THE DAILY CLIPS

May 20, 2008

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

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The New York Times
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USA Today
The Charlotte Observer
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Academics from 18 nations discuss global learning at ECU

By Josh Humphries
The Daily Reflector

Representatives from universities all over the world converged on Greenville and East Carolina University on Monday to discuss a global academic initiative.

ECU is hosting a three-day conference on Global Partners in Education, a program offered at 21 universities in 18 countries.

Erskine Bowles, president of the University of North Carolina system, welcomed more than 22 international visitors and educators to ECU.

"I am confident that if we collaborate, we will produce young people who will compete in a knowledge-based global economy," Bowles said. "I think what you are doing is absolutely critical to the future of not only this university, but our state and education in general."

ECU partners with universities in countries such as Venezuela, China, Russia, Algeria and Malaysia to offer a global understanding class to students.

Students communicate through live video and chat technology to discuss food, family and culture.

The purpose of the conference is to establish a formal Global Partners in Education. The first conference this week will set goals for improving and expanding the program.

The Global Academic Initiatives Program was created in 2003 by ECU staff members Rosina Chia, assistant vice chancellor for Global Academic Initiatives, and Elmer Poe, the associate vice chancellor for academic outreach.

The goal of the program was to provide an international educational experience to students unable to travel abroad.

Nationally, only 4 percent of students study abroad and, at ECU, the percentage is even lower, according to ECU's Web site.

"The formation of the Global Partners in Education represents the coming together of professors and administrators from around the world to enhance the international experience of their students through direct collaboration," Poe said. "The partners will move these experiences to the next level of excellence."

The international representatives posed for photos with ECU Chancellor Steve Ballard and Bowles after introducing themselves.

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GLOBAL
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"We feel very privileged to be a part of this program, which connects us beyond all borders with the huge world outside," said Alla Nazarenko of Moscow State University in Russia.

"It gives us a chance to understand people — who are people everywhere — just people. I am sure it will serve the world."

More than 600 ECU students have met their academic counterparts in other countries via technology since the program began in 2004.

ECU's efforts to globalize education were recognized by the Institute of International Education. The university received honorable mention in the 2008 IIE Andrew Heiskell Awards for Innovation in International Education and was honored at the United Nations in New York City.

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Forum looks at ways to stop underage drinking

By Tom Marine
The Daily Reflector

Reducing underage drinking means confronting youngsters’ access to alcohol, retired Superior Court Judge Ronald E. Bogle said Monday.

Speaking at a local forum for environmental strategies to prevent underage drinking, Bogle said society no longer can ignore what alcohol is doing to children.

"People support the right to drink, but they do not support the abuse of alcohol by children," said Bogle, deputy director of the Coalition for Alcohol and Drug-Free Chapel Hill and Carrboro, Inc. "Parents have little to no awareness about how their children are consuming alcohol."

Nearly one-third of students used alcohol within the past 30 days, even though more than 70 percent felt alcohol use was risky; according to a 2007 Youth Risk Behavior Survey administered to Pitt County middle school and high school students.

The survey also highlights the shifting attitude toward alcohol as students move from middle school to high school.

"For underage drinkers, there is no such thing as a healthy drink," Bogle said. "We need to fundamentally understand that young people are drinking in destructive ways. Someone needs to intervene."

Bogle said 6,000 teenagers die each year from alcohol-related causes, more than all other drugs combined.

Bogle suggested the local government create social host ordinances making landlords and land owners responsible for underage drinking on their property.

Mayor Pat Dunn said the city of Greenville and East Carolina University appointed a task force last year to address underage drinking.

Its two recommendations, she said, were for the university to create an alcohol-free venue in the downtown area, and for the city to implement a pilot project, reading the bar code on drivers licenses to eliminate fake identification cards.

Elizabeth Montgomery Lee, director of the Eastern Carolina Regional Training Institute, provided a list of environmental approaches to prevent underage drinking, such as minimum bar entry age and banning "two for one" drink specials.

