BraveNation,

Leaders in the North Carolina General Assembly have agreed on a budget that will be a game changer for The University of North Carolina at Pembroke, significantly advancing our historic mission of increasing accessibility to higher education.

The budget addresses college affordability in several ways, most notably through the creation of the North Carolina Promise Tuition Plan. The plan proposes the state buy down tuition at UNC Pembroke, Western Carolina University and Elizabeth City State University to $1,000 per year for in-state students and $5,000 per year for out-of-state students beginning in the fall of 2018. As an NC Promise campus, the state's level of investment in our students will increase. Furthermore, the plan will allow UNC Pembroke to leverage its existing scholarship funds to make a greater impact. The preferential tuition rate will allow us to attract additional students from across North Carolina, across the nation and internationally. This growth will not only further our mission of changing lives through education but also stimulate the economy of southeastern North Carolina.

We are studying the specific ways the entire budget will impact UNCP and will remain in communication with you throughout this process. We can say, with certainty, our academic programs will not be adversely affected, nor will our students' ability to complete their degrees. Additional benefits to the university from the budget as presented include tuition predictability for our students and their families, salary increases for faculty and staff, and a one-time appropriation to UNCP of $675,000. The budget also allows UNC Pembroke to move forward in planning our new School of Business facility, which will receive $23 million from recently passed the Connect NC Bond.

Earlier versions of the legislation pertaining to college affordability generated much discussion from our campus community and others across the state. I was heartened by how many of you made your opinions known. Your pride in UNC Pembroke is strong. I share your pride as well. Our conversations with legislators resulted in the increase of state funding to cover the cost of reduced tuition revenue resulting from enactment of the North Carolina Promise Tuition Plan. The

provision means the legislature will match dollar for dollar the difference between our full tuition price and the NC Promise Plan tuition plan cost. The end result is affordability for students without sacrificing our quality or identity.

In fact, the proposal includes language that directs the UNC Board of Governors to give consideration for our unique historical character and mission of service to minority, first-generation and economically disadvantaged students. We believe this is a product of our continuing discussions and the resulting collaboration with our legislators, and signifies their respect for our historical mission.

While I believe this plan will be significant and positive for UNC Pembroke, I recognize the anxiety that comes with change and uncertainty. But as an institution symbolized by bravery, I implore us to be strong and seize this opportunity. It's important to remember our institution has served as a trailblazer since its founding 129 years ago. As the first state college in the nation designated specifically for American Indians, UNC Pembroke was the product of collaboration between visionary community leaders and lawmakers to provide access to education.

While we honor our heritage, we are proudly among the most diverse universities in the nation. And the North Carolina Promise Tuition Plan will allow us to be among the most affordable. UNC Pembroke has always been distinctive. There is no campus in the nation like ours. This opportunity will allow us to further distinguish ourselves and serve as a role model for the future of high quality, accessible higher education. This is a tool we can use for even greater impact.

Together, we are writing a new chapter for UNC Pembroke and southeastern North Carolina.

Yours in Service,

Robin Gary Cummings

Chancellor