

# THE DAILY CLIPS

**February 21, 2011**

News, commentary, and opinion  
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**East Carolina University News Bureau**

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AO Phi Volunteer Rachel Lohman, center, is Dionna Barret's (left) "personal shopper" during her time at the Fairytale Boutique. This is a charity program at East Carolina, which gives girls the opportunity to receive special treatment in preparation for Prom. The girls get to keep all the prom apparel, with an included dry cleaning of the dress they pick. Friday, Feb. 18, 2011. (Aileen Devlin/The Daily Reflector)

**Reflector.com**

## **Boutique outfits students for prom**

By **Kim Grizzard**

The Daily Reflector

Monday, February 21, 2011

In the fairytale “Cinderella,” the fairy godmother shows up just in time with a dress, shoes and accessories so Cinderella can outshine her stepsisters at the ball. But at the Fairytale Boutique, everybody gets a happy ending.

Twin sisters Aleisha and Alexis Stewart were among dozens of girls who got the royal treatment at the weekend boutique at East Carolina University. ECU students and faculty transformed the university's old cafeteria complex into a specialty shop, stocked with gowns and jewelry, shoes and shawls, handbags and hair accessories.

“It's all about having that girlie moment,” said Jessica Gagne Cloutier, service-learning coordinator of the Volunteer and Service-Learning Center, which created Fairytale Boutique, “and making sure they feel like the belle of the ball or a princess when they get to go to their prom.”

The boutique, launched in 2008, is designed to help give girls a chance to participate in their dream prom without the nightmare price. The concept is for college students to donate clothing and accessories that are made available free to girls selected to shop at the invitation-only event.

Students like Lynelle, who is preparing for her first prom at Ayden-Grifton High School, are given personal appointments where they can shop for their perfect prom attire.

“It's like Cinderella getting dressed for the prom,” Lynelle's mother, Jackie, said. “It's a blessing.”

Despite a stagnant economy, prom costs have skyrocketed. From tickets to the dance itself to dinners out and flowers to photography, prom can cost hundreds of dollars. Adding options such as limousine rental and salon services to the cost of formal wear can easily bring the total to more than \$1,000.

Fairytale Boutique was a godsend for Jackie, who wondered how she would pay for her daughter to go to the dance when she just had a cut in her teacher's assistant salary. Not all shoppers were selected due to financial hardship. Cloutier said organizers consult with high school guidance counselors and the Department of Social Services to determine which girls could benefit most from the experience.

“Our donors really felt strongly that if they're giving up this dress that has so many memories for them that it's going to a girl who truly deserves it,” Cloutier said.

Bernetta Bradley was responsible for helping to choose nine students from J.H. Rose High School to shop at Fairytale Boutique. Bradley, a senior counselor at Rose, came to the boutique Friday night to offer her opinion on color and style.

“I'm just so thrilled that this is here for them,” she said. “It makes the girls feel so special.”

At Fairytale Boutique, each girl is paired with a volunteer personal shopper who hears the girl's vision for her dress and then focuses on the sizes and colors available.

Volunteer Whitney Sibol, an ECU senior marketing major from Baltimore, Md., said she felt like one of the bridal consultants from television's “Say Yes to the Dress” as she selected gowns from Fairytale Boutique's 300-dress inventory.

“It's one of those milestones, especially for girls, that they always remember,” Sibol said of prom. “We've been working on it so hard for the past year ... (to) see that girl leave happy.”

After successful showings in 2008 and 2009, Fairytale Boutique took 2010 off to have time to restock its inventory. Organizers like to have a ratio of at least 10 dresses for every shopper to give girls a good selection.

Getting those dresses donated can be a hard sell. The boutique likes to keep current on styles, so dresses it offers are no more than five years old. (More vintage gowns are sold as Halloween costumes at Fairytale Boo-tique, an off-season fundraiser for the boutique.)

“One thing that we do see, it's really hard to part with these dresses for a lot of women. We get a lot of bridesmaids' dresses, which are apparently much easier to part with,” Cloutier said, laughing.

“We kind of say, ‘You're giving a new chance at life for that dress. Pull it out of the closet and give an opportunity for another girl to create memories as happy and exciting as the ones that you have.’”

Volunteer Kiki Brown is glad she did. Her prom dress was among the first selected at a previous Fairytale Boutique. Now an ECU graduate, Brown returned Friday and served as a personal shopper for Aleisha Stewart, who was having trouble deciding between a full-length orange gown and a strapless cream-color one. Meanwhile, her sister, Alexis, was in another room, deciding her own dress dilemma between two perfect-fitting gowns, one burgundy and the other jade.

Bradley, a former sales associate at Lord & Taylor in New York, knew this could take awhile. She found a comfortable seat in a waiting area where she could admire her students as they modeled their selections.

“It provides for some young ladies who wouldn't have any other opportunity to get a nice dress,” she said. “It just boosts their self-esteem. They just beam and shine.”

Contact Kim Grizzard at [kgrizzard@reflector.com](mailto:kgrizzard@reflector.com) or (252) 329-9578.

Los Angeles Times

*In the Works*

## Off-the-shelf blood vessels

**A North Carolina company has figured out how to get cells to build artificial vessels that are strong and safe.**



Bioengineered veins may become an option for patients having bypass surgery or dialysis. (Science/AAAS / February 21, 2011)

By Amber Dance, Special to the Los Angeles Times  
February 21, 2011

Heart bypass patients may soon be able to get new arteries without having to sacrifice vessels from other parts of their body, thanks to ready-made, off-the-shelf artificial blood vessels.

Biomedical engineers have been trying to build replacement blood vessels, needed for coronary artery bypass surgery and kidney dialysis patients, for three decades. Researchers from Humacyte Inc., in Durham, N.C., discovered the trick: recruiting cells to build the vessel, then washing them away so the nonliving tissue is storable and works for anyone. The team reported their findings in the Feb. 2 issue of the journal *Science Translational Medicine*.

Humacyte's methods are the first to yield ready-to-use vessels that could be suitable for emergency surgery. The company estimates that, annually, 100,000 Americans who need bypass surgery don't get it because they have

no suitable replacement.

The company has managed to make a "universal blood vessel," says Gordana Vunjak-Novakovic, a biomedical engineer at Columbia University in New York who was not involved in the study. "This is very practical and convenient for clinical applications." Other approaches, customized with a patient's own cells, take several months to prepare.

Though Humacyte is starting to plan human clinical trials, it's too early to predict when the grafts would become available to the general public.

When performing bypass surgery — in the heart or elsewhere in the body — surgeons need replacement vessels that match the size of the old ones. Often they can harvest vessels from elsewhere. Two mammary arteries in the chest and a pair of veins from the legs can often get the job done.

