East Carolina University will sustain a 16 percent or $49 million cut in the fiscal year that began July 1.

The budget and finance committee of the University of North Carolina system Board of Governors met Thursday morning to allocate cuts mandated by the state budget approved in June. Since then, officials have been working on how to distribute the $414 million reduction.

The overall cut to the UNC system is 15.6 percent. But that reduction is not even across the board, due to state budget law. UNC-Chapel Hill will bear the largest cut at 18 percent of its budget or $100 million. The smallest cut was at Elizabeth City State University with 10 percent or $3.7 million of its budget. Appalachian State and UNC-Charlotte both had 16 percent cuts as well. Last year, state funding made up approximately $300 million of ECU's $800 million budget.

“The loss of more than $49 million in state funds will certainly reduce our capacity, but not our desire, to make a difference for eastern North Carolina,” said Chancellor Steve Ballard. “The central component of that is an excellent faculty and we have already lost several of our very best to other universities with more resources. I also worry greatly about the impact on our students. However, Pirates never give up. We will carry on. ECU's mission is to be a national model of regional transformation and we're very proud of that mission.”
Administrators at ECU will be finalizing the distribution of the cut across campus in coming weeks, according to the public information office.

Everything is on the table to balance the budget except another tuition increase, according to the board of governors.

A package of increases already was approved in February for this coming year, with ECU's increase in undergraduate in-state tuition and fees being 12 percent or $567. The budget bill stipulated that several factors be used to determine the cuts at each campus, including student retention and graduation rates as well as tuition, percentage of low-income students and the availability of other sources of revenue.

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**UNC system will lose $414 million from state**

BY JANE STANCILL - Staff writer

CHAPEL HILL UNC-Chapel Hill's funding from the state will be reduced by nearly 18 percent - or more than $100 million - making the historic flagship the hardest hit among the UNC system's 17 campuses.

Reductions will be 15 percent, or $79 million, at N.C. State University, and 14 percent, or $13 million, at N.C. Central University. The UNC system as a whole will be cut $414 million in the fiscal year that started July 1.

The allocations were approved Thursday by the UNC Board of Governors' budget and finance committee, acting with the authority of the full board.

The cuts will play out in varying ways at the universities. State funding accounts for just part of the total budgets of UNC system schools. At smaller campuses that don't bring in federal research grants, for example, the state dollars make up a large share of the funding.

At NCSU, state appropriations make up about 42 percent of overall funding. And at UNC-CH, the state money was 22 percent of the campus's $2.4 billion operating budget in 2009-10. UNC-CH has more private fundraising capacity than other campuses and pulls in hundreds of millions of dollars in federal research money each year. But the donations and federal dollars are largely earmarked for specific uses and can't be tapped for the operating budget.

UNC President Tom Ross said he was proud of the unity among the chancellors who lead individual campuses. He noted that budget turmoil across U.S. public higher education had led to infighting and fragmentation in other state systems.

"I'll tell you they're not all happy about this, but they all understand it and they're all supportive of it, because they support the system," Ross said. "I think it's going to be hard to cut the amount of money that they're being asked to cut on every campus, but they're going to do it wisely and well, I'm sure."

The budget law enacted by the legislature ordered that the reductions not be made across the board. That could have resulted in a 15.6 percent cut for each campus.

**Six criteria**
Instead, the system used six criteria to determine how to dole out the pain, taking into account differences among the campuses.

Those criteria included performance measures, such as student retention and graduates produced, and financial factors such as tuition, percentage of low-income students and the availability of other sources of revenue. Also, campuses with fewer than 6,000 students received special consideration because they aren't large enough to operate with economies of scale.

The state cuts range from 17.9 percent at UNC-CH to 8.4 percent at the N.C. School of Science and Mathematics in Durham.

