THE DAILY CLIPS

March 24, 2008

News, commentary, and opinion
compiled by the East Carolina University News Bureau from:

The Greenville Daily Reflector
The Raleigh News & Observer
The New York Times
The Wall Street Journal
USA Today
The Charlotte Observer
The Fayetteville Observer
The Greensboro News & Record
Newsweek
U.S. News & World Report
Business Week
Time

East Carolina University News Bureau
E-mail to durhamj@ecu.edu  Web site at http://www.news.ecu.edu
252-328-6481 FAX: 252-328-6300
ECU centennial celebration continues Thursday

By Ecu News Bureau
Special to The Daily Reflector

East Carolina University will continue its centennial celebration Thursday with a focus on spirit and service.

The 10 a.m. convocation at Wright Auditorium will be led by Robert J. Grezyn Jr., chairman of ECU Board of Trustees. He will speak on the topic of "spirit." The convocation will also hold the inaugural induction for members of the Service Society — a recognition of ECU students, staff and faculty who have performed 100 or more hours of volunteer service, followed by a presentation for the Centennial Awards for Excellence. The Centennial awards, now in their second year, recognize outstanding university leaders or leadership teams in four categories: leadership, service, spirit and ambition.

Lunch on the university mall will be held from noon—1 p.m. A ticket is required for lunch only. The unveiling of the Greenville Quilters Guild's Centennial Quilt at the J.Y. Joyner Library will occur at 1 p.m., followed by a 2 p.m. ribbon-cutting for the reopening of the Carol G. Belk Building on Charles Boulevard, the new home for the College of Health and Human Performance.

Professor to lead regional Rotary

Vivian W. Mott, a department chairwoman in the College of Education, was named district governor for 45 Rotary clubs in eastern North Carolina. A member of the Greenville Noon Rotary, Mott will assume her leadership position July 1. She also attended a Rotary International leadership conference in January in San Diego, Calif.

Alum establishes scholarship

A Raleigh businessman and ECU alumnus has established a new scholarship designed to produce the next generation of construction management professionals.

Thomas R. Bland, president of Preservation Homes of Raleigh, established the Preservation Homes Construction Management Scholarship at the university.

The renewable scholarship covers all costs for a four-year education for a student majoring in construction management who is from Durham, Franklin, Johnston, Nash, Orange, Wilson or Wake counties. Christopher Karl Wheeler, a freshman from Wilson, is the first recipient of this scholarship.

Bland said he hopes the scholarship will allow more students to learn the hands-on realities of the residential construction industry, and to encourage others into doing more — as both students and alumni.

"ECU has a reputation for its hard-work ethic and ingenuity," Bland said. "We know what we want and how to get there."

Scholarship recipients must maintain a 3.5 GPA and demonstrate financial need. Bland is a member of the ECU Circle of Excellence and a 20-year member of the ECU Pirates Club.

See ECU, B3
**ECU**

Continued from B1

He is also a member of the Thomas Harriot College of Arts and Sciences Dean's Advancement Council.

**Jarvis Lecture is March 31**

A biblical archeologist will be the speaker for the 16th annual Jarvis Lecture on Christianity and Culture, 7:30 p.m. March 31 at the Harvey Banquet Hall at ECU’s Murphy Center.

William G. Dever will present “Did God Have a Wife? Archaeology and Folk Religion in Ancient Israel.” Through his review of the evidence, Dever will illuminate the multi-faceted role of religion and cult in the everyday lives of the ancient Israelites.

The free lecture is sponsored by the East Carolina Thomas Harriot College of Arts and Sciences Religious Studies Program and supported by a contribution from the Jarvis Memorial United Methodist Church. Next year the Jarvis Lecture will be included in the Harriot College Voyages of Discovery series.

Free parking is available adjacent to the Murphy Center. Contact Calvin Mercer at mercerc@ecu.edu or visit www.ecu.edu/religionprogram.

**Joyner Library hosts exhibit**

As part of ECU’s centennial celebration, J.Y. Joyner Library will present “Reflection on Nature—One Hundred Works,” an exhibit featuring the work of sculptor and ECU professor Hanna Jabran. The exhibit will open with a reception at 5 p.m. Thursday on the second floor of Joyner Library, and will run through June 27.

Jabran’s work has been exhibited across North America, Europe, the Middle East, Asia, and Latin and South America.

**Pulitzer winner to read her work**

Natasha Trethewey, the 2007 Pulitzer Prize-winning poet, will give a free reading at Hendrix Theater at 6 p.m., April 2.

Trethewey, author of the collection, “Native Guard” (Houghton Mifflin 2006), examines racial turmoil and personal identity growing up in the Deep South, according to John Hoppenthaler, an ECU poetry professor.

“The book is also about her mother’s subsequent death at the hands of a black stepfather, as well as about the Native Guard, Louisiana’s celebrated regiment of black men during the Civil War,” Hoppenthaler said. “These intertwined stories are presented in poems that are largely written in formal poetry modes.”

