THE DAILY CLIPS

April 21, 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
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Geriatric care faces crisis

A decline in care may be the lot of aging baby boomers

BY THOMAS GOLDSMITH
STAFF WRITER

East Carolina University's geriatrics program stopped taking new patients this year. Its leaders have been able to fill only one of the three fellowship slots for training new geriatricians, specialists who treat the ill of older patients.

ECU's troubles are part of a larger crisis in the quality of care available for a growing population of older people.

A new Institute of Medicine report concludes that the 78 million baby boomers who start turning 65 in less than three years will face "a health-care workforce that is too small and woefully unprepared to meet their specific health needs." North Carolina has about 175 geriatricians, ranking near the national average of about four doctors for every 10,000 people older than 75. By contrast, state figures list 1,484 pediatricians and 1,001 psychiatrists.

Experts say that an inadequate supply of geriatricians could result in poor care for the wave that will nearly double the number of North Carolinians over 65 by 2030.

"We are not making any money, and we can't recruit new faculty and fellows because of the shortage," said Dr. Irene Hamrick, an ECU associate professor and director of geriatric fellowship program. "It's a downward spiral."

Young doctors are often unwilling to spend one to three years in geriatrics fellowships, only to enter jobs that rely on low Medicare reimbursement and require unpredictable hours. Geriatricians can earn about $150,000 a year, but colleagues in specialties such as dermatology and radiology can make nearly twice that.

Dr. Colleen Christmas, a geriatrician and Johns Hopkins University professor, said having fewer geriatricians means poor care. Many patients have more than one disease and, without a geriatrician, may take prescription drugs with bad interactions specific to older people. Or they may avoid the doctor, because their concerns aren't met.

"I think that older patients suffer from too much care, too little care and the wrong care," Christmas said.

Common diseases often show up differently in older people, said Dr. Laura Hanson, a geriatrician and assistant professor at UNC-Chapel Hill. A heart attack might be painless, or an infection can take hold without the patient's temperature rising above 99 degrees.

"They tend to go surgery later," with worse results, Hanson said during a break from rounds at the nonprofit Carol Woods Retirement Community, where she's part of a rotation of five geriatricians.

During a visit with Elinor Koechley, 89, Hanson knelt by the bed and looked her straight in the eye. "How are you feeling?" Hanson asked, following up on Koechley's recent pneumonia.

"Reasonably OK," Koechley said, softly but resolutely.

After the visit, Hanson said she makes a point of connecting with her patients instead of rushing through appointments.

**Engaging the patients**

"People are in a situation where they typically have lost control for a variety of reasons, including their illness," she said. "I try to go out of my way to communicate with the patient even if her memory is not 100 percent or her energy is not 100 percent. That allows her to be part of the picture."

"The typically more complicated medical situation of an older patient can be a challenge. The Institute of Medicine, a Washington, D.C., research group that's part of the National Academy of Sciences, found that the average 75-year-old American has three chronic conditions, such as diabetes, hypertension, arthritis and dementia, and takes four or more prescription drugs. Medicare, the federal health-insurance program for people over 65, actually hinders care through its policies, according to the report. It often focuses on short-term treatment instead of chronic-disease management."

That model is at odds with a geriatrician's approach.

"What we try to do in developing geriatric care is deal with all the needs of the patients," said Dr. Kenneth Schmader, chief of the division of geriatrics at Duke and director of the geriatric research center at the Durham VA Hospital.

Experts on aging, demography and geriatrics said the coming generation of baby boomers is already asking for more information and better communication. One solution may be to increase geriatrics instruction in the overall medical school curriculum.

"Rather than start a whole new practice ... we need an academic discipline," said Dr. Robert N. Butler of the International Longevity Center think tank in New York. "I don't think we need a geriatrician on every street corner. We need people who practice medicine to know how to look after older people."

Absent major changes in the U.S. health-care system, it's unlikely that geriatricians will enjoy a major boost in their ranks, given the reputation as a "high-touch, low-tech" specialty.

"The work is very challenging, and you have to enjoy being around frail older patients," Hanson said. "Not everybody's cut out for that. Sometimes it's just simpler to work with younger people."

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**Geriatrics**

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Nonprofit CEO will speak to spring grads

By ECU News Bureau

Special to The Daily Reflector

Thomas J. Spaulding, Jr., head of the nonprofit organization Up With People, and an East Carolina alumnus, will deliver the keynote address at ECU's spring commencement May 10.

The ECU Wind Ensemble will perform a concert at 9:30 a.m., followed by commencement exercises at 10 a.m., rain or shine, at the Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium.

Almost 3,400 students have applied for spring graduation, according to the ECU registrar's office. That number includes approximately 2,400 undergraduates, 910 graduate/professional students and 73 medical students.

Spaulding, who graduated from ECU in 1972 with a degree in political science, received ECU's Outstanding Alumni Award in 2006. Before becoming president and CEO of Up with People in 2005, Spaulding had been the group's director of corporate affairs, and prior to that, had held positions at IBM/Lotus Development. He earned his MBA from Bond University in Gold Coast, Australia, and a master's degree in nonprofit management from Regis University. He is a board member for the Museum of Outdoor Arts, as well as Up With People's Leadership and International directors boards.

Up With People provides its participants with opportunities to perform a musical stage show in cities and towns across the world, and also offers them leadership roles and how to meet the needs of the communities they inhabit through service learning projects.

Departments and Colleges will hold individual events throughout the weekend. Visit http://www.ecu.edu/commencement/college_school.cfm for the schedule.

Conde named to post

David Conde has joined ECU as senior associate vice chancellor for special initiatives in the Office of the Provost.

Before coming to ECU, Conde was associate vice president for academic affairs at Metropolitan State College of Denver for 12 years. And for eight years, he was chair of the Department of Modern Languages and professor of modern languages at the college.

In total, he spent 30 years teaching Spanish and Portuguese, and serving in administrative roles at Colorado State University at Pueblo, New Mexico Highlands University and Metropolitan State before coming to ECU.

"Dr. Conde brings a wealth of experience in higher education, and his scholarship and academic administrative experience should prove valuable to us for any number of academic and institutional initiatives. New perspectives are always important to the work that we do, and we look forward to his contributions and leadership," said Marilyn S. Sheerer, interim provost for the university.

As senior associate vice chancellor for special initiatives, Conde will be responsible for supervision and oversight of new and existing programs and work specifically with the areas of international affairs and the honors program.

"I am very pleased and excited to join ECU and the excellent leadership team assembled by Chancellor Ballard and Provost Sheerer and look forward to participating in helping to meet the twenty-first century challenges for this great university," Conde said.

After serving in the U.S. Air Force, Conde attended the University of Denver and the University of Northern Colorado where he obtained his baccalaureate degree. He
continued from B1

completed graduate work and obtained his masters and doctorate from the University of Kansas.

