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Students favor ECU master plan

By Jackie Drake
The Daily Reflector
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The preliminary campus master plan for East Carolina University released Tuesday has been generally well received by many students, but there are concerns regarding parking, preservation of historical buildings and funding.

Plan diagrams were set up on easels in the West End Dining Hall on Wednesday afternoon, and officials from the firm generating the plans were available to answer questions. Suggestions and concerns were posted to relevant areas on purple-and-gold sticky notes.

The preliminary master plan outlines possible expansions of the campus within the next 20-25 years, including new parking decks and increased pedestrian pathways. A new student center is planned to stand directly south of Mendenhall Student Center, which will be repurposed. A nearby parking deck would serve the new student center and an expanded recreation center.

“It sounds really good to me,” junior public relations major Danielle Rein said. “Parking is my biggest issue, and I think the parking deck near the rec center would really benefit the campus.”

Senior community health major Robany Chandler liked the expansion. “The layout seems great, especially the parking deck,” she said. “That’s always been a problem.”
While no new dorms are planned, several are set for updates, and Belk will be replaced with a larger configuration.

“I really like it,” senior computer science major Brian Holloman said, adding that campus has needed to expand for a long time. “I really like how Umstead and Slay will be turned back into residence halls (from office space).”

An additional academic building for business is slated for west of Cotanche Street at the corner of 10th Street, along with another parking deck. A biosciences building is planned to be built where Christenbury Gym stands, near other science facilities.

“I do want to preserve Christenbury,” Holloman said. “I'd like to preserve the historical buildings as much as we can.”

Roadways like Faculty Way and the midsection of Founders Drive will be converted into pedestrian walkways that still will allow access to service and emergency vehicles.

“I really like closing the central part of campus (to cars),” Holloman said. “Campus safety is one of the most important things to me.”

Several additional buildings are proposed to the north along Reade Street, including an alumni center, a performing arts center, and a hotel and conference center.

“I really like the expansion onto Reade, I think that will neaten things up downtown,” Rein said.

“The plan's got potential, but I wonder how they'll be able to do it with the budget,” junior communications major Justin Cooper said.

The plan will be made available online (www.ecu.edu/masterplan) at the end of the week. This step is the last collection of public input before a final plan is expected in late summer or early fall. From there, funding possibilities will be examined, and individual projects will be priced and timed into phases.

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Students and friends will hold a memorial service and vigil tonight for an East Carolina University graduate student killed in a head-on crash in Wilson, university officials said.

The service for Amanda "Mandy" Kelly, 24, will be at 8 p.m. today in Room 307 of the Science and Technology Building. A candlelight vigil at the Trustees Fountain will immediately follow the service.

Kelly was a College of Business accounting major who worked as a graduate assistant in the Office of Student Transitions and First Year Programs.

She was driving a 2000 Ford Taurus about 8:30 a.m. Monday on U.S. 264 Bypass near Black Creek Road when she struck a 2006 Chevrolet Silverado driven by Johnnie Page III, 31, of Sims.

Kelly was pronounced dead at the scene. Page was treated at Wilson Medical Center and released.

Investigators said it appears Kelly was driving east toward Greenville when she ran off the road, overcorrected, crashed through the center median and into oncoming traffic.

A native of Ontario, Canada, she had recently been in Raleigh and had dropped off her parents in the city Friday so they could catch a plane home, university officials said.

Kelly was described Tuesday by supervisors and co-workers as a pleasure to be around. An avid Pirates fan, she frequently could be seen at football games and had great school spirit, said her friend and co-worker, Brittany Shifflett.

“She's always just a positive person,” said Shifflett, 23, a native of Winterville. “She was really fun to be around. She always had a crazy story about something that would brighten your day.

“She loved ECU.”

Program director Mary Beth Corbin said Kelly recently had accepted a job offer from a Charlotte accounting firm and had completed two of the four-part exam necessary to begin her career as an accountant.

She said the young woman had great poise.
“No matter what was going on in Mandy's life, every morning when I came in this office — anyone who came in — she always stopped and lifted her head to say hey,” she said. “I thought that was pretty impressive for a young student,” Corbin said. “Mandy really cared about people.”

