THE DAILY CLIPS

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ECU to conduct live emergency drill today

The drill is designed to prepare staff and law enforcement to respond to an active shooter on campus.

East Carolina University officials will conduct a live shooter emergency drill today that will temporarily shut down part of campus for the first day of summer classes.

The drill is part of ECU’s emergency planning and is designed to prepare staff and law enforcement to respond to an active shooter on campus. The drill may involve actors, emergency outdoor speakers, emergency officials and simulated use of weapons.

“East Carolina, nor any college campus, will never be immune to emergencies,” said ECU Police Chief Scott Shelton in a video about the drill on ECU’s web site. “However, training and having an effective plan is vital.”

Green, White, Clement, Fletcher and Garrett residence halls, Bloxton House and West End Dining Hall will be off-limits from 7:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Mendenhall Student Center and the Student Recreation Center will be closed to the public until 1 p.m.

Some streets and parking areas on campus may be blocked, including Trustees Way at Fifth Street and in front of Jenkins Fine Arts Center; Faculty Way behind Jenkins and the Bloxton House; a parking lot north of the Student Recreation Center; and Reade Street from Reade Circle to Fifth Street. B1 parking lots off Reade Street between Fifth and Third streets will be unavailable.

The drill is scheduled to involve agencies including ECU and Greenville police, the Pitt County Sheriff’s Office, the State Highway Patrol, Greenville Fire-Rescue, Pitt County Emergency Services and Pitt Emergency Management.
Editorial: ECU emergency drill serves campus safety, readiness

Emergency vehicles and law enforcement officers descending on part of the East Carolina University might ordinarily be cause for fear, alarm or panic. Today it will be cause for comfort as the university, in concert with local officials, simulates the scenario of an on-campus shooter to conduct a full-scale drill of its response network.

The need for such an exercise may be a sad commentary on the state of the modern world, but it also shows that university officials take seriously their responsibility to create a safe and secure environment for students, faculty and staff. Preparation is critical in case of emergency, and the school has invested heavily in developing information networks and strong response plans in the unlikely case tragedy unfolds at East Carolina.

University officials at schools across the nation have traditionally walked a difficult line in the effort to balance safety and openness on college campuses. The cultivation of a learning environment conducive to the free exchange of ideas can be fostered through a campus that encourages open movement and seamless borders with a nearby community, as with Greenville and East Carolina.

However, protecting students is also tantamount, and most colleges have tipped the scales toward greater security in recent years. The 1999 shooting at Columbine High School showed the type of violence that could be inflicted by two teenagers determined to commit murder. Though a resource officer was on the premises and local police responded swiftly, they managed to kill 13 before taking their own lives.

Eight years later, a more sinister tragedy unfolded at Virginia Tech, as a senior English student shot 57 students and instructors, killing 32, before turning the gun on himself. The deadliest shooting in United States history took place on a serene campus nestled in the mountains of southwest Virginia, perhaps the most unlikely spot for such violence.

That served as a wake-up call to other universities to prepare for the unthinkable, to which East Carolina responded. The school now features text and e-mail alert systems, a speaker system to make external on-campus warnings and an emergency response plan to bring help quickly. These are the systems that will be tested today and which will be closely monitored to ensure they work as intended in providing information to the university community.

