

InTouch: UNC Employee Forum News

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From the Chair, Ernie Patterson ...

Address to the Board of Trustees

March 21, 2007

Thank you for this opportunity to share with you some of the issues and concerns currently before the Employee Forum. It's an exciting time to be here, because there are so many promising possibilities on the horizon for UNC. Of course, the most immediate possibility comes every March when our entire campus goes a little bit crazy with March Madness. (Go Heels!) But, there are other possibilities that the Forum thinks are just as exciting as winning a national basketball championship.

First, the staff wants to publicly thank President Erskine Bowles for his decision to create a task force to study the state personnel system and make recommendations for its improvement. The UNC-Chapel Hill Employee Forum is planning to survey all SPA staff, EPA non-faculty staff and other non-tenure track employees to gather their ideas for how we need to amend our current personnel system to make it more operationally efficient, cost effective, and fair for everyone. We plan to submit our report on the results of this survey to President Bowles' task force (through the UNC Staff Assembly) and to you, the UNC Board of Trustees (through Chancellor Moeser).

We are excited about this opportunity to work with the Assembly and President Bowles to re-shape our personnel system into one that will be a credit to our state and the University—one that, perhaps, will set a new national standard for responsible and progressive personnel management.

The second exciting possibility on the horizon at Chapel Hill concerns the phenomenal success of the Carolina First Campaign. The Forum applauds the Board of Trustees and the Campaign for not just declaring victory when we reached the goal of \$2 billion, but increasing the overall goal by \$100 million. We would like to ask that you create a trust with these additional funds and that revenues from this trust be used to provide two kinds of support for all your staff and faculty.

Specifically, with its Resolution #07-04 the Forum has asked that you give your full and public support to including as a part of the Carolina First Campaign the goal of raising \$40 million to provide tuition for the children of staff and faculty at UNC-Chapel Hill. This act would be the first formal recognition of the importance of staff employees by the Campaign—a campaign whose success is due, in part, to the support of some of these very same employees. A tuition grant for the children of all Carolina employees with 10 years or more of service would support the core University mission of education and simultaneously help to insure that the children of each teacher, each bench researcher, each administrative assistant, each grounds worker, and each public safety officer, will have an opportunity to get the best education available.

In addition, the Forum would like to ask that you commit the balance of the increased Carolina First Campaign goal toward providing affordable, on-campus childcare and affordable dependent health care options for UNC-Chapel Hill employees and graduate students. In discussions with staff and faculty employees from across campus, as well as graduate and even some undergraduate students, these two needs have been cited repeatedly as serious problems at Carolina.

Many studies show that affordable options for both childcare and dependent health coverage significantly improve employee wellness and their ability to get their work done. Research supported in part by UNC's Center for Urban and Regional Studies found that "Employers offering direct child care benefits report positive impacts of child care programs on their workers' performance, as well as reductions in turnover, absenteeism, and recruitment costs."¹ If we look at businesses that rate high in employee satisfaction and achievement, childcare and affordable health coverage for dependents is a significant factor in their success. UNC-Chapel Hill should establish similar standards for itself.

We hope you will see this proposal as an opportunity to strengthen partnerships and mutual respect among students, faculty and staff. The UNC-CH Employee Forum has a "Three Legged Stool Award" that recognizes the equal importance of students, faculty and staff to the success of our University. Our shared support of this proposal would certainly follow the high standards defined in this award and create opportunities for all of us to contribute more fully to the success of the University.

We ask that the Board of Trustees and the Carolina First Committee jointly form a task force comprised of staff, faculty, graduate students and members of the Board of Trustees. The task force should be charged with implementing this proposal. It should define policies and procedures for how funds would be used to meet the proposed goals and assure equity and fairness. Recommendations from the task force would come to you, the Board of Trustees, for final approval.

All of these possibilities—the fair and effective re-shaping of our personnel system, the establishment of a tuition fund for the children of

permanent employees, and the creation of affordable child care and dependent health care options for employees—are within our reach. The Forum asks for your support as we seek to extend Carolina’s winning, can-do attitude from the basketball courts into the labs and lawns and offices and classrooms of our campus.

 1 Connelly R, Degraff D S, Willis R A. (2004) The Value of Employer-Sponsored Child Care to Employees. *Industrial Relations*, Vol 43 No. 4: 759-792.

President Bowles Tables Personnel Flexibility

UNC System President Erskine Bowles has announced that he will not seek to remove SPA employees from the statewide personnel system.

