

# The Word is Bond

by Akilah Imani Nelson and Kiron Terrell

It is nearly impossible to live on a college campus, or anywhere else in North Carolina without being accosted by someone who wants to register you to vote or ask you to vote for the "the bond." Since students returned to campus in August, there have been massive voter registration drives sponsored by many on-campus organizations and strong efforts to educate voters about the \$3.1 billion bond that will face public referendum in a few days. North Carolinians for Educational Opportunity join many state universities and community colleges in urging students and citizens to pass the bond, which will provide modernization funds for North Carolina's 59 community colleges and the 16 universities within the UNC system.

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill will receive \$510.5 million from the bond, putting the University one-third of the way to Chancellor Moeser's \$15 billion fundraising goal. Most of this money will be used to renovate existing class and office buildings on campus. Almost half of

the money will be used to construct new buildings, including a science complex and a student services building that will hold offices for advising, financial aid and housing. Another \$8 million will be allocated for land acquisition.

Opponents of the bond claim that Carolina is getting more than its fair share of the money while schools like North Carolina A&T and North Carolina Central are not receiving enough funds. The monetary division was decided based upon each school's expected enrollment and the condition of its facilities. It is highly possible that, as the jewel in North Carolina's crown of higher public education, Chapel Hill is getting a little extra attention.

However, each school in the UNC system will receive a substantial amount of funding that will greatly assist in meeting its needs. North Carolina's 59 community colleges will split \$600 million; only a small fraction of that money will have to be locally matched. The hope is that the improvements and augmentations funded by the

bond will prepare North Carolina schools for the 30% increase in enrollment that is expected to take place over the next ten years.

The controversy surrounding the bond is over its effect on the state economy, specifically taxes. Proponents for passage of the bond stress that it will not cause taxes to increase. North Carolina has one of the smallest deficits in the country. The state's economic outlook for the next few decades is solid. North Carolina will be able to repay the bond over a 25-year period without having to raise state taxes, using only 1% of the budget. By pumping money into higher education, proponents claim that North Carolina will draw in more businesses and corporations, further improving the state economy.

This is probably not the last you will hear about the bond, but after Nov. 7, the issue will be out of your hands. Make an impact while you can, and remember, the word is bond!

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