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ECU employees recognized for recycling efforts

More than a million. That’s the number of pounds of recyclable waste a special team of employees at East Carolina University diverted from the landfill this past fiscal year. That’s more than a million pounds of cardboard, paper, aluminum and plastic drink containers, hardback books, scrap metal and wood that won’t be taking up space in a landfill, but will be recycled and put to new uses.

That’s pretty amazing. “We’re proud of it,” Terry Little, coordinator of the ECU Recycling Department, said. “It’s really neat at the end of the month to get the collection numbers from my crew leader and see how far we have come since just last year.”

And here’s another amazing number for you: four. That’s the size of Little’s crew. Just four full-time staff members here at ECU collected, sorted and delivered those 1,065,278 pounds of recyclables to a local material recovery facility, ECVC.

Recently, that hardworking team coordinated by Little and made up of Billy Winslow, Jimmy Meeks, Danny Braxton and Ed House, was recognized by the city of Greenville with an Environmental Awareness Award. The city’s Environmental Advisory Commission presents the awards annually to an individual, organization, institution and business that demonstrate exemplary work in an environmental area.

“The ECU Recycling Department takes their job very seriously,” said John Gill, assistant director of Facilities Services at ECU, in his award nomination. “In each of the last five years, the university has decreased the amount of waste taken to the landfill and significantly increased the amount of materials recycled. That says a great deal about the work ethic and motivation of this dedicated group.”

The group services every university-owned or leased building on the main campus, Health Sciences campus and West Research campus, reaching more than 200 buildings in a week.

One employee spends his days collecting mixed paper from various locations. Other crew members pick up cardboard and empty recycling containers that can now be found in residence halls, dining halls, campus buildings and in 14 permanent outdoor sites. Wooden delivery pallets are broken down and recycled. Even hardback books no longer of use to Joyner Library meet an environmentally friendly end. The crew recycled 40,000 books last year.

The program continues to expand with more containers being put in more locations and at more convenient times. The placement of 50 recycling containers at special events, such as football and baseball games, Barefoot on the Mall and Pirate Palooza, has been a very successful new initiative.

“The commingled drink containers are a growing source of materials,” Little said. “That collection has really taken off, and we hope to expand this part of the job even more in the next five years.”

Growth is also being driven by an increased interest in recycling by students, faculty members and staff, Little said. Paper and cardboard remain the “bread and butter of what we do,” according to Little. ECU even has a contract with ECVC, earning money for every pound of paper that’s recycled. Little said the earnings are substantial enough to pay a yearly salary. Funds are often used to purchase educational resources and additional collection bins.

Libraries provide single catalog search tool

The East Carolina University Libraries, J.Y. Joyner Library and William E. Laupus Health Sciences Library, unveiled a new integrated library system, Symphony, on May 21.

The move to Symphony allows library users to search the catalogs of both libraries at once, a tool that has been the single most requested library feature in recent years.

Symphony will improve the internal productivity of the ECU libraries and enhance their capabilities to serve both campuses as well as the greater community. The online catalog contains more than 1.7 million bibliographic records, over 2 million item records (many print or electronic), and approximately 80,000 user re-
Scholarships awarded in health sciences

Erika Leigh Stewart, a student in the Department of Health Service and Information Management in the College of Allied Health Sciences, recently received the North Carolina Health Information Management Association Health Information Administration Scholarship. The $1,000 merit scholarship is offered each spring to an outstanding rising senior pursuing a degree in health information administration and health information technology. Stewart of Benson is president of ECU's Student Health Information Management Association, a member of Epsilon Sigma Alpha and an ECU annual fund supervisor.

Britta Burkhardt, a senior in the health information management program, has received the 2009 Peggy H. Wood Scholarship Award. The scholarship honors Wood, former chair of the health information management department in the College of Allied Health Sciences, and is awarded annually to a deserving student who demonstrates a commitment to the health information profession.

Kun Yu, a second-year graduate student in the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders, received the Gravely Foundation Scholarship valued at $500. The scholarship is awarded to a student with academic excellence, financial need and qualities of good citizenship within the university and contribution or dedication to the enhancement of the professional major.