Trethewey’s first volume, “Domestic Work” (Graywolf Press, 2000), received the Cave Canem Poetry Prize, and her second volume, “Bellocq’s Ophelia” (Graywolf Press, 2002) is a collection of epistolary poems in the voice of an octogenarian prostitute in the early 1900s, drawing from photographs of that era’s New Orleans red-light district. She is a professor of poetry at Emory University. Contact John Hoppenthaler at hoppenthaler@ecu.edu or 328-5562.

**Chancellor will inaugurate series**

ECU Chancellor Steve Ballard led the inaugural Construction Management Leadership Lecture Series on March 18. Partnering with the National Housing Endowment, the Department of Construction Management will host the lectures each semester with the goal of teaching students the importance of leadership in business and industry.

Ballard’s lecture, titled “From the Baseball Field to the Chancellor’s Office,” chronicled his career path from being a member of a farm team for the St. Louis Cardinals to entering higher education then heading to ECU as chancellor in May 2004.

The next lecture in the series is scheduled for fall 2008.

**Social justice lecture is April 8**

Byron Pitts, CBS national correspondent and former Greenville newscaster, will present “Leading the Way to Social Justice: The High Cost of Failure” at 2 p.m. April 8 in Hendrix Auditorium. Pitts will discuss leadership in the context of social justice and challenges set before American leaders today. Sponsored by the ECU Student Union Programming Board and the College of Human Ecology, Carolyn Freeze Baymes Institute for Social Justice. Contact: 252-328-2982.

**Youth art fest coming April 5**

ECU will host the fourth annual Youth Arts Festival April 5. The festival will be held from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on the “mall” area in the center of campus.

More than 100 visual and performing artists from both ECU and across the region will share their creative talents with children and their families.

Featured performers and artists include: the African-American Dance Ensemble; Arienne King, Comer Batik artist/indigo dying; Sharren Parker, fiber artist; Steve Myott, puppeteer and mask maker; and Randy Hodges, blacksmith.

Rain location is the Jenkins Fine Arts Building on Fifth Street.

Contact coordinator Dindy Reich at Reichd@ecu.edu or at 328-5749.
College of Human Ecology doles out honors

The College of Human Ecology at East Carolina University honored alumni and friends of the college in a celebration at the Rock Springs Conference Center.

Greenville Mayor Pat Dunn received the Dean's Choice Award, and Greenville Councilwoman Rose Glover received the Community Engagement Award for their support of the college and the city of Greenville in establishing the Lucille W. Gorham Intergenerational Center in west Greenville.

The Department of Child Development and Family Relations honored alumnus Rebecca Payne, state director of career and technical education; and Doug Smith, chief executive officer of Greene County Health Care.

The Department of Criminal Justice honored alumnus Altrice Gales, criminal justice instructor at Pitt Community College and ECU; and David Stevens, ECU's first attorney and a former faculty member.

The Department of Hospitality Management honored alumnus Eric Mason, vice president worldwide research and development, Pacific, for Global RCI; and James Maynard, co-founder and chairman of Investors Management Corp.'s subsidiary, Golden Corral Corp.

The Department of Interior Design and Merchandising honored alumnus Keri Wilder, associate at Phillips Architecture in Raleigh; and Laurel Wright, chief accessibility code consultant for the N.C. State Fire Marshal.

The Department of Nutrition and Dietetics honored alumnus Melanie Rogers, executive director of food and nutrition for Wellstar Health System in Georgia; and Kathryn Kolasa, professor and section head, nutrition education services at the Brody School of Medicine.

The School of Social Work honored alumnus Glenn Buck, chief clinical officer of Port Human Services in Greenville as outstanding alumnus; and Cassandra Campbell, lead school social worker for Pitt County Schools; and Karen Koch, assistant director of mental health education for Eastern Area Health Education Center.
Basketball worth effort at ECU

In response to a March 17 letter, here is a different take on East Carolina University men's basketball. The athletes benefit from the academic and athletic support of the university. It is their door to tomorrow. For the men's team, there is a core of 3,500 ardent supporters, talented coaches, dedicated players, musicians, cheerleaders and dancers who make that coliseum hum with Pirate spirit.

This has been an exceptional year for them. The men's team has grown in individual performance, in coordinated effort and in second-half exuberance.

The coaching staff and the team developed some fantastic three-point shots, scored more from the foul line, stayed busy under the net, got the crowd in the game; got noticed and the list goes on.

There were some very bad games, but mostly, the team almost won or often won. Mid-game, Coach Mack McCarthy forcefully refocused the game and the team responded. Our souvenir win was over N.C. State. Pirate fans were emotionally suited up and created such a cacophony that State struggled in confusion and lost. It was our first time beating an ACC team in 88 tries. We Pirates finally have our winning ways.