East Carolina cannot predict a tragedy, nor can it promise one will never take place. All it can do is be ready, an end that exercises like today’s help to ensure
Drinking on ECU buses prompts investigation
By Ginger Livingston
The Daily Reflector
Monday, May 17, 2010
East Carolina University is investigating two reported incidents of underage drinking on student
transit buses that were chartered by local fraternities, a spokesman confirmed Monday.
Early inquiries into the incidents, reported in an e-mail to Greenville City Councilman Calvin
Mercer and university officials, already have resulted in one fraternity being banned from renting
transportation from the school, said John Durham, executive director of university
communications. The university also plans to change its rules for chartering buses, he said.
“We rent out buses regularly to campus organizations, including fraternities and sororities,”
Durham said. “We don’t condone drinking on the buses and we will take steps to make sure it
won’t happen going forward.”
The university doesn’t allow alcohol consumption on student transit vehicles. The rule is stated in
the ECU Student Transit Authority Charter Request and Contract that organization
representatives have to fill out.
“No alcohol may be brought on board an ECU Transit bus. Alcohol consumption is strictly
prohibited on ECU Transit vehicles; on board consumption result in immediate termination of the
charter at the full estimated billing rate,” is how the contract is worded.
The new rules will include requiring a faculty adviser to be on the charter bus, Durham said. It’s
believed a faculty member can provide a driver with support when having to deal with
undesirable activity on a rented bus, Durham said.
The e-mail sent to Mercer stated that during a December 2009 bus trip involving Kappa Alpha, a
person was removed from the bus and transported by ambulance to a hospital for treatment of
suspected alcohol poisoning.
The trip was allowed to continue even though other bus occupants were described as “heavily
inebriated,” the e-mail stated.
The second incident happened in April and involved the alumni association of Sigma Phi Epsilon,
said Mike Upchurch, a 1989 ECU graduate and alumni member who was on the bus.
Upchurch said about 30 to 40 people were on the bus, including about 10 undergraduates,
returning from a golf tournament.
“Basically it was pouring down rain and we jumped from the club house to the bus with beers in
our hands,” Upchurch said.
The e-mail said large amounts of alcohol were consumed on the bus, including by underage
individuals. Upchurch said the undergraduates were invited to the tournament to network with
alumni members. Upchurch said he believed most of the undergrads were seniors but didn’t see
any of them with beer. He added that he sat in the back and didn’t have a view of everyone.
Upchurch said the driver never mentioned a no drinking rule. However, two days after the trip Upchurch said the alumni group received a letter from the university stating there should not have been alcohol on the bus and the organization was suspended from renting student transit property until 2011. Upchurch said he had seen a copy of the e-mail sent to Mercer and other university officials complaining drinking was allowed on charters “with tacit approval of the management of that system.”

Upchurch said the letter sent to his organization demonstrates the university and student transit takes the enforcement of its no alcohol policy seriously. Neither Upchurch nor Durham could confirm if it was the alumni association or the fraternity that is banned from renting transit vehicles.

Durham said the university’s Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities is continuing its investigation into Sigma Phi Epsilon incident. An investigation of the alleged incident involving Kappa Alpha also is ongoing.

Contact Ginger Livingston at glivingston@reflector.com or (252) 329-9570.
Board asks legislators to limit cuts to UNC system

The resolution states that the University of North Carolina General Administration estimates that any state budget cuts over 2 percent will harm the academic core of the university system.

BY JOSH HUMPHRIES
The Daily Reflector

The Pitt County Board of Commissioners approved a resolution asking the North Carolina General Assembly to limit budget cuts to the University of North Carolina system and East Carolina University Monday.

The county commissioners unanimously approved the resolution without discussion. The resolution was considered by the board at the request of ECU Chancellor Steve Ballard.

The resolution urges “the North Carolina General Assembly to prevent the most serious erosion of the quality of higher education in North Carolina by providing sufficient and appropriate funding for our state universities.”

The resolution states that the University of North Carolina General Administration estimates that any state budget cuts over 2 percent will harm the academic core of the university system and the system is facing a potential 5.9 percent cut.

The cuts could cost 1,200 jobs across the system and 100 jobs at ECU, including up to 50 faculty jobs.

The resolution also states that “the budget cuts will limit access to higher education for many residents of our county and state at a time when higher education enrollments are growing.”

The cuts will lead to a direct economic impact for Pitt County, ECU officials said.

The board also approved a plan for Pitt County’s fire departments to seek a $1 million state grant to purchase radio equipment for the coming narrow band radio requirements that go into effect in 2013.

The county will have to match the grant with $200,000.

The Federal Communications Commission is requiring emergency responders to use a small bandwidth for communications. The county is under contract with a consulting firm to establish how much the change will cost.

County Manager Scott Elliott said the change will likely cost millions and the county will have to take out a loan to purchase new equipment to meet the federal radio signal requirements.

Elliott said the county can apply half of the $200,000 if the grant is approved from some existing E-911 funds and the other half would come from another E-911 fund if the General Assembly loosens rules on how the money is spent or it would have to come from the county’s general fund balance.

Tim Ware, director of the Mid-East Commission, gave the board an update on the services provided through the organization.

The Mid-East Commission serves Beaufort, Belews Line, Hertford, Martin and Pitt counties.

Ware said Pitt Count contributes about $38,000 to the commission each year and receives $53 for every $1 invested in the form of services like disaster recovery plans, community planning, and transportation, senior programs and work force development.

“1 just wanted to come before you to let you know what we are doing in Pitt County as you prepare to your budget next year,” Ware said.

The county commissioners also appointed Don Duke to a one-year term on the Pitt County Nursing Home/Adult Care Community Advisory Committee.

