THE DAILY CLIPS

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East Carolina University faces state budget cuts as high as 20 percent and will have to make adjustments to try to preserve academic quality and affordability in the face of the most daunting budget picture of the past half century.

That was the message of Chancellor Steve Ballard's State of the University address Wednesday morning at Mendenhall Student Center.

“We're all in this together,” Ballard said. “Every element of our university will feel the pain of this cut, I see no escape from that fact. Our goal is to emerge with our mission intact and to be a better university at the end of it.”

The state is facing a $3.7 billion shortfall for a 20 percent gap between revenue and expenditures. If that 20 percent is transferred to ECU's state funding, it could mean a loss of as much as $60 million, Ballard said. State funding makes up roughly $300 million of the university's $800 million budget.

“Whether or not we have a 20 percent cut is anybody's guess,” Ballard said. “Without question, the cut that we would receive would be between 8 percent and 20 percent.” Ballard asked everyone to “pray for the 8 percent but ... prepare for the 20 percent.”

Much is unknown, and much will change between now and the summer budget drafting process, Ballard said. The university will focus first on increasing efficiency and dipping into emergency funds before looking at unit reductions and/or tuition increases.
According to Ballard, 92 percent of the university's base budget cuts the past two years already have come from administrative areas.

“We have very little flexibility,” Ballard said. “Most of the realizable opportunities that we could do to keep from having an impact on academic quality have been exhausted.”

Ballard's speech was not all “doom and gloom” as he put it. ECU remains one of the most affordable institutions in the UNC system, Ballard said. And the new dental school is on track to open in August.

“We will survive this crisis and remain a great university,” Ballard said. “We are a vital part of the solution for this state and to the state's future and recovery.”

Education is about people and opportunity, Ballard said, and giving students access to a great university to realize their dreams.

“We have great optimism and great resolve about the future,” Ballard said. “We know we have a challenging 12 to 18 months, but the pride that we have in this institution is overwhelming and it will certainly get us through these tough times.”

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Scientists Able to Grow Human Veins in Lab
Published February 03, 2011 | NewsCore

Human veins have been grown by U.S. scientists who hope to revolutionize heart bypass surgery and kidney dialysis procedures.

Scientists from Duke University, East Carolina University and Yale University said Wednesday they can create "fully formed vascular grafts" in eight to 10 weeks through a process that takes smooth muscle cells from a human cadaver and grafts them onto tubes made of polyglycolic acid.

The researchers said the bio-engineered veins could also be stored in saline solution and surgeons would be able to pick them "off the shelf" for use in a sick patient.

"These can be made ahead of time and then are ready to go whenever they are needed," said the paper, which was published in the journal Science Translational Medicine.

"Currently, grafting using the patient's own veins remains the gold standard," said report author Dr. Alan Kypson of the Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University.

"But, harvesting a vein from the patient's leg can lead to complications, and for patients who don't have suitable veins, the bio-engineered veins could serve as an important new way to provide a coronary bypass," he added.

The veins are sterile, so they are not at risk of being rejected by the patients' immune system and can be made in a variety of sizes for use in different operations.

The veins have been tested in baboons and dogs and were not rejected by the animals' bodies and functioned well for six months, said the researchers. Clinical trials in humans were expected to begin soon, according to a
spokeswoman from Humacyte, a regenerative medicine company based in North Carolina that also contributed to the study and funded the research. Around 400,000 coronary bypass procedures are performed annually in the US, says the American Heart Association.

URL
Bioengineering Better Blood Vessels

Durable conduits made by living cells might boost options for dialysis, heart bypass patients

Posted: February 3, 2011

By Nathan Seppa, Science News

Using human cells as tiny factories, researchers can grow new blood vessels that might someday provide a valuable option for patients undergoing surgery for kidney dialysis or a heart bypass. The new study testing the bioengineered vessels in baboons and dogs raises the prospect of mass-producing such natural-tissue vessels, researchers report in the Feb. 2 Science Translational Medicine. In coronary bypass surgery, a vein is typically stripped out of a part of the body that can manage without it and implanted on the heart as a conduit supplying blood to the heart muscle. But in some patients, vessels are inaccessible due to obesity, deterioration or having been used up in other operations. Those individuals have few alternatives beyond medication, says study coauthor Alan Kypson, a surgeon at East Carolina University School of Medicine in Greensville. “A blood vessel that comes right off the shelf for a bypass—that’s potentially groundbreaking stuff,” he says.

