**Will’s Campus Update: Draft**

Thank you Mr. Chairman,

And thank you other members of the Board. I have really enjoyed getting to know you all a little bit already via emails and during our tour of some of the new buildings going up on campus. I am very excited to have the opportunity to get to know you all much better over the course of this year as I learn the ropes of this job and do my best to represent the wonderful student community we have here at UNC.

Representing UNC students this academic year on the Board of Trustees is a huge honor and certainly a big responsibility. Today, I’d like to take the opportunity to talk to you briefly about why I am here today and about my team’s objectives for this year and years to come.

[*Insert something personal about why you ran for SBP in the first place*] Three years ago I would never have imagined myself being Student Body President. I was just another wide-eyed first year student eager to move away from home and experience all that college had to offer. The only thing that made me a little bit different was a pronounced passion for environmental issues, which manifested itself in my immediate involvement in the Environmental Affairs Committee of Student Government. Spring of my sophomore year a combination of factors came together to make me begin thinking about running for this position. I took some courses on broadly defined sustainability that helped me connect my environmental passion to the many other issues facing the university. These courses, my involvement in the Environmental Affairs Committee and other areas of campus, and finally some friendly peer pressure led me to decide to run for Student Body President. I built a campaign around three principles connected to sustainability, called the Three E’s: equity, efficiency, and environment. First, equity: that our team will strive to ensure that all Carolina students have equal access to resources and awareness of the many opportunities available to them here. Second, efficiency: that we use all university resources as effectively as possible in these difficult economic. And finally, environment: that we foster a safe, inclusive, intellectually dynamic environment and a “green” campus.

The platform we developed followed from these three ideas, informing both our vision of how Student Government should function as an entity and what specific projects we would prioritize. Functionally, my Executive Board Officers and I decided that Student Government should strive to be more efficient, more transparent, and more accessible. So far the biggest thing I’ve done is choose a phenomenal executive branch officer team. They are all rock stars, and I sincerely hope you get the chance to meet them at some point this year. We are in the process of implementing a number of mechanisms that we think will help us achieve these objectives. Some examples of what we are doing include: structuring cabinet meetings like “think tanks,” hosting an orientation session for campus leaders to meet administrators, streamlining the publicity and outreach of the Executive Branch, building relationships with leaders of the other branches of student government, creating a feedback process for our external appointees, setting up a Student Government electronic newsletter to increase transparency, and emphasizing leadership development in Cabinet meetings.

In addition to these modifications to the structure of Student Government, there are two key initiatives I’d like to highlight. The first is a desire to build **money.unc.edu**, a website that clearly compiles all financial resources on campus for students. We hope this site will educate students about their options and help ease the impacts of budget cuts, allowing students to do more with less. The site will include a searchable grant database, financial literacy tutorials, and scholarships. I believe this kind of transparency and accessibility is critical for students and families to be able to make informed decisions in the face of strained budgets.

A second key project is the expansion of a UNC Mobile App. Given the prevalence of Smart Phones on campus today, we feel it’s critical to give students access to Carolina resources with the push of a button. We are in the process of working with students and staff with mobile app development experience to include features like athletics schedules, advising appointments, dining hall menus, transportation information, and much more all in one place.

Beyond these projects and a number of others, one of the key goals of my administration is to engage students in the ongoing discussion about tuition, financial aid, and Carolina’s future as a leader in public higher education. As a recipient of need-based financial aid myself, I understand many of the burdens associated with the rising cost of university attendance. Student Government can have the most impact in this area by drawing student stakeholders into the discussion and giving students an opportunity to express their questions and concerns before decisions are made.

In a eulogy to former Student Body President Eve Carson that was republished in the Daily Tar Heel recently in her memory, Carolina was described as a place of “Excellence with a Heart.” This phrase deeply resonated with me, and it’s something that I hope to bring to the forefront of our administration and to the university as a whole. This is an institution that prides itself not only on academic excellence but also on public service, diversity, equity, and inclusivity. In the decisions that are made moving forward, in regards to financial aid and tuition but also in regards to any critical university decisions, I hope we can embody that sentiment of Excellence with a Heart. I intend to lay a foundation for my administration and successive administrations to uphold this value, which can inform our actions and ultimately allow our university to remain a vibrant and proudly public institution. It is not an easy charge to take on – it requires more than just academic excellence, but also a sincere commitment to the public good and accessibility to all Tar Heels. This dual commitment is central to the Carolina Way and is what sets us apart from our peer institutions. It is what drives my fellow students to ace their Biology exams, write wonderful English essays and undertake incredible projects like HOPE Gardens, Kicking Across Carolina, and Carolina for Kibera in their free time. (If you don’t know about any of these projects I’d be more than happy to tell you about them later) It is truly the essence of the Carolina experience and I look forward to discussing what we all can do to best protect UNC as a place of excellence with a heart in the coming years.

I truly look forward to working with all of you in the year ahead. If ever you want to discuss student government’s initiatives, or get the student perspective on an issue please do not hesitate to reach out to me. You can rest assured that I will do my best to represent all 30,000 of my fellow students throughout this year.

Thank you again for all of your time and support.