the Seahawk

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Dear Editor,

"What do we want?" We want a voice. "Why do we want it?" We want a choice. "When do we want it?" Now.

Students last Thursday made a courageous choice when they demonstrated outside of the UNCW Board of Trustees meeting with signs that communicated various messages surrounding tuition and our right to be included in the process.

This demonstration of student voices was one of the first of its kind on this campus that sent a message about our needs, not only to the trustees to keep tuition low and the administration to include us, but our signs also read "GA (General Assembly), no way" and "Higher Education needs more money." We realize the problem stems from the NC legislature's decline in funding for higher education, but that problem has other solutions, like our generation actually voting more and electing candidates that put more money into education than prison building.

"I have a dream" that the foundation for student inclusion in the tuition process has been laid here at UNCW and that the student demonstration was the climax of our frustrations. Protests are usually done after other options have been exhausted, but I believe the future will bring fewer demonstrations and more cooperative efforts between students and the administration if we continue to demand more inclusion in the decision-making process from our university leaders. And hopefully they will realize the valuable contributions that students bring to the table, if informed and given a chance to learn about these "complex" areas and decisions.

Student perspectives absent from the process means the process is not complete because this university ultimately functions when students pay the higher tuition and fees in good faith that it will be used to enhance the educational process. Maybe someday the state will follow through on its obligations to higher education, but if it doesn't and our university leaders again face major choices about price increases, hopefully their first thought will be "what do the students think?"

Adrien Lopez
Student Body President

Editorial Viewpoint

Student fee increase understandable, but unfairly decided

Most students will agree that $316 is a lot of money . . . especially when it is tacked onto the already expensive price of a college education under the guise of student fees. It's enough to make your wallet want to commit suicide.

The Board of Trustees voted last week to increase student fees by $316, and Chancellor James Leutze hints at an increase in parking fees as well. The money is set to go to several projects including University Union expansion, technology enhancement and more visible needs such as renovation and maintenance in Wagoner Hall and the dorms. These may be fund-worthy projects, but it is so easy to come up with reasons why the fee increase is excessive—the main one being that most students simply can't afford it.

The protest group that met outside Madeline Suite last Thursday was not, however, arguing about the hike in student fees, but rather how they were passed. The group, led by SGA president Adrien Lopez and Senior Class President Les Stewart argued a good point. The students had virtually no voice in the amount of money they'd be dishing up next year or in how it would be spent.

The students are clearly left out of the decision process where money is concerned, and Leutze confirmed this fact by saying that they never were the deciding body anyway. Shouldn't we have a say in how scary UNCW's price tag gets or even how that money is spent?

Leutze's appearance at the protest with a sign reading "I oppose the tuition increa$e too, But . . ." was cute—admirable even—and his point was well-taken, but that wasn't really the point we were trying to make. It's more along the lines of one of the protester's chants: "we want a say in what we pay."

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Dear Editor,

Why is it that UNCW police are that bored? Tuition increases (and) parking fines totaling hundreds of thousands of dollars a year go to pay the salaries of UNCW finest. Then why is it that a UNCW officer has nothing better to do than to ticket students sitting in their cars waiting for a space before class? I know this may seem petty, but it's just one thing that adds to the increasing frustration of our parking problems, as well as proposed tuition increases. Do we need the amount of campus law enforcement that we have when a police officer finds the need to ticket a student for simply WAITING for an open space? How else are you supposed to park when a lot is full? Drive around repeatedly? Cause more of a hazard than sitting still patiently? UNCW wonders why our retention rate is not that of other schools. I think it's time to reevaluate the little things, and think WHY the university exists in the first place.

Ryan Hohman
Sophomore