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Task force tackles ECU budget reduction

By Josh Humphries
The Daily Reflector

Wednesday, February 11, 2009

East Carolina University, along with the rest of the UNC system, is facing budget reductions that could affect any number of operations.

The newly formed budget task force met with ECU faculty and staff Tuesday night in the Hendrix Theater to gather recommendations on how to operate more efficiently in advance of potential state funding cutbacks.

Faculty members discussed a range of topics with the budget task force from reducing energy costs to salary cuts.

In an effort to find every way possible to reduce costs without cutting positions, Chancellor Steve Ballard formed the task force to make recommendations to the Chancellor’s executive counsel to reduce the budget.

Ballard said Tuesday about 75 percent of budgets in the various university departments go to personnel.

“Budgets are very personnel driven and it allows very little to look at otherwise,” Ballard said.

With state reversions in the current budget year, departments have already been trying to cut costs.

“Every unit has given back significant operating money at this point.

“The units have very little operating money to give back right now,” said Provost Marilyn Sheerer.

Ballard said UNC President Erskine Bowles is working to make sure that any budget cuts to the university system are not recurring so that when the economy picks up ECU and the other universities will not be behind where they were before the current state budget deficit.

“There is a political strategy, if we can get this compromise we will not sacrifice the fabric of our institution,” Ballard said.

The faculty balked at suggestions to increase class sizes and offer fewer courses per semester.

Several members of the faculty said large classes in certain subjects are impossible.

But students may find it harder to get into the classes they need to graduate on time if the faculty is reduced and fewer classes are offered each semester.

These issues are being discussed at every campus in the system. Many schools are facing considerable reductions in faculty based on budget predictions.

Gov. Beverly Perdue asked the UNC system to prepare budgets with 3 percent, 5 percent and 7 percent reductions.

A reduction of 7 percent could mean the loss of millions of dollars in funding to each university across the state and may mean job cuts at some schools.

ECU is trying to avoid cutting any jobs, said ECU spokesman John Durham.

“Looking ahead, we are making every effort to avoid cuts or lay-offs,” Durham said.

“It all depends on how severe the cutbacks are in terms of state appropriations, but we have seen this
Lincoln, NAACP share milestone birthdays

By Ginger Livingston
The Daily Reflector

Thursday, February 12, 2009

Today marks milestone anniversaries for the man who freed the nation's slaves and the organization that sought to secure rights for their descendants.

It is the 200th anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's birth and the 100th anniversary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

The Pitt County branch of the NAACP is marking the centennial with a gathering of current and former leaders at 8 a.m. in front of WOOV radio station, 405 Evans St., Greenville.

No Lincoln bicentennial event is planned in Greenville or at East Carolina University, which employs two nationally recognized Lincoln scholars. David Long and Gerald J. Prokopowicz, both with the Department of History, are participating in observances in Washington, D.C., and California.

It's no coincidence that the NAACP shares its birth date with Lincoln. The founders chose Lincoln's birthday as the date to hold its organizational meeting in 1909, according to the Association's Web site.

Mary White Ovington, called the "Mother of the New Emancipation," was a social reformer horrified by accounts of race riots that occurred the summer of 1908 in Springfield, Ill., Lincoln's home.

She and other reformers of the time, recognizing the growing violence against black Americans and the denial of their basic rights, decided to meet on Lincoln's 100th birthday to form a strategy for restoring "the spirit of the abolitionists" and securing equal rights for blacks. In 1910, the NAACP was formally organized.

"The NAACP has a very rich history. The most amazing event is the fact it was founded by a diverse group of people who were not just black, but were black and white and Jewish and who responded to the call," said Calvin Henderson, the current president of the Pitt County branch. "They were responding to a very serious situation at that time, a series of lynchings that were taking place across the country."

If Lincoln could reflect on the nation's character in 1909 and 2009, "I think he would have been a lot happier on his bicentennial year than his centennial year," said Long, whose dissertation "The Jewel of Liberty: Abraham Lincoln's Re-election and the End of Slavery," was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize and several other awards.

