

## North Carolina State Conference of the AAUP

May 30, 2009

Respected Members of the North Carolina House of Representatives:

We are writing as deeply concerned faculty and graduate student leaders who teach both in the University of North Carolina system and in private colleges across North Carolina. Given that a central part of our mission is to represent the interests and concerns of faculty members of public and private institutions of higher learning in North Carolina, we have worked closely with campus administrators and leaders, and fellow faculty, students, and staff since this fiscal crisis began.

We now believe that it is time to extend that discussion past our campuses and into the North Carolina General Assembly and Governor's office.

The current draft of the House budget calling for an 11 percent cut to the UNC system will be devastating – not only to the quality of higher education in North Carolina, but to the eventual recovery of North Carolina's economy.

Our state system of public higher education is central to any recovery. The suggested deep cuts endanger not only the quality of education that our 16-campus system currently provides, these cuts will also have a tremendous negative impact on the state's economy as well, prolonging the recession.

We are acutely aware that some spending reductions are necessary, and we are not asking to be exempted from hard choices. However, North Carolina does have another choice – that choice involves instituting a mix of progressive tax hikes along with spending cuts. The Center for Economic Policy Research, in a recent report, found that states can maximize the impact of the federal recovery dollars by taking a balanced approach to their respective budget deficits, including spending cuts and tax increases.

We are all working longer hours with fewer resources. Despite perceptions that faculty have a light work load, rigorous national studies consistently show faculty working an average 55-hour week. We know that work weeks will lengthen over the coming few years, and we understand the need to sacrifice. These cuts will affect students even more than faculty. Even now, our students are having trouble graduating in a timely manner. It is devastating that critical programs, which took 25 years to carefully build, are being gutted and that dedicated teachers and staff are already being laid off.

An affordable, quality public education is not simply a point of pride here in North Carolina. It's a central component of economic recovery and growth. Please don't take the opportunity of education away from our citizens.

We know that your schedules are filled to the brim. But we would be happy to meet with any of you to further discuss our position. Part of the American Association of University Professors' mission includes ensuring higher education's contribution to the common good – we faculty and graduate students have a responsibility to uphold that mission.

Sincerely,



Prof. Martha McCaughey, Appalachian State University, President, North Carolina Conference, AAUP

Prof. Gale Isaacs, Elizabeth City State University, Vice President, NC-AAUP

Doctoral Student Dana DeSoto, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Treasurer, NC-AAUP

Prof. Janet Land, Gardner-Webb University, Secretary, NC-AAUP

Assoc. Prof. Purificación Martínez, East Carolina University, Member-at-large, Public Institutions, NC-AAUP

Prof. Richard Zweigenhaft, Guilford College, Member-at-large, Private Institutions, NC-AAUP

Assoc. Prof. Cat Warren, North Carolina State University, Immediate Ex-President, NC-AAUP

Cc: Governor Beverly Perdue; UNC President Erskine Bowles; Gary Rhoades, General Secretary, AAUP