

NORTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY – approved version
Staff Senate Meeting
Talley Student Center, Walnut Room
Wednesday, March 4, 2009

Present: Paul Adams, Ron Aman, Chris Austin, Donise Benton, Tracy Brown, Billy Bryant, Marcia Bryan, Thelia Burrell, Lynn Burris, Steve Carlton, Randy Colby, Tuesday Cross, Erica Cutchins, Judy Daniels, Joe Darkoh, Robert Davis, Joan Davis, David DeFoor, Emily Dell, Michael Ellison, Regina Gardner, Mary Harrell, Michelle Healey, Pat Hill, Joy Holland, Kenneth Holland, Melissa House, Shannon James, Shirley Jones, Valerie Jones, Sandy Kanupp, Carrie Levow, Fran Little, Douglas Lynn, Laura Massengill, Jane McDaniel, Claudia Mello, Vicky Merritt, Catherine Reeve, Marquette Russell, Jill Schmitter, Missy Seate, Beth Simmons, Joy Smith, Rob Stevenson, Donna Stewart, Marie Talley, Elbert Turner, Peter Vanderpoel, Melissa Watkins, Natalie Worth, Mary Yemma

Absent: Christine Brownfield, Susan Colby, Christine Klein, David Ladrie, DJ Lane, Dale Mackey, Kent Rorem, Christie Vann, Gail Willis

Guests: Dr. James L. Oblinger, Rob Nelson, Charlie Leffler, Tony Caravano, Deborah Wright, Barbara Carroll, Corrinda Watkins, Terri Kuiper, Frances Milks

Guest Speaker: President Erskine B. Bowles

Chair Laura Massengill called the 8th meeting of the 14th session to order and welcomed Chancellor James Oblinger to introduce UNC President Erskine Bowles.

Chancellor Oblinger thanked the senators and visitors for their attendance. His introductory remarks acknowledged the efforts of President Bowles as a constant champion for students, staff, and faculty of the University, noting that the President had spend the previous day downtown talking to key legislators on behalf of the University and its constituent institutions.

President Erskine Bowles thanked the Chancellor and the Staff Senate for the invitation. He noted that in his first weeks in office, he had created the UNC Staff Assembly as a way to hear ideas and advice from staff across the constituent institutions. When Chair Massengill invited him to visit NC State's Staff Senate, he readily accepted, not so much to speak as to listen to staff and to answer any questions.

President Bowles acknowledged that we are in perhaps the toughest economic climate in his life. He expressed concern that, if the General Assembly doesn't continue to fund the University in the manner it has historically, UNC will not be able to educate the workforce necessary to compete in today's knowledge-based global economy. The Governor had asked for budget scenarios for next fiscal year that represented 3, 5 and 7 percent cuts. A seven percent cut for the University system as a whole is over \$175 million. President Bowles noted that as much as 70-75% of the University's budget goes for personnel costs, and it would not be possible to accomplish a total 7% budget reduction by cutting only from the remaining 25% that represents non-personnel items.

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As a result, he acknowledged that such budget cuts would almost certainly have some impact on personnel. But he was committed to doing the least damage possible to the University's academic core, and to making decisions that would allow the University to recover as quickly as possible as the economy recovers, in order to continue to be able to educate a highly skilled and capable work force for the future of the State.

President Bowles noted that there are many "known unknowns" at present, including the impact of the federal stimulus package on North Carolina, although its effects should be positive in both indirect and direct ways. For example, it will support state Medicaid programs, which is a major state budget drain, and Medicaid relief might free up other money for education, including K-12, as well as the community colleges and the university system. Another "known unknown" is size of the losses the State will take this year due to declines in income tax and sales tax revenues. A big portion of new money UNC receives from the State covers costs due to yearly growth in enrollment. Enrollment demand will be going up, but lack of funding may limit the number of students the campuses will be able to admit. And demand will be higher for need-based student financial aid, because more families are hurting financially and will be eligible for more aid.