With the team up and running on all cylinders, ECU basketball will make in-roads into the ACC local talent pool, as it has already successfully invaded it for baseball. ECU offers a home port for talented athletes who strive for the best through effort, skill and education.

That is what hoop dreams are made of and that is what the American dream is made of. Embarrassed by ECU basketball? No. Enthralled and hopeful? Yes.

ALISON LORD STUART
Greenville
TECS professor receives certification

Jeanne-Marie Lawrence, professor of technology systems at East Carolina University, received certification as a supply chain professional. Many corporations are now using supply chain management strategies to compete in the global marketplace. The certification is administered by the Association for Operations Management.
Harshberger joins SBTDC at ECU

Katie Harshberger, a Goldsboro resident, has joined the N.C. Small Business and Technology Development Center at East Carolina University.

Harshberger will serve as the center’s procurement technical assistance center counselor. In this role, she will assist small and mid-sized companies in doing business with federal, state and local governments.

Assistance includes providing training on various topics including doing business with the government, government preference programs, marketing and proposal preparation in general and specific subjects requested.

Harshberger’s main focus will be one-on-one confidential counseling. Counseling services and trainings are provided free of charge.

Before joining the SBTDC, Harshberger served 20 years in the U.S. Air Force. After 11 years in the supply field, in 1993 she entered the field of contracting, where she worked as a buyer, administrator and contracting officer. While she worked in commodities and services, she found her niche in construction. Her nine years of experience in government contracting is a tremendous asset to the SBTDC clients as they learn how to find and target opportunities with federal, state and local governments.

Harshberger is a graduate of Mount Olive College, where she received her bachelor’s degree in business management.

The SBTDC at ECU is one of 17 offices in North Carolina, each affiliated with a University of North Carolina-system campus. The SBTDC is administered by N.C. State University and operates in partnership with the U.S. Small Business Administration.
Editorial: Hoop dreams - McCarthy should provide stability to ECU

The Daily Reflector

Monday, March 24, 2008

The story of East Carolina University men's basketball is one of unfulfilled dreams. Those who long for a competitive team have been consistently disappointed as Pirate hoops have failed to achieve in and out of conference play, eclipsed more and more by the more prestigious and popular in-state teams of the Atlantic Coast Conference.

Into the abyss steps Mack McCarthy, the interim coach of last season's team, who was awarded a five-year contract on Thursday. Time will measure his success, but if McCarthy can bring stability and enthusiasm to a program in desperate need of both, he will be revered throughout the Pirate nation.

East Carolina Director of Athletics Terry Holland announced on Thursday that he and McCarthy had reached agreement on a five-year deal, after eight days of speculation following the Pirates' loss in the Conference USA Tournament. The contract must receive approval from the East Carolina Board of Trustees, but it appears all but certain that the McCarthy era can now begin in earnest.

McCarthy, a graduate of Virginia Tech, has 17 years of head coaching experience at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, Virginia Commonwealth University and East Carolina. Last year's team, which McCarthy inherited from Ricky Stokes, compiled an 11-19 record overall, including a 5-11 record in Conference USA. The Pirates enjoyed two signature wins — against George Mason University and N.C. State University, the school's first basketball victory against an ACC opponent. And the five wins in conference represent a school record.

However, McCarthy will need to extend that one-year record of modest success if he hopes to realize the untapped potential of men's basketball at East Carolina. The Pirates' history is littered with dashed hopes and unrealistic expectations, but precious few lasting memories. East Carolina won the Southern Conference in 1972 and the Colonial Athletic Conference in 1993, but, sadly, little else in a 75-year history.

The purple-and-gold faithful are right to hope for a program that can draw talented players and consistently compete in a strong Conference USA. But they must also admit that changing the fortunes of East Carolina basketball will take considerable time and effort.

In McCarthy, they now have a coach who might be able to inspire dreams of titles and tournaments once again. Only time will tell, but this hire should provide stability and enthusiasm, key components of a foundation on which to build a legacy of success.

Find this article at:
http://www.reflector.com/opin/content/news/opinion/stories/2008/03/24/ED_ECUHoops.html
Laurels — To an early Easter, the holiday that celebrates the one event which most defines Christianity — the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Easter always comes after the first, or Paschal, full moon following the first day of spring. That full moon came on Friday, the earliest since 1913. But don't get used to the concept of an early Easter. It won't happen again for another 230 or so years.

Laurels — To Thursday's arrival of spring, which came to our region without the severe weather and flooding that has plagued areas of the Midwest. Although the season does not represent much of a transition from the predominantly mild weather enjoyed by eastern North Carolina since January, the greening lawns and blossoming trees are a welcome sight nonetheless.

Laurels — To the familiar purple ribbons that mark community participation in Pitt County's 14th annual Relay For Life campaign, which involves groups, individuals and businesses in the battle to find a cure for cancer. One of those individuals is bicyclist Gary Clay, who is scheduled to pedal into Savannah, Ga., today in the final leg of a 430-mile trip that began Tuesday from his home in Ayden. More than 1,000 people are registered to walk or run in the actual relay this year, set for April 25 and 26 at South Central High School.

