

MAY 2017 PUBLIC COMMENT SESSION

UNC Center for Civil Rights

Commenters raised concerns about a proposed policy on the involvement of centers and institutes in legal actions, discussed in the Committee on Education Planning, Policies, and Programs on Thursday, March 2, 2017. Previously, the public had several opportunities to share their concerns including a public comment session specifically for the UNC Center for Civil Rights on Thursday, May 11, 2017 and an online portal specifically to provide written comments about this issue. Additionally comments were sent to public@bog.northcarolina.edu.

At the May 18, 2017 meeting, the committee expressed appreciation of the time and effort from the commenters and for insight gained from their opinions. The committee received the final report from UNC-Chapel Hill and will meet on August 1, at 12 p.m., at the Center for School Leadership Development to consider the proposed policy on involvement of centers and institutes in legal actions.

Further information about this issue, including both reports and video from the hearing on May 11, can be found at <https://www.northcarolina.edu/cic>.

Countering Violence Extremism Grant

Several commenters expressed concerns about the Countering Violent Extremism Grant, and requested that the grant to be rejected by UNC-Chapel Hill. The Countering Violent Extremism Grant is awarded by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) 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.”

In January, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill was included in the list of organizations to which DHS anticipated offering an award. In June, the university received notification that its award was not included in the final list of grant awardees and would not receive funding.

Transparency

One commenter raised concerns about the transparency of the Board of Governors meetings, including asking all board members to attend the public comment session, opening the public comment session to the public, holding meetings in a larger room, and noting that the Board members do not have a dialogue with the commenters.

The Board of Governors shares a commitment to openness and has made a number of changes in the past year to increase transparency. The Board meetings are now streamed online and broadcast via UNCTV, and the Board regularly holds public comment sessions, which are open to the public. These sessions are held in the largest space available at UNC General Administration following a Board of Governors meeting, and sign-ups are open to the public in advance via northcarolina.edu, with priority given to those individuals that have not previously commented to allow the Board to hear from as many different stakeholders as possible. These sessions follow longstanding guidelines for public meetings and democratic forums. For the 2017-2018 year, in addition to the sessions in Chapel Hill, the Board will hear from the public at comment sessions in Asheville (July 2017) and Wilmington (March 2018).