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East Carolina University News Bureau
E-mail to durhamj@ecu.edu  Web site at http://www.news.ecu.edu
252-328-6481 FAX: 252-328-6300
Tuition will rise at ECU

By Josh Humphries
The Daily Reflector

Thursday, November 19, 2009

Tuition and fees will go up at East Carolina University next year, but officials can not be sure of the rate of increase.

The executive committee to the Board of Trustees will recommend a rate increase of 3.6 percent, or an increase from $2,491 to $2,581 for undergraduate residents, for the full board to consider today at it’s meeting at the East Carolina Heart Institute.

But the plan may not represent the actual increase in tuition for the 2010 academic year.

Due to a recent change in state law, the state’s public universities no longer have the power to set tuition increases.

The General Assembly has the power to set tuition increases across the entire University of North Carolina system. UNC officials are expected to ask for the power back from the General Assembly.

The General Assembly rate across the board would be an 8 percent increase in tuition or $200, whichever is lower at the particular university.

For ECU, the plan would increase tuition by 8 percent for the 2010 academic year from $2,491 to $2,690 for undergraduate residents of the state.

If the 8 percent increase stands at ECU, the General Assembly will leave the increased revenue, about $5 million, at ECU, but will reduce the amount of state appropriations by $5 million to the university. The state would do the same thing at each of the 16 UNC schools.

ECU Chancellor Steve Ballard was not optimistic about the General Assembly giving the power back to university officials to set tuition rate increases.

"If the current law stays — and I suspect it will — we will have no choice," Ballard said. "But there is a possibility that we would be able to set our own rate."

The East Carolina University Board of Trustees will set a tuition rate increase today as back-up plan for the scenario which gives the power back to the university system.

The tuition increase rate approved by the board would then be sent to the UNC General Administration, where it may be changed again.

"We have to make a decision based on the hope that the General Assembly will give the authority back to the Board of Governors," Ballard said.

The proposed increase from the executive committee would raise tuition by 3.6 percent for undergraduate resident and non-resident students and graduate resident and non-resident students. It would increase tuition for the Brody School of Medicine by 13.5 percent.

Despite what happens with tuition increases, the Board of Trustees are expected to increase some student fees for next year.
Officials are also considering raising fees for athletics, education technology, transit, housing, dining meal plans, and orientation, which would increase the cost of attending ECU by at least $110 for incoming freshman who live on campus.

The athletics fee would increase by $30 to $526 per year to improve facility and operations needs, according to the agenda.

An increase in the education technology fee would tack on another $40 to the cost of attendance and the transit increase would add another $10.

Housing would increase by $100, dining meal plans by $70-$100 and orientation by $30.

Contact Josh Humphries at jhumphries@reflector.com or (252) 329-9565.

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Our Views

Center city

New life breathed into downtown district

As the East Carolina University football team prepares for a crucial conference showdown with the University of Alabama at Birmingham, many of the Pirate faithful will kick off the weekend at the year’s final Freeboot Friday. Held before most home games, the event draws people to the heart of the city for music, food and beverages, bringing the community together.

Now in its 10th year, Freeboot Friday represents the type of public gatherings that breathe life into the downtown district, a crucial part of improving that part of the city. Success in that endeavor will help to make Greenville the thriving and attractive community that residents deserve.

A little more than 10 years ago, downtown Greenville was a shadow of its present self. The 1974 conversion of Evans Street into a pedestrian mall achieved the opposite of its intent, as residents avoided an area known for crime and drugs instead of commerce and entertainment. Empty storefronts were common, and many residents questioned the ability to salvage a part of the city that was once a bustling hub.

Slowly and steadily that has happened, thanks to the concerted effort of the community and determined focus from groups like Uptown Greenville. Most involved with that organization have a vested financial interest in improving and promoting that part of the city. However, that does not diminish its genuine desire to see the center of the city grow into a destination for residents of all ages and an even greater asset to the community.

Freeboot Friday, now in its 10th year, is but one Uptown Greenville initiative engineered toward drawing more people to the area. Other events like ArtWalk, Umbrella Markets and the Sunday in the Park concert series are similarly family friendly attractions that help define the public social life of the city.

Organizing, planning and executing these events are not free of cost nor would they happen without dozens of volunteers who willingly give their time. They deserve the city’s appreciation since they improve the quality of life for those residents who choose to attend.

Greenville’s downtown has problems, and an umbrella market or a Freeboot Friday does not obscure the important decisions that must be made to improve safety in the evenings there. However, residents should be thankful for these events and the worthwhile purpose they serve in making this city a special place to live.
Team of medical professionals exemplary

Thursday, November 19, 2009

On Oct. 11, my husband, Charlie Manning, was diagnosed with leukemia. This was a tremendous shock to both of us. He had been transported to the emergency room thinking he was perhaps in congestive heart failure.

