

The second public comment session of the University of North Carolina Board of Governors was held on July 29, 2016, in conjunction with the regularly scheduled Board meeting. Five commenters participated in this session. Below are responses to topics raised during the July session.

Public Comment Session Notice and Board Meeting Format

The Board will continue seeking ways to further publicize these public comment sessions. For instance, the Board will communicate information to constituent institutions for distribution by email and social media in addition to relying on UNC system website postings and distribution to local journalists. For the July 2016 session, online sign-ups were promoted via social media. As students return to campuses and classes begin for the fall semester, the Board's September meeting will offer increased ability to promote registration. We are evaluating several options to improve future comment sessions. Commenters are also encouraged to share written comments, which will be distributed to members of the Board of Governors. The Board will continually work to make our meetings more accessible as it is important that the public, especially students and faculty, remain engaged. Transparency is and will continue to be a priority for our Board.

Senate Bill 873

The final version of this legislation, which was a part of the 2016 Appropriations Act, included four important components: 1) a revised fixed tuition provision, which enables parents and students to know the cost of their education for eight continuous semesters at any of our institutions; 2) a tuition buy-down program at Western Carolina, UNC Pembroke, and Elizabeth City State University; 3) a cap on annual fee increases, and; finally, 4) a provision creating a scholarship at North Carolina Central University and North Carolina A&T State University. To ensure that this piece of legislation is implemented seamlessly and in such a way as to best serve our students, UNC General Administration has convened a working group to develop a comprehensive plan for implementation and marketing.

Faculty Retention and Compensation

Two themes of the strategic planning process are student success and excellent and diverse institutions. Without attracting and retaining high-quality faculty, these goals are unattainable. Additionally, the significant economic impact of the University to our state is due in large part to our faculty's ability to generate research funding. These topics will continue to be included in the Board's strategic planning discussions.

Board of Governors Membership

The membership and selection of the Board of Governors is established in the North Carolina General Statutes. [G.S. 116-6](#) establishes the election process for the 32 voting members of the Board of Governors elected by the North Carolina Senate and House of Representatives. [G.S. 116-7](#) includes general provisions concerning members of the Board of Governors, including the basis for selection of members.

Affordability

The North Carolina State Constitution directs that the benefits of the University of North Carolina and other public institutions of higher education be extended to the people of the state free of expense, as far as practicable. Affordability has been and will continue to be a consistent focus of the University, particularly when considering changes to tuition and fees. One of the themes of the strategic plan is affordability and efficiency, and this topic will continue to be included in the Board's strategic planning discussions.

Private Donations

During the comment session there was a question regarding the endowment and donation practices of the system. While most constituent institutions have developed policies regarding endowments and donations, the Board has also enacted system-wide policies. These are found in [The Code Appendix 1, Section VI and VII](#). Otherwise policies are determined by each institution and are available at that institution's website.

Historically Black Colleges and Universities

One commenter emphasized the importance of the system's historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs). HBCUs are an integral part of the University. The University of North Carolina system includes five historically black universities – campuses that once provided the means to a higher education for African Americans. Overcoming great obstacles, these campuses have produced generations of African-American leaders in North Carolina who have left their mark on history.

North Carolina's economic future will depend, in large part, on UNC's success in expanding access to affordable higher education so that more young people from every walk of life can attain the knowledge and skills they need to compete in the global economy. Our HBCU's are critical to that effort. These institutions are also major economic drivers and cultural centers in the regions they serve.

Academic Freedom

The University's policy regarding academic freedom found in [Chapter 100.1 Section 601 of the Code](#), which states:

Part 1: "It is the policy of the University of North Carolina to support and encourage full freedom, within the law, of inquiry, discourse, teaching, research, and publication for all members of the academic staffs of the constituent institutions. Members of the faculty are expected to recognize that accuracy, forthrightness, and dignity befit their association with the University and their position as men and women of learning. They should not represent themselves, without authorization, as spokespersons for the University of North Carolina or any of its constituent institutions."

Part 2: "The University and its constituent institutions shall not penalize or discipline members of its faculties because of the exercise of academic freedom in the lawful pursuit of their respective areas of scholarly and professional interest and responsibility."