"The way to change the culture is through our laws," Dr. John Morrow, county public health director, said during the panel discussion, "but until we get people to understand this is unhealthy, we can't expect our lawmakers to make changes."

Morrow said there will be a battle against alcohol abuse similar to the one with tobacco use.

"Hope that, unlike tobacco, it doesn't take 40 years to make these changes," he said, "or we will lose this generation."

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Cramming more onto a computer chip

SRC researchers push for dizzying technology improvements

BY TIM SIMMONS
STAFF WRITER

Few people outside the world of semiconductor research know about the work of Veena Misra or Ki Wook Kim at N.C. State University.

But the two engineers are certain everyone will know if they and their colleagues fail: The march of technological progress as we know it will cease.

They are sure of this. Moore's Law — named after Intel co-founder Gordon Moore — has predicted it.

"Our whole standard of living will stop evolving," said Dinesh Mehta, vice president of Semiconductor Research Corp. in Durham. "Our quality of life will stop evolving."

The Semiconductor Research Corp., or SRC as its known in the industry, is the world's leading university-research consortium for semiconductors. It has invested $1.1 billion in research since it was founded in 1982.

The work of Misra and Kim is part of the newest round of grants totaling $11.2 million spread among three dozen universities.

The goal is to develop a radically new chip when today's semiconductors reach their technological limits. That is expected to happen in about 12 years.

"We have reached a point where people take it for granted, that technology will always improve," said Larry Sumney, president of SRC. "That should never happen."

In its simplest form, semiconductors are a series of transistors placed on a silicon-based chip. Think of companies in Silicon Valley.

But that simplicity vanishes at today's standards, where 2.1 billion transistors are placed on a square wafer that is about ½ an inch across.

Shrinking transistors to a size measured in nanometers is the result of Moore's Law — an industry standard that dictates that the number of transistors on a chip should double every two years.

Meeting the standard has allowed remarkable progress in the technology that propels everything from medical equipment to airline travel.

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THE ROLE OF SRC

Concerned about a decline in U.S. research efforts in the field of semiconductors, the chip's co-inventor, Bob Noyce, teamed with other industry leaders to create Semiconductor Research Corp. in early 1982.

Begun with a personal check from Noyce, SRC operates a research network that includes more than 110 universities and two dozen businesses and government organizations.

The research ideas come from business members who pay fees to SRC. Information from that research is shared among members.

SRC is responsible for more than $100 million a year in chip research and has invested more than $1 billion since it was founded.

About $38 million has been invested with North Carolina universities.

...are experimenting with a recent discovery known as domain wall logic that relies on magnetic fields.

It faces significant challenges, Misra said. To begin with, the approach has only worked on large instruments at slow speeds. But it holds significant promise.

Kim also hopes that his area of research will push the industry toward an answer. He is working with substances such as graphene — an thin layer of carbon atoms. It greatly reduces the amount of heat today's chips generate.

MOORE'S LAW

Gordon E. Moore, 79, co-founder Intel, the California technology company, in 1968.

Three years before, in 1965, he predicted that the number of components the industry would be able to place on a computer chip would double every year. It became known as Moore's Law. In 1975, he updated his prediction to once every two years. It has become the guiding principle for the semiconductor industry to deliver more powerful chips while decreasing the cost of electronics.

The two engineers are part of large teams of researchers whose work is sponsored by SRC.

Alarmed by the decline in U.S. research dollars for semiconductor chips, industry leaders created SRC more than two decades ago as a way to focus the industry.

To meet that goal, SRC solicits proposals from chip makers about basic research necessary to continue advancements.

Kudos for SRC

Once a proposal is selected, the fees that each company pays to join the consortium are used to help pay for university research.

SRC coordinates research among more than 110 universities divided roughly into short-term, midterm and long-term needs of the industry.

In recognition of its work, the organization in 2007 was awarded the National Medal of Technology, the country's highest honor for groups or individuals that improve quality of life.

Research money for the next generation of chips strengthened those federal ties with money coming from the National Institute of Standards and Technology. The National Science Foundation has also paid for some projects.