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A witness in James Richardson's capital murder trial told jurors Wednesday he saw Richardson pulling a gun back into the passenger window of a white BMW after shots killed two men.

Vidal Thorpe, a personal trainer living in Greenville, told Assistant District Attorney Kimberly Robb he was “absolutely positive” he recognized Richardson as the person holding the gun that killed Andrew Kirby and Landon Blackley on June 30, 2009.

Thorpe said he had not spoken to anyone about what he had seen until two weeks ago, when Robb and Greenville police Det. Connie Elks came to his workplace. Thorpe said he knew Richardson from a pickup basketball game they had played together at J.H. Rose High School. He witnessed the altercation that led to Richardson's ejection from The Other Place nightclub on Fifth Street in downtown Greenville. He saw an angry Richardson tell bouncers he would be back, he said.

“I took that as a very serious threat,” Thorpe said.
Concerned for the safety of the bouncers, Thorpe exited the front of the club, where the altercation had escalated. He returned inside alone, then heard shots moments later, he said.

Thorpe said he ran back outside to check on friends and saw the passenger side of a white car directly in front of the club. A hand holding a gun was extended out of the window to the elbow, he said, and was pulling back inside the car.

In his written statement given two weeks ago to Robb and Elks, Thorpe said he could see Richardson dressed in a white T-shirt or jacket, with his face near the passenger window.
Under cross examination by defense attorney Jeff Cutler, Thorpe confirmed he had said it looked like two people were in the car, with the shooter on the passenger side.

“I could not see the driver,” he said.
Previous testimony had indicated one person was in the car.

Cutler asked Thorpe several times in several ways why he did not immediately or any time after the incident share information with police.
“I thought they had enough witnesses,” Thorpe replied. “I figured if the police needed me, they knew where to find me.”

All other witnesses Wednesday were police and government officials, including state medical examiner Karen Kelly.
Kelly said Blackley died at Pitt County Memorial Hospital shortly after being transported by Greenville EMS. The cause of his death, Kelly said, was a “perforating wound to his upper left chest.”

Kirby died from a perforating wound that entered his left upper arm, breaking it, then went through his left lung before it cut his aorta and exited his right upper chest, Kelly said.

Kirby's heart stopped at the scene of the shooting, and he was not revived, Kelly said.

The bullets that killed both men came from a large-caliber gun, she said.
One of the bullets was found on the ground beside Kirby and was picked up by club owner Matt Blackmon. It was passed from one officer to another at the scene who bagged it and forwarded it for ballistic and forensic testing, the officers testified.


The video was of a white car traveling west on Fifth Street, pulling up behind a dark SUV in front of Greenville City Hall a few blocks west of the shooting.

The jury then saw photos taken by police about 7:45 a.m. that morning of a white BMW parked between 707 and 709 McDowell St., near the home of Richardson's mother, Dorothy, Lt. Anthony White, deputy commander of investigations, conducted an inspection of the vehicle with other officers about 10 a.m.

They located a spent bullet casing in the rear window ledge and a complete bullet in the console next to the driver's seat, he said. No contact was made with any individuals at the scene, White said.

Two Greenville officers described the scene outside the nightclub when they arrived at 2:07 a.m.
Officer Allison Farrington heard people crying and saw Andrew Kirby lying on the sidewalk in front of the club. She also approached Landon Blackley, lying farther down the sidewalk.

“He took a breath, looked at me as if to say, ‘Help me,’ then he stopped breathing,” Farrington said.

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East Carolina University baseball coach Billy Godwin, left, and ECU basketball coach Jeff Lebo enjoyed BBQ and spoke to boosters at the Farmers Market in New Bern on Wednesday.

**Pirate coaches pay a visit**
By Adam Thompson
The East Carolina basketball program just capped off a record-breaking season.

They Pirates earned their first winning season in 14 years, notched a program-best 10 Conference-USA victories, their first-ever win over Memphis, two C-USA Tournament wins and a trip to the postseason.

