



2016 Legislative Short Session Recap

On Friday, July 1, the NC General Assembly concluded its legislative short session by adjourning Sine Die, with an expected return to Raleigh for the legislative long session on January 11, 2017. The short session began on April 25 and met legislative leaders' expectations of wrapping up by the July 4th holiday.

The legislature discussed several issues potentially impacting N.C. A&T. As in past years, many of these discussions were folded into broader budget deliberations. Both chambers' proposed budgets that provided targeted funding increases for the UNC system and included a number of our top policy priorities, and the final budget conference report generally incorporated our preferred budget outcomes. We worked closely with legislative leadership in both chambers to ensure that A&T and the UNC system remained a top priority.

In the final budget, we had a number of positive results, including:

- Rewarding talent with a combination of pay raises and bonuses
- Elimination of the private fundraising cap
- Postponing the NC Guaranteed Admission Program (NC GAP), pending the development of an improvement plan by President Spellings
- Funding to support the completion of part-way home students (\$2.3 million)
- Procuring over \$40 million for Repairs & Renovation (R&R) for the UNC system
- \$300k towards the development and implementation of the Cheatham-White scholarship

Some budget outcomes were less than favorable, including:

- Additional system wide budget cut of \$16.3 million (\$62m total) to offset the elimination of the private fundraising cap
- In addition to items requested by the Board of Governors, the legislature included a number of other items in its budget impacting A&T. Those items include:
 - Portions of SB 873 – the Access to Affordable Education Act (including fixed tuition, a tuition “buy-down” program at three institutions, a cap of 3%



on annual fee increases, and merit scholarship programs at A&T and NCCU

Legislation Impacting the University of North Carolina System

S. 873: Access to Affordable Education Act

Sponsored by Sen. Tom Apodaca, the Access to Affordable Education Act originally included several significant reforms. The first included a requirement for each UNC institution to offer students a fixed tuition option, so students and parents know the cost of education for eight (or ten) semesters. Another significant provision was a legislatively mandated cut to fees from 10-25% and a cap on potential annual fee increases. The bill also included a tuition reduction at five UNC institutions, while creating the Cheatham-White scholarship provision at A&T and NCCU.

Several provisions from S. 873 were rolled into the budget conference report, including a revised fixed tuition provision, a tuition “buy-down” program at three institutions, a cap on annual fee increases and the scholarship provision. The fee reduction was removed.

S. 536: Students Know before You Go/Centralized Residency Determination

Last year, the Senate passed S. 536, sponsored by Sen. Chad Barefoot, which requires the State Education Assistance Authority to post student outcomes by degree path in an effort to inform students of expected graduation rates, salary outcomes, and other information for students to consider when declaring a major. At our request, the House added language requested by the UNC system, the North Carolina Community College System and the NC Independent Colleges & Universities surrounding Centralized Residency Determination.

Two years ago, the legislature passed legislation requiring the three entities to work together to create a centralized process for determining in-state residency. The three education sectors have worked together to craft the language needed to ensure a smooth implementation of the legislature’s request.

H. 805: Measurability Assessment/Budget Technical Corrections

The original House bill would allow legislators to request a measurability assessment for state programs. During the waning days of session, the Senate amended the bill to



include the budget technical corrections, where several truly technical adjustments were made.