GREENVILLE—For the first time in three years, the East Carolina football team won’t be introducing a new offensive or defensive scheme in spring practice.

Now that the Pirates have some playbook continuity, the big challenge for third-year coach Ruffin McNeill is to figure out who will be executing those Xs and Os.

Heading into the spring practice period, which opened Monday and will conclude April 14 with the Purple and Gold game at Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium, McNeill must:

• Identify a replacement for graduated quarterback Dominique Davis.
• Sort through a host of largely unproven running backs.
• Rebuild a secondary that lost three of its four starters from a year ago.

Addressing his to-do list, McNeill said he was ready to roll up his sleeves and get to work.

“Today is the first time to get around our team and meet and get on the field and get a chance to see how much (the players) have grown,” he said. “For college coaches, this is an exciting time, because you get a chance to get on the field and see how a young man who may have played minimum reps last year has developed and come along.”

In his first year with ECU, McNeill and his staff employed a prolific, “Air Raid” passing offense and switched their defense from zone to man. The change led to big numbers on both sides of the scoreboard, as well as a 6-7 record and a trip to the Military Bowl, where the Pirates lost to Maryland.

In an attempt to shore up their leaky defense, the Pirates switched from a 4-3 to a more versatile 3-4 base defense, which helped the unit jump from being ranked last in total defense (120th) in 2010 to No. 56 in 2011.

Despite the rise in defensive production, East Carolina finished last season with a 5-7 record and saw their streak of five straight bowls end.

This spring, the Pirates return seven starters on offense and defense. Before they can attempt to start a new string of postseason appearances they must
find a replacement for Davis, who in his two years with the program set the several school records, including most touchdown passes (62) and most completions (727).

Vying for the job will be strong-armed junior Rio Johnson, last season’s backup to Davis, along with senior Brad Wornick, the 2010 No. 2 quarterback, and sophomore Shane Carden and freshman Cody Keith.

“This is a competition that I’m looking forward to,” McNeill said. “They are four quarterbacks that I like, and they understand this offense and they understand the leadership part that goes along with it.”

The battle to see who will be taking the handoffs is even more heated. ECU listed six running backs on its preseason depth chart, and the group is headlined by last year’s leading rusher – junior Torrance Hunt (489 yards) – as well as 2011 opening-game starter senior Reggie Bullock (428 yards) and junior Michael Dobson (221 yards).

“We have challenged the coaching staff to identify roles: What’s this young man’s role? How can he help us win football games?” McNeill said. “And it’s our job as a staff to put him in a position that can help us.”

Facts

**ECU football 2011 record:** 5-7 (4-4 C-USA)

**Spring game:** 2:30 p.m., April 14
Stephanie Louise Dawson
January 18, 1968 - March 15, 2012
Durham

Stephanie Louise Dawson of Durham, NC and Baton Rouge, LA, a professor, technical director, and production manager in the Department of Theatre and Dance at Tulane University, died on Thursday March 15 at Duke University Hospital. She was 44 years old.

Ms. Dawson's career in theater production and teaching was distinguished by her technical and collaborative skill as well as her gift for mentoring and inspiring others. Her talents were expressions of both professional dedication and personal courage that defined a remarkable life.

Known among her colleagues as "Stevie" Dawson, she brought to her work an unusual combination of engineering skills and an understanding of narrative drama. She was valued highly by her peers for her ability to understand and honor the artistic visions of a play's director and designers while translating those visions through the strictures of time, money, space, and labor, into palpable art. With her scene shop crews, frequently consisting of young people starting theater careers, she demonstrated her ability to combine demands for excellence with a protective attitude and willingness to mentor that won their loyalty and often sent them another step ahead in their lives.

Stevie had worked extensively as a theater professional in the Southeastern
United States before joining the Tulane faculty in New Orleans as professor of the practice, technical director, and production manager. Her other notable teaching positions included adjunct appointments at Louisiana State University and Old Dominion University and part-time instruction at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts. Her professional experience included the Alliance Theater Company, the Georgia Shakespeare Festival, and the Centennial Olympics in Atlanta; the Virginia Stage Company in Norfolk; the Arkansas Repertory Theater in Little Rock; the East Carolina Summer Theatre in Greenville, NC; the Birmingham Summerfest in Alabama; the Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival; and the Utah Shakespearean Festival.

She graduated magna cum laude from East Carolina University in 1992, earning a Bachelor of Fine Arts and the Outstanding Senior Award from the Department of Theatre Arts, with a concentration in Design and Production. She was awarded the Master of Fine Arts in Technical Direction from the University of North Carolina School of the Arts in 2004 with a thesis that engineered affordable and accessible automation for small and mid-sized theaters.

