THE DAILY CLIPS

April 29, 2010

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

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

East Carolina University News Bureau
E-mail to durhamj@ecu.edu  Web site at http://www.news.ecu.edu
252-328-6481
Teka Jones, left, talks with Sarah Swain from the American Cancer Society during a Community Service Fair sponsored by the Information Technology and Computing Services Leadership Program at East Carolina University in the Willis Building on Wednesday.
Justin D. Falls/The Daily Reflector

Photos by Justin Falls/The Daily Reflector
Teresa Davis, left, talks with Mark Klaich, ReStore manager for Habitat for Humanity, during a Community Service Fair at East Carolina University on Wednesday.
Justin D. Falls

**Fair at ECU presents service opportunities**
The Daily Reflector
Wednesday, April 28, 2010
East Carolina University students and employees were exposed to a variety of service opportunities Wednesday at the community service fair held on campus.
The Information Technology and Computing Services Leadership Program at ECU sponsored the fair with more than 20 local organizations providing information on ways to give back to the community.
“"We provided volunteer opportunities for university employees, students and the community,” Margaret Umphrey, director of IT security at ECU, said. “Part of the university’s mission is service, so we are trying to enhance that mission.”
ECU provides 24 hours of service leave to its employees. The fair was designed to show employees how to spend that leave time and provide students opportunities to participate in community organizations.
The department also hosted a blood drive as part of the fair.
UNC-TV praised major donor

A foundation set up to help rural economic development has given about $300,000 over two years to UNC-TV, the public television network, which used the money to air positive stories about the foundation's work.

The grants are from the Golden LEAF Foundation, which controls hundreds of millions of dollars from the states' 1998 legal settlement with tobacco companies. The TV station has used the grants to produce sunny stories, with more than half of the episodes in its first 12 shows featuring projects that also received Golden LEAF money.

This month, the station received a second Golden LEAF grant of $112,000 to continue the series, with new shows to start in August.

When it pursued the Golden LEAF money, UNC-TV promised to "raise the visibility of the work being accomplished by the Golden LEAF Foundation and others as North Carolina rises to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century."

Critics said the network should not use grant money to produce stories involving the donor, while legislators said Golden LEAF grants should not go to produce television programs.

Though the "North Carolina Rising" episodes posted on UNC-TV's website do not disclose that Golden LEAF paid for them, Shannon Vickery, the director of production, said those disclosures appeared twice when segments aired as part of the news and information show "North Carolina Now."

The network considers itself "an information provider," Vickery said, and is not out to air the kind of news found on commercial stations. The series fits with UNC-TV's mission to aid the state's economic transition, she said.

Ties criticized

George Padgett, an associate professor at Elon University who teaches a law and ethics course, said UNC-TV's relationship with Golden LEAF "doesn't sound right to me."

The on-air disclosures that Golden LEAF is the donor "alleviates some of the pain, but doesn't make it right," he said.

"It's probably best to avoid that direct coverage as much as possible," said Fred Brown, vice chairman of the Society of Professional Journalists' Ethics Committee.

The Golden LEAF Foundation is a quasi-governmental agency established under a 1999 state law. The foundation, whose board members are political appointees, receives half the state's share of a national tobacco settlement between cigarette companies and states. As of this month, the foundation has received about $867 million in settlement money and has handed out $446 million in grants.
LEAF's goals drift

When legislators started the foundation, they said they intended to use the money for economic-development projects in communities hurt by tobacco's decline.

Lately, some of the foundation's grants have only a remote connection to that original goal. In addition to the UNC-TV programs, grant money has gone to college scholarships, housing and retail development plans and to help prepare the state's application for a federal education grant. One Golden LEAF project, which helps provide each student at a Wilson County high school with a laptop, was the subject of a "North Carolina Rising" episode.

Foundation President Dan Gerlach, who appeared in the laptops episode, said the TV grant was in keeping with the foundation's marketing.

"They might get some ideas from us," Gerlach said. "They get no editorial control or anything like that from us."

Projects featured in the series generated interest from other areas of the state, Gerlach said. For example, other counties wanted information on student laptops, and an episode on making sweet potato fries sparked ideas from growers of other commodities on what products that could be made from their crops.