Barefoot returns to ECU

"Another year, another foot" is the slogan for ECU's annual Barefoot on the Mall from noon to 6 p.m., April 24. The event - held on the last Thursday of classes - will feature a lineup of activities and bands, from hip hop to rock and roll.

Performances include the hip hop group, The Urban Sophisticates; the Sublime tribute band, Wrong Way; and Cute Is What We Aim For. Other activities include inflatables, a step show and student organization information tables.

The Barefoot Committee will raffle off an Apple iPhone with proceeds going toward the Children's Miracle Network. Student volunteers are still needed. For more information, contact subarefoot@ecu.edu.

Professor's poem makes final list

A sonnet written by ECU English instructor Randall Martoccia made the "top 32" in the Prairie Home Companion's annual "Bed of Roses" love sonnet competition. Martoccia's entry, "Love as a Space-age Polymer," which he wrote while a student at ECU, was one of more than 4,000 entries. The poem is dedicated to his wife Christie, who inspired one of the lines.

Biologist to discuss networks

Ferenc Jordán, a professor of animal ecology at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, will visit ECU to present "Central Nodes in Networks: A Way to Better Understand Complexity," at 4 p.m. April 28 in ECU's Science and Technology Building, Room C-309. Jordán will discuss approaches to complex network systems as diverse as mating patterns in wasp colonies to underground railway systems.

Jordán's lecture is one in a series, "The World of Networks," co-sponsored by Robert R. Christian, Thomas Harriot College of Arts and Sciences Distinguished Professor of biology and the ECU Division of Research and Graduate Studies.

Wright brothers' research exhibit

An exhibit about the Wright brothers' Kitty Hawk flight will feature the research of ECU students and their professor April 24.

The exhibit, "Seven Days in May: The Secret Flights of the Wright Brothers," will open with a public presentation about the Wright brothers' 1908 flights at 7 p.m. in the pavilion of the Wright Memorial Visitor Center Museum.

Larry Tise, the Wilbur and Orville Wright distinguished professor of history at ECU, and graduate students Michael Kegerreis, Thomas Long, Nancy Muller, Kiana Pritchard, Ralph Scott, Mindy Spain and Bridget Wingate, will lead the April 24 presentation. The findings of their research will be on display through December at the Wright Brothers National Memorial, mile-post 7.5 on U.S. Highway 158, Kill Devil Hills, N.C., as part of the memorial's "Know Your Park" program.

The exhibit features recently discovered photographs of the 1908 flight, as well as 22 photomurals depicting events during the Wright brothers' 18 flights that year, composed with the assistance of the University Multimedia Center Director Laurie Godwin and her staff.

ECU students created two of the panels and offer findings that had been previously unknown.

These materials will be available at www.worldofflight.org, a site that will go online April 23, before the exhibit opening on April 24.
From the momentous to the mundane, the job is enjoyable

One of my journalism professors in college made sure his students were not misled about what to expect from a journalism career. He often would ask, "Are you sure you want to do this?" He then would go on a rant something like this, "The hours are bad, the pay is bad, people won't like you..."

If that's all he said, most of us may have changed our minds. But, convinced he hadn't completely scared us off, he would eventually proclaim "You're gonna' love it!"

I've found that my professor was right. The hours can be a challenge; there certainly are more lucrative professions, and people aren't always kind. But there are things about being a journalist that I love.

One of those is getting front row - or in some cases, second row - access to notable figures, such as the Democratic presidential candidates and their representatives who have come through the area recently.

I enjoyed having a seat in a not-too-crowded press area to hear Sen. Barack Obama speak. It also was nice to walk with a crowd of about 30, not thousands, to get in the event.

Over the years, I also was able to speak to people that otherwise may have been out of my reach.

Two that impressed me most were musician Ray Charles and actress Michael Learned.

I spoke to Charles over the phone about a concert he was going to perform in Greenville. I was struck by how easy he was to talk to as he answered my questions. Toward the end of the interview, he asked, "Are you coming to the show?"

I hadn't planned to go, but he had changed my mind. "I'll be there," I told him. It was a memorable performance, and I'm glad I went.

Learned was participating in a...
Candidates eyeing state dropout rate

By Gary D. Robertson
The Associated Press

RALEIGH — The public school dropout rate didn't much matter in North Carolina a generation or two ago, when students who quit could always find a decent job at the one of the state's many textile mills and furniture factories.

Those jobs are long gone, think Pillowtex and J.P. Stevens. Since the North American Free Trade Agreement was signed in 1993, North Carolina has lost more than 200,000 jobs in manufacturing.

So when the Department of Public Instruction used a new calculation method last year to reveal that barely two-thirds of the roughly 100,000 students who started ninth grade four years earlier had graduated from high school, the combination of job losses and educational failures took on a renewed sense of urgency.

"For those of us whom I say are out in the trenches, the numbers really aren't startling," said Angella Dunston, director of the Education & Law Project at the North Carolina Justice Center, which advocates for the state's low-income residents. "We knew that the numbers were devastating. It's finally come to the public light and ... people appear to be alarmed."

That includes all of the major-party candidates for governor, who have made reducing the state's dropout rate a part of their campaigns to replace outgoing Gov. Mike Easley.

In surveys and in interviews with The Associated Press, both Democrats and Republicans agreed on the value of the pre-kindergarten and high school reform efforts pushed by Easley, and his predecessor, Jim Hunt, and all vowed to continue to press for reform.

North Carolina is losing at least $169 million annually in taxes and public spending on the 38,100 students in the class of 2005 who quit, according to a report released last fall by a pair of school-choice groups.

The leading Democratic candidates, Lt. Gov. Beverly Perdue and State Treasurer Richard Moore, have both released higher education scholarship plans, which they believe will spur students to both remain in school and learn skills needed to succeed in the jobs that have replaced the state's closed mills and on shuttered factory floors.

"You're looking at a leader who believes that in the 21st century, you've got to have more than a high school diploma," said Perdue, a former teacher. She touted a "College Promise" program that would target children and their parents as young as fifth grade with the pledge of a debt-free college education.

Moore calls his program to make community college tuition-free a wise investment of $50 million annually, money that will come from North Carolina's share of the national tobacco settlement. He pledges to cut the dropout rate in half during his first term in part by reforming the public school curriculum to make it more useful in the real world.

"We're still by and large teaching a liberal arts curriculum from 200 years ago," he said. "I firmly believe a lot of our young people are going out of high school simply because they are bored."

The data on why students leave school are largely incomplete. The Department of Public Instruction reports that 53 percent of the 23,550 students in grades 9-12 who quit during the last school year did so due to "attendance," a catchall phrase that offers little explanation about the underlying reasons a student drops out.

Other leading reasons included enrollment in a community college (14 percent), academic problems (10 percent), a job (7 percent) or failing to return after a long-term suspension (3.5 percent).

The third Democrat in the race, retired Air Force Col. Dennis Nielsen, said allowing parents to use public money to send their children to private schools would help them find the best fit for their children.

