

APPENDIX X

CHAIRMAN WILSON'S REMARKS BOARD OF GOVERNORS MEETING JUNE 9, 2006

Let me just share a couple of observations with you about continuing challenges we face. I want to recognize that Erskine and his team are already hard at work on all of these things. I want to elevate them in our mind as we prepare for transition in board leadership. We learned this week, and yet again this morning, that the General Assembly is responding to this board's priorities as they finalize the budget. We thank them for their continued support. And we are particularly grateful that enrollment growth money, financial aid, and all the other things that you heard Erskine and Peter reference will be provided to ensure that the door of the University remains as wide open as possible for all qualified students that seek higher education here in North Carolina. So as we continue to grow the enrollment, we must do a better job in retaining and graduating our students. That conversation was taking place yesterday in committee meetings here. We all recognize that students have the primary responsibility for staying in school and graduating, however our University must constantly examine the inhibitors and barriers that we can influence to create the best environment for their timely success. This is a top priority for Erskine, and I look forward to our continued work on this issue.

I anticipate that our next Chairman will bring leadership and momentum to an examination of the missions of our campuses. This is certainly a badly needed and worthy endeavor. And as we do so, I hope we will remember the inherent differences between the large research universities and our other campuses. I also hope that we will recognize what our president has so eloquently stated in a magazine interview that "you can't have flagships without a fleet; all of our universities play a very important role in the future of North Carolina." To that

end, quoting Erskine again, “as we better define what the mission of each campus will be” I hope that we will address funding inequities that still exist which result in financial disparity that disproportionately impact those campuses that are conferring approximately 50% of our undergraduate degrees. The new economy is one that we have all agreed will be built on brains, not brawn. Therefore, I urge us to continue to work hard to ensure appropriate and fair funding for the undergraduate programs which are indeed the backbone of any university and particularly this University. Erskine and I have discussed this issue at great length. I commend him for the work that he is doing on this issue, and I look forward to the work that the board will bring to this conversation as we examine our campuses.

Access is our number one priority. You have heard it mentioned here again today. Great strides have been made to improve access to the public university system here in North Carolina, but we have more work to do. North Carolina has the nation’s fastest growing Latino population. Latinos accounted for 57% of the total enrollment growth in North Carolina public schools in 2000-2001 and in 2004-2005. This University has always led the conversation about important issues facing our state. We have never run from that opportunity, or that obligation. As a state, North Carolina must focus on insuring that all young people have access to higher education so they can be trained and have an opportunity to succeed. We have hundreds, if not thousands of talented Latino youth who are ending their academic careers in high school and we know that is a pervasive problem across the racial lines. We cannot lose an entire generation of young people who have already become, and will remain, an important part of our state’s economy. Now I don’t know what the answer is, but I do know that this University is and should consider the implications of the undisputable demographic trends and discuss what can be done to facilitate access for all qualified North Carolina students. Commitment, compassion, and

creativity are the ingredients this University has applied when faced with tough issues in the past, and I am confident that we will do so again as this particular issue continues to evolve in the days ahead.

So now let me close by thanking you, the members to the board, for providing me the honor and the privilege to serve as your Chair. Thank you also for your hard work, your support, and your commitment to the University that we all love so deeply. Nothing that has been achieved in the last four years is attributable to me. You identified the issues, you served on the committees, you served on the task forces, you crafted the policy and budget provisions, and you have advocated for their adoption, both in this room and in Raleigh. I just happened to be on point. On my desk I keep a quote that I am sure you have seen because it is around lots of places. But I want to amend it slightly to apply to this particular occasion and close with it:

A hundred years from now, it will not matter what my bank account was, the sort of house I lived in, or the kind of car I drove, but the world may be different because we were important in the lives of our students.

I hope that together we have made a positive difference in the lives of our students and our great University. Thank you for the opportunity to have been a part of that endeavor.