Contact Josh Humphries at jhumphries@reflector.com or (252) 329-9565.
NC university to hold full-scale emergency drill

GREENVILLE, N.C. -- Officials at a North Carolina university have scheduled a full-scale emergency planning drill at a campus residence hall.

East Carolina University has scheduled the drill for Tuesday, which is the first day of summer classes. It's designed to prepare staff and law enforcement to respond to an active shooter on campus. Environmental manager Tom Pohlman said people should be aware that the exercise may involve actors, emergency outdoor speakers and simulated use of weapons.

School officials are advising students, faculty, staff and visitors to avoid five residence halls, a dining hall and the Bloxton House African-American Cultural Center. That advisory is in effect from 7:30 a.m. until 2:30 p.m.

In addition, Mendenhall Student Center and the Student Recreation Center will be closed to the public until 1 p.m.
Teachers could face furloughs

Teachers could be in line for unpaid days off if local school boards and university leaders decide to impose furloughs for budget savings.

The state Senate's proposed budget would give local school districts the authority to furlough employees for up to two days, and it would give the UNC system the option of furloughing workers. School and university employees who make under $30,000 would be exempt.

State Sen. A.B. Swindell, a Nashville Democrat, said districts would be able to use furloughs only as a last resort. Education lobbyists were told furlough days could not be taken when students are in school. All district schedules include teacher workdays.

The education provisions were part of a $19 billion budget the Senate was expected to roll out today that includes cuts to deal with an expected $800 million gap between revenue and planned spending. The reductions go deeper into health and human services staffing than Gov. Bev Perdue proposed, but the budget follows her lead in several other areas, including job creation initiatives. Senators also proposed a tax cut for many small businesses. The state House will write its own version of the budget in the coming weeks.

The Senate proposal, expected to be approved by the chamber Thursday, also makes a few obscure shifts in the law, such as requiring drive-through businesses to position a trash can by the window and expanding a ban on plastic bags to all Outer Banks retailers. The spending plan also provides university researchers with $2 million to test devices that float on the ocean and generate electricity, sometime called "wave snakes."

The Senate's proposed public school budget, at $7.1 billion, would still force local school districts to make $305 million in discretionary cuts in 2010-11. But the Senate plan erases the additional $135 million in unspecified local cuts Perdue proposed.

Overall, the budgets for public schools, the state university system and community college system were not cut as deeply as they were in Perdue's proposal.

"It's a better budget for education," Sen. Richard Stevens, a Cary Republican and a co-chairman of the Senate education budget writing committee. "Is it ideal? No. It's better than it was."

School districts including Charlotte-Mecklenburg, Winston-Salem/Forsyth and Durham needed state permission to furlough teachers.

Many Durham teachers supported furloughs when they were asked for money-saving ideas, said Durham school board Chairwoman Minnie Forte-Brown.

"We're real excited for that option," she said.

Brian Lewis, a lobbyist for the N.C. Association of Educators, said it was much too soon for legislators
to be talking about furloughs. The Senate proposal also includes a $10 million cut to local districts for school administrator salaries and benefits, and it eliminates dropout prevention grants.

The public schools would get about $30 million in extra lottery money.

In other areas, the Senate budget proposal:

Allows small business owners to file income tax at the same rate as corporations, effectively cutting their tax rate from 7.75 percent to 6.9 percent.

Cuts nearly 200 positions from the Department of Health and Human Services, while Perdue had proposed around 50

Reduces personal care services for invalids to only medically necessary services, saving an estimated $59 million.

Banks on $430 million in federal stimulus money to help cover the ever-ballooning Medicaid bill.

Restores $40 million for mental health cut last year.

Raises nearly $14 million in new court fees, including a $10 fee for anyone who wants to legally go back to using a former name.

Sells 23 aircraft owned by the Forest Resources department and Marine Fisheries division for an expected $3.5 million in revenue.

Asks the Department of Correction to draft a plan for a pilot program to privatize the state probation system.

Allows liquor tastings at distilleries.

After the Senate votes on its budget, it goes to the House for a rewrite.

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Critical investments in education and growth

RALEIGH -- Public universities like N.C. State University are critical to the nation's ability to maintain its edge in the global economy. They are especially important to states like North Carolina where emerging technologies and innovation are rapidly replacing more traditional economic models. In an area like the Research Triangle that is heavily dependent on technology and innovation for its continued success, they are even more important.

N.C. State is an institution that has a clear understanding of its mission and a passion for connecting that mission to the people of the state and the nation. It serves as an economic engine for the area and it helps train the workers of tomorrow. The state's continued support of higher education is critical if we're to continue meeting those expectations.

