

McCrorry: Tearing down silos with UNC-wide cooperation making universities more energy-efficient and cost effective by Editor

RALEIGH — On Friday Governor Pat McCrorry applauded action by the UNC Board of Governors on approving groundbreaking lighting and other energy-saving efforts that avoid \$25 million in energy costs through a unique system-wide guaranteed energy savings contract involving 13 UNC campuses, the UNC General Administration and several affiliated organizations. Over the seven-year length of the agreement, the energy-efficiency improvements will result in the installation of more than 100,000 lighting fixtures in classrooms, dormitories and other University facilities.

“This system-wide effort represents the kind of cooperation among different state agencies that means savings for taxpayers, business for North Carolina companies and allows these UNC institutions to focus public dollars on the core mission of educating students and continuing groundbreaking research,” said Governor McCrorry. “This action by President Tom Ross and the Board of Governors shows just how beneficial it is to tear down institutional silos and cooperate for more effective and efficient results.”

These lighting projects will provide more efficient, effective lighting and thus create better and safer work, research, study and living environments. This project will allow reductions in campus utility costs to pay for the project over seven years. At the same time they will save money for taxpayers along with parents and students – about \$25 million over seven years. Johnson Controls Inc. will oversee the program and one of the major subcontractors is CREE – a North Carolina company and one of the nation’s leaders in cost-saving, energy efficient LED lighting.

In implementing the Board of Governors’ sustainability action plans, President Ross has encouraged system-wide approaches for facility energy efficiency. In addition to 13 UNC campuses and the UNC General Administration, this alliance includes UNC TV, the NC Arboretum and the N.C. Department of Commerce’s Energy Office. The four UNC campuses not participating already have similar programs in place. “This lighting initiative is a natural extension of UNC’s ongoing efforts to operate more efficiently and effectively,” said President Ross. “It is another step toward more shared services, more pooled purchasing, and greater collaboration as a way of doing business. We’re making our campuses more energy efficient and sustainable, while creating an environment that’s more conducive to learning and safety.”

Commerce Secretary Sharon Decker recognized the role her department, through the N.C. Energy Office, played in bringing the various state agencies and education institutions together. “The Energy Office’s efforts, particularly through the Utility Saving Initiative, are helping bring state agencies, our universities, community colleges and public schools, together to make our facilities more energy efficient and save taxpayer dollars,” Secretary Decker said. “This is also helping grow jobs and expand North Carolina’s economy – particularly our growing clean energy economy and efficient lighting makers such as CREE.” The projects will address lighting needs in various facilities on the campuses including classrooms, research labs, residence halls, parking facilities and other outdoor lighting using LED technology.