Ross said campus job eliminations are under way and that some had occurred earlier in the year to prepare for the certainty of cuts. From January to May, for example, 269 employees were laid off across the system. Open positions were also cut, and the campuses did not renew contracts for many adjunct faculty and other contract employees.

UNC-CH Chancellor Holden Thorp was out of the country Thursday and could not be reached for comment. But last month, in an e-mail message to the campus, he said a proactive cut of almost 5 percent on July 1 will "only marginally ease the pain of this new round of reductions."

How to mitigate losses

"These cuts will undoubtedly hurt our teaching mission, because state appropriations primarily support undergraduate education," he wrote in his message. "And we'll see further cuts to administrative units that have already absorbed significant reductions to protect the classroom experience for our students."

Jan Boxill, chairwoman of UNC-CH's Faculty Council, was surprised that her campus's cut ended up at almost 18 percent. She said the university will have to work to mitigate the effect on the classroom experience.

"There's going to be a lot of pushing and pulling to try to balance out what happens and how we implement these changes," said Boxill, a professor of philosophy. "Clearly it's going to be difficult for all of us, but we certainly want to protect the long-term interests of the university."

Everything will be on the table as individual chancellors deal with the situation, except an additional tuition increase. Some chancellors had said another increase was necessary.

Tuition will not go up
But tuition across the system has increased an average of 39 percent in the past three years. Increases had been enacted in February for the coming academic year, and financial aid packages had been set accordingly. So, another increase would have been disruptive and unfair to parents and students, Ross said. There also is less financial aid available for a larger pool of students. An estimated 6,000 students who previously qualified for financial aid won't this year.

"We just felt it was more important to figure out how to get through this without another tuition increase right now," Ross said.

Students are grateful for that.

Atul Bhula, a graduate student in business at Appalachian State University in Boone, said students may still have to pay more in the long run. Budget cuts will mean larger classes and fewer class offerings, which could slow students' progress toward a degree.

Bhula, who is president of the systemwide Association of Student Governments, said this is occurring in his own family. His brother, an engineering student at UNC Charlotte, was scheduled to graduate in May 2012. Now it appears as though his graduation won't be until December 2012 because he could not get into a class he needed.

"His graduation will be prolonged by a semester, maybe even a year," Bhula said. "That's happening to a lot of people."

Beyond that, students are having to say goodbye to staff and faculty they depended on.

"We're losing all these great people at the university," Bhula said. "These people affect students' lives."

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**Cuts Statewide**

State dollars being cut at UNC institutions across the state.*

Appalachian State University – 16 percent, $23 million
East Carolina University – 16 percent, $49 million
Elizabeth City State University – 9.9 percent, $4 million
Fayetteville State University – 14.8 percent, $8 million
N.C. A&T University – 13.7 percent, $14 million
N.C. Central University - 14 percent, $13 million
N.C. State University - 15.1 percent, $79 million
N.C. School of Science & Math - 8.4 percent, $2 million
UNC Asheville – 11.8 percent, $5 million
UNC Charlotte – 16.2 percent, $34 million
UNC-Chapel Hill - 17.9 percent, $101 million
UNC Greensboro – 15.3 percent, $26 million
UNC Pembroke – 15.5 percent, $9 million
UNC School of the Arts – 10.8 percent, $3 million
UNC Wilmington – 15.8 percent, $17 million
Western Carolina University – 16.4 percent, $14 million
Winston Salem State University – 13.8 percent, $10 million

* Dollar figures are rounded
The University of North Carolina Wilmington will receive a $16.6 million budget cut this year, its share of $414 million in cuts across the state's university system.

The UNC System Board of Governors approved the cuts Thursday after lawmakers told the schools they would have to divide the cuts amongst themselves.

Legislators ordered in the $19.7 billion state budget that the spending cuts averaging 16 percent couldn't be applied across the board. Lawmakers also protected some favored programs, such as turfgrass research at N.C. State University and a nanoengineering school shared by N.C. A&T University and UNC-Greensboro.

