ECU may receive indigent care funding

By Josh Humphries
The Daily Reflector

Wednesday, March 25, 2009

While East Carolina University is preparing for severe budget cuts, there may be state funds available for an initiative that supports the local community.

Gov. Beverly Perdue included $4 million for indigent care at ECU in her budget. Funding for indigent care has been a legislative priority for ECU for years, said Philip Rogers, executive assistant to Chancellor Steve Ballard.

"The Legislature has been a strong supporter of our legislative priorities in the past," Rogers said. "I feel confident based on my conversation at the Legislature that they will continue to fund this critical need for eastern North Carolina."

ECU Physicians provides millions of dollars in medical care to patients without insurance every year and has been seeking help from the state to fund the work.

Phyllis Horns, vice chancellor for health sciences at ECU, said that the need for indigent care is growing as the economy worsens.

"As the economy gets more difficult and more people lose their jobs, the need for indigent care from our faculty in the medical school does nothing but grow," she said.

ECU provides about $10 million annually in care for patients who have no way to pay for medical care. Horns said one out of every seven patients treated has no insurance.

"If it does happen it is going to really allow us to continue to provide the level of care that is needed in this community and is growing," Horns said. "It is absolutely essential that we get some help with these kinds of care problems."

The state budget is in the early stages, but ECU's other funding priorities still are up in the air, Rogers said. "We are only in stage one — we have a long way to go to make our legislative goals a reality" he said.

ECU also is seeking funding for operating cost at the dental school and capital to begin planning for a new science building on campus.

Those requests did not make it into the governor's budget.

The Senate is slated to get a budget out by mid-April. Rogers hopes to see more ECU projects on the Senate budget.

Meanwhile the university is planning for budget cuts up to 7 percent, which could mean the loss of jobs on campus.

Provost Marilyn Sheerer is heading up a budget task force looking to find ways to cut corners in the budgets of every department.

"We may have to lay people off," she said. "It may be temporary or fixed-term people and perhaps more non-teaching positions.

"Right now (faculty jobs) are protected, and we don't know if and when we will have to cut into the actual faculty."
College phone booth stunt just like old times

The Associated Press

Thursday, March 26, 2009

MORAGA, Calif. — Twenty-two students at St. Mary's College of California have done something their predecessors famously did 50 years ago: cram into a phone booth.

Teams competed to fit as many bodies as possible into a phone booth on the campus green Wednesday, a half-century after Life magazine published a now-famous photograph of 22 St. Mary's students stuffed into a phone booth, a popular college stunt in the 1950s.

Current students matched the number in the 1959 image, though they failed to break the campus record of 24 set in 1984.

St. Mary's officials say a South African team set the world record of 25 set in 1958.

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BCBS slipping off UNC board

CEO withdraws from consideration

BY DAN KANE AND JANE STANCILL, Staff Writers
Comment on this story

For what appears to be the first time in 12 years, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina will not have a voting representative on the board that oversees the state's 16 public universities.

Robert Greczyn Jr., the chief executive officer for Blue Cross, withdrew from consideration Wednesday after officials for the State Employees Association of North Carolina lobbied hard against his election in the state Senate. Greczyn and three other candidates withdrew as the voting began, leaving senators with eight candidates to fill eight seats on the UNC Board of Governors.

Ardis Watkins, a lobbyist for SEANC, said senators from both parties had opted not to support Greczyn after the association expressed concerns about the head of a company that has a sizable contract to administer claims for the State Health Plan. The plan covers roughly 667,000 state employees, teachers and retirees. Blue Cross could be paid as much as $120 million under the contract.

Greczyn could not be reached for comment. He was nominated by Sen. Don Davis, a Snow Hill Democrat. Davis said Greczyn had done an excellent job as chairman of East Carolina University's board of trustees and has served on the board during a time of tremendous growth at the campus. Davis said Greczyn's time on the board also showed that he knows the eastern part of the state's higher education needs.

Two Blue Cross officials, Brad Adcock and Brad Wilson, serve on the board, but their terms end this year. Both were elected in 1997, said Joni Worthington, a board spokeswoman. She said Wilson could continue to serve for four years as a nonvoting member by virtue of his time as board chairman.

The House has not voted on its nominees for the board, which has 32 members who serve four-year terms.

Among those elected to the board Wednesday was Paul Fulton of Winston-Salem. A trustee on UNC-Chapel Hill's board, Fulton is the former business school dean at UNC-CH's Kenan-Flagler Business School. He helped found Citizens for Higher Education, a big-spending political action committee that pushes issues for the UNC-CH campus. That group has at times clashed with the UNC system leaders.

The election process in the Senate has been criticized for a lack of openness and debate. Senators had no opportunity to nominate other candidates after four of the 12 nominees dropped out. If they wrote in another candidate, their ballots would not be counted.

Senate Minority Leader Phil Berger, a Rockingham County Republican, said in a news release
that it was a "Soviet" style process that Senate Democrats, who control the chamber, should abolish.

The others elected to the board are incumbents Peaches Gunter Blank, Laura Buffaloe, Phil Dixon and current chairwoman Hannah Gage, and newcomers John Blackburn of Linville, Franklin McCain of Charlotte, and Burley Mitchell of Raleigh. Blackburn is chairman of Appalachian State University's board of trustees, McCain is chairman of N.C. A&T State University's board of trustees, and Mitchell is a former state Supreme Court chief justice and a trustee on N.C. State University's board.

dan.kane@newsobserver.com or 919-829-4861

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Duke has new business program

FROM STAFF REPORTS
Comment on this story

DURHAM - Duke University's business school is offering a new master's program intended to provide entry-level business skills to recent college graduates.

The first class of students in the Master of Management Studies in Foundations of Business program starts in August.

