

Economic downturn forces adjustment

BY SARAH ELLIS, ANDREW HARTNETT AND ARIEL ZIRULNICK
STAFF WRITERS

The economy took a critical blow this year, and UNC-Chapel Hill along with the rest of the UNC-system schools and Orange County are scrambling to adapt.

The UNC system faced budget cuts with more lean times to come, as the systemwide Board of Governors requested the smallest-ever increase in funds from the N.C. General Assembly.

Meanwhile, local governments are looking for ways to cut spending because of projections of decreased revenues from sales and other taxes.

Students weigh options

Many students are looking into obtaining higher degrees and possibly securing more stable jobs in the face of substantial job losses as a result of the economy.

UNC-Chapel Hill saw an almost 10 percent increase in graduate school applications from 2007 to this year.

Tabatha Turner, senior associate director for scholarships and student aid, said that graduate school is a wise plan of action.

"It makes sense that until the economy gets better we continue to see graduate school as a positive option for people whose jobs have been terminated because of the

economy," Turner said.

Private loans for students are also becoming harder to receive, and there is more pressure for students to pay back that money sooner.

UNC officials have said they don't expect the University to cut financial aid support or change its long-standing policy of need-blind admissions, as some smaller schools are doing.

Still things might get tougher for some families next year, as the Board of Trustees has recommended the maximum tuition increase, 6.5 percent, for in-state undergraduates allowed by law. It's recommending a less hefty 5.6 percent increase of \$1,150 for out-of-state undergraduates.

The UNC-system's Board of Governors, which has final say over tuition rates, should make a decision in February.

Funding from the state

These proposed hikes come alongside an unprecedentedly low budget increase request to the N.C. General Assembly.

"It is a budget that is lean, focused and fully prioritized," said Rob Nelson, UNC-system vice president for finance.

The request names campus safety, financial aid and faculty recruitment and retention as top priorities.

The board sends a recommended budget to the legislature every

other year. UNC-system schools get funding from the legislature, tuition and private donations.

The Board of Governors is asking the state legislature for an increase of \$168 million in the next two years — a 5.8 percent increase for 2009-10 and a 4.3 percent for 2010-11. The previous three requests asked for an average increase of 12.5 percent.

The modest requested increase for the next two years comes on top of budget cuts this fall.

Gov. Mike Easley has asked state agencies, including public universities, to cut 5 percent of their annual budgets.

UNC-Chapel Hill responded by asking individual departments

to oversee cuts, possibly creating struggles to maintain faculty-student ratios and forcing departments to look for creative ways to save money.

Local governments cutting

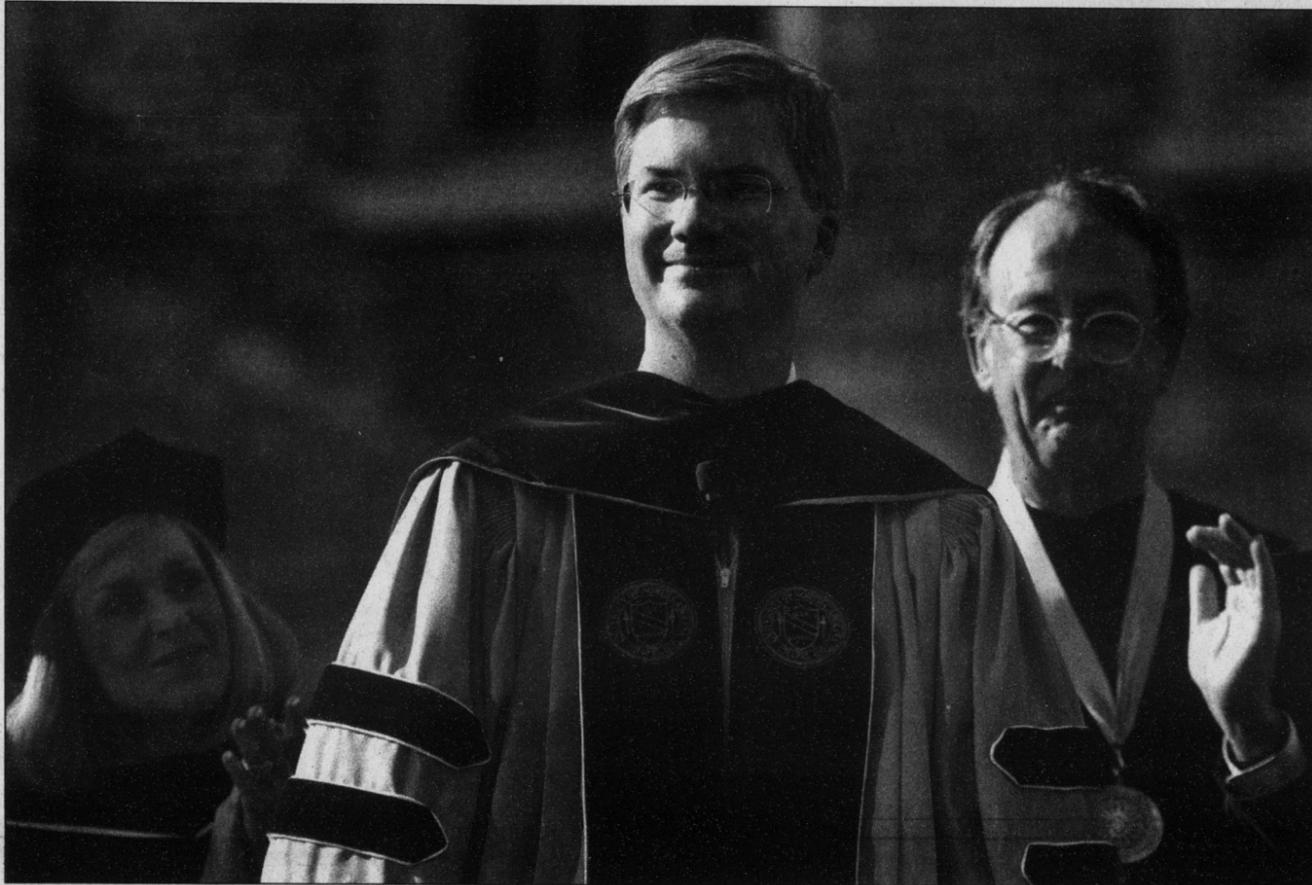
And government officials throughout the county are also having to think on their feet in the face of decreasing available funds.

