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Title of Issue:	The North Carolina Arboretum Wedding Program

Please describe in detail the issue you wish the Umstead Review Panel to consider.

The North Carolina Arboretum Wedding Program

Contact Information

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Umstead Exception Relating to NC Arboretum Wedding Program
G.S. §66-58(b)(8)o - Activities that enable a community in which the constituent institution or other University entity is located or the people of the state to utilize University's facilities, equipment or expertise.

Overview of the Arboretum and the Proposed Wedding Program
The North Carolina Arboretum has been an affiliate institution of the University of North Carolina for almost 23 years. Its mission is to cultivate connections between people and plants through creative expressions of landscape stewardship including economic development, education, research, garden demonstration and conservation. The North Carolina Arboretum is committed to the use of its facilities and grounds to support the Arboretum's mission areas and for the general benefit of North Carolina citizens and visitors to Western North Carolina.

With more than 434 acres of cultivated gardens, woodlands and trails, the Arboretum, since 1995, has offered its facilities for rental to businesses, government, education and non-profit groups that fall within its mission areas. Its facility rental program averages 500 meetings and events annually with more than 25,000 people participating in these activities from throughout the region, the state and beyond. The proposed wedding program will be an additional component to the Arboretum's already successful facility rental program and will allow the Arboretum to extend its public service and economic development reach to a new audience.

Weddings as Part of Tourism Economic Development
As a strong partner in regional tourism, the Arboretum's wedding program will enhance Western North Carolina as a wedding destination market and support economic development of regional businesses and vendors that service weddings. Attracting a new clientele to the region, the Arboretum wedding program will include an educational component by requiring weddings to be "green" - focusing on the use of natural and sustainable products. These activities will in turn

support Arboretum revenue strategies that allow the fulfillment of its mission.

The Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce's Convention Visitor's Bureau is promoting the Asheville area as a national wedding destination, capitalizing on the area's scenic beauty and viable hospitality industry to develop this economic sector as part of it regional tourism efforts.

Both the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce President and the Convention Visitor's Bureau Assistant Vice President serve on the Arboretum's Board of Directors and Society Board of Directors, respectively, and serving as a regional voice for the business community, support the Arboretum's proposed wedding program.

Green Weddings

A strong and unique niche of the Arboretum's wedding program is the establishment of an educational "green wedding" guide to help couples lessen their impact on the environment through the use of organically grown and natural products and the reduction of consumable products in their wedding activities. The guide will also provide a resource list of locally grown food products, floral and décor, fabrics, jewelry, transportation, recycled paper products, furniture, and more. The green wedding component will allow the Arboretum to educate the public about the importance of being a good steward of the natural environment within the context of the wedding celebration.

By virtue of its own efforts, the Arboretum property and facilities offer excellent lessons in sustainability through green buildings, sustainable landscapes, natural products, water conservation and recycling. Information about these sustainable components at the Arboretum will be incorporated into the guide.

Other Agencies

Other agencies within the University of North Carolina permit weddings as part of their facility rental programs, including the JC Raulston Arboretum at North Carolina State University and the North Carolina Botanical Garden at UNC Chapel Hill. In addition, the Arboretum has conducted research on wedding programs permitted at other universities around the United States. These include, but are not limited to, the Morris Arboretum at the University of Pennsylvania, the Minnesota Landscape Garden at the University of Minnesota and the Red Butte Botanical Garden and Arboretum at the University of Utah.

Attachments:

1. Final WEDDING POLICY 1-16-09.doc