"It's one of the most progressive periods in American history for so many people but African-Americans were hardly benefiting," Long said.

There are scholars and politicians who have sought to revise Lincoln's legacy over the last century. It is appropriate to some degree because Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation which ended slavery in 1863 had been so mythologized that it excluded the thousands of soldiers, abolitionists and slaves who fought to end the practice in the United States, Prokopowicz said. Some try to paint Lincoln as a hypocrite because of a letter he wrote in 1862 where he stated, "My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union, and is not either to save or to destroy slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing any slave I would do it, and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone I would also do that. What I do about slavery, and the colored race, I do because I believe it helps to save the Union... ."

When Lincoln wrote this letter he had already written the Emancipation Proclamation, Prokopowicz said. Lincoln had been a vocal opponent of slavery for more than 30 years.

The letter, he said, was a publicity push to convince Northerners who didn't think slavery should be ended
that emancipation was necessary to preserve the Union.

"He was facing some genuine risks when he tried to do such a revolutionary thing," Long said. "Despite what people say today, the Emancipation Proclamation was a revolutionary thing."

Long and Prokopowicz say one of most fascinating evolutions in Lincoln's character was how his opinion changed regarding citizenship rights for the newly freed slaves.

Like many of his time who were opposed to slavery, Lincoln never addressed the issue of giving voting rights to freed male slaves, Prokopowicz said. When regiments of free black men and former slaves fought in the Union army, Lincoln's opinion changed, he said.

Henderson, Long and Prokopowicz said they hope people take a few moments today to reflect on the importance of Lincoln's birth and the NAACP's creation.

I would take the message of hope from them," Prokopowicz said. In Lincoln's time the nation was at war against itself and in 1909 African Americans were being murdered in broad daylight and their killers never prosecuted.

"No matter how grim things seem now recognize that Americans have lived through grimmer times and from that found progress," Prokopowicz said.

"My thoughts about the NAACP, from my beginning involvement, is that it is an organization that has fought many great battles and stood for many great things," Henderson said. "The battles it fought have benefitted all races."

There are still hurdles to overcome, he said.

"There is still some unfinished business," Henderson said. "Yes we've elected a black president but there is still a lot of work that needs to be done to change the mind set of our young people." They must be infused with the desire for education that people of his and his father's generations had and shown that hard work produces rewards, he said.

Henderson said he fears that young people will relive the injustices of the past if they don't learn these lessons.
Logan to coach Bucs' RBs

Staff and wire reports
Thursday, February 12, 2009

TAMPA, Fla. — The Tampa Bay Buccaneers filled more openings on the staff of first-year coach Raheem Morris on Wednesday, adding running backs coach Steve Logan, tight end coach Alfredo Roberts and assistant offensive line coach Chris Mosley.

Logan, East Carolina's all-time winningest football coach, joins the Bucs after spending the past two seasons as offensive coordinator for Boston College, where he worked for Jeff Jagodzinski, who was fired by BC after interviewing for the New York Jets coaching vacancy last month.

Tampa Bay hired Jagodzinski as its offensive coordinator two weeks ago.

Logan compiled a 69-58 record while serving as ECU's head coach from 1992-2002. He took the Pirates to five bowl games in that span.

The team also said two holdovers from the staff of former coach Jon Gruden had their titles changed. Richard Bisaccia becomes associate head coach/special teams coordinator and Richard Mann will serve as assistant head coach/wide receivers.

Jay Kaiser is an assistant to the head coach.

Roberts was tight ends coach for the Cleveland Browns the past two seasons. Mosley was the tight ends coach at Princeton in 2008 after working as an assistant offensive line coach at Boston College two years ago.

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Duke meningitis victim expected to recover

ERIC FERRERI, Staff Writer

DURHAM - A Duke freshman who contracted meningitis while sleeping out at the Krzyzewskiville tent city is expected to make a full recovery, university officials said Wednesday.

The female student, whose identity has not been released, was hospitalized Tuesday.

