

Demand More for Higher Bill

At the Board of Trustees meeting Thursday, student government desperately needed a stronger argument than accessibility to fight the \$400 tuition increase.

Rather than examining the reasons why UNC needs more money and how it can profit the most students, student government weakly fought a tired fight against tuition increases in general.



KATY NELSON
UNIVERSITY
COLUMNIST

Although the trustees knew the tuition increase would not have nearly any impact compared to the \$1.5 billion Carolina First Campaign to build the endowment, the trustees took advantage of our weakness.

Student lobbyists focused too narrowly on the credible threat of UNC being too expensive for lower-income students. Yet with 40 percent of the \$9 million raised through the increase headed to financial aid, the N.C. Constitution argument was pushed aside by the trustees.

Student Body President Justin Young should have admitted there's no question that UNC needs more money to retain outstanding faculty and to maintain our tradition of academic excellence. To fight the \$400 tuition increase, student government should have focused less on complaining about paying more and zeroed in on how our money will be used to improve our educations.

Young should have talked with the BOT more about where UNC's expansion is headed and how the legislature, students and alumni must work together to ensure quality education within this future. All parties must understand what funds are needed and how they will be allocated so that the burden will not be dumped on students due to lack of discussion.

Young also should have continually reminded the BOT that this increase will only provide a fraction of the amount needed for faculty salary parity with our competitors. For the sake of doing something relatively small about our needed improvements, UNC has shafted students rather than having a more meaningful discussion in which alumni and General Assembly resources were included.

To ensure a uniform vision, all of us need to consider how UNC can be improved without radically changing UNC's signature style. At the BOT meeting, Trustee Rusty Carter spoke about how UNC must focus on retaining its unique character.

We need to have more confidence in our University, and we must put our heads together to discover how we can raise a substantial amount of money and then apply the funds to making a better, yet still special, Carolina.

It's not the time for students, alumni or legislators to deny financial responsibility. But because all three groups have not discussed the most important issues concerning Carolina's future, students are stuck with another meaningless bill.

Students can no longer resist tuition increases simply because we don't want to pay more. What we should be fighting for is paying more for a better Carolina, not a Carolina that implements tuition increases as Band-Aids to cover huge problems. And a stronger Carolina starts with more student-oriented administrators. Instead of analyzing statistics all day, I want to see Chancellor James Moeser sitting in your classes. I want Moeser and Provost Robert Shelton studying the brilliance of a UNC education and spending their quality hours identifying ways to remedy our academic weaknesses. I want our administrators and trustees behaving like educators rather than businessmen taking advantage of the little guy.

I want our student government to behave more professionally and to address our administrators more thoughtfully and tactfully. I wish Young had mobilized a more thought-provoking campaign than "Speak Out or Pay Up."

I think Young's administration would have been more successful in raising support had the protests examined the real issues behind the tuition increase: What does a Carolina education mean today, and what will we want it to mean in the future?

Better yet, student government should have eloquently expressed the need of unity between legislators, students and alumni at this pivotal time in Carolina history – which means we needed more discussion time to establish a shared vision, a point Young did hammer home.

If we're going to pay more, let's get more.

Columnist Katy Nelson can be reached at knelson@email.unc.edu.

ASG Aims to Inform Voters About Funding

Members seek to prevent further cuts into the state's higher education budget and to increase ASG funds.

By ELYSE ASHBURN
Assistant State & National Editor

GREENSBORO – Student leaders have decided to take a proactive approach to preventing further tuition increases across the UNC system.

At its monthly meeting Saturday, the UNC Association of Student Governments announced its intention to

take its "Keep North Carolina Educated" campaign on the road.

ASG leaders said the campaign will focus on raising awareness of the N.C. General Assembly's responsibility to fund higher education in the state, which could offset future tuition increases.

ASG leaders said the campaign is especially needed now that the state is facing a budget shortfall between \$400 million and \$900 million and the UNC system is potentially facing greater funding cuts.

Brad Dixon, ASG vice president of finance, said the campaign is intended to persuade voters to pressure state legislators for adequate higher education funding or to vote those legislators out of

office. "The campaign is about getting out awareness to a lot of people who are footing the bill," he said.

Dixon said North Carolinians must demand that state legislators stop shirking their responsibility to the UNC system.

"We can't allow them to press through the para-



ASG President Andrew Payne said he hopes to increase ASG's budget from \$2,500 to \$165,000.

digm that the state doesn't have to support the university system," he said.

Dixon said the General Assembly's higher education budget cuts force system officials to implement tuition hikes to compensate for a lack of state funding.

