

Dear Members of the Board of Governors of the University of North Carolina,

We write to you as members of the Progressive Faculty Network devoted to achieving economic and political justice at UNC-Chapel Hill, and concerned with promoting a progressive and democratic culture within the University. We appreciate the work done by the Committee on Faculty Salaries and Benefits, and while we accept their findings that faculty salaries are low compared to those at our peer institutions, we want to register our opposition to the proposed Tuition Hike for the following reasons:

- The tuition hike will have a disproportionately negative impact on our poorer students, making it extremely difficult for many to consider UNC-CH as a viable option. The goal of public education, as stated by the North Carolina Constitution itself, is to become as close to free as possible. UNC should ensure that it continues to provide top-quality education to the poorest North Carolinian, as well as encourage a diverse student body that reflects the growing diversity of North Carolina itself.
- Because minority students often tend to come from the more economically disadvantaged groups in our state, the tuition hike will lead to an unacceptable loss of diversity in the student body. Diversity, apart from being an essential aspect of social justice and equity, is also crucial to the intellectual and social development of our students and faculty.
- Raising tuition to augment salaries sets a dangerous precedent and constitutes a short-term fix for a long-term problem. Non-competitive faculty compensation is just one among many financial problems and resource short-falls the University is experiencing. In the past four years, the North Carolina legislature has cut taxes by \$1.4 billion, with most of those funds going to corporations and the wealthy segments of the state's population. These tax cuts are far in excess of the \$70 million target figure estimated by the Committee on Salaries and Benefits to make up the salary gap. As a public university, UNC-CH -- its faculty, students and staff -- deserves the fullest support from the legislature. UNC should work towards securing from the legislature a firm commitment to maintaining excellence of public education in the state, as well as taking responsibility for the welfare of the institution.
- To focus exclusively on low faculty salaries is to ignore vast internal disparities in the University system. The gap between salaries of the lowest levels of pay at UNC and the faculty, and the resource gap between Chapel Hill and other parts of North Carolina's University system, especially historically black institutions, continues to grow. These inequalities are being fed in an environment which increasingly values image, prestige and rankings over integrity, justice and scholarship. As responsible and committed faculty, we want to resist these destructive tendencies.
- This tuition hike is occurring in the midst of growing privatization and corporatization of the economy at all levels, leading to an ever-increasing gap between the haves and the have-nots. The drive towards corporatization has serious consequences for the future of public education. Any recommendation that will further skew the balance of resources is detrimental to the cause of public education and hence should not be supported. As a public

institution, the University should not mimic private corporations; we must not place goals of growth and profit above democracy, equity, scholarship and service.

- UNC should not pit excellence against equity. As a major public university, UNC-CH should play a leadership role in addressing structural inequalities within our society and the state. It should demonstrate through its policies and actions a commitment to social justice and democracy.

As faculty, we stand firmly in support of public education and recognize the historical importance of our mission as educators. We want to strive towards excellence in education and research. Accompanying this goal is our dedication to a larger democratic vision in which education is seen not as a privilege, but as a right belonging to all residents of the state. We believe we can be a first-rate public institution while remaining accessible to the poorest of the poor.

We take our responsibility to the state as a serious and weighty one, and want to meet the state's expectations of us as top-notch educators and researchers. We are requesting you to consider our opposition to the tuition hike so that we do not forfeit the trust of the people of our state both in ourselves and in public education.

We thank you for your attention, and we hope that you will consider our efforts in making this University a truly public University.