Most self-to-self transplants perform quite well, says Dr. Alan Kypson, a heart surgeon at the East Carolina Heart Institute in Greenville, N.C., who co-authored the Humacyte report. But if a person has varicose or swollen veins, or needs multiple bypasses, the body's own vessels may not be sufficient, he adds.

Plus, these transplants are a case of "robbing Peter to pay Paul," says Yadong Wang, an associate professor of bioengineering at the University of Pittsburgh who also works on artificial vessels (see the related article). Removing the vessels lengthens time in the operating room and causes pain and swelling that can last up to six months.

Artificial vessels could also be useful for people on kidney dialysis machines. To get easy access to fast-moving blood, doctors typically link an artery and vein, making an artificial shunt. But that structure can withstand only so much poking and prodding; eventually a replacement will be necessary. Once a person runs out of his or her own vessels, artificial options exist, but they typically last for less than a year.

To build a better vessel, the researchers collected smooth muscle cells from the aortas of cadavers. They put the cells in a polymer tube that acted as a scaffold. To make the environment more like a natural vessel, they pumped fluid through the tube, mimicking blood flow.

Over time, the scaffold degraded as the cells did their work. The cells produced a network of proteins such as collagen, which gives blood vessels their strength. After seven to 10 weeks, the scientists washed away the cells, leaving behind a clean, ready-to-use artificial vessel.

"All we're left with is the proteins the cells have secreted," says Shannon Dahl, co-founder and senior director of scientific operations at Humacyte, who led the study. With no cells, there's no worry that the patient's immune system will attack the graft. And, she adds, the graft is not really "living," which explains why it can last so long in the refrigerator.

About 5% to 10% of bypass surgeries are emergencies, Kypson says; other patients can afford to wait for days or weeks. Off-the-shelf grafts would be a boon for all patients, though, since it would mean shorter surgeries with quality-controlled, size-matched transplants.

A new blood vessel has to withstand the heart's constant pumping. In a healthy person, blood pressure tops out at approximately 120 millimeters of mercury. In tests, Humacyte's vessels could withstand a burst of more than 2,000 millimeters of mercury. They won't pop.

Kypson tested artery-vein shunts in nine baboons; the shunts lasted for at least six months. The scientists have not yet tested the vessels for longer periods.

He also tested coronary artery bypass replacements in five dogs. The vessels all lasted for at least a year. The scientists have not yet completed longer-term experiments, so the maximum lifetime of the grafts is unknown.

Dahl does not yet know how much the grafts would cost, but anticipates it will be less than the \$15,000-and-up for personalized grafts from patient's own cells. The company can use cells from multiple cadavers to generate hundreds of grafts at once, making production much cheaper.

Humacyte's protocol is a major advance, says Robert Tranquillo, a biomedical engineer at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, who was not involved in the study. However, he adds, it is not yet known if the cell-free vessels will eventually degenerate in the body.

Scientists are pursuing several ways to grow vessels, and the best method

remains uncertain, Tranquillo says. He notes that a company called Cytograft is also trying grafts made from patients' own rolled-up skin cells. There is plenty of testing left to do, in terms of safety and effectiveness of the transplants.

[health@latimes.com](mailto:health@latimes.com)

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February 18th, 2011 07:00am

## **“The Master” in Greenville**

by Ben Steelman

If you can get away to Greenville, N.C., next week, here’s a good excuse to travel: Colm Toibin, the Irish novelist considered one of the finest living writers in English, will be at East Carolina University on Feb. 23 and 24.

Toibin, known for his 2004 novel “The Master,” will give a lecture on “The Art of Fiction” at 7:30 p.m. Feb. 23 in Room 1031 of the Bate Building, on the ECU campus. He will give a reading of his work at 7:30 p.m. Feb. 24 in the Greenville Museum of Art, 802 Evans St.

Tom Douglass, associate professor of English at ECU, called Toibin “a writer’s writer in the tradition of Jane Austen and Henry James and the Irish champion, James Joyce.”

Toibin, 55, was born in County Wexford, Ireland, the grandson of an IRA member who fought in the Irish war for independence. He graduated from University College, Dublin, then spent several years in Spain, an experience that influenced his books “The South” (which won the Aer Lingus Fiction Prize and was shortlisted for the Whitbread First Novel Award) and “Homage to Barcelona.”

“The Master,” a psychological study of the Anglo-American author Henry James, published in 2004, was shortlisted for the Man Booker award. His 2009 novel “Brooklyn,” about a young Irish woman’s experiences in America in the 1950s, won the Costa Novel Award. Toibin has also written plays, essays (“Lady Gregory’s Toothbrush”), literary criticism (“The

Modern Library”) and travelogues (“Sign of the Cross: Travels in Catholic Europe”).

For more about this author see: <http://www.colmtoibin.com/content/biography>.



## **Tech Chronicles**

News and views from the digital frontier.

### **Feeling down? Play Bejeweled.**

If you are feeling a tad depressed, playing Bejeweled, Peggle or Bookworm Adventure could lift you up.

No, really. An East Carolina University clinical study, funded by Popcap Games, the maker of casual games such as Bejeweled, found that the games reduced symptoms of depression and anxiety in patients.

Carmen Russoniello, the director of the school's psychophysiology lab and biofeedback clinic, even said that it had the potential to be a treatment that could be prescribed to patients with depression.

The results were the latest in an ongoing study; in the past, the school also found that playing casual games helped reduce tension, anger and fatigue.

No word on whether playing CityVille, developed by social gaming company Zynga, reportedly valued at \$10 billion, could have the same effect.



Photo from Forrest Croce



## **Niswander named to American Institute of Certified Public Accountants Board of Examiners**

Monday, February 21, 2011

WorkWeek

Frederick Niswander, dean of the College of Business at East Carolina University and interim vice chancellor for administration and finance, has been named to the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants Board of Examiners for the 2011-12 term.

The Board of Examiners is a senior committee that consists of approximately 20 CPAs from across the country. It is responsible for the oversight of the uniform CPA examination used throughout the United States and internationally. Niswander will help set policy for the uniform CPA examination while overseeing the scoring and development of the exam.

“I am honored and privileged to continue serving the accounting profession through the AICPA,” Niswander said. “Giving back to our community and our profession is an important value we instill in each of our students in the College of Business, and I am delighted to have this opportunity.”

Niswander served the AICPA for three years as a member of the institute's council, a group that determines programs and policies for the AICPA. He also has an extensive service record with the N.C. Association of Certified Public Accountants and was awarded the group's Raymond Rains Outstanding Service award in May.

Niswander serves on the Greenville-Pitt County Chamber of Commerce board of directors and is chairman of the City of Greenville's Investment Advisory Committee, a volunteer position that assists in developing and evaluating investment strategies and options for the city.

