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ECU SINKS ITS TEETH INTO DENTAL SITE

Groundbreaking held for new school

By Jimmy Ryals
The Daily Reflector

Six years and untold hours of sweat and persuasion led to this: 12 shovels turning the first dirt on the East Carolina University School of Dentistry.

More than 150 state, local and campus officials attended a groundbreaking ceremony for the $87 million dental school Friday. They reflected on a broad collaboration and looked forward to the school's contribution to oral health care in North Carolina.

"We know how to make a difference for those populations that have not been served well enough," ECU Chancellor Steve Ballard said, noting that more than 25 N.C. counties have fewer than three dentists. "And it's vital for our economic future and our health future to do that. So, it is a great day to be a Pirate."

Ballard, N.C. House Speaker Joe Hackney and ECU Board of Trustees Chairman Robert J. Greczyn Jr. spoke to a crowd spilling out of a heated tent next to the ECU Health Sciences Building. Afterward, three rounds of dignitaries took up shovels to break ground on the dental school site, approved earlier in the day by the ECU board.

Eastern North Carolinians look to ECU "to lead this region, and you have consistently delivered," Hackney said. "This decision, I think, was about service to North Carolina. This dental school is just one more example of how your university is not just building an academic institution, but building up an entire region and this entire state."

Multiple speakers cited the success of the Brody School of Medicine in producing doctors for rural North Carolina. Since its creation in 1975, Brody has exported more than a quarter of its graduates to rural areas of the state, according to the Sheps Center for Health Services Research at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

"Building this dental school, we're going to use the same model as the

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Brody School of Medicine," Greczyn said. "This is going to be about rural, primary care dentistry."

"It's a huge, huge opportunity for us to do that all over again," he added.

The dental school will join Brody and the colleges of nursing and allied health sciences to form "a truly great health sciences center," Ballard said.

ECU has sought a dental school since at least 2002, when a UNC System feasibility study dismissed a large, research-intensive program as too similar to the one at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. In summer 2005, the ECU trustees approved an on-campus feasibility study that supported a smaller school dedicated to teaching primary care and sending new dentists into rural North Carolina.

The process accelerated in February 2006, when the ECU board directed staff to move forward with planning. They proposed a school pairing an on-campus instructional facility with 10 satellite clinics around the state where upper-level students would do clinical work. The program would admit 50 students a year. ECU officials also linked their proposal to a planned expansion of the UNC-CH dental school, then the only one in the state.

"This was a joint plan for dentistry that we're celebrating today," said Ballard, crediting retiring UNC-CH Chapel Hill Chancellor James Moeser for devising the partnership. UNC System President Ers-
What’s up - docs?

Preliminary plans that would turn out more North Carolina-trained doctors are worth a closer examination.

North Carolina needs to train more doctors to cure what ails an aging and ever-expanding population. So goes the thinking behind costly proposals to expand the state’s two public medical schools.

In addition to enlarging medical school classes at UNC-Chapel Hill and East Carolina University, preliminary plans call for starting new physician training centers in Charlotte and Asheville, and perhaps in Eastern North Carolina too.

The plans are worth considering. Increasing the number of medical school graduates, and extending medical education to new sites, might mean that more newly minted doctors would take up and remain at posts in rural and poor areas. There, residents’ health problems are often acute, and physicians have been hard to attract. Having more home-grown and home-trained physicians could help.

All this, however, requires careful, realistic analysis by university higher-ups and by the legislature before final plans are approved and money appropriated. Filling unmet medical needs isn’t as simple as opening the doctor-training tap wider. Advocates of expansion must show that this is an effective way to address growth and the underserved areas.

At Chapel Hill, medical school officials are thinking about adding 70 students to each entering class.

That would increase class size to 230, among the largest in the nation. A welcome component of the plan is that 50 medical students would complete their final two years at new facilities linked to hospitals in Asheville and Charlotte. That reduces the need for construction on the Chapel Hill campus and spreads the new doctors around.

In Greenville, the plan calls for increasing the first-year class at ECU’s Brody School of Medicine from 75 to as many as 120. And there could be a regional campus or two in the eastern part of the state.

The sums involved are staggering. Facilities associated with the UNC-Chapel Hill expansion alone would cost an estimated $239 million to build, and there would eventually be an extra $40 million a year in costs for faculty and staff. That’s a cool quarter of a billion right there. Meantime, the university is expected to ask the legislature for $247 million for a biomedical imaging facility at Chapel Hill, and hospital expansions on campus could lead to requests for hundreds of millions more in state funds.

Is this the best use of the state’s medical education dollars?

It’s true that doctor shortages are forecast both nationwide and in North Carolina. In our rapidly growing state the four medical schools (Duke and Wake Forest are the others) graduate around 440 medical students each year, a figure that hasn’t increased lately. Medical school applications have been rising. So some expansion seems logical.

Expansions or not, through sheer supply and demand affluent areas will get their fill of physicians and medical specialists, maybe more. The trick will be to make the two UNC system schools’ plans count for the rest of North Carolina. Plans to turn out more doctors should be evaluated with a close eye on how much real improvement they’re likely to bring to Tar Heels’ health care.
Growth

Focus of ECU, UNC-CH

The twosome is working on its largest collaboration yet: medical school growth.

By Jimmy Ryals
The Daily Reflector

After several decades as sometimes testy sister institutions, East Carolina University and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill have built a successful partnership.

Since 2004, the pairing has yielded a cardiovascular institute and dental school in Greenville, a cancer hospital and dental expansion in Chapel Hill, and new cancer partnerships between the universities' medical schools.

The twosome is working on its largest collaboration yet: medical school growth that could cost up to half a billion dollars in initial state investments and tens of millions annually in new funding.

In a Feb. 14 meeting, UNC System President Erskine Bowles blessed the schools' latest joint project, urging them to work together on planning enrollment increases in their medical programs. ECU Chancellor Steve Ballard said Friday at a meeting of the ECU Board of Trustees.

"What we're doing there is only conceptual at this point," Ballard said. "The victory that we want is to ensure that East Carolina University is an equal partner as we move forward to make a difference in medical education."

The schools have requested $2 million from the Legislature to fund the planning process. Representatives from both universities will appear March 6 before a UNC Board of Governors committee to discuss their plans.

Designing the ECU expansion will take "well over a year," Ballard said. Funding requests likely will reach the UNC System board in fall 2006, he added.

ECU's Brody School of Medicine proposes admitting classes of 110-120 students annually by sometime in the 2010s, school officials have said. While leaders haven't offered specific cost estimates, Vice Dean Dr. Nicholas Benson has said ECU likely will need funding similar to what UNC-Chapel Hill has requested: $239 million for facilities and $40 million in annual new funding.

Each school proposes admitting more medical students and building off-campus clinical sites for upper-level students. UNC-Chapel Hill would place students in Charlotte and Asheville. ECU hasn't announced sites for its plan.

Brody is in the midst of a smaller expansion that will take annual class sizes from 72 last year to 80 in 2009.

