

# Union pact's impacts unclear Maximum Pell Grant stays in place

BY LAURA YOUNGS  
SENIOR WRITER

An agreement last week between major players in the state farming industry could mean unprecedented unionization in North Carolina, but experts say it remains to be seen if the fruits of such labor will produce change.

"It is tremendously precedent-setting and astounding in many ways," said Baldemar Velasquez, committee president of the Farm Labor Organizing Committee, an Ohio-based affiliate of the AFL-CIO that represents migrant farmworkers.

"There's never been a unionized foreign guest worker program. It means extension of coverage from Mexico to Ohio."

Under the two-part agreement, the N.C. Growers Association, a federal program designed to supply foreign labor to farms, will recognize a union headed by the committee, allowing for far greater worker protection.

Association President Stan Eury said talks with committee members began in July, and subsequent meetings spurred the agreement,

which will help expand the use of the guest worker program.

In addition, it will improve the credibility of the grower's association, which some organizations have accused of worker exploitation.

"We thought that we could correct some of the misunderstandings by developing a closer relationship with the union," Eury said. "We thought that (NCGA and FLOC) might be a stronger political force together than apart."

Unionization means that workers will pay dues in exchange for a grievance process and for protection from being summarily fired without justification, Velasquez said. There will also be time off for injury and bereavement, and employees will suffer no penalty.

But workers still will not have the right to strike.

"It puts a lot of pressure on (non-unionized farms) to do something because (there will be) massive outside scrutiny," Velasquez said. "It'll inspire (workers) and encourage them to be more vocal about their rights."

The deal also means the end of

the committee's five-year boycott of Mt. Olive Pickle Co. Inc., which began when the committee said Mt. Olive had an obligation to workers to improve conditions on farms supplying its pickle cucumbers.

Mt. Olive contended that labor issues were the business of farmers. Negotiations with the committee resulted in last week's agreement by the pickle company to pay farmers 10 percent more during a three-year period for cucumbers.

Lynn Williams, spokeswoman for Mt. Olive, said the company is glad to put the matter behind it. "Our sales continued to grow throughout the boycott period, but it was a lot of energy and time diverted away from our business," she said.

The process is new to all parties involved, and whether or not it works is a question that will be answered down the road, Eury said.

"This is sort of a new partnership that's never been contemplated before," he said. "But now we have to wait and see."

Contact the State & National Editor at [stntdesk@unc.edu](mailto:stntdesk@unc.edu).

BY NATALIE HAMMEL  
STAFF WRITER

The U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee did not approve an increase last week in the amount of money students receive from Pell Grants when it approved its 2005 fiscal budget.

If the bill is approved by U.S. Congress, this would be the third consecutive year the maximum award possible from Pell Grants is kept at \$4,050.

The committee appropriated \$12.8 billion — an increase of \$823.3 million — to support the program.

But when spread over the total number of students who receive funding, the increase does not stretch far.

It potentially does allow the program to provide more total grants, but the maximum amount of each award will not change.

Clara Lovett, president of the American Association for Higher Education, said the main reasons for the lack of change are the huge cost of the program and the urgency of more pressing needs, such as health care and improved transportation.

To increase the maximum grant by \$100, the program would require a \$300 million increase in funding.

Pell Grants provide need-based financial assistance to more than 5 million low- and middle-income undergraduate students and their families to help pay the cost of higher education.

About 14 percent of UNC's undergraduate students receive Pell Grant funding.

Shirley Ort, UNC's director of scholarships and student aid, said that although the budget is devoid of a grant increase, it will meet UNC's needs.

"While we would like to see increased funding for Pell Grants, in this kind of economy and competing pressures for defense and national security, I think this is a good budget," Ort said.

"It would have little, if any, impact on students at Carolina."

When tuition increases at UNC, Ort said, the Office of Scholarships and Student Aid turns to other, University-based resources to help students make up the difference.

But this year's battle is not one

for the long haul.

Ultimately, the future of the Pell Grant program depends largely on reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, the federal law that controls most government-run financial aid programs.

The Republican version of the reauthorization proposal would freeze the maximum award.

The Democratic proposal, on the other hand, would double that amount to \$11,600 by 2011.

