THE DAILY CLIPS

March 23, 2012

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Faculty speak out against changes
By Jackie Drake
Friday, March 23, 2012

Faculty at East Carolina University generally are against changes proposed in an ongoing academic reorganization effort but are seeking more information on potential financial savings as the process continues.

Most colleges want to remain intact, according to representatives who spoke at a special meeting of the Faculty Senate on Tuesday to discuss structural changes proposed last month by the Program Prioritization Committee. The committee was appointed by the chancellor in May 2011 to identify ways to increase efficiency and save money after four years of state budget cuts culminating in a $49 million cut this fiscal year.

More than 2,200 employees responded to an online survey that solicited feedback on the “white paper” released on Feb. 15, which contained 56 potential changes to the university’s three divisions, 13 colleges and free-standing schools, and 72 departments. The three “menus” of change for each level did not include financial figures.

“I have trouble ordering from a menu without prices,” Charles Boklage, faculty senate representative from the Brody School of Medicine, said.

Estimates of financial savings will be included when the committee releases four to five overall scenarios combining the 56 options and feedback received, according to committee chairman and geography professor Ron Mitchelson. The scenarios will be released on March 30.

“They will be estimates, I want to caution you,” Mitchelson said.

Merging two colleges could save roughly $270,000 or $348,000 in administrative salaries in two hypothetical examples that Mitchelson presented at the meeting Tuesday. The budget committee is working with the prioritization committee on the scenarios.

Forums will be held April 9-12 on the different scenarios, one of which will be no change at all. The committee will make its final recommendation by April 30 to Chancellor Steve Ballard, who said he would take his time with approval and implementation.

“We’re thankful for all the feedback,” Mitchelson said. “Without feedback we cannot be successful.”
In addition to the survey, the committee received about 50 written responses from the different units.

Fourteen of 15 departments “oppose the breakup of the College of Arts and Sciences,” said Jeff Popke of the Department of Geography, adding that the departments are not opposed to organizational change.

“The College of Human Ecology has a strong theoretical foundation and shared vision,” said Sharon Ballard of Child Development and Family Relations. “If we’re dissolved, that synergy will dissipate.”

While most colleges want to stay the way they are, most also were open to taking in other departments or programs.

“In large part, people fear the disruptiveness,” Mitchelson said. “We will be sensitive to the nature of the disruptions.”

The nutrition department is interested in moving to nursing or health and human performance.

Another goal of reorganization is to increase collaboration.

“We don’t have to be in the same college to have synergy,” said John Given of the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures.

A few faculty members continued to question the purpose of reorganization.

“We’re comfortable in our current homes,” Mitchelson said, “But there’s some discomfort coming with these budget issues that we face.”

The committee will continue to accept feedback throughout the process.

“I’ll tell you one thing about this committee: it listens,” Mitchelson said. “And it will continue to listen.”

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ECU Criminal Justice Dept. Chair, William Bloss presented the results of a crime study the department was contracted to preform by the GPD to the City Council on Thursday, March 8, 2012. (Aileen Devlin/The Daily Reflector)

Council revisiting crime study
By Michael Abramowitz
Friday, March 23, 2012

Greenville’s leaders are having another look this week at a recent East Carolina University-based research study that indicated city residents have little fear of crime, and at least one would like a refund for the cost.

The City Council in April 2011 commissioned ECU’s Department of Criminal Justice to conduct the study at the recommendation of its Special Task Force on Public Safety.

Results of the study, conducted by the Center for Survey Research, were presented to the council at its March 8 session by department Chairman William Bloss.

Mayor Allen Thomas and the council members told Bloss following his presentation that the sample of residents surveyed by the researchers did not appear to accurately reflect the demographic makeup of the city. Thomas noted that 70 percent of the study respondents were female; 67 percent were white; 72 percent had some college or a degree; 56 percent were retired or unemployed; and 76 percent owned their own home.

“It looks like you did a great job of gauging what white educated females who own their own home and are not working currently think about crime in Greenville,” Thomas said.
Thomas later requested a copy of the $11,346 contract former police Chief William Anderson signed on behalf of the city, paid with seized criminal assets.