Laurels — To the NCAA men's and women's basketball tournaments, a yearly American pastime colloquially known as March Madness. North Carolina is well represented with potential for reaching championship games in either men's or women's play. That distinction also belongs to neighboring Tennessee, home to the defending National Champion UT Lady Vols, and lesser known Belmont College, whose men's team nearly upset the Duke Blue Devils in first-round play. Madness, indeed.

Darts — To the tragic loss of another Pitt County teenager in a car crash Monday that left a Winterville man critically injured. The Farmville teen's death marked the second fatal crash involving a teenager during a period of unusually high traffic fatalities. Nine people have died on Pitt County roads since the start of the year. That's a sad statistic that serves as a painful reminder for every motorist to make safety the first priority.

Darts — To East Carolina University's success in working toward internationalizing education. ECU's Global Academic Initiatives program, created in 2003 to provide an international educational experience to students unable to travel abroad, was recognized at the United Nations on March 13. The program received Honorable Mention in the category of Best Practices in International Education at the 2008 Institute of International Education Andrew Heiskell Awards ceremony in New York City.

Compiled by Mark Rutledge, writer/columnist for The Daily Reflector. Contact him at 329-9575 or via e-mail at mrutledge@coxnc.com.
ECU sends 66 percent of med school grads into primary care residencies

By ECU News Bureau
Special to The Daily Reflector

Nearly two-thirds of the medical students graduating from East Carolina University this spring will go into primary care residencies.

Those are the results of the annual Match Day, celebrated Thursday amid whoops and hugs at the Brody School of Medicine.

Of the 70 students participating in the match, 11, or 16 percent, are entering family medicine residencies, more than twice the national average of 7.6 percent. Twenty-one are entering some type of internal medicine residency. Nine students are entering pediatrics and gynecology. The remaining 35 are training in other fields.

"I'm super-excited," said Erin Swanson, who is going to the Medical University of South Carolina in Charleston for a residency in OB/GYN. "It's a long road. I'm glad it's finally here."

Her classmate, Roger Stone, also matched there in pathology.

Before they can provide direct patient care, U.S. medical school graduates are required to complete a three- to seven-year residency program accredited in a recognized medical specialty. Medical students at the nation's 125 medical schools learned their destinations Thursday.

The class of 2008 was accepted into institutions in 17 states in 17 specialties. The Brody School of Medicine and Pitt County Memorial Hospital will be home to 11 class members; 25 graduates will stay in North Carolina.

Officials at Brody, which emphasizes primary care, were pleased with the match results.

"We're very happy with the way things turned out with this class," said Dr. Virginia Hardy, senior associate dean of the Brody School of Medicine. "From day one, they've been very committed. We know they'll continue to make us proud and put Brody on the map."

The National Residency Match Program, a private, not-for-profit organization, provides a method for matching applicants for residency positions in the United States with residency programs at various teaching hospitals. Applicants and hospitals rank each other in order of preference, and a computer matches them based upon those rankings.

According to the NRMP, the number of available residency positions this year was the highest in match history. This year, 28,737 applicants vied for one of the 22,240 first-year residency positions available, the most ever.

Of those, 15,206 of these applicants were U.S. medical school seniors. Other applicants included previous graduates of U.S. medical schools, U.S. citizen and non-U.S. citizen international medical graduates, and osteopathic doctors.
Staying at the helm

McCarthy to stay on as ECU coach, gets five-year deal

By Tony Castleberry
The Daily Reflector

The rumor mill can stop churning now.

After eight days of speculation about whether Mack McCarthy would be retained as head coach of the East Carolina men's basketball team, ECU Director of Athletics Terry Holland announced Thursday that the interim tag can officially be removed from McCarthy's head coaching title. McCarthy agreed to a five-year deal and will be entering his 18th season as a head coach when the Pirates next hit the floor.

Next season will be McCarthy's fourth at East Carolina. He served as associate head coach for Ricky Stokes for two seasons before taking over for Stokes last August.

"I'm not as relieved as I am just happy," McCarthy said during an interview at his office Thursday afternoon. "I've been in this business a long time and was prepared for whatever happened, but I truly felt like we laid a pretty good foundation. Not just this year, but even the last three years there was some foundation laid and I'm glad that we, as a group, get to continue forward with that responsibility."

Specific details of the contract, which includes an incentive and bonus structure, cannot be released until final approval is granted by the ECU Board of Trustees.

Holland has said ever since the Pirates' season ended last Wednesday that he wasn't going to be in a hurry with his decision and that it would "be a methodical evaluation of the whole operation."

But after meeting with McCarthy and his staff this week, Holland must have felt keeping McCarthy is what's best for the Pirates instead of making ECU's fourth coaching change since 2005.

