The state had reduced UNCP’s budget by 15.5 percent, which led to an increase in tuition and a 21 percent decrease in financial aid funds.

It takes courage

Batten said she wants to get the program to the legislature. "Not a lot of people want to be in the education system, so Teaching Fellows provides a lot of inner power to stand up for what UNCP has to offer and what UNCP is going to do," she said.

Batten said the most important thing she has learned from Teaching Fellows is courage and has applied it to her mission.

"It takes a lot of courage and a lot of inner power to stand up for what you believe in," she said.

Batten said that ending the program would hurt high school seniors and the scholarship UNCP offers to potential freshmen.

"If continuing students do not meet the requirements, they impact the university because they could transfer, be suspended or drop out, all of which impact the retention rate," Dr. Kitts said.

The state determines the big budget a university receives by their retention rate, graduation rate and enrollment size. UNCP has a history of not being able to retain students through the course of their academic careers, and its budget reflects this problem.

Dr. Kitts plans to implement a new plan which would put students on campus and familiar with UNCP faculty and staff while they are still high school seniors in hopes of curing the retention woes.

"I want students to come to campus and see what UNCP has to offer and get acquainted with the school ahead of time," Dr. Kitts said.

"I want people who think education is important to say, ‘Here is a good investment,’" she said.

Batten plans to make a video to send to legislators that features children talking about their favorite teachers and Teaching Fellows talking about how the program has helped them.

"It takes courage" she said.

Dr. Kitts said there are many factors that is affecting fall numbers this year is that tuition is up and financial aid is down at UNCP.

One of many factors that is affecting fall numbers this year is that tuition is up and financial aid is down at UNCP. The new class met the new academic policy requirements that raised the GPA from 2.0 to 2.3, and raised the academic standing to attend, Dr. Kitts said. If students enrolled their freshman year is not enrolled for the sophomore year, they impact the university’s retention rate. The student could transfer, be suspended or drop out, all of which impact the retention rate.

"We are going to do everything we can to get students on campus as soon as possible and try to prevent this from happening again in the future," Dr. Kitts said.

It’s Eating Me Alive

Photo by Nick Phillips

Dr. Kitts plans to implement a new plan which would put students on campus and familiar with UNCP faculty and staff while they are still high school seniors in hopes of curing the retention woes.

Dr. Kitts said the potential freshmen will be interviewed by faculty of their interested major, and the faculty will provide feedback on the interview.

"If the professor loves the student and says they want them in their department, it will give them a better chance of getting the scholarship than a student who did not come to UNCP," Dr. Kitts said.

He added the plan helps faculty learn more about the students, and vice-versa which is designed to get interested students here and keep them here.