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Scientists get look at Queen Anne's artifacts

By Josh Humphries
The Daily Reflector
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Scientists from throughout the world are in Greenville this week to get a first-hand look at efforts to preserve artifacts believed to have been aboard the Queen Anne’s Revenge. About 80 conservators and scientists from 15 countries and 10 U.S. states who preserve wet archaeological artifacts are participating in the Triennial Conference of the International Council of Museums, Conservation Committee, Wet Organic Archaeological Materials Group.

The group visited East Carolina University’s West Research Campus and the Queen Anne’s Revenge (QAR) lab on Wednesday evening as part of the four-day event.

N.C. Department of Cultural Resources Secretary Linda Carlisle spoke to the scientists at the QAR lab.

“We are doing great work here,” Carlisle said. “I think you can see that this is not just a Greenville, North Carolina, project but an international project.”

The QAR lab is the center for protecting and cleaning artifacts researchers have discovered in Beaufort inlet believed to have been aboard the Queen Anne’s Revenge, the one-time flagship of the famous pirate, Blackbeard.

Carlisle and the researchers viewed hundreds of artifacts removed from the ship including large cannons and tiny beads and particles of gunshots. The project continues to gather and prepare items from the shipwreck for display in museums.
“We hope you can come back and see these wonderful artifacts in exhibits that tell the story of our state,” Carlisle said. “That is what we are working toward.”
Carlisle said it is an honor for North Carolina to host the conference because it is on held once every three years.
The previous two conferences were held in Copenhagen and Amsterdam.
“This really helps put North Carolina on the map,” Carlisle said. “Now that they are here, they realize that this is an very important project.”
QAR Chief Conservator Sarah Watkins-Kenney said she was delighted when the conference committee chose the N.C. Department of Resources, ECU and Colonial Williamsburg to host the 2010 conference in Greenville.
“Not only will they see artifacts from the likely Queen Anne’s Revenge, Blackbeard’s flagship, but also artifacts in treatment in Colonial Williamsburg and from the Civil War Monitor at the Mariners Museum in Newport News,” she said. “They have come from all over the work to see what we are doing here and to share their own research and experiences.”
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Donors fuel Kenan Stadium’s growth

5-story add-on, fan seats in the plans

By Eric Ferreri
Staff Writer

CHAPEL HILL — Even in a bad economy, Tar Heel boosters are opening their wallets.

The result: an expansion to Kenan Stadium that hadn’t been a sure thing.

A UNC-Chapel Hill board of trustees committee signed off Wednesday on a plan to pay for the $70 million project, a five-story combination of luxury seating for fans and academic support services for athletes. The full board will likely approve the financing today, clearing the way for construction to start in June.

No public money will be used for the project: Half of the funding will come from private donors, and the rest will come from the sales of luxury seats and suites.

When they settle into their comfortable new seats, with food service, rest rooms and other amenities, the UNC fans buying the premium seats will, for the first time, be able to buy beer and wine. Alcohol has never been sold at UNC-CH athletic venues, but officials are allowing it now as an enticement.

So far, 15 of 20 luxury suites have been sold, at $50,000 each per season. All 224 upper loge boxes, at $2,500 each, have been claimed.

But fans weren’t entirely thrilled with the pricing of the new seating.

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The cheapest of the new seats, called “concours club” seats, were originally $1,500 each.

“We were getting feedback that even the lower end was out of their price range,” said Dick Baddour, director of athletics.

Seat price dropped

Fans wanted a cheaper option, so the seats were reduced to $750 and are now selling more quickly, Baddour said.

“Since we dropped the price, we’ve been really pleased,” he said.

In all, about 3,000 seats will be added.

A fundraiser to collect $35 million by 2015 has had a strong start.

The university surpassed this year’s $10 million goal, bringing in $10.3 million, and officials expect little trouble raising the $5 million per year needed to hit the $35 million total.

One draw for donors has been the new academic center, which at 30,000 square feet will be a major upgrade of the 9,000-square-foot facility it will replace in the same location. The academic center will be available to athletes in all 28 sports.

“I really think there’s a lot of affection for the academic support center,” Baddour said. “That really resonates with people.”

The new facility will have a strength and conditioning center for athletes in nonrevenue sports.