If the State mandates a 7% cut for UNC, the pain would be significant. President Bowles said he'd explained to members of the legislature the day before that a 7% permanent budget cut would "hurt bad, and hurt real people." It could mean cutting up 1,600 jobs across the University system, of which almost 1,000 would be currently filled – even as the University makes significant reductions in travel, supplies, materials, telephone service, postage, utilities, repairs and maintenance, and administrative costs at all levels; and focuses on increasing faculty productivity, consolidating academic programs, and eliminating or downsizing non-core affiliated centers and institutes. He gave examples of several centers housed at the University that support K-12 needs in the State but that cost millions of dollars and wouldn't be considered core academic programs for the University. Entities like the Arboretum, in the western part of the state, is an enormous asset but costs \$3 million a year to operate. Almost \$14 million a year is required to support UNC TV.

Even if significant reductions are taken elsewhere, a 7% cut would inevitably hurt the academic core as well. It is likely to mean larger classes, less counseling and advising support for students, and higher student-to-faculty ratios. As an example, he said, for UNC-Chapel Hill to keep the same student-to-faculty ratio that they have today, under a 7% budget reduction, it could require them to not admit their entire freshman class. Of course, they have to admit a freshman class -- so instead it will mean larger classes, fewer course sections, and probably longer times to graduate if students can't get the classes they need when they need them. Classroom upgrades and lab renovations would have to be postponed. UNC Hospital could end up providing less patient care, due to fewer employees. There could also be fewer security and maintenance personnel. The

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University could be unable to launch or expand degree programs in areas important to the future of North Carolina, such as genetics at NC State, aviation at Elizabeth City State, respiratory therapy and PT at UNC-Wilmington, and nursing at North Carolina Central.

President Bowles pledged his efforts to help protect the University's academic core, recognizing that the legislature will have to make some very difficult choices. He has asked the General Assembly to give the University its continuation budget, full funding for enrollment growth, and full funding for need-based financial aid. There were many other items the President would have liked to request in his budget, but he didn't expect anything more, given the financial situation of the State. He asked that the State hold UNC's cuts to 5% rather than 7%, with institutional flexibility to decide where those cuts could best be taken by each campus. He also asked that any budget cut be a one-time cut rather than a permanent, recurring cut. If the duration of the budget reduction matches the duration of the financial crisis, the University could better manage -- so that when this crisis is over, the resources will be available again to recover quickly and move forward. Permanent cuts that the University never gets back would not be a smart thing for North Carolina if it wants to produce a high quality, highly educated, highly trained work force that can compete with the world's best and brightest.

President Erskine Bowles concluded his formal remarks and opened the floor to questions from the Staff.

Questions:

Will the University take diversity into account when making faculty and staff reductions?

President Bowles assured staff that the campuses must consider the impact of layoffs on their demographic makeup, and indicated that any perceived concerns about prohibited discrimination could be brought directly to his attention.

What can be done to encourage staff with 25 plus years to retire? Can the legislature offer any early state retirement plan?

President Bowles said he'd been so focused on keeping people and saving university jobs that he hadn't really focused on retirement incentives. On the other side of the equation, using tools like unpaid furloughs to avoid permanent layoffs might be worth consideration if care were taken with regard to the impact of furloughs on retirement calculations and the effect on lower-income employees. He agreed to give some thought to the question of early retirement incentives.

President Bowles wanted as many options as possible on the table other than having to lay people off. He said some people had asked him why he would consider furloughs, and

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his feeling was that if it were a viable option, it should be considered, and that anything seems better than permanently losing an employee.

Vice President Rob Nelson, who attended the meeting with President Bowles, spoke about how the University had considered the idea early retirement packages in the early 1990's, but determined that such a program would not benefit the State significantly in terms of dollars saved.

We would rather take X number of days of unpaid leave than to see someone lose their job. Is that a possibility from the legislators?

President Bowles responded by saying that today it is not a possibility, because there is no legal authority to do it, but it is one of the tools he intended to ask for. He noted that the Governor's current position was that she it was not supportive of furloughs other than as a last resort. Bowles thought furloughs might be a better option than just a "last choice." He said he'd rather implement some type of limited furlough than have to fire people, because when the economy come out of this crisis, those good people will be needed again.

Can we donate leave as a possibility for people to keep their jobs?

