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stentorian@ncssm.edu

## Senator Kay Hagan to Speak at Commencement

AVANI UPPALAPATI

Kay Hagan, elected in November to the US Senate from North Carolina, will be the NCSSM Commencement speaker for the graduating class of 2009.

While a State Senator, Hagan was listed as one of the 10 most powerful senators in North Carolina by the North Carolina Center for Public Policy. Hagan is a strong advocate of education and a supporter of NCSSM's tuition grant, and thus these topics are expected to be prevalent in her speech.

Senator Hagan proposed a plan in 2003 in the North Carolina State Senate that would allow for NCSSM students to receive a tuition grant if they attended a UNC constituent system upon graduating. Vice Chancellor for Academic Programs Dr. Steve Warshaw affirmed that Hagan was instrumental in getting the tuition grant approved.

Hagan became involved in NCSSM when her son applied to the school many years before the tuition grant was proposed. Although her son was accepted and decided not to go

to NCSSM, Hagan continued her interest in NCSSM and proposed the tuition grant that would serve all classes through the graduating class of 2010.

students in North Carolina after graduating from high school. After the tuition grant was approved, Hagan was noted as saying that NCSSM

workers" in the state.

State Senator Linda Garrou of Winston-Salem says of Hagan "She is a strong, strong advocate for education. She worked for increasing teacher pay. She supports the university." Hagan has proven this statement to be true through her efforts at the state and federal level. She supports reducing class size, increasing teacher pay and funding for classroom technology while increasing standards and accountability.

Hagan wants to increase access to higher education with student loan assistance and affordable tuition costs. She supports increased investment in the state university system, in her words, "to keep pace with increased demand for educated workforce that our knowledge-based economy demands." Hagan also believes that math and science are vital components to the 21st century information economy.

During her campaign for the U.S. Senate, Hagan expressed her interest in fixing the problems she perceives with the No Child Left Behind Act enacted under the Bush administration. She believes

schools should accommodate the needs of individual students without lowering standards for others. Opposed to the practice of pulling funding from schools which are failing to meet education standards, Hagan has expressed a wish to instead fight for an allocation of federal funds to these institutions as a subsidy for state allowances.

In a world where global economics are of great importance, Senator Hagan pushes for financial literacy courses in high school to allow students to navigate college loans processes, manage personal finances and gain other long term benefits such as being able to understand their credit scores and afford homes. As a senator, Hagan has worked on considering both long and short term benefits to the state and country.

NCSSM is fortunate to have a key member in the school's history address the student body, especially at such an important event as Commencement. Students are excited to hear her views on the dilemma that is presently affecting the North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics.



Photo from Hagan website

Senator Hagan supported having the tuition grant to keep some of the best and brightest

students "are going to be the entrepreneurs and business leaders and the really hard

## State Department Sends Miller, Chenier to China

ALEX LEW

As his friends celebrate the last class blocks of their K-12 careers, senior Daniel Miller is not quite ready to say he's done with high school. It is not that he won't graduate: Miller will receive his high school diploma with all his classmates this June. However, he will do so with the knowledge that in just a week, he'll be back in a high school classroom—a high school classroom in Beijing studying the Chinese language and culture.

Miller and his classmate Scott Chenier were both accepted into a competitive scholarship to study abroad this summer in China. The National Security Language Initiative for Youth (NSLI-Y) was a program started by the Bush Administration after the September 11th attacks raised awareness of the need for Americans to be educated in certain foreign languages designated as "critical" including Arabic and Chinese. Now, students may apply to receive funds from the State Department to study a month, a semester, or a year in one of a number of countries around

the globe.

"The thing that most interested me was that it was free and expenses were all paid for, and the second thing that interested me was that it was focused on language study," Miller said. "A lot of study abroad programs are based on science and research, and I thought I had a better shot at a language one."

The program will be intensive: Miller will be studying Chinese for eight hours a day in formal classes, and even time outside of class will be a welcome opportunity for him to practice his newly learned language skills. "I'm planning to tell people that I'm actually South American and don't speak English," Miller joked, "so that they'll use Chinese with me instead of English. I'm going to try to use English as little as possible."

Chenier will be going to a different part of China to study this summer, though under the auspices of the same program. Staying in Shanghai, Scott will take only four hours of language classes a day and will have a somewhat less structured experience, spending more time with his host family and less in

a classroom.

Even so, he's determined to get the most out of the situation. "I've committed myself to use Chinese in all situations I possibly can," Chenier said, though he acknowledged that the 'language buddy' the program assigned him will

probably want to speak half the time in English.

"Since I went to China last summer, I was looking for different ways to go back," Chenier said. "This looked like the least expensive and the most extensive program, pretty much." However, the

organization has been a little bit lacking: even though Chenier has less than a month before he departs for Shanghai, he has still been told hardly anything about the structure of the program. "I know where the supermarket is," Chenier said. "They gave us a map and said, 'this is where the Starbucks is.' We know where the general region is, but other than that they haven't told us much."

Before departure, both Chenier and Miller will attend a short orientation weekend with their fellow scholars. Coincidentally, one of these scholars, a sophomore named Joseph Young, will be attending NCSSM next year. At the orientation, students will take placement tests and learn what to expect in China.

Both Miller and Chenier plan to attend UNC Chapel Hill next year, and both plan to continue their studies of Mandarin Chinese at the university. Miller, who will be an ROTC student, will receive a stipend for continued study of critical languages, and Chenier is considering a minor in Chinese.

