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New times call for new strategies and East Carolina University will carry on in a struggling economy, according to its top administrator.

Chancellor Steve Ballard explained how ECU is adapting to repeated state budget cuts and offered words of encouragement during his third annual State of the University address in Mendenhall on Tuesday.

“While the fiscal crisis is unprecedented, it will not define us nor deter us as we pursue our vision and mission,” Ballard said. “Despite severe fiscal challenges, we remain focused on our mission of being a national model of public service and regional transformation.”

ECU has lost $120 million in state funding over the past four years, including a $49 million cut this year. Meanwhile enrollment has grown over a third from 2001 to 2010. Nationally, higher education funding is at a 25-year low.

“This picture presents great uncertainty, if not chaos,” Ballard said. “But we are the leadership university. We are responding aggressively. ECU is re-engineering our academic programs and services.”

The university is already administratively lean, having about half the vice chancellors of the similarly-sized Virginia Tech, according to Ballard.

“Despite years of focusing on productivity and efficiency, we have initiated new commitments to consolidating services,” Ballard said.

Faculty are engaged in a prioritization effort that will redistribute resources and possibly eliminate some of more than 220 programs, and a related academic reorganization effort is evaluating the structure of the university’s three divisions and 13 colleges.

“We expect this process to help us further save money and reduce expenditures on administrative positions,” Ballard said.

The university has also consolidated administrative units like public service and combined marketing and public communications.

“And we get better every day in private giving, endowments, and raising non-state dollars,” Ballard said.
While tuition and fees will increase 9.3 percent next year, “this option is never my first choice,” he said. “It is now required to maintain the quality of education. We will do all we can to balance the need for excellence in the classroom with our traditional goals of access and affordability.”

ECU continues to have a positive economic influence in the region. The university’s economic impact in eastern North Carolina is $1.8 billion each year and $3.3 billion a year across the state. For every dollar the state invests in the university, the return is $14.

“Much of our research results in better treatment for illnesses, better methods to manage natural resources, better understanding of history and economics, and hundreds of other ways to improve our quality of life,” Ballard said.

He praised a number of initiatives like the Medical Family Therapy program, the Lucille Gorham Intergenerational Center run jointly with the City of Greenville, the Center for Sustainable Tourism and Operation Re-Entry that assists veterans returning to civilian life.

“I report with great pride that not only is ‘service’ our university motto, it is the soul of ECU,” Ballard said. “It embodies our commitment to eastern North Carolina. Even more important is why we do so much service. We do it because we believe in helping people... We will flourish tomorrow and in the future because we have an authentic goal and because we believe in people.”

Contact Jackie Drake at jdrake@reflector.com or 252-329-9567 or follow her on Twitter @JackieDrakeGDR.
Mark Lenzi, Olympic Gold Medalist in Diving, Dies at 43

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BLOOMINGTON, Ind. (AP) — Mark Lenzi, who won a gold medal in diving at the 1992 Summer Olympics in Barcelona, Spain, died on Monday in Greenville, N.C. He was 43.

His death was announced by his alma mater, Indiana University.

Lenzi’s hometown newspaper, The Free Lance-Star in Fredericksburg, Va., said he had been hospitalized for two weeks after having fainting spells. His mother, Ellie, told the newspaper her son’s blood pressure was too low.

Lenzi won the three-meter springboard in Barcelona. Four years later, he came out of a brief retirement and won the bronze medal at the 1996 Atlanta Olympics.

Lenzi won 2 N.C.A.A. diving championships and 18 international competitions and was twice named the United States diver of the year. He was the diving coach at East Carolina University from 2009 to ’11.
He is survived by his wife, Dorothy; his mother; two brothers; a sister; and his grandmother,

Lenzi started his athletic career as a wrestler. He enjoyed the competition but did not enjoy starving himself to reach the needed weight.

When he decided to give up wrestling in favor of diving after watching it on television, he said, people were upset.

“I don’t think anybody believed in me,” he said. “My dad wanted me to wrestle because he thought I could get a college scholarship. We argued so bad that I left home for two weeks and stayed with a friend. Then my dad compromised and said I could do both.”