Scott Cormier of Milford, Maine, an occupational therapy graduate student, Bridget Leford of Corydon, Ind., a senior in clinical laboratory science, and Janelle Luckasavage of Asheville, a doctor of physical therapy student, are recipients of the new College of Allied Health Sciences Patriot Scholarship.

Each has received $1,000 for the 2009-10 academic year. The Patriot Scholarship is based on academic strength, leadership capability and the potential to contribute to a profession in the field of allied health sciences. Awarded must be a military member or veteran, or the spouse or child of a military member or veteran.

Professor to join board for brain tumor program

Dr. Michael Rastatter, professor of communication sciences and disorders at the College of Allied Health Sciences, has been invited to become a member of the board of advisors for the Duke University Preston Robert Tisch Brain Tumor Program. All members of the board have either lost loved ones or have a loved one going through treatment at the center. The center was established in 1937 as one of the first brain tumor research and clinical programs in the United States.
Staying alive: East Carolina holds off South Carolina 8-6

By Nathan Summers
The Daily Reflector

Sunday, May 31, 2009

Two masterful pitching performances and the usual slew of runs assured East Carolina baseball another day to play this season.

The host Pirates won two games Sunday at the NCAA Greenville Regional, and in doing so forced today’s if-necessary game to be necessary.

After rallying from four runs down in the opener, ECU (45-18) sent Binghamton out of the tournament in a 16-9 victory in which Brad Mincey tossed a complete game for the Pirates. In the nightcap, the Pirates avenged Saturday’s 12-2 blowout loss to South Carolina by edging the Gamecocks, 8-6, backed by another big-game win from freshman left-hander Kevin Brandt.

Kyle Roller and Brandon Henderson accounted for seven ECU runs against the Gamecocks with two big swings of the bat to key the offense.

But like always against the Gamecocks, it was anything but easy for the Pirates. ECU toed an 8-2 lead into the bottom of the ninth before South Carolina staged a furious rally, scoring four runs and bringing the potential winning tally to the plate before closer Seth Simmons shut the door with the final two outs.

The Pirates and Gamecocks (40-22) will square off tonight at 6 inside Clark-LeClair Stadium in the regional’s deciding game. The winner advances to play North Carolina, the victor of the Chapel Hill Regional, in next weekend’s Super Regional round.

"I told these guys coming in that we had to be offensive and we were. And I told them that our starters, for us to win this thing, had to give us a deep outing, and we got a tremendous outing from Brad in game one and Kevin in game two," ECU coach Billy Godwin said, adding that he hadn’t decided on a starter for tonight’s game yet.

The same pitcher who notched ECU wins over N.C. State and then-No. 1 North Carolina during the regular season delivered new life to the Pirates in the postseason. Brandt pitched 8 1/3 innings, allowed four runs on eight hits and struck out four.

He warmed up in the bullpen during the first game, but wasn’t needed until the second, an admitted relief to Brandt and Godwin.

"It’s just another game, going out and trying to throw to the best of my potential," Brandt said of his ninth win of the season. "I went down to the pen and started warming up (during the Binghamton game), and they shut me down and I was hoping I wouldn’t have to get back up."

Brandt didn’t surrender a run until Andrew Crisp’s two-run double in the bottom of the seventh, which made it a six-run game.

In the ninth, Jackie Bradley Jr. led off with a single and trotted home when Justin Dalles crushed a two-run home run that made it 8-4. Next, Crisp singled up the middle, Adam Matthews bunted his way on and Bobby Haney chopped a base hit off the glove of ECU shortstop Dustin Harrington to load the bases with one out.

Pinch hitter Brady Thomas ripped a double that ricocheted off the first base bag and into the right field corner, scoring two more runs to make it 8-6 and putting all the pressure on Simmons.
But the Pirate closer notched the next two outs to keep his club in the hunt for a regional win. He was the only relief pitcher the Pirates used all day.

“Kevin gave us all he had, and I wasn’t going to overextend him,” Godwin said of his decision to pull Brandt during South Carolina’s last-inning rally. “Seth Simmons has been our guy all year. It was his ball, his game to win, and I thought what he did was pretty impressive.”

Brandt gave up a double in the first and a single in the second, then proceeded to shut down the Gamecocks until the final frame. As his teammates batted the Pirates to a 4-0 lead, Brandt retired 11 straight over the second, third, fourth and fifth innings.