Stevie also donated her skills to community and educational causes, including work she provided as a public service for the Governor's School for the Arts in Norfolk, the Unitarian Church of Baton Rouge, and Habitat for Humanity in Greenville and Baton Rouge.

Stephanie Dawson was born on January 18, 1968 in High Point, North Carolina. She grew up in Durham, where she developed her lifelong interests in the arts and literature. Known for her determined spirit, positive outlook, and inquisitive mind, Stephanie was a voracious reader who also developed interests in astronomy, music, and the painting of the Impressionists. She enjoyed hiking, skiing, and motorcycle riding. Many of her friends have fond memories of horseback riding with Stephanie at Crossroads Farm in Bahama, where she kept and cared for her horse "Texas" for most of her childhood and teenage years. Her lifelong involvement in the theater began when she was a student at Carrington Junior High School and Northern Durham High School, where she acted in school plays and developed an interest in technical production.

Stephanie met her ideal match, Ken White, a theatrical lighting designer,
while working together at the Birmingham Summerfest in 1990. They were married on May 1, 1993, and supported each other's professional aspirations throughout their marriage and many separations as professional work for him and professional work and further education for her, frequently kept them apart. They were never however separated in their hearts and were known as a devoted couple among their friends and colleagues.

She was considered an empathetic and supportive colleague and friend whose high ethical standards informed her interactions and had a lasting influence on many people. As early as her undergraduate work as a teaching assistant she began mentoring undergraduates, the start of a legacy of support and guidance for many theater students and professionals. In spite of the rigorous demands and long hours of technical theater production work, she was consistently personable and accessible to those around her. Somehow she made time for friends, family members and associates, leaving a lasting impact through her generosity and the inspiring example she set of a person who could be successful in her profession while remaining an authentic friend.

On top of these accomplishments, Stephanie set an extraordinary example in her fight with cystic fibrosis. When she was born, less than half of the children with cystic fibrosis lived to adulthood. Stephanie beat the odds, graduating from college in 5 years while enduring more than a dozen hospitalizations, grappling with illness while fulfilling numerous summer stock and professional seasons, and eventually receiving a double lung transplant in the year 2000 while completing her Master of Fine Arts degree. At the end of 12 years of thriving post-transplant, Stephanie was hospitalized in May 2011 and fought a 10-month battle with complications stemming from her transplant.

Whether fighting against cystic fibrosis or managing the challenges of living post-transplant, she in effect lived three lives in one, with a demanding work schedule, devotion to friends and loved ones, and the multitude of daily tasks required to maintain her health. Stephanie dealt with her medical challenges on her own terms. As a child, her determination, even defiance, carried her to adulthood. As an adult, she became a skilled advocate for her own health. Her physicians were her consultants, but she was the final authority on what was best for her. Her resilience may have been forged in the battles for her health, but she did not allow disease to define her.
Stephanie was preceded in death by her stepbrother, Justin Campbell of Durham; her stepfather, Richard Soloway of Chapel Hill; her grandfather, John W. Dawson Sr. of Durham; and her grandparents William P. Banner and Louise M. Banner of Asheville. She is survived by her husband, Ken White of Baton Rouge, Louisiana; her mother, Leslie Banner of Chapel Hill; her father, John W. Dawson Jr. of Durham; her stepmother, Marie Flowe Dawson of Durham; her husband's mother and stepfather, Carole and Thomas George of Green Cove Springs, Florida; her husband's father and stepmother, Richard and Vicki White of Sevierville, Tennessee; and her grandmother, Grayce B. Dawson of Carrboro. Other surviving relatives include her stepbrothers, Taylor Campbell of Durham and Colin Soloway of Washington, DC; her aunt, Diane D. Fisher of Carrboro; her uncle, Daniel Dawson of San Jose, California; and her cousins, Morgan Fisher Daven, Leigh Owenby, and Wesley Banner of Asheville.

A memorial service will be held on Saturday, March 24 at 2:00 p.m. at the Unity Center of Peace in Chapel Hill, located at 8800 Seawell School Road. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made payable to the UNCSA Foundation, specifying the "Stevie Dawson" Scholarship Fund for the School of Design & Production, and mailed to: School of Design & Production, c/o UNCSA, 1533 S Main St, Winston-Salem, NC 27127. The family also encourages sharing memories and photos of Stephanie online at cremationsocietync.com on her page in the obituaries section.
UNC physics professor Paul Frampton

Drug smuggler? Victim of scholar envy? UNC prof in Argentine jail

By Jay Price - jprice@newsobserver.com

CHAPEL HILL A 68-year-old UNC-Chapel Hill physics professor with three degrees from Oxford University is being held in an Argentine prison on charges of trying to smuggle two kilograms of cocaine.

