

UNC-system staff will get raises

UNC-system employees have gone four years without pay increases, but that will soon change.

By Vinayak Balasubramanian
State & National Editor

Salary increases and a partial restoration of financial aid funding was discussed by the UNC-system Board of Governors at a committee meeting Tuesday.

The committee voted unanimously to implement these — and other budget measures recently approved by the N.C. General Assembly — for the 2012-13 academic year.

Joni Worthington, spokeswoman for the UNC system, said the committee's vote has the same effect as if the full board passed it, and the board

does not need to vote on the measures. Charles Perusse, the UNC-system vice president for finance, said thousands of students would benefit from increased financial aid that has been provided by the revised budget, which includes a net increase of \$19.6 million in-state appropriations to the system.

Last week, the N.C. General Assembly voted to revise its biennial budget — which was approved for fiscal years 2011-13 in June 2011.

The budget revisions were vetoed by Gov. Bev Perdue on June 29. But legislators voted to override her veto July 2.

In her veto message, Perdue criticized the budget for not adequately reversing education cuts imposed last year.

Despite being less than the \$216 million requested by the Board of Governors, UNC-system President Thomas Ross praised the updated budget for offsetting some of the deep cuts the system has faced in recent years.

“We came out of the session, particularly the budget process with a

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Charles Perusse,
UNC-system vice president for finance

budget that, given the restraint, was fair to the university,” he said.

Under the updated budget, the state will provide more than \$30 million to support a 1.2 percent salary increase for all university employees. The budget revisions give an additional \$3 million to recruiting and retraining faculty.

This marks the first salary increase since fiscal year 2008-09.

“After going four years without an increase, people appreciate that they were provided one,” Perusse said.

The new budget also increases financial aid funding by \$25.2 million using state lottery funds.

Ross said this would help offset the \$35 million in need-based financial aid cuts imposed last year for students system-wide.

Perusse said budget cuts to financial aid programs resulted in 9,000 fewer students receiving financial aid in the 2011-12 academic year than in the previous year.

“We’re hoping to get back a lot of those students, and to give a little more to students with existing aid,” he said.

The updated budget did not provide for the board’s performance-based funding model, which would allocate money to schools based on their ability to meet targets for several measures, including retention, six-year graduation rates and degree efficiency.

But Perusse said the board will still implement the model for the 2012-13 academic year to test the feasibility of the target measures.

Contact the State & National Editor at state@dailytarheel.com.

Q&A with Jodi Magness

By Alex Dixon
Arts Editor

Jodi Magness, who is a distinguished professor in the department of religious studies at UNC, is conducting an excavation of a recently-discovered ancient synagogue in the village of Huqoq, located in the Galilee region of Israel. Magness spoke to The Daily Tar Heel via email from Huqoq about the discovery, the excavation process and the mosaic floor of the synagogue, which depicts biblical passages and is made up of small stone cubes. Students and staff from UNC are joining groups from five other universities to participate in the month-long excavation process.

Daily Tar Heel: How was the synagogue discovered?

Jodi Magness: It was discovered during our excavations at Huqoq, which began last summer and continued this summer.

DTH: How old is the synagogue estimated to be?

JM: About 1,600 years old (fourth to sixth centuries A.D.)

DTH: Can you tell me a little bit about the mosaic floor artwork and what it's depicting?

JM: In one section, there is a Hebrew or Aramaic inscription in a medallion that refers to rewards for those who perform good deeds, flanked by two female faces (perhaps personifications of seasons). Another section contains a scene depicting Samson taking revenge on the Philistines by tying together the tails of pairs of foxes and placing lighted torches between them, and then letting them loose to burn the agricultural fields of the Philistines (an episode related in the book of Judges 15).

DTH: Are there any estimated artist or artists responsible for this floor?

JM: There surely were, but we do not know who they were.

DTH: When is the excavation expected to be completed?

JM: Not sure, perhaps in another five seasons of work (one month each summer).

DTH: What does a day of excavating entail?

