

Workers seek better health care

BY BRIAN HUDSON
UNIVERSITY EDITOR

The UNC Employee Forum approved a resolution June 2 calling for N.C. legislators to provide affordable health care for state employees and families.

The resolution also called for the N.C. General Assembly to pass a plan allowing for the tailoring of health benefits, employee representation on all State Health Plan boards and publication of all information regarding administration of the State Plan.

"I would hope that they would listen to our concerns and realize that we need something better than what we have, that the system needs fixing," said Katherine Graves, vice chairwoman of the Employee Forum.

The resolution also requested

support from Chancellor James Moeser and the University's administration.

"The Employee Forum ... strongly recommends that the chancellor and his administration convey and support publicly the concepts of this resolution in dealings with the University's general administration and the North Carolina state legislature," it states.

According to the resolution, state employees are in desperate need of affordable health care.

"Family health-care coverage under the State Health Plan rates at or next to 'worst' when compared with coverage available at peer institutions and other plans in the Southeast," it continues.

Graves said the purpose of the resolution was to bring the issue of employee health benefits to the

forefront of state political debate in order to warrant some kind of action.

"(State legislators) realize that there is a problem with the health insurance," she said.

"And this is just that extra punch for their awareness, because our health insurance is in trouble."

Delita Wright, chairwoman of the Personnel Issues Committee of the Employee Forum, said the language of the resolution was vague because of the complexity of state of health benefits.

The Personnel Issues Committee was responsible for drafting the resolution.

"We were general in this because the problem is bigger and much more complex," she said "There is no simple bottom line solution."

"Our primary goal with this resolution is to get it in on next year's

agenda and get them to look at the management (of health benefits)," she said.

The forum passed a resolution in April requesting a \$2,000 flat raise for all employees. The N.C. House included a \$1,000 raise for State Personnel Act employees in its recently approved budget.

Wright said that the success of that resolution in no way affected the timing of this resolution's passing. She explained that the issues of health benefits have been discussed since before she joined the forum.

"The Employee Forum Personnel Issues Committee has been working on this for over a year now," she said. "It was not a new issue then, it has always been an issue."

Contact the University Editor at udesk@unc.edu.

Anti-merger group pushes candidates

BY JOSEPH R. SCHWARTZ
CITY EDITOR

In an event that embodied the term "grassroots," members of NoMerger.org announced that they will endorse Democrats Valerie Foushee and Pam Hemminger for Orange County commissioners.

The political action committee was formed in January to parry the looming merger of the Orange County and Chapel Hill-Carrboro school systems.

The provocation was made at Seawell Elementary School atop a concrete slab to a small gathering of parents and school children.

"We chose Seawell Elementary School for this press conference because many of the children who attend this school could be bussed to distant schools if the school systems merge," said Mark Peters, a member of the steering committee.

The two candidates, who are among five running in the July 20 primary, were selected based on their responses to a questionnaire as well as their political history.

The group noted the need to back candidates.

"It's one thing to form a new group, with all the energy that can take, but it's quite another to run for county commissioner," said David Weinberg, also a member of the steering committee.

"We were rebels with a great cause but we were rebels without a candidate for our cause."

And, the members say the two candidates' good qualities do not stop with their opposition to the

merger.

Weinberg praised Hemminger's stance on energy. "She's as green as you get without actually being made out of chlorophyll," he said.

Foushee, a member of the Chapel Hill-Carrboro school board, was lauded for her efforts to aid the local economy.

"The candidates have excellent records," said Matthew Barton, another member of the steering committee. "They could win this election without NoMerger.org being in existence."

The group also used the opportunity to throw a few jabs at the two incumbents, Moses Carey Jr. and Margaret Brown. Barton said that when the group received Carey's questionnaire Tuesday, three days past the deadline, he wrote that he will take his election as a mandate to merge the schools.

Starting out with 200 families on the e-mail list, it has snowballed, gaining three to four people a day and it eventually amassed a 1,000-person database.

The group has recently garnered support from the numerous signs they've posted around town urging people to vote in the upcoming election. Members said that the group's message is one of civic duty and responsible government. They also urge people to realize the power given to the commissioners.

Foushee and Hemminger were unable to attend the event.

Contact the City Editor at citydesk@unc.edu.

Late rally not enough for UNC in regionals

BY MICHAEL PUCCI
SENIOR WRITER

For the North Carolina men's baseball team, its play last weekend in the NCAA Regionals in Columbia, S.C., was good, but just not good enough.

For the third straight year, UNC (43-21) watched its season end in heartbreaking fashion at the hands of South Carolina.

"It's an intense three days, and we were fortunate to win the first game," said Coach Mike Fox. "But then we lost in the winners' bracket, and it's an uphill battle having to win three in a row."

But how close the Tar Heels came.

UNC pitcher Garry Bakker gave up three first-inning runs Sunday, recording only one out before Robert Woodard relieved him.

North Carolina scrapped its way

back into contention. Trailing 7-5 in the ninth, the team staged a furious rally.

"I expected that," Fox said. "Our team's done this all year."

Facing Chad Blackwell, the Gamecocks' third pitcher of the afternoon, pinch-hitter Jay Cox led off with a single to right. After inducing a pop-up to short, Blackwell gave up singles to Chase Younts and All-America catcher Chris Iannetta, bringing the Heels to within a run.

But UNC was unable to capitalize any further. Marshall Hubbard, who the day before set the school's single season RBI record, and Sammy Hewitt struck out to end the game, and the season.

It was the second defeat to top-seeded South Carolina in as many days for the Tar Heels, following a 5-2 loss Saturday afternoon that pushed them to the brink of elimination. UNC is now 1-5 against the Gamecocks in the NCAA Tournament since 2002.

After the first loss to South Carolina, UNC quickly rebounded, beating The Citadel 6-3 in a must-win game later that evening that saw designated hitter Matt Ellington drive in three runs.

North Carolina had opened the tournament Friday by overcoming a four-run deficit against Coastal Carolina to win 6-5, scoring two runs in the bottom of the ninth.

Contact the Sports Editor at sports@unc.edu.

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CORRECTIONS

■ A page 3 story misidentified Roger Perry, chairman of the Board of Trustees' buildings and grounds committee.

To report corrections, contact Managing Editor Laura Youngs at layout@email.unc.edu.

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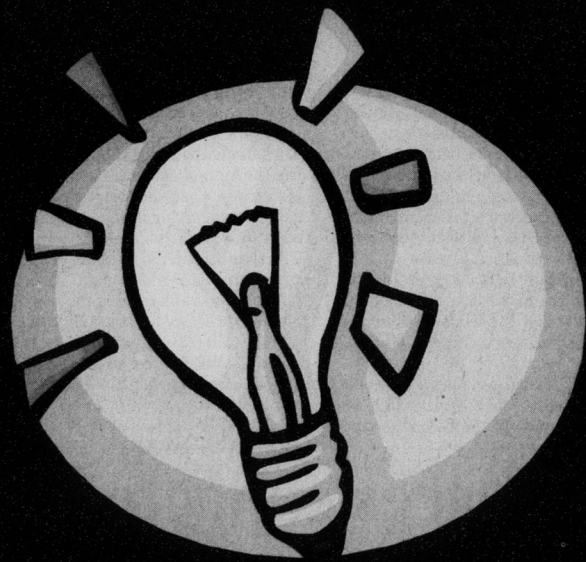


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