

## UNCA's 8 percent budget cut eliminates student centers

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Several management positions and student programs with the N.C. Arboretum, the Environmental Quality Institute and the Mossbauer Data Center fell victim to an 8 percent budget cut this year, Vice Chancellor of Finance John Pierce said last Thursday at an open student budget forum.

"There was a lot of pressure on the university system to reduce centers and institutes," Pierce said. "The reasoning behind it was to preserve the core academic mission, and things that were extraneous were those areas that were cut."

The state budget suffered a 15 percent shortfall in 2009, collecting only \$17 billion in revenue for a \$20 billion budget. The fiscal financial year ended June 30.

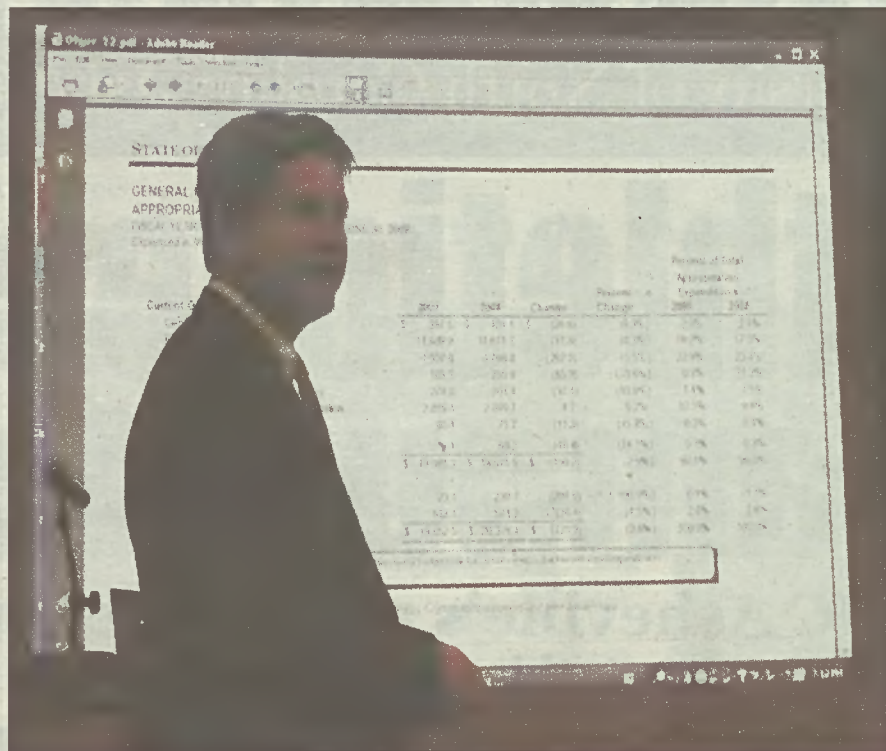
The Student Government Association and *The Blue Banner* sponsored the budget forum, administrated mainly by Pierce, as well as Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs Bill Haggard, Vice Chancellor of Budget and Assessment John Bucher and Assistant Provost of Budgeting Pat Catterfield.

"Almost hours after the board of governors decided on a 3 percent budget cut, the state said that, on top of that cut, they were going to withhold cash and take another 5 percent," Pierce said. "So we went from a 3 percent cut to an 8 percent cut, and that's what we're dealing with now."

Although the state had some influence in what the university eliminated, senior staff made most specific decisions, according to Pierce.

"In terms of how we have gone about our cut, I have really tried to follow the philosophy that the finance guy isn't suited to know what's best for student affairs," Pierce said. "But the people who are closest to it, like Bill Haggard for student affairs and Jane Fernandes for academic affairs, they are. They know where things are either leaner or fatter, so that's where those decisions were made."

UNC Asheville moved eight salary positions from state funds to funds collected from student fees, according to Haggard.



Susan Terry - Photography Editor

Vice Chancellor of Finance John Pierce discussed the state's financial report and its effect on UNCA at the budget forum in Highsmith.

"When we moved the positions from state funding to fee funding, to afford that, we took that money out of administrative cost and the biggest part of that was travel," Haggard said. "In student affairs, usually every person goes to one conference and no one traveled last year."

Director of Academic Affairs Jane Fernandes made the ultimate decision to close the EQI and Mossbauer Data Center, according to Pierce. The closings of the centers, particularly the EQI, sparked controversy in August since most funding came from grants.

"The EQI did not require a lot of state funds, but what we did save were costs from what we would eventually have to do to renovate Rhoades Hall," Pierce said. "Beyond the declining financial performance of the EQI, when we look at the relative level of student involvement compared to some of the other institutions, that one probably had less student involvement."

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**— Bill Haggard,  
vice chancellor of  
student affairs**

Similarly, the decision to close the Mossbauer Data Center came primarily from a lack of student involvement rather than excessive costs, according to Pierce.

UNCA saved \$1.3 million through management flex reduction, which included eliminating middle management positions, facilities personnel, arboretum positions, realigning funding sources and general campus administration.

The director of media services, community relations, prospect research or fundraising and the assistant director of the N.C. Center for Creative Retirement made up most of the eliminated management positions.

"There was a lot of pressure going through this whole budget process when the Raleigh News & Observer came out with the whole issue of the administrative blow, as far as the universities were concerned," Pierce said. "There were arguments that universities were growing leaps and bounds in administration compared to those people focused on academics."

Administrators consolidated the eliminated management positions, according to Pierce.

"The less resources that we have to apply to fundraising, the harder the rest of us will have to work," Pierce said. "The community relations position was outreach to the community, so what's happening instead of that is that we're all pitching in to help that out."

According to The UNC General Administration and a News & Observer analysis, university payroll data in August indicated the UNC system expanded administrative departments by 28 percent since last year, while faculty positions grew by 24 percent and student enrollment grew by 14 percent.

UNCA currently spends 54.8 percent of its total budget on academic support, an increase of 1 percent since the previous year.

The SGA plans on holding a series of upcoming budget forums, including one solely dedicated to the handling of student fee funds.

"When we say it's complicated, we're not trying to use smoke and mirrors. It really is," Haggard said. "Sometimes the foginess is not created by us."