Several candidates said vocational and technical education should be re-embraced in high school, where it can be carried over to community college. Students there can have certifications to become well-paid plumbers, bricklayers and mechanics, they said.

"We have a mentality of the education establishment in North Carolina that one size fits all. That everybody's got to go to college," said GOP Sen. Fred Smith.

"And through that mantra, they leave behind a set of our population that's not going to college."

Interest in "career and technical education" has grown in recent years. About 492,000 students in grades six to 12 participated in such classes during the 2006-07 school year, an 11 percent increase compared to four years earlier, according to the Department of Public Instruction.

Charlotte Mayor Pat McCrory, a Republican, said there should be more coordination between how much public money is spent on certain fields of study and the demand for those fields.

"We seem to be doing it in reverse," McCrory said. "It should not be based on the volume of students or the cost of the course."

Elbie Powers, a Republican pecan grower, said he would push to have a student's driving privileges revoked if they quit school. The compulsory school attendance age also should be raised from age 16 to 18, and truancy laws already on the books should be enforced, said Bill Graham, a Republican attorney.

"It certainly sends a strong signal to the public that we expect ... our parents to send our children to school and be diligent about it," Graham said.

Republican candidate Bob Orr, a former Supreme Court justice, said dropout problems will fester until there's an overhaul of the state education leadership structure.

Orr wants to change the constitution to make the governor answerable for the state's public education decisions.

Right now, "we've got the state board over here that's actually in charge of public education and then you got the bureaucracy. ... Then you've got the Legislature doing its thing, passing laws, and then you've got the governor out there hanging around doing whatever," Orr said.

Orr served on the Supreme Court when it ruled that North Carolina must offer children the opportunity to receive a "sound basic education."

Dunston, the education advocate at the North Carolina Justice Center, said the state would be well-served if the next governor supported an effort to define exactly what a "sound basic education" meant so the state's efforts can be measured against it.
Black colleges seeking more financial support from alumni

By Dionne Walker
The Associated Press

ETTRICK, Va. — Making money, administrators at Virginia State University have learned, takes money.

The majority black school has spent millions of state dollars renovating buildings, partly to heighten school pride among alumni they hope will respond by opening their own wallets.

It's working: Alumni support has risen from 7 percent five years ago to 10 percent, and individual gifts have increased from hundreds of dollars to thousands, development vice president Robert Turner said as he showed off libraries and academic buildings recently.

"This" — Turner said, surveying the hilltop campus — " obviously converts to good will."

As state and private funds shrink, historically black colleges are refreshing outdated efforts to solicit former students, by adding specialized staff, crafting personalized "asks," improving campuses and increasingly using Internet outreach.

They're targeting a wider base — more blacks are graduating — and younger alumni who've moved into a broader range of careers.

At VSU, efforts as subtle as adding a donor recognition dinner have heartened alum like Anthony Spence.

"If I'm going to give my money to a university, I want to be sure that it's used for the very best," said Spence, 41, a Miramar, Fla., entrepreneur who's given about $60,000.

Administrators plan computer network upgrades devoted to online giving at Atlanta's prestigious Morehouse College, where alumni contributions dipped from about $3.1 million in 2006 to $1.3 million last year.

Wiley College in east Texas will use a nearly $400,000 grant from the United Negro College Fund to help scout 200 major gift prospects a year, create new online giving opportunities and beef up staff.


"At some of the larger, predominant institutions, they may have an advancement staff of say 20, 30, 50 people," said Karen Helton, vice president for institutional advancement. "That's how the Harvards and the Stanfords and the UCLAs generate billions."

Such measures are commonplace at some mainstream institutions. But they represent a major investment for the nation's more than 100 historically black colleges and universities, whose resources often are stretched.

The fundraising push by these schools forewarns an expected slowdown in levels of state higher education funding, at the same time that predominantly white universities are pushing harder to attract high-achieving black students.

"There is an urgency about this as we look at our network of institutions and look at trying to sustain them," said Elfred Pinkard, executive director of the Institute for Capacity Building, part of the United Negro College Fund that represents 39 private historically black schools.

Since 2006, the institute has granted more than $8.1 million to 29 member schools for projects that include increasing alumni support.

"There was a recognition that alum of these institutions represented a very important constituency that had not been tapped in any systematic way," Pinkard said.

The colleges, founded to serve blacks during segregation, have kept tuition low to help underprivileged students. That leaves little extra cash for things like fundraising, said University of Pennsylvania assistant professor Marybeth Gasman, author of "Supporting Alma Mater: Successful Strategies for Securing Funds from Black College Alumni."

They also have historically been reluctant to ask former students, already paying off loans, to give more money. At the same time, black alumni haven't always had the income of graduates from predominantly white schools, Gasman said.

"Their alumni have had more access to income, to assets, and thus could give back," Gasman said, adding that blacks also tend to give more to churches.

But at Norfolk State University, alumni giving has grown from 2 percent to 3.2 percent since 2000, nudged, officials say, by graduates who are more moneyed at younger ages.
Group hosts special populations prom

By Kim Grizzard
The Daily Reflector

Gary McGowan is a swimmer and competitive bowler who was invited more than a decade ago to take part in the Special Olympics World Summer Games. But until this weekend, Gary, 42, had never attended an event considered a rite of passage for a typical teen.

He'd never been to a prom...

Saturday night was Gary's turn. His parents, Kenneth and Lorraine McGowan, rented him a tuxedo and bought him a white rose boutonniere.

"This is something he has never been to," Lorraine McGowan said. "He was really excited about coming."

Gary was among more than 100 honored guests at the area's first special populations prom, held at the Pitt County Boys & Girls Club on Fire Tower Road.
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PROM

their first formal.

"I think it gives these kids and young adults the opportunity to dress up and feel so important," she said before heading off to the parents' room, where prom-goers' families were invited to stay and socialize.

To help prom-goers prepare for the big night, ECU Ambassadors collected dozens of dresses and ties for participants to wear to the dance. Some of the gowns were left over from the Fairytale Boutique, sponsored last month by the ECU Volunteer and Service Learning Center to help provide prom dresses for girls from low-income families. Wheeler and ECU junior Theresa Esslinger, who chairs the community service division of ECU Ambassadors, delivered dresses to several area group homes to give ladies a chance to find a perfect fit for their first prom.

On prom night, volunteers showed up at the Boys & Girls Club an hour early with curling irons, hair spray and makeup for anybody who wanted to get dolled up before the dance.

Before they could get every hair in place, DJ Tyler Richardson had turned the club's gym floor into a dance floor, playing favorites like "Brick House" and "Electric Slide" to get the party started.

Richmond, a sophomore pre-law major at ECU, has been a part-time disc jockey for four years. This time of year, he spends weekends working high school proms for Black Top Entertainment.