An analysis of the latest available data indicates the economic impact of N.C. State and its alumni in the local economy totals about $4.2 billion annually. We are also responsible for the creation of around 64,000 jobs. That's approximately 20 percent of the Wake County workforce.

Universities are also the nation's principal creators of a skilled workforce. In its 123-year-history, N.C. State has awarded more than 211,000 degrees. This year's class includes about 7,500 graduates and a vast majority will stay right here in North Carolina.

Research universities are also engines of technological innovation. The Research Triangle Park was built around research universities. In California, Silicon Valley was developed around Stanford and Berkeley, while in Boston, Harvard and MIT have helped created a high-tech boom.

N.C. State is among the most successful in taking research from the lab to the classroom and to the public and industry sectors. More than 110 products developed at the university are available to consumers, and we hold 674 U.S. patents. Seventy-two start-up companies have come from our Raleigh campus. They represent more than $750 million in venture capital investment and have created more than 3,000 jobs in North Carolina.

North Carolina values higher education in a way that very few states in the country do; it's one of the advantages that attracted me here. But in the modern global economy, with the need for a well-educated workforce to compete in international commerce recognized as a top priority, the educational mission of N.C. State and our other partners in the University of North Carolina system is more critical than perhaps at any time in our history.

It takes generations to build a great university, but without continued support from the state, we'll surely be walking a path toward mediocrity. Further budget cuts will continue to erode the number of class sessions and the number of faculty available to teach, and will increase class sizes. The quality of academic instruction and the student experience in general will suffer.

This reality is something no one in North Carolina has ever been willing to settle for in their institutions of higher learning.

Randy Woodson is the new chancellor of N.C. State University.
Big Ten should heed ACC expansion woes

Various Big Ten Conference officials spent the weekend insisting that the league's spring meetings, which began Monday and conclude Wednesday in Chicago, will be anticlimactic on the expansion front.

That may be true, but it's difficult to believe the league's 11 athletic directors will return home without important information to relay to their campus leaders.

Big Ten commissioner Jim Delany has made it clear that some degree of expansion probably is on the way, although he repeatedly has said there is no specific timetable or definite number of prospective new members set.

It's virtually certain at least one team will be pulled in. Just one would be enough to allow the conference to stage a championship football game, which probably would increase annual revenue by $8 million.

If the expansion is to be only the one team, the process could move along quickly.

But if the many rumors are true that three to five new schools could be targeted, Delany and his staff will face a good deal of fence-building within the current membership.

The perfect example in that regard is the ACC. The league's acquisition of three Big East teams in 2005 and 2006 so rearranged the landscape that the governor of Virginia at time - Mark Warner - ultimately emerged as the primary power broker.

Duke and North Carolina, the two schools that account for about 99 percent of the ACC's reputation as a basketball kingpin, weren't wild about the idea of adding so much as a 10th team, much less zooming to 12.

Schedules had to be revamped across the board, travel expenses in minor sports soared, and any semblance of a "conference family" was forever abandoned.

So much ill will was created among the old Big East clan that pre-raid relationships will never be restored.

At the end of the turmoil, the ACC wound up a weaker basketball conference, roughly the same in football and with a baseball "championship" tournament that prohibits four teams every year from even competing.

The per-team television income remained about the same as when the ACC had nine members, and those all-important football championship games have done nothing whatsoever to create any sort of national interest or prestige.

What happened within and to the ACC will not be casually disregarded by the Big Ten presidents and boards of trustees, most of whom ultimately are supposed to account for their actions to taxpayers and state governments.
In other words, the pro-expansionists in the Big Ten simply can't assume that all of the wheeling and dealing can be done behind locked doors and be forever hidden from the public.

Warner shot a hole in that sort of nonsense when he told the ACC either to include Virginia Tech or expand without the support of the University of Virginia. Mike Easley and/or the UNC System Board of Governors could have done exactly the same favor for East Carolina but didn't so choose.

College conferences often like to think they can operate in a vacuum and make up rules as they please, but that's not really the case.

Expansions are all about money and allowing television networks to gain more control over college sports. But the process also involves real people and can touch on issues that transcend athletic competition.

If the Big Ten is smart, those matters will be addressed at length this week.

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NCSU looks for new provost

FROM STAFF REPORTS

RALEIGH — N.C. State University has started a national search for a new provost, the university’s top academic officer.

