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Chancellor: ECU is strong and confident

BY JOSH HUMPHRIES
The Daily Reflector

East Carolina University is strong and prepared for the future, Chancellor Steve Ballard said Wednesday in his first state of the university address.

“My remarks today address how we are doing and where we are going,” Ballard said. “I think you will agree with me that ECU is strong and confident. We are confident in our faculty, staff and students, our mission and our future.”

Ballard spoke to about 450 people at Hendrix Theatre on campus. He said he wants to make the State of the University address an annual event.

ECU Board of Trustees Chairman David Brody introduced Ballard as a chancellor who has led the university through some difficult times since he arrived in 2004.

“I must tell you that the state of the university is much better than it was when he arrived here five years ago,” Brody said. “Steve has been great for East Carolina University.”

SPEECH HIGHLIGHTS

Chancellor Steve Ballard shared some of ECU’s achievements during his state of the university address:

- ECU’s Brody School of Medicine trains more doctors that stay in the state than any other school in North Carolina and produces more nurses than any other institution in the state.
- East Carolina has the state’s only College of Allied Health Science.
- The university soon will open its School of Dentistry, which will place fourth-year students in service learning centers throughout the state.

Several local officials including Greenville Mayor Pat Dunn, N.C. Rep. Marian McLawhorn and members of the ECU Board of Trustees turned out to hear Ballard’s take

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on the university's successes and challenges.

"Our contributions to the state of North Carolina are remarkable," Ballard said. "North Carolina must have a strong eastern North Carolina, and the east needs a strong ECU."

Ballard said ECU's Brody School of Medicine trains more doctors that stay in the state than any other school in North Carolina. Of Brody graduates, six of 10 practice in the state.

ECU also produces more nurses than any other institution in the state at the College of Nursing. ECU also has the state's only College of Allied Health Science and 85 percent of its graduates also stay in North Carolina, Ballard said.

Soon the university will have a School of Dentistry, which will place fourth-year students in service learning centers throughout the state and be a model for other dental schools, he said.

Ballard pointed out athletics accomplishments such as back-to-back Conference USA championships in football and the best start to a season by the women's basketball team.

"Pirates have passion," Ballard said. "I know this first-hand because that passion is often directed at me. But passion translates into commitment and engagement."

The university continues to face challenges as it deals with exponential growth and state budget shortfalls, Ballard said.

"Any prudent assessment tells us that we should expect at least one more year of tough fiscal times and perhaps longer," he said.

But, he said, the university has made cuts and priorities that will make it strong in the long run.

The university has hired more than 500 new faculty members since 2004 and will add about 50 this year.

The university also is in the middle of what Ballard called a "building boom." There are about $300 million in building projects in the planning stages.

Ballard said that he plans to continue pushing the university in the right directions with the help of his administrative staff, the Board of Trustees and the faculty.

"We can design our own future if we stay true to our history, our mission and our values," he said. "Nothing is more important for North Carolina than to have a strong East Carolina University leading this region."

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New Pirates arrive

McNeill signs 18 in first recruiting class at ECU

BY NATHAN SUMMERS
The Daily Reflector

It took a lot of phone calls, flights, rental cars, taxis, hotel rooms and a whole lot of home-cooked meals, but Ruffin McNeill got his guys.

The new East Carolina head football coach finalized his first ECU recruiting class on Wednesday's national signing day, getting 18 new signatures to help compensate for the loss of 28 senior players from last year's Conference USA champion squad.

It might never get any tougher.

McNeill was charged with the unenviable task of trying to keep the recruits who ultimately signed national letters of intent on Wednesday on board with the Pirates despite the fact most of them had committed to former coach Skip Holtz. On top of that, McNeill was given just two weeks to do it after being named the new ECU coach on Jan. 21.

But after traveling some long miles with recruiting coordinator Donnie Kirkpatrick — including being snowed-in last Saturday in Maryland — McNeill personally visited 17 of the 18 households of Wednesday's newcomers.