ECU’s first-year coach Jeff Lebo has the Pirates heading in the right direction.

The former UNC point guard and new leader of the Pirates was the featured speaker during a local Pirate Club gathering at the Farmer’s Market in New Bern on Wednesday evening.

Lebo, along with ECU baseball coach Billy Godwin, took time to speak and answer questions in front of a group of more than 200 faithful Pirate fans. “They are always coming to Greenville to support us and I think this is one way for us coaches to come out and support them and say thank you for
what they do for us,” said Godwin, who is in his sixth season with the ECU baseball team.

Both coaches discussed the current state of their program, the direction its heading and recruiting.

“I learned first hand about Pirate Nation and Pirate Pride,” Lebo said. “The fans here knew about basketball and appreciate good basketball. We just had to get them to a game and put a product out on the court. We needed a team that fans could identify with; a team that is going to play hard and hopefully play smart and together and do it the right way, then I knew Pirate Nation would come out.”

For ECU basketball, Lebo is the third coach in four seasons. The former Auburn head coach addressed that he’d like to make Greenville a permanent stop.

“People ask me what it is like coaching at the Division I level and the best way I can say it is, when I go into my office, and my name plate is on the door, I go in for the day,” Lebo said. “I love it here and I hope you will have me here for as long as I can walk. This is where I belong.

“My next move, hopefully, is down to Atlantic Beach or Morehead City.”

Lebo, who finished at UNC following the 1988-89 season, said he has been amazed by the support from the Pirate fans.

“We had some incredible crowds,” Lebo said. “I’ve been doing this for a long time and I haven’t been in a place that has been so loud as Minges in a long, long time. The Pirate Nation really stepped up and came out and supported the guys. They were really a big reason that we had some success at home.”

ECU was 18-14 and earned a trip to the CollegeInsider.com Tournament. While the Pirates lost to Jacksonville in the tournament game, Lebo in encouraged by his incoming recruits, along with a couple transfers from Missouri and South Carolina.
The Pirates will lose four seniors — Jontae Sherrod, Jamar Abrams, Brock Young and Chad Wynn — but return double-double machine Darius Morrow.

Lebo said he hopes to keep on looking for recruits throughout Eastern North Carolina.

When he was an assistant coach at the University of South Carolina, from 1993-98, Lebo said he attempted to recruit New Bern star Antwan Scott. Scott instead chose to play at Wake Forest.

Being with the Pirates, he has a new pitch.

“We have got a great conference, we are making a commitment to basketball and we are going to play a style that I think kids like to play,” he said. “If they want to do that and be at a great school and they want to stay close to home, this is the place to be.”

New Bern native Si Seymore, who calls the Pirate basketball games on the radio, has been impressed with the work Lebo has done.

“She thing about his teams are, they are fundamentally strong and they play great defense,” he said. “He has a real knack of staying calm and doing a great job teaching the kids.”

ECU is also in the works of getting a new state-of-the art $15 million practice facility. The preliminary plans have already been approved by ECU’s Board of Trustees and the design was laid out for fans to see at Wednesday’s event.

The new facility is expected to be two floors, combined to be 48,000 square feet, built on the north side of Minges Coliseum. Also in the plans is an ECU Hall of Fame lobby at the entrance of the building.

The hope is to have the facility built by the fall of 2013.

“It really helps. In today’s world, you have got to have the facilities to recruit,” said Seymore. “The kids are looking for that and the coaches need that. Where we go, we see that all the time — great practice facilities,
whether it’d be at UTEP, Memphis, UAB — all these great places have great practice facilities. This will be top notch, as good as any in the country.”

Butch Ricks played basketball at ECU in the early ‘60s. He has three sons who graduated from the school and a daughter in her senior year. He’s in his third year as president of the Craven County/Pamlico County chapter of the Pirate Club.

He is pleased with the direction ECU’s athletic program is heading. The ECU football team went to its fifth-straight bowl game, the basketball team returned to the postseason and the baseball team is off to an astounding 16-4 start.