Roller, who cranked two home runs in one inning in the afternoon game, teed off a three-run shot against South Carolina starter Nolan Belcher in the top of the first to put South Carolina in an immediate hole, 3-0.

“I’ve been working in the cage a lot lately, mainly working on my timing, and I think that was the big key today, being able to keep my foot down and react to pitches,” Roller said of his seven-RBI day.

In the fourth, Harrington’s opposite field flyball grew wings and sailed out to right for a 4-0 ECU edge.

Pirate right fielder Devin Harris kept South Carolina off the board in the fifth when he leapt high above the wall to rob Matthews of a home run.

In the seventh, ECU made sure it would play the Gamecocks again today.

Ryan Wood singled with one out, Stephen Batts walked and Roller was hit by a pitch. Henderson then tattooed a changeup down the left field line for his fourth career grand slam and an 8-0 ECU lead.

“We had a mulligan and we used it,” said South Carolina skipper Ray Tanner, who called Brandt’s performance special. “Now we’ve got to play very, very well (tonight). East Carolina is very good and I thought they played well tonight — defensively, Brandt’s performance and I thought they had some really good at-bats.

“We’re even again.”

ECU 16, Binghamton 9

Trailing 7-3, the Pirates rallied for eight runs in the fifth inning to make a see-saw game stop teetering. ECU, playing out of the loser’s bracket, took an 11-7 lead and never looked back to earn a second chance against South Carolina in the nightcap.

Mincey turned in a stalwart effort, going all nine innings to keep the Pirate bullpen in the bullpen.

Roller blasted two home runs in the Pirates’ fifth-inning barrage. He led off with a solo home run, and in his second trip to the plate in the inning, he smashed a two-run shot off the scoreboard.

In between, pinch hitter Austin Homan bloomed a base hit into shallow right with the bases loaded to bring home two more and cut the BU lead to 7-6.

Trent Whitehead singled to tie the game 7-7 before Batts took the first pitch he saw into the gap in left-center to give his team its second lead, 9-7, before Roller’s second blast capped the big inning.

In the seventh, Wood and Batts were hit by pitches with one out and both scored. Wood came home on Henderson’s bases-loaded sacrifice fly, and Batts scored on Harrington’s RBI single to left-center, upping the lead to 13-7.

BU’s Peter Bregartner hit a two-run homer to briefly cut the lead back to four runs. But Corey Thompson singled home a run in the eighth, and in the ninth, Henderson scored on a double play and Schieber hit a solo homer to round out the scoring for ECU.

The Bearcats (30-22) batted around against Mincey in the third, scoring four runs to take a 4-2 lead in the process.

After C.J. Lukaszewski led off the frame with a single, Mincey struck out Jim Calderone for the first out of the inning, and then forced Henry Dunn to roll a grounder to second base. But Wood’s throw to the second pulled Harrington off the bag, squelching a double play and allowing both runners to reach safely.

Corey Taylor made it 2-1 with his RBI groundout before Dave Ciocchi knocked an RBI single into left-center field to put the Bearcats in the lead, 3-2. Bregartner’s single to right gave Binghamton a two-run cushion,
4-2.

In the fourth, Whitehead cut into the Bearcats' lead when he belted a double down the left field line to score Zach Wright and make it 4-3 BU.

But Binghamton exploded for three more runs with two outs in the fourth on Ciocchi's bases-loaded, bases-clearing double to right, which stretched Binghamton's lead to 7-3. The hit gave Ciocchi five RBIs in the game.

Seven of Binghamton's nine runs were unearned.

The Pirates small-balled their way onto the scoreboard in the top of the first, then rammed home another before the Bearcats made their first trip to the plate.

Whitehead led off with a walk and took second when BU starter Walker McKinven threw wide on a pickoff attempt. Wood then chopped an infield single between second and short to put runners on first and third, and again McKinven missed his target on a pickoff throw to first, allowing Whitehead to charge home for a 1-0 ECU lead.

With one out, Roller ripped an opposite-field double into left field to bring Wood around for a 2-0 lead.

Contact Nathan Summers at nsummers@coxnc.com or (252)329-9595.