On Saturday night, he passed up a prom at South Carolina's White Knoll High School that would have paid him $500 to DJ at the Boys and Girls Club for free.

"I decided to take off from that prom this year, and I decided to come out here for a good cause," Richardson said. "Fortunately, my brother's a DJ, so I just happened to kind of cover me. I think it's absolutely the right thing to do and absolutely wonderful that we can provide the opportunity to help these guys out."

At least 100 ECU student volunteers worked the prom, doing everything from serving food and drinks (provided at cost by Longhorn and Olive Garden) to securing the parking lot.

ECU Ambassador Meredith Dwyer volunteered to help with the decorations. When that job was done, she stayed on as a volunteer on the dance floor, dancing with groups of as many as half a dozen prom-goers at a time.

"Some want to hold you really close. Some just want to hold your hand," Dwyer, a senior, said. "I don't want anybody to feel like they don't have anybody to dance with."

Dwyer, who has been working with special populations since her grandfather invited her to join him as a Special Olympics volunteer when she was about 13, was comfortable inviting prom-goers to dance. But some students who were inexperienced working with special populations were a little shy at first.

"At the beginning of the night, they were really timid (saying) 'I don't know how to dance with special populations,' I don't know if I'm really supposed to,'" Dwyer said.

Still, it didn't take them long to get into the groove. At times, ECU volunteers outnumbered prom-goers on the dance floor.

"It's turned out really great," Dwyer said. "... Everybody deserves a great time."

In addition to volunteers, Esslinger and Wheeler recruited financial support for the prom from about 50 campus organizations, as well as more than a dozen community groups. Salem United Methodist Church in Simpson won the title of "prom king" for being the event's largest contributor.

Betty Wilson accepted the award on behalf of her congregation. She said the church learned about the dance from some ECU Ambassadors who are members of the church's child care staff.

"We thought it was one of the most worthwhile projects we had heard of in a long time," Wilson said. "It's been a great pleasure to see these young people, older people and middle-aged people made to feel special."

Wheeler hopes the event will become the same sort of milestone for prom-goers that it has become for her. She worked with the Arc of Harnett County to put on a special populations prom before she ever attended a prom at her high school.

"When I went to (high school) prom, I was so disappointed. It was just not fun compared to theirs," she said. "I'd rather go to theirs."

Betty Wilson
Salem UMC

"It's been a great pleasure to see these young people, older people and middle-aged people made to feel special."

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Kim Grizzard can be contacted at kgrizzard@coxnc.com or 329-9576.
ECU alum creates scholarships for College of Business students

The College of Business at East Carolina University has announced the establishment of more than 20 new scholarships thanks to a charitable gift from alumnus and retired businessman David Bond.

The David Bond Access Scholarships will be awarded annually to students who demonstrate both academic excellence and financial need — targeting full-time students as well as incoming freshmen with a declared major in the College of Business. The amount of each scholarship will total $5,000, covering the cost of in-state tuition, fees and books.

"Being an ECU College of Business graduate has given me the opportunity to succeed in the world of business," Bond, a 1978 graduate, said. "These scholarships are a small way to give back to an institution I care so much about. Unfortunately, many qualified students cannot advance their education because of financial constraints; hopefully these scholarships will be an entry point for some of those students."

Bond, a Raleigh resident, is the former president of the HealthMatics Division of Allscripts — a supplier of clinical and financial applications for the ambulatory health care market. He serves on the Business Advisory Council at ECU and is a frequent guest speaker in business classes.

Bond also serves on the ECU Educational Foundation, better known as the Pirate Club, and is a board member of the ECU Foundation.

The first seven recipients of the David Bond Access Scholarships will be announced in May for the 2008-09 academic year, selected through a process including the ECU Office of Financial Aid and College of Business Scholarship Committee.

The College of Business at ECU has more than 2,600 undergraduate students, 710 graduate students and 110 faculty members. It offers 30 degrees, majors, and concentrations.
Wagner joins cardiovascular sciences department at ECU medical school

Dr. Peter Wagner has joined the Department of Cardiovascular Sciences as a clinical associate professor at the Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University. He comes to ECU from a local private practice.

A native of Philadelphia, Wagner has a bachelor's degree from Temple University and a medical degree from the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine. He completed an internship at Metropolitan Hospital in Philadelphia, a residency in internal medicine at PCOM and a fellowship in cardiology at the Deborah Heart and Lung Center in New Jersey.

Wagner is certified in cardiology and internal medicine by the American Osteopathic Board of Internal Medicine. He is a fellow of the American College of Cardiology, the American College of Chest Physicians and the American College of Osteopathic Internists. His interests are echocardiography, clinical cardiology, nuclear cardiology and dive medicine.

Wagner sees patients at Move Medical Center under the auspices of ECU Physicians, the group practice of the medical school.
Trustees tour heart institute

By Josh Humphries
The Daily Reflector

The East Carolina University Board of Trustees got its first look at the new East Carolina Heart Institute at ECU on Friday.

The board toured the 200,000 square foot building located near Pitt County Memorial Hospital while construction workers were finishing the inside of the building.

The four-story building is set to be complete by September, said Randolph Chitwood, director of the East Carolina Heart Institute. It will house physician offices, cardiology clinics, surgery clinics and research labs.

Officials broke ground for the new $60 million cardiac research and treatment center in March of 2006.

"Proximity is the key," Chitwood said. "If you have people together they can talk together."

Officials expect the collaboration between the doctors and scientists at the institute to reap benefits for the university and the hospital. The other section of the heart institute is the East Carolina Heart Institute at Pitt Memorial Hospital just across the hospital campus.

"This allows us to bring physicians and scientists together to focus on cardiovascular disease," said Brian Floyd, vice president of cardiovascular services at PCMH.

The perimeter of each floor is lined with offices where doctors can conduct academic work a few feet from clinics where they see patients. This will be a great recruiting tool to attract doctors, said Bill Bagnell, executive director for facilities services.

"This will make them readily available to patients and more productive," Bagnell said.

The building will address all aspects of cardiovascular care from research to outpatient care and surgery.

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ECU

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The building also will feature an auditorium with 250 seats for conventions.

"This is a new venture for the university to provide comprehensive care in one location," Bagnell said.

Before touring the new building the board held its regular meeting on campus.

The board endorsed a plan to form a commission to study updating or renovating Chancellor Steve Ballard's housing.

David Redwine, chairman of the board's facilities and resources committee, suggested forming a special commission to investigate the options available to the board.

Since fall 2006, the board has considered and rejected a series of proposals to improve the chancellor's house at 503 E. Fifth St.

The house hosts many functions for the university and is the same as it was when it was purchased in 1948 when ECU's enrollment was around 1,500 students. The university now has more than 26,000 students.

The board wants to get representation from several university groups to discuss the options for improving the housing for chancellors because there are many factors to consider, Redwine said.

The board must consider community support for the idea, location, costs and alumni reaction.

