



MARCH 2017 PUBLIC COMMENT SESSION

The University of North Carolina Board of Governors held a public comment session on March 3, 2017, in conjunction with its regularly scheduled meeting. Below are responses to topics raised during that session.

UNC Center for Civil Rights

A number of commenters raised concerns about a policy on involvement of centers and institutes in legal actions that was proposed in the Committee on Education Planning, Policies, and Programs on Thursday, March 2, 2017. During the committee's discussion, committee members raised questions about how the policy might affect the Center for Civil Rights and other centers and institutes. Members noted the importance of the center's work. They asked for more information about the center's activities and unique characteristics, the clients represented by the center, how the needs of clients would be met if the center no longer engaged in litigation, and whether and how other universities engage in similar activities.

With these considerations in mind, the committee asked UNC-CH to prepare a report to address the committee's questions and offer options for organizational changes and alternatives for the Center for Civil Rights to perform its work. The committee also asked for a report on the possible impact of the policy on the law schools at UNC-Chapel Hill and North Carolina Central University, including law school clinics. The requested reports are expected to be prior to the board's July meeting.

There will be ways for the public to provide additional feedback on this topic, both in person and online. Once determined, details will be available on our website: www.northcarolina.edu.

Undocumented Students

One commenter raised concerns about the treatment of undocumented students eligible for the federal Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) policies enacted in 2012. Under DACA, certain eligible immigrant youth who came to the United States as minors receive a renewable two-year period of deferred action on deportation and eligibility for a work permit.

The University of North Carolina welcomes and supports all students who earn a place in our public universities. The University cannot control federal law or national policies, but we can affirm our commitment to being a welcoming, supportive, and safe environment for all students.

Foreign Nationals in Forestry Research

One commenter discussed the importance of foreign nationals to forestry research. The University of North Carolina's international students, researchers, and faculty are valued and important members

of our University community. The University and its constituent institutions value all students, scholars, faculty, and staff. In response to recent events and reports of heightened anxieties, our constituent institutions have been working proactively and will continue to provide resources and support to the University's foreign-national population.

House Bill 39

One commenter raised concerns about the implementation of House Bill 39 limiting the diversity on the Board of Governors. On March 3, 2017, [House Bill 39](#) was signed into law, changing the number of members of the board of governors elected each session by the General Assembly from 16 to 12. This would bring the total number of members on the board from 32 to 28 next year, and to 24 in 2019.

The members of the Board of Governors are not selected by the Board. The General Assembly elects all of the members of the Board of Governors. [G.S. 116-7](#), General Provisions concerning members of the Board of Governors, provides more detail on the selection criteria and process.

Student Debt and Free Tuition

One commenter expressed concerns about the level of tuition and student debt. 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. In fact, one of the goals of the UNC Strategic Plan is to “offer education of equal or higher quality than currently provided at a cost that is both consistent with the State constitution and attainable to students and families in North Carolina.”

This school year is the first year under a fixed tuition plan, which holds tuition steady for students that stay continuously enrolled for eight semesters. The tuition and fees increases that were approved in March, some of the lowest in recent years, are a major step forward to advancing predictability and confidence for our students and families. Additionally, three of the institution's campuses will be offering their education at a tuition of \$500 as a result of [Senate Bill 873](#), known as NC Promise beginning in

Countering Violent Extremism Grant

One commenter expressed concerns about the Countering Violent Extremism Grant. The Countering Violent Extremism Grant is awarded by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and “provides funding for activities that enhance the resilience of communities being targeted by violent extremists, provide alternatives to individuals who have started down a road to violent extremism, and create or amplify alternative messages to terrorist/violent extremist recruitment and radicalization efforts. It also seeks to develop and support efforts that counter violent extremists' online recruitment efforts.” The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill received a one year grant in the amount of \$867,000 to “create a series of sophisticated videos and other materials to counteract jihadist propaganda that targets young people.” More information is available [here](#).