

Hans to focus on efficiency as leader

Peter Hans is the new chairman of the Board of Governors.

By Vinayak Balasubramanian
State & National Editor

After serving as chairwoman of the UNC-system Board of Governors for four years, Hannah Gage's term ended June 30.

The board chose Peter Hans, then vice chairman, to replace Gage at its June 15 meeting.

Both leaders have spoken about their vision for the future, as the UNC system is forced to continue finding ways to be efficient and effective in the fight for state funding.

Gage talks struggle and success under her lead

Gage said her two terms have been marked by signifi-

cant economic challenges and changes in the state's political leadership.

The system has absorbed more than \$1 billion in state funding cuts over the past five years.

Meanwhile, the board approved an average system-wide tuition and fee increase of 8.8 percent, including a 13.5 percent hike, for in-state undergraduates at UNC-Chapel Hill.

This has led students and their families to question the viability of the system's low tuition model.

Gage said the economic recession and changes in the state legislature have made it increasingly difficult for the UNC system to rely on the state for funding.

"Even though the new leadership is supportive of the university system, funding is no longer a slam-dunk."

She said the system must focus on keeping tuition



Hannah Gage
served two terms as Board of Governors chairwoman. Her term ended in June.

affordable.

"If tuition is beyond the grasp of state families, we can look twenty years down the line and see a very uneducated state," she said. "Given the clear change in demographics of our state, affordable tuition will be more important."

Despite the challenges, Gage said she was proud of how system schools have adapted to the changing environment.

Gage said she expects Hans to continue many of the same initiatives she started when his term began July 1.

Hans to focus on better managing resources

Hans, a 1991 graduate of UNC-CH, said his experience with working with legislators will help him effectively communicate the board's priorities with legislators.

"Republicans and Democrats have been supportive of the UNC system in past years, but as the economy declined, it has forced them to make decisions between a number of competing priorities," he said.

He said his focus as chairman will be to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the UNC system. He said this is a crucial step in helping the university system during trying times.

"We can educate as many students as possible at the



Peter Hans
is the new chairman of the Board of Governors. He has served on the board since 2003.

highest quality as possible, while doing so at a reasonable cost," he said.

He said the use of online technology is a great way to save money over time.

Hans said he supports returning to former UNC-system President Erskine Bowles' Four-Year Tuition Plan. The 2006 plan holds university administrators accountable for keeping the tuition increases at or below a 6.5 percent cap for undergraduate resident students.

The board currently uses

the Second Four-Year Plan — which allows schools to ask for tuition increases above 6.5 percent for undergraduate in-state students in times of need.

"It is important for students and families to make college affordable, and thus maintain the state's constitutional commitment to low tuition," he said.

Hans said the budget cuts faced by the state have provided an opportunity for the board to rethink its priorities.

"Anytime you recommit to setting priorities and increasing collaboration across campuses, that's a silver lining in the cloud," he said.

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