The last provost, Larry Nielsen, abruptly resigned a year ago, citing scrutiny and criticism over his role in hiring former state first lady Mary Easley. The scandal over Easley’s job also led to the resignation of the chancellor and the chairman of the board of trustees.

Warwick Arden, dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine, has been acting as interim provost since Nielsen’s resignation and will continue in that role until a new provost is hired, a university spokesman said.

Margery Overtorn, chair of the faculty senate, will head the 16-member search committee, which also includes Marvin Malecha, dean of the College of Design; Terri Lomax, vice chancellor for research and graduate studies; and student body president Kelly Hook.
The Washington Post

Hefty wait lists shield colleges but unsettle students

By Daniel de Vise
Washington Post Staff Writer
Monday, May 17, 2010; B01

This spring, some colleges in the Washington region have assembled waiting lists that rival the size of their incoming freshman classes, a measure of their uncertainty at a volatile time in higher education.

The University of Virginia has offered admission to 6,900 students and wait-listed 3,750, a group large enough to fill the 3,240 spots for the Class of 2014. The College of William and Mary placed 1,415 students on a wait list for a freshman class of about 1,400. Most of the other top national universities in the Washington area, including Georgetown, Johns Hopkins, the University of Maryland and Virginia Tech, are tending deep wait lists of their own.

The swelling of wait lists in the past two years reflects the lingering economic downturn and an increasingly cautious approach by admissions offices. The recession has made it more difficult for admissions officers to discern which admitted students are likely to attend and has sapped endowments, leaving colleges less inclined to risk tuition dollars by failing to fill their freshman classes. Competitive colleges are processing record numbers of applications, further complicating the task of predicting who will enroll.

"Last year, wait lists at most places were much more active than normal, because people had no idea what was going to happen," said Charles Deacon, dean of admissions at Georgetown. This year, colleges "are mostly not in any better shape than they were last year," he said. "But they've had more time to prepare."

Colleges create the wait list as a sort of reserve fund, available for use if the school comes up short of students at the end of the regular admission cycle. No college wants to end up underenrolled.

Nationwide, roughly one college in three employs a wait list. Its use is more common among the most selective colleges, according to a national survey by the National Association for College Admission Counseling. Roughly 30 percent of wait-listed students ultimately are admitted, although the percentage is much smaller at top colleges.

Colleges wait-list many more students than they plan to enroll, knowing that a good share will tire of the wait and commit to another school. Still, academic officials say that some wait lists are needlessly long.

"Sometimes, frankly, it's just hard to say no to so many great kids," said Greg Roberts, dean of admission at U-Va.

"I'll agree there's no scenario where we'd exhaust the wait list and still not have the class we want," said Henry Broaddus, dean of admission at William and Mary. "I think there's an appropriate national
conversation to have about 'are these wait lists too big?'"

May is wait-list month, when colleges tally deposits from students who have committed by the May 1 deadline and tabulate how many more students, if any, they will need to complete their freshman classes. By the start of June, most wait-listed students will have received a polite letter of rejection or, for a lucky few, a surprise telephone call offering admission.

Urja Mittal, a senior at Montgomery Blair High School in Silver Spring, accepted an offer of admission from the University of Pennsylvania. She's on a wait list at Columbia University, which she initially favored over Penn.

Mittal, 18, is in a pickle. Since committing to Penn, she has learned a lot more about the school and its programs and has tried to convince herself "that Penn is the best." She has friends "who are getting attached to their school, and the mascot. I'm trying to do the same."

And yet, she said, "my attraction to Columbia still exists." In the unlikely event that she gets in, she said, "I think it would be a real toss-up."

Local deans say this year's admission cycle, although tricky, was somewhat easier to predict than last year's, a time of plummeting endowments and plunging stock prices. Colleges may empanel a wait list by a rough mathematical formula -- say, one wait-listed student for every two admits. They don't usually have a set number in mind.

Georgetown put 1,177 students on its wait list this year to plug holes in a class of 1,580. U-Md., which usually gets by without a wait list, revived it last year. This year's list holds nearly 1,000 students. Virginia Tech has 1,350 students wait-listed.

William and Mary's list is longer than last year's by 142 students. Wait lists at U-Va. and Virginia Tech are shorter. At Georgetown and U-Md., they are about the same length.

Admission officers counsel the wait-listed to consider the long odds and mull over other options, even as they encourage them to submit additional grade reports and letters of recommendation, just in case.

"There's no intent to peddle false hope here," Broaddus said.