"Today, seeing that last fax come across the fax machine was an awesome feeling," said McNeill, who played defensive back for the Pirates in the late 1970s and later served one season as an ECU assistant coach.

"The special thing about it, going into those young men's homes and meeting with their parents, they each gave us their word they would be attending. They each held true to their word and they all stood fast by that."

Like any great recruiter, once McNeill made it through the front door, the commits were mostly ready to tell him they were keeping their word, often doing so at the dinner table.

"Everybody wanted to feed me. I guess they saw the press conference, so we had a lot of meals," McNeill said. "One day we had to eat three meals and all of them were delicious. Probably the scariest thing was one day trying to remember what state and what city I was in. But it was a fun challenge. It was a whirlwind but I knew what to expect."

McNeill described his living room visits as a feeling-out process in which he tried to give recruits and their families a level of comfort.

The coach knew before walk-

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ing into all but one of those homes that the players had committed to Holtz and not him. Holtz announced Jan. 14 he was leaving ECU to become the new head coach at USF, meaning the commits were left in limbo and that McNeill had to reel them back in if he wanted to coach them at ECU.

That meant convincing them he was every bit as committed to ECU as they had been.

“I made sure that each home understood that. When we established that with each home and each family member, then the conversation just took off,” said McNeill, who has already added eight members to his coaching staff and will likely name the final member before the end of the week. “I told them what I believe in, and academically what we believe in here.”

It was only then, McNeill said, that the football talk began in earnest.

Seven athletes in the class are already enrolled in school. That includes two mid-year signees, offensive lineman Diavalo Simpson (East Mississippi Community College) and defensive back Bradley Jacobs (Mississippi Gulf Coast C.C.), who had previously been announced as new members of the team but who count toward this recruiting class.

Also potentially adding to the total number are a pair of 2009 signees, running back Damonte Terry (Laurinburg/Scotland High School) and linebacker Justin Dixon (Smithfield/Smithfield-Selma), who did not qualify academically after signing but who have been in school at ECU since the fall. If they meet academic requirements in time, they will also join the Pirates for August camp.

In all, the signing class includes players from 10 different states.

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ECU’S 2010 RECRUITING CLASS

Athletes signing letters of intent Wednesday were:
DB Detric Allen, 6-foot, 180 pounds (Norwood/South Stanly)
DB/QB Desi Brown, 6-2, 190 (Webster Groves, Mo./Webster Groves)
QB Shane Carden, 6-3, 205 (Bellaire, Tex./Episcopal)
DE Maurice Falls, 6-2, 210 (Belmont/South Point)
OL Anthony Garrett, 6-5, 305 (Prairie Village, Kan./Fort Scott C.C.)
LB Jacob Geary, 6-3, 220 (Hillsborough/Cedar Ridge)
OL Drew Gentry, 6-6, 285 (Tallahassee, Fla./North Florida Christian)
LB Jeremy Grove, 6-1, 231 (Ijamsville, Md./Gov. Thomas Johnson)
DE Mack Helms, 6-3, 275 (Tallahassee, Fla./Leon)
OL Taylor Hudson, 6-5, 290 (Greenville, S.C./Mauldin)
DB/WR Lamar Ivey, 6-1, 182 (Mebane/Eastern Alamance)
DE/LB Derrell Johnson, 6-1, 218 (Baltimore, Md./Wyoming Seminary)
WR/DB Damon Magazu, 5-11, 175 (Charlotte/Providence)
RB Alex Owah, 5-11, 190 (Harrisonburg, Va./Har-grave Military Academy)
DE Lee Pegues, 6-2, 255 (Bennettsville, S.C./Marlboro County)
WR Torian Richardson, 5-10, 169 (Greer, S.C./Byrnes)
DE Chrishon Rose, 6-4, 275 (Forestville, Md./Bishop McNamara)
LB/DE Terry Williams, 6-1, 255 (Loganville, Ga./Grayson)
ECU

East Carolina University students, faculty and staff are kicking off the two-day "Wear Red for Women" campaign at noon today with the annual "Heart and Sole Walk," sponsored by Campus Recreation and Wellness.