Chapel Hill Town Council members expressed frustration with the uncertainty of state funding used for maintenance and public safety.

Town Manager Roger Stancil ordered a 5 percent budget cut for

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A NEW CHAPTER BEGINS



DTH/KAITLIN MCKEOWN

UNC Board of Governors Chairwoman Hannah Gage and UNC President Erskine Bowles applaud Chancellor Holden Thorp during the University Day ceremony on Polk Place.

N.C. native Holden Thorp takes over as 10th chancellor

BY ANDREW DUNN
UNIVERSITY EDITOR

Holden Thorp has only been in his role a few months, but he has already established himself as a new breed of chancellor.

In a drastic change from the resumes of chancellors past, Thorp served only one year in a dean position, as dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, and two years as a department chairman before being selected to succeed James Moeser.

UNC's most recent previous chancellors had served in the top role of other universities.

Thorp's selection in May ended a nine-month national search that received 104 applications.

"He's risen so quickly in such a short time," Moeser said at the time. "The only way to accurately describe that is to say that he's a supernova."

Thorp brought in about \$57 million for the Arts and Sciences Foundation last year and raised \$17 million toward the completion of the Carolina Physical Science Complex since 2002.

Last week he was in Maui participating in alumni fundraising events.

But his openness has made the deepest impression.

His recently launched blog — holden.unc.edu — is one outward sign of that.

He's also held three open houses with students this semester, more than any previous chancellor.

And when Student Action with Workers marched on South Building in September, they intending to deliver a letter to Carolyn Elfland, associate vice chancellor for campus services, pushing for a plan that would not force housekeepers to work weekends.

Instead, they were greeted with handshakes from Thorp, who invited a member of SAW and a housekeeper to meet with him. SAW's wishes were granted.

In April, Moeser did not meet with SAW, and members held the longest sit-in protest South Building had ever seen.

Thorp has also proven influential with the Board of Trustees.

The board approved his tuition increase recommendations at their November meeting without debate.

Thorp also got rave reviews at his inauguration Oct. 12. Foremost in the minds of the 2,750 students, faculty and alumni who attended was the pride of having a chancellor who graduated from UNC and worked his way up the faculty ranks.

Thorp graduated in 1986, attended graduate school at the California Institute of Technology and worked at N.C. State University before returning to UNC as a chemistry professor in 1993.

In his inauguration speech, Thorp spoke of his three

key goals for UNC: to recruit top undergraduate and graduate students, to attract talented faculty, and to elevate the region and state.

The first goal could be achieved by revamping academic programs to make them more attractive to students' interests and offering more financial aid.

The second could be attained by creating more endowed professorships and garnering more research money, and the third by collaborating with the other 16 campuses in the UNC system. But he mostly dealt with the interconnections between the three.

"It's on us to do more than teach," Thorp said. "We must inspire our students to reach beyond themselves and take on the great problems facing the world."