“I wanted some context and clarity about the dialogue that led to the request for the study, making sure the goals and expectations were met,” Thomas said on Monday. “The council does not only want a good report, we want one that reflects the city ... all its races, backgrounds and socio-economic standard, because we’re trying to solve a real problem.”

Council members Rose Glover and Max Joyner Jr. said they asked Bloss beforehand and were expecting that the interviews would be conducted face-to-face with respondents.

“I asked him if the study would assure diversity in its coverage, and he said it would,” Glover said. “Then he puts out this thing that’s about 70 percent retired white women who went to college and own their homes. I don’t think he should get paid (for the study). It was a waste of taxpayers’ money.”

Councilwoman Marion Blackburn questioned the analytical methods used by the department, asking how a small population sample can be scientifically indicative of the city as a whole. Only 386 of the 6,000 sample population responded to the surveyors, but that was an adequate and “scientifically sufficient” number, Bloss said.

“We try to achieve the requirement that there is an equal probability of everyone in the sample being selected (for questioning),” he said. “Everyone was called a minimum of three times, and we are governed by the data collected.”

Researchers surveyed residents from all four of the city’s policing districts. Bloss said his researchers did not select the demographic makeup and the report simply reflects the respondents.

“The study was conducted by experts ... and is objective and scientifically valid. If the results are not what you wanted to see, I regret that. We’re the messengers who report what we collected,” Bloss said.

The council members and mayor seemed unsatisfied with Bloss’ explanations and rationale.

“I have a hard time believing that speeding was the greatest crime concern among Greenville residents,” Joyner said.

The mayor said he and all the City Council members are interested in having an accurate picture of how Greenville residents feel about crime in their city.
“We don’t want to whitewash anything,” Thomas said. “If things are going well, we want to be told that, and if there are certain areas of focus with issues, we want to be able to look them in the eye. (Inaccurate information) is not going to help us make our city better.”

Bloss said Wednesday that he has not been approached by the mayor or any council members regarding the study since the March 8 presentation where he heard and responded to the council’s questions and concerns. He reiterated that he is satisfied with the manner in which the research was done and the accuracy of the report.

“We stand by (the study) in terms of its scientific rigor and objectivity,” Bloss said. “The presentation (of the report) was delivered with an open invitation to any of the city’s decision makers to meet with the members of the research team and pose questions or ask for elaboration. None was requested and none has occurred.”

Thomas said he is unsure whether the city can do anything to recover the cost of the survey but he would like the investment to produce something worthwhile.

“We need to learn from this experience and make sure that when we’re spending the people’s tax dollars, we get what we ask for ... rather than simply an academic exercise,” Thomas said.

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The Tina Fey Effect
By ECU News Services
Tuesday, March 20, 2012

With the U.S. presidential race ramping up, politicians will spend millions on campaigns to enhance their image and affect voters’ choices. And the politicians’ multiple appearances and news interviews give late-night comedians new material to mine.

ECU political science professors Jody Baumgartner and Jonathan “Jay” Morris, along with ECU undergraduate Natasha L. Walth, have determined that humorous portrayals and caricatures of political figures are an important factor in how politicians are perceived among young adults.

The researchers examined young voters’ perceptions of former vice presidential candidate Sarah Palin following impersonations of her by comedian Tina Fey on the popular television program “Saturday Night Live.” Their study, “The Fey Effect: Young Adults, Political Humor, and Perceptions of Sarah Palin in the 2008 Presidential Election Campaign,” was published in the latest issue of Public Opinion Quarterly.

Baumgartner said they simply got lucky on the timing of the “American Values Survey” they were conducting at public universities across the country. By November 2007, the ECU researchers had 10,343 students, ages 18 to 24, who agreed to participate. Those students were asked to complete a series of surveys beginning in December 2007 and continuing through November 2008. Ultimately, 1,755 students completed all six.

The first and second surveys had identical questions that measured views of Sarah Palin, John McCain, Joe Biden and Barack Obama. Baumgartner said
the researchers lucked out when “SNL” aired its first skit featuring Tina Fey’s impersonation of Palin on Sept. 13, 2008, because it appeared after the first wave of surveys had been fielded. A second skit aired two weeks later. The vice presidential debate took place Oct. 2, and the “SNL” spoof of that aired two days later. The researchers’ second survey was fielded Oct. 24-Nov. 2. And “SNL” aired more skits lampooning Palin.