The foundation has drawn criticism for grants. Grants to a horse park drew repeated criticism from the John Locke Foundation, a conservative think tank based in Raleigh.

Legislators weigh in

Legislators said grants to UNC-TV do not fit the foundation's mission. Senate Minority Leader Phil Berger said the public probably did not think when the foundation was established that it would be paying for television features.

"The idea of government self-promoting using public dollars is something that I think most people feel is inappropriate," said Berger, a Republican from Eden.

"It argues for changing the way we handle the tobacco settlement money," he said.

In its grant proposals, UNC-TV said it would "identify and highlight the success stories of rural areas that once thrived on tobacco but are now effectively transitioning to be part of the new, global economy."

Generally, the shows have little discussion of how the featured projects fit in the world economy. Vickery said that the town hall meetings the network organized and the related Web site discussed those issues.

"Our focus was to take a look at what's happening successfully with the rural economic development," she said, "really focus on what's working, what are those projects that are working in one community that can be replicated in another community."

The Golden LEAF Foundation, the N.C. Rural Economic Development Center, the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation and others were contacted for ideas, but the network picked the stories, Vickery said.
Justin Falls/Informer

Director Darren Brown, left, works with Producer Andrea Lawson to get the right framing on a shot as Terrence Holland, back right, looks on during the filming of an independent movie outside of the Mendenhall Student Center at ECU.

Justin D. Falls

Behind the scenes, Director Darren Brown, left, works with Andrea Lawson to get the shot as Tyree Barnes, far left, and Siliza Valdez act out a scene during the filming of an independent movie outside of the Mendenhall Student Center at ECU Wednesday, April 14, 2010. (Justin Falls/The Daily Reflector)

Justin D. Falls

From left, actors Estee Gabay, Siliza Valdez and Tyree Barnes walk together as Producer Andrea Lawson, left, and Dominique Mathis shoot a scene during the filming of an independent movie outside of the Mendenhall Student Center at ECU Wednesday, April 14, 2010. (Justin Falls/The Daily Reflector)

Justin D. Falls
Students create independent film for production
By Kristin Day
mixer
Wednesday, April 28, 2010

Darren Brown and Andrea Lawson made their first film in high school. It was their junior year, Brown said. He had a lot of ideas, and she had a camera. Their first production, a five-minute piece called “Godfather,” didn’t win him the title of Military Ball King, but it did arouse a student demand for a 45-minute “Godfather II.” Brown and Lawson came to East Carolina University in 2007 and created a documentary about their freshman year, which ran on Channel 31 for a time. That exposure led to marketing videos for Legacy Endeavors, more shorts and skits.
M. Cole Jones, friend and CEO of Legacy Endeavors, took an interest in the duo. He arranged them to be extras in “Stomp the Yard 2” in Atlanta, where they met with director Rob Hardy and got some insider filming advice.
After that, they established DreamSeeker Productions. It’s motto: “Remove the nightmares of your reality while dream seeking.” “We wanted to set our foot in the concrete and make an imprint in the film industry,” Lawson said. “We figured, if we’re going to do it, do it big.” So, in late 2009, they wrote a script for their first feature-length film for Dreamseeker, “Perfect Flaws.”
They found other ECU students — from many different majors — to fill out their 20-some person cast and crew, and used university equipment to film and edit. Since January, they’ve been filming day and night, whenever the students have some free time. The project consists of two-story lines.
The first — filmed during the day — follows Frankie (played by Siliza Valdez), a hard-working student who is hiding a big secret from everyone but her best friend, Malcolm (played by David Kromah).
“Frankie is pretty much just like me,” said Valdez, a 19-year-old engineering major. “I’ve gone through things in my life that I’m not proud of, or things that my family’s been through, and not that many people know that about me because I put up a front. And that’s what Frankie does. ?EUR? Our stories are really similar.”
The second story line is filmed at night and focuses on Malcolm’s brother, Bobby (Tyree Barnes), and the real world outside of the college campus. Devin Hayes, 20, plays Roland, a friend and drug dealer attempting to better his ways.
“I knew it was something with Darren, that he was going to be big,” said Hayes, who’s studying to become a sports broadcaster. “I really wanted to be a part of that and help in any way possible. So just being able to get any character would’ve been good, but Roland especially, since it seemed diverse. ... So, I thought it was a good opportunity to showcase one of my skills.”
For Brown and Lawson, “Perfect Flaws” is their avenue to create a film that would appeal more to college students.
“A lot of times you get movies that are put out into Hollywood or the theaters that are written by older people (but) that are supposed to be appeal to the younger crowds,” said Lawson, director, producer and 20-year-old communications major. “We really wanted to reach out to our audience and let them know, ‘we do understand; we’re going to put your life on screen.’”
Brown, also 20 and majoring in business marketing, said the story line comes from the experiences of others they’ve witnessed growing up and what they’ve gone through together.
“If nothing comes of this film,” he said, “I, at least, want people to relate to it. When you’re going through the tough times, maybe you can pop this movie in and say, ‘I’m not alone, somebody else is going through the same thing,’ because this is based on true events.”
Tiffany McNeil, director of photography, said she was hesitant to join the project because of all the time demands it would add to her — and her coworkers’ — already packed schedule. However, most of the cast and crew say the film has become their social time and their co-stars have become their good friends.