Paul H. Frampton, who holds the title Louis D. Rubin Jr. Distinguished Professor of Physics and Astronomy, said in a telephone interview that he was arrested Jan. 23 at the airport in Buenos Aires after the drugs were found in his checked luggage en route to Raleigh-Durham International Airport.

Frampton said he was confident that he would be exonerated and seemed less upset by the drug charges than of his treatment by the university, which he said had stopped his pay for reasons of petty academic jealousy.

Frampton says the cocaine had been cleverly built into a piece of his luggage without his knowledge, but he declined to say how it might have gotten there, saying that revealing details might harm his defense.

“I am innocent,” he said. “I will not be convicted. It is just that the Argentinian justice system is very slow. There is easily enough evidence that I didn’t know there were drugs in the bag, and that will come out, I hope sooner rather than later.”
U.S. State Department officials said Monday that they were aware of Frampton’s arrest, and that officials from the consulate had visited him twice.

**Known in his field**

Frampton has written hundreds of scholarly papers and studies some of the largest questions confronting mankind, including the origins and likely fate of the universe. His CV lists his research interests as theoretical physics, particle phenomenology, string theory, and theoretical cosmology.

Right now, though, he says he’s dodging drugged-up fellow prisoners and fighting to get his university pay restored.

Frampton said that Provost Bruce Carney had his pay improperly stopped, and that he needs the money for his defense and his bills back in Chapel Hill.

Also, the university should have sent someone who knows him and can attest to his character to talk with the judge. Instead, it sent an associate dean who doesn’t know him, but happened to be coming to Argentina on business.

“The university has done nothing, absolutely nothing, to help me,” he said. “You would expect a university of that caliber would do everything possible to get me out of prison.”

Frampton said that he has known Carney, who also taught in the Department of Physics and Astronomy, since they joined the university about the same time more than three decades ago.

**‘Jealousy’ stops pay**

Carney had long been jealous, he said, because Frampton had earned tenure much more quickly and because Carney’s academic accomplishments were paltry compared to his own.

“I am one of the most published physicists, and really he hasn’t done much that is of interest,” Frampton said,

Carney had taken advantage of Frampton’s helpless position to stop his pay and hinder any notion of the university helping him.

Carney, reached by telephone, gave a short laugh.

“That’s an interesting assertion,” he said before referring questions on Frampton to Nancy Davis, the associate vice chancellor for university relations.
Davis confirmed that Frampton’s salary had changed from $106,835 to zero as of March 1, but said she couldn’t release the reason for the change because it was a personnel matter protected under state law.

She also confirmed that the senior associate dean for Social Sciences and Global Programs, Jonathan Hartlyn, had been in Buenos Aires recently on university business and, on March, met with a member of the Argentine judiciary.

Over the phone from the prison, Frampton read a letter that he said Carney had sent to Frampton’s defense attorneys.

In the first sentence, Carney wrote he was sorry to hear of Frampton’s arrest. In the next, he wrote that he was also sorry to hear that Frampton had been missing the meetings of the general relativity class he was supposed to be teaching.

Carney also wrote that after consulting with Chancellor Holden Thorp and University of North Carolina System President Tom Ross he would have to suspend Frampton’s pay, as Frampton would have to take a leave of absence, given his failure to teach the class.

Frampton said the class had been cancelled before it even began because only one student had enrolled, and at least five were required.

Carney, he said, inserted himself in the issue of salary improperly. Due process would have included the department chair, Frampton said, but the chair hadn’t even known.

Frampton said he was actually working more than 40 hours a week in prison, and had already written four scholarly papers this year, including two that would be published. He said that he was able to continue advising two students assigned to him.

One of the students, doctoral candidate David Eby, said that was true.

Frampton had been helping him with several peer-reviewed research papers and was helping him get into an advanced summer program for physicists.

“We’ve been in continuous contact by phone, particularly over the last month, and he has been doing all these things that I’d be depending on him for if he were actually here,” Eby said. “I find that admirable.”

Eby said he didn’t know that Frampton was incarcerated until Sunday. Frampton had said he was out of the country, but hadn’t discussed the circumstances.
Absence noted at UNC

Frampton’s disappearance had been a topic of speculation around the department, said Eby, who thinks there is little question that Frampton is innocent.

“He is human, but this is so far out of his character that I think I actually laughed when I heard about it,” he said.