Lenzi, though, never wrestled again. When he entered his first diving competition and won, he received five scholarship offers.

“My dad said, ‘O.K., you’re diving, not wrestling,’ ” he recalled.
Triangle drivers wince as gas prices rise

By Bruce Siceloff and John Murawski - bsiceloff@newsobserver.com

RALEIGH–As gas prices climb closer to $4 a gallon, Triangle drivers are finding little ways to blunt the pain.

Don Hagge bought a carwash he didn’t need Monday – just to get a 20-cent discount on regular gas at a BP station on Creedmoor Road, where the posted price was $3.93.

Except for a few specks of pollen, his black SUV was spotless.

“I’m probably not going to wash it today,” said Hagge, 66, an IBM retiree. “The carwash ticket’s good for two weeks. But that 20 cents a gallon was very tempting.”

To cut back on the high cost of a Sunday drive, Monica Wilcher switched recently from her church in Cary to a congregation closer to her home in North Raleigh.

“I try to stay on this side of town,” said Wilcher, a hair stylist. She had attended the Cary church for 20 years.

Rising gas prices are changing the way people shop, relax and even worship. Triangle drivers haven’t paid this much for gas – an average $3.90 per gallon for regular Monday – since the summer of 2008, when the local average spiked above $4 in July and again in September.

Drivers say they are reducing trips and cutting back on distances to keep from forking over as much as $100 for a fill-up.

And, increasingly, drivers say their strained budgets won’t cover an entire tankful at a time. So they buy gas in installments. Wilcher had just $10 to invest Monday at an Exxon station on Falls of Neuse Road.

“If I have to go to Durham to visit my relatives, this $10 is over,” she said.

Michael Walden, an economist at N.C. State University, said these lifestyle changes are chipping away at the economy. As fuel costs eat up more of a household budget, consumers have less to spend on groceries, appliances, clothes and other items. Every increase of 10 cents a gallon slows the economy by 0.2 percent, according to a formula worked out by economists.
The changes in spending behavior are subtle. James Kleckley, an East Carolina University economist, said the shock people felt the first time about four years ago when gas blew past the $4-a-gallon barrier is not likely to repeat itself.

“I don’t think $4 is that magic number anymore,” Kleckley said. “I don’t know if anyone knows what that tipping point is.”

Industry forecasters were split over what to expect in coming weeks. After the national average price declined by a fraction of a penny, some economists said a recent price surge had ended. But several analysts said drivers should expect to pay more than $4 before the end of April.

“Within the next two weeks we’ll probably have our brush with $4, and probably go past it,” said Denton Cinquegrana, senior markets editor for the New Jersey-based Oil Price Information Service.

At the Creedmoor Road BP station, Amal Hester shelled out $10 to fuel her Kia.

“I was running low so I had to stop here,” Hester said. “Ten dollars will give me enough to get to Costco, where it’ll be cheaper to fill up.”

When her marriage ended two years ago, Hester ended up with a gas-guzzling Jaguar. But she couldn’t afford to keep the tank full, so she gave the luxury sports car back to her ex.

“I’ve had to cut down on expenses, everything I do, I can’t travel anywhere,” Hester said.

Gary Newkirk had just $15 to spend on gas when he stopped at one of the most expensive stations in town: an Exxon on Six Forks Road, which was selling regular for $3.99.

“You hate to stop when it’s this high, but I had to,” said Newkirk, 35, of Raleigh. He commutes 120 miles round-trip to work in Nash County, so he’ll burn up that $15 in a day.

He usually tanks up on Wednesday.

“But I had to do some extra running around today,” Newkirk said. “Do something extra, you got to put gas in the car.”

