

Senate Repeals Tuition Surcharge at University of North Carolina Schools

By Administrator

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The N.C. Senate today unanimously passed a bill to repeal the tuition surcharge at University of North Carolina Schools for students who take more than the prescribed time to finish their bachelor's degree. Senate Bill 225, sponsored by Sens. Jim Perry (R-Lenoir), Rick Horner (R-Nash) and Jerry Tillman (R-Randolph), eliminates the surcharge for students who take more than 140 credit hours to complete their degree in a four-year program, as well as students who take more than 110 percent of the credit hours required to complete a bachelor's degree in a five-year program. Currently, students who exceed these limits are subject to a 50 percent tuition surcharge which disproportionately affects older students and transfer students. According to research from UNC, in 2017 and 2018, adult students between the ages 26 and 45 made up 44-46 percent of those with more than 140 credits while transfer students made up more than 60 percent of those with more than 140 credits. This trend also has implications for veteran and military connected students as they are generally an older population compared to traditional college students.

“This bill was driven by concerns of the surcharge’s unintended impact on veterans, transfer students and non-traditional students,” said Perry. “For some people in those groups, making the decision to go back to school is a big decision and the last thing we want to do is create an additional barrier to entry.”

The bill builds on previous efforts by legislative Republicans to reduce costs to attend college in North Carolina. Those efforts include NC Promise which provides tuition for \$500 a semester at four state universities, a fixed tuition program which guarantees a student receives the same tuition rate for a period of 4 years, and capping student fees.