



# *the Voice*

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## **March 9, 2006 Open Forum Update**

Chancellor Oblinger stated four values the school is working towards:

- Scholarship Values
- Climate of innovation
- Environment of diversity and inclusiveness
- Efficiency and effectiveness

He also spoke about his meetings with President Bowles. President Bowles is focused on prioritization of top needs. He is genuinely concerned about the university employees along with salaries and benefits.

Andy Willis, Assistant to the Chancellor for External Affairs shared some things that his office is working on. The new UNC system budget proposal will go from a 200-page book to a much more refined document reflecting the priorities of the universities. He thinks there may be a 3%-4% salary increase this year. They are also working on tuition waivers increasing to 3 classes per year, preserving phased retirement along with reducing to a 60-day break instead of 6 months for re-employment, and a tuition discount of 25% for spouses/dependents attending the university.

Dan Soper from the SHP talked about the new PPO. There will be three options with varying levels of benefits and choices. The plan will result in substantial savings for employees for the cost of healthcare. Details will be available soon. He stated the PPO was only the first of many innovative changes in the pipeline.

Deborah Wright spoke about career banding. NCSU is participating in transition teams for implementation of banding, which moves us forward more quickly with the initiative. Administrative support positions are targeted for fall 2006 implementation, followed by Research, Institutional Services, and Trades. The point was made that "funding" was the key to this issue.

Tom Kendig talked about the parking situations. He explained the pending legal issue about parking fines collected by state agencies going to local county school systems. In addition, costs are rising due to increased number of parking spaces, decks, and required clean up. Overall a 9% increase is expected, with the "C" permit increasing by 5.4%. Parking permits are now also required at Centennial campus.

Galen Jones presented the Faculty and Staff Assistance Program (FASAP) to the Staff Senate and shared some of its features. This program provides no-cost assistance which employees can take advantage of for assistance with life's challenges and in times of violence, crisis, or tragedy. This is confidential and available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, all year.

Barbara Carroll had the closing remarks and fielded questions from the audience; she was joined by Charles Leffler. Most of the questions were about the winter break closing in December and the two extra days that employees will have to use as vacation days. They explained that funding is a fixed amount, and in addition to the utilities deficit, overall costs are up and tuition receipts are below expectations. Closing over the break will result in substantial savings for the university. There are, however, some functions at the university that must continue during the break, and it is any unit's decision to determine what is essential and if operations would need to go on.

### **Staff Senate Contact Information:**

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