We were immediately sent to west wing third floor oncology. This letter is to give special recognition to a team of professionals who can only be described as exemplary.

Special thanks to the nurses, doctors, residents, care-partners and housekeepers on that floor. Recognition goes to a team of people whose medical knowledge and skills are outstanding, whose compassion and care of the whole person exemplary.

Special thanks for their love, patience and understanding of my need to be with my husband 24 hours a day. Special thanks to the Leo Jenkins oncology doctors. A very special thanks to Charlie’s cardiologist, Dr. Jerry Simpson, who has over the years been a constant in providing the best care and treatment and continues to do so along with the oncology team.

JANIE MANNING

Bethel

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Campus ministry hosts feast for public housing residents

By Kathryn Kennedy
The Daily Reflector

Thursday, November 19, 2009

It was a little warm and a week early for Thanksgiving, but the sentiment at St. Paul's Episcopal Church was just right Thursday evening.

The Episcopal Campus Ministries, a group comprised of East Carolina University and Pitt Community College students attending St. Paul's, held its third annual Thanksgiving feast in the parish hall. The event involves extending an open hand and a full plate to residents at University Towers — the public housing complex located directly behind the church.

Campus Minister Matt Scully said sharing this meal once a year bridges age, financial, race and religious divides.

“We're thankful for you and thankful for all the blessings we share in this neighborhood,” Scully said during a welcoming address to the 50 people assembled.

The land University Towers occupies was actually owned by St. Paul's until the church sold it to the city in the late 1960s. It was a parcel the church could have used to expand. And the sale price? One whole dollar.

“Some might say, ‘Was that wise?’” the Rev. Bob Hudak said, adding that the decision was made long before he came to Greenville. “I think to do that was our greatest investment.”

The minister and Scully opted to invite some new guests this year — the Greenville Housing Authority Board. Hudak said that in a city planning to end homelessness within its borders over the next 10 years, it’s important to make these kind of connections.

“Whatever issues some people have and whatever political posturing has been happening, we have a wonderful public housing board serving our citizens,” he said. “We need to celebrate what’s good.”

GHA members expressed their appreciation for the invitation and the chance to mingle with housing authority residents.

“If they know who we are, that’s great,” Chairman Sterling Edmonds said. “If not, that’s OK, too. What we’re trying to accomplish and the residents we’re trying to serve, it takes a community working together.”

University Towers resident James Smith said that’s what the community can expect from Hudak. Smith, 58, went to the church for guidance over a year ago and emerged with much more.

“Public housing is at the top of the list,” Smith said. “But the church does outreach all over the community. Being here in the city, it gives the opportunity for people in the inner-city to take the bus here or walk.”

Smith moved into public housing in July, with Hudak’s assistance, and has since become the weekend sexton, maintaining the campus at St. Paul’s. He’s also attending classes at PCC.

“There’s a lot of positive things that have happened since I met Bob,” he said. “He's like a guardian angel. I'm not the first to say that.”

Contact Kathryn Kennedy at kkennedy@reflector.com or (252) 329-9566.
UNC tuition hike too small, some say

CHAPEL HILL -- Students at UNC-Chapel Hill will continue to pay far less for their educations than peers at most of the campus's competitors under a tuition plan approved Thursday. And that, some say, is a problem.

In considering tuition hikes each year, campus leaders weigh the price of quality against the state's historic mandate to keep college costs low. This year, the task was complicated by the recession and a legislative mandate that will take tuition revenue away from public university campuses.

Under the UNC-CH plan trustees approved Thursday, in-state undergraduate students would pay nearly $300 more next year for a total of $5,921.42 in tuition and fees. Out-of-state undergrads would pay an increase of about $1,223 for a total of $24,736.42. Those rates don't include room, board, books and other expenses.

Now, some campus leaders say the increase, which is moderate when compared to UNC-CH's peers in other states, won't produce enough revenue to compete with those same institutions for the best faculty.

"We remain a great bargain," said Bruce Carney, UNC-CH's interim provost. "That is admirable. But it is a challenge to accomplish what we need to do."

Luring faculty

Faculty recruitment and retention has long been a high priority at UNC-CH, and a portion of tuition increase revenue is always used for those purposes. But there's far less money available this year.

Meanwhile, the university's competitors have raised tuition at far higher rates and are reaping the financial benefits.