The American Institute of Certified Public Accountants is the world's largest association representing the accounting profession, with nearly 370,000 members in 128 countries. AICPA members represent many areas of practice, including business and industry, public practice, government, education and consulting. Membership also is available to accounting students and CPA candidates.

The AICPA sets ethical standards for the profession and U.S. auditing standards for audits of private companies, nonprofit organizations, federal, state and local governments. It develops and grades the Uniform CPA Examination.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

**GLEN GILBERT**, right, dean of the College of Health and Human Performance at ECU, thanks Brian Pecheles, president of Pecheles Automotive Group, for his support of the annual scholarship event.

## Pecheles Automotive Group supports scholarship, annual breakfast at ECU

Even in an economic climate where some companies are scaling back donations, **Pecheles Automotive Group** continues to steer a course toward supporting education and service to the community.

Pecheles Automotive Group has donated more than \$20,000 to East Carolina University's College of Health and Human Performance to support undergraduate scholarships and the annual scholarship breakfast.

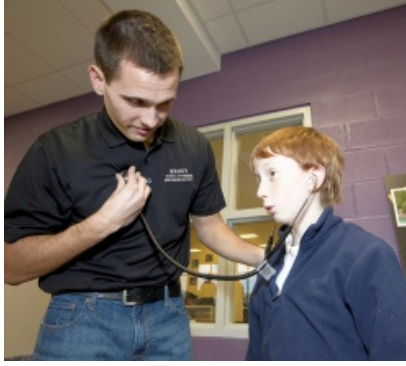
"We are proud to sponsor this event that recognizes so many talented students," Brian Pecheles, president of the automotive group, said in a news release. "It is a great opportunity to meet and get to know the students who receive our support."

Glen Gilbert, dean of the College of Health and Human

Performance, said, "We are grateful for the generosity of Pecheles Automotive Group. In partnership with this successful business leader, we can gather together benefactors and students. Scholarship recipients learn about why others give back and donors hear firsthand how their gifts make a difference. This event is of mutual benefit on both sides of the table."

Pecheles Automotive Group employs 150 people at three locations: Joe Pecheles Volkswagen, Audi, Hyundai, Mitsubishi in Greenville; Pecheles Ford, Toyota, Scion in Washington, N.C.; and Pecheles Honda in New Bern.

Joe Pecheles Volkswagen garnered national recognition this year by Volkswagen of America Inc. for 45 years of dedication and service.



Cliff Hollis/ECU News Services

ECU Medical student Wesley O'Neal lets Allen Stork, 11, of Greenville, listen to chest sounds during a health fair at the Boys & Girls Club on Belvoir Highway on Feb. 11. O'Neal and his fellow ECU Brody Scholars organized the fair.



## **ECU Notes: Bioengineered veins**

ECU News Services

Sunday, February 20, 2011

Thanks to research involving experts from East Carolina University, other universities and a Morrisville-based biotechnology firm, the day when a surgeon can pull a new human vein off the shelf for use in life-saving vascular surgeries is a step closer to reality.

New research published in the current issue of the journal "Science Translational Medicine" demonstrates the capability of tissue-engineered vascular grafts that are immediately available at the time of surgery and are less likely to become infected or obstructed. The bioengineering method of producing veins shows promise in large- and small-diameter applications, such as for coronary artery bypass surgery and for vascular access in hemodialysis.

Humacyte, a Morrisville biotechnology company, worked with university researchers to develop the veins.

"This new type of bioengineered vein allows them to be easily stored in hospitals so they are readily available to surgeons at the time of need," said Dr. Alan P. Kypson, a cardiothoracic surgeon, associate professor at the Brody School of Medicine at ECU and an author of the paper. "Currently, grafting using the patient's own veins remains the gold standard. But harvesting a vein from the patient's leg can lead to complications, and for patients who don't have suitable veins, the bioengineered veins could serve as an important new way to provide a coronary bypass."

The American Heart Association Update on Heart Disease Statistics reported that in 2007, in the United States, surgeons performed more than 400,000 coronary bypass procedures. Patients requiring bypass surgery may not have suitable veins or arteries available and are not candidates for synthetic grafts because of the size needed for grafting.

The bioengineered veins also show promise for patients on kidney hemodialysis. According to the National Kidney Foundation, 320,000 patients are on chronic hemodialysis. Each year, 110,000 new patients develop renal failure requiring dialysis, and the number is growing by 3 percent a year. More than half of dialysis patients lack the healthy veins necessary and must undergo an arteriovenous graft placement to have bloodstream access for hemodialysis.

Most arteriovenous grafts that are placed for hemodialysis access are made of a synthetic material, which suffers from significant drawbacks including a high rate of infection, a propensity for blockages due to clotting and a thickening of blood vessels known as intimal hyperplasia, said Dr. Jeffrey H. Lawson, a surgeon and associate professor at Duke University School of Medicine and an author of the research.

“Due to high complication rates, each A.V. dialysis graft requires an average of 2.8 interventions over its lifetime just to keep it functioning,” Lawson said. “Hence, there is a huge clinical need for a functionally superior, off-the-shelf A.V. graft that suffers from fewer complications than current materials.”

Lawson has served as a consultant for Humacyte and has received research support from the company through Duke.

In this research, scientists generated bioengineered veins in a bioreactor — a device designed to support a biological environment — and then stored them up to 12 months in refrigerated conditions. The bioengineered veins, 3 millimeters to 6 millimeters in diameter, demonstrated excellent blood flow and resistance to blockage in large animal models for up to a year.

Scientists from Duke, ECU, Yale University and Humacyte conducted the research, and Humacyte, a leader in regenerative medicine, funded it. Dr. Laura Niklason, founder of Humacyte and professor of anesthesiology and biomedical engineering at Yale, oversaw the research and served as senior author of the article. Niklason is an authority in regenerative medicine for arterial engineering and led the team that recently created a functioning rat lung in a laboratory.

Shannon L.M. Dahl, senior director of scientific operations and co-founder of Humacyte, is lead author on the paper.

“Not only are bioengineered veins available at the time of patient need, but the ability to generate a significant number of grafts from a cell bank will allow for a reduction in the final production costs, as compared to other regenerative medicine strategies,” Dahl said.

“While there is still considerable research to be done before a product is available for widespread use, we are highly encouraged by the results outlined in this paper and eager to move forward with additional study.”

Humacyte, a privately held company, is primarily focused on developing products for vascular disease and for dermal filling and soft tissue repair. The company uses its innovative and proprietary platform technology to engineer human extracellular matrix-based tissues that can be shaped into tubes, sheets or particulate conformations with properties similar to native tissues.