"Coach McCarthy and I have concluded the necessary first step of what will be a continuing dialogue on the future of our men's basketball program," Holland said in a statement on the East Carolina athletics Web site. "There is no doubt in my mind that the current staff, under coach McCarthy's leadership, will continue to move this basketball program forward."

McCarthy has already started that forward progression after one season as head coach in Greenville.

"After inheriting a team that finished 6-24 the previous season, McCarthy led the Pirates to an 11-19 overall record and a 5-11 mark in Conference USA. Those five C-USA wins tied a school record."

ECU also pulled off two of the biggest upsets in recent Pirate memory with wins against George Mason, an NCAA tournament team, and N.C. State, the first ECU victory over an Atlantic Coast Conference club in 58 tries.

While there were also low points, like the loss to NAIA squad Lee University and some lopsided defeats once C-USA play started, McCarthy did enough to be given the reins of the program for the next five seasons. That doesn't mean he was completely confident the job was his, though, particularly as he and his staff had to play the waiting game for eight days before the announcement was made.

"I was impatient like everybody else," the coach admitted. "But you have a guy in charge (Holland) who understands what's going on and it was probably a good thing for everybody to examine all phases of the program from a lot of different perspectives."

"I never let my personal feelings enter into it. It wasn't under my control. We did, as a staff, the best we could do every day, all year long. Ultimately, that's all you can really do."

In his statement, Holland made sure to point out some of ECU's shortcomings, like the team's lack of consistent rebounding and physical presence as well as its continuing struggles in games outside of Greenville.

But the AD also mentions numerous positive strides that the Pirates have made under McCarthy's watch, both on and off the court. East Carolina's RPI ranking has risen to 2.78 and Holland described the team as "a group of young men who represent ECU in a first-class manner wherever they went."

One of those young men — point guard Brock Young — was happy to hear the news he wouldn't have to adjust to a new coaching staff when he returns for his sophomore season. That season begins in earnest when the Pirates start season conditioning Monday and Young seemed thrilled that he was known to be back running the show.

If McCarthy hadn't returned, Young, a dynamic floor leader with tremendous upside, hinted that his days at ECU might have been numbered.

"(Transferring) could have been a possibility," Young said. "With a new coach and not knowing who's recruiting, I might not have been given a chance to be the point guard next year. It's a relief for everybody to know (McCarthy) will be back next year."

Tony Castleberry can be reached at tcastleberry@coxe.com or at (252) 329-8991.
Proof at last: Winning brings more applicants

BY DENA POTTER
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

RICHMOND, Va. -- Researchers say there's some basis for the belief among college admissions officers that the better their teams do in high-profile sporting events, the more applications they'll see.

Until recently, evidence about the "Flutie Effect" -- coined when applications to Boston College jumped about 30 percent in the two years after quarterback Doug Flutie's Hail Mary pass beat Miami in 1984 -- had been mostly anecdotal.

WHAT A TITLE MEANS: Jaren Pope, an assistant professor at Virginia Tech, and his brother, Devin, an assistant professor at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School, concluded that winning the NCAA football or men's basketball title means a bump of about 8 percent.

BASKETBALL: Schools that make it to the Sweet 16 in the tournament see an average 3 percent boost in applications the next year. Making the 65-team field means an average 1 percent bump.

FOOTBALL: Schools that finish in the top 20 have a 2.5 percent gain.

AN EXAMPLE: Gonzaga was virtually unknown until it broke into the NCAA tournament in the mid-'90s. The Zags have been in the tournament every year since 1999, and enrollment has grown from just over 4,500 to nearly 7,000, Dale Goodwin, a university spokesman, said.

Inquiries at the Spokane, Wash., school have jumped from about 20,000 per year to 50,000, and it attracts students from eastern states where it doesn't recruit.

ABOUT THE STUDY: The brothers compared information on freshman classes at 330 NCAA Division I schools with how the schools' teams fared from 1983 through 2002. Their conclusions will be published this year in Southern Economic Journal.
Campus to test emergency sirens

CHAPEL HILL — UNC-Chapel Hill will test new emergency sirens Wednesday with the start of Alert Carolina, a safety awareness campaign.

The test will occur between 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m.

Although the university would use a variety of ways to share information in an actual emergency, this test will focus on the sirens. The sirens will sound only during a test or in a life-threatening emergency such as an armed and dangerous person on or near campus; a major chemical spill or hazard; or a tornado sighting.

The campaign is designed to educate students, faculty and staff to go inside, close windows or doors and take cover immediately if the sirens sound in a real emergency. There also will be brief public address announcements with instructions.

The sirens are at Hinton James Residence Hall off Manning Drive; the Gary R. Tomkins Chilled Water Operations Center behind the Dogwood Parking Deck; Winston Residence Hall at the corner of Raleigh Street and South Road; and next to university buildings and support facilities near the Giles Homey Building off Martin Luther King Boulevard.
UNC wrestler charged with assault

CHAPEL HILL — Police arrested a member of the North Carolina wrestling team on an assault charge early Saturday morning, according to police reports.

