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East Carolina University News Bureau
E-mail to durhamj@ecu.edu Web site at http://www.news.ecu.edu
252-328-6481 FAX: 252-328-6300
Local young violinists set to travel as ambassadors for concerts in England

By Tom Marine
The Daily Reflector

Their flight departs Raleigh-Durham International Airport at 5:55 p.m. today.

Ahead lie a foreign nation and a two-week trip, including classical music performances.

The group of young violinists travels to England for the North Carolina Suzuki Violin tour, with stays in Bath, Taunton and London.

The local group, consisting of about 30 students, their family members and two chaperones, will perform two concerts and stay with host families during their time abroad.

"Going out of the country, it's important for children to know people live in different ways," said Joanne Bath, distinguished professor of Suzuki pedagogy at East Carolina University. "They really gain connections with children from other countries."

The group, which ranges in age from 13 to 16, will join Suzuki students from The Cape Fear Valley School of Violin.

To honor the violinists, Mayor Pat Dunn officially designated the group to serve as cultural ambassadors for the city of Greenville.

Gov. Michael F. Easley wrote a letter congratulating the group for being invited to play overseas by the mayors of Taunton and Bath.

"I applaud you for your desire to be the best you can," the governor wrote.

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VIOLINS

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"I also admire your hard work, commitment to excellence, and your recognition of the importance of developing those skills that are necessary to be successful in life."

One highlight of the trip will be the group’s concert at Bath Abbey, featuring a solo performance by one of the local students, Anna Dietrich.

Suzuki is an action approach to learning music. Helping chaperone the trip with her husband, Charles, Joanne said the most important part of teaching Suzuki is getting people to work peacefully together.

This will be the sixth time the Baths have taken Suzuki students to England. They have also taken groups to Sweden three times.

"It gives me great pleasure to see the children play together," Joanne said. "I smile the whole time, and they play on such a high level."

Katie Johnson, a 14-year-old student at the Parrott Academy, said she wants to play her violin during the flight, because it would be something she hasn’t experienced before. "I hope they let me," Johnson said. "It would be an air concert."

Johnson said she is interested in seeing if the other musicians play the same style and use the same techniques as her.

For Charles, whose father is originally from England, the trip has additional personal meaning.

He said he is looking forward to meeting the people there and having the students intermingle and play with the students from England.

"We have to be open-minded and accepting, because there is a different world out there," Charles said, referring to what he hopes the students get out of the trip. "The way we live is not necessarily the way other people live."

Tom Marine can be contacted at tmarine@coxnc.com and 329-9587.
Laurels — To plans for improving and expanding the children's hospital at Pitt County Memorial Hospital. The plan's first phase includes development of a hematology and oncology unit, more capacity to care for newborns, and improvement of outpatient services. Children's hospitals are among the health care industry's least lucrative, yet they serve society's most important asset. The commitment of PCMH to improving that service is to be commended and must be met with generous financial support from the greater community.
Gift enables insurance, risk program

ECU News Bureau
Special to the Daily Reflector

The College of Business has received a $50,000 endowment from the North Carolina Surplus Lines Association, a support agency for licensees who underwrite unique and hard-to-place risks. The endowment will support a new risk and insurance concentration being developed by the college's finance department.

Frederick Niswander, dean of the College of Business, said, "We are sincerely grateful to the NCSLA for its investment in our students." Niswander continued, "Their support will help us provide top-notch instruction in the growing field of insurance, preparing today's students to become tomorrow's insurance professionals.

The fund will work in tandem with the recently announced gift from the Independent Insurance Agents of North Carolina, which established a faculty chair in support of the risk and insurance concentration.

ECU named to consortium

ECU was named last month to join the Carolinas Photonics Consortium. ECU's inclusion into the nation's largest research and development group will provide research and development opportunities for the university's physicists, medical researchers and engineers.

Photonics technologies are used in products such as DVD players, telecommunications, surgeries, and missile guidance, said Jeff Conley, director of the consortium, which includes UNC Charlotte, North Carolina State University, Western Carolina University, Duke University, and Clemson University.

"ECU has a good combination of research and applications efforts, and provides access to unique markets and industries," Conley said. "Its addition to our consortium is a natural next step."