### **Low-cost behavioral health services clinic**

ECU faculty, staff, students and area residents have more options for low-cost specialty health services with the opening of the new ECU Psychological Assessment and Specialty Services Clinic.

The PASS Clinic, directed by Tony Cellucci of the Thomas Harriot College of Arts and Sciences, is as much a training facility as public health clinic. Under the supervision of licensed psychologists, ECU doctoral students get hands-on training while providing services at the clinic.

The clinic offers patients short- and long-term treatment in several areas: cognitive-behavioral psychotherapy, healthy weight management, smoking cessation services and women's health. The healthy weight and smoking cessation services are approved for N.C. FLEX reimbursement.

Cognitive-behavioral therapy is a short-term, evidence-based treatment approach available to adults who suffer from emotional disorders. It is also available for people who want to reduce their drinking or abstain from alcohol or drugs.

Healthy weight services are available to children, adolescents, adults and families. This program is not a diet. It provides evidence-based treatment focusing on making small, non-restrictive lifestyle changes that result in maintained weight loss, and addresses the thoughts, behaviors and emotional factors that contribute to weight gain. Group and individual treatment services are available, along with short-term treatment or long-term follow-up care.

Smoking cessation services are available to help people reduce or stop using tobacco and nicotine. The program offers ways to help prevent weight gain associated with stopping smoking.

Women's health services are available to individual women or couples. Concerns addressed may include stress, depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder as well as coping with relationships, fertility or chronic pain.

The PASS Clinic is in Rawl 311 and is open in accordance with the university calendar. Hours of operation are 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Friday.

The clinic does not provide emergency services. It will work with an individual's physician or refer the patient to a medical provider if necessary.

For information, call 737-4180. There is no charge for an initial consultation. Some programs may have a waiting list. ECU students are encouraged to contact the ECU Counseling Center first.

### **Annual Youth Arts Festival seeks artists**

The Seventh Annual Youth Arts Festival at ECU is seeking artists to participate in its annual show 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on April 2.

The goal of the East Carolina Annual Youth Arts Festival is to promote the visual and performing arts to the region's children.

Visual and performing artists present their art forms to the youth of Pitt County and eastern North Carolina. Some artists showcase their talents and demonstrate the media they work in, while others work with the children doing hands-on projects.

The festival strives to feature multicultural and multiethnic artists from the university community, Greenville and the region.

Artists are not charged booth fees and no commission is taken on any work sold. This festival is geared towards elementary and middle school children but is open to all. For more information or to participate, contact Dindy Reich, coordinator of the Youth Arts Festival, at 328-5749 or reichd@ecu.edu. More information about the festival can be found at <http://www.ecu.edu/soad/youtharts.cfm>

### **Summer med ed deadline nears**

College students and recent graduates aiming for a career as a physician have until March 4 to apply to ECU's Summer Program for Future Doctors.

The eight-week summer program at the Brody School of Medicine, which begins on May 16, that lets participants experience the demands of a medical school curriculum.

The only requirement is that students be North Carolina residents. Preference is given to minorities, disadvantaged and non-traditional students, but all students are encouraged to apply.

Students should have satisfactorily completed one year of biology, chemistry and physics. Organic chemistry is strongly encouraged.

The program is tuition-free, though participants are responsible for living expenses. Eligible students will receive stipends.

Applications and more information are online at <http://www.ecu.edu/ascc/SPFD.cfm>.

**Upcoming Events:**

**Wednesday:** Best-selling author Katharine Weber will give a free lecture, “Who Owns History: Making Fiction from the Facts of the Triangle Fire of 1911” at 4 p.m. in the Mendenhall Student Center, Room 221. Call 328-6092 for more information.

**Thursday:** Award-winning writer Colm Tóibín will give a free reading of his work at 7:30 p.m. at the Greenville Museum of Art, 802 Evans St.

**Saturday:** ECU School of Music's Tribute to Motown, 7:30 p.m. in Wright Auditorium. Ticketed event. Call 328-4788.

See [www.ecu.edu/cs-ecu/calendar.cfm](http://www.ecu.edu/cs-ecu/calendar.cfm) for times, places and more information on these events and other ECU upcoming activities.

## **Volunteers remodel paralyzed bride-to-be's home**

The Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. Volunteers plan to help remodel the Knightdale house of a woman paralyzed in a freak accident when one of her bridesmaids shoved her in a pool.

The Remodelers Council of the Home Builders Association of Raleigh-Wake County is helping make Rachelle Friedman's home more handicapped accessible.

Friedman was paralyzed from the chest down just a month before her June wedding when she hit her head on the bottom of a pool while enjoying a night out with her bridesmaids.

Friedman decided to postpone her wedding because if she married her fiance, she would stop receiving the Medicaid checks she needs to pay for her constant care and rehabilitation.

NBC's "Today" will feature the remodeling, which is part of another NBC show, "George to the Rescue."

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**Note:** Rachelle Friedman is an ECU alumna.



Plant Manager Emerson Hobgood, right, discusses the assembly of a gas-fired unit heater at Mestek Inc. in Farmville as employee Antonio Godard attaches a part to the unit Friday morning. (Rhett Butler/The Daily Reflector)

**Reflector.com**

## **Employers seeing positive signs**

By **K.j. Williams**

The Daily Reflector

Monday, February 21, 2011

Some effects of the recession appear to be receding, and signs of economic growth are in the air, experts and executives say.

Wanda Yuhas, executive director of the Pitt County Development Commission, said there are some good signs locally. "It's incremental, but it's positive growth. We are seeing small gains," she said, noting, "It's not a complete turnaround."

The area is reaping the benefits of its broad employment base.

"Our long-term strength has been the diversity of our economy. We have a mix of education, health care, and we still have a good bit of manufacturing, which many communities don't," Yuhas said.

And there is some hiring taking place.

"We are seeing most of our employers starting to recover," she said. "They are hiring people back who were laid off."

John Chaffee, president and chief executive officer of North Carolina's Eastern Region, said the 13-county area including Pitt lost 15,000 jobs in 2009. It gained about 3,000 jobs in 2010.

"We expect to see positive job growth continue throughout the rest of the year," he said of 2011.

Chaffee notes the region is seeing growth in aerospace, including Spirit AeroSystems, a manufacturing facility in Kinston and Fleet Readiness Center East in Havelock, a civilian repair facility.

Pitt County should reap benefits from regional growth since it's a center for medical services and retail, he said.

The effect of projected state budget cuts, however, is cause for concern, Chaffee said, due to the anticipated effect on state institutions, including East Carolina University, which has seen its research activity “dampened a bit since the university's budget has been cut.”

On the plus-side, Pitt is poised to grow in the life science sector that ranges from biotechnology to pharmaceuticals, and in the health care and medical products sector, Chaffee said.