ECU and UNC-Chapel Hill leaders have traced their expansion plans to estimated physician shortages that lie ahead. The Association of American Medical Colleges has called on the state's medical schools to expand enrollment by 20 percent to fill the gap.

"Certainly, those medical shortages affect the rural areas more than any other areas," Ballard said. "And no university is positioned better than East Carolina University to address those kinds of problems."

The medical expansion partnership dates to Dec. 19, Ballard said, when administrators from both schools discussed the matter with Bowles for the first time. UNC-Chapel Hill had been designing its proposal—an extra 70 students per year, with clinical campuses in Asheville and Charlotte—more than a year.

ECU began considering larger expansion last fall, officials have said.

The project continues a fertile partnership, one that brought UNC-Chapel Hill and ECU long way since the 1960s, when leaders on the two campuses butted heads over Brody's creation.

"It's not they get theirs and we get ours," said Robbie Hite, Kinston health care executive and chairman of the ECU trustees' health sciences committee. "It's a joint venture. It's really good, and we've really started working quite well with the University of North Carolina."

Jimmy Ryals can be contacted at jryals@coxnc.com or 329-9568.
Our Views

A landmark

ECU should celebrate new dental school

More than 150 people gathered on Friday to witness the newest landmark in the evolution of East Carolina University. A groundbreaking ceremony for the new dental school proceeded despite an intermittent drizzle, which could not dampen hopes that this new program will help fulfill the region’s need for practicing dentists.

Unlike the foundation of the medical school, the dental school was not the result of a ferocious, protracted battle, and for that we can be thankful. But the considerable time and energy required to win approval for this project will be justified if East Carolina can educate the professionals who will improve dental care across the region.

One hundred years have passed since the N.C. General Assembly decided to create a teacher’s college in Greenville to meet the need for educators in this region. The fledgling school’s commitment to service has never wavered over the last century. In fact, East Carolina has expanded its mission to meet the needs of eastern North Carolina, including its lack of access to reliable, affordable health care.

The new dental school is intended to address the paltry number of practicing dentists in North Carolina, and particularly in the east. The state ranks 47th in dentists per capita, lagging well behind its neighbors when judged by the number of children who have visited a dentist in the last year. In eastern North Carolina, four counties do not have a practicing dentist, and 28 counties have two or fewer. The need could not be more pronounced.

East Carolina intends to address that shortfall through a program set to begin in 2010. Though it only intends to enroll 50 students each year at its outset, the facility to be constructed at the intersection of MacGregor Downs Road and West Fifth Street could handle classes of 65 students. Final approval was given Friday by the East Carolina Board of Trustees.

The realization of this project would not have happened without the considerable support and work of the county’s legislative delegation, University of North Carolina system officials and local administrators. And, of course, the tireless efforts of local community leaders who believe in East Carolina’s capacity to meet the needs of this growing region. All deserve thanks and appreciation for their efforts.

However, their accomplishment will be found in knowing they helped contribute to better health for the residents of this region, especially the down-trodden who call eastern North Carolina home. They are the ones without proper dental care or regular visits, and those who will benefit the most from the additional dental professionals East Carolina University will educate.

The dental school promises to be another invaluable resource for the university, this community and this state and will be anticipated by all with excitement.
School makes $200M pitch

By Jimmy Ryals
The Daily Reflector

East Carolina University is launching its second century with a pitch for $200 million.

With the halfway point of a two-year centennial celebration coming up, the university is nearly ready to announce its first capital campaign in 15 years. Scholarships, professorships, financial aid, lecture series and research will be among the beneficiaries of the fund drive, officials said during meetings of the ECU Board of Trustees.

So will ECU's $60 million endowment, which lags behind those of other schools in the University of North Carolina system and nationwide. ECU's endowment fund ranks eighth of nine campuses cited in documents presented to the trustees this week.

“Why we raise these numbers up from the 90 million to where you’re going to see extraordinary things,” said Trustee Mark Tipton, a Raleigh homebuilder. The board passed a resolution supporting the campaign Friday.

Vice Chancellor for Advancement Mickey Dowdy said Friday that ECU raised nearly $84 million during the private phase of the campaign, which opened when Chancellor Steve Ballard came to ECU in May 2004.

While $200 million is the financial goal for the fund drive, its larger aims are less tangible, Dowdy said.

“We've talked about a lot of numbers, but really what we're talking about is enriching, changing and saving lives,” he said.

Fifteen percent of the total goal will go to student support, scholarships, financial aid and study-abroad funds, according to ECU documents.

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ECU AND PEER INSTITUTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Endowment amount</th>
<th>Alumni giving</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UNC-Chapel Hill</td>
<td>$2.1 billion</td>
<td>19 percent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Louisville University</td>
<td>$797 million</td>
<td>12 percent</td>
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<tr>
<td>N.C. State</td>
<td>$535 million</td>
<td>21 percent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Virginia Commonwealth</td>
<td>$323 million</td>
<td>5 percent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ohio University</td>
<td>$243 million</td>
<td>13 percent</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNC Greensboro</td>
<td>$184 million</td>
<td>6 percent</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNC-Charlotte</td>
<td>$147 million</td>
<td>6 percent</td>
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<tr>
<td>East Carolina</td>
<td>$90 million</td>
<td>7 percent</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNC-Wilmington</td>
<td>$51 million</td>
<td>11 percent</td>
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Source: East Carolina University Advancement

TRUSTEES

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Another 28 percent will fund professorships and faculty research.

The rest will go to facilities and specific strategic goals of each ECU college.

The public phase of the campaign is to start March 27 and end Dec. 31, 2012.

The eight-year campaign mirrors one recently finished by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Dowdy said.

Dowdy used a series of metaphors to describe the campaign: It’s a marathon, not a sprint; a symphony, not a song.

"It’s a NASCAR race," he said. "It's not drag racing."

Other news from the trustees meetings Thursday and Friday:

The board approved purchase of a home at 920 E. 14th St. ECU will pay $185,000 for the home as part of an ongoing effort to buy property near the intersection of 14th Street and Berky Drive.

Trustees voted to sell three trailers next to the Belk Building at the corner of Charles and Greenville boulevards. The units have housed classes from the College of Health and Human Performance, but renovations to Belk have rendered them obsolete, said Kevin Seitz, vice chancellor for administration and finance. A fourth trailer will be destroyed, he said.

Trustees passed a resolution applauding two ECU alumni with ties to the Super Bowl champion New York Giants: offensive tackle Guy Whimper and Chief Medical Officer Dr. Ronnie Barnes.

In another note from the meeting, trustees were told that board chairman Bob Grezczyn Jr., the Durham-based president of Blue Cross-Blue Shield of North Carolina, will appear on the public television show "North Carolina People." The program airs at 9 p.m. March 7 and 5:30 p.m. March 9 on WUNC-TV, channel 4 on Suddenlink cable.