President Bowles said he'd consider any idea. He noted that the Faculty Assembly had offered the idea of taking a 1% cut in pay in order to help everybody out. He acknowledged that such ideas are sometimes far more complicated than they may seem, but any good idea should be considered, and he believes that everyone in the University system is prepared and willing to help share in the pain.

How involved are you with the negotiations on the State Health Plan? People also believe there won't be any raises this year; can you comment?

President Bowles responded that he had not been included in State's healthcare discussions to the extent that he would like to be, given that the University system employs 40,000 people. He's heard that they are proposing to raise the cost of family coverage, and to double deductibles. UNC does have some representation on the health care committee, and they are trying to ensure the State knows how the University feels on these matters.

Regarding raises, President Bowles gave his honest opinion that he, too, doubts there will be money for salary increases this year.

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How do you determine who gets laid off? Are housekeepers at the bottom of the totem pole?

President Bowles thanked the employee who raised the question and noted how much he values what housekeepers and other employees do. He admitted that it was likely that some housekeepers would be among those who will lose jobs, but was clear that layoffs will not just affect service and maintenance staff positions. He doesn't expect layoffs to be disproportionate, but they will happen, and the University will pay a price for that. He said, "I hate to tell you that some are going to have to go, but if we have a 7% budget cut, and if that cut is permanent, then, yes, some housekeepers and maintenance folks will lose their jobs." He reiterated his belief that the University could manage much better if the budget cuts are not permanent, if the University has the flexibility to decide how to absorb any cuts, and if the cuts can be kept to 5%. In that case, he thought the University could get through this with limited job losses.

What is your reaction to the suggestion that employees be allowed to pass their tuition waiver benefits to their dependents?

President Bowles welcomed the suggestion and indicated that the idea hadn't been on his radar. He had heard suggestions about allowing employees, particularly those impacted by layoff, to take courses at the community colleges. President Bowles stated that ideas like these are worth considering.

How can the campus Staff Senates work most effectively with the UNC Staff Assembly to advise you and the chancellors?

President Bowles didn't want to speak for the Chancellors, but for himself, he really wants "input, input, input" -- and it doesn't have to be sugar-coated; he wants to know what staff members are thinking, which is why he wanted to create a staff assembly. He values what staff members do just as much as what he does, noting that we are all on the same team. He welcomes emails, which he answers before he goes to bed every night.

President Bowles again thanked the group for what they do, noting that the University couldn't survive without the critical contributions of the staff.

Roll Call:

A roll call was performed by Nancy Phillips to ensure accuracy.

Approval of the Staff Senate Minutes of February 4, 2009

Minutes were approved as written.

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Administrative Report – Barbara Carroll, Associate Vice Chancellor for Human Resources:

Barbara Carroll asked if anyone had any questions. A question was raised regarding the timeframe on when we will know what the revenue of the state will be. Barbara Carroll stated the state will not have a real true picture of what the budget actually looks like until after April 15th. That is when they will know how much tax revenue actually comes in for the state on income tax, which is the biggest source of revenue for the state.

Budget Report – Corrinda Watkins, Advisor

Corrinda Watkins reported the Senate's starting balance was \$5919.41. We had expenditures of \$331.61, which included \$263.61 for office supplies and equipment and a telephone charge of \$68.00. Our balance today is \$5587.80. However, we will have election expenses that will decrease our balance.

Committee Reports:

Chair:

Chair, Laura Massengill attended the following:

- February 4 - University Budget Advisory Committee
- February 5 - UNC Staff Chairs - Video Conference (all day)
- February 6 - University Brotherhood Dinner (Guest speaker on program)
- February 17 - University Council Meeting
- February 18 - Staff Senate Executive Committee
- February - 27 Monthly Staff Assembly Chairs videoconference

Vice Chair:

Nothing new to report

Governance Committee:

Steve Carlton reported the committee continues to work on the bylaws. A special governance committee meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 17th.

Human Resources:

Vicky Merritt reported the following:

The 2008-2009 Staff Senate Human Resources (HR) Committee met on Wednesday, March 4, 2009 at 9:00 a.m. in the Talley Student Center Boardroom.