Josh Humphries can be contacted at jhumphries@coxnc.com and 329-9565.
Some ECU students got a chance to be on the Comedy Central program “The Colbert Report.”

The Daily Reflector

Interns from Sen. Barack Obama’s campaign and some East Carolina University students were asked to stick around and help Obama tape a segment for “The Colbert Report” on Thursday after Williams Arena at Minges Coliseum had mostly cleared out from his visit.

The segment, which aired Thursday night and repeated Friday on Comedy Central, showed Obama standing in front of the students as he joked with Colbert about political distractions and put them officially “on notice.”

“Stephen,” Obama said, “I would go so far as to say I want to put these political distractions on notice.

“Boys, bring out the ‘On Notice’ board.”

After fumbling around a box for the “distractions” card, Colbert asked Obama which issue should be taken off of the board.

“Well, it can’t be grizzly bears,” Obama said. “They are the number one threat to America.”

Obama decided to remove James Brady from the board, citing, “He’s a good guy.”

The episode also featured Sen. Hillary Clinton fixing Colbert’s main screen and Senator John Edwards giving the night’s “Word,” which was renamed the “Ed-Words.”

Because the “The Colbert Report” does not air new shows on Fridays, the episode featuring Obama, Clinton and Edwards will likely air throughout the weekend and Monday.

Sights and sounds from a packed house

There was plenty to feast the eyes on before, during and after Obama’s visit to Minges Coliseum. Greenville residents Melissa and Gary Taylor were bound and determined not to miss a thing.

The couple showed up at 11:30 p.m. Wednesday and was rewarded for their early bird efforts. They were sent home by a staffer on-site, but with the promise of good seats Thursday.

“We’ve been following him for about a year,” Melissa Taylor said, and mentioned she saw former President Bill Clinton speak on his wife’s behalf. “I thought, too bad Obama will never come to Greenville.”

But he did, and they strolled into the media entrance around 3:30 p.m., easily staking out a spot against the platform barrier — the closest in the house.

The tees: All colors, shapes and sizes

Equally diverse as the crowd of men, women and children in attendance were the T-shirts. Many bore unique Obama-support slogans that won’t be sold on his Web site.

“Obama is my homeboy,” one proclaimed. Another volunteer’s read “Obama said knock you out,” and featured a picture of Obama’s head superimposed over a picture of a boxer. The wearer found it on eBay, she said.

“Ba-Rock,” one stated simply, under a background of Andy Warhol-ish colorful photos.

Campaign’s media circus comes to town

Along with Obama’s following of young voters, the media came out in full force for the rally at Minges
Coliseum, The Obama campaign does not keep track of the number of press attending rallies, but did say it received more than 100 requests from the media.

More than 15 camera crews from major television networks and their local affiliates stationed themselves on a platform at the end opposite of the stage, including CBS and NBC.

Kyle Abshire, a freshman at East Carolina University, said the amount of media exposure at the event was about what he expected for a presidential campaign.

Limiting projectiles

Much like a sporting event, the concessions stands outside Williams Arena were packed before the speech began. People were paying top dollar for popcorn, nachos and large sodas.

What wasn’t available was bottled water.

“It’s so they can’t throw the bottles,” explained a Pitt County Sheriff’s Office deputy who was stationed nearby. “You try to throw a cup, the lid flies off. Doesn’t go very far.”

Eyes on the adoring crowd

Obama broke away from his stump speech around to 6:45 p.m. to attend an immediate health care need in the audience.

He told the listeners someone to his left needed some medical attention.

“Probably just someone feeling a little faint,” he added. “Drink some water if you’ve been standing a while.”

Someone took advantage of the brief silence, shouting “I love you.”

“I love you too,” Obama replied, chuckling.

Getting plugged in and voting

In an announcement mirroring the one Clinton made Saturday, a young volunteer asked supporters to put Obama in their cell phones. By texting “NC” to the number 62262, attendees could get “looped in” to the Obama campaign, receiving updates and announcements.

Warm-up speakers — and Obama himself — also hyped early voting. Additionally, North Carolina’s One Stop voting program allows citizens to register and vote the same day. The early polls opened Thursday and will stay open until May 3.

Skipping class, standing up

“We just came here to start the wave,” said ECU freshman Andrew Everhart.

Everhart was seated in section 209, the second tier of the Coliseum, with five of his friends. He said class cancellations at ECU were left to the discretion of individual teachers, but he took the decision into his own hands.

“I’m missing biology right now,” he admitted, checking his watch. “In a few minutes it’ll be math.”

The room’s first few attendees moved the masses back out two sections over. But as Obama’s entrance grew near, people got out of their seats.

“It went around three or four times,” Everhart boasted.
Darts & Laurels

Going Green

Laurels — To Tuesday’s Earth Day and the opportunity it affords to recognize the importance of conservation and environmental protection. Discussion of global climate change may dominate the political discourse, but Americans can make a positive impact on the earth through simple conservation efforts like recycling glass and plastic bottles or limiting water use. Individual participation forms the foundation for a larger movement, so commit to doing your part this week.

Laurels — To a decision by the Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University to end the use of live animals for medical student training. Following two years of lobbying by the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine, the medical school elected to follow national trends and alter its policy. That is comforting news for animal lovers, who reject the notion of using live creatures for medical work, and for medical students, who will continue to receive an excellent education without inflicting harm on animals.

Darts — To motorists who relentlessly and recklessly exceed the posted speed limits in Pitt County, a thoughtless act that endangers health and safety. A recent week-long law enforcement effort — the “No Need 2 Speed” campaign — netted 11,241 citations statewide, and 648 in Pitt County. Of those, 172 violations were for speeding, and offenses for traveling in excess of 100 mph are on the rise. Thanks to law enforcement for the crackdown — and to those responsible motorists who know to slow down.

Laurels — To the 38th annual Grifton Shad Festival, usually one of the community delights in Pitt County and a regional attraction. The lowly shad may not provide a hearty meal by itself, but the festival offers more than its fill of music, rides, games and food throughout the weekend. Southern Pitt County looks like the place to be today, so bring the kids out for a few hours and enjoy the celebration.

Darts — To eligible voters who fail to cast a ballot this year despite the ease of OneStop Early Voting in North Carolina. With three locations now available in Pitt County and competitive races across the board, there is little excuse for failing to participate. The decisions made in May promises to echo for years, and local voters should have their say.

Compiled by Brian Colligan, editorial page editor of The Daily Reflector. Contact him at 3299507 or via e-mail at bcolligan@coxnc.com
James Lester Rees

James Lester "Jim" Rees died Thursday, April 17, 2008, after a long and courageous battle with cancer. A service of Holy Eucharist in thanksgiving for the life of Jim Rees will be held at 3 p.m. on Sunday at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Greenville with interment following in the church columbarium. The family will greet friends following the ceremony in the church parish hall.