Officials are pleased that they will be able to start work soon, because the weak economy has driven down construction costs. Cost estimates are about 10 percent to 15 percent less than an estimate six months ago, said Rick Steinbacher, associate athletic director for marketing.

The project has been in the planning stage for years, and it has been slowed and tweaked as the financing came through.

“I think two years ago we thought this was impossible,” said campus trustee John Ellison. “They’ve done a great job raising money.”

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New Breed of Specialist Steps In for Family Doctor

By JANE GROSS

PHILADELPHIA — By the time Djigui Keita left the hospital for home, his follow-up appointment had been scheduled. Emergency health insurance was arranged until he could apply for public assistance. He knew about changes in his medication — his doctor had found less expensive brands at local pharmacy chains. And Mr. Keita, 35, who had passed out from dehydration, was cautioned to carry spare water bottles in the taxi he drove for a living.

The hourlong briefing the home-bound patient received here at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania was orchestrated by a hospitalist, a member of America’s fastest-growing medical specialty. Over a decade, this breed of physician-administrator has increasingly taken over the care of the hospitalized patient from overburdened family doctors with less and less time to make hospital rounds — or, as in Mr. Keita’s case, when there is no family doctor at all.

Because hospitalists are on top of everything that happens to a patient — from entry through treatment and discharge — they are largely credited with reducing the length of hospital stays by anywhere from 17 to 30 percent, and reducing costs by 13 to 20 percent, according to studies in The Journal of the American Medical Association. As their numbers have grown, from 800 in the 1990s to 30,000 today, medical experts have come to see hospitalists as potential leaders in the transition to the Obama administration’s health care reforms, to be phased in by 2014.

Under the new legislation, hospitals will be penalized for readmissions, medical errors and inefficient operating systems. Avoidable readmissions are the costliest mistakes for the government and the taxpayer, and they now occur for one in five patients, gobbling $17.4 billion of Medicare’s current $102.6 billion budget.

Dr. Subha Airan-Javia, Mr. Keita’s hospitalist, splits her time between clinical care and designing computer programs to contain costs and manage staff workflow. The discharge
process she walked Mr. Keita and his wife through can work well, or badly, with very different results. Do it safely and the patient gets better. Do it wrong, and he's back on the hospital doorstep — with a second set of bills.

"Where we were headed was not a mystery to anyone immersed in health care," said P. J. Brennan, the chief medical officer for the University of Pennsylvania's hospitals. "We were getting paid to have people in the hospital and the part of that which was waste was under the gun. These young doctors, coming into a highly dysfunctional environment, had an affinity for working on processes and redesigning systems."

But hospitalists are not a panacea. Some have made mistakes when they sent their short-term charges home, failing to pass along necessary information to the regular doctor and family. Another concern is that patients will balk at an unfamiliar doctor at the scariest of times.

Carol Levine, in charge of family caregiving at the United Hospital Fund of New York, remains skeptical that hospitalists will completely smooth the process. "The patient," she said, "is still expecting a doctor-doctor, when 'Wait a minute I don't know you' is going to take care of them."

The hospitalist appeared in the early 1990s, before the primary care situation was the crisis it is now. Today's private internist may carry a roster of more than 2,000 patients, older and sicker than ever before, and the workload is expected to increase 29 percent by 2025. To keep tabs on hospitalized patients, the doctor generally races in, white coat flying, at 7 a.m., when the patient is asleep and the family is not there. (Physicians also earn 40 percent less for time spent with a hospitalized patient than one in the office, according to a report in the journal Health Affairs.)

Mort Miller, 84, of Chicago, was hospitalized eight years ago for a broken hip. He already had congestive heart failure and diabetes and was on dialysis. He died after four weeks.

His son, Joseph, said that he did not once communicate with the family doctor. "He rounded in the morning when I wasn't there and never returned my phone calls," Mr. Miller said. "I guess he didn't have time."

Mr. Miller left his business to help run the hospitalists' professional group, the Society of Hospital Medicine, a career change inspired by his father's experience.