Plus, the passion Brown and Lawson exhibit sealed the deal for McNeil.

"Initially I actually wasn’t going to do it, because I didn’t have any time," McNeil said. "But then I met Drea and Darren and their dream, their vision, is so huge. They’re so serious about it. It’s kind of contagious."

After filming is complete, the team will go into the editing process. By September, they hope, “Perfect Flaws” will be released in Hendrix Theater and will be entered into ECU’s film festival. With backing from Los Angeles Executive Producer James Bland (who’s worked on the upcoming movies “Takers” and “Death at a Funeral”) they hope to then enter it into other festivals and get exposure on school campuses around the country.

Then, it’s on to the next film.

“This is just the beginning for DreamSeekers,” Brown says.

For more information on this film, visit www.perfectflawsfilm.webs.com.
$1 million gift to UNCW supplies scholarships to re-entry students

By Chelsea Kellner
Chelsea.Kellner@StarNewsOnline.com

Published: Friday, April 23, 2010 at 11:34 a.m.

At the quarterly Board of Trustees meeting Friday, the University of North Carolina Wilmington announced a $1 million scholarship endowment for students re-enrolling in the school after an absence of five years or more.

The endowment comes courtesy of the Bernard Osher Foundation, an expansion of several annual gifts of $50,000 given during the past three years.

“This is a highly competitive grant program, and we are pleased and proud to have been selected based on the services we already have established to aid this student population,” Chancellor Rosemary DePaolo said.

The scholarship program provides $2,000 per year to students with a five-year or more cumulative disruption in their education who are looking to complete their undergraduate degree. Students must demonstrate financial need, academic promise and a commitment to completing their degree.

The idea is to help students like UNCW business administration senior Laura Hall, who left a difficult marriage at age 30 and enrolled at UNCW to start a new life. Hall received an Osher Foundation scholarship in the 2009-10 school year, and calls it a "lifeline."

"The only other option for a student like me is to max out student loans," Hall said. "I feel strongly that no student should have to put themselves into a decade worth of debt to obtain an education."

This is the second $1 million endowment that UNCW has received from the Bernard Osher Foundation. The first, received in 2007, supports the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at UNCW. UNCW was chosen to receive the endowment funding because of the many support programs it provides to non-traditional students, according to foundation program officer Andy Lynch.

The foundation launched the Osher Reentry Scholarship Program in 2005. UNCW has received a $50,000 gift each year since 2007, which has supported a $2,000 gift toward tuition for 25 re-entry students. More recently, the university received an additional $50,000 gift, which will ensure that scholarships can be awarded for the 2010-11 academic year while the new $1 million endowment begins to accrue interest.

"The scholarship hasn't just impacted my life," Hall said. "It has changed the direction of my life every day."

Chelsea Kellner: 343-2070

On Twitter: @StarNewsOnline

Copyright © 2010 StarNewsOnline.com — All rights reserved. Restricted use only.