Jim was born Jan. 14, 1935, in Lancaster, Pa., the second son of Dr. Lester Celestine Rees and Alta Marie Zecher Rees. He attended Franklin and Marshall College and graduated from Millersville State College (Pa.) in 1966 with a bachelor's degree in English. He received a master's degree from Syracuse University in 1966 in public address, having completed a thesis on Leonard Bernstein as an informative speaker on the CBS-TV series, "Young People's Concerts."

His career included positions with radio stations in Lancaster, Pa., high school teaching in Millersville, Pa., and faculty appointments at East Carolina University, Greenville, N.C., beginning in 1966, where he retired as professor emeritus in the ECU School of Communication. During his career at ECU, he taught numerous courses in voice and diction, public speaking, broadcast announcing, audio production and business-professional speech.

He was a contributor to a basic speech text and a co-presenter to a Southern Speech Association conference, producer of two recordings of performances by the ECU Opera Institute, the N.C. State Board of Education 400th Anniversary Committee, the N.C./ECU Center for Applied Technology, and was featured presenter at numerous lectures, seminars and workshops for universities, businesses, honor societies and civic organizations.

In addition to teaching on campus, Jim performed and narrated in numerous dramatic and musical productions at ECU. For many years, he was Lord of the Manor at the popular Christmas Madrigal Dinner series on campus.

Throughout his life, Jim loved classical music, travel, classic automobiles, and endlessly pursued the "absolute sound" on stereo. In his latter years, he was an avid supporter of ECU Pirate football.

He was preceded in death by his parents; his first wife, Diane Aubrey Erwin Rees; and a great-nephew Jesse David Gove.

He is survived by his two sons, Carl Jamison Rees and wife, Melissa, and David Winborne Rees of Greenville; and two grandchildren, Cameron James Rees and Margaret Jane Downing Rees; and his only sibling, brother, Charles John Rees and wife, Marie, of Lake Havasu City, Ariz. Other survivors include his nephew, Gary Bruce Rees of Appleton, Wis., and wife, Alida; niece, Gale Lynn Rees Gove of Carnation, Wash., and husband Norman; and their children Brandy Gove Lindeman of Seattle, and Adriana and Charles Jason Rees of Appleton, Wis. Also surviving are his former wife Francine Perry Rees of Greenville; and several cousins.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that memorial donations be made to the Lester and Alta Rees Memorial Scholarship for communication students at ECU. Checks indicating contributions to the scholarship may be mailed to the ECU Foundation, Suite 1100, 2200 S. Charles Boulevard, Greenville, NC 27838.
Our Views

At a loss

Fire reinforces importance of history

For 100 years, the Imperial Tobacco Warehouse cut a striking figure on the Greenville landscape. Once serving as a proud symbol of the city's agricultural vitality and economic growth, it later offered as a potential anchor of a revitalization effort that will define Greenville for years to come.

Now, that landmark is lost, felled by a raging fire that sent flames 100 feet in the air. As investigators examine the cause of that blaze, the city is left to mourn the loss of a structure linking its past to the future, and the implications of its uneven record of historical preservation.

Across Pitt County and beyond, residents gazed at the towering plume of smoke rising in the distance on Thursday evening. As presidential hopeful Barack Obama spoke to a packed Minges Coliseum on the East Carolina University campus, dozens of firefighters were battling a massive blaze on Dickinson Avenue. There, the Imperial Tobacco Warehouse, a massive century-old structure, was ablaze.

Despite an inspired effort to prevent it, the building was consumed and succumbed to the flames. The three-story warehouse that once housed the most powerful of the tobacco companies in the city was laid to ruin, declared a total loss in an early estimation. Fire investigators hope that a cause of the fire can be pinpointed, though the effort may be complicated in the ashes that remain.

The loss of that prominent landmark represents an unfortunate moment for the city. The building harkens back to an important era in the community's growth, when tobacco ruled the landscape and its cultivation defined the local economy. At one time, the Imperial Tobacco Company was the leading purchaser of the golden leaf for export in Greenville.

That era faded as the inherent danger of smoking was acknowledged, and Imperial left the city in 1978. And that building, like most area tobacco warehouses, offered only a fading reminder of time consigned to history.

The revitalization effort now under way in Greenville intends to breathe new life into the old Tobacco Town area, and some believed the Imperial warehouse would play a vital role. The building was being planned for redevelopment and success there may have been a turning point for economic expansion in that key city sector. Sadly, those hopes faded as the flames swelled.

For longtime residents of Greenville, the loss of the Imperial Tobacco Warehouse is another in a litany of events that have claimed important parts of the city's history. In fact, the community has made several deliberate decisions that favored progress, at times to its detriment.

While Greenville should balance those decisions with a desire to protect history, this week's fire reminds the community how fragile and fleeting its links to the past can be. And it should encourage work to preserve the rich memories that places like the Imperial warehouse represent.
Post-College Coverage

It's tempting for this spring's college grads to think more about dumping old textbooks than about finding new health insurance. But college seniors and their parents should be thinking about health coverage along with last-minute graduation arrangements.

That's because many students will lose their current coverage the moment they cross the podium—even if they plan to move back home. Coverage under a parent's employer-provided plan may end as soon as a young adult is no longer a full-time student. Coverage also typically ends under college health plans offered to students at a particular school.

Many young adults avoid the expense of arranging new insurance and hope they won't get sick before landing a job that includes health insurance. Nearly 40% of college grads are uninsured for at least some time, and 21% are without coverage for at least six months, according to the Commonwealth Fund. But the decision to go without coverage could be costly—and it's not difficult for healthy grads to find affordable coverage.

Even if you're starting a job shortly, you may need temporary coverage. Check with the employer to see what it provides and how quickly the coverage goes into effect. Some plans have a waiting period of two or more months; others cover new employees right away.

A Temporary Solution

In shopping for insurance, grads need to consider their health, budget and how long they expect to be without insurance. Temporary insurance is a good option if you're healthy and need the insurance as you transition from college to a job or graduate school.

These short-term policies typically can be purchased on a month-to-month basis and have lower premiums than other types of health insurance, according to the National Association of Insurance Commissioners. But these plans typically won't cover pre-existing medical conditions and may have other exclusions and caps.

According to Assurant Health, which provides health insurance to individuals and small groups, a 25-year-old single male would pay about $29 to $87 for 30 days of coverage on a plan that pays 90% of covered expenses after a $50 deductible.

A growing number of colleges are offering short-term policies as an offshoot of an existing university plan or through the alumni association.

High-Deductible Route

Standard individual medical plans are typically more expensive than temporary plans because the insurer takes more risk. To trim policy costs, NAIC says consumers can opt for a higher deductible.

Many high-deductible plans are available for $30 to $150 a month, says James A. Boyle, president of the College Parents of America in Arlington, Va. That adds up, but is far less expensive than the $75,000 estimated cost for a case of serious pneumonia or $45,000 for a head injury from a car accident.