The most compelling argument in favor of hospitalists, who are now in 5,000 institutions, from academic giants like the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania to small community hospitals to innovators like the Mayo and Cleveland Clinics — is that they are there all the time. Another is that they are more comfortable than their predecessors with technology and
cost-cutting decision-making. One day in April, Dr. Airan-Javia was in and out of the rooms of a dozen patients, toggling between clinical work and designing a computer system for the safe handoff of patients between residents whose hours are now limited by law.

Bad discharges generally result from hurried instructions to patients and families and little thought to where they are headed. One such situation was the centerpiece of a class taught for doctors at Mount Sinai Medical Center in New York. The patient, an elderly woman in the hospital for scoliosis, a spinal condition, was discharged by a hospitalist on a Friday night, with a prescription for a narcotic pain reliever that her pharmacy, as it turned out, did not stock. No one explained how her new medication differed from the old, or gave her a contact number for help. Without medication, by Tuesday, her ankles swollen and her breathing irregular, the woman was back in the hospital.

In 2008, the hospitalists’ organization decided to invent better discharge systems rather than respond defensively to criticism, not unlike the simple operating room checklist, made famous by the physician and author Atul Gawande, which reduced accidents and deaths.

In 65 participating hospitals around the country, the Society of Hospital Medicine identifies patients at high risk for readmission, provides staff mentoring, and designs user-friendly discharge forms listing follow-up appointments, potential signs of trouble and phone numbers for the hospital team. Peer-reviewed research on the reforms in the system is expected in a year or two.

Even experts who were initially skeptical agree that the hospitalists’ skill set is timely. They are young and thus not entrenched in the current order. They enjoy working in teams, when older doctors tend to be hierarchical. And, like Dr. Airan-Javia, who has a 16-month-old baby, they appreciate the regular hours and a paycheck of, say, $190,000 — higher by $30,000 than community-based peers.

Dr. Airan-Javia says she made an inspired career choice. Forty percent of her time is spent on the floor, treating diseases and helping patients and families though complex life events, like deciding when it is time to suspend medical care and let life end. Sixty percent of the time she is designing systems to improve workflow and advising the hospital’s chief medical officer. At meetings with her fellow hospitalists, phrases seldom spoken by most doctors, like “cost-effective delivery of care,” and “preventable adverse events,” flow off everyone’s tongue: The language of health care reform.

“The tools have never been better,” she said, “for finally getting all of this right.”
Public colleges looking at record enrollments this summer

By Jennifer Epstein, Inside Higher Ed

Many public colleges and universities were overrun this year by larger-than-ever enrollments driven up by economics and demographics, and early signs suggest that this summer will approach or pass record highs.

Across the country, at flagship universities, state colleges and community colleges, administrators are reporting that their summer session enrollments are up, as the same pressures that put students in the classroom September through May keep them in their seats all summer.

"Having a poor job market is something we correlate positively with," said Richard Russo, director of summer sessions at the University of California at Berkeley. High unemployment drives nontraditional students to enroll in college at all times of the year, but a tough economy makes it more difficult for traditional-age students to find jobs and internships, or gives them greater awareness of the need to complete a degree as quickly and inexpensively as possible.

"There's more pressure; students are being pushed into the summer."

There's no one reason why students are choosing to spend their summers in class, said Curt Eley, vice president for enrollment management at the University of Texas at Dallas. "We can't say that any one factor is leading to our summer growth — there's just so much going into it, so many things that are increasing the numbers at the margins."

ON THE WEB: Defining the enrollment boom

CAMPUS TRENDS: Look who's living on campus

Among the factors: the competitiveness of the summer job and internship markets, a rise in the number of students who attend other institutions but are looking to save money by taking classes at home this summer, and the implementation of year-round Pell Grants.

At UT-Dallas, Eley said, summer enrollment is up 5.3% from last year at this time, to 6,751 students. "Our strategic plan is for growth throughout the year and that includes the summer," he said. "We are really looking actively to make sure that we have a value proposition that appeals to the students in our market and to increasing our enrollment in any way we can."

When the first set of summer classes started Monday at Berkeley, more than 13,800 had already enrolled in the university's summer offerings, a thousand more than had registered by the first day of class last summer. Russo said that he had expected to see more summer students in part because of intensified efforts to attract them. "We've introduced more online classes and are building partnerships to bring international students here in far greater numbers than we can during the rest of the year," he said. "That's where some of our growth is coming from."