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Dr. Irvin Lawrence Jr.

Dr. Irvin E. Lawrence, Jr., 83, of Raleigh, died Thursday afternoon at the E. Carlton Powell Hospice Center in Lillington. Funeral Service will be held 3 p.m. Sunday at Montlawn Funeral Home chapel. Interment will follow in Montlawn Memorial Park. The family will receive friends from 2-3 p.m. Sunday prior to the service. A native of Wake County, Dr. Lawrence was the son of the late Irvin Emmett Lawrence and Gladys Atkins Lawrence. Dr. Lawrence was Professor Emeritus of the Department of Anatomy and Cell Biology at the East Carolina School of Medicine. He served his country with the United States Army Air Corps during World War II. Dr. Lawrence is survived by his sisters, Marie L. Beasley of Raleigh and Dorothy L. Mann and her husband, Truman of Apex, as well as several nieces and nephews. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the E. Carlton Powell Hospice Center, 185 Pine State Street, Lillington, NC 27546. Arrangements by Montlawn Funeral Home, 2911 S. Wilmington Street, Raleigh (www.montlawn.com)

Published in The News & Observer from 5/30 to 5/31/2009
Prepare

Floyd, 10 years of hurricane awareness

Nearing the 10th anniversary of Hurricane Floyd and the most devastating flooding North Carolina has seen before or since, Pitt County is more prepared than ever for stormy weather. But is it enough?

The National Weather Service has recognized East Carolina University as a “StormReady” university after a yearlong effort to increase the university’s capacity for protecting lives and property during severe weather. Pitt County Emergency Management has the ALERT and the Alert Me systems, which call registered residents on their land lines or cellular telephones in the event of severe weather. Hospitals, schools and workplaces have their own contingency plans for dealing with hurricanes.

All the official planning and preparation matters less, however, if individuals and families fail to take the recommended steps to brace for a hurricane.

Surveys conducted by the Salvation Army show that only about half of coastal residents have a family disaster plan or survival kit, and nearly a third indicate they would wait for a hurricane warning before preparing their homes for a storm.

Residents who were living in flood-ravaged areas of eastern North Carolina after Floyd should be among those who diligently prepare for the worst. Floyd caused nearly every river basin in the region to exceed 500-year flood levels. The lives, homes and livelihoods lost to that storm were still painful when Katrina spread its swath of misery along the Gulf Coast in 2005.

The National Weather Service says four to seven hurricanes are likely during 2009, emerging from 14 named storms. Experts point out that a single hurricane making landfall is all that is needed to create a “bad” hurricane season.

So stockpile enough food and water to last a minimum of three days, check your list of items necessary for preparing your home and property, and make an evacuation plan. Despite predictions, this could be a mild hurricane season or it could be the worst.

Prepare for the worst.
James F. Webb, Jr.

James Fred Webb Jr., 91, was called to be with the Lord Saturday, May 30, 2009.

The memorial service will be conducted at 3 p.m. Monday in the First Presbyterian Church. Burial will be private.

Mr. Webb was born in Edgecombe County on April 21, 1918, to James Fred Webb Sr. and Mattie Walston Webb. He graduated from South Edgecombe High School in 1935. He then attended North Carolina State University, graduating in 1939 with a degree in agriculture. He was elected to the honorary Agricultural Alpha Zeta Fraternity.

Mr. Webb entered the U. S. Army in March, 1942, earning the rank of Lieutenant Colonel by 1946. He then started his career in the grain business in Elizabeth City. He was with Continental Grain Company for a short time before launching Fred Webb Inc., an agricultural commodity merchant company of his own in Greenville that had other subsidiaries in the cotton business and agricultural land business.

Mr. Webb became the largest private grain dealer on the East Coast, operating over 50 locations in North Carolina, Virginia and Maryland. His company received awards two consecutive years for being in the Top 100 Companies in North Carolina. A friend to all people in the agricultural community, known for his loyalty and honest dealing with all farmers and fellow grain dealers, he was a much beloved confidant and mentor for his many employees and business partners.

