

Money spent on Pisgah House should be spent on the students

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UNC Asheville plans on using over \$100,000 in discretionary funds to pay for maintenance and repairs on the chancellor's house, said Robby Russell, member of the Board of Trustees. Updates on private bedrooms, washers and dryers, refrigerators and television sets are on the list of changes the Pisgah House will undergo. In addition to these updates, repairs to the deck and paint on the interior walls will be completed, said David Todd, associate vice chancellor for campus operations.

This topic was discussed in the Board of Trustees meeting on Feb. 23 where they referred to these changes as maintenance and repairs, but they sound more like upgrades. When you consider the house is less than 10 years old, renovations at this time seem a bit unnecessary.

"I suppose if the geothermal unit was damaged or there were drainer issues I would be in support of it, as poor upkeep on a home can cause more expensive and severe damage down the road. But if it were an absurd amount of money being spent on landscaping you could claim it

'inadequate' to some sense," said Vanessa Jones, a sophomore chemistry student.

However, Jones said she does feel the chancellor should live comfortably.

"I think it's a good thing for the chancellor to live comfortably. A happy chancellor is a happy semester, I suppose," Jones said.

While I think everyone should be able to live comfortably, some are doing so beyond what is necessary. Mary K. Grant, our previous chancellor, received a \$40,000 pay increase in 2015, increasing her salary to \$299,425, reported by *The News and Observer*. Several other chancellors in the UNC system received large bonuses the same year.

More recently, chancellors who have been with their universities for more than two years received raises last year, making the highest paid chancellors Randy Woodson of NC State and Carol Folt of UNC Chapel Hill. Chancellor Grant was not included in this round of raises since UNCA knew she would leave her position soon after, reported *The Charlotte Observer*.

It is not a far-fetched statement to say the men and women holding these positions are not strapped for money. I think it is wrong that

these state employees received significant raises, while my father, an engineer for the state, has not received a raise in over a decade. One could argue for a long time which job is more important and why certain positions grant more raises than another, but it seems to be another case of making the rich richer and keeping the rest stagnant in their place.

If the Pisgah House needs repairs to enhance safety to the structure or needs to be treated for something dangerous the residents might be exposed to, then sure, let us use the university's discretionary funds to pay for it.

Since this type of maintenance is not being done to the residence, I feel as though the university should not have a hand in paying for it. The chancellor of this institution and any chancellor of a higher education institution in North America is more than able to afford the cost of a new washer-dryer set and a new television system themselves.

These are the costs the average American citizen pays out-of-pocket that the future chancellor will get for free, on top of being paid just under six times what the average 45-54 year old will make (\$50,024), according to *Business*

Insider.

Instead of using over \$100,000 to pay for "maintenance and repairs" to the Pisgah House, the university could use that money to do \$100,000 in repairs to the campus to benefit the entire student body rather than a single family.

"If anything I think maybe some of the bathrooms in a few halls could stand to be updated. I think it would also be interesting if UNCA added some planted terraces to a few of the buildings. It would add a lot of beauty, housing for birds and maybe even make up for some of the forest fires we had last year," Jones said.

Renovations on some of the older academic halls, such as Carmichael and Owen, are set to begin soon. Part of the funds allocated for the house could instead go to this project or the project Jones suggested.

It is important to remember at any university the primary group whose interests should come first are the students' interests. It is the students who pay tuition which allows the school to exist.

Universities are a place for education, which means they belong to the students who receive it.

CHANCELLORS' SALARIES IN NORTH CAROLINA INSTITUTIONS

Randy Woodson
North Carolina State University
\$617,376
Carol L. Folt
UNC- Chapel Hill
\$596,448
Cecil Staton
East Carolina State University
\$450,000
Philip L. Dubois
UNC Charlotte
\$450,000

Franklin D. Gilliam, Jr.
UNC Greensboro
\$380,625
Harold L. Martin, Sr.
North Carolina A&T State University
\$365,400
Jose V. Sartarelli
UNC Wilmington
\$355,250
Sheri Everts
Appalachian State University

\$350,338
David O. Belcher
Western Carolina University
\$345,313
James A. Anderson
Fayetteville State University
\$329,875
Johnson O. Akinleye
North Carolina Central University
\$300,000

Mary K. Grant
UNC Asheville
\$299,425
Elwood L. Robinson
Winston-Salem State University
\$284,200
Robin Gary Cummings
UNC Pembroke
\$284,200
Thomas E.H. Conway
Elizabeth City State University
\$276,250