The cut at UNCW will amount to a 15.8 percent reduction in the school's budget, bringing the budget down to $104 million.

UNCW Chancellor Gary Miller said exacerbating the reduction was a requirement that the school stop spending during the month of June to reduce the state's 2010-2011 shortfall. UNCW racked up $1.3 million in expenses, which may have to be tacked onto this year's budget, he said.

Due to the cuts, Miller said the school will have to get rid of 11 jobs that are currently filled and eliminate the equivalent of 147 full-time positions. None of the 11 people laid off will be tenured faculty, he said.

The positions cut will include already-vacant positions, retirements and some part-time positions.

The budget decrease will have a number of impacts at the school, Charles Maimone, vice chancellor for business affairs, said in an email.

"Double-digit budget reductions will mean eliminating faculty and staff positions; increasing class sizes, which will adversely impact students' learning experiences; and eliminating a number of course sections, which will likely result in the inability for many students to graduate on time," he said.
University leaders across the state warned three months ago that a budget cut of this size would result in about 9,000 fewer course offerings and the loss of 1,500 faculty jobs statewide.

A panel of the 16-campus university system's Board of Governors agreed to divide up the budget cuts by forcing UNC-Chapel Hill to take the lead. The Chapel Hill campus will lose more than $100 million this year, or 18 percent.

The N.C. School of Science & Math, a residential high school in Durham that is part of the UNC system, was assigned the smallest cut, 8.4 percent.

East Carolina University, UNC-Charlotte, Appalachian State University and Western Carolina University all will take cuts of 16 percent or more.

UNC-Charlotte leaders estimated in a report released in April that a 15 percent cut would increase the average time for a student to earn an undergraduate degree by a full semester. Appalachian State said it would have to eliminate financial aid and loan staff at the same time that the number of students with financial need is increasing. East Carolina said its library would cancel subscriptions to key academic journals and databases.

This story contains information from The Associated Press.

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Cuts will prevent hires, aid at UNCC

By Jane Stancill and Sanette Tanaka

UNC Charlotte will lose $33.5 million in state money this year, a cut that will cost the university hundreds of positions and millions of dollars in student financial aid.

UNCC's 16.2 percent cut, approved Thursday by the UNC Board of Governors, is surpassed in the statewide system only by UNC Chapel Hill (17.9 percent) and Western Carolina (16.4 percent.) The rollbacks will affect the budget year that started July 1.

The cuts to UNC Chapel Hill, the flagship campus of the statewide system, amount to close to $101 million. N.C. State, the state's largest university, will lose $79 million.

Overall, the losses to the system will reach $414 million.

At UNC Charlotte, officials described the cuts as of "historic proportions."

Chancellor Phil Dubois was out of the country and not available for comment Thursday.

His predecessor, Jim Woodward, who also served as the interim head of N.C. State, said budget cuts of this size will mean a significant loss of jobs.

"By definition, you reduce the educational opportunities available to students," Woodward said. "My view is that the impact will be long-term."

John Bland, director of public relations at UNC Charlotte, said in an email Thursday that the cuts mean "more than 270 faculty and staff positions currently open will go unfilled this year." Bland said he expects to have a more detailed report within the next 10 days.

The budget enacted by the General Assembly ordered that the reductions not be made across the board. That could have resulted in a 15.6 percent cut for each campus.

Instead, the system used six criteria to determine how to dole out the pain, taking into account differences among the campuses.

Those included performance measures, such as student retention and graduates produced, and financial factors such as tuition, percentage of low-income students and the availability of other sources of revenue on a given campus. Also, campuses with fewer than 6,000 students got special consideration because they aren't large enough to operate with economies of scale.
Those were factors the UNC system leaders thought were important in tough economic times, UNC President Tom Ross said.

Ross, the former Davidson College president, said he was proud of the unity among chancellors who lead individual campuses. He said budget turmoil across U.S. public higher education had led to infighting and fragmentation in other state systems.