Executives of some of the area's major employers also have shared their predictions for what 2011 holds. The outlook appears to be brightening, they said, and many hope to hire more employees this year if current trends hold steady.

#### **Attends Healthcare Products Inc., Greenville**

Michael Fagan, president and chief executive officer

The aging baby boomer population has fueled growth in the adult incontinent products industry, creating a boon market for Attends Healthcare Products Inc.

“Our business has been experiencing 10 to 15 percent sales growth year over year,” said Michael Fagan, president and chief executive officer.

In 2011, he projects the privately held company will see higher earnings and hire between 25 to 50 workers during the year.

“We're expecting to increase investment in our production capacity,” Fagan said. “And over the course of the next year, we would expect to continue to add jobs in support of the extra production.”

Production was bolstered five years ago when N.C. KPS Capital Partners CHECK, a private equity fund that owns Attends, entered the picture, injecting more than \$40 million in capital into the company to boost production capacity.

“For us, our market is directly linked to the aging of the baby boomers so we're seeing pretty consistent increases in demand,” he said.

Attends is facing some business challenges despite strong sales, and increasing prices is a difficult move to make, especially when dealing with the institutional market.

“There's a lot of inflation from commodity input costs,” Fagan said. The cost of the raw materials like pulp has risen, and is expected to continue spiraling upwards, with elevated prices through 2015. The rising price of oil and petroleum also impacts production costs.

### **DSM Pharmaceutical Inc., Greenville**

Hans Engles, president and business unit director

DSM Pharmaceutical Inc. in Greenville began to experience a resurgence in its business about six months ago.

“The pharmaceutical industry is embracing the concept of increased outsourcing and that results in more inquiries for our services,” said Hans Engles, president and business unit director of the Greenville facility.

Companies like “virtual” ones have a product but lack the capital and resources to develop it, relying instead on companies like DSM to develop a process so the product can be used in clinical trials.

For cost-reduction reasons, demand has been on the upswing for the services provided by DSM from the pharmaceutical industry and from “virtual” companies.

“They've always outsourced and they are increasing the volume now because they have access to funding again,” he said.

Engles said DSM is now seeing some impact and have been hiring, but expects to ramp up more next year based on inquiries this year.

“We will see the full impact starting in 2012,” he said.

Jobs that will be available range from manufacturing operators jobs that require strong basic skills and six months of training to more specialized jobs for chemists.

DSM, the parent company of DSM Pharmaceutical Inc., held a global telecom meeting recently to tell employees about the company's new strategy for growth. Details on the new logo and branding won't be made public until after the shareholders meeting later this month, Engles said. DSM is headquartered in the Netherlands.

### **Mestek Inc., Farmville**

Emerson Hobgood, plant manager

Mestek Inc. has had a plant in Farmville since 1974.

Under the division name of Sterling HVAC Products, the plant is included in a company effort to attract new customers to combat a flagging construction industry.

Emerson Hobgood, the Farmville plant's manager, said Massachusetts-based Mestek Inc. has worked to increase its market share of the heating and air condition equipment sector.

The Farmville facility makes heating and air conditioning units sold under its own Sterling brand name and sold as other company's brands to commercial, residential, retail and manufacturing customers.

“Our business normally lags behind new construction,” Hobgood said. The delay is due to the fact that heating and air conditioning is installed last.

“So once you see an economic recovery in construction, we're going to lag behind six to 12 months before you seen an increase in volume,” he said.

Despite the construction slowdown, Mestek Inc. is forecasting a 10 to 15 percent increase in business this year, largely by adding more customers.

“The reason for that is we're concentrating on increasing our market share, and that's through new manufacturing representation as well as new distribution points,” Hobgood said. “We're also working on new product development. ... The green movement is what we're concentrating heavily on to try to make air conditioning and heating units more effective.”

The expected uptick comes on the heels of two slow years that resulted in layoffs in 2009, and a company consolidation that closed several United States plants.

“We expect to stay just above flat to a small percentage up,” Hobgood said of 2011. As business increases, the Farmville facility will start to hire its temporary workers as full-time employees, he said.

Mestek operates nine facilities in the United States and Canada and two in China.

### **Metrics Inc., Greenville**

Phil Hodges, president and chief executive officer

Business at Metrics Inc. has been increasing since mid-2010, following a 2-1/2 year dip.

“We finished last year ahead,” said Phil Hodges, president and chief executive officer.

“We were up 11 percent over the year before.”

Metrics has a commercial side that manufactures some generic products, but its core business is contract work for pharmaceutical development, he said.

The company develops formulations for pharmaceuticals and for manufacturing clinical supplies, including the chemistry involved in the process, Hodges said.

The recession caused some of Metrics “virtual “ pharmaceutical companies that outsource much of their pharmaceutical work to close up shop when they couldn't secure venture capital, affecting Metrics' business.

Instead of layoffs, Metrics shifted its employees to the commercial side. That side also has seen growth recently.

Now, its pharmaceutical business is reviving. Hodges said one reason is “we've shifted our focus away from these clients to large companies.”

He also credits an improved economy. "I think there's more money out there to be spent." Hodges said more business means jobs. "We have been hiring. We had gotten very lean over the 2-1/2 year slide."

Most of those hires were for scientific staff. "We hire a lot of people out of East Carolina University, and primarily what we've hired is entry-level chemists," he said, adding, "We're in a very much wait-and-see mode. We hope to continue to have a few open positions."

### **Overton's Inc., Greenville**

Mark Metcalfe, president

Overton's Inc. mail order and retail market for marine and water sports accessories appears to be rebounding slightly as the economy strengthens.

"Last year was better than the previous year so we're looking for continued growth," said Mark Metcalfe, president of Greenville-based Overton's Inc., a subsidiary of Minnesota-based Gander Mountain.

He said they're hoping to see some improvement this year, but they're not expecting a significant turnaround. "Our purchases are discretionary and as the economy continues to improve we expect to see increased spending on discretionary items."

Metcalfe said while mail orders have picked up, it's too early to predict this year's sales. "We're in a business where the peak season is May, June and July.

Top sellers at their mail order business and retail stores in Greenville and Raleigh include water skis and wakeboards, he said. "Things that make boating fun.

"During the recession, we saw people back off their purchase of water sports accessories, but we did not have layoffs," Metcalfe said, adding they're back to a hiring mode for graphic designers.

### **Practicon, Greenville**

Scott Griffin, president

Practicon's business plan has focused on an aggressive marketing strategy and new products to grow its business in a slow economy.

"We expect sales to be up at least 15 percent," said Scott Griffin, the company's president, of this year's business. "We are a distributor of dental supplies, primarily mail order catalogue and e-commerce Internet is where most of our sales are."