JM: Lots of hard work and sweat. We get up at 4:00 a.m., start digging at 5:00 a.m. — hoeing, picking, scraping with trowels. There is also lab work — pottery washing and sorting, animal bones, data entry on computers, etc.

Contact the Arts Editor at arts@dailytarheel.com.

inBRIEF

CAMPUS BRIEFS

Mellon Foundation grant supports Carolina Digital Humanities Initiative

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation has given \$1.39 million help UNC create the Carolina Digital Humanities Initiative. The initiative will apply digital technology to humanities research, teaching, graduate training and public engagement.

The grant will be used to hire new faculty and support graduate students of digital humanities.

UNC study finds diabetes levels are higher in China than in United States

A study led by UNC researchers found that Chinese teenagers are four times more likely to have diabetes than teenagers in the United States.

Data was gathered from the China Health and Nutrition Survey, and includes surveys from 1989 to 2011.

The study found that 1.9 percent of Chinese teenagers have diabetes and 14.9 percent have pre-diabetes glucose levels.

The study was led by Barry Popkin, a distinguished professor of nutrition with the Gillings School of Global Public Health. The project involved coordination between UNC and the Chinese Center for Disease Control.

Sciarrino named Knight Chair at UNC

JoAnn Sciarrino has been named the Knight Chair in Digital Advertising and Marketing at UNC's School of Journalism and Mass Communication.

Sciarrino is an advertising and marketing executive with more than 25 years of experience, and previously worked at BBDO America.

Sciarrino will collaborate with, Penny Abernathy, the school's Knight Chair in Journalism and Digital Media Economics, to develop digital advertising business models. UNC is one of only two schools in the country with more than one Knight Chair. The Knight Foundation is a national effort to recruit top professionals to be tenured professors.

— From staff and wire reports

SUMMERTIME SESSIONS FOR KIDS: MUSIC, ART



DTH/MELISSA KEY

Aliya Suawah, 11, practices guitar and vocals with her other bandmates at ArtsCenter's Rock Band summer camp that ended in a performance at Cat's Cradle.

Even in July, summer camps are open for K-12 children

By Chessa DeCain
City Editor

Summer vacation is nearly halfway over for most K-12 students, but there's still time for kids to expand their horizons.

Many local businesses, including Kidzu Children's Museum, Carrboro Recreation and Parks Department and the ArtsCenter are still offering summer programs for kids of various ages.

At Kidzu, Tina Clossick, director of operations, said their programs are aimed towards children ages 0 to 8.

“Most of our programs are based on the fact that if you're here during the school time, you're going to be 6 and under,” she said.

She said some of the programs Kidzu offers for kids include arts and crafts, storytelling and joint programs with PlayMakers Repertory Company, Ackland Art Museum and FRANK.

Most of the programs at Kidzu are free with the price of admission or membership.

“We're a perfect indoor space to bring the kids and give them something fun and educational to do,” Clossick said.

The Carrboro Century Center is anything but

a space for indoor camps. With both outdoor and indoor classes, and sponsored by the Recreations and Parks Department, the center has a number of programs to choose from each week.

“Now that July is here, a lot of times people are looking to fill that gap before they go back to school,” said Julie Collins, recreation supervisor.

Collins said the center's main goal was to offer something for everyone.

“We try to get as many kids involved as possible,” she said.

Collins said they offer classes for kids between ages 3 and 12, but the biggest number of programs is for kids ages 6 to 12.

Registration for summer classes at the center begins in January and continues up until the camp is full — a period that Collins said could take anywhere from a few months to one week.

She said there were still some spaces for kids in dance, young gymnast, drawing, watercolor and Zumba classes for the summer.

“It just depends on if there's space available,” Collins said.

Most of the programs at the center run for about six weeks and cost between \$40 and \$50.

She said the center tries to keep prices afford-

able so most families can participate but they do offer financial assistance by reducing fees for families who can't afford the programs.