The program will consist of 12 courses taught over four, six-week terms. They will focus on business fundamentals including finance, accounting, marketing, strategy, operations, decision analysis and management, according to a Duke news release.

All will be taught by faculty at Duke's Fuqua School of Business.

The program will require no previous career or business experience, but enrollees will need a basic understanding of calculus, statistics and computer skills.

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MBA candidates test out skills in N.O.

Paired with local entrepreneurs

By Rick Jervis
USA TODAY

NEW ORLEANS — Just a year ago, students at Stanford University's Graduate School of Business would be elbowing for an internship at a Wall Street investment firm.

Instead, this week eight of them are spending Spring Break in New Orleans helping a local entrepreneur develop a business strategy for selling his eco-friendly flip-flops.

Wall Street's troubles have master's degree candidates rethinking life after graduation, said Matt Nash of the Center for the Advancement of Social Entrepreneurship at Duke University.

By Sean Gardner for USA TODAY

At Naked Pizza: DePaul students Lucas Weingarten, second from right, and Patrick Murphy, right, lend a hand Tuesday.

One of the main benefactors of this trend has been New Orleans, a city nearly destroyed by the 2005 floods. The Idea Village, a non-profit created after Hurricane Katrina to help businesses get on their feet, launched IDEA-Corps in 2006. It is a business-oriented Peace Corps concept that pairs MBA candidates with local entrepreneurs, said Tim Williamson, president and co-founder.

"Other communities will be going through what New Orleans has gone through for the past three years," he said.

The initiative has grown from five students in 2006 to 40 last year. This year, it has attracted 50 students from Stanford, DePaul University, the University of California-Berkeley, Northwestern University and others.

At a meeting of minds Monday between Stanford students and the owner of Feelgoodz, the eco-friendly flip-flop maker, ideas for new business models were scribbled on a large dry-erase board. Not far from the Stanford gathering, the team from DePaul University bantered around ideas to help grow Naked Pizza, an all-natural health-conscious pizzeria.

More MBA candidates are venturing into impact-conscious roles, and they could end up solving the economic crisis, said Lucas Weingarten, 32, a DePaul MBA candidate.

"I recognize that it's business and unrestricted free-market capitalism that has caused a lot of the problems we have today," he said. "But they're also going to fix them."

One of the goals of the program is persuading the visiting students to move to New Orleans, said Bob Brown, head of the Business Council of New Orleans and the River Region, a non-profit group of area CEOs.

"If we become a mecca for smart entrepreneurs, it could have an enormous impact on recovery," Brown said.
Leaving PCs on overnight costs companies $2.8B a year

By Jon Swartz
USA TODAY

SAN FRANCISCO — Even during an economic meltdown, when companies are scrambling to cut costs, businesses are wasting billions of dollars by leaving their PCs on at night.

U.S. organizations squander $2.8 billion a year to power unused machines, emitting about 20 million tons of carbon dioxide — roughly the equivalent of 4 million cars — according to a report to be released today.

About half of 108 million office PCs in the USA are not properly shut down at night, says the 2009 PC Energy Report, produced by 1E, an energy-management software company, and the non-profit Alliance to Save Energy. The report analyzed workplace PC power consumption in the USA, United Kingdom and Germany.

Wastefulness does not just affect a company's bottom line, it creates environmental concerns, the report says. If the world's 1 billion PCs were powered down just one night, it would save enough energy to light the Empire State Building — inside and out — for over 30 years, it says.

"Workers do not feel responsible for electricity bills at work, and some companies insist PCs remain on at night so they can be patched with software updates," says 1E CEO Sumir Karayi. He says 63% of employees surveyed said their companies should take more steps to save PC power.

"It is scary how much energy is wasted," says Michael Murphy, senior manager of global environmental affairs at Dell, a business partner and customer of 1E. It has used 1E software to efficiently manage its 50,000 PCs globally, saving about $1.8 million a year.

Simply shutting down PCs at night can save a company with 10,000 PCs over $260,000 a year and 1,871 tons of carbon dioxide emissions, the report says.

"PCs can be a tremendous drain on electricity," says Doug Washburn, an analyst at Forrester Research. "During a nine-hour workday, it isn't always in use because of lunch, meetings and other things."
Rankings, students vs. parents
College-bound students and their parents have slightly different ideas about their dream college:

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Source: Survey by Princeton Review

Economy influences college choices
By Mary Beth Marklein
USA TODAY

Nearly seven in 10 high school students say the struggling economy has affected where they applied to college this year, a survey out today shows.

And yes, they are stressed about it. Most students will find out this month where they have been accepted. The biggest concern: that they will get admitted into the school they most want to attend but won't be able to for financial reasons.

"Some call it the other March Madness," says the survey, based on responses from 12,715 college-bound students and 3,007 parents of college-bound students. The College Hopes & Worries Survey has been conducted annually since 2002 by The Princeton Review, a test-prep company and developer of college guides.

This year, more students reported being stressed: 68% said their stress levels were high or very high vs. 61% last year. Respondents weren't asked what the source of their stress was. But money worries appear to be a priority:

▶ 67% of students and 63% of parents said the economic collapse had influenced their decisions. Of those, 38% of students said economic concerns had caused them to change the kinds of colleges they applied to (for example, schools with lower tuition prices). Also, 33% of students said they applied to more schools because of the economy, and 28% said they narrowed the geographic range of schools to which they applied.
▶ 86% of students and 81% of parents said financial aid will be "extremely" or "very" necessary to pay for college, up from 85% and 79% last year.
▶ When asked what their biggest concern is, 37% of both students and parents — the largest share of each — said it was that they (or their child) will get into their first choice of college but won't be able to attend for financial reasons.