The first population to benefit from these bioengineered vessels would probably be kidney failure patients who need to undergo dialysis, in which the blood is cleansed every few days. Dialysis needs fast blood flow to work well, so a patient’s best option is surgery to join a large artery directly to a vein, creating a circulatory shortcut that provides an area of surging blood and facilitates dialysis. But many patients have vessels unfit for that surgery or the surgery does not succeed, so they often get implanted with a synthetic vessel to join an artery and vein. Both operations, typically done in an arm, carry risks of infection and clogging from a buildup of cells.

In the new study, Kypson and his colleagues tested large bioengineered vessels in baboons. To make the vessels, the scientists cultured smooth muscle cells obtained from human blood vessels on a biodegradable tube of micromesh similar to material used in dissolvable sutures. After the cells had built a vessel by depositing collagen and other compounds on the mesh, the scientists removed the cells to leave behind a vessel of tough human proteins. Removing the living cells discourages immune attack on the vessels and
also allows them to be stored in refrigerators for up to a year, says study coauthor Shannon Dahl, a biomedical engineer at Humacyte in Durham, N.C.

The vessels were tested for suture strength, stretchiness and ability to withstand pressure. “If you’re going to grow blood vessels, you have to make sure they won’t burst,” Kypson says. The researchers implanted these bioengineered vessels into baboons in the same way synthetic vessels are grafted into dialysis patients. The vessels showed little evidence of clotting and cell buildup even after a year, the longest large-animal test of a tissue-engineered vessel grown in a lab, Dahl says.

Implants for dialysis are large by vessel standards, nearly 1 centimeter in diameter. The researchers also grew vessels one-third that size, 3 millimeters, for heart bypass experiments in dogs. Those vessels were “seeded” inside with natural vessel-lining cells called endothelial cells. These cells release anticlotting factors that promote blood flow, says study coauthor Laura Niklason, an anesthesiologist and tissue engineer at Yale University School of Medicine. This function kept blood moving in the month-long test in the dogs.

In people, a vessel recipient would donate his or her own endothelial cells for placement in a bioengineered vessel, which would delay surgery only a few weeks, the researchers say.

“Vascular access is known as the Achilles heel of dialysis,” says epidemiologist Paul Eggers of the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases in Bethesda, Md. “Keeping the vascular site open is big deal.” He notes that several lines of bioengineering are under way, and this process seems to land halfway between surgically connecting an artery with a vein and installing a synthetic graft in the arm. “It may turn out to be a wonderful thing. This looks like something one should keep an eye on.”

The team is preparing an application to test the technology in people with dialysis “in about a year,” Niklason says.

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ECU welcomes 27 new faces

By Nathan Summers

ECU welcomes 27 new faces

Thursday, February 3, 2011

Despite caring little about the media and internet frenzy that has become college football’s National Signing Day, East Carolina head coach Ruffin McNeill had the kind of day Wednesday that would leave many coaches patting themselves on the back.

All of the players on McNeill’s recruiting wish list made official their commitments to the Pirates by mid-afternoon, and the group of 27 total new faces includes players other coaches tailed throughout the recruiting process.

McNeill said he remained steadfast to the goal of bringing in the players who best fit his ideals of winning, character and leadership, and stressed that the evaluation process which brought together a memorable second signing class was the same one which crossed other recruits off his list, often despite their physical gifts.

“We wanted to make sure we brought the right guy in that I feel fits what we want here,” said McNeill, who hopes the class will help the Pirates build on last year’s 6-7 finish. “We had some guys on the list that were good football players, but we didn’t think they would fit here with what we wanted philosophy-wise. We got the guys that think team first and entitlement and ego last.”

The 2011 signing class can play some football, too.

As expected, the class is highlighted by nationally-coveted running backs Chevelle Buie and Reggie Bullock, but its core is seven defensive linemen, led by prized JUCO defensive end Chris Baker.
McNeill signed 15 defensive players and 12 on offense. The Pirates received 16 signatures from in-state athletes, four from South Carolina, three from Virginia and one each from Florida, Mississippi and Nevada. Five of the players are junior college transfers.

The second-year coach credited what he described as well-established relationships with all of this year’s recruits as the biggest reason for ECU’s signing day success. Getting the players signed meant cashing in on every chance during the football year to reinforce the bonds McNeill and his coaching staff had with recruits.

Those bonds were perhaps doubly valuable this year, as McNeill underwent bariatric surgery just weeks before signing day, limiting his contact with players in the final weeks of recruiting.

