

UNC-P wants biotech funds

Request reflects push by small schools

BY PATRICIA LAPADULA
STAFF WRITER

While some Triangle-based public schools already have received funding for biotechnology laboratories and research, smaller UNC-system schools and community colleges are lobbying for more state funding to develop similar programs.

The schools are mainly in counties that have been hit hard by agricultural and textile losses. They are competing for funding with larger public and private research institutions such as UNC-Chapel Hill and N.C. State University.

"What we have been relying on economically is going away pretty fast," said Scott Bigelow, associate director of university relations at UNC-Pembroke, a school that

wants to construct a new biotechnology research lab.

The university has plans to create a fermentation and bioprocessing facility that would house a number of biotechnology research projects.

UNC-P would like to begin more in-depth training programs for people in the biotechnology field. It also wants to get its hands on the emerging industry.

These moves, university officials hope, will help make up for Robeson County's declining textile industry.

N.C. Senate President Pro Tem Marc Basnight, D-Dare, toured the site of the proposed facility, which state and Robeson County leaders hope will aid in the advancement of biotechnology in eastern North

Carolina. Amy Fulk, Basnight's spokeswoman, said the tour would help the senator understand the changing needs of N.C. counties.

Along with Robeson Community College, UNC-P would like biotechnology companies to notice the capacity of other parts of the state besides the research-heavy Triangle.

"Biotechnology could be used to create a new market for tobacco farmers," Fulk said.

Biotechnology companies are researching the use of tobacco to produce new protein-based medicines.

If the research is successful, North Carolina would benefit immensely from the expanding field, she said.

The Golden LEAF Foundation, a nonprofit corporation that distributes tobacco settlement money

to government and other nonprofit organizations, will allocate \$8.7 million to five community colleges to develop training locations, along with mobile facilities throughout the state.

It expects to have the programs running by July.

The foundation's priority is to make economic opportunities available to tobacco-producing counties.

It also provides grants that "support efforts in the biotechnology sector," said Valeria Lee, president of Golden LEAF.

Forsyth Technical Community College in Winston-Salem is one of several colleges vying to become one of five locations that will receive help from the foundation.

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TUITION

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first talking about nonresident tuition.

"One missing element is that we did not seize the opportunity to address increasing out-of-state tuition," said Trustee Paul Fulton.

With tuition and fees at \$15,920 per year for out-of-state students, Fulton even suggested that the University could increase tuition by \$6,000 to \$8,000, bringing it in line with costs at peer institutions such as the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor and the University of Virginia.

Jerry Lucido, director of undergraduate admissions, said out-of-state students wouldn't be deterred by higher rates.

"My best guess is that there is still some ways to go before tuition increases lead to less interest from out-of-state students," he said.

Lucido estimated that tuition probably could withstand a few thousand dollars' increase with minimal impact.

Those potential increases for

"Taxpayers are expecting (tuition hikes). ... We have an obligation to do it."

PAUL FULTON, TRUSTEE

nonresident students would more than cover the cost of their education.

At the current rate, out-of-state tuition pays for 95 percent of the cost of education. Chancellor James Moeser said even a \$900 increase would bring tuition close to covering costs completely.

Moeser said that once the cost of education is covered, any additional tuition money returns directly to the University.

Surplus money from out-of-state students would help keep in-state tuition in the bottom quartile among peer institutions — a top priority of University officials.

But Student Body President Matt Tepper said the increases would put an undue burden on out-of-state students.

"When it comes to talking about making money off of out-of-state students, I think we need lots of time to sit down and discuss and research," Tepper said.

Provost Robert Shelton said the deliberations about flat, campus-based tuition increases should be kept separate from specific non-resident student issues.

"I worry that if we tie (these issues) in too tightly, we might never get anywhere with anything," he said.

But some trustees, including Fulton, said it would be a mistake to act on proposed increases without looking at the broader issue fully.

"I think the timing is appropriate (for nonresident tuition increases)," Fulton said.

"Taxpayers are expecting it. I think we have an obligation to do it."

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PROPERTY

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lot sooner."

Hill said the move will require him to pay a higher mortgage on his new home, and the house he will be moving into is not significantly larger. "I'm happy with this deal," he said. "But it's not, by any means, a sweetheart deal."

Runberg also pointed out that UNC has expressed interest in the property for several years, and it's had nothing to do with Hill and everything to do with the location. "This was just a simple case of swap-

ping a property that doesn't have strategic value for one that does."

Runberg said this is not the first time officials have swapped properties.

Hill said he was not sure exactly when he and his family would move, but it could happen as soon as next week. No matter when they move, Hill said, he has mixed emotions about leaving the house he's lived in for 25 years. "I've put a lot of effort into this place," Hill said. "But I guess it's time to move on."