In a March 16th memo to the UNC Staff Assembly, Bowles said that after listening to feedback from staff, he has decided not to move forward in seeking “personnel flexibility” legislation that would bring SPA staff out from under the State Personnel Act and create a separate HR system for all University employees. Instead, he will seek to create a task force to suggest areas where the Act can be modified to make HR functions within the University system more responsive to the unique needs of the University.

Employee Forum Chair Ernie Patterson applauded this decision. “When President Bowles assumed leadership of the UNC system, he told 22,000 staff employees that he was a staff employee, too, and that he was interested in their concerns. I think he has demonstrated the truth of this, today. He has affirmed the importance of the work that staff employees do and the protections that the State Personnel Act gives them.

“The Forum looks forward to working with President Bowles and the UNC Staff Assembly to find ways to improve the Act without dismantling it.”

In light of this decision, the *InTouch* will not continue with its planned series on the pro’s and con’s of personnel flexibility. We will, however, cover developments as the proposed task force is formed and begins its duties. Stay tuned!

 March 16, 2007

TO: Staff Assembly

FROM: Erskine Bowles

SUBJECT: University Human Resource System

I want to thank the Staff Assembly for facilitating the process of getting feedback from University employees on the desired attributes of a University HR system, and the perceived benefits and concerns of the possibility of the University creating its own personnel system.

As I promised I would, I have listened to you. I have heard the feedback from our staff, and I have decided that we will not move forward with legislation to create a separate HR system. Instead, I will ask for legislation to create a task force to identify possible modifications to the State Personnel Act that will provide the University with greater flexibility in personnel matters so that we can better meet the needs of our employees and improve the efficiency of our personnel operations. The goal will be to reach a consensus for recommended legislative action in 2008. The task force will provide representation across the University, including chancellors, HR and finance professionals, and University staff. I will ask the Staff Assembly for recommendations for the staff members of this task force.

Thank you again for your thoughtful feedback. I’m deeply grateful for your help. I look forward to continuing to work together on this important issue.

Part-Time Undergraduate Degree Program for UNC Employees

Are you a UNC employee who began work on an undergraduate degree and then had to quit? A new program at UNC may help you return to school part-time as a degree-seeking candidate while continuing your employment.

An outgrowth of the Chancellor’s Task Force on a Better Workplace, the Part-Time Undergraduate Degree Program is a three-year pilot project that began in the fall of 2005 and admits up to ten full-time UNC employees as transfer students each year.

Employees are admitted competitively on the same basis as other UNC transfer students and are held to the same standards of performance. However, since they are also maintaining their regular University employment for at least 30 hours per week, employee-students are allowed to take a reduced course load each semester and have an extended period of time to complete their degrees.

Employees in this pilot program are able to take advantage of other educational benefits for employees at the same time, such as the Tuition Waiver program and the Employee and Dependent Scholarship Program. They may also be eligible to apply for some of the same financial assistance programs that are available to non-employee students.

The deadline for submitting an application is May 1st.

Information about the program and the application process can be obtained by calling the Office of Undergraduate Admissions at 966-3621 or by visiting the Employee Degree Program web site at <http://admissions.unc.edu/applying/employees.htm>. General information about the

program is also available from the Friday Center's Credit Programs for Part-time Students at 962-1134.

Sexual Violence Day of Truthtelling

Though we don't like to think about it, sexual violence is a fact of life—even for some of our co-workers at UNC-Chapel Hill. Whether encountered privately or on the job, sexual harassment and violence is a nightmare that is not likely to end until its victims and their supporters speak up and speak out.

For all who ARE survivors of sexual violence...
For all who choose to BELIEVE survivors of sexual violence...
For all who KNOW WE CAN end rape culture...

...join us on April 28th, 2007, in Durham, North Carolina, as we come together-across divisions and disempowering silences to create a world full of the safety, possibility, dignity, justice, and peace that we all deserve. Stand with us as we dare to imagine a world free from sexual violence and ALL forms of oppression.

Meet us in Durham to speak, teach, learn, demonstrate, and tell the truth. Together, WE can make this world a reality!!!

Questions? Contact us at dayoftruthtelling@gmail.com or check us out on My Space at www.myspace.com/ubuntunc

This event is being organized by: the North Carolina Coalition Against Sexual Assault, the North Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Ubuntu, Men Against Rape Culture, SpiritHouse, Raleigh Fight Imperialism Stand Together, Southerners on New Ground, Independent Voices, Black Workers for Justice, and Freedom Road Socialist Organization/OSCL.