At the ArtsCenter, Summer Camps Coordinator Louise Tremblay said they want to give their K-12 graders a well-balanced arts education.

Though the ArtsCenter offers youth programs year-round, she said the summer was definitely their busiest time.

Tremblay said they still had spaces available in their Kid's Camp, which is designed for 2nd through 7th graders. The Kid's Camp costs \$200 for 5 full days, or \$100 for 5 half-days.

She said the Kid's Camp focuses on a different theme every week and teaches visual art, dance and music that related to the theme.

This week's camp, Tremblay said, is focusing on animals, and next week's will focus on food.

She said the best way to see which classes were still available was to look online.

“I update our website on a regular basis to show availability,” she said. “That's the best place to look.”

Contact the City Editor at city@dailytarheel.com.

Many teens ignoring N.C. cellphone ban

A study found many high school students still using their phones while driving.

RALEIGH, N.C. (MCT) — North Carolina adopted a cellphone ban for teen drivers in 2006, but a recently published study has found that many teens ignore the law and more are engaging in the highly hazardous practice of texting and driving.

The results of the study by the Highway Safety Research Center at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill appear in the current issue of Accident Analysis and Prevention. It is based on the observation of 5,000 teen drivers leaving high school parking lots.

State Sen. Stan Bingham, a Republican from Denton and a sponsor of the ban, was disappointed by the findings, but not surprised. He said the law may be redrawn.

“We've passed a law that's impossible to enforce,” he said. “This study will be used to aid future legislation.”

In the UNC study, researchers

observed the driving behavior of teen drivers in North Carolina in 2006 and repeated the observations two years later after the cellphone ban was passed. For the study, a researcher was stationed at the exit of a high school parking lot, and noted whether each driver was talking or physically manipulating a phone, presumably texting.

In their observations, overall cellphone use among the teen drivers had decreased slightly in the two years since the law passed, 11 percent to 9.7 percent. But the number of texting teen drivers in North Carolina has gone up, about a 40 percent increase between the year of the ban and the researchers' observations two years later.

Due to the pace of peer review and academic publishing, the study is surfacing now. The frequency of teens texting while driving is probably higher today, said Arthur Goodwin, a senior research associate at the UNC Highway Safety Research Center who led the study.

The study is the only one of its kind to actually observe teen driving and cellphone use in North Carolina. More

recent data involves self-reported activity in surveys of a broader range of ages. In 2011, for instance, the Harris Poll reported texting while driving is much more common among younger drivers. Fully 49 percent of drivers with cellphones under 35 send or read text messages while driving compared to 11 percent of baby boomers and less than 1 percent of people over 65; the poll found.

In interviews, teens said texting and driving is widespread despite the cellphone ban and years of driver education instructors stressing the dangers of distracted driving.

“Everyone I know who has their license texts,” said Ure Loop, 15, at student at Green Hope High in Cary. “I know someone who almost got hit by a bus. They were texting.”

“Everyone does it,” echoed Loop's friend Sydney Gaston, 15, who attends Athens Drive High in Raleigh. “This guy drove me home the other night and he was texting. Or like on Twitter. Something stupid.”

Ure and Sydney both have learner's permits. They have only driven with their parents in the car, meaning they

personally haven't had a chance to break the law. But they constantly witness their friends' bad habits.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reports that 11 percent of drivers under 20 involved in fatal crashes were reported as distracted. Texting in particular creates a crash risk 23 times higher than non-distracted driving, the agency reports.

“With inexperienced drivers texting and driving these torpedoes down the road, it's a recipe for disaster,” Bingham said.

The teens can't plead ignorance of the ban. Driver education courses have been informing students since the law was passed. And in conjunction with the study, a survey of teens showed most are aware of the law.

The law allows teens to call parents and make emergency calls, but Lewis' description captures the spirit of the law. The penalty for getting caught is a fine and a six-month delay for eligibility for the next license level.

But virtually no one is getting caught. So while teens know about the law in theory, in practice it doesn't exist to them.