The national stature of the group comes despite the semiconductor industry's relatively low profile in North Carolina.

SRC settled in Durham, Sumney said, largely because former Gov. Jim Hunt was a strong supporter of the electronics industry, and the Microelectronics Center of North Carolina had just been formed.

But Sumney said states such as California, Texas and New York have since shown more interest in nurturing the industry, which means the SRC staff spends a fair amount of time outside the state.

That matters little in the scheme of things, he said. The race for the next generation of chips is an international competition.

"China, Taiwan, Japan — we are all searching for that breakthrough," Sumney said. "There is no reason it can't happen here."
SETTLEMENT
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Paid by a combination of fees generated by her clinical work, research grants and a special fund for the recruitment and retention of minority faculty.

In 2004, Theodore became pregnant at the same time as another colleague in the department, the lawsuit said, and the two doctors had the same due date. The colleague sent an e-mail message to Benjamin discussing maternity leave plans. Benjamin responded by referring to the message as "a missile," the lawsuit said.

Theodore took family medical leave in December 2004 and planned to return to work in April 2005. But in a meeting with Benjamin and Stiles in 2005, the lawsuit said, Theodore was told that she would have to choose between a part-time position or a terminated contract in July. Theodore also was told she could no longer perform clinical duties and be paid by the department but that she could work part time in a research-only position in another department, reducing her pay by 40 percent and making her ineligible for benefits.

Theodore, who is black, alleged in the suit that white faculty members were given department funding.

Fulgham said there was never any performance problem or negative evaluation of Theodore. "She was described as an excellent clinician by people who supervised her," Fulgham said, "and someone else was immediately hired to fill Theodore's clinical duties.

Theodore met with other female faculty members in the department to discuss discrimination complaints in 2005. Male physicians were commonly introduced as "Dr.", the lawsuit said, while female doctors were introduced by their first names. One faculty member was told she could not be serious about her career if she had another child, the lawsuit said, and another professor was denied a request for a door on her cubicle so she could pump breast milk for her infant. There was no lactation facility for faculty in the department that routinely advises its patients to breast-feed, the suit said.

A committee appointed to look into the matter concluded there were serious issues related to gender, the lawsuit claimed.

But in announcing the findings of the committee, the panel's chairman remarked that "all of this started because some women wanted to pump their breasts," according to the suit.
Builder's empire began with hot nuts

Boylan Cos. grows on persistence that fed vending machine business

Dusty Field, a relentless entrepreneur and head of Boylan Cos., has invested heavily in apartment development.

Staff photo by Jason Arthurs

By Jack Hagel

RALEIGH — To understand the financial hurdles that developers face these days, look to the desk of M. Dustin "Dusty" Field.

There you can find spreadsheets that explain ways to finance the apartment communities that he and his partners think will thrive as demand for rentals grow.

Field, the 36-year-old chief executive of The Boylan Cos., is spending a lot of late nights poring over the papers, trying to figure out how to build in a tight lending environment.

A year ago, banks would have competed to lend him money. Today, some aren't even considering big construction loans.

"It's a problem for anybody in real estate development right now," said Haze Lancaster, a high-school friend of Field's who has invested in some of Boylan's projects. "If there's a way to do it, he's the kind of guy who will figure out a way to get it done."

Indeed, if ever there was an example of profit following persistent pursuit, it resides in the squat building at 410 N. Boylan Ave., where Field's companies have quietly grown in six years.

For Field, it's not a tale of ups and downs, but one of ups and outs. It starts with nuts and ends with commercial real estate.

For 15 years, he has expanded companies with impatient perfectionism and a bit of micromanagement: When he needs something, he finds a way to get it. And when what he has doesn't work right, he finds a way to fix it. Then he moves on.

In 1993, low on cash as a student at East Carolina University, Field bought a vending machine, filled it with pistachios and placed it in a bar. It generated only $6 in weekly profit, so he bought two more.

