

Major Points of Faculty Assembly, 02-17-06
John G. Cope, Assembly Delegate

Legislative Update, Mark Fleming:

We are currently in short-session; don't expect much new to legislative agenda in an even-year session. Highlights for the year are as follows:

- Erskine Bowles is focused on "efficiencies" or ways to streamline campus operations.
- Concern with shifting enrollment funding into the continuation budget so that Universities and Community Colleges will be treated the same as public schools. Better planning through decreased year to year begging.
- Faculty Staff benefits are to be a priority. Ex. Health Care benefit study shows that if we were out on our own we could produce a better product. However, we need to wait until July 1st, pending possible changes in the State system, which has new leadership. If things don't improve, you will see, during the long-session, calls for us to go it alone.
- We may also want to study concerns with the State Personnel Act during the up-coming long-session.
- Budget Issues: We will be asking for more in an election year, but the raise numbers that everyone are talking about seem to be in the range of a 4% increase.

Report by the President, Erskine Bowles:

Highlights of Presidential Address to Assembly are as follows:

Priorities grouped into basic "lens", or "prisms" of focus.

- I. K-12 Community; teacher shortage, especially in Math and Sciences. (Knows of only three physics teachers produced last year at secondary level.) Also mentioned current shortage of training for Principals.
- II. Greater collaboration with Community Colleges; a "seamless relationship"
- III. Affordability of education; tuition, scholarships, summer programs, DE, Continuing Education and etc.
- IV. Retention rates. "Retention rates at all but Chapel Hill are unacceptable."
- V. Diplomas and graduation that means something practical and "worthwhile"

- VI. Training focused in high need/high growth areas, such as teaching, nursing, new learning areas, and in the environmental sciences.
- VII. Focus on public services; "public leaders of tomorrow".
- VIII. Faculty. Need to attract and keep the best and the brightest through competitive salaries, and better benefits (we need "benefit plans that make sense"...Mentioned plan discussed above to look at current proposals coming out later this year prior to making decision to go it alone, ..."if not we will go elsewhere, or form our own plan that makes sense".)
- IX. "Administrative Creep" Wants to look at this in three ways:
 - 1. Internal (GA) study,
 - 2. Discussions and suggestions from Chancellors
 - 3. Outside panel (CEOs, Bell South, etc)

Selected Sound Bites, responses to questions, and general statements of philosophy:

- "I am no academic, that's what I need you for"
- "I am not a top down person"
- "Academic freedom is at the core of our democracy; it is not a benefit, it is a necessity"
- "You can't do much without money; advice only goes so far; what you need is both money and advice"
- "I know folks on most every major foundation in America"; "I think I can help here"; "Show me how to direct these efforts". "We need to start now."
- I have been in China and the Far East; we need to wake up, or in 15 years we are going to be a second-rate contender. You would not believe the effort and attention placed on Math, Science and English, even at small-rural schools". We need to get and keep the best and brightest; like the third-world, we will eventually need to go to year-round educational formats.
- DE will happen whether we like it or not; we need to address quality issues. Everyone knows that this, if done right, takes more time on the part of faculty and students. It is not a short-cut. Ultimately I would like to see a system where education can be interactive and seamless across the system. You sign up for a course at ECU, taught by someone at State, which is offered from somewhere else in the 16-campus system; while never leaving your room.

- We are in a crisis; we will need to take a hard look at the programs that are working and those that are not working. You need to tell me which are viable; which are working, then ask me for the money and I will get it for you. We need to devote money to the areas that are working, especially in the Math and the Sciences.

Additional remarks by Alan Mabe (Interim Senior VP for Academic Affairs), Committee Reports, and Standing Committee Reports (Brenda won a second term as Chair) will be available from the Assembly web page found at:

<http://unconfacultyassembly.northcarolina.edu/html/minutes/index.htm>.