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Crime on the rise

City officials outline steps to combat numbers

By Michael Abramowitz
The Daily Reflector

The Greenville Police Department and city government will use federal, state, and local funds to bolster community policing and upgrade a computerized crime analysis program to fight an upward trend in local crime, city and law enforcement leaders said.

Police this month released statistics to the City Council that document an increase in thefts, robberies and other crimes that department leaders have been reporting for months in public forums and neighborhood meetings. The statistics also have been sent to the State Bureau of Investigation for inclusion in the annual Uniform Crime Report.

Initiatives to combat the trend include a $1.2 million crime analysis computer program. When the system is completely installed, its analytical capabilities will assist in the strategic deployment of officers, said Police Chief William Anderson. Specialized task forces and operations units have been formed to focus on specific areas where crimes occur, Anderson said.

"When Greenville was hit by its largest increase in robberies during the months of October and November, the department responded by initiating its Armed Robbery Task Force and Violent Crime Response Plan," Anderson said.

The main area of police and city attention remains the west Greenville area. Officers will be positioned in the heart of the community when a new police station is completed on West Fifth Street later this year, Anderson said.

He expects it to give officers visibility and allow them to form relationships with the people of the community.

"A building is not going to solve a problem. The interaction of the officers will," Anderson said.

Anderson and City Manager Wayne Bowers also acknowledged the connection and the pervasiveness of gangs in Greenville and Pitt County.

"We're trying to address the more complex societal issues of kids dropping out of school, not having opportunities and turning to crime instead of more productive pursuits," Bowers said.

"You have to give these kids some sort of meaning."

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CRIME
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ful alternative (to gang membership). We can’t be responsible for raising kids, but we can offer them some options and alternatives to gangs. I don’t think these kids cherish being locked up,” Anderson said.

The city and its partners in crime fighting are trying to provide such alternatives, and they’re concentrating their efforts in west Greenville.

Ground zero

“Eight of the 10 homicides last year were black-on-black, several in the west Greenville area. We recognize it. But it can’t strictly be a law enforcement issue; the community needs to be involved in changing it,” Anderson said.

“Our whole west Greenville strategy is based on the recognition that the problem is generational, the result of many years of living in those conditions. It will take time to resolve,” Bowers said.

One of the main resources for intervention in west Greenville is the Lucille Gorham Intergenerational Center on West Fifth Street, a nonprofit organization that coordinates several outreach efforts. The center is partly underwritten by the city at a cost of $400,000, and the city spent another $200,000 to refurbish the old St. Gabriel’s Church facility to house the center, Bowers said.

“Our Summer Significance program was based there last year. The folks from East Carolina University ran that program for sixth-graders brought in the parents as part of the program,” Bowers said.

A partnership including the police department, businesses and community organizations started The Summer Significance Academy last year to enroll about 90 at-risk students at four sites in Pitt County. Students participated in recreational activities, summer classes and service-learning projects.

The Gorham Center also houses the Little Willie program, a grass-roots effort to address the needs of latchkey children year ‘round. Center volunteers also provide one-on-one tutoring and mentoring.

The city is also trying to elevate the west Greenville standard of living through the promotion of home ownership. The voters approved $5 million in bonds for west Greenville revitalization to go along with (federal) community development block grants that have been pledged to the goal.

“We’ve built four homes there already and we’re going to build seven more,” Bowers said.

Much of the assistance with that project will come from Pitt Community College, which teaches skilled construction classes at building sites in west Greenville.

Students participating in the classes can then be qualified for better-paying construction jobs in a growing Greenville.

The City Council also allocated $78,000 last summer for a Police Athletic League after-school program that has partnered with Greenville Recreation and Parks to serve 140 children at two locations.

While the trend for 2007 showed an increase in crime in Greenville, the early returns for 2008 numbers show a reduction, Anderson said.

“A lot of that has to do with the efforts we’re putting in place and the changes we’ve made in some of our enforcement strategies,” The police chief said.

Inside the stats

The need to develop a crime-fighting strategy is underscored by the statistical crime data released by the department to the City Council on Feb. 12.

Police reported 5,578 crimes in 2007, an overall increase of
Eight of the 10 homicides last year were black-on-black, several in the west Greenville area. We recognize it. But it can’t strictly be a law enforcement issue; the community needs to be involved in changing it.”

Greenville Police Chief William Anderson

robbery detail,” Smeltzer said. “Unfortunately, when the crime numbers for businesses go down, they go up for the guy walking on the street,” he said.

Armed robberies continued to occur in the Memorial Drive and Greenville Boulevard corridors, where the majority of businesses are. The Memorial Drive corridor is lengthening as commercial development increases southward, Smeltzer said.

Individual armed robberies also continue to happen in the traditional horseshoe-shaped area around downtown. The 10 homicides in Greenville in 2007 represent an increase of 67 percent over the six in 2006.

Most shootings and homicides spring from the gang culture, where one incident inevitably leads to another. “It’s important to first get a grip on that, then try to put a stop to it,” Smeltzer said.

Anderson pointed to the disintegrating structure of many families in Greenville as the gateway to gang life.

The community must step forward and share the responsibility for its youth if significant change is to occur, Bowers and Anderson said.

“Someone has to take the lead. If law enforcement waits for that to happen, it might not, so we’re taking the initiative to encourage groups to deal with the issues,” Anderson said.

City officials said they routinely encourage community involvement.

“It’s a complex issue. If there was a simple solution, a lot of cities would be doing it,” Bowers said.

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FROM EARTHWORMS TO DEBUNKING THE 'BUNNY'

Students participate in science fair

By Kristin Day
The Daily Reflector

Dog scents, ice cream, earthworms and the Energizer Bunny. It must be the Northeast Regional Science Fair.

The third floor of ECU's Science and Technology building was ruled by kids and posterboard Saturday afternoon for the fair that lasted for about six hours from registration to Awards Assembly. Dr. Ron Newton, associate dean for the graduate school at ECU, took on the task of handling all of the logistics of the large event.

The 118 students competed for one of 24 possible entries into the state fair with experiments on sun power, earthworms, ice cream, diaper absorbency and a movie's effect on blood pressure, to name a few.

Qu'lish Vaughn, a third-grader from Riverview Elementary School, submitted a project entitled "Proving the Energizer Bunny Wrong," which poses the question, "Will the Energizer keep going and going?" (After completing the experiment, Vaughn concluded that although the Energizer lasted longer than Duracell and Panasonic batteries, it did not, as alleged, last forever.) Vaughn's hypothesis proved correct, and it all started after she heard the Energizer Bunny's claim.

"I saw it on TV," Vaughn said shyly.

A poster contest coincided with the fair to get more high school students involved. This year, students created designs to reflect the theme, "My Lifestyle and the Effect in the Environment." The winning poster, Rachel Barnum's "Truth About Bottled Water," revealed that 60 million plastic bottles are produced but only 12 percent are recycled, leaving 40 million to be thrown away. Barnum received an iPod, bought with donation money from PCS Phosphate, for her win.

