

Faculty Senate Meeting
April 27, 2010
NEW BUSINESS

RESOLUTION ON THE 2010-2011 NORTH CAROLINA STATE BUDGET

Whereas, education plays a vital role in our State's future economic health and the aspirations of millions of North Carolina families; and,

Whereas, an educated and highly skilled workforce is necessary for the economic progress of the State; and,

Whereas, the University of North Carolina System plays a leadership role in educating the people of our State and in the overall economic growth of North Carolina; and,

Whereas, continued excellence depends upon sustained, adequate funding; and,

Whereas, the projected budget cuts are of an enormous and shocking magnitude, especially following budget cuts over the past two years; and,

Whereas, the budget cuts will limit access to higher education for many residents of our State at a time when higher education enrollments are growing; and,

Whereas, academic reputations are built slowly over many years, and once compromised cannot be easily regained; and,

Whereas, the proposed cuts would *change the very nature of our universities* resulting in fewer academic advisors, fewer financial aid officers, and reduced student access to the courses they need to graduate on time; and,

Whereas, the University of North Carolina General Administration estimates that any budget cuts in excess of 2% would harm the academic core of the University and significantly reduce the quality of academic instruction and student experiences at all UNC campuses; and,

Whereas, the University of North Carolina has already absorbed approximately \$300 million or 29% of the current state budget reversions while the University represented only 13% of the total state budget; and,

Whereas, the proposed state budget currently recommends a reduction of 5.9% or \$154 million (a 3.9% reduction on top of the existing 2% cut) for the UNC System; and,

Whereas, 75% of the state budget allocated to the UNC System supports personnel expenses making it impossible to absorb large cuts without eliminating more jobs; and,

Whereas, the proposed cuts would result in the loss of 1,200 additional jobs in the UNC System; and,

Whereas, ECU's share of the proposed cuts would result in at least 100 lost positions, all affecting fundamental academic and student support, half of which would be faculty positions; and,

Whereas, previous budget reversions were largely taken from administrative cuts that protected the academic core; and,

Whereas, the previous rounds of budget cuts have already resulted in increased class sizes and fewer course offerings across the UNC System; and,

Whereas, these proposed budget cuts would cause retention and graduation rates to decline resulting in students leaving the University with accumulated debt and without achieving their academic goals; and,

Whereas, numerous academic programs, including those in high-demand fields such as nursing and the STEM disciplines, would be downsized; and, therefore,

Be It Resolved that the Faculty Senate of East Carolina University urges the State Legislature to prevent the most serious erosion in the quality of higher education in North Carolina by providing sufficient and appropriate funding for higher education; and,

Be It Further Resolved that the State budget include full funding for need-based financial aid to ensure access to higher education for the people of the State of North Carolina; and,

Be It Further Resolved that the State Legislature appropriately continue its historical commitment and attention to our State's higher education needs as envisioned in the original *Act of Incorporation (1789)* for the University of North Carolina by providing adequate higher education funding to ensure "the happiness of a rising generation, and endeavor to fit them for an honorable discharge of the social duties of life by paying attention to their education."

Call To Action #1 – Impact of Governor's Proposed Budget Reduction

Overall Message:

If budget cuts rise to the level recommended by the Governor, UNC will suffer significant and lasting damage to the quality of instruction provided to our 220,000+ students.

Current Status:

Governor Perdue released her proposed 2010-11 budget last week. For the University, she recommended:

Full funding for need-based financial aid (\$34.8 million)

Board of Governors' alternative Tuition Proposal (\$34.7 million – to remain on the campuses for need-based aid and other specified uses)

Funding for adjustments in enrollment increases (\$5.6 million)

Reduction of 5.9% or \$154,626,000 (3.9% reduction on top of the existing 2% cut)

The General Assembly convenes on May 12th and the Senate will present its budget proposal first. They are scheduled to complete their work by May 20th.

Talking Points

In the current fiscal year, the University permanently reduced its budget by 6% and targeted those cuts to administration in order to protect the Academic Core. In addition, while UNC accounts for only 13% of General Fund appropriations, it contributed 29% of budget reversions imposed across state government. As a result, our total cuts for this year approached \$300 million.

The University cannot further reduce administration without endangering fiscal integrity and regulatory compliance. Another 5.9% budget reduction would cut directly into our Academic Core and significantly reduce the quality of academic instruction and the student experience at all UNC campuses.

Seven of every ten dollars appropriated to UNC provides fundamental instructional, academic support, and student support services.

Since 75% of our state budget supports personnel expenses, it is impossible to make cuts of this magnitude without eliminating jobs. If the Governor's proposed budget were implemented, nearly 1,200 additional positions would have to be eliminated, and nearly half of them would be faculty positions.

Previous rounds of budget cuts have resulted in increased class sizes and reduced course offerings, but we would now see the very nature of our campuses being changed. Our smaller campuses would lose the capacity to provide personalized attention and smaller classes. Our best faculty--the ones whose positions were not eliminated--would seek opportunities elsewhere. To replace them, our campuses would be forced to pay higher salaries and recruiting expenses, a costly, self-defeating cycle that would result in lower quality instruction for our students.

Students would see fewer academic advisors, fewer financial aid officers, and their access to the courses they need to graduate on time severely constrained. Retention and graduation rates would undoubtedly decline as a result. Numerous academic programs, including those that produce graduates in high-need fields such as nursing and physical therapy, would be downsized. Aging technology would not be replaced as equipment life cycles are extended. Programs designed to meet the special needs of the military would be eliminated or reduced. The list goes on and on.

UNC campuses are economic engines and centers of innovation for the State. Our teaching, research, and outreach have never been for important to North Carolina's economic future.

As you tackle the 2010-11 budget, I urge you to help keep budget reductions for the University to a minimum so that we can maintain our academic quality. Our students deserve no less.

While it takes generations to build a great university, it can erode dramatically and quickly if not properly sustained. The budget reductions recommended by the Governor would do permanent and substantial damage to the University's Academic Core and start us on a path to mediocrity, something North Carolinians have never been willing to settle for in their institutions of higher learning.

Thank you for your support.