Baumgartner said they weren’t looking specifically for this topic, but “this is the type of research that we do. The survey questions that we asked – we asked the right questions at the right time.”

He said the Palin questions were part of a larger survey on the college students’ knowledge of all the candidates and their political views.

“We knew what we were going to find (as the survey results came in). The pleasant surprise was that we had taken a survey before and one after the vice presidential debate. Absolutely consistent with previous research – if comedians make fun of someone the perception on that person is going to go down,” Baumgartner said.

In the weeks following her appearance in the vice-presidential debate, overall approval for John McCain’s pick of Palin dropped from 40 to 31 percent in the researchers’ sample (taken between the first and second waves survey questions), while disapproval increased from 39 to 55 percent, their study reports.

This was not the first time Baumgartner and Morris teamed up to study young voters. In 2006, they reported their research showed college students who watched the satirical TV program, “The Daily Show,” were more skeptical and knowledgeable about politics and media.

“We do know a lot of young people watch political comedy – late night TV in particular,” Baumgartner said. “And we know some or many of them are getting their understanding of politics from this. You have to assume it’s playing a fairly important role (in their decision on candidates).”

Baumgartner said he doesn’t think viewing Fey’s impersonation of Palin changed people’s vote. “Political humor is just a drop in the bucket,” he said. “People form their opinions from many various sources.”

Their study noted that “SNL” has been doing parodies of presidential candidates since its inaugural season in 1975.

The political party that a voter is most connected to proves to be the most important factor in their candidate selection, Baumgartner said.
“We know (political humor) will change the way the person thinks about the candidate and it may change the vote. But it’s not necessarily the same thing – changing an opinion and changing a vote. You can assume a changed opinion might have an effect,” he said.

“Political humor seems to have more effect on the less informed citizen,” Baumgartner said. “The more informed citizen probably already has an opinion formed or is on its way to being there.”
Former Pirates perform at pro day

“I kept the rage in for a few months ... and I let it out today.”

By Nathan Summers

By Nathan Summers
Friday, March 23, 2012

A lifetime of playing football helps to foster the dream of making it to the NFL, yet the realization of that dream often comes down to a couple of hours and a few clicks of a stopwatch.

At East Carolina on Thursday, those dreams were put to the test for dozens of former ECU players, who worked out for NFL scouts on the annual pro timing day.

While anyone has a chance to post big numbers and be noticed by the scores of scouts on the field, three former Pirates seem to have built the kind of momentum it takes to live out their football dreams: wide receiver Lance Lewis, quarterback Dominique Davis and offensive tackle Steven Baker.

Lewis, who enjoyed a brilliant two-year career with the Pirates after signing from East Mississippi Community College, wasn’t completely satisfied with his workout, but still has time to do some fine-tuning before the April 26 draft.

“I’m comfortable with everything, but my 40 time was a little off, wasn’t where I thought it would be,” Lewis said of his 40-yard dash, which he estimated to be about a 4.52. “That doesn’t really stand too good to me so I’ve got to get back to work to get where I want to be.”

Lewis, who did his training with Billy Miller at The Factory in Westlake, Calif., said the scouts gave him positive reviews of his performance.
Davis, another JUCO product (Fort Scott C.C.), set numerous ECU passing records in his short time in Greenville, but during his training with Chip Smith in Atlanta, he didn’t use his accomplishments as a motivation, but instead focused on the fact he was considered a long shot for the draft when his college career ended.

“I had a chip on my shoulder, and I kept the rage in for a few months from not getting invited to the combine or some major bowl games, and I let it out today,” said Davis, who threw for a school-record 3,967 yards and 37 touchdowns as a junior before tossing for 3,225 yards and 25 scores last year,

Davis said Smith worked with him on speed and strength to prepare him for Thursday’s workout, and said his mental approach was to relax and not press too much in front of the scouts.

Baker also felt good about his showing, and said the thrill of being eyed by pro teams is something he’s been waiting a long time to do.