Thorp also touched on safety as necessary to achieve all his goals — academic safety for innovation as well as physical safety.

Campus security has been one of his main priorities this year — represented by his direction in creating a set of guidelines for protesting and his goals for Halloween.

"We really do need you to help us tone down Halloween," he said at an October open house, saying students should try to head home by midnight.

"I am concerned that there could be an incident that doesn't involve students that students get involved in."

Contact the University Editor at udesk@unc.edu.

Carson suspect to face trials

Multiple charges for March killing

BY MAX ROSE
CITY EDITOR

A man charged with killing former UNC Student Body President Eve Carson now is awaiting both state and federal prosecution.

Demario James Atwater, 22, has had a busy year in court as he faces charges from the March 5 shooting.

Atwater pleaded not guilty Tuesday to the federal charges in a Greensboro hearing, and could begin both trials in about a year.

The state prosecutor said in an August hearing that Atwater and Lawrence Alvin Lovette, 18, were looking for someone to rob when they saw Carson through the window of her Friendly Lane

home. District Attorney Jim Woodall told the court that they took Carson in her Toyota Highlander to withdraw money before shooting her several times in a wealthy neighborhood less than a mile from campus.

Police arrested Atwater on March 12 and Lovette the next day and charged them both with first degree murder, among other crimes.

Carson's autopsy, released during the summer, concluded that she had been shot five times, including once in the right cheek.

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DTH INSIDE: Carson is honored with a memorial scholarship and 5k. PG. 7

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North Carolina votes for change in '08

Election breaks from convention

BY ARIEL ZIRULNICK
STATE & NATIONAL EDITOR

North Carolina elected a black man as president, unseated a Republican incumbent senator and put a woman in the governor's seat — and they're all Democrats.

What remains unclear is whether 2008 was an anomaly or if it marks a permanent shift in this traditionally Republican state's political climate.

Many conservatives in North Carolina say that the Democratic sweep was a one-time event caused by the dire state of the economy, President George Bush's unpopularity and President-elect Barack Obama's magnetism — and that the pendulum will swing back toward Republicans in future elections.

"Neither side should exaggerate what 2008 meant and draw sweeping ideological conclusions," said Brent Woodcox, com-

How N.C. voted

Presidential race
Barack Obama (D) — 49.7 percent
John McCain (R) — 49.4 percent

Senatorial race
Kay Hagan (D) — 53 percent
Elizabeth Dole (R) — 44 percent

Gubernatorial race
Bev Perdue (D) — 50 percent
Pat McCrory (R) — 47 percent
Mike Mungler (L) — 3 percent

munications director for the N.C. Republican Party.

"There are still more conservatives than liberals in North Carolina."

But economic diversification, urbanization and the growth of some demographics have strengthened the Democratic contingency in the state, potentially irrevocably.

"It's the change in the last few decades. ... We have new residents not tied to the political constructs.



DTH FILE/KATE NAPIER

President-elect Barack Obama campaigned in Charlotte at a rally of more than 20,000 people in September. He narrowly won the state.

There's been a pool of persuadable voters," said UNC journalism professor Ferrel Guillory said.

Moving from an agriculture-based economy to a service- and technology-based one has led to a more educated workforce and brought many to cities and sub-

urban communities. There has also been an influx of whites from outside the state and blacks. A growing Latino population is another factor.

By capitalizing on these social

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Airport authority gets eminent domain right

Many residents raise objections

BY KATY DOLL
SENIOR WRITER

Orange County has seen almost constant debate since August about a possible new airport.

The N.C. General Assembly created an authority to investigate placing a new airport in Orange County to replace Horace Williams Airport, which will close to make way for the University's satellite research campus, Carolina North.

The authority, which will have 15 members, eight from the University and seven from other local governments, was granted the power of eminent domain to seat the airport.

Eminent domain, a government's ability to seize land for public use, is central to the debate.

Consulting firm studies

Airport consulting firm Talbert

& Bright released two surveys before this legislation was enacted, as contracted by the University.

A 2005 study examined different parts of the county, locating an area in southwestern Orange County as the top site in the county.

The study named Raleigh-Durham International Airport as the best alternative for medical flights. The N.C. Area Health Education Centers Program uses Horace Williams to fly doctors and organs to different areas of the state and is generally cited as the main reason UNC wants a new airport.

Earlier this year, Talbert & Bright released an economic impact survey, stating that Orange County could benefit up to \$53 million from a new airport.

"It would be a vehicle. It would be an asset that may be able to attract opportunities in a new sector," said Bradly Broadwell, economic development director for Orange County, in an October