Duke health officials quickly tracked down at least a dozen of her roommates and tentmates, all of whom were given antibiotics as a precaution, officials said. None is thought to have contracted the disease.

The student was one of 12 sharing a tent for the past six weeks in anticipation of Wednesday's basketball game against UNC.

Meningitis, an inflammation of the spinal cord and brain, is transmitted through close contact, so the other students sharing the tent were of particular concern, said Bill Purdy, executive director of Duke’s student health service.

Other students who camped out at Krzyzewskiville are in no danger, he said.

"We don't have to treat the next tent, or the tent two over, or someone in a class with her, or who had coffee with her," Purdy said.

About 70 percent of this year's freshman class arrived last fall having had the meningitis vaccination, but the student who contracted it this week had not, according to her medical records, Purdy said.

The vaccine lowers the risk of meningitis greatly but doesn't prevent it altogether because it doesn't protect against all strains. The vaccine is recommended but not required by state law.

Krzyzewskiville, a sprawling community of tents, makes this a somewhat tricky and unusual public health situation, Purdy acknowledged. "Germs can certainly spread in tents very easily," he said. "It's close quarters and certainly not the best hygiene."

Symptoms can include high fever, stiff neck, severe headache and vomiting.

Mary Covington, assistant vice chancellor for campus health services at UNC-Chapel Hill, said the risk of meningitis is greater this time of year when people are suffering from coughs and colds. And its symptoms are similar to those of influenza, she said.

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Faribault native leads research toward diabetes treatment

Pauline Schreiber
Posted: Wednesday, February 11, 2009 1:09 am

Ethan Anderson stands in front of a research building at East Carolina University in Greenville, N.C. The Faribault native assisted with research that could lead to a new treatment for Type 2 diabetes. (Photo provided)

pschreiber@faribault.com

FARIBAULT — A Faribault native is among East Carolina University researchers whose discovery could lead to a new treatment for Type 2 diabetes.

Ethan Anderson, a 1996 graduate of Faribault High School and a research associate in ECU’s Department of Cardiovascular Science, is the lead author of a paper on research showing elevated production of hydrogen peroxide in cells is a primary reason for insulin resistance — a precondition that leads to diabetes.

“It’s a nasty by-product of metabolizing saturated fat,” Anderson said.

Anderson, who is now a junior faculty member at the Greenville, N.C., university, received degrees at Bethany Lutheran College and the University of Minnesota. He earned his Ph.D. at Yale University.

He and other ECU researchers did studies both on animals and humans that showed too much saturated fat in a diet leads to too much production of hydrogen peroxide in cells, resulting in insulin resistance that could lead to development of Type 2 diabetes.

Dietitians and physicians already knew too much saturated fat in a diet could lead to Type 2 diabetes, Anderson said.

“What our study discovered was that the overproduction of hydrogen peroxide is the cause of insulin resistance that leads to Type 2 diabetes,” he said.

The researchers showed that by either blocking the production or preventing the release of hydrogen peroxide in cells, they were able to prevent the development of insulin resistance in rodents fed a high-fat diet.
“We also used five male college students and gave them vouchers to eat at fast-food places, exclusively, for five days and to do little exercise,” Anderson said.

The men experienced dramatic increases in the production of hydrogen peroxide in cells, he said.

In their study, researchers also implemented a new molecule, an antioxidant that targets blocking the production of hydrogen peroxide. Clinical trials will need to be done on the drug, Anderson said.

Anderson is exploring ways the new antioxidant treatment might help diabetics with cardiovascular disease and as a potential therapy for patients recovering from cardiac surgery to alleviate post-operative complications.

A paper based on the ECU research will appear in the March issue of the Journal of Clinical Investigation. An online version of the article is available now at jci.org/articles/view/37048.

Anderson’s parents are Tom and Kathy Anderson of Faribault. Kathy is a nurse supervisor at District One Hospital and Tom is a nurse anesthetist at Regions Hospital in St. Paul.

— Staff writer Pauline Schreiber may be reached at 333-3127.