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**Prices vary across the state**

Here are average prices Monday for self-service regular gas in six North Carolina metropolitan areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>Change in past week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asheville</td>
<td>$3.96</td>
<td>up 2.4 cents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charlotte</td>
<td>$3.89</td>
<td>up 0.2 cents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fayetteville</td>
<td>$3.85</td>
<td>up 5.4 cents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triad</td>
<td>$3.89</td>
<td>up 2 cents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triangle</td>
<td>$3.91</td>
<td>up 1.3 cents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilmington</td>
<td>$3.89</td>
<td>up 0.4 cents</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Oil Price Information Service

**Pump price approaches $4 again**

Gas hasn’t been this expensive since the sticky summer of 2008, when local prices spiked above $4 in July and again in September. Triangle motorists paid an average $3.909 per gallon for regular on Monday.
N.C. lawmakers recommend limiting size of UNC Health Care

By Mandy Locke - mlocke@newsobserver.com

RALEIGH–A group of legislators Tuesday took the first step toward reining in UNC Health Care by proposing to limit its ability to grow and compete with local hospitals such as rival WakeMed.

In a narrow and rushed vote, eight representatives voted to prohibit UNC Health Care from growing beyond its current footprint and put in place quotas on indigent care in counties where UNC does business. The legislators also proposed to limit the size and power of UNC Health Care’s board of directors.

The proposal, which can now be taken up in the May legislative session, addresses complaints that WakeMed has been making for more than a year: that UNC Health Care was competing so fiercely in local communities that it had put private county hospitals at risk.

UNC and its supporters quickly criticized the proposal, saying it would put the hospital system at risk.

“As a doctor, the first thing you learn is to do no harm,” said Bill Roper, CEO of UNC Health Care. “The legislature, if they move forward with this bill, would create massive harm. What’s the problem for which we are purporting to fix?”

WakeMed-Rex dispute

Tuesday’s action stems from a protracted dispute between Wake County’s two largest hospitals: WakeMed and Rex Hospital, which UNC bought in 2000.

In 2010, after WakeMed lost the allegiance of a premier cardiology practice to Rex, WakeMed began complaining that Rex is using the power and resources of UNC to unfairly compete in the Wake County market. In May 2011, WakeMed’s board issued an unsolicited bid to buy Rex for $750 million.

The bid was rejected by UNC’s board but prompted the House to create a special committee to examine whether Rex ought to be sold. On Tuesday, the committee sidestepped the question of selling Rex and instead put forward a number of provisions to limit UNC Health Care.
Bill Atkinson, CEO of WakeMed, was heartened by the committee’s actions and called for more work.

“It’s a good step in the right direction, but there’s a lot left to do,” he said. “People shouldn’t be offended by the questions being asked.”

For UNC, the vote was ironic.

In 1998, legislators stepped in to level the playing field between UNC Hospitals and its next-door competitor Duke. Duke had gotten a foothold in the lucrative Wake County healthcare market by buying Raleigh Community Hospital, but the state’s public hospital wasn’t set up to buy hospitals. Legislators changed that by creating UNC Health Care, a public hospital system with the autonomy and resources it needed to compete with hospital giants. Two years later, UNC bought Rex Hospital and began competing in Raleigh.

On Tuesday, UNC found itself on the other side of that debate.

**Hospital consolidation**

The proposal to rein in UNC comes at a time of great consolidation within the health industry. Hospital systems such as UNC and WakeMed have been rushing to buy or affiliate with other medical groups to achieve greater bargaining power with insurance companies.

The fate of UNC Health Care is far from settled. Many of the representatives in the special committee weren’t in favor of pushing any recommendations forward to the full House. And some who voted in favor of the measure thought they were voting on a very limited portion of the bill, not the full nine pages of changes delivered to committee members during the meeting.

The proposal, because it came out of a study committee, can now be considered in the House during the short session in May. Senate leaders, however, promised a frosty reception if it crossed chambers.

Rep. Julia Howard, a Mocksville Republican, said during the meeting that she felt unduly rushed and asked the measure be postponed.

“This is a nine-page bill that we’re seeing for the very first time right now,” said Howard. “I, for one, don’t know what’s in it.”

The proposal passed in an 8-7 voice vote, and spectators struggled to calculate which members voted which way.

If adopted, the bill would cut the maximum number of spots on UNC Health Care’s board from 27 to 12. It would defer much of the board’s power to the
Board of Governors for the larger university system. It would also require nonprofits under UNC Health Care, including Rex, to file 990 tax forms.