Growth in Berkeley's summer enrollment is also coming from Berkeley's own students. The University of California System introduced two sets of fee hikes that will make this fall's tuition 32% more than last fall's, but rather than the full increase, only the 15% increase introduced with the spring semester will apply this summer, Russo said. "We know we have more Berkeley students taking more credits than in the past because they see that here's a way to save a little money and get some of your courses out of the way," he said. "We made a bet that if we don't increase the tuition for the summer we may lose some revenues that way, but we'll make up for it in volume."

Before this year, Berkeley provided institutional aid to Pell-eligible students who wanted to take summer classes. Because of the changes in Pell regulations, the aid that would have gone to those students will be given to low- and middle-income students who don't qualify for Pell. "Some students who might've felt like they couldn't afford the summer session may be able to now," he
said. It's too early, though, for him to have statistics on how the aid picture has changed summer enrollment.

The enrollment picture for summer sessions at the University of California at Los Angeles, is roughly flat. About 14,000 students have registered so far, said Kathleen Micham, associate director of summer sessions. But because the full UC fee hike goes into effect at UCLA this summer, "I was fearing the worst and we haven't gotten the worst," she said.

Even before the UC system became even more crippled this year by furloughs and budget cuts, Micham added, "it was already the understanding here that if you want to get your degree done in four years, you're going to have to do a summer." About 80% of UCLA students spend at least one summer taking classes,

she said, "but they make the best of it — there are fewer students on campuses, things aren't as crowded, class sizes are smaller." And, perhaps most importantly in the era of oversubscribed required courses, "in the summertime, there's no line to get into classes."

Youngstown State University's summer enrollment is down 266 students to 4622 thus far, said Ronald Cole, a spokesperson. "The numbers are so preliminary and fluid at this stage that we're not worried."

Greg McCalley, associate vice president for student affairs at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, said his institution has seen its summer sessions grow in popularity for the last few years. "With the economy as it is, we're seeing a lot more students interested in continuing on with their education instead of taking the summers off," he said. "They want to get their degrees done earlier and this is a way to stack up the hours and get a lot of courses out of the way quickly."

As of Tuesday, 5,012 students had enrolled in the summer session, up 4.6% from 4,789 a year ago. Credit hours, McCalley added, were up 6.3%, suggesting that some students may be taking on heavier course loads this summer than they did in the past.

Eastern Michigan University reports that 5,775 students have signed up for summer classes. A year ago, the number was 5,358. While the headcount is up 7.8%, credit hours are up 8.3%, hinting at the same pattern as at Missouri-St. Louis.

At the University of Central Florida, summer enrollment is up about 5%, to 31,500, said Gordon D. Chavis, associate vice president for undergraduate admissions, student financial assistance and student outreach. The university hasn't yet surveyed students but what he's heard so far from current UCF students suggests that "the fact that students are unable to gain employment in the summer is probably one of the major reasons why they're taking classes," he said.

As of late last week, more than 6,600 students had enrolled in Boise State University's summer classes, a 5.4% increase over a year ago. Washington State University in Pullman has 4,700 summer students so far, about 150 more than it did last year at this time.

The Houston Community College District experienced dramatic enrollment growth during the academic year that seems to be carrying on into the summer. "We're seeing more students than ever who want to take summer classes," said Diana Pinot, vice chancellor for student services. As of Tuesday, 28,771 students had signed up for summer classes, up from 21,216 a year ago at this time. Thousands more, she said, will sign up as the summer rolls on.

Though the Houston district has not yet surveyed students to learn who they are and why they've chosen to enroll, Pinot said she thinks the 35% growth over last summer is an extension of the trends that drove enrollments up throughout the academic year, as well as an indication that greater numbers of students from four-year institutions are opting to take summer community college classes. "Some of these students are coming back home to work or to save resources in terms of room and board by living with their parents," she said, "and they want to take advantage of the fact that we're less expensive than four-year universities."

The same factors are at play at other community colleges. The Community College of Vermont projects a summer enrollment totaling 1,065 students, up 7% from last year. Sinclair Community
College in Dayton, Ohio, has nearly 7,200 students already enrolled in summer classes; a year ago, 6,000 students had enrolled.