Practicon took a different approach during the recession. "Because the economy was down, we saw competition start to pull back from marketing, we decided to go the other way," Griffin said. "Last year was our best year ever."

Last month, Practicon hired five employees, four in telesales and one in production. At least two new positions will likely be added soon.

“Our catalogue is getting bigger as well. We're aggressively adding a lot of new products,” he said.

Practicon also has developed in-house a line of products for dentists and distributors.

“We focus on finding and/or developing what we call practical innovations,” Griffin said.

The company was founded in 1982 by Griffin's mother, Ann Page Griffin. She still has some involvement with Practicon, but Griffin and his brother, Brad, its vice-president, run its daily operations.

### **The Roberts Co., Winterville**

Chris Bailey, president and chief executive officer

The industrial base that drives business at The Roberts Co. seems to be more ready to take on new projects today.

The Winterville company builds industrial plants, upgrades and expansions.

“We're seeing an increased flow of inquiries and projects coming through,” said Chris Bailey, president and chief executive officer.

He said some of the business appears to be coming from pent-up demand.

“Things were so slow and so bad for the last couple of years, there's a lot of catching up on projects they had postponed,” he said.

The Roberts Co. offers integrated engineering, fabrication, construction and plant start-up services for the heavy industry sector. It can supply an engineering group, steel plate fabrication services and a plant services group.

“Across the board, we're hearing a little bit more optimism from our customer base,” Bailey said.

“There seems to be more projects building in the pipeline and more activity than there was a year ago,” he said.

The company had some significant layoffs last year, but Bailey said he expects to reverse that soon.

“Our forecast would be on the positive side of hiring,” he said. “I think we'll be adding people.”

The company could add some welders, fabricators and staff and management positions in 2011.

“I think this year will definitely be better than last year,” Bailey said.

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## **WHS students to compete in science bowl**

By EDWIN MODLIN II  
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Staff Writer

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Two local oceanography science teams from Washington High School are going to compete in a National Ocean Sciences Bowl next weekend at East Carolina University.

The coach of the Ocean Bowl, also called the Blue Heron Bowl, is Clay Campbell. He has been an oceanography teacher for more than 20 years and says he loves every bit of it.

“The Ocean Bowl is a national state-wide competition,” Campbell said. “It’s a quiz bowl tournament about Marine Sciences, using standard buzzing questions. Washington has been competing in the Ocean Bowl since 2001.”

Kay Evans, who works in the Institute for Coastal Science and Policy, said Campbell was also the first coach to register his team this year.

“I could tell from his former students, that came to Raleigh from Chapel Hill for the training session, they loved the experience of being in the Blue Heron Bowl while at Washington High School and their high regard for Clay as their coach,” Evans said.

Campbell has been coaching the bowl for the past 12 years. This year, he will be coaching two teams with 10 kids total, all of whom are from Washington High School.

Team One consists of seniors Emily Lobos, Casey Lewis, Holly Alligood, Johnny Broadway and junior Erin Stowe.

Team Two consists of seniors Cameron Ashley, Dylan Bowen, Jeff

Swanner, Beth Bachelor and Kristi Wood.

Evans added that the Blue Heron Bowl is North Carolina's regional competition of the NOSB. The NOSB is coordinated by the Consortium for Ocean Leadership.

"The winning team of the Blue Heron Bowl will qualify for the NOSB national competition in Galveston, Texas," Campbell said. "This all-expense paid trip will allow the winning team from North Carolina to compete with other regional winners."

This will be the first time ECU will be hosting the tournament. Locations in the past have been at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the University of North Carolina at Wilmington, and more.

According to Campbell, since this is the first year the Bowl will be hosted by ECU, it is an excellent opportunity for ECU to attract and recruit smart, science-minded high school students.

Eighteen teams have registered, each comprised of five high school students (grades 9-12), with most of the competition in round robin format. Competition will be all day Saturday, Feb. 26, 2011, in the Bate Building.

Campbell added two hard-hitting schools that will be competing in this year's Bowl will be Raleigh Charter School and the School of Science and Math.

Campbell said the competition format will be similar to that of the game show, Jeopardy. However, there will be a toss-up with four multiple-choice answers, a bonus basic question with no choices provided, and a team challenge where the team is allowed time to discuss among themselves and then present an answer.

The categories that they'll be quizzed on will be biology, chemistry, geography, geology, marine policy, physical oceanography, social sciences and technology.

However, as competitions go, they do need sponsors and volunteers to help both Friday night and all day Saturday. Evans said they can volunteer for only portions of the day if that's all they can do.

Sponsors can put forth donations that will be used for one night's lodging in Greenville, mileage reimbursement for teams' transportation, dinner on Friday and lunch on Saturday, and for prizes for the winning and runner-up teams. The team that demonstrates the best sportsmanship (voted upon by the judges) will also receive prizes.

“This is something they can definitely put on their college applications,” Campbell said. “As well as use it to apply for scholarships.”

Campbell has had one student study Oceanography in college, however, she was not on one of his bowl teams.

To find out more about the National Ocean Sciences Bowl, log onto the event websites, which are [www.ecu.edu/icsp/bhb/2011/](http://www.ecu.edu/icsp/bhb/2011/) and [www.ecu.edu/icsp/ICSP/Home\\_files/HeronSquare\\_Long.gif](http://www.ecu.edu/icsp/ICSP/Home_files/HeronSquare_Long.gif).

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## UNC considers early retirements

BY ERIC FERRERI - Staff Writer

CHAPEL HILL—The UNC system may try to entice faculty members to retire early in hopes of paring payroll.

The early retirement offer would most likely be run and funded by individual campuses, helping them weed out some high salaries to help meet budget-cut demands, officials say. Employee salaries account for about 75 percent of the system's operating budget.

But not all the campuses may be able to afford to offer retirement incentives. The UNC system itself wouldn't fund the program.

"The big 'if' is if you have the money," said Hannah Gage, chairwoman of the UNC system's Board of Governors. "We don't have a pot of money hidden somewhere to make it happen in any consistent way."

Still, system officials want to set up some clear guidelines for campuses to follow. And there are obstacles. The program, for example, can't specifically target faculty at or above a specific age, said William Fleming, the UNC system's vice president for human resources.

"You have to be really mindful about age," Fleming said, "because it's discriminatory."

An early retirement plan wouldn't necessarily apply to the oldest faculty members, said Sandie Gravett, an Appalachian State University professor who chairs the UNC system's Faculty Assembly. But it might help persuade some approaching retirement age to speed the process.

"It's not a way of saying 'You're 75, and we're showing you the door,' " Gravett said. "It's not based on who's the oldest. You could be 75 and very effective, or you could be 62 and ready to go."