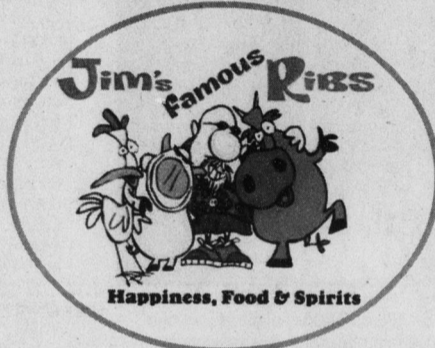
"It is vital that we maintain our commitment to this program, as the increasing cost of college tuition has become a major concern for nearly every student seeking higher education," said Bridget Lowell, spokeswoman for Rep. David Price, D-N.C.

"The grant-to-loan ratio has already tilted too far toward loans, resulting in unwieldy debt for students upon graduation."

Katie Norman, press secretary for Sen. Elizabeth Dole, R-N.C., said the senator also supports amendments that would increase Pell Grant funding.

Contact the State & National Editor at [stntdesk@unc.edu](mailto:stntdesk@unc.edu).

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## THE Daily Crossword

By Alan P. Olschwang

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### ACROSS

- 1 One with an IRA
- 6 List-ending abbr.
- 10 Woe is me!
- 14 An Astaire
- 15 Radames' love
- 16 Lion's hairdo
- 17 Gold measure
- 18 Emulate a beaver
- 19 \_\_\_ go brag!
- 20 Start of Paul McCartney quote
- 23 Eagle quarters
- 24 Make beloved
- 25 Single grain
- 27 Body shop's \$ quote
- 28 Refrain starter
- 29 Part 2 of quote
- 31 Vegas opening?
- 32 Speculative
- 36 Frasier Crane's brother
- 37 Illuminated
- 38 Old-time peep show
- 39 Iditarod ride
- 40 Cylindrical hat
- 41 Part 3 of quote
- 42 Contend
- 43 Actress Novak
- 44 Star Wars letters
- 45 Beset
- 49 Add to the beauty of
- 51 End of quote
- 55 Scheme
- 56 Fleetwood Mac hit
- 57 Louise and

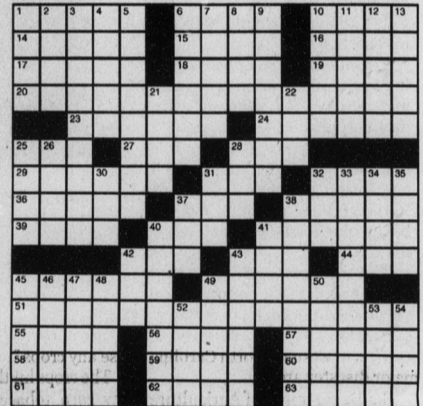
### DOWN

- 1 H.H. Munro's pen name
- 2 Actor West
- 3 All-purpose
- 4 Lift the spirits of
- 5 AARP members
- 6 Aerie youngster
- 7 Color shades
- 8 Hebrew month
- 9 Members of the bar
- 10 Make revisions
- 11 Extensive
- 12 Ekberg or Baker
- 13 Mexicali mister

- 21 Kudrow of "Friends"
- 22 Balin or Claire
- 25 Has little to
- 26 Seed cover
- 28 Make lace
- 30 Danson or Koppel
- 31 Claiborne or Smith
- 32 End of man?
- 33 Perked up
- 34 \_\_\_ off (keep at bay)
- 35 Abominable snowman
- 37 Peggy or Pinky
- 38 Forgiveness
- 40 Subs

- 41 Malicious gossip
- 42 Caesar's seven
- 43 Works dough
- 45 Kindness to creatures org.
- 46 Power option
- 47 Plumber's device
- 48 \_\_\_ of God
- 49 White heron
- 50 Sound like a bell
- 52 Intertwine
- 53 Called
- 54 Latin being

REED INDO REGAL  
EXPO NEMO ELIDE  
PEACHFUZZ DEVON  
TIER EARNEST  
TEARDROP SEAM  
OLLIES EPPS ESE  
KILNS GLEES AER  
ETTE BRIAN TBAR  
NEH WRIST ARUBA  
SSA IANS BRAZEN  
TANG EROTIZED  
ADJUDGE ATEN  
GOADS ROYALFIZZ  
ANZIO NOON UKES  
RAZOR SONY LEDA



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