Exhibits from Aurora Fossil Museum and PCS Phosphate were also on display throughout the day, and Coleman Bailey, on of North Carolina's Teachers of the Year, held a workshop for students and parents.

Rebecca Robertson, ECU grad student who is also trained in engineering, educated participants on the difference between a research project and one using engineering.

Twenty judges, most of them from ECU, interviewed each student about their project before making their selections during a private meeting, which Nancy Bray, director of the fair, said further helps the students understand the lesson each experiment brings.

"The kids really learn by getting asked questions," Bray said.

In a lecture hall across the catwalk, Bray announced the winners of each category, gave away metals and, for middle and high school winners, handed out certificates for $25, $50 and $75.

"The judges were very pleased with the work everyone has done," Bray told the students before announcing the winners.

"I need that money," student Jaqueline Smith whispered half-jokingly when she heard about the prizes. And she got her wish by placing first in the Senior Technology category with a project called "Predicting Appendage Surface Areas in Live Bottlenose Dolphins."

Clayton Dailey was also a big winner of the day. He placed first in the Junior Technology competition for one of the most humorously titled projects, "Why Does My Dad Fall Down the Hill Faster Than Me on a Bike?"

Schools from nine regions will compete at the state science fair at Meredith College, Raleigh, on March 15.

Contact Kristin Day at 329-9579 or kday@coxnc.com.
Networking and nuisances: 
The opportunities of social web sites

Amy Winehouse was denied a visa to come to the United States so the London-based singer could not attend the Grammys where she received five awards earlier this month.

While the singer's spokesman, the United States Embassy in London and the State Department in Washington declined to comment on why Winehouse's visa application was rejected, the 24-year-old star's arrest in Norway for cannabis possession last year was thought to be a significant factor. She also entered rehab in January after footage of her smoking what appeared to be crack cocaine was released.

Winehouse is an example of how videos, photos and words can be incriminating - even through social networking services, Peter Romary told sorority women at East Carolina University on Friday. Romary, the director of student legal services at ECU, presented "Facebook and MySpace: Are They Really Your Friend?"

The presentation was part of a workshop called "Sorority 101: Defining Our Purpose: More than Just Our Letters." It was sponsored by the sororities on campus, their graduate advisory chapters and ECU's Office of Greek Life.

Recognizing that social networking sites offer numerous benefits, including sharing information about the good work of the sororities, Romary also addressed some of the pitfalls.

The warnings he offered are worth repeating.

As in Winehouse's case, evidence of illegal drug use, or other illegal activities such as underage drinking, can be incriminating, drawing unwanted or unexpected attention.

And watch the "innocent jokes." If you make false statements about

someone involving injury, illness, death, disfigurement and criminal conduct among other offenses to embarrass him or her, you can be charged with a crime.

A site showing unscrupulous behavior could jeopardize a college education or job.

Students of one university, Romary said, took pictures of themselves cheating on a test, violating the school's honor code. That was real smart.

A student at another university was expelled after joining a group too anxious to bash a university policeman they considered too overbearing.

And more and more employers, scholarship committees - and sororities - look at sites to help judge an applicant's character.

Then there's the threat of stalkers, identity theft and other liabilities that can come with careless use of the sites.

Once something gets into cyberspace, it can be hard to delete. With that in mind, Romary offered a rule most could apply.

"Do not put anything online that you would not be proud for grandmother to see."

Cherie Speller is associate editor for readership and community news at The Daily Reflector. Contact her at 329-9512 or cspeller@coxnc.com.
PirateFest preps for second voyage
Street festival scheduled for April 12 in downtown Greenville

By Mike Grizzard
The Daily Reflector

As PirateFest prepares to set sail for the second time, organizers are digging through a treasure chest of ideas to bring out buccaneers and landlubbers young and old.

The street festival in downtown Greenville debuted last year in conjunction with the International Festival, Uptown Art Walk, and East Carolina University’s annual Pigskin Pig-Out festivities and spring football game. Turnout was mod-

PIRATEFEST BY THE NUMBERS
15 Venues participating in Uptown Art Walk
75 Volunteers supporting the event
150 Total vendors
10,000 Estimated attendance last year
$1,000,000 Estimated economic impact.

est, in part due to Pitt County Schools’ spring break and some uncooperative weather — shiver me timbers.

“It was freezing,” Carolyn Thompson, coordinator of ECU’s Centennial Planning and co-chairwoman of the PirateFest committee, said of the cold and windy weekend. “It was unreal how cold it was. And it stayed like that the whole day.”

Thompson and co-chairwoman Debbie Vargas of Greenville-Pitt County Convention & Visitors Bureau can’t guarantee a bounty of beautiful skies this year — they can hope — but they do believe the lineup of events April 9-12 will be a pirate’s delight.

By tapping into the history and appeal of pirates in east-

PIRATE
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ern North Carolina — from Blackbeard to the ECU mascot — organizers hope the annual event will become a significant regional draw.

“We do really think that it’s got the potential to be Greenville’s premiere festival,” Vargas said. “We’ve had the little festivals that bring 2,000 people. We would like to have (something like the) Azalea Festival (in Wilmington) that brings 25,000 people, and we think this has got the opportunity to do it.”

An estimated crowd of 10,000 attended last year, Vargas and Thompson said some tweaking of event schedules and locations this year should make it even more family-friendly.

“One of the things we learned is it was awfully spread out,” Vargas said. “We had some different starting times and closing times. What we really did is take a lot of events and push them together. ... We decided this year it all needs to be at the same time.”

The street festival is scheduled for April 12 with most events beginning at 11 a.m., including the International Festival, the Little Pirates’ Pavilion and Uptown’s Buccaneer Bash.

2008 PIRATEFEST ACTIVITIES
- Three sound stages with music and performances
- Greenville’s International Festival
- Pirate Alumni 5K, One-Mile Fun Run
- Blackbeard’s Marketplace with vendors, food and sponsor information
- Little Pirates Pavilion with children’s activities, clowns and playground
- Historic bus tours
- Pirate re-enactors
- Uptown Greenville Arts Festival
- Art Walk — original art displayed, food and entertainment
- Pirate costume contest
- Pirate Treasure Hunt
- Carnival
- Pigskin Pig-Out pig cooking contest
- Pigskin Pig-Out spring football game
- Painted Pirate Public Art Project unveiling and parade

Entertainment will be set up in four areas — outside Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium at the Pigskin Pig-out, the International Festival and a children’s area at the Town Common and a main stage on Evans Street across from Jefferson’s where seven bands will play from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. A bagpipe procession down Evans Street will kick off the event.

Thompson said the band lineup has been arranged this year so a high-profile attraction will not be going head to head with the football scrimmage.

Another change is condensing the festival area by moving activities from the Sixth Street parking lot to First Street.

“For a lot of families with small kids and strollers, it was a little bit of a hard trek to make it from the International Festival and the commons all the way up to Blackbeard’s Marketplace and Sixth Street,” Vargas said.