Gravett said plenty of faculty members likely would be interested in an incentive if it allowed a neat transition similar to the university's current

phased retirement program, which allows faculty members to ease out of full-time work over a series of years.

For a lot of professors, an abrupt departure isn't an option because of ongoing research projects or long-term relationships with graduate students, Gravett said.

"It's a big thing to wind down an academic career," she said.

That's particularly true in the sciences, where professors essentially extend the length of their careers by several years each time they take on a new graduate student, said Joe Templeton, a chemistry professor at UNC-Chapel Hill. While a golden parachute might be tempting, it may not be logistically feasible, said Templeton, who supervises master's and doctoral students.

"Every time a student walks into my office and says, 'I want to join your [research] group,' I have to decide whether to commit another five years," said Templeton, 62. "When you talk about early retirement, I don't think of less than five years."

### **State incentives**

A UNC retirement plan may be patterned on a larger one at the state level. Gov. Bev Perdue's budget proposal offers state workers payments of \$10,000 to \$20,000 to leave, depending on whether they have the years in to be eligible for full or partial retirement benefits.

That deal is open to university and community college workers.

There are no specifics to the UNC plan yet, and it isn't clear how much money it might save. But in discussing a retirement package for faculty, the university isn't alone. One example: Ohio State University is offering workers a lump-sum payment of as much as a year of full salary, not exceeding \$75,000, or a phased option offering part-time pay over two years, according to a recent report in the Cleveland Plain Dealer newspaper.

In North Carolina, campus leaders say a retirement incentive might help an institution's bottom line but hurt its academic credibility. At UNC-CH, Chancellor Holden Thorp fears losing top talent.

The average age at which researchers get their first National Institutes of Health grant is 40, he said. If a researcher takes early retirement at 55, the university loses out on some of that researcher's best years of work.

"You're talking about someone only 15 years into big-time research," Thorp said. "We're concerned about losing some of our star researchers. It's a delicate, two-edged [retirement] program."

At UNC Charlotte, Chancellor Phil Dubois also thinks a retirement program might target the wrong people.

"The assumption that the so-called deadwood are your senior people is flawed," Dubois said. "They're some of our most important and productive faculty members. I wouldn't really want to see them go."

Plenty of faculty members stay sharp well past what is traditionally considered retirement age, said Joseph Ferrell, 72, who retired several years ago after about four decades on the faculty of the UNC School of Government.

"You can keep on being productive way up in your 80s," Ferrell said. "I don't think there's any hard and fast rule about when you get put out to pasture."

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## **Perdue would merge college plans**

BY ERIC FERRERI - Staff Writer

A \$49 million venture proposed by Gov. Bev Perdue would consolidate five existing high school-to-college programs and guarantee a free two-year degree, or comparable work-force training, to qualified students.

Perdue announced her College to Career Promise program this week as part of her 2011-13 budget proposal.

Perdue plans to use money that supports five programs that will be rebranded as a single entity. Those are the Huskins program, Dual Enrollment, Cooperative and Innovative High Schools, Early College, and Learn and Earn Online.

About 25,000 high school students now are enrolled in those programs, each of which helps ease the path from high school to college. The programs will operate largely as they do now but will have a standard set of admissions and operations criteria, according to members of Perdue's staff.

The recast program will help high school juniors and seniors who meet academic standards take up to two years of community college courses or the equivalent amount of work-force training, free of charge.

"It's hard for anyone to refute that, in these high-tech times, that everyone needs a high school diploma," Perdue said. "The challenge becomes having the student agree to do it in the 11th grade."

The recession has sparked a significant enrollment spike at the state's community colleges. The promise of free college credit hours will likely be appealing, said Linda Weiner, the state community college system's vice president for engagement and strategic innovation.

"There's definitely interest from students trying to lower the cost of their education," she said.

On other higher education issues this week:

Perdue acknowledged that the tuition increases approved recently by the UNC system's governing board were necessary, adding that she hoped not to see a second increase approved later this summer by the General Assembly. That happened last year as legislators grappled with a sizable budget hole, resulting in a two-pronged tuition increase of up to 18 percent for some in-state students.

The governor proposed a 6.5 percent reduction in aid to North Carolinians attending private colleges. The state contributes to four such funds. The big ones are a legislative tuition grant - which provides a stipend to all in-state students at private colleges within the state - and a scholarship fund that does so based on need. In total, those two funds receive about \$100 million a year in public money. Perdue's budget would cut \$6.7 million. Last year, legislators considered cuts to these funds but eventually added \$4.5 million, an acknowledgment that private college enrollment is surging, just as it is within the UNC system and at community colleges.

Perdue's budget includes \$23 million for enrollment growth at UNC system campuses. That's about half of what the UNC system requested, even though Perdue and the university system each base their dollar figure on the same projection of 2,337 new students next fall.

Here's the discrepancy: Perdue's \$23 million is based on her staff's calculation of what it costs strictly to provide classroom instruction to each of those students. The UNC system's projection is based on the cost of classroom instruction, as well as other services provided to students, such as the registrar's office, financial aid and public safety, according to Joni Worthington, a UNC system spokes woman.

"The funding formula has multiple components, and [Perdue] funded a piece of it," Worthington said. "It would be up to the other institutions to fund the rest."

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Yankaskas  
Bonnie Yankaskas



2010 NEWS & OBSERVER FILE PHOTO - ROBERT WILLETT  
UNC head coach Butch Davis embraces UNC Chancellor Holden Thorp as they celebrate the Tar Heels' victory over Duke this past season.

From the Editor column:

## **UNC sends mixed signals with disciplinary actions**

BY JOHN DRESCHER - Executive Editor

Butch Davis got hugged. Bonnie Yankaskas got slugged.

These two prominent cases at UNC-Chapel Hill raise difficult issues about what happens to the leader when things go wrong.

Both have been reported prominently in The News & Observer and nationally.

Yankaskas, an epidemiologist, has supervised a project for 15 years that compiles and analyzes mammogram data.

A hacker infiltrated a database she oversees. The breach endangered 180,000 patient files, including about 114,000 Social Security numbers.

Yankaskas says she shouldn't be held responsible for a lapse by an information technology staffer. But UNC disagreed. She's been demoted from full to associate professor and her pay cut from \$178,000 a year to \$93,000.

Davis, UNC's football coach for four seasons, has overseen the program during a time of scrutiny from the group that runs college sports, the NCAA. UNC's problems stem from impermissible gifts provided to players by agents and others; and improper academic help provided by a tutor.

Also, associate head coach John Blake resigned under pressure in September; his lawyers said he took gifts from a sports agent to pay for his son's private school tuition. There is evidence Blake helped the agent.