He figured he could boost his profit if he heated the nuts. So he welded heating plates onto the dispensers. Voila: hot nuts. Weekly profit climbed to $25 per machine.

Field expanded into gum-ball machines, and by the time he graduated in 1994, he was pulling in $3,000 per month from 25 pistachio and 25 gum-ball machines, filling them about once a month. "That supported being able to eat and have fun," Field said.

A year later, the business had grown to 75 vending machines and 200 pay phones that brought in $6,000 a month — so much that the weight of the quarters he collected caused the tail end of his Acura to scrape the ground.

"He's somebody who says he's going to do something, and he does it," said Sa'ed Hamad, a fraternity brother and vending partner of Field at ECU. "He's driven."

Field's drive was stoked by doubters.

At a house party, Hamad and Field were discussing growth strategies for their vending business, Tons of Fun.

An acquaintance who planned to sell cars scoffed: "I'm sitting here talking about BMWs and Lexuses, and you're..."
talking about gum balls," Hamad recalls.

Friends of Field's girlfriend wondered when her quarter collector would get a "real job."


**One thing to another**

On the town with buddies in 1996, Field couldn't find an ATM on one of Greenville's busiest strips. Soon, he bought one, paying $11,000. He was 24.

He struck a deal with a convenience-store owner near the ATM-less site. Field filled the machine every other day, using cash from gum and nut sales, and charged $1 per transaction.

More ATMs meant more income: "It was gum-ball math," Field said. He maxed out credit cards buying four more. Then he went to parents, friends, friends of parents and parents of friends for enough cash — $350,000 — to fill them.

He borrowed from a bank to expand his ATM venture to 150 locations in 1997. By the time his company grew to 300 ATMs — a year later — Field couldn't fill all the machines himself.

**Guarding his money**

He hired an armored car service to do it, a big change from when Field did the job himself, armed with a Labrador retriever and 9 mm handgun to protect the $100,000 stashed in the Chevy Tahoe that replaced the doomed Acura. But when one of his ATMs at Crabtree Valley Mall broke in 2001, the armored car company he hired wasn't able to fix it for several days.

"I went ballistic," Field said. So he bought an armored car and founded U.S. Armored, which allowed him to control maintenance and other services.

As his ATM business grew, so did U.S. Armored, filing ATMs for Field's company and for small banks across the state.

After several offers, he sold the ATM venture for $7 million in 2003. It had grown to 1,400 locations across the country — one of the nation's biggest ATM portfolios. He was 31. The armored car company was sold soon thereafter for $1 million.

With a chunk of cash — no longer in quarters — Field was attracted to real estate. Long-time friend Tyler Morris had development experience and a plan to build 52 condos off Lake Lynn Road in North Raleigh. Field put some equity, acting as a passive investor. "One thing led to another, and we bought an office building and decided to form a company," he said.

In a 50-50 partnership, they have built about 1,000 apartments, two condo complexes and several subdivisions. They are building 170 condos in Durham and plan to start 450 apartments in coming months.

Their latest venture, an apartment management arm, was born of a desire for quality. "I'd rather control our own destiny," Field said, "than have our business based on the results of another company."

**Banks demand more**

Field and Morris are facing challenges beyond their control: Completing some of their biggest projects, including up to 600 apartments, as banks tighten up.

"Now the deals are getting bigger," Morris said. "And instead of raising $1 million, we're trying to raise $10 million."

Which puts pressure on Field, who is responsible for raising Boylan's equity.

Financiers are asking for as much as 30 percent equity. A year ago, they asked for about 15 percent. "If you go condo, it's 40 percent," Field said. And the banks want at least half of them pre-sold.

Some banks are raising borrowing costs. Others want to be paid back in 25 years, instead of 30 years. Some ask borrowers to transfer their accounts and deposits before letting loans loose.

Field and Morris are dividing projects into phases — a strategy that may now be more agreeable to skittish lenders. They are considering the arduous process of applying for financing through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

But they're not waiting for providence. Field never has.

As for his doubting, BMW-dealing acquaintance of years ago: He now sells used cars.

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