Among last year’s highlights was four groups of Pirate re-enactors that roamed the streets and interacted with festival-goers. Members of the House of Cadarn, The Moody Crewe and The Shadow Playwrights Stage Combat Group are expected back this year.

“There are a number of people we find that follow the Pirate-themed events all over the place,” Thompson said. “We found out they were a huge hit. Everybody loved them. Some of them sang, and what they liked to do is sort of work the crowd and weave in and out of all the spectators and strike up a conversation. They were all dressed in costume. It was really neat. We, of course, invited all of them to come back. ... You can’t have a PirateFest without your pirates.”

Joining the party will be 18 Pirate statues during the unveiling of the Painted Pirate Project, an art fundraiser to support the ECU Alumni Association. Each 6-foot pirate has a sponsor that commissioned an artist for a unique design.

The painted pirates will surround the main stage across from Jefferson’s.

“I don’t know if we will have all 16 completed by April 12 or not, but all that are completed will be on stage for the festival,” Thompson said.

Thompson said the festival is seeking vendors, sponsors and volunteers. But most of all, she hopes to see the streets taken over by pirates.

“In building the festival we decided what we needed to do was capitalize on some events that were already going,” Thompson said. “We’re continuing to add things that come up that we see might fit in and make the festival bigger and better. ... We want the people within our community to participate and become engaged with the whole process.

“It was refreshing to see that in our downtown (last year),” Thompson said. “It was a lot of work, and everybody involved would certainly agree that I’m sure. But there was a sense of pride and accomplishment at the end of the day.”

Mike Grizzard can be contacted at mgrizzardi@coxnc.com and 329-9580.
ECU looks within for new associate research dean

The Daily Reflector

Cindy Putnam-Evans, professor of biology, was appointed associate dean for research in the Thomas Harriot College of Arts and Sciences.

"I'm very excited about the opportunity to work with faculty across the entire college," Putnam-Evans said. "I hope to help faculty acquire the resources they need in order to be successful grant writers."

Putnam-Evans came to East Carolina University in 1993. In addition to her teaching duties, she conducts National Science Foundation research on the genetic engineering of proteins involved in the process of photosynthesis. She was named to the position after the retirement of longtime associate dean Scott Snyder.

Historian holds book signing

Gerald J. Prokopowicz, acting chairman of the history department, will read from and sign his new book, "Did Lincoln Own Slaves? and Other Frequently Asked Questions about Abraham Lincoln" (Pantheon, 2008) at 7 p.m., March 5, at Barnes and Noble Booksellers, 3040 Evans St.

Acclaimed poets offer reading

The Writers Reading Series of Eastern North Carolina will welcome two nationally acclaimed poets, David Wojahn and Mark Cox, 7 p.m., March

ECU NOTES

5 at the Greenville Museum of Art.

Pulitzer Prize finalist David Wojahn is the author of many collections of poetry, including "Interrogation Palace." He is the recipient of many awards and fellowships, including a Guggenheim and National Endowment for the Arts. He teaches at Virginia Commonwealth University. Mark Cox, author of the forthcoming collection, "Natural Causes," is the recipient of many awards for literary achievement.

He chairs the Department of Creative Writing at UNC-Wilmington. Both poets also teach in the Vermont College master's in fine art in writing program.

ECU hosts Princeville film

ECU will offer a screening of "This Side of the River: Self-determination and Survival in the Oldest Black Town in America," 6 p.m., March 6, in Mendenhall Student Center.

The documentary, produced by filmmakers Ryan Rowe and

Something to say?

Post your comment about this story at reflector.com

Drew Grimes and the North Carolina Language and Life Project, is about the decisions the residents of the United States' first incorporated all-black town had to make after Hurricane Floyd flooded the area in 1999. The documenta-ry will be followed by a panel discussion with historians and Princeville citizens.

See ECU, B3
Domestic violence

Journalist Janine Latus will present "If I Am Missing or Dead: A Sister's Story of Love, Murder, and Liberation," at 4 p.m. March 3 at Hendrix Theater, to call attention to domestic abuse and violence in America.

Latus, who wrote a memoir about abusive relationships and her own sister's murder, has appeared on "The Oprah Winfrey Show" and National Public Radio and has told her story on campuses nationwide. The program is free.

Artists sought for Youth Arts

Registration is now under way for performing and visual artists for the Youth Arts Festival at ECU April 5 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The annual free festival is designed with children in mind. Artists are invited to showcase their work and give demonstrations about their craft; others conduct performances or offer hands-on projects for children.

In the past, more than 100 artists from ECU, Greenville, and from across the region have participated in the festival, offering children opportunities to visit with artists skilled in wheel-thrown ceramics, watercolor painting, weaving, felting, paper-making, printmaking and portraiture, as well as music and dance performances.

There are no booth fees or commissions, but the purpose of the event is geared towards teaching children and their families about the diverse and creative possibilities in the community. Contact coordinator Dindy Reich at reichd@ecu.edu or at 328-5749.

Prom dresses needed for youth

East Carolina University is seeking prom and evening gowns for its first-ever Fairytale Boutique.

Organized by ECU's Volunteer and Service-Learning Center, the boutique will offer young women from Pitt County high schools a chance to pick out a prom dress and accessories.

About 50 dresses have been donated, but Jessica Gagne, student engagement specialist at the Volunteer and Service-Learning Center, is hoping to have 250 more before the boutique opens March 1 and 2.

This is the first year that the center has offered the Fairytale Boutique, which is based on other similar boutiques held around the country. The idea is simple: Previously loved and danced in prom and special occasion dresses are donated to the center. Girls from area high schools, who are unable to afford the purchase of a new prom dress, can "shop" at the boutique for a dress and accessories.

"I read recently that girls spend an average of $400 and up on their prom dress," Gagne said. "We don't want anyone to miss out on going to their prom because of financial circumstances."

Dresses in all sizes, especially larger sizes, along with shoes, purses, tiaras, any accessories that a girl might need for the prom are needed.

Students who want to "shop" for a dress at the Fairytale Boutique will make an appointment and be accompanied by an ECU student volunteer. Selected dresses will be sent to Bowen Cleaners for cleaning, free of charge to the girl. The Boutique is also seeking donations from other businesses, such as restaurants and salons.

To donate a dress or to nominate a high school student, call 328-2735.
Car crashes into building

The Daily Reflector

Driver illness caused a car to crash into a vacant 10th Street building Saturday night, Greenville police said.

Shortly after 9:30 p.m., a "medical emergency" caused the driver of a green Pontiac Grand Am to crash into a strip of unoccupied shops near the intersection of 10th and Evans streets, said Cpl. M.D. Ross of the Greenville Police Department.

Ross had no details about the driver's identity or condition, although he said the person had been taken to Pitt County Memorial Hospital. Police radio traffic indicated dispatchers sending officials to the scene thought the driver was unconscious.

The car was traveling west on 10th Street when it crossed the center lane and drove into the building, which sits between a Starbucks coffee shop and a Sheetz convenience store. There were no passengers in the car.