"I'll tell you they're not all happy about this, but they all understand it and they're all supportive of it because they support the system," Ross said.

UNC Chapel Hill Chancellor Holden Thorp was out of the country Thursday and could not be reached for comment. But last month in an email to the campus, he said that a proactive cut of almost 5 percent on July 1 will "only marginally ease the pain of this new round of reductions."

State money accounted for 22 percent of the school's $2.4 billion budget in 2009-10. However, the state's flagship university has more private fundraising capacity than other campuses and pulls in a large amount of federal research money.

The state dollars go to the core of the classroom, Thorp said.

"These cuts will undoubtedly hurt our teaching mission because state appropriations primarily support undergraduate education," he wrote. "And we'll see further cuts to administrative units that have already absorbed significant reductions to protect the classroom experience for our students."

Everything will be on the table as chancellors deal with the situation, except an additional tuition increase. Some chancellors had said another hike was necessary.

Tuition has increased an average of 39 percent in the last three years across the system. Increases had already been enacted in February for the coming academic year, and financial aid packages had been set accordingly. So another increase would have been disruptive and unfair to parents and students, Ross said. There is also less financial aid available for a larger pool of students.

"We just felt it was more important to figure out how to get through this without another tuition increase right now," he said.

Although tuition has been set, UNC Charlotte will reduce its financial aid packages for the upcoming year, Bland said. The damage: $17 million out of a total package of $54 million.

"The end result," he said, "will be higher costs but less financial aid for some students."
Stan Honda – AP / Atlantis and a crew of four are scheduled to launch at 11:26 this morning on the 135th and final space shuttle launch. Weather at the Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Fla., could delay the event.

Experiments from UNC-CH and NCSU aboard final shuttle mission

BY HELEN CHAPPELL - Staff Writer

The official countdown clock at the Kennedy Space Center is ticking down to the end of an era.

Weather permitting, today's liftoff of the space shuttle Atlantis, scheduled for 11:26 a.m., will be the last space shuttle launch in history.

Two North Carolina research teams - from UNC-Chapel Hill and N.C. State University - will be on hand to watch. Each has experiments aboard Atlantis.

"It's incredibly exciting to be involved in a shuttle mission of any sort," said Caroline Smith, an NCSU researcher working on a plant growth experiment. "But in particular, to be involved in the last one is a real treat."

The plant project looks at how plants grow in extreme environments. Researchers from UNC-CH and NCSU's joint biomedical engineering program also have a study on board, looking at ways to slow bone loss.

After the final launch, some will mourn the shuttle program, remembering its successes. Directly or indirectly, the program enabled countless scientific advances in fields ranging from astronomy to biology. Historically, the
shuttle program carried the first women and African-American astronauts into orbit.

Despite the shuttle program's successes, though, others will say good riddance.

"The shuttle was created to make transportation to low Earth orbit economical, safe and reliable," but it failed on every count, said Alex Roland, a former NASA historian and a professor emeritus at Duke University. "It never did the things necessary to make manned spaceflight practical."

Practical or not, the space shuttle will be missed by many Triangle researchers.

The two experiments due to launch today may be conducted in space, but researchers emphasize the relevance of the research for those of us who never leave Earth.

**Halting bone loss**

Bone loss, for instance, is a problem that matters to both astronauts and osteoporosis patients, said Ted Bateman, professor of biomedical engineering in the UNC/NCSU program and the leader of the study on Atlantis.

Astronauts' bones weaken when they travel in space, just like the bones of those suffering from osteoporosis. The difference is the amount of time it takes. An astronaut's bones can grow much weaker after spending just a few weeks in "microgravity" - the weightless environment of space. On Earth, similar changes take years.

"There are many things that microgravity does that models human aging, but in a very accelerated way," said Bateman.