“We call ourselves the Pirate Nation and we see purple and gold everywhere,” Ricks said. “We see more and more license plates with East Carolina University on it than we ever have. The university continues to grow and the athletic program is really beginning to get off the ground. We are just excited about what’s happening.”

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A football player crosses the finish line on a 40-meter dash during Pro Timing Day activities with NFL scouts at ECU on Wednesday. (Justin Falls/The Daily Reflector)

NFL scouts evaluate ECU seniors

By Nathan Summers
The Daily Reflector
Thursday, March 24, 2011

For guys like Dwayne Harris, Wednesday was chance to improve on an existing chance. For others, it was a chance to have a chance.

Scouts from six National Football League teams timed, measured and critiqued last year's East Carolina football seniors both in the weight room and during on-field drills as part of an annual, nationwide sweep by NFL clubs in advance of the NFL Draft.

Harris, who last year became the Pirates' all-time leading receiver, is fairly certain he'll hear his name called during the draft. Offensive tackle Willie Smith is also a legitimate draft hopeful.

On Wednesday, Harris was simply trying to polish up some final details, having already attended the NFL Combine in Indianapolis.

“I think I did well,” Harris said before walking off the ECU practice field, possibly for the last time. “I got a lot of great feedback from the coaches that were out here, and they said I did well. I did great on the route-running, did great on the 40.”

Harris opted to only be graded on those events after having previously done all of them at the NFL Combine in Indianapolis. After running a 4.55 in Indy, Harris said the scouts estimated he ran somewhere in the vicinity of 4.38 to 4.40 on Wednesday.

Others being timed were offensive linemen Cory Dowless and D.J. Scott; linebackers Dustin Lineback, Melvin Patterson and Wes Pittman; defensive backs Dekota Marshall and Travis Simmons; running backs Giavanni Ruffin, Jon Williams and Norman Whitley; wide receiver Justin Nunery and defensive lineman Josh Smith.
Marshall, who was never able to return to the playing field for ECU after breaking his lower leg during the 2009 season, had disaster strike again when he blew out his hamstring early in Wednesday's drills.

For Harris, who did his training for the combine in Boca Raton, Fla., having some time to relax between now and draft day is important

“It's a relief. This day was kind of stressful, building up to it, but at the end of the day, I came out here to have fun with the guys like it was just a regular day of practice,” he said, noting that most teams are looking at him primarily as a punt returner but also as a slot receiver.

Teams sending scouts to ECU were the Atlanta Falcons, the New Orleans Saints, the Philadelphia Eagles, the Houston Texans, the Indianapolis Colts and the Washington Redskins.

Though he hasn't auditioned officially with any NFL teams yet, the Stone Mountain, Ga., native has a private workout with the team he grew up rooting for, the Atlanta Falcons, on April 14. Harris said he's also hopeful to be invited to work out with Baltimore, Dallas and Green Bay.

The wide receiver thinks his abilities speak for themselves.

“It's not really hard for me to sell myself,” he said, noting that while he's been projected to be drafted in the fourth or fifth round, he knows it could easily be higher or lower than that. “A lot of people look at film and they know what I can do. They like my toughness. I think selling myself is the easy part, but getting people to come watch is the hard part.”

Harris is also well aware he's about to be hired by a corporation with its fair share of problems, foremost among them a labor lockout that could very well keep him and the rest of the league off the field next season.

“Without football, I don't know what America would be,” he said. “I hope everybody comes to an agreement. I hope the owners and the players come to an agreement.”

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UNC seeking new parking fees
BY ERIC FERRERI - Staff Writer
CHAPEL HILL UNC-Chapel Hill wants to require permits and fees for night and satellite parking to spread the burden of rising transportation costs.

In the next five years, the university hopes to begin charging for day parking in satellite park-and-ride lots and in campus spaces at night. There's no charge for either currently, but officials say they need the money to meet construction and other costs that are expected to rise $6.1 million by 2015-16.

"We're facing some significant financial commitments," said Jeff McCracken, UNC's public safety director. "The real effort is to try to equitably distribute costs."

Campus trustees are considering the plan this week.