The collision knocked out one side of the glass and steel door to the retail space and shattered a glass door farther down the strip. The shop, 100 E. 10th St., has a dirt floor and belongs to Brody Properties LLC, according to Pitt County property records.

The wreck was the third this month caused by driver illness. On Feb. 14, a 59-year-old man lost control of his vehicle on College Hill Drive, striking two cars and causing a collision with two others.

One week earlier, an East Carolina University bus driver had a seizure behind the wheel, hitting several cars on 10th Street and closing the road to traffic for several hours.
Eye Openers

Pretty for prom

East Carolina University’s Volunteer and Service-Learning Center is collecting “gently used” gowns, shoes and accessories for a “Cinderella Boutique” to be held at downtown Greenville’s Tipsy Teapot March 1 and 2.

The group aims to help girls from low-income homes make it to prom night in style by providing items they couldn’t normally afford.

Donations will be taken through Thursday and can be brought to the center, located on the first floor of the Old Cafeteria Complex on the ECU campus. Home pickups can also be arranged by calling 328-2735.
University police chief named at Friday meeting

By Jimmy Ryals
The Daily Reflector

The chief of police at a Missouri university has been tapped to lead the East Carolina University police department.

Chief Scott Shelton of the University of Missouri-Kansas City's police force will come to ECU on March 15. Chancellor Steve Ballard announced at Friday's meeting of the ECU Board of Trustees.

The open position drew 90 applicants. When six finalists visited campus in December, a search firm put them through tabletop exercises to test their responses to different scenarios, interim Provost Marilyn Sheerer said.

Shelton was one of two who scored well above the other four finalists, she added, saying that Shelton's 32 years in campus law enforcement gave him an edge.

"He has a wealth of background and experience," Sheerer said. "He's often sought" for counsel by other officers. She said Shelton was at ECU during a shooting at Northern Illinois University last week and received several calls from colleagues about handling the incident.

"He's just one of those people who's been around campus policing a long time, so I really am lucky to get him," Sheerer said.

Shelton has been chief at UMKC since 2001. Previously, he worked at the University of Missouri-Columbia for 25 years, including two as interim chief. Shelton is an Army veteran and has been through Federal Bureau of Investigations and Missouri Highway Patrol training courses, according to a resume he submitted when he applied for the ECU job.

Shelton faces different challenges than local or state law enforcement, Shelton wrote in his application. It requires "dedicated people providing essential services in a friendly and sincere manner to minimize the threat of criminal activity."

Student Body President Keri Brockett, a trustee and senior from Fayetteville, said Shelton impressed her during a campus visit.

Shelton, who will earn $125,000 a year, will replace interim Chief Janice Harris. Harris has held the position since former Chief Robert Stroud, who left the university for the Pitt County Sheriff's Office in April 2007.

Jimmy Ryals can be contacted at jryals@coxnc.com and 329-9568.

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ECU CAMPUS

ECU sign vandalized

The East Carolina University Police Department reported that someone spelled out the word "noose" on a map sign at Chancellor’s Way on the ECU campus on Thursday.
Darts & Laurels

Stay alert

Laurels — To those East Carolina University students, faculty and staff who have signed up for the emergency alert system, one of the school's responses to the tragedy at Virginia Tech in April. East Carolina conducted a thorough safety assessment and created the alert system that allows members of the university community to register to receive messages in the unlikely event of an emergency. All should sign up.

Laurels — To Diversity Week at East Carolina, which begins on Monday and continues with events through Thursday. The university will feature programs throughout the week to educate the community about people from different backgrounds and urge respect and tolerance of all races. It is a fitting celebration for Black History Month, and an important message to embrace.

Laurels — To the start of the East Carolina baseball season, which is scheduled to begin Saturday against the University of South Carolina following Friday's rainout. The Pirates, as always, have high hopes for the season, and begin their play on the road in Columbia, S.C., before returning home to Clark-LeClair Stadium next week for the opener against Monmouth College. Let's hope the team can start the season on the right foot.

Laurels — To the 25-foot no-smoking zones now in place around all campus buildings at East Carolina, a policy intended to improve health and wellness at the school. The rule came into effect on Aug. 1, but the school hopes to craft a more comprehensive policy that considers the rights of smokers and non-smokers alike. A 100-foot smoke free zone has been considered, but has not been enacted by the school at this time.

Compiled by Brian Colligan, editorial page editor of The Daily Reflector. Contact him at 329-9507 or via e-mail at bcolligan@coxnc.com
Class of 2008, you can find jobs

It’s never encouraging to graduate from college when the economy shows signs of a recession. But experts say that despite the current slowdown, this spring’s graduates can find jobs.

In its annual survey, the Collegiate Employment Research Institute at Michigan State University found that though employers are cautious, they plan to make 7 percent more positions available than last year for graduates with a bachelor’s degree.

One reason has nothing to do with the economy, but with baby boomers.

"Some companies have 60 percent of their workforce getting ready to retire," especially in industries such as transportation, education and accounting, said Philip Gardner, director of the institute.

Norfolk Southern, a railway company based in Norfolk, Va., for example, has doubled the number of graduates it aims to hire, to about 150 annually. More than half of the railway’s managers are eligible to retire in the next five years.

"If there’s a prolonged recession, we may have to adjust our hiring needs, but there’s still opportunities, regardless of what’s going on in the economy," said Rudy Husband, a company representative.

Hiring also is expected to remain robust at firms with significant overseas business.

Still, landing a job this year won’t necessarily be easy, especially if companies in industries hardest hit by the economic downturn — financial services, housing and retail, for example — have to scale back hiring considerably.

Small and medium-size firms, which are feeling the pressure of rising costs and tighter lending standards, also may put recruitment on hold, according to the Michigan State institute report.

Here are tips from college career advisers on how to find opportunities in the current job market.

■ Act now.

If you haven’t started your job search yet, get going. Employers who set recruiting goals for the year are likely to fill those positions in the next few months and then reassess their employment needs as the economy’s prognosis becomes clearer.

"Normally, I might suggest that a student take the summer to travel or do volunteer work," said Carl Martellino, director of career development at Pomona College in Claremont, Calif. "This particular time, it may be better to forget that and push up the timeline to getting a job."

■ Use campus resources.

As you begin your job search, make sure to take full advantage of your school’s career center and other tools.

These resources, which can include resume writing help and job databases, are free (or at least covered by your tuition) and often give you a leg up compared with other job seekers.

At the University of Illinois, students can search for jobs on Always Illinois, a new networking site made up of the school’s alumni.

"With recruiting on campus having been plentiful, students haven’t needed to tap alumni for job advice," said Lois Meerdink, assistant dean of business career services at the university. "Now it’s important to use a multifaceted approach."

■ Refine your search.

The college career center also can help you adjust your search to address the current economy.

If you’re determined to land a job in, say, retail, career advisers can help brainstorm alternative positions that might offer a similar experience.