He was Charter President of the N.C. Grain Dealers Association and served on the Board of Directors of the National Grain Dealers Association. As the first President of the South East Grain Association, his career spanned many changes in the grain business. His original grain elevator received ear corn still in the shuck. With the advent of grain combines, he fulfilled his vision by designing and building a state-of-the-art grain elevator. He loved telling about the man who, upon learning that he was going to start building a 250,000-bushel elevator in 1957, said, "Young man, you will never fill it up. ... you'll go broke." He continued expanding that original 250,000 to over 2.5 million bushels. His elevator was capable of blending 50 different bins simultaneously. At the same time, it dried three different commodities and could also load out or unload by railroad or truck. He was an innovator in the government storage era by being the first in the grain business to store grain in warehouses and on the ground. Throughout his business career, he always said his best asset (besides his wife) was his employees, whom he continued to befriend until his death.

Mr. Webb was a member of the Chancellor’s Society and the Order of the Cupola at East Carolina University. He was Chairman of the Board of the local N.C. National Bank, now known as Bank of America. He was one of the founders of The Greater Greenville Community Foundation. He was also past president of the Jaycees and the Kiwanis Clubs.

Mr. Webb was extremely active in his church, First Presbyterian Church of Greenville. He was deacon, elder, co-chair of the building committee and a Sunday school teacher for many years. The Sunday school class he taught was named in his honor. He was also an active member of the Men of the Church.

Mr. Webb was a member of the Greenville Country Club for over 50 years and was an avid golfer, having scored two holes-in-one. Intensely competitive, he loved a good match but was also a gentleman, whether he won or lost. He organized many golf trips with his buddies, who recently recognized him by naming a bench in his honor where he would sit and figure his score and matches. He consistently shot his age or better. After his grandson, Webb Simpson, received his PGA Tour Card, he spent many tense but happy hours on his laptop following Webb’s play in tournaments.

Preceding him in death, besides his parents, were his sister, Evelyn, and his brother Marvin.

Mr. Webb is survived by his beloved wife of 68 years, Nellie W. Webb; his sister, Edna Webb Colson; his son, Dr. Thomas Frederick Webb and wife Karen Farless Webb of Greenville; daughters Judy Webb Lanier and husband Jean Edmond Lanier of Paris, France; Bonnie Webb Gaylord and husband Richard Warren Gaylord Jr. of Raleigh; Debbie Webb Simpson and husband Evander Samuel Simpson of Raleigh; eight grandchildren, Caroline Bernhardt-Lanier and husband Jason; Nellie Lanier Harasimowicz and husband Jim; Elizabeth Webb Wells and husband Vin; Blair Webb Hogan and husband Joe; Laura Webb Covington and husband Thomas; Blake Simpson Fricks and husband Wesley; Natalie Simpson Davis and husband Jay and Chase Butler Simpson; seven grandchildren, Richard Warren Gaylord, III and wife Katie; Todd Webb Gaylord and wife Sydney; Bonner Gardner Gaylord and wife Ashley; Brittain Dawson Gaylord; Patrick Jean Edmond Lanier and wife Jenna; James Frederick Webb Simpson and Thomas Frederick Webb Jr.; thirteen great grandchildren Thomas, Nicholas, Alexia and Celine Bernhardt-Lanier; Paulina and Alexander Harasimowicz; Lulu Wells; Vail, Mary Haven, Boone, Ren, McKinnon and Gigi Gaylord.

More than anything, he loved his wife and family, who all adored him.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the Fred and Nell Webb Endowment Fund, c/o First Presbyterian Church, 1400 S. Elm St., Greenville, NC 27858-3746.

The family will receive friends from 3-5 p.m. Sunday at the home.

Laurels — To the slight drop in Pitt County’s unemployment rate, which landed at 10 percent in April. That’s down from 10.5 percent in March, but there is some concern that the numbers may be on the uptick again soon. Some signs indicate this recession is easing, but that has yet to manifest itself in needed job growth.

On the diamond

Laurels — To the NCAA Regional Baseball Tournament in Greenville this weekend. Clark-LeClair Stadium for the first time hosts the first round of postseason play as East Carolina University welcomes three teams for the double-elimination contest. The Pirates will enjoy strong support as they look to step toward the College World Series in Omaha.