“I’ve been working hard and laying down some good practice times, and I really felt good coming into it, more anxious than anything,” said the 6-foot-8 Baker, who stepped into a starting role on the ECU offensive line for the final nine games of his senior season. “I’ve really been looking forward to this day since I started playing football, watching the previous years and the seniors before me. I was hungry to get my chance.”

Williams update

Former ECU running back Jonathan Williams has already had a taste of the NFL, having signed with the Cincinnati Bengals last season, but now as a free agent Williams is ready to find a more permanent role in the league.

That chance might be waiting for him next weekend in Detroit at the NFL Super Regional Combine.

“My experience with the Bengals was a great experience for me,” said Williams, a spectator at Thursday’s pro day. “I got to learn a lot about what they want out of their players. You’ve got to be able to read film, critique yourself and take notes.”

Contact Nathan Summers at nsummers@reflector.com or 252-329-9595.
Womens' virtue tested in opera

Friday, March 23, 2012

Did a real-life scandal in 1790 prompt Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart to write “Cosi fan tutte”? There are still rumors that the famed composer wrote the opera based on facts that took place in his beloved Vienna.

“Cosi fan tutte” will be performed by the School of Music at East Carolina University at 7 p.m. Thursday-March 31 and at 3 p.m. April 1 in A.J. Fletcher Recital Hall.

Mozart and librettist Lorenzo Da Ponte wrote the opera about the theme of wife swapping, which dates back to the 13th century to Boccoaccie’s “Decameron” and Shakespeare’s play “Cymbeline.” Elements of Shakespeare’s “Taming of the Shrew” are also present.

The story begins in a café where two officers, Ferrando and Guglielmo, are discussing that their respective fiancées will remain eternally faithful to them. Philosopher Don Alfonso joins the conversation and lays a wager that he can prove in a day’s time that their fiancées, like all women, are fickle. Ferrando and Guglielmo accept the wager then pretend to be called off to war. The two men plan to return, disguised, to see if they can seduce the other’s fiancée.

The ECU production includes Brenton O’Hara as Don Alfonso; Todd Barnhill and John Charles Clark as Ferrando; Ronald Holmes and Scott
Willis as Guglielmo; Erin O’Leary and Jordan Winslow as Fiordiligi; Chelea Keane and Brooke Haney as Dorabella; and Cera Finney and Anna-Parsons Charles as Despina, Dorabella and Fiordiligi’s chambermaid.

While the subject matter was not considered risque at the time it was written, it was considered so during the 19th and 20th centuries. The opera, as a result, was rarely performed and when it was, the libretto was censored.

“The fact that it fell out of fashion after its premiere in 1790 had a great deal to do with the strange subject matter,” said John Kramar, director of the ECU production.

The first performance of “Cosi fan tutte” was held at the Burgtheater in Vienna Jan. 26, 1790. But just five performances into the show, it was stopped because of the death of Emperor Joseph II and the resulting period of mourning by the court. The first British performance was in May 1811 at the King’s Theatre in London. The first U.S. performance, however, didn’t take place until the 20th century when it made its debut in 1922 at the Metropolitan Opera.

Cosi fan tutte means “Thus do all women” but is often referred to as “women are like that.” The “women are like that” line is sung by three men in Act 2 Scene 12 just before the finale.
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill has asked WRDU 106.1, a Triangle radio station also known as Rush Radio, to stop referencing the school or the Tar Heel Sports Network during the broadcast of Rush Limbaugh’s program.

UNC-Chapel Hill has asked WRDU 106.1, a Triangle radio station also known as “Rush Radio,” to stop referencing the school or the Tar Heel Sports Network during the broadcast of Rush Limbaugh’s daily talk show on the station.

The new practice, announced in a statement from the university, also prohibits mentioning Limbaugh’s show during the broadcast of UNC football and basketball games on Rush Radio.

WRDU agreed to the changes.

The action was taken in response to comments Limbaugh made on his show recently about a Georgetown University law student named Sandra Fluke, who was advocating for insurance coverage of contraceptives. Limbaugh called Fluke a “slut” and a “prostitute.” He later apologized, but his show has reportedly lost more than 100 advertisers in the fallout.