One option, Martellino said, is to work for a temporary agency that provides employees for a specific company.

"You can go in as a temp and prove yourself that way," he said. "And you’ll have access to the internal job listings."

In addition, if you are competing for a reduced number of jobs, it’s even more important to put together a polished resume and pitch.

■ Be optimistic.

It’s easy to let news about layoffs or cutbacks affect your search.

"Students would rather not take the chance of failing," said Tom Halasz, associate director of the career resource center at the University of Florida. "They would rather continue on in graduate school rather than go into a down job market."

But if you approach your search as though you have no other option than to get a job, you likely will succeed, Halasz said.

"Persistence and enthusiasm are qualities that employers look for in new employees," Meerdink said.
Universities adopt tuition aid plans to help the middle class

U.S. senator hopes it’s ‘a shift in thinking’

Amid the doom and gloom of a possible recession and skyrocketing college costs, there is a small glimmer of financial hope for nervous parents struggling to pay tuition.

Last week, Stanford University joined a small but growing group of elite universities to announce a huge tuition break for middle-class students. Students from families earning less than $100,000 a year will not be charged the $36,030 annual tuition. For families making less than $60,000, Stanford will cover the full $47,212 in tuition, room and board.

The move follows announcements of expanded aid by Harvard, Yale, Duke and others providing bigger breaks to families with incomes well above average as colleges come under fire for tuition increases.

What’s Duke doing? Duke announced a program in December that will allow students with family incomes below $40,000 to graduate debt-free. It eliminates parental contributions for students from families who make less than $60,000. The program also reduces loans for students with family incomes up to $100,000. Duke officials estimate the program will help nearly 2,500 undergraduates. The changes will take effect for current and future students next fall.

What’s the catch? Only about two dozen schools in the United States can afford to join the race to boost financial aid as dramatically as Stanford, said Terry W. Hartle, a senior vice president with the American Council on Education. “Most private colleges and universities simply don’t have those resources,” he said.

At Stanford, in Palo Alto, Calif., students whose tuition, room and board are paid for will be expected to contribute about $4,500 a year from summer earnings and on-campus work.

What are lawmakers up to? Last month, the leaders of the U.S. Senate Finance Committee wrote to 136 colleges with endowments of $500 million or more asking detailed questions about their endowment growth and how much they spend on financial aid.

Some lawmakers have raised the possibility of requiring colleges, which benefit from tax exemptions on donations, to spend at least 5 percent of their endowments a year, as private foundations are required to do.

“I hope we’re seeing a trend and a shift in thinking,” said Sen. Charles E. Grassley of Iowa, the senior Republican on the Senate Finance Committee. “Spending a little more on students won’t break the bank for well-funded schools.”

From staff and wire reports
Textbook buyback expanding at State

BY JOSH SHAFFER
STAFF WRITER

RALEIGH — Q: Which happens first when you buy a college textbook — your wallet empties or your jaw hits the floor?
A: It’s a tie.

Textbook prices are rising at twice the rate of inflation — about 6 percent a year, according to the U.S. Government Accountability Office.

But N.C. State University is expanding a program to guarantee a 50 percent buyback on campus.

Last fall, NCSU’s bookstore arranged for guarantees to buy back 12 common textbooks bought from the bookstore, mostly the English 101 variety.

This fall, that list will expand to 18 titles, said Bobby Mills, student body president.

An undergraduate could easily shell out $100 on a single textbook and still have to dig deeper.

The NCSU bookstore explains that modern textbooks feature more photos and graphics on clay-based paper — plus they often include multimedia add-ons.

The text for Biology 105 runs for $130 new, $97 used.

But the campus bookstore works with NCSU professors to find out which texts they are using, and it is hoped that eventually the list of books eligible for buyback will run longer.

“On average,” Mills said, “the cost of textbooks adds 25 percent to tuition.”

In other campus news, NCSU has already received more than 17,000 undergraduate admissions applications for the 2008-09 academic year, Board of Trustees Chairman D. McQueen Campbell III said at a board meeting Friday.

That’s a record, he said, and it represents a 7 percent increase.

Of course, NCSU will admit only about 9,700 of those students, and even fewer will enroll.

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Study: Eye’s carbon-14 can tell age

BY THOMAS H. MAUGH II
LOS ANGELES TIMES

Radioactive carbon-14 trapped in the lens of the eye permits researchers to accurately date the year of a person’s birth, according to Danish scientists.

The lens contains proteins called “lens crystallines” that are transparent, allowing light to pass through to the retina. These proteins are produced during the first year of life and are unchanged afterward, providing a unique record of the time of birth.

The only other bodily proteins that remain unchanged are those in the enamel of teeth, but they are formed over a five- to six-year period and are less useful in dating.

The key to the dating process is the incorporation into the crystallines of carbon-14, which is found in all the food a person consumes.

Because it is taken up by plants, all living organisms have a concentration of carbon-14 equal to that in the atmosphere. When the organism dies, the isotope decays slowly until none of it is left — the phenomenon used for radiocarbon dating of archaeological artifacts.

Forensic medicine specialist Niels Lynnerup of the University of Copenhagen and physicist Henrik Kjaeelsen of Aarhus University in Denmark reported this week in the online journal PLoS One that measuring the amount of carbon-14 in the lenses of 13 corpses using a large nuclear particle accelerator provided the year of birth.

The primary restrictions on the technology are that the person has to have been born after 1950, the lens must be removed within three days after death, and the individual cannot have subsisted primarily on seafood, which raises the readings.
Breast cancer drug approved

Doctor, advocates split over Avastin

BY MATTHEW PERRONE
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON - A Genentech drug received federal approval on Friday to treat breast cancer, a surprise decision that could represent a shift in standards for assessing the effectiveness of cancer medicines.

Going against the recommendation of its advisory panel, the Food and Drug Administration judged the effectiveness of Avastin based on measurements of tumor growth, not patient survival.

The ruling prompted a mixed reaction from doctors and advocates for breast-cancer patients.

Some bemoaned the lowering of medical standards, but others applauded the FDA's endorsement of a drug that is already prescribed "off-label" - or without a federal endorsement - to an estimated 9,500 patients and for whom insurance coverage is limited.

Avastin, which is approved in the United States for treating lung and colon cancer, was Genentech's best-selling product last year with revenue of $2.3 billion. Through a partnership with Genentech, Swiss drug maker Roche markets the drug in Europe, where it is already approved as a breast-cancer treatment.

Shares of Genentech rose $5.60, or 7.8 percent, Friday to $77.20 in after-hours trading.

FDA approval for drugs targeted at cancer patients who have never been treated before is usually contingent upon data showing a drug extended, or improved, the quality of patients' lives. Avastin showed neither in a study submitted by Genentech, though the drug did slow tumor growth.

Some cancer experts see FDA's Avastin decision as opening the door for more cancer drugs to be approved for tumor-shrinking capabilities.