Participants are encouraged to donate a new pair of athletic shoes for children ages 5-14. The shoes will go to students at local schools. Officials are hoping to surpass last year's total of 60 pairs of donated shoes.

The Heart and Sole Walk is a one-mile walk that starts at the Student Recreation Center, continues down Fifth Street, and turns onto Founders Drive. From there, walkers will pass the fountain in the middle of campus and make their way back to the Student Recreation Center.

In addition to the walk, the Healthy Pirates will share information explaining the impact that extra stress puts on a person's heart. For more information, contact the Campus Wellness Center at 328-5171.
Paul Hartley Legacy

By Sarah Hall
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On Jan. 17, a group waited patiently in the drizzle outside 225 Glenwood Ave. in Raleigh. Those who had made it past the white barber shop to the teal porch of the house-turned-gallery, inched through the packed doorway for their turn to sign the guest register and view the art exhibit paying tribute to a teacher and friend.

This large crowd was a testimony to the influence of artist Paul Hartley, who succumbed to cancer Thanksgiving Day after a 37-year career as instructor at East Carolina University where he was professor of studio art. The reception was for the opening of "The Paul Hartley Legacy" at Lee Hansley Gallery.

The exhibit includes works by about 100 of Hartley's former students, and fills both the gallery at 225 Glenwood and the newer Lee Hansley Gallery, Too! in the next block. The exhibit will remain up through Feb. 27. According to Hansley, this is the largest show ever mounted in North Carolina by a private gallery.

And it was organized and mounted in record time, just a few weeks. Hansley and his two assistants "worked like dogs" he says, "and I was mean," but he wanted to do this for Hartley's family, and he had wanted to do it as soon as possible.

Hartley students were asked to submit six images of their work electronically, and from those Hansley narrowed down the number of pieces to be included, which were then shipped to the Raleigh studio.

The labels identifying the artists' names and locations show that Hartley's influence is not just in numbers of students, many of whom are now art teachers themselves, but has a far reach geographically as well, since the artists in the show live in 17 different states, and one, noted artist Kiyomi Talaulicar, from Mumbai, India.

"Paul had taught more art students than anyone in North Carolina," says Hansley. "He was proud of his students, but would never take credit for their successes. If he saw a spark of creativity he was determined to bring that out, but not by having the student emulate him."

And so the students' work is all different, although Hartley's influence can be detected, especially in the technique of acrylic lift of which Hartley was a master.

Hartley's quiet manner and personal attention are what most students remember. Hansley, who represented Hartley for the past 17 years, calls him a "silent giant."

Artist C. Tanner Jensen recalls a semester that she was Hartley's lab assistant, a job that would normally include cleaning and stocking the studio.

"When I asked him what he wanted me to do, he said, 'Paint, I want you to go to your studio and paint.' What a gift that was, what a gift to have had him as a teacher."

Artist and musician Scott Avett (of The Avett Brothers) is one of Hartley's former students. The exhibit includes several of his paintings.

Avett had graduated with a major in broadcast communication and an art minor, even though he had enrolled at ECU with the intention of majoring in art. Painting professor Leland Wallin convinced Avett to stay another year and complete a BFA in art with a focus on painting.

Wallin and Hartley had very different teaching styles, and Avett recalls how he benefitted from both.

"Leland was like a bomb going off, more pointed and direct," says Avett. It was his insistence that convinced Avett to stay at ECU.
But Avett says he realized in hindsight what a big influence Hartley had been with his style of coaching and leading, directing the responsibility to the student. Avett admits that he's never liked anybody telling him what to do, and so Hartley's approach of allowing the student to make his own discoveries made him less likely to rebel against it.

Avett went through a phase where he wasn't finishing work; his "next plan would be in operation before the last one was finished" as he was "ripping through" his paintings.