Vincent Toribio Ramirez, 21, also was charged with being drunk and disruptive. He was released on the misdemeanor charges after making a written promise to appear.

Police reports say that officers saw him punch someone in the incident, which happened in the 100 block of West Rosemary Street.

The wrestling team roster lists Ramirez as a redshirt junior from Durham and says he went to Riverside High School. When contacted Sunday, UNC wrestling coach C.D. Mock said he could not comment on the charges.
College savings expected to slow

*Monthly bills might trump 529 plans*

Contributions to North Carolina's 529 college savings plan continue to climb, but the weakening economy could crimp the fund's momentum.

Last year, partly because of tax changes and added investment choices, the number of new N.C. 529 accounts nearly doubled to 50,174. The total in the fund rose 33 percent to $357 million, said Benjamin Kittner, spokesman for the N.C. 529 College Savings Plan.

However, with the economy slowing and rising prices hurting parents' budgets, it's unlikely that the state plan will continue to expand at that pace, Kittner said. "It will likely follow the downward trend of the economy," he added.

In January, the number of new accounts rose 20 percent from the same month a year earlier, a slower rate of increase compared with last year.

**WHAT'S HAPPENING ELSEWHERE?**

The number of new accounts for T. Rowe Price Group 529 plans nationally were down 16 percent in December and January, said Tom Kazmierczak, senior product manager. "A lot of parents are staying on sidelines and not opening accounts right now," he said. "If you have to pick between paying a mortgage or buying a 529 plan, the mortgage is going to win every time."

Jackie Williams, executive director of the Ohio Tuition Trust Authority, said some parents are making hardship withdrawals from their 529 savings, which triggers tax penalties. That's a sign that people are struggling.

**WHY IS NORTH CAROLINA'S PLAN STILL GROWING?**

A big reason: Last year, the state removed the income limits for people eligible to deduct contributions. For the 2007 tax year, the deduction is $2,000 for individuals and $4,000 for couples.

Also, the N.C. 529 plan is among the least expensive in the nation, according to a study by Savingforcollege.com released last month. In 2006, the state teamed with the Vanguard Group, which offers at least 10 investment choices, and Upromise Investments, which channels shopping rebates into educational savings accounts. Both partners are helping to attract parents, Kittner said.

**WHAT'S THE HARM IN PUTTING OFF INVESTING?**

Williams and other experts warn parents to avoid pulling back on saving for college. Tuition costs are soaring too, and parents only have a short time to invest.

"We advise people that unless it's a dire emergency and it really creates a hardship to continue saving, try to invest some amount systematically," Williams said.

*Vicki Lee Parker*
Gifts with strings a knotty issue

Ayn Rand reading requirement compromises independence, UNCC faculty say

By Pam Kelley and Christina Rexrode
The Charlotte Observer

As a college student in Chapel Hill, John Allison stumbled across a collection of essays by Ayn Rand and was hooked by her philosophy of self-interest and limited government. As he rose over the decades to chief executive of BB&T, one of the country's leading regional banks, Rand remained his muse.

He's trying to replicate that encounter through the charitable arm of his Winston-Salem-based company, which since 1999 has awarded more than $250 million to 27 colleges to support the study of capitalism from a moral perspective.

But on at least 17 of those campuses, including UNC-Charlotte, N.C. State and Johnson C. Smith University, the gifts come with an unusual stipulation: Rand's novel "Atlas Shrugged" is included in a course as required reading.

The schools agreements have drawn criticism from some faculty, who say it compromises academic integrity. In higher education, the power to decide course content is supposed to rest with professors, not donors. Debate about the gifts, which arose at UNCC this month, illustrates tensions that exist over corporate influence on college campuses.

UNCC received its $1 million gift pledge in 2003, but details about the "Atlas Shrugged" requirement came to light as the school dedicated an Ayn Rand reading room March 12.

"It's going to make us look like a rinky-dink university," UNCC religious studies professor Richard Cohen said Thursday after UNCC Chancellor Phil Dubois told the faculty council about the gift. "It's like teaching the Bible as a requirement."

But Dubois, who learned of the book requirement this month, says it was ill-advised. He may ask Allison to reconsider it, he told faculty.

Allison has been surprised that the gifts can generate controversy. He says he simply wants students exposed to the late author's ideas, which he thinks the academic community has largely ignored. He welcomes opposing ideas.

He also points out that the schools approached the foundation, not the other way around. "We obviously can't make anybody teach something," he says. "We wouldn't want to, we wouldn't try to. These are professors that want to teach this."

"Atlas Shrugged" tells of an America where the most gifted industrialists and creators go on strike. The book, more than 1,100 pages long, showcases Rand's philosophy of Objectivism, which says individuals have the right to live entirely for their own self-interest.

An atheist, Rand criticized government regulation of business.