Rex Hospital, which considers itself a private nonprofit, was excused in 1995 from filing such forms because of its connection to a public university; WakeMed had complained that the exemption made Rex less transparent.

Roper said the bill would effectively undo all of UNC Health Care’s success, making it harder for the system to teach doctors, treat the poor and harness research dollars for cutting edge treatments.

A powerful ally agreed with Roper.

Senate GOP leader Tom Apodaca suggested he would bury the bill in the Senate Rules Committee he chairs if the proposal came to the Senate. He said that the government shouldn’t intrude any further into health care market issues in these confusing times.

“We have no interest in this at all,” Apodaca said. “It’s a turf battle here locally.”

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UNCW kicks off new chancellor's installation events
School plans smaller lead-up to chancellor ceremony

By Pressley Baird
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When Gary Miller is formally installed in late April as chancellor of the University of North Carolina Wilmington, it will end a month of celebration. But this time, it'll be a scaled-back affair.

UNCW officials released details last week about a monthlong calendar of events leading up to Miller's installation ceremony and a campuswide picnic April 20. The first event was a baseball game against East Carolina University on April 3, with other happenings taking place nearly every day until the ceremony.

The more than 40 events are meant to highlight the college's different programs and departments.

They're also a way to tell the story of the university without racking up big costs, said Robert Tyndall, chair of the chancellor's installation committee.

The ceremony and picnic will cost the university $85,000, which will be funded entirely through private donations, Tyndall said. That's the same price as former chancellor Rosemary DePaolo's weeklong installation celebration eight years ago.

DePaolo's week included speeches by nationally known figures like George Mitchell, a former United States senator and chairman of the board of Disney, and an installation ball. Mitchell's speech came with a $75 ticket fee, and entrance to the ball cost about $150.

Similar big-ticket events won't show up during Miller's month. The reason for that, Tyndall said, was to cut down on costs.

"We wanted to do this with quality that represents the university well," he said. "But we want to be also aware of and sensitive to the fact that these are difficult times. We don't want to be doing anything that places an extra burden on folks."

Tyndall said the installation committee looked across the campus to find events that departments were already holding. Some events were already
planned for April, and organizers rearranged dates for others to include them in the installation month, Tyndall said. But no new events were created.

A good example, he said, is the annual graduate showcase featuring student art exhibits. As part of the installation celebration, it's now played up as an example of UNCW's cultural arts.

"We were looking for scholarship, partnership, things that are important aspects of university life, to draw accents around as part of an installation month," Tyndall said.

The events are funded through the department or college's budget, and any admission fees tied to the events will go back to the group sponsoring them, Tyndall said.

But many of the events, like a forum on diversity or a symposium on health inequities, are free, he said.

"We want as much of this to be free to the public since it is a public university," he said. "Eighty-five percent of this doesn't cost anything."

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NCSU researchers predict average hurricane season

The Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C.—Researchers at North Carolina State University are predicting a relatively average hurricane season, but say even minor storms can still cause serious problems when they make landfall.

Professors Lian Xie (lee-ON' ZHWAY) and Montserrat Fuentes said Tuesday they expect between seven to 10 named storms in the Atlantic basin in 2012. That would be about normal for the region, which averages about 10.5 named storms annually.

The researchers say four to seven of the storms may grow strong enough to become hurricanes, with one to three having the chance to become a major hurricane.

They calculate there's only a 12 percent chance of a major hurricane, defined as Category 3 or above, will make landfall in the southeastern U.S. this year.

Hurricane season runs from June 1 through Nov. 30.
Colleges' Tough Waiting Game
Schools Keep Hundreds of Applicants on Reserve Lists, but Very Few of Them Get In
By RACHEL LOUISE ENSIGN and MELISSA KORN
U.S. NEWS
Updated April 9, 2012, 7:26 p.m. ET

So Harvard has put you—or someone you know—on its waitlist. Great news! Or maybe not.

