, and it's really not fair to take that away from a student," said Crissy Battle, an undeclared freshman.

The specific cuts outlined for UNCA include reduced spending for travel expenses, cellular phones, temporary positions and contracted services.

UNCA administration said they are committed that no individual will lose their job as a result of the cut, and should be able to avoid eliminating jobs by moving some state positions to non-state funding, according to the University e-mail.

Letters were also sent to university and public school officials earlier this month, asking that each identify \$125 million in possible cuts for the next fiscal year.

These recent requests come in response to the state's budget crisis brought on by slowing tax revenues in a slowing economy, according to the *Citizen-Times* article.

Lana Coffey
Staff Reporter

UNCA is having trouble increasing the minority student population as it continues to search for ways to increase diversity on campus, according to Dolly Jenkins-Mullen, head of the minority affairs commission for the campus.

"I will think diversity is up when all of these (minority) groups are represented on our campus at least in the proportions that they're represented in the state," said Jenkins-Mullen. "I shy away from popping the champagne cork until we realize these goals."

Faculty members, primarily blacks, created the minority affairs commission about 15 years ago, according to Mullen.

These people "wanted to see the issues facing minority people at UNCA addressed, and so the commission became a body that considers the issues."

This commission works with Brenda Greene, who is the executive arm of the office, according to Mullen.

It works together to find and implement ways to recruit and retain more minority students.

The part of the commission that Mullen heads may offer suggestions on new ways to improve campus diversity to Greene's department.

That department then looks into ways to implement the suggestions the minority affairs commission makes.

The focus of the commission this semester will be student improvement, according to Mullen.

"We are particularly concerned about the dip in the African American student population," said Mullen.

According to Mullen, UNCA currently has about 93 black students, which she says is down significantly from what it was 10 years ago when

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Anthrax exposures hit Washington, D.C., Florida and New York

Ed Fickle
Staff Reporter

Anthrax, a potentially deadly bacteria which has been tested extensively for use in biological warfare, has caused 42 confirmed cases of infection or exposure in the United States recently, raising fears of biological terrorist attacks on American soil.

According to a CNN special report, experts believe the risk is real, but limited.

"The most likely event would... involve a release into a room or building," said Richard Spertzel, a former United Nations weapons inspector.

While 42 confirmed cases existed as of Oct. 17, only one has resulted in death, and one other in severe illness.

According to medical experts, an

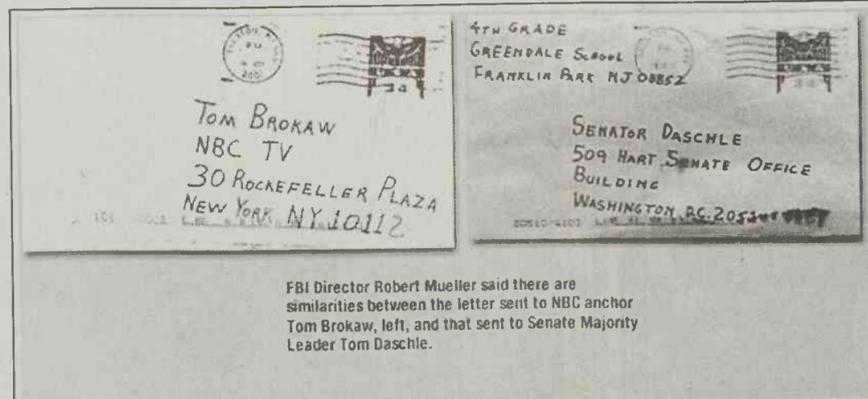
anthrax exposure can be successfully treated using the antibiotic drug Ciprofloxacin, if the infection is discovered soon enough.

"The antibiotic is so effective that it is 100 percent successful in killing the bacteria, once that bacteria has been released... so we are supremely confident of our ability to deal with circumstances like this," said Senate majority leader Tom Daschle.

In one of the largest recent releases of the bacteria, 31 personnel from Daschle's Washington office tested positive for exposure to anthrax Oct. 17, as did three personnel from the adjacent offices of Senator Russel Feingold.

The House of Representatives closed Oct. 16, for a five-day security sweep of facilities, although the Senate has remained in session.

To date, only four of the 42 confirmed cases of exposure have resulted in infections.



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"The simple obtaining and growing of the organism is not the difficult thing," said Ron Atlas, a member of the American Society for Microbiology. "Converting it to a weapon of

mass destruction is."
Only a few cases of anthrax infection are typically reported each year, most of them affecting cattle and other livestock, usually resulting

from natural exposure to the bacteria.

While many strains of anthrax are known to exist, only certain strains are virulent enough to kill.

There are several ways to become infected, the most common being the ingestion and inhalation of spores.

"Experts say once terrorists get the bacteria, the spores can survive for decades, even centuries," said NBC correspondent Kelly O'Donnell in a recent report.

Officials have identified that the spores contained in the letter sent to Daschle's office are of the same strain as those contained in the letter sent to NBC news anchor Tom Brokaw.

In developing an effective strain of anthrax, the challenge is making the spores small enough, "so that it would spread through the air like fog and not just settle to the ground," said Atlas.

This is not the first time anthrax has been used as a biological weapon. In WWI, certain forms of anthrax

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