“I was able to visit with a lot of these players on our campus during spring ball, during summer camps and seven-on-seven camps here,” McNeill said, noting that Buie made his final visit to McNeill’s home shortly after the coach was released from the hospital. “A lot of the players on the list today came to games, numerous games, so I was able to meet with parents and players on numerous occasions. When I had the surgery, it meant it wasn’t required of me to actually go into each guy’s home.”

Buie, who originally committed to Rutgers out of Cocoa High School in Cocoa, Fla., had reportedly narrowed his choices to ECU and Marshall in the days leading up to signing day. At 5-foot-8 and just 153 pounds, Buie has made his name and many highlight reels with his speed.

As a senior, he rolled up 1,338 rush yards and 15 touchdowns, and he capped his career with consecutive 14-0 seasons at Cocoa.

Bullock was just as electric as a sophomore at Arizona Western College, where he led the National Junior College Athletics Association with 1,830 yards and 20 touchdowns. He was named co-player of the year in the NJCAA.

Also stepping into the backfield for ECU is 1,000-yard rusher Chris Hairston out of Parkland High in Winston-Salem.

The Pirates got what they expected at wide receiver, where the South Carolina duo of Antonio Cannon (Central, S.C./Daniel) and Donte Sumpter (Myrtle Beach, S.C./Myrtle Beach) joined early signee Danny Webster (Havelock/Havelock).

The Pirates’ high-octane pass offense made them instantly attractive to a slew of receivers, creating the rare good problem of having to say no to good players. “You have to turn them down, some really good players,” McNeill said.

Joining an offensive line that just endured substantial graduation losses are Isaac Harris (Columbia, S.C./Dutch Fork), Stewart Hinson (Monroe/Piedmont), Chaz Lowery
(Virginia Beach, Va./Ocean Lakes) and Tre Robertson (Roxboro/Person). Long snapper C.J. Struyk (Morehead City/West Carteret) is also on board, but is considered an added newcomer and does not count in Wednesday’s signing class.

Quarterback Cody Keith (Charlotte/Cheshire, Conn., Academy) is also already on campus and counts toward the Pirates’ total of 26.

Perhaps the biggest prize of the day was the substantial addition to an ECU defensive front in desperate need of quality depth. Joining Baker (Greenville, Miss./Hinds Community College) are fellow defensive ends Jeton Beavers (Virginia Beach, Va./Bayside), Dontrill Hyman (Warsaw/James Kenan) and John Lattimore (Lexington/Ventura, Calif., Community College). In the middle come four promising signees in Will Foxx (Greensboro/Oak Ridge Academy), Terrell Stanley (Southport/South Brunswick), Jonathan White (High Point/Central) and Leroy Vick (Wilson/Georgia Military).

At linebacker, McNeill landed a hometown prize in South Central’s Montese Overton, who is joined by Zeek Bigger (Gastonia/Ashbrook), Jojo Blanks (Pembroke/ASA College) and Treshawn Council (Durham/Hillside).

Beefing up the defensive secondary will be Glen Hilliard (Anderson, S.C./T.L. Hanna), Domonique Lennon (Suffolk, Va./Nansemond Suffolk Academy) and Rocco Scarfone (Greensboro/Northern Guilford).

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Researcher's demotion hurts UNC image

BY ERIC FERRERI - Staff Writer

CHAPEL HILL From afar, Oregon scientist Patty Carney has long held UNC-Chapel Hill in high regard.

But no longer, she says. Not after the way it has dealt with prominent cancer researcher Bonnie Yankaskas.

Carney, a professor at the Oregon Health & Science University, watched with surprise as UNC-CH first tried to fire Yankaskas and subsequently demoted her and cut her salary after a hacker's infiltration of a research database she oversees. The university's investigation found that the 2007 breach endangered 180,000 patient files, including about 114,000 Social Security numbers.

Still, the sanctions have struck Yankaskas' colleagues as unnecessarily harsh. They think she was maligned by a university that has long benefited from her accomplishments.

"The image of UNC as being this place where smart, inquisitive people could conduct research with pride was huge," said Carney, a family medicine professor. "The fact that they handled this in this way - you couldn't pay me a million bucks to work there."
Carney is one of 127 university professors to sign a petition backing Yankaskas in her quest for full job and salary reinstatement. The petition, signed predominantly by UNC-CH faculty members, has been presented to the board of trustees, which was set to review an appeal of Yankaskas' demotion. That appeal has been tabled, with the two parties now headed to mediation later this month.

Some at UNC-CH fear that the situation, which has received thorough coverage in higher-education publications, may have long-term consequences for the university as it tries to recruit faculty.

"The university comes out looking not so good," said Michael Knowles, a UNC-CH medical school professor who helped put the petition together. "If I was considering coming here, I might have second thoughts."