A spot on a waitlist from an elite school doesn't necessarily mean a candidate is closer to the finish line. Some may be waitlisted because while their grades weren't quite good enough, or they didn't take enough advanced placement classes, they still piqued the interest of admissions officers. Others are offered spots purely out of courtesy, such as family members of alumni or children of donors who failed to make the academic cut.

Schools often pad their waitlists to protect their "yield," or the proportion of accepted students who choose to attend. They can admit fewer students on the first pass, to maintain their aura of exclusivity, then move on to the waitlist if accepted students turn them down.

But for most students, being waitlisted is "not much better than a rejection," said Elizabeth Heaton, senior director of educational consulting at College Coach, an admissions consulting firm, and a former regional director of admissions at the University of Pennsylvania.

Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh admitted just six of 5,003 applicants invited onto its waitlist last year. At Cornell University, in Ithaca,
N.Y., not one of 2,998 students offered a spot on last year's list was admitted.

"It's so hard to know what we're going to need," said Janet Lavin Rapelye, Princeton University's dean of admission.

Waitlists start out so large because colleges rarely know what their yield from admitted students will be; nor do they know how many waitlisted students will actually accept a spot. And if a college does need to fill holes, they want to have a broad group of students to choose from.

Princeton, which accepted 2,095 students for a record-low 7.86% admission rate this year, offered 1,472 applicants places on its waitlist. In the past six years, it has taken as few as zero from the list, or as many as 164.

Many colleges are reluctant to disclose the number of students on their waitlists. Harvard, which admitted a record-low 5.9% of applicants this year, doesn't release the size of its list. A Harvard spokesman said it accepted 31 from the waitlist last year, and between 49 and 228 in the four years prior to that.

Most schools know by May 1 who has accepted their initial offers of admission. They then turn to the waitlist to fill any remaining slots, a process that is supposed to wrap up by Aug. 1, a deadline set by the National Association for College Admission Counseling. On average, 45% of students offered spots on a waitlist accept, said the Princeton Review.

Generally, schools scan the waitlist first for students who can fill unique holes in their incoming class—a prospective Classics scholar from Hawaii, for instance. They also eye students who show interest in the college through phone calls, emails and letters after accepting a spot on the waitlist, said Kennon Dick, also of College Coach and a former associate dean of admissions at Swarthmore College.

Aileen Eisenberg, 18, from Monroe, N.Y., was one of 10 students to be accepted from Swarthmore's waitlist last year; 948 applicants were offered a spot on the list. She sent a letter comparing the admissions process to her hobby of dancing tango, likening the college to an ideal dance partner. In June, they offered her admission.

And then there are the "courtesy" waitlist offers. It is common for elite institutions to place a number of students on their lists even when they have virtually no chance of being seriously considered for admission, Mr. Dick said. They may be children of alumni or faculty, or candidates whom
admissions officers found interesting but whose grades or test scores fell short.

"You'll get some really angry alumni calling if you deny their kid," Mr. Dick said.

For its part, Ms. Rapelye said, Princeton doesn't have a courtesy list. Swarthmore says it does waitlist some students as a courtesy, but rarely anyone with no chance of getting in.

Applicants requiring financial aid may have an even tougher time. Even at a handful of need-blind schools—those that don't consider financial need in admissions decisions—waitlisted students with less need have an edge. Six percent of private colleges were need-blind in the regular admissions cycle but became need-aware once they started admitting students from the waitlist, a 2008 survey by the National Association for College Admission Counseling said.

Some schools have begun shrinking their waitlists to keep applicants' expectations in check. The University of Pennsylvania trimmed the size of its waitlist by 400 this year. Stanford, which offered 1,078 applicants a spot on the waitlist last year, only to admit 13, has offered just 789 applicants a position on this year's list, said Richard Shaw, dean of undergraduate admission and financial aid.

Still, Mr. Shaw doesn't think waitlisted students should be too optimistic. Comparing their chances this year with last, he said, is "like playing the state lottery versus the national lottery. It's a million to one instead of a billion to one that you're going to get it."