By studying space travelers after short periods in a weightless environment - in this case, space-traveling mice after 12 days aboard Atlantis - Bateman's team hopes to learn how to prevent bone loss in osteoporosis patients.

**Helping plants thrive**

Similarly, the NCSU team studying plant growth thinks its work in space can help us understand the ways plants respond to extreme environments on Earth. Researchers led by Imara Perera, professor of plant biology at NCSU, are looking at how we can control plants' response to signals from extreme conditions. As many a gardener will tell you, plants don't grow very well in
stressful conditions, whether that stress comes from the lack of gravity or a more mundane lack of water.

If we learn how to control a plant's response to stressful signals, though - like learning to calm down a frightened child - then we could one day design plants that thrive in tough places, Perera hopes.

"Even though the shuttle program is ending, the International Space Station is kind of just starting," she said.

Her team's experiment will be conducted aboard the space station, though it will be delivered by Atlantis. The end of the shuttle program will only make it harder to get materials there and back, Perera said.

Bateman also is optimistic. With a few modifications, his team's experiment could be conducted aboard the space station, he said. Plus, new commercial launch vehicles may soon be available to deliver experiments and supplies to astronauts on the station.

**Relying on Russia**

Because the space shuttle lacks an immediate successor, the end of the program will change U.S. human spaceflight. American astronauts will still travel to the International Space Station, but without a NASA launch vehicle, they'll have to hitch a ride aboard a Russian Soyuz spacecraft to get there.

In the long term, both teams of Triangle researchers think that human spaceflight will continue, and that eventually, we will go far farther than our current work in Earth's orbit.

Exploration, Bateman said, "is fundamental to what humans do and what (we) are."

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NCSU says leak in reactor not a risk

BY JOHN MURAWSKI - Staff Writer

N.C. State University announced Thursday that it shut down its nuclear reactor on campus after a leak was discovered at the Raleigh research facility. Officials said there is no health risk.

The small nuclear reactor has leaked 2,300 gallons of water contaminated by radioactivity since Saturday. The facility continues leaking about 10 gallons an hour from the 15,600-gallon pool used to cool the campus reactor.

It's expected to continue leaking until at least Tuesday, when technicians are scheduled to arrive with a sonar device to find the leak and seal it with epoxy.

The contaminated water is assumed to be seeping out of the Burlington Nuclear Engineering Laboratory building and into the ground.

University officials emphasized the contamination levels are minuscule and pose no public health risk. The university shut down the reactor only as a precaution even though the research facility could continue operating, officials said.

"It's like a pinhole leak," said Andrew Cook, the manager of the nuclear reactor. "You can't see it with underwater camera or the naked eye."
The leak was discovered Saturday, but campus employees and students, as well as the general public, were not informed earlier because there was no public safety concern, Cook said.

The leak is the second mishap at the campus reactor in the past year. In December nuclear regulators investigated a minor incident involving a laboratory technician being briefly exposed to small amounts of radioactivity.

**Used for studies**

The 39-year-old reactor is used primarily to study the properties of thin films, concrete and other materials by exposing them to subatomic particles. The facility is used by about 32 employees, experimenters and students.

It's one of about 20 such academic reactors in the country. N.C. State's Pulsar reactor generates 1 megawatt of power, a fraction of the power capacity of the 900-megawatt Shearon Harris nuclear plant operated by Progress Energy in Wake County.

The pool that sprang the leak is 26.5 feet deep and is used to cool the reactor core, which heats to 273 degrees Fahrenheit during a nuclear reaction.

The university notified state and federal regulators Monday even though notification is not required for leaks of less than 350 gallons per hour.

W. Lee Cox III, chief of the state's Radiation Protection Section in the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services, said the radioactivity in the leaking water is so low that someone could drink all 2,300 contaminated gallons without exposure to a health risk.

"The leak rate does not meet the requirements for emergency plan activation," the university's letter said to Cox's agency.