A distinctive feature of ECU's photonics research is its strong association with biology, medicine and biophotonics. Approximately 20 ECU researchers are pursuing projects aimed at addressing many real world challenges, including cancer diagnosis and treatment.

Youth leadership school to begin

The College of Education will host the 22nd annual

Home-based teachers' course

ECU's Center for Science, Mathematics, and Technology Education is offering K-12 teachers across the state home-based and online professional development courses this summer.

Titles of offered programs include: Reading and Thinking about Science, EarthCaching: North Carolina's Wild Places, Lights, Camera, Action! and Online Science Modules: Promoting Standards in Science and Mathematics. Cost for the programs range between $30 and $46, and teachers can earn 3.0 professional development credits.

Details about each program and application forms may be found on the CSMTE Web site: http://www.ecu.edu/educ/csmte/.

For more information, contact Karen Dawkins, director: dawkinsk@ecu.edu.
Some people collect stamps. Others collect baseball cards, rare coins, or even antique automobiles.

Dr. Donald Hoffman collects microscopes.

Displayed on all three floors in Laupus Library at the Brody School of Medicine, an exhibit is showcasing about 40 of Hoffman's microscopes with their information and a 20 minute slide-show. He owns nearly 50.

"A lot of people have found them particularly interesting," said Hoffman, professor of pathology and laboratory medicine at the Brody School of Medicine. "Everyone seemed to enjoy it."

The collection spans countries and generations, with the instruments dating between 1840 and 1960 and coming from Great Britain, France, Germany and the United States.

Hoffman said some of his models are the types used by scientists who made important discoveries, such as Alexander Fleming, who discovered penicillin; Rudolf Virchow, dubbed "The Father of Pathology," and Paul Ehrlich, 1908 Nobel Prize winner noted for his work in hematology, immunology and chemotherapy.

Ruth Moskop, head of history programs at Laupus Library, said the exhibit originally was scheduled to run until the end of July, but now will be featured through the fall and, possibly, even December.

"I think they are very attractive and fascinating," Moskop said. "I was delighted when he let us borrow them."

Although collecting microscopes may appear to be uncommon, Hoffman said many in the medical community collect them because they are one of the few pieces of scientific equipment practical to keep at home.

"There are a few (microscope) dealers, but the big market is by auction," said Hoffman, who has been collecting for less than two years. "When I see one, I just decide how much I am going to pay and don't go past that."

Hoffman said he will not

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EXHIBIT

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buy too many more, although he hopes to see a Smith & Beck model similar to the one used by Charles Darwin.

Moskop commended Hoffman for providing all the information about each microscope and for creating a slide-show that continuously plays next to the display cases.

She said the exhibit has lived up to all her expectations.

"(The microscopes) represent meticulous craftsmanship," Moskop said. "These are extremely high-powered lenses that enable the subject to be enlarged 100 times. It's fascinating to look at the microscopic world."

Laupus Library Director Dorothy Spencer wrote in an e-mail that she is pleased with the collaboration between the library's History Programs and Hoffman to present the exhibit.

"These microscopes clearly demonstrate how technology can also be fine art," Spencer wrote. "It presents the evolution of microscope technology, design and materials."

Contact Tom Marine at tma-

rine@coxnc.com and 329-9567
To the Senate

Bipartisan budget advances in Raleigh

Gov. Mike Easley and Democratic leaders in the N.C. Senate may be disappointed in the budget approved by the state House last week, but the spending plan represents a strong framework for the coming fiscal year.

While notable flaws will need to be addressed — particularly in regard to university enrollment — the budget earned a remarkable level of bipartisan approval in passing the House, a rarity in North Carolina. The Senate should look to refine, not rebuild, as it begins deliberation.

The House budget emerged from two votes of support this week in its progress through the General Assembly, by 102-12 and 104-10 margins.

That represents a level of bipartisan support seen quite infrequently in the state Legislature, and an achievement that warrants further exploration.

Easley's original budget proposal offers strong priorities for the state. He would increase teacher salaries by 7 percent, fund expanded university enrollment, pay for early childhood education programs and start the needed repair of the state's mental health program.

However, the governor employed unpopular and indirect ways of funding those priorities. For instance, he would use higher taxes on alcohol and cigarettes to pay for mental health and teacher salaries, respectively.