UNC-CH students pay $5,625 in tuition and fees this year. By comparison, the University of California, Berkeley, often considered the nation's top public institution, charges $8,938, and a 32 percent increase is scheduled for next fall (Story, Page 17A). Virginia charges $9,872 this year.

Many of these institutions have spent the past year raiding the UNC-CH faculty, said Carney, previously interim Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. While in that role, he fended off 12 attempts to hire away faculty by giving raises or other resources to those professors; he lost six others to better-paying jobs elsewhere.

Across campus, the university spent about $1 million last year to retain faculty members offered higher-paying jobs.

Until UNC-CH adds considerably to its faculty salary pool, it will lose talent, said John Ellison, a trustee from Greensboro. Eventually, its rank and reputation will suffer, he said. "This university is not going to maintain our academic standing in the world if we continue down this path," Ellison said. "We are paying less and less and less to our faculty than our peers."
UNC-CH and the UNC system are largely handcuffed by the General Assembly, which earlier this year mandated that tuition for in-state students in 2010-11 rise $200 or 8 percent, whichever is less. Revenue from that tuition hike would go to the state's General Fund rather than to the campus, as is customary.

That's $5 million to the state that UNC-CH would otherwise have used for faculty pay, financial aid and other needs.

UNC-CH and UNC system officials say they'll lobby legislators to change that law.

But the state is already running a deficit of $95 million four months into the fiscal year, said state Rep. Ray Rapp, a House education budget writer.

eric.ferreri@newsobserver.com or 919-932-2008
UC regents approve fee hike amid loud student protests [Updated]...

UC regents approve fee hike amid loud student protests [Updated]...

November 19, 2009 | 1:06 pm

Amid loud student protests that roiled the UCLA campus, the UC Board of Regents this afternoon approved a 32% increase in student fees.

The fee hike of $2,500, or 32%, will come in two steps by next fall. That would bring the basic UC education fees to about $10,300, plus about another $1,000 for campus-based charges, for a total that would be about triple the UC cost a decade ago. Room, board and books can add another $16,000.

Only student regent Jesse Bernal voted against the undergraduate fees.

The noise of protesters came through the window as the regents voted. It was only lightly discussed, with UC President Mark G. Yudof urging that students explore all the financial-aid possibilities so they don’t get scared away or drop out.

Groups of UC students from several other campuses arrived in Westwood to join a demonstration against the fee hike, and a group of protesters was occupying a UCLA classroom building.

UCLA officials declared Campbell Hall, where the sit-in continued, closed for the day. Inside, about 40 to 50 students who had chained the doors shut shortly after midnight were issuing e-mail statements.
UC regents approve fee hike amid loud student protests [Updated] 1...

"We choose to fight back, to resist, where we find ourselves, the place where we live and work, our university," their statement said. Campus police surrounded the classroom building, but no arrests were made.

Meanwhile, across campus, a crowd of several hundred gathered outside Covel Commons, where the regents were meeting. Students and UC employees chanted such slogans as "Whose university? Our university!"

Among them was Tommy Le, a fourth-year student at UC Santa Cruz, who left his campus at 3 a.m. today in a convoy of two buses headed south. Le, 21, an American studies major from El Monte, said he was worried about how he being able to afford the higher charges, starting with an additional $585 for the rest of the school year.

"It's adding more stress and more burden," said Le, who said he works two part-time jobs and sends money home to help his family. The fee increase, he said, would be "a lose-lose situation."

[Updated at 1:33 p.m.: As news spread that the regents had approved the increase, hundreds of student protesters gathered in the courtyard outside the building and yelled, "Shame on you! Shame on you!"

After the vote, Jasmine Guerrero, a freshman at UC Santa Barbara, said she feared she would have to drop out of school.

"I can't afford it," said Guerrero, who wore a red bandanna across her face. "They (the regents) don't care. They're laughing at us."

Gaby Arita, a senior at UCLA, said she recently lost a $4,000 grant to pay for her final quarter of school and is worried about finding the money to graduate. She said she is working two jobs to pay for her education.

"I'm on my own," she said. "I can't ask my family. In this economy, no one is stable."

Mark Villela, a junior at UCLA, also said he would probably have to drop out of school and attend community college in his hometown of Palmdale.]

-- Larry Gordon and Amina Khan in Westwood

More photos > > >

Audio: Statement from demonstrators

Audio: Charles Alexandre, UCLA Vice Provost for Student Diversity and Director of Academic Advancement Program

Photo: Elliot Goldstein, right, of Berkeley protests for the "future of education" as UC police officers watch the crowd during a regents meeting at UCLA. Credit: Barbara Davidson / Los Angeles Times

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