**Infiltrated server**
For 15 years, Yankaskas has overseen the Carolina Mammography Registry, a federally funded project that compiles and analyzes mammogram data submitted by dozens of radiology offices across North Carolina to improve breast cancer screening.

In 2009, UNC School of Medicine officials discovered that the server had been infiltrated two years earlier. Though the university doesn't think any personal information was removed, it nonetheless notified all 180,000 women with data on the server and set up a call center to answer questions. That cost roughly $250,000.

The medical school received more than 1,600 calls from women afraid their personal information had been compromised. At least one clinic, Wake Radiology, pulled out of the study.

As the leader of the registry project, Yankaskas was responsible for making sure the data was secure. Because she's not an information technology expert herself, she hired a staff member to do so.

UNC-CH Chancellor Holden Thorp could not be reached this week for comment. Robert Winston, chairman of the board of trustees, said he could not comment but hopes the mediation will work things out.
Yankaskas, 65, is still working and continues to receive National Institutes of Health funding. The data her registry collects feeds a larger, national effort whose collective findings help shape federal policy on breast cancer screenings.

**Who's responsible?**
Yankaskas, who holds a doctorate in epidemiology, has argued that she can't be expected to be a data security expert. But John Baines, who works in the information technology department at N.C. State University, said Yankaskas, as principal investigator for the project, should be held responsible. Baines said security is particularly important in this case because the data included 114,000 Social Security numbers, which he referred to as the "lightning rod of privacy these days."

"If it was just a matter of someone breaking through a firewall and going through some [anonymous] data, I wouldn't have a problem with it," Baines said. "But with this kind of data, you may not know how, but you should say 'these are social security numbers and I ought to take care of them.'"

At first, university officials sought to fire Yankaskas. But on appeal, a faculty hearings committee determined that part of the basis for her dismissal - that she had improperly collected mammogram data from UNC Hospitals patients - wasn't valid.

The faculty committee also ruled that Yankaskas wasn't "recklessly ignorant of security concerns." In an eight-page report recommending that she be demoted but not fired, the committee suggested that Internet security is more complicated than Yankaskas understood at the time.

UNC-CH reduced Yankaskas' rank from full to associate professor and her cut her pay from $178,000 to $93,000.

The punishment concerns other researchers who oversee secure data.

"I am far from computer savvy, so even though I do bear responsibility for my studies, I am dependent on the people who work for me," said Knowles, the medical school professor. "It's a wake-up call. I'm sure Dr. Yankaskas thought she was doing things the right way."

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UNC board member advises House speaker

Bill Daughtridge, a member of the UNC system's Board of Governors, is now working as senior policy adviser for House Speaker Thom Tillis. It's an unusual arrangement, because members of the UNC board aren't supposed to work for the legislature, which oversees its budget.

But in this case, Daughtridge is not drawing a salary, said Jordan Shaw, a Tillis spokesman.

"He is helping us out on a volunteer basis and we're very appreciative," Shaw said. "No cost to the taxpayers."

Still, the UNC system's lawyer isn't yet totally comfortable with the arrangement. General Counsel Laura Luger said she's waiting for a written opinion she is expecting soon from an attorney with the General Assembly.

"One of the things we're guided by is not simply a conflict but the perception of a conflict," she said. "I'm conservative about potential conflicts."

The UNC system code says no member of the General Assembly "or officer or employee of the state or of any constituent institution" may serve on the UNC board.

The code does not distinguish between paying and nonpaying jobs. Daughtridge is a former state legislator himself, having served three terms in the N.C. House representing Nash County.

Before becoming senior policy adviser, Daughtridge briefly served as interim chief of staff while Tillis made the transition to the post. Daughtridge is a 1975 graduate of UNC-Chapel Hill, where he was a Morehead Scholar.

McKissick to lead caucus
Sen. Floyd McKissick, a Durham Democrat, has been named chairman of the 25-member state Legislative Black Caucus.

McKissick said in a statement that he would work with caucus members to champion issues such as job recruitment and the promotion of small and minority-owned businesses.

McKissick has been a senator since 2007. He was a member of the Durham City Council for eight years.

**Budget deadline set**
Legislative leaders have talked about an ambitious schedule for passing a recession-era budget. Now they've put it in writing.

According to the budget calendar, it will pass June 1 and be on its way to the governor for her signature nearly a month before the fiscal year ends.

The House, Senate and compromise versions of the budget will be published three days before scheduled votes. The House vote is scheduled April 22, the Senate vote for May 13, and the final votes for June 1.