Instead of insisting that he complete what he started, Avett says Hartley told him that if he isn't going back to a painting, "maybe it's already finished."

Avett says he learned banjo from a teacher who had much this same student-directed approach. And he also compared Hartley to Rick Rubin, the legendary record producer with whom The Avett Brothers recorded their most recent album. He says Rubin guided the project, but left many of the creative decisions up to the Avetts.

In addition to his teaching legacy, Hartley leaves a large body of work, exhibited in the Weatherspoon Art Museum in Greensboro, the Greenville Museum of Art, the Cameron Museum of Art in Wilmington, the Barton College Museum in Wilson and the Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art in Winston-Salem, as well as many business institutions. A painting of his is currently going through the approval process of the NC Museum of Art.

His work had been seen in at least 25 solo shows and over 75 other exhibits. His final show, entitled "Looking Back" was at the Lee Hansley Gallery this past September and October.

Hartley was particularly noted for his mixed media works, combining oil and acrylic with collage. He would often paint realistic objects over an abstract background, giving those objects a floating appearance. With these foreground objects, he utilized an oil glazing technique practiced by Renaissance painters.

For more information, visit www.leehansleygallery.com.
Perdue: SEANC speaks for state workers

RALEIGH -- Gov. Bev Perdue has given North Carolina's largest state employee association the authority to represent workers in discussions about workplace conditions, a move that business and conservative groups say is a step toward unionization.

Without fanfare, Perdue issued an executive order Jan. 21 to create a formal procedure for "meet and confer" gatherings between agencies and representatives of the State Employees Association of North Carolina, which is Local 2008 of the Service Employees International Union, the nation's largest public employee union.

North Carolina and Virginia are the only two states with complete bans on collective bargaining by public employees. But the new procedure will require the governor and some agency heads to sit down with representatives of the 55,000-member group.

The move has drawn criticism from some in the business community, who fear a move toward repeal of the state's ban on collective bargaining for public employees.

"We feel that this is a camel's nose under the tent," said Gregg Thompson, the state director of the National Federation of Independent Business, which represents 7,000 businesses across the state.

North Carolina is the least unionized state in the country, according to the U.S. Labor Department. Thompson said he is concerned that public employee unionization would make the climate more favorable for unions in the private sector. He plans to raise the issue with Perdue.

Francis De Luca, president of the Civitas Institute, a conservative policy group in Raleigh, said the meet-and-confer policy was political payback for the strong union support the Democrats enjoyed in the last election.

'Bad public policy'

"I don't think talking to employees is bad policy," De Luca said. "I think talking to a union is bad public policy. That is exactly what this is. This is talking to the union people."

Perdue, however, said she saw her directive as a gradual expansion of employee-employer discussions started by her predecessor, Gov. Mike Easley.

She said she made the move after conferring with her Cabinet members and said she hoped it would be "good for morale" during a period when there was little money in the state budget for pay raises.

Asked whether she thought the business community would see this as a step toward collective bargaining, Perdue replied: "I hope not. Employers know I'm against collective bargaining."
The governor's assurances satisfied the N.C. Chamber of Commerce, the state's major business voice.

"We are reassured by the fact that the governor maintains her support for North Carolina's current ban on collective bargaining by public employees," said Sherry Melton, the chamber's spokeswoman.

Access for recruiting

The governor's order would give employee association representatives the right to meet with the governor and the state personnel director annually. It would also require heads of state agencies where at least 20 percent of employees belong to the association to designate someone to meet quarterly with the group's representatives to "confer regarding areas of mutual concern, including ways of improving employee-management cooperation, ways of more efficiently and cost effectively delivering high quality services to the public and the terms and conditions of employment."

The order also guarantees the association "reasonable access" to state facilities for purposes of recruitment, distribution of material and consultation with its members.

Dana Cope, executive director of the association, said he thought he had enough members to be recognized to represent employees in several state agencies.