Chancellor Holden Thorp concluded Davis knew nothing of the wrongdoing and said in November that Davis would continue as head coach. After UNC's win at Duke on Nov. 27, Thorp and Davis embraced on the field.  
Unequal punishments

Did UNC handle these cases with consistency? Art Padilla, a professor and the head of the Department of Management at N.C. State, says yes. Padilla is the author of a book on the leadership shown by college presidents.

"Based on what you guys have reported, they've been handled quite consistently," Padilla said. "They've held accountable the person closest to the act or misdeed."

I partly disagree with Padilla. Yes, Blake was directly involved in wrongdoing and was held accountable.

But Yankaskas wasn't the person closest to the security breach. That was the tech person for the cancer research project. UNC won't speak specifically about that person but has said members of Yankaskas' staff were disciplined. Regardless, Yankaskas was punished for the problems in her area, and Davis was not.

Thorp was involved in each decision. He decided Davis would continue as coach. In the Yankaskas case, he upheld the recommendation of a faculty committee.

Thorp said UNC handled the cases consistently. He said there were major differences.

"We don't have any evidence that Butch Davis was negligent," he said in an interview.

What did Davis know? Davis said he did not know of any of the misdeeds at UNC. But Davis might have been the last recruiter in college football to learn that Blake, whom he'd known for 30 years, was considered by his peers to be a guy who cut corners.

### **UNC's excuses weak**

Steve Spurrier, the coach at South Carolina, said he was not surprised by reports about Blake. "Let me just say this: When you've been in coaching as long as I have, we know the reputation of almost all the coaches out there that have been around a long time," Spurrier said. "We all have a reputation, especially guys who've coached 20 years or so. It's hard to hide whatever your reputation is."

Thorp said another difference in the two cases is that Blake's misdeed - accepting money from an agent - involved his personal life and Yankaskas' involved her work at UNC.

But if Blake helped the agent, as some news outlets have reported, that would involve his work as a football coach. (The N&O might be able to get to the bottom of this if UNC would release all of Blake's phone records from his university cell phone.)

A UNC faculty member can be dismissed for neglect of duty. But the faculty committee didn't recommend Yankaskas' dismissal.

The committee questioned the qualifications of the staffer with primary responsibility for security. That staffer had been given that responsibility by Yankaskas.

Yankaskas "was not recklessly ignorant of security concerns," the committee wrote, but did not keep up with changes in security. "She did discuss security with her staff. ... She was attuned to the importance of confidentiality as well as security."

The faculty committee said principal investigators should not be required to be experts in computer security. It recommended a review of security practices at UNC.

"The problem appears to the Committee to be a systemic one, not a case of an individual faculty member and PI acting egregiously," the committee wrote.

Many say college football has a systemic problem with sports agents.

### **An incentive to ignore**

No two personnel cases are identical. But for Davis and Yankaskas, there are more similarities than differences, in my view.

Intended or not, two communities at UNC received different messages. The UNC medical research community now knows it's responsible for the security of its data.

The UNC athletics community received a different message: If you don't know about wrongdoing, you can survive problems with the NCAA. Leaders and managers respond to incentives, just like everyone else.

If you know you are going to be held accountable for your group's actions, regardless of whether you know about those actions, your incentive is to seek information. You weed out problems before they doom your career. If history shows that you won't be held accountable if you don't know, you avoid information about your staff and its activities. You ignore warning signs.

Thorp has embraced Davis, literally and figuratively. Thorp wasn't chancellor when Davis was hired, but there's no mistaking it now: Butch Davis is his guy.

As for Yankaskas, she is no longer UNC's woman. She and UNC are headed to mediation.

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## **Too many forgo flu vaccine, experts say**

BY STEPHANIE SOUCHERAY - Staff Writer

Flu activity is high in many Triangle communities, but many people still resist getting the flu vaccine, experts say.

"Most parents wouldn't think about not making their kids wear seat belts or bike helmets," said Linda Butler Chief Medical Officer at Rex Hospitals. "But they send their kids to school without a vaccine."

Fourteen North Carolinians have died from complications caused by influenza this year, one of the higher flu death tolls in recent years. Six of those deaths were children.

Before becoming Chief Medical Officer, Butler was a pediatrician in the Rex system. She said flu vaccines are the best way to protect children, who often bring diseases from school into the home, because their hand-washing skills are not always ideal.

"School mandates you vaccinate your kid against measles, mumps and rubella," Butler said. "But I know of more deadly flu cases than mumps cases."

### **It's not too late**

Zach Moore is a state epidemiologist who works at the Department of Health and Human Services. He said this year's vaccine is well-matched to the current flu, a combination of three strains including H1N1, the "swine flu."

This year's flu is an equal opportunist, Moore said, infecting children, adults and the elderly with vigor. Many nursing homes are reporting outbreaks. "We have an effective vaccine, and it's not too late to get the shot and get protection from it. That's the good news," Moore said.

The bad news is skepticism and cavalier attitudes are still the common enemy of the flu vaccine.

"People, like college students, think 'I won't get sick, I don't need it,' and others say, 'I've never gotten the flu vaccine in my life, why start now?'" Moore said.

### **NCSU outbreak**

N.C. State University has had 624 cases of the flu since second semester began on Jan. 10. That number is very high, said Dr. Mary Bengtson, medical director and staff physician at N.C. State Student Health.

"Those are only the cases that we've seen and treated," Bengtson said. "The case number may be much higher if students self-treated or saw their personal doctor."

Misinformation can play a role in the reluctance to get a flu shot.

"No matter how many times scientists disprove associations between vaccines and autism, or prove that the flu shot cannot give you the flu, people will continue believing that," Butler said.

Moore said the flu vaccine has been administered in the U.S. for more than 50 years and is very safe.

"I just don't see a downside to getting the vaccine," Butler said.

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PHOTOS BY CHUCK LIDDY - [cliddy@newsobserver.com](mailto:cliddy@newsobserver.com)

Fetzer gym rocks as about 1,600 students take part in the 13th annual UNC Dance Marathon, a fundraiser for the N.C. Children's Hospital.

## Keep moving! It's for the kids

STAFF WRITER CHELSEA KELLNER

About 1,600 UNC-Chapel Hill students quick-stepped and hula-hooped for 24 hours Friday and Saturday for the 13th annual UNC Dance Marathon fundraiser.

"There's hair flying everywhere, hands flying around, people jumping up and down, doing anything to not fall over," junior Kaylee Baker said after 21 bone-wearying hours in Fetzer Gym with her fellow dancers.

Since 1998, the event has raised more than \$2.4 million for the N.C. Children's Hospital. Each dancer must raise at least \$150; participation is capped at 1,600. The event is the largest student-run fundraiser on campus. Last year, the marathon raised \$421,851 to fund two ongoing grants and seven divisional grants.