2007 Carolina Kids Camp

This summer, Carolina Kids Camp will enroll campers ages 6-12 in nine weeks (from June 11 through August 10). Carolina Kids Camp is located on campus at Woollen Gym and operates Monday-Friday, with drop-off beginning at 7:30 a.m. and pick-up ending at 5:30 p.m. Each camper must have a parent who is a permanent UNC-Chapel Hill employee, a UNC-Chapel Hill student, a permanent UNC Health Care employee, or a permanent UNC-Chapel Hill General Alumni Association employee during the dates in which the camper participates in the program. Camp applications are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis beginning Feb. 19 at 8 a.m.

Deadlines: All forms must be returned to Employee Services by Friday, May 18, 2007, by 5:00 p.m. Security deposits by no later than March 30, 2007, at 5:00 p.m.

Costs: A non-refundable application fee of \$25 per child, a non-refundable security deposit payment of \$50 per week per child enrolled (will be credited to each camper's tuition payment(s)), and a tuition of \$1100 for 9 weeks. Scholarship is available.

For more information about this program, please visit <http://hr.unc.edu/employees/spa-employees/workfamily/childcare/kidscamp/?folderView=collapsed>, or call Employee Services at 962-6008. Forms can be downloaded at the previous link.

2007 Summer Blood Drive

This summer blood drive will be on June 5, 2007. A kick-off session on this will be given by Employee Services of HR on May 3, 2007 to meet the recruiters all over the campus from individual departments. Among events on that day are giving information on the drive and taking appointments of donations and volunteers for the drive.

For more information, please take a look at <http://www.unc.edu/blood/> or call Employee Services at 962-1483.

Annual Enrollment for State Health Plan Update

Annual enrollment for the State Health Plan ended March 30. Employees chose the plan options they would enroll in without knowing the rates and benefits for each option because those rates and benefits will not actually be determined until the North Carolina legislature meets this fall. Health plan administrators would like to change the plan year (which currently runs from July 1 to June 30) to coincide with the calendar year so that employees can be fully informed when making enrollment decisions, but this change would require the approval of the legislature. If you'd like to share your thoughts about the State Health Plan's benefit year with your legislative representatives, you can find their names and contact information at http://www.ncga.state.nc.us/GIS/Representation/Who_Represents_Me/Who_Represents_Me.html

Current health plan rates will remain in effect through the end of October 2007. If you have questions about the State Health Plan, call the plan's customer service representatives at 888-234-2416 (for the PPO plan) or 800-422-4658 (for the CMM plan).

Clerical Interns Need Placement Opportunities

Hiring managers, please note: the Basic Clerical Skills program has qualified candidates with proven ability to fill Office Assistant III and IV positions. The program needs support from campus hiring managers.

When you have entry level permanent positions requiring one year of clerical experience, please contact Felecia Perry in Training & Development at 962-9681 or felecia_perry@unc.edu. Perry wants to ensure all graduates are aware of opportunities they are qualified to apply for as a result of successfully completing the Basic Clerical Skills program. Thanks in advance.

The clerical skills internship program has had great success with its interns. The August 2006 graduates of the Basic Clerical Skills program received outstanding feedback for their office performance. Managers interested in learning more about the experience of working with clerical skills interns can contact these sponsors for feedback on how well these interns are prepared to work in clerical skills positions:

- Michael Burch, internship supervisor for Ophelia Hill, can be reached at mburch@FAC.UNC.EDU or (919) 962-0161
- Jill Hartman Crowder, internship supervisor for Yvonne Snipes, can be reached at jcrowder@fac.unc.edu or (919) 962-0785
- Tamara Norris and Bonnie Wilson, internship supervisors for Lorraine Graham Dorsett, can be reached at tnorris@email.unc.edu (919) 966-0328 or or bfwilson@unc.edu (919) 966-8144, respectively.

This [document](#) outlines procedures for departments interested in providing internship opportunities. The program has received placement requests for the 2 remaining internships. Bill Burston, Director of Housekeeping Services will sponsor an intern to perform inventory duties and Kirk Pelland, Director of Grounds will sponsor another intern in June.

Campus Y Snack Bar Now Open

Just a reminder to everyone in the vicinity of North Campus that the Campus Y Snack Bar is now ready and open for business. The proprietors encourage all to take advantage and stop on by for a burrito, salad, or tasty drink.

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