Laurels — To the many visitors in town this weekend for the tournament, including those who came to support East Carolina’s competitors. Despite the traffic an event of this size can bring, both the activity and the revenue are more than welcome to this community. One hopes that the city’s many guests enjoy the weekend and, if you’re not rooting for the Pirates, don’t take the losses too hard.

Darts — To the first tropical depression of the season, a small system in the Atlantic that marks the start of this year’s hurricane season. Forecasters predict a storm season with average activity, with most expecting fewer than the 16 named systems that developed last year. Residents should ready themselves regardless, storing supplies in case a dangerous system threatens.

Laurels — To the baseball and softball postseason now under way for high school teams, including some local squads still competing for titles. Five teams — J.H. Rose baseball and softball, D.H. Conley softball, Ayden-Griffton baseball and Farmville Central softball — all came into the week alive in the playoffs. And though losses have ended several dreams, successful seasons should still elicit pride in players, coaches and parents.

Darts — To the 30 vehicle accidents recorded in Pitt and Martin counties by the state Highway Patrol over the holiday weekend. While thankfully none of the wrecks involved fatalities or serious injuries, that number represents a level of carelessness behind the wheel that should encourage better driving habits across the community. Stay alert and be cautious on the roadways.

Laurels — To the N.C. Senate’s unanimous vote to suspend the graduation project requirement for high school seniors through 2010. Educators have expressed reservations about the provision, with some questioning its value and the burden it may place on low-income students. Legislative staffers will study the requirement before a final decision is made by lawmakers for future seniors.

Compiled by Brian Colligan, editorial page editor of The Daily Reflector. Contact him at 329-9507 or via e-mail at bcolligan@coxnc.com
ECU professor writes diet book

ECU News Services

Saturday, May 30, 2009

GREENVILLE — According to a new diet book by an East Carolina University scientist, carbohydrates are the target in the fight to lose weight, but simply eating fewer carbs isn’t the secret.

“The Dudek Diet Plan” (Outskirts Press, $24.95) is based on how the body processes carbohydrates, said Dr. Ronald W. Dudek, a professor of anatomy and cell biology at the Brody School of Medicine at ECU. In it, Dudek explains that while people should eat fewer carbohydrates to lose weight, the body needs — even craves — varying amounts of carbohydrates to carry out its metabolic needs.

Dudek will sign copies of his book at 7 p.m. Thursday at Barnes & Noble in the University Commons shopping center.

Dudek also has written 12 medical textbooks.

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Bowles rallies supporters to lobby for UNC

UNC system President Erskine Bowles is calling in reinforcements in the battle over the budget.

Bowles sent e-mail messages to the UNC Board of Governors and the UNC system's chancellors, asking them to activate their supporters to contact legislators over the weekend and early this week. And he offered talking points with the clear message that an 11 percent budget cut, now under discussion in the House, "would have severe and lasting negative impacts on student access and the quality of education our universities can offer."

He included contact information for the House budget committee members and urged a quick campaign by university supporters to stave off 8 percent tuition increases and $337 million in cuts.

"If cuts of that magnitude are implemented," he wrote, "students on every UNC campus will see 1) larger classes; 2) less student advising and counseling; 3) higher faculty/student ratios; 4) lower retention and graduation rates; 5) delayed classroom upgrades and laboratory renovations; 6) fewer security personnel; 7) reductions in library services; and 8) reductions in maintenance."

Bowles said he understood the severity of the recession and the difficult choices required of lawmakers, but warned that "while it takes generations to build a great University like UNC, that hard-won quality and reputation will erode quickly if it is not adequately funded and sustained."
Community colleges may face tuition hike

By Josh Humphries
The Daily Reflector

Friday, May 29, 2009

Working with a $4 billion deficit, lawmakers in Raleigh are considering a hike in community college tuition.

Pitt County Rep. Marian McLawhorn, chairwoman of the education appropriation subcommittee, said a tentative plan calls for an increase in community college tuition by $8 per credit hour along with an 8 percent increase in University of North Carolina tuition and an increase in K-12 class sizes.

Community college tuition in North Carolina is $42 per credit hour. The proposal would bring the total to $50 per credit hour or about $800 per semester for a 16-hour course load.

Officials at Pitt Community College are preparing for the increase.