"It probably gives companies a wider area to operate in ... to get a drug approved," said Dr. Otis Brawley, chief medical officer for the American Cancer Society. "But I can't think of another drug out there right now that would immediately benefit from this lower threshold."

In December, a panel of outside FDA advisers voted 5-to-4 against Genentech's application, indicating that the drug's benefits did not outweigh toxic side effects. Still, U.S. doctors continued prescribing it off-label.

Some insurers are reluctant to pay for Avastin's use among breast-cancer patients. It can cost $100,000 for a year's supply.

Dr. Joseph Sparano of Montefiore Medical Center in New York said he prescribes Avastin because it has shown better results at slowing breast cancer growth than any other drug on the market.

But the president of the National Breast Cancer Coalition said the drug's effectiveness should not have outweighed safety risks, pointing to six deaths attributed to the drug in the study submitted to FDA.

"All they had was progression-free survival in one trial, no increase in quality of life and patient deaths in the Avastin group," said Fran Visco. "We're very confused why FDA made this decision."
New leader believes that NCCU can fly

Nelms raises the bar at his installation

BY ERIC FERRERI
STAFF WRITER

DURHAM — Upon being officially installed as N.C. Central University's 10th leader Friday, Charlie Nelms proudly displayed the university medallion, held aloft the ceremonial mace and then let loose an avalanche of promises and declarations aimed at raising standards on campus.

More money will be raised. More doctoral programs will be created. An ombudsman's office will soon start mediating employee disputes. And students have no choice but to excel in the classroom, Nelms insisted.

"Too many of our students are entering one door and exiting another, leaving with a great deal of debt but no degree," he said, a reference to lagging retention and graduation rates that the university has recently made a priority. "If you don't have graduation as your destination, you may want to consider transferring to an institution with lower expectations."

Nelms was recruited to NCCU from Indiana University, where he was a vice president. He has previously led two midsize regional public universities in the Midwest, so being the boss is nothing new. Still, the 61-year-old son of Arkansas farmers spoke with the exuberance of a young man when discussing NCCU's future. When he pressed faculty to take more ownership over the ed-

SEE NELMS, PAGE 6B
NELMS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1B

ucation of their students, mur- 
murs of approval rippled through 
the crowd.

Several of the 14 speakers who 
issued goodwill messages dur-
ing the ceremony described 
Nelms as a visionary leader. To 
that, Nelms added a caveat.

"I've been in higher education 
long enough to know that vision 
without focus is an illusion," he 
said.

Thus, he offered a few specifics:

■ NCCU cannot exist on cur-
rent funding alone. To that end, 
Nelms is adding staff to the de-
velopment office and announced 
three donations totaling $5 mil-
lion, much of which will be used 
for scholarships.

■ NCCU will create three new 
doctoral programs in the next 
six years — in biomedical and 
pharmaceutical sciences, library 
and information science, and 
communication disorders. In 
those fields, NCCU has well-
regarded faculty already, and there 
is a demonstrated need in the 
marketplace for more profes-
sionals.

"These programs will be de-
ivered at the highest levels of 
quality," Nelms said. "We need 
not concede these areas of need 
to other institutions."

■ NCCU's community service 
requirement will be overhauled 
to work more closely with nearby 
schools.

Faculty Chairman George Wil-
son called Nelms "a breath of 
fresh air."

"He doesn't make promises he 
can't keep," said Wilson, a crim-
inal justice professor. "He's en-
ergetic, honest and not afraid of 
challenges."

Nelms has been in constant 
motion since starting work in 
August. He has hired several new 
administrators, mandated ser-
tice training for all employees 
and is figuring out how and 
where the university should 
grow.

Jim Phillips, chairman of the 
Board of Governors of the UNC 
system — of which NCCU is a 
member — said Nelms has 
made an impression more 
quickly than any other new 
chancellor he can recall in his 10 
years of governance.

Young singers strike a chord

The high point of Friday's chancellor installation was a one-song performance 
by 59 pint-size members of the Fayetteville Street Elementary School choir. Clad 
in matching black pants and white shirts, these youngsters brought the house down 
during a musical interlude. Their haunting rendition of "We Are Climbing Jacob's 
Ladder" — which UNC President Erskine Bowles called his favorite song — inspired 
applause when they added: "I believe I can fly, I believe I can touch the sky."

When the choir sounded its last note, the McLendon-McDougal Gymnasium 
crowd leaped to its feet and applauded boisterously.

"Chancellor Nelms has already 
begun to make his mark on N.C. 
Central University," Phillips said. 
"He has already shown what kind 
of leader he's going to be."

While his initial reception has 
been positive, Nelms' efforts to 
expand NCCU's boundaries may 
bring an end to the love feast. 
He is advocating an expansion 
plan that would require NCCU 
to buy up at least 136 homes in 
neighborhoods close to campus, 
and many residents are con-
cerned. Some see him as an out-
sider with a tin ear for the deep 
pride and passion locals have 
for both the university and their 
neighborhoods. Sweeping 
change will be too disruptive, 
they say, and the university's 
master planning process is mov-
ing too quickly.

University trustees may vote as 
early as next week on the plan.

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UNCC football deflated

Spangler, Friday say it's a bad idea

BY DAVID SCOTT
THE CHARLOTTE OBSERVER

Two of North Carolina's most respected educators came to UNC Charlotte on Thursday with a frank assessment of the school's hopes of starting a football program.

They don't think it's a good idea.

"I fear that football will damage the university's academic position," said C.D. "Dick" Spangler, the University of North Carolina System's president from 1986 to 1997. "This is the future of this campus that we're talking about."

Spangler was joined by William Friday, another former UNC System president and the founding co-chairman of the Knight Commission for Intercollegiate Athletics. They spoke to about 200 faculty members.

They asked UNCC Chancellor Phil Dubois for the opportunity to speak after hearing in December that a feasibility committee had recommended starting a football program by 2012.

"As university people, what we must guard against above all is the integrity of the institutions where we teach and serve," said Friday.

Friday talked about how escalating costs of college football—from funding 85 scholarships to rising coaches salaries. The influence of television and shoe contracts for schools and coaches also contributes, he said:

"All these events are integral in making what's happening at our universities nothing more than an entertainment event," he said.

UNCC's football feasibility committee has recommended that much of the cost for a program—which could cost about $6 million per year to operate—be borne by an increase in student fees.

"So you're putting the burden on the families of students," Spangler said. "Unless you're keeping tuition and fees low, you'll find it's hard to get the quality you need for other programs."

Spangler also said that asking prospective donors and sponsors for money would conflict with fundraising for academics.
NATION

SMU will get
Bush library

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DALLAS — Southern Methodist University will be home to George W. Bush's presidential library, officials formally announced Friday after a yearlong approval process that some faculty and religious opponents failed to derail.

The decision became official as SMU's board of trustees approved an agreement with the Bush Foundation, which will manage construction and raise money for the project, expected to cost more than $200 million.

First lady Laura Bush is an SMU graduate, and the couple is expected to live in Dallas when Bush leaves office in January.