If you have an existing medical condition, Mr. Boyle adds, "make sure the condition will be covered by the new plan."

Grads who have been covered under a parent's insurance or a college plan often can extend that coverage under terms of the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act or COBRA. However, Assurant Health says continuing coverage under COBRA typically costs three times as much as temporary insurance plans.

Email: forum.sunday03@wsj.com
University inventions’ cash value unrealized

BY TIM SIMMONS
STAFF WRITER

New York University hauled in $157 million in 2006 by charging licensing fees to use faculty inventions. Stanford University, a distant second that year, collected $61 million.

But locally — where universities put the word “research” in Research Triangle Park — licensing fees didn’t crack $10 million combined.

That relatively small take underscores a truth that often goes unmentioned when boosters talk about the wonders of RTP: Technology transfer hasn’t brought much to the coffers of Triangle universities.

“The fact is that most of these massive dollar figures you see are for drugs or treatments that are tied to blockbusters — or people suspect they are going to be blockbusters,” said Dave Winwood, former associate vice chancellor for technology development at N.C. State University. “And those just don’t happen too often.”

Success without profit wasn’t the goal of universities when schools won the right to patent faculty inventions more than 20 years ago. But then, landmark legislation sparked visions of gold in the nation’s ivory towers.

“I’m surprised to hear universities say the income doesn’t make any difference,” said Larry Summer, CEO of Semiconductor Research Corporation of Durham, a national organization that works with dozens of universities to commercialize inventions. “That’s not the way it started. The original intent was to develop a source of revenue.”

But with only 28 U.S. universities topping $10 million in licensing fees, tech transfer officials have redefined value. Today, inventions are valued for the businesses they launch, the jobs they create or the improvements to your life.

“It’s university administrators who expected tech transfer offices to be profit centers,” said Monica Doss, president of the Council for Entrepreneurial Development in Durham. “Those who run the programs have known for a while that that isn’t likely, but they are stuck between the reality and the expectation.”

No boatload of money

The modest returns haven’t stopped universities from seeking new markets. NCSU, Duke University and UNC-Chapel Hill have negotiated more than 1,000 active licenses combined. Businesses spun out of those efforts, such as Cree in Durham and Biolex Therapeutics in Pittsboro, are well known locally.

Biolex, for example, employs more than 100 people, has attracted at least $10 million in private investment and has several products in the pipeline. It’s just as much about everything NCSU could want in a spinout — except for profit.

“The return as far as royalties are concerned so far has been a big fat zero,” said Winwood, who took a job last month as CEO of the University of Alabama Research Foundation. “However, I still think it’s one of my biggest success stories.”

That’s because tech transfer officials say their job is to move ideas to market and stimulate economic development — not make a boatload of money.

If an invention generates publicity or some lucky faculty member strikes it rich, universities are more than happy to celebrate the moment.

“But we don’t pursue an idea based on how much money it will make,” said Rose Ritts, director of the Office of Licensing and Ventures at Duke. “We look for a corporate partner based on an idea’s potential to benefit society.”

Law incubates patents

Few people knew what to expect when tech transfer offices started popping up on campuses after Congress approved the Bayh-Dole Act of 1980, but they knew university inventions were routinely dying in the lab.

“The government was funding a lot of research, but there was no way to manage it and deliver it to companies,” Winwood said. “And at the time, the U.S. was getting its rear end kicked by Japan.”

Federal agencies were usually the bottleneck in the old system, controlling patents on inventions created with federal tax money.

The solution was to give universities the ownership rights to inventions discovered through federally funded research. In return, the universities were required to move those ideas into the marketplace.

By that standard, the Bayh-Dole Act was an unequivocal success. More than 5,000 new companies can be traced directly to the changes, including entire new fields in biotechnology and nanotechnology. Within a decade, thousands of university patents were issued each year — more than six times the rate of 1980.

Tech transfer offices handle the details of those transactions: tracking discoveries by faculty, applying for patents, negotiating license agreements.

But the new arrangement also created conflicts of interest with professors suddenly able to profit from their ideas. And it let companies transfer the cost of basic or speculative product research to taxpayers.

Today, universities usually do the research until the work suggests the possibility of a new drug or other product. Then companies move in to negotiate for the exclusive right to develop it. The days of the old Bell Laboratories where corporate scientists won Nobel prizes for fundamental research are all but over.

SEE VALUE, PAGE 11A
A big hit takes years

The Triangle would seem like a natural winner in the post-Bayh-Dole world. But schools here have failed to cash in for several reasons. One is that local universities were slow to push faculty inventions into the commercial pipeline. Now, they have to wait for results that earlier actors are enjoying now.

Innes said, "Look at the University of Washington. In the year 2000, they were bringing in about $20 million on three big technologies, but those technologies started out as disclosures to the office in the early 1980s. UNC has been serious about this for about 12 years — the mid 1990s."

Similarly, Duke licensed a variety of discoveries in the past 15 years. But it didn't significantly increase its marketing efforts until late 2005, when it hired Ritts as its director and increased full-time staff from three to eight.

Information technology, on the other hand, has turned out to be a poor fit for tech transfer offices. An entire product — if not a company — can come and go in the time it takes to obtain a patent. That helps explain why giants such as Google and Microsoft maintain their own research labs.

"The minute you start to talk with faculty about what might be done with a good idea, the subject comes up of whether this is intellectual property and whether people are going to get paid for it," said Keith Collins, chief technology officer at SAS in Cary. "There have been times when we just threw up our hands and walked away."

Universities could increase their returns by betting only on likely winners. But they tend to license a wide range of ideas. Doing so runs the risk of violating parts of the Bayh-Dole Act, but there are gray areas in the law.

"We could probably try to cherry-pick the five best ideas and put all our resources on trying to make a mint out of them," Innes said. "But instead, we handle 100 technologies, of which two might be startup opportunities that might be successful in 10 years."

And when companies do succeed, universities rarely leverage their good fortune. Most, for example, sell any shares of a new company they might own as soon as possible after the initial public offering.

"We don't want to start playing the stock market," Innes said. "I know it's hard for some people to believe, but we just aren't doing this to make money."

And on that count, they are succeeding.

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STUDENT LOAN EXPANSION: Voting 383 for and 27 against, the House on Wednesday passed a bill (HR 5713) increasing by $2,000 per year the ceiling on the so-called Stafford Loans that students obtain from private lenders. At present, the ceiling on such loans ranges from $3,500 to $10,500 per year for undergraduates and higher for graduate students. The bill also raises aggregate loan limits and eases repayment terms for the federally approved loans that parents take out to finance their children's education.

A yes vote was to pass the bill.

YES: Etheridge, Jones, Price, Coble, McIntyre, Hayes, Myrick, Shuler, Watt, Miller.