Neither U-Md. nor Hopkins admitted a single student from its wait list last year. So many admitted students chose to attend Hopkins, in fact, that the university had to lease a hotel and transform it into a residence hall for the year. Hopkins officials confirmed that they have a wait list this year but would not divulge its length.

Will some students on the wait list get in? Perhaps. Georgetown admitted 175 wait-listed students last year; U-Va., 288.

Making the phone call to a student admitted from the wait list is among the most pleasant duties assigned to admission officers, somewhat akin to contacting lottery winners.

"The last people in are the most grateful," Deacon said. "They end up being the best alums."
WEARING NAME TAG BECAME BADGE OF HONOR

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Why just earn a degree when you can leave behind a legend?

By David Perlmutt
dperlmutt@charlotteobserver.com
Posted: Monday, May. 17, 2010

If you've spent significant time on the Davidson College campus the past four years, chances are you've at least heard of "the Name Tag Guy."

Or, less likely, Stephen Pierce.

They are one. Both were among 427 seniors who graduated during the college's 173rd commencement Sunday - Pierce pinning to his gown the same paper name tag he was given on his first day of freshman orientation in 2006.

The tag was a little stained and tattered. Understandable. He's worn it - protected by at least eight plastic holders - to every class and Davidson College function since he set foot on campus.

Even in England, where Pierce studied at Cambridge during a Davidson summer abroad program.

It started on a dare:

Orientation, he said, lasted from Wednesday to Sunday. Classes started the next day.

"I was getting dressed for my first class - religion in the movies - and decided my professor ought to know my name, too," said Pierce, 22, of Newnan, Ga., who earned an English degree Sunday. "So I wore it to class."

His classmates razzed him: Orientation's over. Why in the world are you still wearing your name tag?

Religion professor Trent Foley piped up: Ladies and gentlemen, this is Stephen Pierce. He's going to wear his name tag for the rest of his time here at Davidson.

"Some in the class shouted, 'That's too cool, you have to do it,'" Pierce recalled. "Others said,
'That's too goofy, bet you can't do it.'

"I wore it the first few days, and people said, 'you've gotta keep wearing it.' It just got bigger than me. From then on, I was 'the Name Tag Guy.'"

Who could have predicted?

His parents, Wayne and Cynda Pierce, say that nothing in their son's past would suggest he was capable of making such a public spectacle.

Growing up, he was quiet. He liked the solitude of writing - plays, short stories, poems.

He did have a touch of the obsessive-compulsive. At age 8, he started climbing stairs two steps at a time. That lasted until he had to haul furniture upstairs into his dorm room during orientation.

He wore the tag everywhere, except when playing sports, working out or sleeping.

Once, when Davidson was playing basketball at Time Warner Arena uptown, Pierce was part of the cheering section that went shirtless with their bodies painted Davidson red and black.

As he was about to enter, a car pulled up and a friend shouted: Dude, where's the name tag?

Pierce had it pinned to his belt and flashed it.

The car erupted in cheers.

Pierce, who plans to attend Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., wore his tag in England, too.

Touring the famous white cliffs at Dover, overlooking the English Channel, he took a tunnel to the cliffs. A hard wind blew his plastic holder open, and the tag flew out. Pierce took off after it through the tunnel, shouting for tourists to stop his name tag.

As the tag flipped and turned perilously toward a fence overlooking a cliff, Pierce thought it was a goner.

But at the last minute, it caught on chicken wire strung along the fence.

A quest for survival

There were other times he could have lost it.

The tag was pinned to a shirt he took to the campus laundry. As workers sorted his clothes, he rushed in to rescue it.

He forgot to bring it back after a visit home once. He called his mother and asked her to scan and e-mail it. He held onto the scanned tag for emergencies - but rarely used it.

No one ever tried to abscond with it. A fraternity had considered making new pledges spirit the tag away as an initiation. They never tried.
Davidson is famous for its 100-year-old honor code.

So Pierce still had the original at Sunday's graduation, when he walked on stage to receive his diploma. Yet just before he got it, he took off the name tag, showed it to the crowd and handed it to Davidson President Tom Ross. I understand campus archives wants this, he told Ross.

The president took it, Pierce said, and replied, "Oh, so you're finally giving it back."

Subscribe to The Charlotte Observer.

Stephen Pierce with his much-traveled name tag from freshman orientation at Davidson College. He wore it to his first class at Davidson, and after a professor's challenge, wore it every day until he exchanged it for a diploma from Davidson President Tom Ross. ROBERT LAHSER - rlahser@charlotteobserver.com