James Haltom, ASG vice president of public affairs, emphasized student leaders' responsibility to ensure that tuition is kept low and UNC-system schools remain accessible.

"Millions of North Carolinians go to work every day at mills, farms and in cities across the state to provide for us to go to college," Haltom said. "It's our responsibility to keep those universities affordable."

To complement the long-range voter awareness campaign, the ASG approved a proposal for tuition guidelines to be presented at the UNC-system Board of Governors meeting in February.

The proposal includes a recommendation to approve campus-initiated tuition increases on campuses that have not increased tuition in the last two years but to deny the requests of universities that have already implemented increases.

The document also recommends that the BOG revamp its tuition policy – a move it is already poised to make.

ASG President Andrew Payne said

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JUMP AROUND



DTH/SARA ABRONS

Five members of the SkipSations! jump rope team of Chapel Hill perform at halftime at the women's basketball game against Virginia on Sunday. The team, composed of children ages 8 to 16, recently won first place at the national championship in Santa Clara, Calif. The team plans to travel to the world championships in Belgium in April.

N.C. Colleges Mull Tuition Increases

By CLEVE R. WOOTSON JR.
Staff Writer

Officials at UNC-Charlotte and East Carolina University recently announced that they are considering raising tuition at their respective campuses.

UNC-C Chancellor James Woodward said Friday that the university's Board of Trustees will consider a \$400 campus-initiated tuition increase at its Feb. 4 meeting.

The announcement comes on the heels of the UNC-Chapel Hill BOT's passage of a \$400 campus-initiated tuition increase. The increase, approved Thursday, will fund faculty salary

increases and reduce class sizes.

Woodward said UNC-C's tuition increase would be targeted toward programs that improve undergraduate education, such as a learning facility program to ease the difficult transition to college work.

Woodward added that the revenue also would fund the hiring of more full-time faculty to replace some adjunct professors and also decrease the student-faculty ratio.

"Just like the trustees at Chapel Hill, our trustees recognized the problems associated with funding," Woodward said. "We are especially concerned about those departments that are dependent on adjunct faculty – replacing

adjunct faculty with full-time faculty."

N.C. State University trustees also will consider an increase at their February meeting.

More than half the schools in the UNC system either have approved a tuition increase or are in the process of determining if one is necessary for their campus.

Jeff Huskamp, ECU's chief information officer, said administrators are considering a tuition increase but declined to give any additional details.

"I certainly think (a tuition increase) has been a topic of discussion as the state's fiscal position

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Easley Seeks More Federal Funds for State Medicaid

North Carolina received a 1 percent cut in federal funding for Medicaid last year, which meant \$65 million less for this year.

By RACHEL LEONARD
Staff Writer

Gov. Mike Easley sent a letter last week urging the N.C. congressional delegation to provide additional funding for the state's Medicaid program, which is facing a \$108 million budget shortfall this fiscal year.

In the letter, Easley stated that increased federal aid is crucial to protect the state's "most vulnerable citizens." Medicaid provides health care for the poor, elderly and disabled.

"Maintaining and increasing federal participation in the Medicaid program not only helps North Carolina but also our counties that are struggling to meet their own budget needs," Easley stated. The Medicaid shortfall adds to the state's budget woes. The state already faces an estimated \$400 million to \$900 million budget deficit before the fiscal year ends in June.

Rising program costs, cuts in funding and the recent economic downturn all contributed to the Medicaid budget shortfall.

A 1 percent cut in federal Medicaid funding last year left North Carolina with \$65 million less for the current fiscal year than in 2001. The federal government continues to provide about 61 percent of the state Medicaid budget.

North Carolina's annual expenditures of about \$2 billion provide another 33 percent of Medicaid funding, and counties pick up the rest.

At the same time, the number of people seeking Medicaid has risen, said Daphne Lyon, deputy director for the Division of Medical Assistance, which oversees the state's Medicaid program.

More than 1 million people in North Carolina receive Medicaid benefits.

Last year, Lyon said, the state cut costs by changing reimbursement amounts and placing limits on the hours of personal care patients can receive per day. More limits could be placed on services in the case of another shortfall, she said.

Lois Nilsen, spokeswoman for the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services, also said the state might need to look at several options when closing the budget gap. "Lots of things are on the table," she said. Lyon said she is hopeful that federal funding will be increased. "But we cannot depend on that," she added.

In his letter, Easley cited proposals to return the federal matching rate to the 2001 levels, to increase Medicaid funding for all states and to provide relief to states with high unemployment.

"All of these various provisions would help North Carolina," he stated in the letter.

No relief has yet to come from the federal government, but provisions for Medicaid assistance to the states are being considered under the economic stimulus package currently in Congress.

