

UNC trustees backed Town Council bids

BY SARAH RABIL

STAFF WRITER
Sympathetic attitudes toward the University motivated the decision by some members of the UNC Board of Trustees to donate about \$1,900 to candidates in the 2003 Chapel Hill Town Council elections.

The majority of the donations were made to UNC senior Mike McSwain and Dianne Bachman, an architect in the UNC Facilities Planning Department, both of whom lost the election.

Cam Hill, a vocal critic of the University who defeated both Bachman and McSwain in November for a seat on the council, said voters elected a council that will be more assertive of the town's needs with respect to University development.

Despite the setback, BOT members said they are confident that town-gown relations will continue to improve.

Trustee Roger Perry, who contributed the maximum \$200 to

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JOHN ELLISON, UNC TRUSTEE FROM GREENSBORO

both Bachman and McSwain, said he was not discouraged by their unsuccessful council bids. "I'm perfectly satisfied with this council and believe we will be able to work effectively with them."

He said that though he knew both candidates he supported through the University, he contributed to their campaigns because he felt they were "the best qualified candidates."

John Ellison, a trustee from Greensboro who gave \$200 to McSwain's campaign, said he thinks it is appropriate for University officials to support candidates who are sympathetic to the University. "We feel there are probably some candidates who will be more likely to support the University interests and that's who we'd like to see on the Town Council," Ellison said.

Even though the candidate he supported was not elected, he said, Ellison is still confident that town-gown relations are improving steadily. He cited Carolina North discussions as an example of the

town and University working together.

Bachman, who missed a seat on the council by 1,017 votes, spent \$7,890 — by far the most of any candidate. Trustees Perry and Russell Carter of Wilmington each gave \$200 to Bachman's campaign. Carter's donation was refunded after the election.

McSwain garnered \$1,500 from BOT members in campaign contributions and finished second to last in the race. Of the eight BOT members who donated to McSwain's campaign, Perry is the only one who lives in Chapel Hill.

BOT member Nelson Schwab gave \$200 to McSwain's campaign, though his Charlotte residency prevented him from voting in the Chapel Hill election.

"(McSwain) was a student and was interested in representing the University's perspective," Schwab said. "I support a lot of candidates I can't vote for."

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The Daily Tar Heel

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Advertising & Business, 962-1163
News, Features, Sports, 962-0245

One copy per person; additional copies may be purchased at The Daily Tar Heel for \$2.50 each.

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ASG project takes aim at possible tuition hikes

Unveils book in front of legislature

BY CHRIS COLETTA

ASSISTANT STATE & NATIONAL EDITOR

RALEIGH — About a dozen representatives from the UNC-system Association of Student Governments met Monday in front of the N.C. Legislative Building to unveil a book the ASG hopes will give officials pause as they consider proposed tuition hikes.

The 500-page book, called "The Personal Stories Project: Faces, Not Numbers," includes about 800 stories from students, parents, staff and faculty across the system describing how cost increases and budget cuts have harmed them.

Amanda Devore, ASG vice president for legislative affairs, was in charge of the project, which she said stemmed from the need to make legislators and the UNC-system Board of Governors aware of the ramifications of its actions.

In its Friday meeting, the BOG will consider campus-based tuition increases for all 16 system schools as well as a 2 percent systemwide hike. The N.C. General Assembly does not reconvene until May.

"The goal of this project became a means to act as the collective voice of those behind the barriers," Devore said in a speech.

In order to drive home this point, the ASG presented a pair of

students to tell their stories.

Rachel Johnson, a senior psychology major at Appalachian State University, and Tony Caravano, student body president at N.C. State University, told stories of struggling to make ends meet.

ASG President Jonathan Ducote said the event was part of a "strong, continued effort" this week to lobby officials, which will culminate Friday at the BOG meeting.

One factor working in their favor is the support of Gov. Mike Easley, who wrote a letter to BOG Chairman Brad Wilson on Sunday expressing his opposition to tuition increases. "Students and families need to do everything they can to support the governor," Ducote said in an interview. "He's on the mark."

In expressing opposition to tuition increases, ASG members centered on a specific theme: Article IX, Section 9 of the N.C. Constitution, which states that attending system schools should be free "as far as practicable."

Varying interpretations of this phrase have fueled much of the debate, and Ducote said the BOG's conception is unacceptable.

"Philosophically, we've dedicated ourselves to the idea of providing an education at no cost," he said. "It erodes that philosophy

"We've dedicated ourselves to the idea of providing an education at no cost."

JONATHAN DUCOTE, ASG PRESIDENT
when you have tuition increases."

Matt Tepper, UNC-Chapel Hill student body president, said this idea applies to all students.

Tepper said that at UNC-CH, where in-state students might face \$300 hike and out-of-state students are looking at an increase of \$1,500, the numbers don't matter as much as the fact that tuition is being increased at all.

"When you get down to it, you're a student no matter what," he said just after delivering a personal copy of the book to N.C. Sen. Ellie Kinnaird, D-Orange, one of the only legislators in the building.

That fact, Devore said, prompted her to put together the book.

"If (officials) do decide to increase tuition anyway, I hope they find the time to contact every student, parent and staff member who has been affected and explain to them what their decision is."

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

Johnson appeals demotion

Questions police department motives

BY LINDSEY LISTROM

STAFF WRITER

The issue of racism within the Chapel Hill Police Department was the focus of a hearing Friday for a black officer recently demoted from captain to police officer III.

Everette Johnson, who was formerly the highest-ranking black in the history of the department, appealed his demotion, claiming the action was racially motivated.

At the hearing, both sides had 90 minutes to present information to Assistant Town Manager Flo Miller, who has 14 days after the hearing to decide whether to rehire Johnson as captain.

Al McSurely, Johnson's lawyer, said he thought the hearing gave Miller a good sense of the racism Johnson has faced while working for the department.

"We felt that the assistant town manager got a little sense of the attacks by the various forces on Captain Johnson," McSurely said. "That was our main aim."

Police Chief Gregg Jarves said he could not comment on information presented by Major Tony Oakley and himself at the hearing but said they followed standard hearing procedure of data presentation and counter-examination.

Miller said she could not com-

ment on the hearing, which was closed to the public and the press because it concerned town personnel.

Johnson and McSurely's presentation focused on past cases of racism within the department and the events leading to Johnson's demotion.

"Our position was that he was targeted by a small group of white officers," McSurely said.

Those officers disliked that Johnson had authority over them, McSurely said, and filed complaints against him to oust him from his position.

"They don't mind working with (blacks)," McSurely said. "But they sure as hell don't like taking orders from them."

During Johnson's 3 1/2 years as captain, four complaints were filed against him through the department's citizen complaint system.

McSurely said he thinks that all of the complaints were filed by officers, not citizens, and that Johnson did not know about two of the complaints until Friday's hearing.

McSurely also said the Police Protection League, an organization within the department, had threatened Jarves with a reverse discrimination suit after Johnson became captain, claiming his

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AL MCSURELY, JOHNSON'S LAWYER

minority status led to his promotion.

Johnson has worked in various divisions in the department for over 20 years.

Jarves said his decision to demote Johnson, which cut Johnson's annual salary by \$15,000, was based on the history of his performance and came only after much consideration.

"I take every bit of information I can before making a decision," he said.

The last complaint filed against Johnson concerned his off-duty work. He was hired to patrol a bank for three hours on Oct. 11, 2003.

The same night, Johnson covered for another officer at a bar three blocks away.

McSurely said bank officials paid Johnson in full even though Johnson told them of his three-hour absence.

Contact the City Editor at citydesk@unc.edu.

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