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As members of the UNC-Chapel Hill faculty, we firmly believe in the value of higher education. To be of value for students and society alike, however, higher education must maintain standards of high quality. For institutions of higher education, this means maintaining favorable faculty to student ratios, faculty commitment to teaching, and an institutional commitment to incorporating innovative strategies of teaching and learning. For students it means demonstrating both a commitment and a capacity to engage in advanced learning.

Students enroll in higher education with the goal of graduating with a degree that leads to a fulfilling career or entering graduate or professional school. When institutions admit students, they accept the responsibility to facilitate student achievement of this goal. This commitment includes providing sustaining financial aid to make higher education costs as "free as practicable" as stated in the North Carolina Constitution, particularly for those of limited means.

To best achieve these goals, we believe the funding model for the UNC system should emphasize student achievement with a focus on graduation rates and similar metrics rather than a focus on expanding enrollment. There can be different measures for graduation rates, such as 4-year, 6-year, or 10-year, and inclusion of transfers to other institutions of higher learning could be captured as well. The point is that degree attainment is the goal of students who enroll in higher education.

We recognize that the commitment and capacity to engage in advanced learning can change and that, therefore, it is important for North Carolina to build an educational system that is permeable. If an 18-year old student's ability or capacity to attend a four-year institution is insufficient, that student should have the opportunity to enroll in a community college and then transfer when the student has demonstrated the commitment and capacity to succeed at a four-year institution.

In summary, we believe a focus on student performance rather than enrollment expansion provides the best funding model for higher educational opportunities in North Carolina while ensuring proper stewardship of taxpayer funds.

Respectfully submitted by

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