NO: Foxx, McHenry.
"Failure to respond"

Organizations that fail to take credible claims of sexual harassment seriously can pay a heavy price. Case in point: N.C. State University must pay $150,000 apiece to two women who were manhandled years ago by an N.C. State University faculty member. The payments are amply justified by the university's inept response to complaints by the plaintiffs and other women that they'd been groped by Shuaib Ahmad.

There's a lot of history in this case, nearly all of it unpalatable. The incidents of harassment stretch back 20 years; Ahmad, a professor of civil engineering, left the university in 1997; a decision by the N.C. Industrial Commission awarding the two plaintiffs the money came in 2006; and last week a unanimous three-judge panel of the N.C. Court of Appeals upheld the $150,000 awards.

The university promoted Ahmad even as harassment complaints against him piled up over the years, complaints involving several women. As the Court of Appeals ruling noted, "It was not Ahmad's conduct towards [the original victim] that opens NCSU to liability. Rather, it was NCSU's failure to properly respond to the earlier harassment that was the proximate cause of plaintiffs' injuries."

When finally shown the door by the university in 1997, the professor got kid gloves treatment.

Even though he offered no timely defense, "NCSU did not fire him," Judge Rick Elmore said in his ruling for the appeals court. "Instead, the university allowed Ahmad to resign, agreed to pay him his salary for the balance of the school year, and agreed to place a "neutral" letter of reference in [his] personnel file."

That was telling him.

N.C. State says it now has better-enforced anti-harassment policies. It had better. For too long it looked the other way, and must pay the price. Congratulations are due the persistent plaintiffs in this case, Kathy A. Wood and Evalyn Gonzales.
Huge change may be afoot at NCCU

BY ERIC PERRETTI
STAFF WRITER

DURHAM — Trustees at N.C. Central University will vote this week on a campus plan that would include more than two dozen new buildings and require the purchase of more than 100 properties close to campus.

The proposed master plan has been a matter of extensive community discussion over the past few months. Some residents worry that the plan will forever change their neighborhoods for the worse. Others see opportunity in the university’s desire to buy a great deal of private property.

Trustees vote Wednesday morning.

The plan would come in four phases, though the first three are defined more concretely.

Prepared by the Lord Aeck & Sargent architecture firm, the plan would break the campus into nine precincts, grouping related facilities and services. For example, it would create three dedicated housing zones, a research corridor and an administrative center. It also would include a new football stadium as part of a relocated athletic complex.

To do all this, the university needs to move deep into the heart of the neighborhoods to its north and south. In the first phase — which the plan suggests implementing by 2010 — NCCU would have to acquire 36 properties, most of them just north of campus in clusters between Lawson and Dupree streets. That property acquisition is already under way. By Phase 3, NCCU will have purchased 136 properties.

Opponents worry about residents, many of them elderly, who may be displaced over time. And they say NCCU has not adequately considered a satellite campus nearby rather than expanding the footprint of the current campus.

“We’re concerned they would take the most disruptive view,” said Larry Hester, a member of the group Unity in the Community for Progress and owner of two shopping plazas near campus. “There’s a lot of elderly people in the area, and there’s an awful lot of history that will be lost. I think people have the right to grow old in the place they wish to.’’

Chancellor Charlie Nelms declined last week to discuss these issues, saying he and other NCCU officials have addressed them at length at forums and neighborhood meetings. They say many residents support the plan.

In a memo presented to trustees in advance of the vote Wednesday, the university said establishing a satellite campus would require too much commuting and impose a “logistical burden.”

The master plan calls for more housing and parking on campus in an effort to soothe traffic and parking woes that have plagued the neighborhood for years.

Derrick Flowers, who lives with his grandfather in a small house on Cecil Street that backs up to campus, has for years dealt with the traffic and other daily detritus that comes with living so close to a college campus. He picks up litter left by students cutting across his lawn and suffers through the booming bass from music blaring from passing cars.

“It really shakes the house when some of those cars come through,” he said.

His family has lived in the small brick home since 1958, and Flowers said he is torn; he supports and appreciates the university, its accomplishments and its need to grow.

“You try to be loyal to the school and cooperate with their growing pains,” he said. “But you have a different viewpoint when you live in such close proximity.”

Several key projects are driving the expansion. The nursing program is growing fast and has received planning money to evolve into a full-service professional school. To do that, NCCU must soon have a new nursing building. A growing football program and other expanding professional programs also are in the mix, officials have said.

If the plan is approved, the university will start contacting the owners of property it wants to purchase. The State Property Office is responsible for negotiating purchases. Though the area around campus is a historic district, NCCU officials have said the university has checked each property it wants to purchase, and none is designated for protection by the state’s historic preservation office.
Valvano foundation, NCSU team up

The partnership will establish a cancer therapeutics training program at the school.

BY CHIP ALEXANDER STAFF WRITER

RALEIGH - The V Foundation for Cancer Research is making a $1 million award and teaming with N.C. State University to establish the Jimmy V-N.C. State Cancer Therapeutics Training Program, it was announced Friday.

The program, designed to introduce young scientists to cancer therapeutic research, is named for the late Jim Valvano, the former NCSU basketball coach and athletic director who led the Wolfpack to the 1983 national championship. Valvano died of cancer April 28, 1993.

"N.C. State is honored to have a program such as this one to be the first gift named for Jimmy V on our campus," Chancellor James Oblinger said during a news conference. "It is quite appropriate that N.C. State honor Jim Valvano's memory and his legacy through a program that will enhance cancer education through cancer research."

The program will take high school students, undergraduates and graduate students out of the classroom and into research labs at NCSU. The program will initially fund 15 to 20 undergraduate students and three to five graduate and postdoctoral students.

Nick Valvano, Jim's brother and the CEO of the V Foundation, said that collaborating with NCSU was the right thing to do and that Jim would have approved.

"This is kind of a bittersweet day, to have something in Jim's name because he died of cancer," Nick Valvano said. "But I think he would be incredibly happy."

"When Jim was diagnosed, he did what Jim normally did — he immersed himself into the subject to find everything he could possibly find out about it. And he found out some disturbing facts...

... that young people who want to have careers in cancer research were finding it increasingly difficult to find programs for funding to start their careers."

Nick Valvano likened the research program to AAU basketball programs that help hone the games of high schoolers.

"We're going to help identify talent, the passion for cancer research, and then have an institution that can bring them together and help, hopefully, our next generation of cancer scientists," Valvano said. "This is our AAU."

John Cavanaugh, professor of molecular and structural biochemistry at NCSU, will lead the project, Oblinger said.

The award and the new relationship with NCSU is another step toward closing a wound that existed in the Valvano family after Jim Valvano was forced out as coach and AD in 1990 because of allegations of NCAA violations and academic irregularities.

NCSU's trustees in 2001 issued a "healing proclamation" noting Valvano's contributions to the university.

"Time heals a lot of wounds," Nick Valvano said. "We've always wanted to have something to do with N.C. State. This fits our mission."

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