Her followers "regard her as the greatest thinker to have graced this earth since Aristotle and the greatest writer of all time," Reason Magazine wrote in 2005. "Mainstream intellectuals tend to dismiss her as a writer of glorified pulp fiction and a pseudo-philosophical quack with an appeal for impressionable teens."

Allison discovered Rand as a business major at UNC-Chapel Hill in the late '60s. "Atlas Shrugged" remains his favorite book.

"Most of the defenders of free markets mostly do it from an economic perspective," Allison says. "They argue that free markets produce a higher standard of living, which is certainly very good. But Rand makes a connection to human nature and why individual rights and free markets are the only system consistent with human nature."

BB&T officials say they never made a specific decision to spread the gospel of ethical capitalism and Ayn Rand.

But in 1999, Duke University received money from BB&T to support the teaching of values and ethics in business. The gift didn't require that Duke teach Ayn Rand. Her work was already being taught there.

As word spread of that gift and others, more colleges approached the foundation with proposals. Allison shared his interest in Rand with them.

At least one school, UNC-Wilmington, offered to make "Atlas Shrugged" a requirement, figuring "our proposal might be more favorably received" if it were part of the package, officials said in an email to the Observer.

Wilmington got a commitment of more than $1 million. But unlike most campuses, the faculty voted to approve the proposal first.

Companies have long endowed college professorships and programs that fit their areas of interest. Sometimes, schools reject gifts if they can't live with a donor's conditions.

But as states reduce higher education budgets, business is playing a bigger role, experts say. "They're so desperate for funding sources that they're willing to take more money with strings attached," says Jennifer Washburn, author of "University Inc.: The Corporate Corruption of Higher Education."
POST-GAME LETDOWN

NCAA fans up for fun find themselves stuck at RBC Center

BY LORENZO PEREZ
STAFF WRITER

RALEIGH — Indiana grad Christopher Brown and his wife, Beth, drove eagerly from Hampton, Va., to root for their Hoosiers and take in Raleigh’s NCAA Tournament atmosphere.

When they pulled up to the RBC Center on Friday, however, all they saw was the Coconut Grove Band playing cover songs as waves of basketball fans waited for the arena to reopen. Tournament-provided vendors sold burgers and barbecue outside the main entrance. And there was a Wendy’s out behind a gas station.

“We were hoping to get here early, walk around some and get something to eat,” said Christopher Brown, 37, a software engineer. “Instead, we’re standing out here biding our time to get in.”

Like many of the 19,000 fans in town for the tournament’s first and second rounds, the Browns discovered that the RBC Center is marooned miles from any social action. The NCAA Tournament host committee offered a Web site (www.raleighroundballroadshow.com) listing 10 area bars fans could visit.

SEE GAMES, PAGE 16A
Let's put on a show

Scott Dupree, director of sports marketing for the Greater Raleigh Convention and Visitors Bureau and co-chairman of the local organizing committee, acknowledged disappointment in the lack of closer dining options. That was one of the reasons the committee arranged for live music and food vendors to operate outside the arena between game sessions Friday.

"It's frustrating that the arena's been open nine years, and there is no meaningful restaurants and nightlife within walking distance," Dupree said. "This weekend is our last chance to make a meaningful impression on the NCAA for our next bid."

Discussions to build a downtown arena percolated for several years in the mid-1980s before the idea died in 1990 when N.C. State said it was not interested. The Centennial Authority was established in 1995 to build and manage the new arena, which opened in 1999. During that time frame, advocates for a downtown arena continued to raise the issue.

The West Raleigh site offered the affordable advantage of being state land, and Raleigh Mayor Tom Fetzer and other City Council members said a downtown arena would be too expensive.

During his tenure as chairman of the Centennial Authority, which built and manages the arena, Steve Stroud even likened the project to creating "the Meadowlands of the South." The comparison with the New Jersey sports complex housing Giants Stadium, The Meadowlands Racetrack and the IZOD Center in the former swamps of East Rutherford did not hasten the birth of new bars and restaurants in West Raleigh, however.

(Nor has the Meadowlands emerged as a hub of post-game nightlife, for that matter.)

Fun is on the way

Members of the tournament organizing committee — which features boosters from government, N.C. State and businesses including The News & Observer — see signs of progress.

Philip Isley, a Raleigh City Council member and committee member, said development is on the way. Two years ago, for example, developers announced plans to build 150,000 square feet of shops and restaurants in a development near the arena on Edwards Mill Road.

"Would it be nice to have all of the downtown development all around RBC Center? Sure. It would be nice to have that downtown, absolutely," Isley said. "In three to five years, it's still going to be a right good place to go watch a basketball game. And then, hopefully, you can walk out and go to other areas."

The Hi5, one of three Glenwood Avenue restaurants on the local committee's list of sports bars, drew a strong lunchtime crowd Friday. Davidson fans who could not score tickets ringed the bar to cheer the Wildcats' comeback win.