The statement from UNC described Limbaugh’s comments as “rude, inappropriate and offensive,” and said the school found itself “unfortunately and awkwardly connected to Limbaugh” during the controversy.
Chancellor Holden Thorp told a student reporter for Carolina Connection, a radio news magazine affiliated with the UNC School of Journalism and Mass Communication, that UNC faculty and others outside the school were bothered by Limbaugh’s comments, so the move was a compromise.

“We do understand why people are upset, so a compromise that (UNC) athletics was able to work out was that the radio station would avoid promoting Carolina sports during Rush Limbaugh’s show, and vice versa,” Thorp said.

The university says it does not plan to take further action.

BlueNC.org co-founder James Protzman, who had been outspoken in his criticism of the university’s connection to Rush Radio said, “UNC’s response is more than I’d hoped for, but less than it should have been.”

“I see the university as a powerful force for strengthening the fabric of our democracy,” Protzman said. “UNC missed the chance to make the most of this teachable moment.”

Tar Heel Sports Properties, which owns and operates the Tar Heel Sports Network, is an independent contractor of UNC. Tar Heel Sports Properties has more than 50 affiliates, including WRDU, that air the games.

Facts
UNC’s statement Radio talk show host Rush Limbaugh recently made rude, inappropriate and offensive statements. And we at Carolina found ourselves unfortunately and awkwardly connected to Limbaugh. Limbaugh’s show airs locally on a station that also broadcasts UNC basketball and football games. That connection spurred many people to email us and prompted a petition campaign, both with the goal of urging us to drop our broadcasts from the station. As background, Carolina Athletics has a contract with Tar Heel Sports Properties, a division of Learfield Sports. Learfield owns and operates the Tar Heel Sports Radio Network as an independent contractor of the University. The radio network includes over 50 affiliates, and that network enables people in almost all of North Carolina to listen to the live broadcasts of our football and basketball games. That’s our goal … for Carolina fans to be able hear our games. We have not affiliated with or endorsed Rush Limbaugh or any other radio personality or politician. We have asked – and the local station has agreed – to end the practice of referencing the Tar Heel Sports Network or the University’s name while promoting the Limbaugh program and vice versa. Beyond that, the University does not plan to take any additional action at this time.
RALEIGH -- The News & Observer, Charlotte Observer and other media organizations continue to seek records related to the NCAA investigation of the UNC-Chapel Hill football program.

In a court document filed Thursday in Orange County Superior Court, lawyers representing the media organizations asked a judge to rule on whether written questions sent from the university’s athletic compliance office to NCAA officials are subject to the state’s public records law.

A hearing was not immediately set.

The media organizations began a quest in October 2010 for public documents related to the two-pronged NCAA investigation that resulted in the recent infractions found within the football program.

Though the university turned over some records as a result of the suit, other information has been withheld, including personal phone records of Butch Davis, the former Tar Heel coach fired amid the investigation.

University officials have maintained that many of the records being sought are private, citing federal student privacy protection laws. The N&O and other plaintiffs believe these records are public under North Carolina law, which states that records, documents and other information generated by state agencies and institutions such as UNC-CH should be, with limited exceptions, made public.

The latest request is part of an ongoing suit filed in October 2010 by two McClatchy newspapers that joined forces with the DTH Media Corp., which
publishes the UNC-CH student newspaper The Daily Tar Heel; News 14 Carolina, a cable TV station operated by Time Warner Entertainment-Advance/Newhouse Partnership; WTVD Television; Capitol Broadcasting; the Associated Press; and Media General Operations.

The suit, filed in Orange County Superior Court, names Chancellor Holden Thorp, former UNC-CH Athletics Director Richard Baddour, Davis and Jeff McCracken, head of the UNC-CH public safety department.

NCAA investigators began investigating the UNC-CH football program in summer 2010. Penalties were issued earlier this month.

UNC-CH’s football team will serve a postseason ban in 2012, and first-year head coach Larry Fedora will have to make do with five fewer scholarships in each of the next three seasons. During the same time span, UNC-CH will remain on probation, and anything that runs afoul of NCAA rules during that time would be subject to harsher penalties.
CHAPEL HILL -- Students and faculty at UNC-Chapel Hill will dive deeply into issues surrounding the world’s water supply as part of a two-year academic initiative announced Thursday.