"We hope that they will not have to increase tuition, but we understand the process they are going through," Susan Nobles, vice president of institutional advancement at PCC, said.

Nobles said that an early decision by the Legislature would be helpful because PCC begins enrolling students in July. She said it would be best to know what students will be charged before enrolling them.

"We are hoping that they will decide very soon," Nobles said. "We have communicated that with our legislators, and we know that they are trying to make a decision right away."

In spite of a potential increase, McLawhorn said that North Carolina's community colleges are less expensive than other community colleges in the South and would remain so.

The subcommittee is planning to increase the size of the Pell Grant to offset the increased cost of community college, McLawhorn said.

PCC, meanwhile, is gearing up to help students find financial aid to pay for their education.

"We have worked with students for whom any additional costs is an issue," Nobles said. "We are going to do all we can to help them with any increase that might come."

The House is working with a budget that will have to be balanced with $1 billion less than the Senate used for its budget just last month.

"The amount of resources that we have to work with keeps going lower," McLawhorn said.

McLawhorn said the subcommittee could vote as early as Thursday before its recommendations go before the full House and ultimately the Senate, where any number of changes could be made.

The subcommittee also is planning to increase tuition at the 16 campuses of the University of North Carolina System by 8 percent or $200, whichever is lower.

Tuition at East Carolina University for the 2008-09 year was $2,445. If the proposal is approved, tuition at ECU would increase to $2,640, an increase of $195.

McLawhorn said there will be cuts to departments across the state.

"Unlike the federal government we can not print money and we have to balance our budget," she said.

Contact Josh Humphries at jhumphries@coxnc.com or (252) 329-9565.
UNC-CH study gauges effect of drugmakers' ads

Pitches aimed at patients don’t boost sales much, but wooing doctors does

BY SARAH AVERY, Staff Writer

An estimated 1 million people flocked to their doctors in the months after TV commercials began airing for a new and ultimately short-lived drug to treat irritable bowel syndrome.

But the spike in doctor visits didn’t result in a lot of additional prescriptions for the drug Zelnorm, researchers at UNC-Chapel Hill reported Sunday in a study of how marketing strategies affect drug sales. Prescriptions for the drug were fueled by the manufacturer’s simultaneous campaign to influence physicians.

The findings add insight into the marketing success of drug companies when they target consumers and doctors directly -- approaches that have long raised controversy.

Dr. Spencer Dorn, a gastroenterology fellow at the UNC-CH School of Medicine and lead author of the study, said there were “positives and negatives” to the advertising strategies by the maker of Zelnorm.

On the plus side, he said, the commercials raised awareness about a bowel condition that causes much discomfort and prompted many sufferers to seek help. At the same time, however, too many people may have gotten prescriptions for a drug with dubious benefit and potential risks, he said.

Zelnorm has since been pulled from the market because of safety concerns but not before an ad blitz made irritable bowel syndrome a household term, with ads featuring people raising their shirts to reveal messages drawn on their bellies.

Advocacy groups, health-care economists and some doctors have assailed television and print advertisements aimed at consumers since restrictions on such campaigns were lifted in 1997. The groups contend the ads fuel unnecessary spending on drugs when consumers demand high-dollar brands they’ve seen on TV.

According to an analysis of consumer advertising released in 2006, the Government Accountability Office found that drug companies spent $4.2 billion on ads hawking pills for all manner of problems -- erectile dysfunction, seasonal allergies, herpes, arthritis, sleep difficulties and acid reflux. The GAO projected that ad spending would rise 20 percent a year.

Even so, that investment trails the money drug companies spend persuading doctors to prescribe their brands.

The same GAO study found that the manufacturers spent $7.2 billion a year on promotional efforts aimed at doctors, including lunches to explain their products, trinkets emblazoned with their brands and ads in professional journals.

"Really, the two are parts of a strategy, and they’re intended to reinforce one another," said
Dr. Peter Lurie with the consumer advocacy group, Public Citizen, "First, you try to get patients to pressure doctors, and then soften up doctors with ads directed at them."

That strategy paid off for Novartis, the manufacturer of Zelnorm, according to the UNC-CH study authors.