Michael Briggs, press secretary for Sen. John Edwards, D-N.C., said many states are experiencing similar budget problems. "It's not unique to North Carolina," he said.

Edwards had proposed increases in Medicaid distribution for the states before Easley's letter, Briggs said.

Although Briggs said Edwards sees a chance of the economic stimulus package passing, Briggs said it depends on what kind of priority the president put on it. "It's high on everyone's agenda."

The State & National Editor can be reached at stntdesk@unc.edu.

Area Schools Hold Forum on Growth

By JON DOUGHERTY
Assistant City Editor

The Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools Strategic Planning Task Force held a public forum Thursday to discuss the development of the school system.

The school system is creating the plan so it can respond to an influx in local growth. The plan is designed to dictate the expansion and goals of the school system through 2008.

David Hartzell, task force co-chairman and a UNC business professor, presented the proposed development plan for the school system to about 35 residents.

"When we started in October, we set ourselves three questions to answer: What should the ideal school system look like, how do we get our system there and what major challenges will we have to overcome," Hartzell said.

Another defining characteristic of the strategic plan that was discussed is the concept of what an ideal graduating student of the school system should look like.

Ada Pisano, a mother of four students in the school system, emphasized the importance of decreasing the achieve-

ment disparity between white and minority students.

"Reducing the minority achievement gap is the key to our development," Pisano said. "To do this successfully, we need to set specific outcome expectations for our program."

Because of an exponential increase of Hispanic residents in recent years, minority issues are being brought to the forefront in the Chapel Hill-Carrboro area.

Ashley Osment, the mother of a rising kindergartner, had concerns about the students' exposure to other cultures. "There have been studies done that prove that kids who begin bilingual education early do better in all subjects," Osment said.

Osment detailed the example the school system should take from Carrboro and Glenwood elementary schools. "I hope the district will expand the pilot program of dual-language kindergarten education at these two schools," Osment said.

In that program, students learn in English for half of the day and spend the other half learning in another language. The Carrboro program offers Spanish,

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Officials Still Debating Sale of Tract

By LIZZIE BREYER
University Editor

The fate of a piece of University-owned land is coming under debate as officials struggle with the idea of selling it to local developers.

Although UNC officials said they are intrigued by the idea of creating more affordable housing for faculty and staff, discussions late last week revealed reluctance about selling the 62-acre Horace Williams satellite tract to developers Phil Szostak and Bob Chapman.

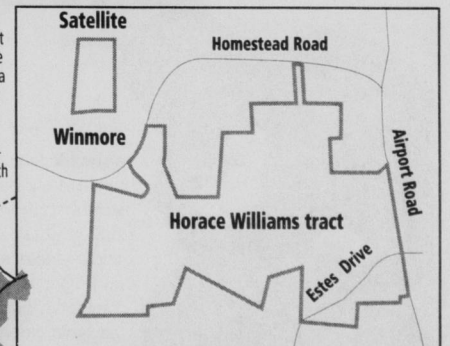
The tract, located in Carrboro, could become part of the proposed Winmore mixed-use development – developed by Szostak and Chapman – which could include housing that would be available for UNC faculty and staff.

"In preliminary discussions with Winmore, it appears that the homes would sell for less than the median price in Carrboro," said Nancy Suttentfield, vice chancellor for finance and administration, at Thursday's UNC Board of Trustees meeting. "We have talked many times about the lack of housing within Carrboro for young faculty and staff members, so we were intrigued."

Sue Estroff, chairwoman of the Faculty Council, said housing in Chapel Hill is unaffordable for faculty members. Estroff said many faculty members,

Adding More to Winmore

Developers have approached UNC about purchasing the satellite Horace Williams tract, a 62-acre area of land in Carrboro. The tract could become part of the Winmore mixed-use development, which opens up on to Homestead Road.



SOURCE: OFFICE OF FINANCE ADMINISTRATION

DTH/GRAPHICS STAFF

herself included, have made decisions about whether to accept an offer from a university based on the availability of affordable housing in the area. She said the cost-of-living price of housing can be as important in attracting faculty as faculty salary and benefit packages.

"(Housing) is a very important part of the total recruitment and retention package that would help boost us up to where we want to be," Estroff said.

But Suttentfield stopped short of recommending the sale of the tract, saying

that BOT members first need to decide whether they consider the development of affordable homes an appropriate use.

The tract was appraised at slightly less than \$1 million more than a year ago, although Suttentfield said the proposed development at Winmore would probably increase the value of UNC's land.

Trustee Jim Hynes said Thursday he is in favor of using the land to create new housing in Carrboro. "I think

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