With 41 televisions tuned to every tournament game, Hi5 general manager Greg Hughes anticipated that the bar would get more crowded as the day progressed. And there was no need to worry whether fans leaving the RBC Center on Friday night would be willing to make the 5.4-mile drive to his bar, he said.

"You want to go where the action is," Hughes said. "Obviously, the action is downtown."
Health-care heavyweights work system

Hospitals wheel and deal to settle rival bids for state's OK of new facilities, equipment.

BY JEAN P. FISHER SPECIAL WRITER

Here's how it's decided, where you can go to get a bone scan or how far you'll have to drive to find a hospital.

The state decides Wake County could use another imaging scanner, and two hospitals want to operate it. The state gives one the OK and the other appeals the decision. Instead of fighting it out in administrative court, which might take months or even years, the winner instead writes a check to the losing hospital, which drops its appeal in exchange.

"That happens frequently," said Noah Huffstetler, a partner in the Raleigh law firm of Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough. He often negotiates such deals for clients with health-care projects.

North Carolina is one of more than 30 states that tightly controls health-care services, deciding both what facilities and equipment are needed and who operates them. Officially, such decisions are made in what's known as a "certificate of need," a public process subject to open meeting and records laws. But in practice, private competitors often strike back-room deals in confidential legal settlements. Even state regulators may not know the terms. Critics say the process favors big hospitals, which can manipulate the system and monopolize care.

The News & Observer is taking a look at this little-known facet of health care as part of Sunshine Week, a national effort highlighting the importance of open government and freedom of information.

Huffstetler said it is not unheard of for hundreds of thousands of dollars to change hands — just a fraction of the revenue the successful provider stands to earn with its new device or service. "Cease-fire" agreements in which providers agree not to go against each other's interests are also common.

Huffstetler and others, including the head of the state division that authorizes health-care expansions, say there is nothing inappropriate in...
HOSPITALS
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1B

settling disputes among competitors behind closed doors. In fact, they say, such settlements are essential to keep the system from becoming clogged with appeals, giving patients quicker access to needed services. In some cases, providers routinely appeal every project competitors have in the works.

“The [regulatory] process would probably grind to a halt if there were no settlements,” Hufstedler said.

Pros and cons

Supporters of the existing system agree it is imperfect, but they prefer it to deregulation, which they argue would allow profiteers to cherry-pick the most lucrative services. They contend such a system would result in clinics that cater to the wealthy and leave hospitals to worry about the poor and uninsured.

Critics of the state-controlled system say private settlements are a prime example of how North Carolina allows health-care providers to skirt anti-trust laws, slice up markets and attempt to predetermine future regulatory decisions.

Last fall, for example, observers were amazed when WakeMed Health & Hospitals in Raleigh did not object to a proposal involving crosstown rival Rex Healthcare. In that case, Rex teamed up with Franklin County’s only hospital to build a new facility in northern Wake County. WakeMed had objected to an earlier version of the project, which did not include Rex, but later withdrew its official comments to the state.

At the time, a WakeMed official said it had negotiated a truce with Franklin Regional Medical Center. A week later, the Franklin County hospital pulled its own objections to a WakeMed proposal to convert a northern Wake County outpatient center into a mini-hospital. A second agreement between Rex and WakeMed to leave each other’s projects alone is rumored.

“A lot of competition between hospitals is in the process — it’s not in the marketplace,” said Dr. Hadley Callaway, a Raleigh orthopedic surgeon. He’d like to see North Carolina dismantle its system for controlling health-care services and replace it with a free-market system.

Callaway said the current system is particularly unfair to doctors who don’t regularly contend for services regulated by the state. When such a practice does try to compete, he said, it goes up against larger, more savvy hospitals that have years of experience working the system.

Callaway is not a disinterested critic. His practice, Raleigh Orthopaedic Clinic, spent years seeking state approval to acquire an MRI scanner. Last year, in its third attempt, the practice finally got the OK.

Both times the practice was unsuccessful, Raleigh Orthopaedic Clinic negotiated settlements with the successful parties. In one case, the practice secured a non-confidential pledge from WakeMed, which had won the right to add an MRI scanner, not to interfere with its future attempts.

“We play the game,” said Callaway. “But it certainly isn’t fair.”

jean.fisher@newsobserver.com
or (919) 829-4753
FROM STAFF REPORTS

WAKE COUNTY

NCSU researcher gets nanotech gift

RALEIGH — A researcher at N.C. State University has been awarded a $1.4 million grant to study how the public understands the safety of nanotechnology.

Dr. David Berube, a professor of communication, won the four-year grant from the National Science Foundation. His research will focus on how the public interprets information about the potential health risks of nanotechnology, NCSU said in a news release Friday.

Nanotechnology uses substances that are thousands of times thinner than a human hair. It is expected to have widespread use in medicine, consumer products and industrial processes.

"When the public tries to understand technical information on health and safety, they do not turn to scientific data,"

Have a story idea or comment? The