In 2005, the company spent $127 million promoting the drug to doctors, and $122 million buying ads targeting consumers. In the first three months after ads began running, the study authors calculated an additional 1 million doctor appointments from patients complaining of abdominal pain, constipation and other symptoms of irritable bowel syndrome.

Those visits resulted in 400,000 new diagnoses of the condition, Dorn reported.

The increases tapered off and then fell back to normal, but prescriptions for Zelnorm continued to rise. Dorn said his analysis indicates that the ongoing rise in prescriptions for the drug suggests it was doctors who were influenced by the marketing.

He said for every $243 spent on promotional efforts to doctors, the drug company landed a new prescription for Zelnorm. It was a lucrative investment. A one-month supply of the drug cost about $180, and patients were supposed to take the drug indefinitely to control their symptoms.

Lurie, with the advocacy group, testified before a U.S. Senate committee that the zeal to market drugs can cause harm to consumers, who are wooed to try new therapies that have little or no track record.

In 2007, five years after Zelnorm was approved, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration asked Novartis to remove the drug from the market, citing an increased risk of heart attacks and strokes for patients who took it.

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Administrator leaving UNC-CH to be a chancellor

BY ANNE BLYTUE, staff writer

CHAPEL HILL - Bernadette Gray-Little, UNC-Chapel Hill executive vice chancellor and provost since July 2006, will leave her high-ranking post at the end of the summer to become the first female and first black chancellor at the University of Kansas.

Officials at both universities announced the news Friday.

"This is a huge loss for Carolina and a great gain for Kansas," UNC-CH Chancellor Holden Thorp said in a letter to colleagues. "Bernadette made her career here at Carolina for more than three decades. ...In every role, Bernadette has served with the highest level of integrity and the best interest of the university in mind. Carolina is better because of her."

Bruce Carney, interim dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, will serve as interim executive vice chancellor and provost, Thorp said in the letter.

Carney, a professor of physics and astronomy, has been at UNC-CH since 1980. The executive vice chancellor and provost serves as chief academic officer, and oversees all academic operations, including 13 schools and the College of Arts and Sciences, the university libraries, a variety of centers and other cultural and educational units.

Gray-Little, who plans to take over at Kansas on Aug. 15, will be introduced on the Lawrence campus today with a reception. She will replace Robert Hemenway, chancellor since 1995. Hemenway announced his plans to retire in December.

Kansas university officials announced the appointment after holding closed meetings Thursday and Friday. Board members said her academic and administrative credentials put her at the
top of a strong pool of candidates. "We found her unassuming, but very powerful," said Donna Shank, chairwoman of the Board of Regents in Kansas.

Gray-Little called the University of Kansas "a place of high quality and high aspirations. "There is a sense of place and a sense of tradition," she said. "I look forward to getting started."

Gray-Little holds a master's degree and a doctorate in psychology, and she served as a psychology professor at UNC-CH before becoming director of the graduate program in clinical psychology and, later, chairwoman of the psychology department.

Thorp said he would form a search committee to identify a new executive vice chancellor and provost.

The Associated Press contributed toxithisreport.

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Local educator receives ‘Honor a Teacher’ award

Posted By GCNT On May 29, 2009 @ 4:53 pm In Education | No Comments

Staff reports

Beverly Dudley of Garner, a health and physical education teacher at Reedy Creek Middle School in Cary, received the Teacher Leadership Award sponsored by the Western Wake Area Principals. Trophies and checks for $1,000 were presented to 24 recipients at the awards ceremony at the Koka Booth Amphitheatre at Regency Park in Cary on Monday, May 11.

Beverly Dudley

Dudley graduated from East Carolina University in 1969 and received her master's degree in education from ECU in 2004. She is the healthful living department chair, cheerleading coach, Hoops for Heart coordinator and staff wellness coordinator and has served as a mentor to beginning teachers for nine years.

During the last four years, her healthful living department has written and received over $16,000 in various grants for programs to increase student learning related to living a healthy lifestyle. Dudley's most recent accomplishment was receiving her national board certification in November 2008.

The Cary Chamber of Commerce's Honor a Teacher Program recognizes teachers that go above and beyond the call of duty.

Related articles:

- Local first-year teachers receive Diane Kent-Parker awards [2]

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