

May 13, 2021

Faculty Council Retreat - Legislative Report

Thank you for the opportunity to update you on legislative matters. Should you have any questions or need further information, please contact us.

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North Carolina 2021 Legislative Session

UNC System and UNC Charlotte priorities

- Salary increases for faculty and staff
 - In an effort to put a “face” on the hardworking faculty and staff, we, along with the UNC System, have been sharing **staff** stories with legislators.
 - Faculty stories that have been sent to the UNC System for inclusion in their Essential Workers series include; Dr. Misty Hathcock, Regional Director for NC New Teacher Support Program and Clinical Professor in the Cato College of Education and Dr. Christopher Bejger, Assistant Professor in the Department of Chemistry
- Enrollment growth funding
- Building reserves to open Science Building including utilities, moving and staffing - Current year funding \$982K.
 - **HB 142**: Unanimously passed the House and Senate and has been signed by the Governor

Bills and issues we are tracking:

- Budget process: The Governor's **budget** was released in March which starts the process. The Senate is anticipated to release their budget in the next two weeks. The budget will then go to the House which will pass their version of a budget, followed by conference negotiations with the House and Senate before a budget will be passed and sent to the Governor for his signature or veto.
- **H243 UNC Legislative Priorities/COVID-19 Impacts**: With the fiscal uncertainty and potential impact of COVID on state and campus revenues, the Board of Governors sought management flexibilities to provide campuses with tools to manage through a crisis. Flexibilities included job saving initiatives such as temporary pay reductions and furloughs. While the bill passed the House, it was amended in the Senate to increase the minimum floor of wages of state employees that could be subject to a reduction from \$45,000 to \$65,000, to reduce the percentage cut from no greater than 20% to 10%, and to move the sunset from December 31st, 2022 to December 31st, 2021. The bill remains in Conference while negotiations continue. *Currently, there are no plans to use these tools at UNC Charlotte.*
- **SB 355 Government Transparency Act of 2021** would make state employee personnel records public including disciplinary, promotion and transfer actions. The NC Press Association has advocated for the bill noting that thirty-five states have such legislation and the public has a right to know. SEANC has voiced concerns and we are advising legislative leaders with pitfalls with the bill.

Chancellor Sharon Gaber is actively engaged in advocating for these priorities with legislators including multiple 1:1 meetings and also visits to the NC General Assembly.

Federal Engagement:

- Chancellor Gaber's introductory meetings include Congressman Richard Hudson, Congressman Greg Murphy, Congresswoman Alma Adams, Senator Thom Tillis, and Congressman Dan Bishop's District Director
- Federal priorities include commitment to expanding access, affordability, and promoting student success, support for federal research, and support for colleges and universities during COVID-19

Local Government Issues:

City and County funding for Institute for Social Capital data infrastructure

Planning and zoning issues, notably plethora of student/single room occupancy housing

Fun facts about public officials' connections to UNC Charlotte:

[Heberlig Caucus](#)- Did you know that five former students of Dr. Eric Heberlig are now serving in the NC General Assembly?