McCracken's proposal, developed with a private consultant and created with input from students and staff, would for the first time charge university workers to park in the several commuter lots around town.

Those lots, including the Friday Center lot on N.C. 54, are used heavily by UNC employees who either can't park on campus or choose not to pay to do so.

Those lots are costly to operate, McCracken said. The new parking permits would cost from $227 to $390 a year depending on the employee's salary. McCracken acknowledged there would be some sticker shock for workers unaccustomed to paying for the park-and-ride option.

"But it is one of our most expensive endeavors," he said. "You have to have very frequent bus service or people won't use it."

The university would implement a similar sliding-scale permit system for employees who need to park on campus at night, while students would pay
an additional student fee of $10.40 to do so. First-year students would be exempted from that fee.

The university also wants to add $14 to the $106.75 a year student transportation fee to correct what officials say is an uneven balance between what students pay and how often they use Chapel Hill Transit, the local bus service that is free thanks to an agreement between Chapel Hill, Carrboro and the university.

Students account for 75 percent of university riders on Chapel Hill Transit buses, but just 29.5 percent of the university's contribution to the free transit program comes from students.

"The percentage of financial support really doesn't equal the percentage of use," McCracken said.

These new fees and permit requirements would be phased in over several years and would apply to both students and employees.

Jackie Overton, chairwoman of the university's Employee Forum, said the changes would be fairer, particularly to employees who now pay for campus parking spaces and largely subsidize night parking and satellite shuttle services.

"No one wants to pay more for parking," Overton said. "However, the faculty and staff have borne the brunt of this for years. We feel everyone should pay to utilize the system."

The extra revenue is needed because UNC's costs are going up, sparked in part by ongoing debt payments for campus parking decks and the increasing costs of the fare-free transit program.

Chapel Hill Transit buses eliminated fares in 2002 to encourage students and local residents to ride. It has proven valuable for employees who live on or near the bus line, particularly those who can't afford campus parking, said UNC Chancellor Holden Thorp. The university has no plans to scrap the program, he said.

"It is a core value of our community we don't plan to deviate from," he said.
Secret Admirers Give University $100 Million
By KEVIN HELLIKER
In a twist on a higher-education mystery, anonymous donors once again have bestowed riches on Kalamazoo, Mich.

The city's Western Michigan University said Tuesday that it received $100 million from anonymous donors to establish a medical school. WMU ranked it the seventh-largest cash gift ever to a public university.

The announcement comes about six years after anonymous donors gained national attention for creating Kalamazoo Promise, an organization that covers tuition costs at state colleges and universities for graduates of Kalamazoo public high schools. Five years after Kalamazoo Promise began writing tuition checks—the total thus far exceeds $20 million—the donors' identities haven't been disclosed.

That will also be the case with the new medical school, said WMU president John M. Dunn, saying only that the $100 million comes from individuals "passionate and affectionate" about Kalamazoo, the university and the state of Michigan.

The medical school will open in the fall of 2013 or 2014 with a debut class of about 50 students. Its opening is part of a slow increase in the number of U.S. medical schools, a trend that many regard as vital to addressing an anticipated severe shortage of physicians. The American Association of Medical Colleges said it foresees a shortage of 90,000 physicians within 10 years.

WMU's Dr. Dunn said the need for a medical school is reflected in the high percentage of high-caliber applicants failing to win a slot each year in a U.S. medical school. He said medical schools are turning away hundreds upon hundreds of candidates "who meet all the standards, who are scoring in the 90th percentile" on the medical-school entrance exam.

Kalamazoo is less dependent on the auto industry than much of Michigan. The city has long been a center of health-related research, having given rise
decades ago to medical-device maker Stryker Corp. and pharmaceuticals maker Upjohn, now part of Pfizer Inc.

Locals say the Stryker and Upjohn fortunes remain heavily—and secretly— influential in Kalamazoo philanthropy.

Janice M. Brown, executive director of the Kalamazoo Promise, said, "Here's my story and I'm sticking to it: I'm sworn to confidentiality about the identity of our donors."

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