
GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNC ASSOCIATION OF STUDENT GOVERNMENTS

38th SESSION, 2009-2010

RESOLUTION 21
AN ACT TO ESTABLISH THE ASSOCIATION'S LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES FOR
THE 2009-2010 SESSION OF THE NORTH CAROLINA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

WHEREAS, the 37th Session of the Association reestablished the historical tradition of adopting formal legislative priorities to guide the organization's advocacy efforts in its meetings with members of the North Carolina General Assembly; and,

WHEREAS, adopting a revised set of legislative priorities that reflect the Association's accomplishments in the preceding session and new challenges that have since arisen is both timely and appropriate to ensure proper representation of student interests in the upcoming 2010 "short" session of the North Carolina General Assembly; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the University of North Carolina Association of Student Governments adopts the attached document entitled "The University of North Carolina Association of Student Governments 2010 Legislative Priorities" as its legislative priorities for the upcoming session of the N.C. General Assembly.

I hereby certify the foregoing resolution was read twice and adopted by consent in the General Assembly of the UNC Association of Student Governments, this the _____ day of _____, 2009.

Atul C. Bhula
Senior Vice President

I hereby signify my approval of this resolution as adopted by the General Assembly of the UNC Association of Student Governments, this the _____ day of _____, 2009.

T. Greg Doucette
President

The University of North Carolina Association of Student Governments 2010 Legislative Priorities

1. Repeal 8% Legislature-Initiated Tuition Increase

Three years ago the UNC Board of Governors adopted a four-year plan to improve predictability in the tuition- and fee-setting processes. Under the plan, tuition and fee increase requests are initiated by the respective institutions, capped at a maximum of 6.5% over the previous year's rates, and reviewed by the Board of Governors for adoption.

This process has worked exceptionally well in its first three years, and provided total tuition and fee increases well below the 6.5% cap. The predictability this plan provides is invaluable to students, their parents and the universities.

Unfortunately, due to the difficult economic environment the General Assembly faced during the 2009 long session, legislators included in the 2010 budget an automatic 8% tuition increase (capped at \$200) for all students. The Association understands the motivations behind the increase, but believes tuition rates are best set by the body delegated the authority for setting them -- the UNC Board of Governors.

The Association asks the General Assembly to respect the tuition predictability plan adopted by the UNC Board of Governors, and to repeal the 8% Legislature-initiated tuition increase and replace it with rates set by the Board.

2. Repeal Doubling of Tuition Surcharge or Expand Campus-level Waiver Authority

Students who exceed 140 attempted credit hours (or 110% of the credit hours required for their course of study) are required to pay an extra 25% tuition surcharge in addition to their normal tuition and fee rates if they remain enrolled longer than four years.

Due to the economic challenges facing the state, in the current budget this surcharge is scheduled to double to 50% beginning with the Fall 2010 semester.

While the surcharge policy is intended as an incentive for students to graduate in a timely fashion, the credits used in calculating the maximum number allowed include those that do not contribute to a student's degree as a result of transferring from a community college to a UNC institution. This impedes students' ability to transfer into the University and hinders their timely graduation.

The Association supports repealing the Fall 2010 increase in the tuition surcharge, or in the alternative expanding authority to individual campuses to waive the surcharge in cases involving transfer students with community college credits that do not apply to their degree.

3. Energy Efficiency Savings Retained by Campuses

The state currently funds the energy needs of the 17 institutions within the University as well as the various other centers, programs and other entities under the University umbrella. This represents a substantial recurring expenditure that could potentially be reduced with newer, more energy efficient technologies.

The Association believes the General Assembly should provide positive incentives for institutions to conserve energy and protect the environment. Specifically, the Association supports policy changes that would allow institutions to retain any funding from energy savings that result from the implementation of environmentally-friendly technologies.

4. Tax-Free Textbooks

In addition to the tuition and fee rates set by the Board of Governors, students also pay a substantial amount for course-required textbooks each semester. According to the US Government Accountability Office, the average undergraduate paid \$915.00 in the 2006-2007 academic year for course textbooks.

The retail sales tax on these books amounted to an additional \$61.76 on top of that figure. This essentially amounts to a “knowledge tax” on students and detracts from the investment in their education.

The Association supports abolishing the knowledge tax. Specifically, the Association supports an amendment to N.C. General Statutes §105-164.13 (“Retail sales and use tax”) to create a sales tax exemption for school instructional material assigned by a course instructor at postsecondary educational institutions.

5. Student Vote on the Board of Governors

The University of North Carolina Association of Student Governments is the only entity designated to “represent the interests of students in the deliberations of the University of North Carolina Board of Governors.” The President of the Association serves as an *ex officio* member of the Board, with all rights and privileges except a vote.

The Association recognizes that *ex officio* membership on the Board is a tremendous asset and not something to be trivialized. At the same time, however, as the Association has matured into a better representative of its students, the Board of Governors composition has remained the same.

The Association supports amending N.C. General Statutes §116-6.1(b) to provide the student member of the Board with voting rights. In addition, the Association supports striking the ability of the President to have a designee serve in his/her absence as currently included in §116-6.1(a).