

## **State of the Campus Address**

Chelsea Boccardo

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Good Evening students, faculty, staff and administration; My name is Chelsea Boccardo and I am honored to be standing in front of you as the Student Body President. Welcome to the fourth Senate meeting of the 90<sup>th</sup> session.

Since 1891, when the State Normal and Industrial School for Women opened and what we now call the University of North Carolina at Greensboro was founded, our motto has been “service.” Service entails a lot of things... philanthropy, duty, human labor, and assistance. The founders of this motto intended for it to inspire the community’s actions. Our alumnae were aspiring teachers, nurses, writers, and scientists who wanted to improve their communities by empowering and helping others.

## **UNCG TODAY**

121 years later, UNCG is now home to 18,260 students with diverse experiences, aspirations, strengths and challenges. We come from different financial backgrounds. Some of us attend UNCG through scholarships; others pay through student loans and out-of-pocket. We come from different places. Some of us are from the great state of North Carolina; others are from places like Virginia, New Jersey, South Africa, and China. We come from different family make-ups. Some of us were raised by nuclear families; but many of us come from single-parent homes, step-families, and other non-traditional households. Some of our students are even parents themselves.

Despite our differences, we all seek to serve in one way or another. Today we are still aspiring teachers, nurses, writers, and scientists. But we also have dreams of becoming:

- Musicians and actors, speech pathologists and psychiatrists
- Business managers and entrepreneurs, architects and occupational therapists
- Anthropologists and nano-engineers, economists and graphic designers
- Politicians and accountants, lawyers AND professional athletes

We are here, at UNCG, to obtain degrees of higher education – to better our lives and the future of our communities. Regardless of our career paths, we long to make the world a better place through innovative technologies and taking on the most contemporary fields of study.

## **OUR RECENT PAST**

Collectively, we face similar trials in our student lives. “Cuts” seems to be the most reoccurring theme. We have experienced budget cuts, course section cuts, job cuts, and program cuts. But we face these challenges, united. UNCG continues to serve its’ students through all of these exciting changes, all while defying our odds.

In the three years that I have attended UNCG, we have undergone:

- Academic Restructuring
- Founding of the Office of Sustainability
- Renovations of North Spencer Residence Hall for the Lloyd International Honors College
- Forming a contract with the Greensboro Coliseum as the official home arena for UNCG Men’s Basketball Games
- Establishing a new Joint School of Nano-science and Nano-engineering with North Carolina Agricultural and Technical School
- Launching the Office of Learning Communities
- Research and discovery for the Academic Program Review

- Opening of the new, technologically equipped and energy-conscious School of Education and Jefferson Suites Residence Hall
- Acquiring space across Lee Street for the Spartan Village
- Quad Residence Hall Renovations
- AND Elliott University Center Blue & Gold-ification

Upon Chancellor Linda Brady's appointment in 2008 by the Board of Governors, she promised that she would: "plan carefully and act BOLDLY to shape the university's future." Through her leadership, we have walked a fruitful path, all the way through, following the philosophy of finding creative ways to do more with less. UNCG will always be an institution exemplifying excellence, both inside and outside of the classroom.

## **THE 2012-2013 ACADEMIC YEAR**

Now, we are in the third week of classes of the fall 2012 semester. As the season changes, in the midst of these difficult, economic times, students, faculty, and administration continue to work together this year, to plan and anticipate:

- Implementation of the Academic Program Review
- Breaking ground for the Lee Street underpass
- The Quality and Enhancement Plan process
- University Reaccreditation
- Beginning stages of construction for the Spartan Village
- Voter registration for most traditional students' first Presidential election
- The first early voting site on UNCG's campus at Weatherspoon Art Museum in October
- Continuing renovations of the Atrium
- Reopening of the Fountain area at the Atrium
- Application of SGA's sponsored Wall Mural with Auxiliary and Dining Services in the EUC
- The application and selection process for three new Deans for the School of Health and Human Sciences, the School of Nursing, and the Division of Continual Learning
- AND The long session of the state legislature, in January 2013

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

I would like to recognize a few of our distinguished guests tonight, who play key roles in making the University of North Carolina at Greensboro a premier institution of higher education. Please stand as your name is called and hold all applause until the end.

- Chancellor Linda Brady, and the Chancellor's Executive Staff
- The Division of Student Affairs: Dr. Cherry Callahan, Dr. Jim Settle, and Dr. Vicki McNeil
- The Office of Campus Activities and Programs: Alexandra Marchesano
- AND The Student Government Association's Advisor: Ashleigh Best

Without your daily service to the University, UNCG would not excel to greater heights every day. On behalf of the Student Government Association and student body, we thank you for your support.

