

President's Report

Nov. 18, 2021

After three days of meetings and festivities, I know no one is looking for a lengthy report and I promise I'll be succinct. But the news of the past couple of days has been so good, I feel the need to share just a little bit about it, because I think it's going to set us on a course for success as we start the next 50 years of this great university.

The budget – the state budget that's passing this week and will soon be on its way to the governor – is a remarkable start on a new era in which we will lift up our faculty and staff, broaden our educational reach, revamp our campus facilities and make education more affordable to more North Carolinians. I want to compliment so many people on this, starting with the team back at the ranch – Bart, Austen, Eric, the finance team that supported them, the campuses, the chancellors have done great work on this, but especially the Board of Governors. Mr. Chairman, we spent some time over here in Raleigh – some of it was enjoyable – but it's all been productive.

We're incredibly grateful to all of our elected leaders for recognizing the value of public higher education with this tremendous budget. I might ask if you will pay attention to the screen behind us, we're going to change it out....OK, a lot of green check marks here. There is more detailed information in your folders, and it is very detailed. And I know the Budget and Finance Committee will be taking up a lot of the allocation work in great detail, but I want you to have that information in your folders. You will see, of course, **ALL** of your budget priorities – and more – were met with this budget.

First, we're able to provide our hardworking employees, the faculty and staff, with raises of 5 percent during the next two years, plus a bonus. This is necessary to hold on to our valued employees during a competitive job market – you heard Chancellor Woodson speaking about this yesterday. Our faculty and staff have been through a very difficult time over the past 20 months; they have been there for our students day after day.

We will receive some \$70 million to fully fund enrollment growth, plus the building reserves of \$29 million that was requested. We'll see an expansion of NC Promise to a fourth campus - Fayetteville State. And Chancellor Allison, that is obviously a recognition of your leadership, so congratulations. That's going to bring \$500-a-semester tuition to thousands more students in this state. It's a big step forward for our goals of affordability and accessibility, and we couldn't be more pleased.

Now, we've all been having this conversation for months about the need to serve more adult learners. The Strategic Initiatives Committee has done a wonderful job in leading this conversation. Adult learners, veterans, underserved populations – we have over a million people in this state who have some college but no degree, and we think it's our duty to serve these students who may need a second chance at college or a new career. With a \$97-million initiative called Kitty Hawk, we're building a robust, high-quality online program to meet the needs of working adults. Believe me, we've learned a lot in the past two years about online delivery of education. We are ready to put those lessons to work and take it to a whole different level. This investment will be a game changer for us, and for many North

Carolínians in the future. It's not going to happen overnight. It's going to take time to build and grow, but it reflects the vision on the part of this board and our elected officials – a vision that's big and bold and necessary to meet North Carolina's needs.

We're also thrilled with the biggest state investment in higher education facilities since the bond referendum of 2000 – more than \$2 billion in repair, renovation and rehabilitation of aging campus facilities in the next few years, as well as new construction. Two billion dollars investment. This will make a large dent in our deferred maintenance on our campuses, protecting the state's treasured asset, and bringing our buildings up to a condition that students need and deserve for education in the 21st Century. And I know our chancellors join me in thanking our elected leaders for this infusion of capital.

Mr. Chairman, that's a lot of green check marks on the board, a lot of green check marks on the board. It's been a collective team effort and I'm very grateful to so many for this. As we head into the Thanksgiving season, I have gratitude, of course, for all of our universities, all of you who are in support of the mission. And on a personal note, I'm thankful to all who have helped us celebrate the 50th year anniversary and touched and honored by the inauguration and the occasion there. I want you to know, I was presented with this tie by our good friends at NC State and School of the Arts, and Mr. Chairman I think it is consistent with our efforts to be more efficient, because of course I've got 17 different ties, to try to visit the campuses and, you know, show support. But now I can do it in one tie, so the tie budget will be significantly reduced. Mr. Chairman, thank you so much. Thank you, everyone.