Write to Melissa Korn at melissa.korn@wsj.com
Laura Marino, a senior at Columbia High School in Maplewood, N.J., was spooked last year when a recent graduate there was accepted to only a couple of colleges, despite having top grades and strong test scores. So Ms. Marino spread applications far and wide, adopting an increasingly common strategy among prospective college students, many of whom have learned the fate of their applications in recent weeks. She applied to 14 colleges, including 1,177-student Haverford College in Haverford, Pa.; University of Michigan, with more than 27,000 undergraduates; and six of the eight Ivy League schools.

"I wanted to have a backup," said Ms. Marino, 17 years old, who learned in recent weeks that she had been accepted to six schools. She hasn't decided which to attend. By submitting so many applications, she and others in the same boat are seeking an edge in the often bewildering college-application process. The surge in applications—also driven by changes that make applying easier, more outreach by colleges themselves, and the search for the best financial-aid package—is helping to drive down acceptance rates at many colleges.

Students "worry more than they used to, so they are looking for more security," said Lisa Sohmer, director of college counseling at Garden School
in Queens, N.Y. "But I don't think they realize that that becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy because the acceptance rates go down to a large degree because the applicant pool goes up."

In 2011, nearly 29% of college applicants applied to seven or more schools, up from 10.8% in 1997, according to the Higher Education Research Institute at University of California, Los Angeles. Nearly 5% of last year's college freshmen applied to 12 or more colleges, up from 1% in 1997. The statistics are based on the institute's annual survey of roughly 200,000 incoming freshmen at more than 200 colleges and universities. Data for the current year aren't available.

Applying to so many schools can be a mixed bag for students. The hassle and cost—application fees are often as high as $75—rise. And with so many applications pending, both surprise acceptances and disappointing rejections are more likely.

"It got so crazy at times, I'd forget which schools I'd finished my applications for, and which ones I didn't," said Genevieve Carrillo, a 17-year-old senior at Highline High School in Burien, Wash. She applied to 10 schools so she could compare financial-aid packages, and to ensure at least a few acceptances.

For schools, the trend means they can be more selective and can promote low acceptance rates as a sign of desirability.

Many elite schools admitted a record-low percentage of students for the coming fall. Harvard University offered admission to 5.9% of its 34,302 applicants, down from 6.2% last year, while Yale University admitted 6.8% of applicants, down from 7.4% last year. Northwestern University's undergraduate-admissions rate fell to 15% this year from 27% three years ago.

"It used to be the max would be about five applications. Now, some have 12 or 13, and I have students with 19 or 22," said Sam Labi, a counselor at Garfield High School in Seattle.

Some parents say they are refusing to participate in the application frenzy. "I sort of put my foot down. I said five to eight [applications]," said Shelly Sundberg, a program manager for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation in Seattle who is guiding her niece, who lives with her, through her college search.

School counselors, college administrators and students say the growing popularity of the Common Application, a standardized undergraduate
application accepted at 456 institutions—up from 227 in the 2001-02 admissions cycle—has made it easier for families to apply to more schools. And with budgets tight after the recession, some families are shopping around for the best financial-aid offers. Still other families have become hypercompetitive and want to better their odds.

"I was just afraid that I wouldn't be qualified enough for college, that I didn't do enough, that I didn't do well enough," said Ms. Carrillo, the Washington state student who has a grade point average around 3.5, "decent" standardized test scores and leadership positions with several student clubs. She was accepted to seven schools and picked Western Washington University, saying the choice was based "110%" on cost.

Applications to the University of Southern California rose 23% this year, to a record 45,917, after the private Los Angeles university adopted the Common Application. USC accepted 8,358 students, or a record-low 18% of applicants, to fill an expected freshman class of 2,650.

The common application boosted USC's numbers, but the university is also doing more outreach, said Timothy Brunold, dean of admissions. And interest from foreign students is rising.

Many students who applied to multiple colleges are now juggling acceptance letters—leaving colleges to wonder until May 1, when most require a response.

Bowdoin College, a liberal arts school in Brunswick, Maine, admitted 16% of a record 6,716 applicants this year, and is now waiting to see how many accept. "Now the shoe is on the other foot," said Scott Meiklejohn, dean of admissions. "Now we wait, which is entirely fair."

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