

Resolution 08-03 A Resolution Concerning the Proposal to Amend the State Personnel Act by Adding “Article 16”

PROPOSED RESOLUTION OF THE EMPLOYEE FORUM
THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL
April 2, 2008

WHEREAS the Mission of the Employee Forum is to address constructively the concerns of Employees of The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, including the representation of staff concerns to University officials, the University community, the General Administration, and the North Carolina General Assembly; and

WHEREAS, the UNC System operates in a highly competitive national—and increasingly international—market for talented and skilled employees and therefore needs an efficient Human Resources system to recruit, retain, and manage such employees; and

WHEREAS the “Report on the Recommendations of the President’s Task Force on Human Resources” dated January 15, 2008, states that such a system does not currently exist; and

WHEREAS the Report recommends that the University:

- gain greater direct control over positions classified as SPA—that is, career civil service positions that fall within and are currently governed by the State Personnel Act;
- once again expand the EPA Non-faculty classification that it already essentially controls, the existence of which has created a dual HR system within the University, and
- initiate 17 other listed changes in how personnel matters are handled; and

WHEREAS the Report recommends effecting these changes by adding a 16th article to the statute that set up the State Personnel System (NCGS 126), which article would provide for setting up a “substantially equivalent” University-wide HR system whose exact parameters are not specified; and

WHEREAS the wording of the final version of Article 16

- fails to affirm and support the legally defined property interest of career state (SPA) employees in their positions, property interest being a strong factor in staff retention;
- gives greater position classification control to the new system, which opens the door for current and future University employees potentially to be “(re-) classified out of” their career status—(re-)classification for the purpose of creating a larger at-will workforce having been recommended by three of the Task Force sub-committees; and thus
- appears to weaken the protections that would remain to SPA employees under Article 8, where employment protections for career employees are established; and

WHEREAS several of the 17 other proposed changes appear to focus on the management of faculty and EPA Non-faculty positions (not SPA positions), focus on the need for or redistribution of money, or focus on actions that can be done even within the current HR system (such as looking for ways to reduce duplicate paper reporting requirements), and the passage of Article 16 is not necessary for any of these; and

WHEREAS the second report on Personnel System efficiency and effectiveness commissioned by the Government Performance Audit Committee, GPAC II, has valuable information and suggestions for improving the State Personnel System as a whole, which would benefit the entire State workforce rather than just one segment of it; and

WHEREAS the recommendations for management and cost efficiencies that were submitted by employees to General Administration in the wake of the 2006 PACE Report appear to have been ignored in the rush to frame a rationale for removal of the University System from key parts of the State Personnel Act via the passage of Article 16; and

WHEREAS the UNC-Chapel Employee Forum is already receiving negative reports about the morale-lowering effects the proposed HR changes will have on the current staff working in the University System;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Employee Forum of UNC-Chapel Hill cannot at this time support the passage of Article 16 and the subsequent implementation of a purportedly “substantially equivalent” HR system as outlined in the 2008 HR Task Force Report; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that at this time the Employee Forum supports remaining completely within the State Personnel System and working to make the kinds of changes from within the System that will make it a more efficient and effective organization for *all* civil service employees statewide; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Employee Forum of The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill requests that the Chancellor and his Administration convey and support the precepts of this resolution and the position of the Employee Forum to the University’s General Administration and the North Carolina General Assembly.

To be signed on behalf of the delegates of the Employee Forum,

Chair, Ernie Patterson