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NORTHSIDE

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"The majority of people buying in are not doing it for single-family, homeowner residents," said Jeff Caiola, a committee member who lives in the neighborhood. "They're doing it to maximize their profits."

But some worry that the zoning restrictions proposed might undermine the family atmosphere the residents seek to defend.

The most controversial tenets in the proposal were maximum height and size limits placed on the district's houses.

The plan sets height thresholds at 20 feet to 29 feet, dependent on setback from the property line, and maximizes allowable floor space in the home to 25 percent of the owner's lot size. An additional cap for floor area was set at 2,000 square feet, although 2,500-square-foot houses in the largest lots would be allowable upon appeal to the town's Board of Adjustment.

Mildred Council, owner and chef at Mama Dip's Country Kitchen, said she worried that as families grow larger and more prosperous, they will not be able to tailor their homes to their needs.

"I don't see why people who started with pennies and built this shining, black community should be restricted," she said. "Why keep people in one type of house when they can afford to make it better?"

Local developer and realtor Mark Patmore concurred with the council and said the committee's plans will be counterproductive.

"This will absolutely drive fami-

lies out," Patmore said. "How could anyone expect families to come if they aren't allowed to buy or build a home that's suitable to them?"

His plea to the town for mortgage assistance to low-income families was denied, he said, and unless tax breaks are given to landlords who have family tenants, they are forced to rent or sell to whomever can afford fair market value.

Lifelong Northside resident Esphur Foster said that family homes never were as large as the new rental units in the area and that the tentative bylaws merely would retain the neighborhood's classic character, balance and diversity.

"If someone came to me and offered me \$5 million for the property my parents left me, I would not sell it," she said. "You can't teach people the pride to appreciate what has come before you and been left to you."

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EDUCATION

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which they view as an affront to the viability of higher education.

Chris Simmons, assistant director of government relations at the American Council on Education, said Congress should be working to give colleges more autonomy in the future, not less.

"We've had 350 years of a pretty good relationship that has produced the best system (of higher education) in the world," he said.

"It would be a shame to end that now."

Simmons also described the immense costs of regulating high-

er education and hinted that a renewed focus on colleges might not be wise when the United States has mounting commitments around the globe.

"There are only two federal agencies that don't have regulations on higher education ... and to do anything more would be taking billions of dollars from a pot of money we don't have."

Others, including UNC-system President Emeritus Bill Friday, said proposed regulations simply could be watered-down versions of President Bush's signature education initiative: the No Child Left Behind Act.

"(NCLB) is a marvelous idea

that shows we're about improving our schools, but the accountability measures are so strict that they impede the progress they seek to create," Friday said.

McKeon's proposal to create a College Affordability Index has drawn the strongest comparisons to the NCLB Act.

The index would measure the rise in tuition during a three-year period and compare the increase to changes in the Consumer Price Index during a similar period of time.

If tuition increases at twice the rate of inflation, then the federal government would impose a set of strict accountability measures on universities, including the removal of federal aid.

McCluskey said this could have disastrous consequences for small, private institutions.

Without the support of state governments or private endowments to fall back on, he said, small colleges will find it hard to attract the best and brightest students.

He said, "The real losers in this debate are small, private, liberal arts colleges and universities, which provide diversity and choice in a landscape dominated by public and prestigious private institutions."

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International Education Week


November 17-21, 2003

Schedule of Events for
Thursday, November 20

Peace Corps Information Session
Toy Lounge, Dey Hall, 1:00 PM


Film Presentation: Bread and Tulips
Room 205, Undergraduate Library, 3:00 PM
(Sponsored by UCIS in conjunction with the Italian Club)

Foreign Language & Area Studies
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UCIS Conference Room, 223 E. Franklin Street, 3:00 PM



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WASTE

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A University budget committee allocated funds for the project last February, one step needed to satisfy the DENR agreement.

The project is expected to last as long as eight years, starting with a 30-day period for public notice before DENR's final approval.

UNC's consultant, Arcadis Inc., will oversee a cleanup investigation plan during the next three years. In the two years after that, Arcadis will install a groundwater remediation system.

During the cleanup period, the public will have a chance to comment on the efforts.

This project comes after University officials removed radioactive materials from the Mason Farm site earlier this year.

The next step in UNC's cleanup process is to remediate the old sanitary landfill near the chemical waste site.

Between 1967 and 1973, Chapel Hill officials operated the 35-acre landfill, which contains University garbage, construction debris and municipal waste.

Carolina North plans will dictate procedures for remediating the landfill. Reinhardt said, "We certainly will need to remediate it in some way, but we still need to investigate the different methods we need to remediate that site."

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