The campus theme, dubbed “Water in Our World,” was revealed by Chancellor Holden Thorp at a meeting of the Board of Trustees. Later, to help kick off the initiative, drama students were scheduled to gather at the Old Well for a reading of a play about the BP oil spill.

Thorp said the theme will bring together faculty from fields as varied as environmental science, global health, brain science, public policy, law, business and the arts.

“By focusing on water we can aggregate all of this great work and also demonstrate how what North Carolina is doing impacts the great problems facing our world,” he said. “We expect to focus on issues of how to ensure water is available and safe for people around the world.”

The announcement came on World Water Day, hours before U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton introduced a U.S. Water Partnership, a public-private group that aims to find solutions to global water challenges, particularly in developing countries. Participating in the group are water experts from UNC-CH’s Water Institute in the Gillings School of Global Public Health.

The campus will host an international conference on water later this year, as well as lectures, film series and other events. Mobilizing a campus around a single topic may lead to new collaborations and breakthroughs, Thorp said.

Thorp also announced a $1 million endowed professorship to recruit a faculty member with expertise in science and policy for improving the world’s access to clean water. It is funded with a gift of $666,000 from Don and Jennifer Holzworth, and will be matched with funds from the state’s Distinguished Professors Endowment Trust Fund.
Don Holzworth founded two health services companies, and the Holzworths have been longtime financial supporters of UNC-CH’s public health school.

Also Thursday, another large donation was announced by Thorp – $2.5 million to the university’s Eshelman School of Pharmacy by benefactor and alumnus Fred Eshelman, a Wilmington businessman who founded Pharmaceutical Product Development Inc. and Furiex, a spinoff that develops drugs.

The money will be used for pharmacy research and education programs and brings Eshelman’s total support of the university to $35 million.
SHU to dedicate new student commons in honor of Linda McMahon
By Sacred Heart University
Published: Mar 23, 2012 - 5:24 AM

FAIRFIELD, CT - Sacred Heart University will name its new student commons in honor of Board of Trustees member Linda E. McMahon. McMahon, who provided a $5 million gift to the university for capital projects such as the student commons, has been a member of the Board of Trustees since 2004. The Linda E. McMahon commons will be dedicated at 10 a.m. on Friday, April 13.

“We are incredibly lucky to have the friendship of someone like Linda McMahon. Her gift shows her commitment to both our students and to our vision to make a strong, thriving University even stronger. She is extremely generous to us with her time and resources,” said Dr. John J. Petillo, president of Sacred Heart. “She is a leader in every sense of the word, and we are very grateful for her expertise and generosity.”

Linking the University’s academic, spiritual and extracurricular cores, as well as its upper and lower campuses, the distinctive V-shaped Linda E. McMahon Commons will serve as a physical and social crossroads, while providing a variety of services to meet the evolving needs of the University’s students. The new building will offer a bookstore, a 250-seat student dining hall, a private dining room with a hearth and seating for 50, informal lounge spaces, outside seating, a presentation room, the career counseling center and much more. The building is 46,000 gross square feet.
and was designed by Sasaki Associates, Inc. The total cost of construction was $22 million.

“I am extremely honored to have my name on this beautiful building. I support Sacred Heart University because of my commitment to the students, to education and, most importantly, because I believe in the University’s commitment to excellence and its mission to shape graduates who know themselves, are rooted in faith and are committed to social responsibility as they go out into the world. If I can set any kind of example for them, I have more than done my job,” McMahon said. “My reward has always been to see successful SHU alumni making their mark, but it means a lot that the University has chosen to honor me in this way.”