"It means that when employees need an avenue to improve employee-management cooperation, we have one," Cope said in a statement on his group's Web site. "It means that we can discuss the terms and conditions of our employment - something that could reduce the $563 million annual turnover cost in state government."

Efforts to reach Cope for further comment were unsuccessful. There are 95,166 state employees, including 76,551 who work for agencies and 23,615 who work for universities. There are 26,070 state employees living in Wake County.

There have been major efforts both in the state legislature and in Congress to change North Carolina's ban on collective bargaining by public employees.

Across the country, such meet-and-confer agreements as Perdue has inaugurated have served as steps toward collective bargaining, said Rick Kearney, director of the School of Public and International Affairs at N.C. State University.

Two perspectives

"There are two ways to look at it," said Kearney, author of "Labor Relations in the Public Sector."

"If you are anti-union, this waves a red flag at you. But from another perspective, state employees are feeling downtrodden.

"They have not had raises in two years, and salaries are falling behind the private sector, and there is no indication of any improvement in the near future."

John Davis, editor of the John Davis Report, a Raleigh-based political newsletter, said he sees the Perdue move as a political reward to organized labor for pouring $5 million into North Carolina in the
2008 election, nearly all to Democrats, including $1.8 million from the Service Employees International Union.

"Very clearly this state is moving toward unionization of public employees and collective bargaining rights," said Davis, a pro-business Republican. "It's being done very subtly through political involvement, primarily through campaign contributions currying favor of elected officials, knowing it will ultimately lead to successfully running legislation."

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Yale, With $150 Million Deficit, Plans Staff and Research Cuts

By LISA W. FODERARO

Yale University announced on Wednesday that it planned a number of steps to close a remaining $150 million budget gap, including cutting staff, freezing salaries for deans and officers, reducing the number of graduate students — even turning down all thermostats to 68 degrees.

In a memo to the faculty and staff, Richard C. Levin, Yale’s president, and Peter Salovey, its provost, said the measures were necessary because of the drop in the endowment to $16.3 billion last June from its peak of $22.9 billion in June 2008.

“Actions taken last year eliminated more than half of the total deficit, but, as we communicated in the fall, a substantial gap of nearly $150 million remained as of last September,” they wrote. “This gap needs to be closed for the next and subsequent years.”

The memo did not specify how many staff positions would be eliminated. Last year, 100 employees, out of a work force of 9,200, were laid off because of similar financial pressures, and several hundred more positions were eliminated through attrition, said Tom Conroy, a Yale spokesman. Those cuts did not affect faculty positions; nor will the current round.

Laura Smith, president of Local 34 of the Federation of University Employees, which represents 3,400 clerical and technical workers at Yale, said the union would try to blunt the impact of any cuts on its members. “It’s disappointing over all that the university feels it has to do more cuts,” she said, noting that the union and Yale had reached agreement last April on a new contract with strong job security, eight months ahead of schedule.

The announcement said that support from the provost for a number of research and other programs would be “reduced but not eliminated.” In addition, those earning more than $83,000 and who are on the Yale Health Plan will have to start paying for part of their coverage. The reduction in new graduate students, expected to be 10 to 15 percent, would save money, as most receive full tuition and a stipend.

Mr. Conroy said that Yale could not simply dip into its endowment. “First, the endowment is largely restricted to the purposes designated by donors,” he said in a statement. “Second, you would simply be delaying the need to reduce expenditures to future years, because the endowment’s annual payout would be lower in the future if even more of it were spent now.”

Other elite universities in the New York region and across the nation have also had layoffs since the economic downturn.
At Cornell University, about 150 staff members were laid off through November, and another 432 employees took an early-retirement incentive. But 34 of the laid-off workers have been rehired for other jobs, said Simeon Moss, a Cornell spokesman.

At Princeton, a total of 43 positions were eliminated last fall as part of a broad initiative to reduce the operating budget by $170 million over two years. In addition, 145 employees took early retirement.