

Chancellor meets with accolades, scorn

Post asks Moeser to wear many hats

BY STEPHANIE JORDAN
SENIOR WRITER

Being the leader of the University is a job that takes a lot of hits.

If the University doesn't meet its fund-raising goal, the chancellor is blamed for not soliciting enough donors.

If the University and the town don't see eye to eye, the chancellor is blamed for pushing the school's agenda.

And if the University doesn't stay in the nation's top academic rankings, the chancellor is blamed for not doing his job.

Chancellor James Moeser has been at UNC-Chapel Hill for five years and plans to stay for five more — until he turns 70, the age at which University bylaws say a chancellor must resign.

There are those who say that he has done a great job — UNC-CH's fund-raising campaign, Carolina First, is fast approaching \$1.5 billion. The goal of the campaign, which started in 1999, is to reach \$1.8 billion by June 30, 2007.

But critics say town-gown relations have deteriorated during his tenure, and others say he is too focused on academic rankings.

Looking to the past

"When I left (the University of Nebraska-Lincoln), there was some degree of anger," Moeser said. "I was accused of having used Nebraska as a stepping stone. I was never thinking ... I should position myself to get a better job."

When UNC-system President Molly Broad brought Moeser's name to the chancellor's search committee, he was virtually unknown. Despite his anonymity, the selection committee extended him the offer to become the ninth chancellor of the University.

"What a great loss for Nebraska, what a lovely vote of respect for him," said Nancy Rapoport, former dean of Nebraska's College of Law, where she worked with Moeser.

She said Moeser has a special edge, getting almost everyone

to come to a consensus. He always called together the heads of the academic units to help him make big decisions, not just to get them to follow his lead.

"Every chancellor, if he does a good job, makes enemies," Rapoport said. "You have to make the right enemies. I don't think he had many."

Moeser said the greatest distinction between Nebraska and UNC-CH, though both are flagship institutions, is their academic rankings.

In the 2005 U.S. News & World Report, UNC-CH ranked 29th among public and private universities. Nebraska ranked 98th.

Building excellence

Moeser has said several times that he wants UNC-CH to be the nation's top-ranked public institution. Getting UNC-CH to that milestone requires getting University employees and administrators to agree.

Last summer, the chancellor held a retreat with the University's governing board to talk about what UNC-CH's goals should be.

"That session has gone a long way to make sure we all agree on what is important," said Richard "Stick" Williams, chairman of the Board of Trustees.

Williams said they decided to concentrate on several key issues: creating the richest possible undergraduate learning environment, successfully completing the 50-year Master Plan and satellite campus Carolina North, and strengthening faculty recruitment and retention.

"He knows the needs we have and the strengths," said Anne Cates, chairwoman of the board when Moeser was selected as chancellor. "You've got to have your chancellor on board. He was able to come right in, and that was that."

And although the number of legislators in the General Assembly with an undergraduate degree from the University dropped from 43 percent in 1939 to 13 percent in 2003, according to a study by UNC-CH professor Thad Beyle, the chancellor has been effective in the legislature.

Sen. A.B. Swindell, D-Nash, co-chairman of the Senate's education committee, said Moeser is straightforward in answering questions during face-to-face meetings.

"When you talk to the people where the pavement meets the road, it's very helpful," he said.

Tug of war

The town and the University have been at odds since Moeser arrived in Chapel Hill five years ago.

Town Council member Dorothy Verkerf said part of that is because of the school's expansion. UNC-CH's plan to build Carolina North, a satellite campus on the Horace Williams Tract on Airport Road, is an issue that has upset residents.

"We want the University to talk to us," she said. "By working together, we can do a better job than the University alone."

Although Moeser said he meets with Chapel Hill Mayor Kevin Foy once a month to discuss town-gown issues, some say the chancellor pushes the University's agenda with little thought for the town.

"I believe that Chancellors Hardin and Hooker had town-gown relations higher on their list than Chancellor Moeser did and still does," said Joe Capowski, former mayor pro tem of Chapel Hill.

"I never want to hear him say, 'We're trying to be a good neighbor' again while he's taking a neighborhood."

And even Moeser said the council isn't as University-friendly as it once was. "Some people were elected on the Town Council on a stop-the-University platform."

Show me the money

Moeser said he spends between 40 percent and 50 percent of his time on the Carolina First campaign.

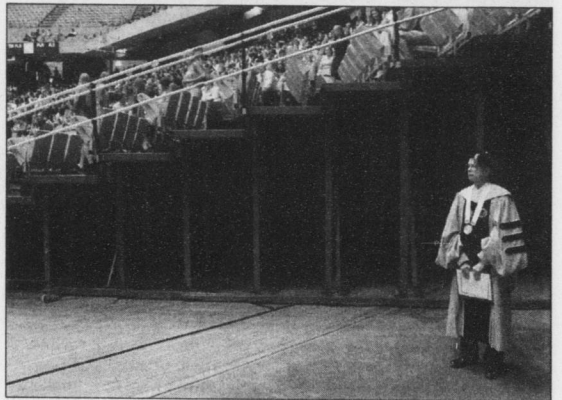
"We really feel good about the success so far, and a good deal of that success has to be put to Chancellor Moeser," said Matt Kupec, vice chancellor for University advancement. "You ask people to take on the vision of their leader, and he's done a wonderful job with it."

With tuition rising during almost every year of his tenure, critics have said he is using out-of-state students to fund the University. In 1999, tuition costs were \$1,456 for in-state students; out-of-state-students paid \$10,622. Now, the costs are \$3,205 and \$17,003, respectively.

"Carolina is more affordable today than it was four years ago," Moeser said. "In my mind, we've actually lowered the cost."

This thinking comes from comparing UNC-CH to its peer institutions — the University of Virginia charges in-state students \$6,790 and out-of-state students \$22,890.

UVA. sought and gained autonomy from its state government, but Moeser said UNC-CH will not.



Chancellor James Moeser prepares to address students at Convocation in August. In his five years at UNC, Moeser has garnered mixed reactions.

To keep college affordable for students, Moeser created the Carolina Covenant, which allows students accepted to UNC-CH to graduate debt-free if their parents' combined income doesn't exceed 200 percent of the federal poverty level.

"You have to understand the potential," he said. "That's what gets people to open their checkbooks and their wallets and say, 'I want to be a part of this.'"

Although Moeser has brought new ideas to the table, Broad said he's learned to be a true Tar Heel. "He's learned the ways and cul-

ture of not only North Carolina, but also of your campus," she said. "He's clearly passionate about Chapel Hill and represents your campus extremely well."

Moeser said he loves Chapel Hill and UNC-CH, and he made the right decision when he came here.

"People who grew up in this state ... don't fully understand how special this place is," he said. "The attraction, the magnetism of UNC — it's even better than I thought it was."

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