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ECU med school partners with UNC-Pembroke, A&T

The Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University will guarantee admission to a few top students at UNC-Pembroke and N.C. A&T State University under a new agreement among the three schools.

ECU is expanding its “early assurance” medical school admission plan to the other universities, hoping to beef up the number of doctors practicing in underserved parts of the state.

For 10 years, the medical school has guaranteed medical school admission to select high school seniors competing for the East Carolina Scholars program, the university's top undergrad scholarship.

Four students get that early admission each year. It means if they hit certain academic benchmarks, they'll be admitted to the ECU medical school after college graduation without having to compete with other applicants or take the medical school entrance exam.

Since the program started, 15 such scholars have graduated from ECU's medical school.

Now, ECU will admit two early assurance students each from UNC-P and N.C. A & T. Those students must be North Carolinians with at least a 3.5 grade point average.

UNC-P expects to open the program to students enrolling in fall 2011. N.C. A&T will offer it to students starting either this fall or next fall.
University bond plan gets early OK

$450 million package for high-tech projects

BY BENJAMIN NIOLET
STAFF WRITER

RALEIGH — The state Senate gave preliminary approval Wednesday to a $450 million package of high-tech and engineering projects for universities.

The borrowing, which would not require the approval of voters, would go toward the construction of two new engineering buildings at N.C. State and N.C. A&T State universities.

Supporters said the bond package would help make the state competitive in high-tech fields. It also would take advantage of low construction costs and would spur job growth, they said.

"This bill will help get our economy back on track," said Sen. Tony Foriest, an Alamance County Democrat. "This is something that will help us recover even sooner."

Opponents, mostly Republicans, objected to borrowing money in a recession. The state's voters should make that decision, said Sen. Phil Berger, an Eden Republican. Taxes and stimulus dollars are scheduled to expire next year, leaving a deficit of as much as $3 billion next year, for budget writers, Berger said.

Repaying the borrowed money is expected to cost more than $18 million next year and as much as $39 million in following years.

"The votes cast by Democrats today prove one thing," Berger said after the vote. "Senate Democrats are going to spend your money and do not care to hear from the people."

The bill cleared a vote Wednesday 32-17. It requires one more vote today before it moves to the House. But it's unclear how much support the measure will have in the House, which has been less kind to universities in its budget proposal this year.

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Macy announces additions to ECU staff
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Fred Applin, Ann Hancock, Shay Hayes and Carol Sciaretta have all been named to the East Carolina women’s basketball staff, head coach Heather Macy announced Wednesday. Applin, Hancock and Hayes will serve as assistant coaches while Sciaretta assumes the director of basketball operations position.

Applin, an associate head coach at Wake Forest for three seasons before heading to Washington, has an extensive coaching resume. A highly-regarded recruiter, Applin’s career has also included assistant coaching stints at Texas, North Carolina and Houston, as well as a tenure as head women’s basketball coach at Hampton.

A 1985 Elon graduate and native of Roseboro, Applin was recognized by the Women’s Basketball Journal as one of the nation’s top assistant coaches in its 1998-99 coaching poll. During his six years at Texas (1998-2004), the Longhorns reached the NCAA Sweet 16 three straight years (2002-04) and advanced to the Final Four in 2003. That season, Texas also won both the Big 12 regular season and tournament titles, while the 2004 squad won the league’s regular season title.

“We have hired one of the premier recruiters in the country in Fred Applin,” Macy said. “He will bring excitement, passion and experience to our program. He wants to be a part of the Pirate Nation and has shown the work ethic to really help us realize our vision.”

In 10 seasons as the head coach at UNC Wilmington, Hancock became the program’s leader in victories at the NCAA Division I level.

She reached another personal milestone during the 2007-08 campaign, becoming just the second coach in the school’s history to amass 100 wins when the Seahawks defeated East Carolina on Dec. 20.

A native of Elizabethtown, Hancock previously served as an assistant for Sylvia Hatchell’s UNC Chapel Hill program for eight seasons. Hancock helped the Tar Heels win the national championship in 1994 and capture Atlantic Coast Conference titles in 1994, 1995, 1997 and 1998.

“Ann is a great fit for our program because she has 10 years of head coaching experience, as well as a national championship to her credit while working with Sylvia Hatchell at North Carolina,” Macy said. “That experience, combined with a timeless work ethic, will really benefit us as we continue the attempt to develop into a force in Conference USA and nationally.

“Fred and Ann were an integral part of the Tar Heels’ national championship squad and I think they have combined to help us assemble the ‘dream team’ staff.”
Hayes, a former standout player at East Carolina under head coach Anne Donovan, makes her return to Greenville after coaching basketball at Farmville Central High School from 1998-2006 and Holly Springs High School the past four seasons.

As the Jaguars’ head girls’ basketball coach, Hayes led her team to the North Carolina 2-A state title in 2006 and regional titles in 2004 and 2005. Farmville Central was also the regional runner-up in 2003.

"Reconnecting the past to the present is an important part of the growth of this program," Macy said. "We have demonstrated this commitment and have hit a home run with the addition of Shay Hayes to our staff."

Sciaretta arrives in Greenville after a two-year stint as Macy’s assistant coach at Francis Marion. Her responsibilities included recruiting, on-floor coaching and academic support.

"Carol Sciaretta is my right hand," Macy said. "We have been to two NCAA tournaments and the Sweet Sixteen together. She is a winner, a role model and was my MVP for the past two years."

— ECU Media Relations
Duncan urges black colleges to step up

DURHAM -- U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan challenged the nation's historically black colleges and universities today, saying they would have to play a key role if President Obama's goal to lead the world in college graduates is to come to fruition.

Duncan, speaking at the first of two stops today in Durham, appeared at symposium sponsored by N.C. Central University examining the future of HBCUs.

Duncan said Obama's goal of leading the world in the percentage of college graduates by 2020 won't happen without HBCUs, which are making strides but still struggle to retain and graduate students.

"Education is meant to be the great equalizer," Duncan said. "It shouldn't matter your race or ZIP code. Equal education is the civil rights fight of our era."

In particular, Duncan said, HBCUs need to improve teacher preparation programs and create more minority teachers.

"Too few children of color have teachers of color," he said.

While acknowledging that HBCUs have long faced challenges related to funding, facilities and the number of students with remedial needs, Duncan said the current White House administration hopes to help.

He said the federal government is making more resources available to HBCUs, is encouraging more partnerships with the private sector, and seeks to change image of these schools.
Dance coach accused of embezzlement

FROM STAFF REPORTS

RALEIGH — The coach of N.C. State University’s dance team, Jamila K. Wright, has been charged with embezzling $21,000 from the team, according to an arrest warrant.

Wright, 27, of 1536 Sunbow Falls Lane, Apt. 305, Raleigh, was arrested Wednesday, and released on $2,000 bail.

She could not be reached for comment Wednesday night.

The warrant said Wright took the money between December 2007 and February of this year.

According to an NCSU biography online, Wright graduated from the university in 2004 after spending four years on the team.

She was a collegiate All American twice and was captain of the team her junior year and performed in the NFL ProBowl halftime show in 2000.

The dance team performs at Wolfpack football and basketball games and other sports events, and competes against other college dance teams in an annual national competition.

In recent years, the NCSU team has often placed in the top 10.