

To the Board of Governors:

I write to you today to provide you with my perspective on need-based financial aid as a student from [INSERT UNIVERSITY NAME]. It has come to my attention that the Board of Governors has been discussing a number of measures related to need-based financial aid that could severely affect universities within the UNC system. During the September Board of Governors meeting, I encourage you to support giving universities the autonomy to maintain their own robust financial aid programs and to discourage any system-wide cap on the amount of tuition revenue that a university decides is appropriate to fund student aid.

I have been fortunate to reap the benefits of being a student in a university system that prides itself on inclusivity and affordability. Measures that limit a university's ability to maintain its financial aid program are extremely detrimental to the health of the UNC system. Stifling a university's financial aid program forces its admissions office to dig deeper into its applicant pool to find students who can afford to attend a school rather than admitting students who are the most qualified applicants.

[Insert information about the state of student aid at your respective university and/or your personal experiences with student aid].

As these discussions within the BOG continue, I also urge you to consider who truly benefits from need-based aid. In 2010-2011, over half of need-based aid recipients came from middle or upper class families. Since family finances can change significantly from one year to the next, the strong system of need-based aid that tuition revenue enables provides a safety net for all students. Those who contribute to the aid of others in one year may find themselves dependent on aid provided by others in the following year.

Furthermore, instituting uniform measures across the UNC system devalues the uniqueness of each institution. Each public university in North Carolina is distinctive, providing students with a range of college experiences. These universities decide how to craft their own financial aid models based on the needs of their student population and should be able to continue to do so.

Finally thanks to this state's historic commitment to keeping college affordable, and the hard work of many administrators, system leaders, and legislators, North Carolina has become one of the premier leaders in accessible higher educations. I view the measures that the Board of Governors is currently debating as part of a much larger discussion about the future of need-based financial aid.

For myself and for many other students, accessibility and affordability remain a foremost priority in higher education. I respectfully encourage you to engage students and their families in these discussions and to take these voices into consideration when debating proposals related to student aid in upcoming Board of Governors meetings.

Thank you so much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

[YOUR NAME]