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HEATHER CASSANO | Photographer

Last Thursday, about 50 protestors met in downtown Raleigh, N.C. to demonstrate against the North Carolina Community College System's newest approved policy, which will allow the entrance of illegal immigrants into North Carolina community colleges.

Illegal immigrants allowed in N.C. colleges, protestors object

Laura Smith
News Editor

On Sept. 17, about 50 concerned North Carolinians waved flags, held up signs and made their voices heard in a protest in downtown Raleigh against the acceptance of illegal immigrants into N.C. community colleges.

"This isn't a great solution for America," said Frank Roche, who is running for Congress in the fourth district of North Carolina. "It's an incentive for more illegal immigrants to come."

The State Board of Community Colleges approved the decision that day with only one member to vote against the matter, according to a press release from the North Carolina Community College System.

"This policy reflects the admissions standards of other states and of the public universities by offering

educational opportunities to those who are willing to work hard to obtain it," said R. Scott Ralls, president of the NCCCS.

Since May 2008, there has been a no-admissions policy for illegal immigrants. Now, with the new policy, illegal immigrants can enroll in any of the 58 community colleges in North Carolina if they have graduated from a U.S. high school.

According to an outside consultant's report, community colleges had 111 illegal immigrants enrolled in the 2007-2008 school year.

Ron Woodard, a Cary resident and the president of Americans for Legal Immigration PAC, was at the protest to show his disapproval of the decision. He also spoke at Elon University several years ago at an immigration debate.

"I'm confused about why, with the

11 percent unemployment rate, we're helping immigrants get education," Woodard said. "We're taking it away from North Carolinians."

He said he is also concerned about how changing the current law will look on behalf of the state.

"We're sending out the message that the rule of law doesn't matter," Woodard said.

With the new policy, illegal immigrants will have to pay the out-of-state tuition rate of \$7,700 per year and cannot apply for financial aid. They also may not displace a North Carolina or U.S. resident from a class or program.

For some, the decision is one of great benefit to the state.

"This is not a policy the Board came to lightly or without contemplation and study, but with Thursday's vote,

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Financial aid bill hits Senate floor

Jack Dodson
Senior Reporter

Last Thursday, the House of Representatives passed legislation that hopes to overhaul federal financial aid for students. The bill, penned by Rep. George Miller (D-Calif.), has already spurred politicians to polarize about its effectiveness.

The Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2009 seeks to improve financial aid in the following ways, according to Inside Higher Ed:

- Provide \$40 billion during the course of 10 years, increase the maximum Pell Grant to \$5,500 as well as increase it annually by the rise in the Consumer Price Index.
- "Greatly expand" and tweak the Perkins Loan Program.
- Strengthen early childhood education with the backing of \$8 billion in 10 years.
- Give states and institutions incentive to increase college enrollment by creating a "College Access and Completion Fund" that would provide grants on the basis of innovative strategy for attracting students to postsecondary education.
- Support the modernization and repair of school and college facilities with the help of \$4.1 billion.
- Simplify the federal financial aid form.

"Instead of the loans being made by banks and subsidized by the federal government, the government will be the lender and collect the loans and make money on the interest once students are in repayment," said Patrick Murphy, the director of financial planning at Elon.

While supporters suggest the bill is a landmark, one which a press release on the House's Committee on Education and Labor's Web site said will "make college dramatically more affordable for millions of Americans, at no net cost to taxpayers," there is not a sound chorus of appreciation coming from Washington, D.C.

"Republican leaders derided the legislation as a federal takeover of the student loan industry," the Inside Higher Ed article said.

A news release on the Web site said a Republican senior member of the House Committee on Education and Labor marks a clear split within the committee.

"(The bill) fulfills President Obama's call to abolish the Federal Family Education Loan program and replace it with a system of government-run lending directly from the U.S. Treasury," the release said.

The Christian Science Monitor reported the bill passed 253-171, which was mostly along party lines, sticking with the Congressional trend.

Murphy said the bill's savings are hard to calculate at this point.

"The claim is that there will be savings within the system because the government will not be paying subsidies to the commercial banks," he said. "There is discussion whether the savings will be as much as claimed. We won't know until it actually happens."



IMAGE COURTESY OF MCT CAMPUS

Local students walk from class outside their university in Iraq. Elon is hoping to bring Iraqi students to campus next year.

Elon seeks to admit Iraqi students to campus next fall

Margeaux Corby
News Editor

University officials are hoping to bring high school and college graduates from the sands of Iraq to the bricks of Elon as early as next fall.

The Iraqi government has committed \$1 billion a year to the Iraq Education Initiative, a scholarship program whose enterprising goals include sending 10,000 Iraqi high school and college graduates to undergraduate and graduate colleges and universities around the globe.

"Iraq is trying to rebuild (its) own higher education system," said Woody Pelton, Elon's dean of international programs. "They're missing one thing: the people."

Pelton, who is also the director of the Isabella Cannon Center, said the large numbers of Iraqi educators who have

fled the warring country have left their university system in shambles.

Initiative leaders are counting on these young students to return to their respective provinces ready to teach others with their new degrees.

"Don't offer them employment," said Zuhair A.G. Humadi, executive director of the Iraq Education Initiative, at a recent NAFSA conference, which is an organization that promotes international education. "Please, we want them back."

Pelton said the most unique and encouraging aspect of this program is the initiative's desire to ensure scholarships are allocated fairly across all regions, religions and genders.

"This is not just a scholarship going to the sons and daughters of the wealthy

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