I also would like to recognize your Student Government Association leaders. These people constantly inspire me, personally and professionally. Please stand as your name is called and hold all applause until the end.

- Vice President: Meredith Swain
- Attorney General: Christine Natal
- The Executive Cabinet: Jaffe Powers, Ariana Bushweller, Brenna Barnett, Toska Cooper, Matthew Moss, and Cassidy Norris

- The Legislative Board: Sara Canada, Hannah Harris, Devon Honeyman, Simone Stephens, Suzanne Kleisch, Chad Crutchfield, Crystal Bayne, and Alexis Hopper
- AND The Senate body

Being a student leader requires you to manage your time well and have a tremendous work ethic, which is not always easy. Thank you for your dedication, hard work, and leadership. Your service enables us to advocate for our peers and enables our organization to accomplish more than it has ever done before.

This year, the Student Government Association has big plans to live out our vision: “*To ensure every Spartan has a voice.*” It is SGA’s purpose to advocate for and address student concerns, liaise between students and administration, and act as an educational resource to the body. For this, we have identified three (3) areas of focus.

## **CIVIL DISCOURSE AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

The first area of focus is *civil discourse and civic engagement*. We will empower our peers to make informed decisions and participate in scholarly discussion on important topics. We must become cognizant on the issues at hand and be engaged in intellectual dialogue to expose ourselves to diverse opinions.

On September 19, SGA is hosting our first forum and community discussion of the year, regarding corporate involvement in politics and C.E.O. Dan Cathy’s remarks on marriage.

On October 6, UNCG will be hosting the Association of Student Governments. This organization’s purpose is to promote discussion on the most pressing issues facing students in the UNC system.

Throughout September, we will be promoting the early voting site that opens on October 18 at Weatherspoon Art Museum. Currently, we are in the planning stages of hosting another community discussion on civic engagement.

Over the course of the academic year, one of my personal goals is to build relationships with city council members and state officials, in hopes that they will hear our stories out. The cuts to higher education hurt and they are jeopardizing our future.

## **SERVING THE COMMUNITY**

The second area of focus is *serving the community*. We are able to serve the University in a multitude of ways. Our strategic goals are to participate in philanthropy, facilitate student organization unity, and voice student opinion on University committees.

Each semester, we will participate in at least one philanthropy or service project with community partners to fulfill the motto of our founders.

Taylor Wilson, an Executive Cabinet volunteer, is facilitating student group leaders in our beta-version of a Unity Council. To address students’ perceptions that there is nothing to do on campus, and that there is too much going on and not enough promotion, Student Group Unity coordination will allow student leaders to program systematically through collaboration.

Already, we have Senate members and Executive Staff serving on University committees. Our voices are being heard on issues of sustainability, tuition and fees, inclusion, parking, legislative advocacy, spirit, and so much more. Through professional student representation, we can truly make an impact on UNCG’s campus and better students’ experience.

## **ADVOCACY AND EDUCATION**

Our third and last area of focus is *advocacy and education*. SGA's primary responsibilities are to advocate for and educate our constituents. Although any of the previously mentioned action plans we have can be considered advocating for and educating students, we are challenging ourselves to do something bigger.

Through info-graphics, we will communicate key information to students about the issues that concern them the most. This educational tool is not only visually appealing, but will allow SGA to connect with students through social media.

Because social media is so important to our generation, and it is integrated in our everyday lives and relationships, we must advocate for use of applications in classrooms. Social media and other online applications will play a vital role in our professional lives and careers upon graduation. Being technologically savvy will allow UNCG students to have a competitive advantage in the work force.

Lastly, my priority goal is to attend at least five (5) donor events over the course of the year, in collaboration with University Advancement and Alumni Relations. As your student body President, I will advocate for you in the community, to help solidify new scholarships and donations for the University. The community needs to hear about who we are, what we do, and why we, as Spartans, are so important to the future of our nation. You are our future.

## **DOING SOMETHING BIGGER, ALTOGETHER**

At the end of the day, we are all working towards a degree so that when graduate we will have a job with a promising future. But that is not all we have to give. Winston Churchill once stated, "You make a living by what you get, but you make a life by what you give."

It is in our blood, as Spartans, to take action with something that we are passionate about. We crave the adventure of doing something that we have always wanted to and never had the nerve to do before. We want to make a difference. We want to serve the community.

We all may ask ourselves from time to time, "Is what I am doing, really making a difference?" But if you asked me, "What is the state of our campus?"

I would tell you that: "We are All Doing Something Bigger, Altogether."