

# UNC system looks for answers to cuts

By Daniel Wiser  
State & National Editor

For the last four years, UNC-system administrators have been attempting to do more with less.

A culture of millions of dollars in budget cuts has pervaded the 16 higher education institutions comprising one of the premier statewide university systems in the nation. Tuition rates have

steadily increased in attempts to maintain the academic quality of institutions with shrinking sources of revenue.

Schools such as UNC and N.C. State University decided to absorb the bulk of the cuts in state funding on the administrative side of operations. Nearly 900 administrative positions have been eliminated system wide in the last three years.

But administrators say the latest round of cuts will begin to puncture the "academic core" of universities. In efforts to close a state budget shortfall of \$2.4 billion and cut taxes, state legislators proposed a budget calling for a cut of 14.6 percent or \$407 million for the system.

Now that the budget has become law, the system's Board of Governors will begin to apportion the cuts among the schools according to their enrollment and resources.

Randy Woodson, chancellor of N.C. State, said the cut will likely be 14 to 15 percent for UNC and N.C. State and will result in fewer course sections for the upcoming year. As many as 140 to 150 faculty positions would have to be eliminated, he said.

"You just can't cut that amount

of money out of a university budget without affecting the instructional mission," he said.

The cumulative total of the cuts has now surpassed \$1 billion during a five-year span. The board has approved requests from campuses to shift more of the costs to students to partially offset the cuts, increasing tuition by 39 percent in the last four years.

Schools had supplemental

tuition increases approved last year after a provision in the state budget recommended increases up to \$750. Both UNC and N.C. State raised tuition by the maximum rate of \$750 on top of hikes approved earlier in the year.

But UNC-system President Thomas Ross has advised against supplemental tuition hikes this year. Ross said forcing students to shoulder a larger burden of the cuts would be untenable with less financial aid funding available. The state budget includes a cut of \$35 million for the system's need-based financial aid program.

And it appears many of the system's chancellors agree with the president. Woodson said he did not foresee further tuition increases in addition to average hikes of \$208 for undergraduate residents and \$650 for non-residents already approved by the board for the system.

"We've got to be very cautious about that," he said. "Our students have already planned for tuition in the coming year."

UNC Chancellor Holden Thorp said he understands Ross' decision to avoid supplemental tuition increases after detailed meetings with the president.

"If that holds, then we're happy for our students," he said.

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BY THE NUMBERS	
<b>\$407 million</b>	State funding cut for the system
<b>14.6 percent</b>	Portion of state funding cut
<b>\$35 million</b>	Cut for need-based aid program
<b>\$750</b>	Extra tuition at UNC last year
<b>\$208</b>	Average in-state tuition hike
<b>\$7,008</b>	Tuition and fees at UNC this year

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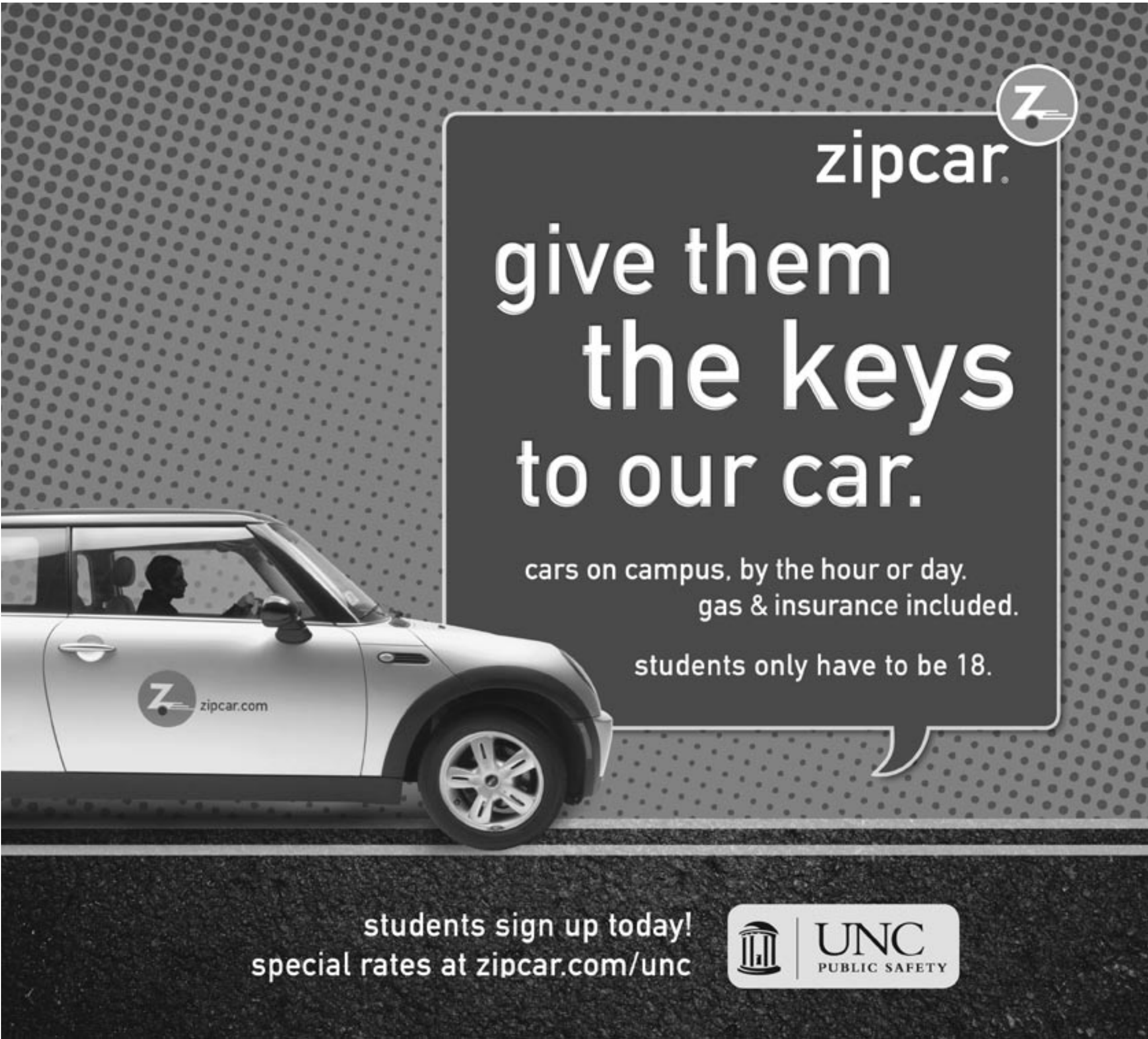
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