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The committee continues to discuss how to coordinate Employee Appreciation Day recognition with county extension offices and off-campus employees. The off-campus locations need to be identified to include all employees who do not have access to activities held on campus during Employee Appreciation Week. Due to the short turn-around time for this year's event, the committee will work towards a plan for next year.

Other items discussed were the HR Committee End of the Year Report, report from Executive Committee meeting regarding selecting chair for 2009-10, and State Health Plan.

Jim Martin, Chair of the Faculty, was a guest at our meeting and provided input on the proposed resolution (which has been tabled) regarding skill training for employees leaving NCSU employment (may be discussed at today's meeting with Erskine Bowles, President/UNC Systems).

Next meeting will be on Wednesday, April 1, 2009 at 9:00 a.m. in the Talley Student Center Boardroom.

Diversity:

Jill Schmitter reported the following:

Met with National Coalition Building Institute (NCBI) – purpose how the Staff Senate Diversity group and NCBI can partner together.

What NCBI does

- National Group meets once a month

- Talking about controversial issues with faculty, staff and students – i.e.: free expression tunnel

- Create a safe environment

- Part of the Carolina Coalition

Goals of NCBI:

- Educate campus about diversity

- Have everyone participate in workshop

NCBI had the Diversity group do a couple of exercises as part of the presentation.

The Diversity group would like to invite NCBI to the Staff Senate retreat in July to conduct a modified workshop 1hr with the incoming/outgoing senators.

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Upcoming events:

Discussion on the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act – March 19th from 12:00 – 1:00 pm in Witherspoon Rm. 356 Amy Circosta from OEO will be presenting. Feel free to bring your lunch.

NCBI is hosting “Building Bridges” workshop April 9th- Strengthening Leadership for Diverse Communities. The workshop is free and you can sign up for it on the OEO website: http://www.ncsu.edu/equal_op/education.html

Public Relations:

Nothing new to report

Resources & Environment:

Nothing new to report

Legislative Liaison:

Ron Aman reported the following:

The Legislative Liaison Committee met on March 4th. The committee is monitoring the Budget and State Health Plan for impacts to state employees. The letter drafted by the committee to welcome back legislators will be modified to include positions affecting state employees and sent to a small group of legislators once there is some clarity on positions to take.

Anyone interested in being added to the e-mail list for updates to the health plan or budget should e-mail ron_aman@ncsu.edu.

Old Senate Business:

None

New Senate Business:

None

Announcements:

Chair, Laura Massengill asked the Senators to join Chancellor James Oblinger for "The State of NC State" address on Tuesday, March 10, 2009 at 11:00 a.m. in Stewart Theatre.

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Campus Recreation Announcements:

Friday, March 20th - Cornhole -A- Palooza

Sunday, March 29 - 5K Spring Fling Run

For more information on these events visit: http://ncsu.edu/stud_affairs/campus_rec/

The Graduate School is celebrating the first "NC Graduate Education Week" to be held Monday, March 16th through Sunday, March 22nd. Graduate Education Week (GEW) is a celebration which highlights the great work of our graduate students. In addition, the week will serve as an opportunity to attract prospective students and legitimize the need for state funding. We hope that you will join us as we recognize "North Carolina's Original Economic Stimulus Package --Graduate Education."

Some of the key events include:

- **Monday, March 16:** GEW Kickoff Breakfast
- **Tuesday, March 17:** Take a Grad Student to Lunch Day
- **Wednesday, March 18:** Annual Research Symposium
- **Thursday, March 19:** Deans vs. Grads Karaoke
- **Friday, March 20:** UGSA 50th Year Celebration
- **Saturday, March 21:** [Habitat for Humanity](#)
- **Sunday, March 22:** Family Night & International Food Fair

Remarks:

None

Adjournment:

The 8th meeting of the 14th session was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

>**Next Staff Senate Meeting: Wednesday, April 1, 2009**

10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Talley Student Center, Room 4115 (Walnut Room)

>**Next Executive Committee Meeting: Wednesday, March 18, 2009**

10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Williams Hall Room 2405

Respectfully submitted by: Nancy Phillips, Staff Senate Administrative Secretary