McMahon is widely recognized as one of the country’s top business executives, helping WWE, headquartered in Stamford, CT, grow from a modest, 13-person company to a global enterprise with more than 600 employees. In 2007, she was named a Multichannel News “Wonder Woman,” recognizing her accomplishments as a leader in the U.S. cable television industry for her work as chief executive officer of WWE. In addition to her success in the boardroom, Linda has been instrumental in nurturing a wide variety of community and charitable programs. She spearheaded the creation of Get R.E.A.L education and literacy programs, including WWE’s nationwide Reading Challenge in partnership with the youth division of the American Library Association. In 2004, the Make-A-Wish Foundation Awarded WWE its highest honor, and in 2005, McMahon was appointed to the organization’s National Advisory Council. Under her leadership, WWE received the first-ever Legacy of Hope Award, given in honor of Bob Hope, for its extensive support of our troops from the USO of metropolitan Washington, D.C. In 2007, the company received the Secretary of Defense Exceptional Public Service Award for its support of deployed service members in Iraq and Afghanistan. McMahon also serves on the board of the Close Up Foundation, a nonprofit that aims to educate and inspire young people to participate in our democracy. In 2009, she was appointed by Governor M. Jodi Rell to serve on the Connecticut Board of Education.

Since stepping down as chief executive officer of WWE in 2009, McMahon has been active with her family foundation to support various Connecticut organizations and programs that promote entrepreneurship and education.
Born in New Bern, NC, she graduated from East Carolina University with a bachelor’s degree in French. She lives in Greenwich with her husband of 45 years, Vince. They have two adult children, Shane and Stephanie, and six grandchildren.
Dean Taylor is president of Verizon Wireless’ South Central Region, which includes Oklahoma, Arkansas, northern Mississippi and western Tennessee. He is responsible for leading, developing and growing the region’s business, retail, indirect, finance and operations functions. Before coming to the South Central Region, Taylor was the retail sales director in the company’s Carolinas-Tennessee Region. He holds a master’s degree in business administration from East Carolina University in Greenville, N.C.

1: Tell us about your career. How did you get to your present job?

I was lucky to have a dad who was in the business in the early 1980s. He put me to work installing some of the very first phones in cars. Many people who work with me now have never seen an installed phone!

Early in my career, I learned what was important to the customer and simply applied that knowledge to my sales roles and, eventually, the many leadership roles I have held. So, you might say part of the advantage I had was learning the business from the ground up.

I'm very proud to have been a part of Verizon Wireless since we formed our company in 2000. That's a short time to become the company we are today.

2: How do you keep up with the many changes in the communications business and still have time to be a manager?
Our No. 1 focus is our customers, and in order to give them what they need, we must provide our employees with the tools and knowledge to best serve them.

We're consistently recognized nationally for the level of training we provide our employees, and recently Verizon Wireless was ranked No. 1 in Training magazine's "Top 125 Training Organizations in America." Training, combined with the teamwork of our multiple departments, gives us a great foundation for success that we deliver to our customers.

3: What new features are we likely to see in smart phones over the next few years?

Smartphones do so much already, and I think we'll see some refining in those areas. However, I think we'll also see more specific uses for these devices in various industries.

For example, if you're in real estate, you might use your smartphone to open the key box on the doors of properties you're showing. You can even use your smartphone to scan a credit card payment in the middle of a corn field - just a couple of ideas on how phones will become even more useful tools in people's work and everyday lives.

4. Network technology has been improving quickly. Is there much more performance that can be wrung out there?

Absolutely. As you may know, 4G LTE technology is the future of wireless technology. Verizon launched 4G LTE in Tulsa in mid-2011; in fact, we celebrated Tulsa as the nation's 100th market.

This technology means customers get information in real time. For smartphone users, that means they're browsing for information at lightning-fast speeds, they can watch live video on their phones or tablets without the buffering (or delays), they can download full-length HD movies in minutes.

On a bigger scale, it means machines have the ability to talk to other machines with real-time data. Before we know it, your washing machine might send an electronic message to a data hub, notifying a repairman that a particular fuse has gone out and that he needs to make a service call. Live
video security surveillance is another capability with 4G LTE.

The difference is the quality and that it's real-time information. 4G LTE allows massive amounts of data to come across quickly and clearly. The machine-to-machine revolution, as we call it, has endless possibilities.

5: Is your industry hiring right now? If so, what skills do applicants need?

There are positions available within Verizon Wireless across the country. Depending on your interests, you can find a job in departments ranging from retail sales, business sales, customer service and network.

The majority of these positions are currently in sales and customer care centers, but we're a growing company, so I encourage potential employees to keep their eyes on opportunities with us.