

2 bills tackle college costs

BY ALEX GRANADOS
STAFF WRITER

U.S. House Democrats and Republicans proposed legislation last week that would help more U.S. citizens attend college, although the parties have divergent views on how that should be accomplished.

The GOP's plan, titled the Affordability in Higher Education Act, "would address the rising cost of post-secondary education by holding institutions accountable for cost increases," stated a press release on the U.S. House Web site.

Ultimately, the act calls for colleges and universities to find ways to decrease their expenses so that more students can afford higher education.

The Democrats' plan, the College Opportunity for All Act, is designed to "increase the access and affordability of a college education," according to a press release from the office of Rep. George Miller, D-Calif., the lead author of the bill.

One of the main differences between the two parties' bills is the approach toward Pell Grants and other types of student funding, said Chris Simmons, assistant director

of government relations for the American Council on Education.

The Democrats' proposal doubles the maximum amount of Pell Grant scholarships to \$11,600 by 2011. The plan also would allow students to refinance high interest rate loans while increasing scholarships for students pursuing careers such as teaching and nursing, the press released stated.

The Republican plan does not affect Pell Grants or student funding, but focuses on curbing tuition increases at colleges and universities, said Rep. Buck McKeon, R-Calif., the bill's author. "The tuition and fees just keep going up," he said.

Because of rising costs, McKeon said many potential students will continue to miss out. "Over the next decade, 2 million people who have trained and want to go to college won't be able," he said.

Miller said the Democrats also are trying to help more students attend college.

"Our bill goes in a very different direction," he said. "It would increase college opportunities for millions of Americans through smart investments and innovations."

But McKeon says Democrats simply are throwing money away. "The Democrats' plan is basically just status quo," he said. "They are just putting in more money."

Simmons said both bills already have some roadblocks to get past. "The biggest problem for both parties is that there is no money," he said. "Because of lack of money, it is hard to authorize more programs."

But Simmons said the GOP proposal faces a bigger problem than just budgetary constraints.

"The Republicans have a real big problem because McKeon wants to have a price control bill," he said. "Trying to impose price controls isn't a very Republican idea."

The Democratic proposal avoids controlling prices by focusing merely on rising tuition as a state budgetary problem and not taking on individual institutions' spending practices, the press release stated.

Despite the problems facing both bills, McKeon said Democrats and Republicans have taken the first step in addressing a major governmental concern.

"When they are turning away kids from getting an education, that is a national crisis."

Contact the State & National Editor at stntdesk@unc.edu.

Tight budget cuts jobs, services

BY LINHDA TRAN
STAFF WRITER

UNC-system schools have slashed almost 400 positions, cut services, tightened capital outlays and reduced supplies in order to meet the \$47.9 million budget reduction required by the state.

The N.C. General Assembly passed June 30 a bill that requires the state's universities to curtail budgets.

"(Budget cuts) are the result of the state's economy not producing the revenues that the state had earlier anticipated," said Jeff Davies, UNC-system vice president for finance.

The mandatory Management Flexibility Reserve reductions allow system chancellors from each campus to have the final say as to where budget reductions would be applied.

The UNC system and its campuses were required to reduce budgets by 3 percent.

Other areas, including UNC Health Care, N.C. Area Health Education Centers and the N.C. School of Science and Math were required to meet a 1.5 percent budget reduction, according to a BOG report released Friday.

"The governor is proposing the budget revisions because revenues into the state budget are not meeting projections, and since North

Carolina has a deficit, the governor is prudently making cuts across the budgets as a precautionary plan," said UNC-system President Molly Broad.

Of the \$47.9 million budget reductions for the fiscal year 2003-04, about 45 percent came from job eliminations and 20 percent from service reductions; another 19 percent was taken from capital expenses. The remainder came from a combination of supplies, fixed charges and line-item reductions.

"The severity (of the budget cuts) is directly related to the fact that we have had cuts in the past several years, and these cuts are in addition to other cuts," Davies said.

Several years of continual budget reductions have made it more difficult to maintain faculty at each university.

For 2003-04, 378 positions were eliminated across the UNC system. Of that, 367 were vacant positions, while 11 were filled. A majority of the cuts — 276 positions — were in instructional areas.

"Compared to what has happened to universities across the country, North Carolina and other universities have fared exceedingly well," Broad said.

Faculty cuts result in the reduction of the number of courses

offered. A greater burden is placed on the remaining faculty members who must absorb the additional responsibilities of those who have been eliminated, the report states.

"It's becoming harder and harder to administer cuts because they come on the heels of cuts last year, and cuts the year before and the year before," Broad said.

"We've cut through all the fat and marrow, and we're into the bone. ... There are very tough choices to be made."

Contact the State & National Editor at stntdesk@unc.edu.

Fund-raiser for schools goes to town

BY SARAH HANCOX
STAFF WRITER

Almost 3,000 parents, teachers and children gathered on McCorkle Place on Saturday afternoon for the seventh annual Walk for Education.

Franklin Street was shut down as marchers, led by the East Chapel Hill High School band, hit the street.

Representatives from each school of the Chapel Hill-Carrboro system wore distinctive costumes or T-shirts that showed off their school colors, and Scroggs and Rashkis elementary schools had their mascots stroll alongside the other participants.

For the past seven years, the Chapel Hill-Carrboro Public School Foundation, an educational advocacy organization, has coordinated the walk as a major fund-raiser for Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools.

Students seek donations from friends and family members, and about 90 businesses chipped in this year.

The marches have raised more than \$2 million for local schools during the past seven years.

This year's event raised more than \$100,000, 85 percent of which will go directly to the schools. Each school decides individually how the proceeds will be allocated.

The walk culminated in a carnival at the Lincoln Center with games, music and food. The carnival doubled as an opportunity for area school groups to raise funds.

Fare at the many booths included a smoothie bar along with a bake sale and face painters, while other groups sold personalized backpack badges and Japanese character bookmarks.

McDougal Middle School students raised money for classmate Jon Paul Minta's cancer treatments.

Others used the carnival as an opportunity to inform the community about local issues. Event volunteers wore stickers and passed out fliers about the proposed merger of the city and county school systems.

Participants praised the march for both promoting local education and building relationships within the community.

"We saw a lot of participation from the new schools," said Michelle Lewis, a participant in the march.

"The Meadowmont and Southern Village neighborhoods have really augmented our community support."

But Stephanie Yost, a Public School Foundation board member, said she wished that UNC had played a greater role.

"It would be great if next year Chancellor (James) Moeser or some of the sports teams could come out and be a part of this. ... It truly should be a community event."

Contact the City Editor at citydesk@unc.edu.

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GAA Student Membership T-shirt Day

TOMORROW! Tuesday, October 14

How to enter - Wear your student membership T-shirt and fill out a ticket to enter when you come to our table in the Pit between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.

What you can win - We have loads of great prizes including a digital camera, color scanner, handheld organizer, movie and restaurant gift certificates, and Carolina merchandise.

Can't make it to the Pit? - You can also enter to win at the front desk of the George Watts Hill Alumni Center on Stadium Drive between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Student Membership Advisory Board members will also be on campus looking for student membership T-shirts.

Winner notification - We will send a list of winners to the student membership listserv on Wed., Oct. 15. Winners will receive additional instructions via e-mail about how to pick up their prize.

Rain date is Wed., Oct. 15.

E-mail gaastudentmember@unc.edu with any questions or comments.

STUDENT MEMBERSHIP

GENERAL ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

Official Homecoming Event!

ARTCARVED COLLEGE JEWELRY official

Carolina Ring Event

DATE.....TODAY, Monday, October 13 - Friday, October 17

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