

Statement of UNC President Erskine Bowles on the draft 2009-11 House budget

June 11, 2009

UNC President Erskine Bowles today issued the following statement on the draft 2009-11 state budget that is under consideration in the NC House:

"We are extremely grateful that House members made the very difficult decision to recommend a modest revenue package to help balance the State

budget and thereby lessen deep cuts to education and other critical State services. The revenue package added to the House budget today would restore about \$75 million of the cuts that had previously been assigned to the University in the first year of the biennium. As a result, our proposed net funding reduction for 2009-10 under the House plan would drop from \$338 million (11.2%) to \$263 million (8.7%). Across our 17 campuses, this partial restoration of funding would save 600 jobs and enable us to teach 1,300 more class sections, helping our students get the courses they need to graduate on time. This vital funding would be applied directly to the University's academic core.

At Appalachian State University, for example, these additional dollars would save about 40 jobs—more than half of them faculty—and restore 175 class sections. Western Carolina would save another 30 jobs in an economically distressed region of the state. Elsewhere, NC Central University would save more than 20 faculty and staff jobs and 75 class sections; East Carolina University would save 75 jobs, including nursing faculty; and UNC Wilmington would save another 50 jobs and 120 course sections. Restored funds would also help soften the impact of budget cuts on critical academic and counseling services and campus safety.

While this revenue package is an important step in the right direction, we remain gravely concerned that the remaining \$263 million of cuts proposed by the House would have a severe and lasting negative impact on student access and the quality of education our universities can offer our students. This reduced cut is still greater than the current state appropriations of our six smallest campuses combined. If cuts of that magnitude are implemented, students on every UNC campus can still expect to see 1) larger classes; 2) less student advising and counseling; 3) higher student/faculty ratios; 4) lower retention and graduation rates; 5) delayed classroom upgrades and laboratory renovations; 6) fewer security personnel; 7) reductions in library services; and 8) reductions in maintenance. The House budget also proposes to cap our 2010-11 enrollment at current levels, resulting in thousands of North Carolina students from every walk of life being denied admission to a UNC campus.

Education is the key to North Carolina's economic recovery. We therefore ask and encourage our legislative leaders to consider all reasonable options for further increasing State revenues."