Budget subcommittee chairmen got their marching orders this morning for putting together their pieces of the puzzle.

Some of the rules:
No "expansion items," which essentially means no new programs.

No negative reserves and no "management flexibility." Sen. Neal Hunt, one of the lead budget writers, said they want subcommittees to say what cuts they're proposing.

No special provisions that spend money or change policies or laws, unless the changes are directly connected to the budget.

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L.A. archbishop talks immigration at UNC

BY YONAT SHIMRON - Staff Writer

As a 10 year-old boy working alongside Mexican workers in a Hollywood, Calif., poultry processing plant owned by his father, Cardinal Roger Mahony said he felt terrorized when the border patrol raided the business one day and intimidated workers with their guns.

It was one of many experiences that made Mahony, the Roman Catholic archbishop of Los Angeles, the church's most outspoken advocate on behalf of immigration reform. Wednesday night he spoke about the issue to students, professors and fellow Catholics during a lecture at UNC Chapel Hill's FedEx Global Education Center.

Stories such as the one he told might open people's hearts and minds to the plight of the 11 million illegal immigrants in the United States and help bring into public view the need for reforms, he said.

Mahoney, who will retire next month as head of the nation's largest archdiocese, visited the state for the first time at the invitation of sociology professor Jacqueline Hagan, who studies migration between Latin America and the U.S.

The cardinal said that while the U.S. happily employs illegal immigrants, it fails to offer them legal protections.

"We gladly accept the toil and taxes of the immigrant work force to fill our economic needs," he said, "but look the other way when they are exploited in the workplace, die in the desert, or are arrested and deported for the most minor of civil violations."

Opponents who support tougher enforcement for illegal immigrants conceded Americans ought not hire people without working papers. "Employers who knowingly hire them are criminals and should be put in jail," said Ron Woodard of NC Listen, a Raleigh advocacy group. But he added just because employers are breaking the law doesn't mean illegal immigrants can get away with it.
"We do have a pathway to citizenship, and it's laid out," Woodard said. Mahoney said he was skeptical of increased enforcement along the border with Mexico.

"We've spent billions of dollars and have only affected the influx very little," he told reporters.

He also suggested that some emboldened opponents of the nation's immigrants are racist.

Mahoney's archdiocese includes 5 million members; 70 percent are Hispanic.

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American students face uncertainty during strife

Many are waiting for chance to leave Egypt

By Alicia McCarty
USA TODAY

Mae Mciver, a 23-year-old student from the University of Maryland, joined Egyptian citizens in a protest last Tuesday in Alexandria.

But the protest quickly turned violent, and Mciver found herself running from Egyptian police.

"It was scary," said Mciver, who returned to the U.S. on Thursday. "You want to be a part of it, but I'm glad to be home safe."

Mciver is one of hundreds of U.S. students coping with the Egyptian unrest. More than 1,700 American students studied abroad in Egypt in the 2008-09 academic year, the most recent for which statistics are available, according to the Institute of International Education.

Sana Saiyed, of Shelbyville, Ky., spent the past few nights in her Cairo apartment listening to the chanting and occasional gunfire from demonstrations. Saiyed, an American University of Cairo student, said she was initially thrilled to be part of history, but was growing anxious. Since it began, one Egyptian friend was beaten during a protest, she said. "It's gotten to the point where it's pretty scary," Saiyed said by phone. She said she hopes to leave soon.

Jessie Mistead, 21, another student at the American University, was waiting in her Cairo apartment Monday hoping for a chance to leave, said her father, Mike Mistead of Hartford, S.D. He said his daughter, whom he reached by phone Monday, says she feels safe, but has a lot of uncertainty.

David Watkins, meanwhile, spent more than 30 hours at the airport trying to leave. The 21-year-old University of Cincinnati student said he hoped to board a flight in Alexandria for Prague.

Still, others are in no hurry to leave, and some want to return.

Carolyn Jezierski, 38, of Elmira, N.Y., a fourth-grade teacher at an international school near Cairo, said she plans to stay until the school tells her to evacuate. "I feel safe enough here," she said.

Jordan Boehm, 21, a University of Maryland student, is trying to get back to Egypt. He left for spring break as the protests were taking shape. "I want to return to Egypt as soon as possible," Boehm, who is in Algeria, said in an e-mail Monday. "I feel helpless sitting here reading the news... and just waiting."

Contributing: Cindy Kranz, The Cincinnati Enquirer; Chris Kennith, The (Louisville) Courier-Journal; Jonathan Ellis, the (Sioux Falls, S.D.) Argus Leader