Frampton said he was being held at Villa Devoto prison in Buenos Aires, the nation’s capital. The prison was used to house political prisoners in the 1960s and 1970s and was the setting of the movie “Kiss of the Spider Woman.”

Ever the scientist, Frampton said the conditions were the worst that he had ever lived in, but that he could not definitely say whether they were unusually bad.

“I have never been in prison before, so I have no way of making an accurate comparison,” he said.

He is able to exercise, he said, and there were five ancient phones that prisoners could use with 10-peso calling cards. Frampton said he had been using those phones to talk with university officials, his students, attorneys and friends.

A personal trip

He had traveled to South America on a personal trip to meet someone, he said, and Buenos Aires had only been a waypoint on the route home. He declined to say what other countries he might have been in.

The 8:45 a.m. flight was supposed to take him through Lima, Peru, then Miami, then to RDU, he said. After he boarded the plane, though, he was escorted off and taken to a luggage area.

A sophisticated scanner designed to detect differences in the density of material had noted something odd about one of his bags. Argentine officials cut the bag open in front of him, then tested the powder and found it to be cocaine.

After his arrest, Frampton said, he was held incommunicado for about three days before he was allowed to call his department chairman and tell him what had happened.

A friend who teaches at Princeton alerted academics in Buenos Aires, who have rallied to help him, Frampton said. They arranged an offer of a
university job there, which his lawyers think could win his release while he waits for trial. If allowed to leave prison, he would have to agree not to leave the country and wouldn’t get his passport back.

The U.S. embassy has looked into the case, but it can only make sure he’s being treated properly and has an adequate defense team. It can’t take sides in the case, Frampton said.

Frampton said that once all the evidence is pieced together, there is a reasonable chance that the judge will drop the charges.

“I told my chairman that the chances I will be back by August 15 are 99.995 percent, so I told him to put me on the teaching schedule for fall.”

Price: 919-829-4526
Legal diplomas are apparently losing luster.

The organization behind the Law School Admission Test reported that the number of tests it administered this year dropped by more than 16 percent, the largest decline in more than a decade.

The Law School Admission Council reported that the LSAT was given 129,925 times in the 2011-12 academic year. That was well off the 155,050 of the year before and far from the peak of 171,514 in the year before that. In all, the number of test takers has fallen by nearly 25 percent in the last two years.

The decline reflects a spreading view that the legal market in the United States is in terrible shape and will have a hard time absorbing the roughly 45,000 students who are expected to graduate from law school in each of the next three years. And the problem may be deep and systemic.

Many lawyers and law professors have argued in recent years that the legal market will either stagnate or shrink as technology allows more low-end legal work to be handled overseas, and as corporations demand more cost-efficient fee arrangements from their firms.

That argument, and news that so many new lawyers are struggling with immense debt, is changing the way law school is perceived by undergrads. Word is getting through that law school is no longer a safe place to sit out an economic downturn — an article of faith for years — and that strong grades at an above-average school no longer guarantees a six-figure law firm job.

“For a long time there has been this culturally embedded perception that if you go to law school, it will be worth the money,” said Kyle McEntee of Law School Transparency, a legal education policy organization. “The idea that law school is an easy ticket to financial security is finally breaking down.”

Law schools have also suffered through some withering press in the last couple of years. Some blogs, most of them written by unemployed or underemployed graduates, have accused law schools of enticing students
with shady data. Attention has focused on a crucial statistic: the percentage of graduates who are employed nine months after graduation.

In recent months, class-action lawsuits have been filed against more than a dozen law schools, charging that students were snookered into enrolling by postgraduate employment figures that were vastly, and fraudulently, inflated. Even if law schools are able to defeat these lawsuits — and many legal scholars anticipate they will — the media attention has been bruising. Steve Schwartz, an LSAT tutor, said the new LSAT figures were not a surprise, given the steady decline in the number of students seeking one-on-one tutoring.

“This is a major turn of events,” he wrote of the newly reported test numbers on his LSAT Blog, “The tide is turning, folks.”

For some law schools, the dwindling number of test-takers represents a serious long-term challenge.

“What I’d anticipate is that you’ll see the biggest falloff in applications in the bottom end of the law school food chain,” said Andrew Morriss of the University of Alabama School of Law. “Those schools are going to have significant difficulty because they are dependent on tuition to fund themselves and they’ll either have to cut class size to maintain standards, or accept students with lower credentials.”

If they take the second course, Mr. Morriss said, it would hurt the school three years later because there is a strong correlation between poor performance on the LSAT and poor performance on the bar exam. If students start failing the bar, then the prestige of the school will drop, which would mean lowering standards even more. “At that point,” Mr. Morriss said, “the school is risking a death spiral.”