"The leak rate is below 350 gallons per hour (and) would not result in uncovering of reactor fuel."

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Family doctor named head of state Bureau for Public Health

By Staff reports, The Charleston Gazette

CHARLESTON, W.Va. -- A family doctor who directed health programs at a North Carolina university will take over the West Virginia Bureau for Public Health in September, Department of Health and Human Resources Secretary Dr. Michael Lewis announced Thursday.

Dr. Marian L. Swinker is set to become the bureau's commissioner Sept. 15, Lewis said in a news release. She is from Pennsylvania and did post-graduate training at West Virginia University.

In 1994, Swinker went to work for East Carolina University, where she directed the Office of Prospective Health, a department responsible for environmental, preventive and treatment health services for 6,000 employees and 27,000 students, DHHR officials said. She also was in charge of compliance with state and federal regulations and served several years on the North Carolina Public Health Commission.

Lewis also worked at East Carolina.

Swinker has strong ties to West Virginia, officials said. She worked two years at a Wetzel County rural community health center. At WVU, she completed an internship in obstetrics and gynecology, her residency in the department of family medicine, and a fellowship in occupational and environmental medicine.

She served on the WVU faculty in the family medicine department for more than 11 years.

She will replace two top officials who are leaving the bureau -- acting Commissioner Chris Curtis and acting Health Officer Dr. Cathy Slemp. Their combined duties are supposed to be handled by one person, but the position was split about a decade ago.

Swinker earned a bachelor's degree and a master's of public health at the University of Pittsburgh. She earned her medical degree at Pennsylvania State University.

The Bureau for Public Health, which works with local health departments around the state, employs 810 people and has an annual budget of nearly $310 million.
Cuccinelli: U-Va. may not bar concealed weapons

By Daniel de Vise

Virginia Attorney General Ken Cuccinelli has opined that a University of Virginia policy against firearms on campus may not be legally enforced.

The university flatly prohibits firearms on its property, with the exception of police officers. Emmett Hanger, a state senator, asked Cuccinelli whether the policy was legal.

In a July 1 response, Cuccinelli replies that it is not. The story was previously reported in the Virginian-Pilot newspaper.

Virginians are legally permitted to carry weapons openly, as well as to wear concealed firearms. The state’s open-carry law is one of the nation’s most permissive.

In drawing his conclusion, Cuccinelli reviews a recent state Supreme Court case. That ruling upheld a regulation at George Mason University that forbids firearms inside campus buildings and at events.

Why, then, can’t U-Va.’s policy be enforced?
Two reasons, Cuccinelli says.

First, the U-Va. policy includes not just buildings but open spaces. Cuccinelli reasons that the George Mason regulation is defensible because it is restricted to “sensitive areas” where students might be found. The U-Va. policy, in his view, is too broad, including “virtually all University buildings and property.”

Therefore, in Cuccinelli’s view, the university has no right to stop people from carrying firearms openly on its entire campus. For the policy to be legal, it would have to be tailored to restrict people from carrying firearms openly “within certain buildings.”

The second problem, he writes, is that U-Va.’s gun ban is a policy and not a regulation. As such, it does not carry the force of law.

Where does that leave the university’s gun ban? It’s fine, Cuccinelli reasons, as long as it doesn’t conflict with any actual law.

“I am compelled to conclude that under its policies, the University lawfully may prohibit persons from openly carrying a firearm in the buildings that are subject to the policy,” he writes.

In other words: Visitors to U-Va. may carry concealed firearms anywhere on the grounds, and if they are outdoors, they may carry them openly.

University officials said they are reviewing their policy in light of the opinion.

“The safety and security of our more than 20,000 students and 10,000 employees -- in addition to the safety of the more than 10,000 patients and visitors who come to the University each day -- are of utmost importance to us,” the university said in a statement, alluding both to the academic operation and the affiliated medical center. “Any steps we consider in our review of the opinion will certainly take that responsibility into account.”