



Budget shortfall not affecting Research Campus plans

By [Ben McNeely](#) | Independent Tribune

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KANNAPOLIS - Because of a state budget shortfall, UNC president Erskine Bowles asked the 16 constituent campuses in the UNC system to cut 4 percent from their budgets this year. But it seems the budget shortfall is not yet affecting the UNC institutes at the North Carolina Research Campus.

UNC-Chapel Hill has not instituted a hiring freeze and faculty and staff hirings are on track, said Jana Harrison, deputy director of the UNC Nutrition Research Institute.

"We've cut 4 percent from our budget," Harrison said, "but we've done it through cutting back on things we don't absolutely need."

The hiring process at the N.C. State Plants for Human Health Institute is still on track as well, even though the home campus in Raleigh has instituted a hiring freeze.

"Since we come from a separate line item in the budget, we are still following through with our hiring process, still following state protocol," said Tara Vogeliën, research and business director. "It takes so long to recruit faculty members, it wouldn't be in our best interests to stop that process."

There are four faculty members on the ground at the N.C. State institute, Vogeliën said, and more set to join next July.

This is not the only economic issue that is affecting the research campus.

Castle & Cooke is working on financing for construction of the Rowan-Cabarrus Community College and the medical office building, which will house CMC-NorthEast and contract research organization PPD of Wilmington.

At the October opening of the Core Research Laboratory, Dole Food Co. owner David Murdock was confident about keeping a strong construction pace on the campus.

"Money markets are closed down, but that doesn't affect us here," he said at a press conference after the grand opening ceremony. "We have two more buildings ready to start."

The sites for the two buildings have been ready since the summer, but no construction has begun. Castle & Cooke also has plans to build South Village, a townhouse development on the old Cannon Plant No. 4 site near downtown Kannapolis. The site has been cleared for nearly two years, but no construction has started on it.

Castle & Cooke president Lynne Scott Safrit said in October that "we would be remiss if we started building houses in a slow housing market."

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