The House rejected that strategy and offered a more modest, $21.3 billion budget. Overall spending would increase only 3.2 percent, a significant drop-off from last year's 9.6 percent increase. It makes some internal redirection of funds, including lower salaries for lottery employees, while raising some fees to offset the need for higher taxes. Compromises garnered strong support from both sides of the aisle and allowed the House to move swiftly.

However, the governor strongly condemned the spending plan before the second vote required to send the bill to the Senate. He said the House does not provide adequate funding for the massive influx of students expected across the University of North Carolina system. It does not meet the goal of bringing teacher salaries to the national average by 2009. And it does not address the significant funding needs in mental health or early childhood education, Easley's signature focus.

As budget deliberations turn to the Senate, lawmakers are expected to address those shortfalls. North Carolina must prepare for the growing university population and the demand it creates. It should invest in public education and, in particular, teachers through higher salaries. Mental health must be addressed swiftly, given the deep concerns raised about the system, and early childhood education should receive legislators' deference in negotiations.

But a modest budget with attainable goals — especially one with bipartisan support — should be lauded in Raleigh. It should serve as a sound foundation, one forged through compromise, rather than be seen as an affront to a departing governor.

This budget needs a sculptor's tools, not a sledgehammer. The Senate should respect that as it begins work.
Frank Deena has collected 10,000 books for the University of Guyana, his alma mater.

By Josh Humphries
The Daily Reflector

East Carolina University professor Frank Deena will present his South American alma mater with a collection of 10,000 books.

Deena, who teaches in the English department, solicited help from his fellow faculty members at ECU to donate books to the University of Guyana in Georgetown, Guyana, the country's only university.

"The first half of the donation came from a friend of his from the University of Kentucky who recently passed away. O.R. Dathorne agreed to donate his 5,000-book library to the South American university that has very little access to new research and textbooks, Deena said.

In February, Deena traveled to Kentucky to pick up the collection and brought them to the Faith of Victory Church in Greenville. Church members helped him pack and label the books to be sent to the university.

"I thought I may as well ask the faculty here if they have any second copies of books to donate," Deena said.

So he set up collection points across the ECU campus and eventually came up with 5,000 more books to add to the collection from Dathorne.

Students do not have access to books in Guyana the way they do here, Deena said. Such a large collection of academic materials will make a real difference on that campus, he said.

ECU faculty members have volunteered time to collect the books, label them and prepare them for shipment to New York, where they will be sent to the University of Guyana.

Deena will travel to Guyana for a presentation ceremony this summer, he said.

"ECU is no longer just a regional university," Deena said. "The global impact we can have is far-reaching. This is one way ECU is not only an academy but is part of the global community."

Each book collected from ECU will contain a label that reads "Donated in friendship to the University of Guyana by East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina."

Josh Humphries can be contacted at jhumphries@coxnc.com and 329-9565.
Chief justice to visit NCCU

John Roberts will judge a moot court exercise next spring

BY ERIC FERRERI
STAFF WRITER

DURHAM — The N.C. Central University law students who compete in the finals of next year's moot court competition have a little extra reason to be nervous: The judge on the bench will be John Roberts, chief justice of the U.S. Supreme Court.

Roberts will be on campus for a day next April at the behest of Raymond Pierce, dean of NCCU's law school. Pierce met Roberts at a recent judicial conference and gave the hard sell, regurgitating fact after fact about the school, which has been lauded in recent years for affordability and stellar passage rates on the state bar exam.

Pierce asked him to come and speak at the school.

"He said he doesn't do speeches but would judge a moot court competition," Pierce said Friday. "You can imagine, it will be a packed house."

NCCU's law school has never hosted a Supreme Court justice. The event will be for students and probably not open to the public, Pierce said. A reception will follow the moot court competition — a courtroom exercise in which students argue sides of real cases.

Roberts, 53, was appointed to the high court in 2005 by President Bush.

The chief justice's visit will surely make an impression on students. It won't hurt law school's profile either, Pierce said.

"To have a sitting chief justice at your school is invaluable," he said. "It just drives up the prominence of your law school, and it increases the value of a degree from your law school."

The law school enrolls about 600 students. Last year, preLaw Magazine named it the nation's best value among law schools.

eric.ferreri@newsobserver.com
or (919) 956-2415
Prof's bird-brain research honored

By Sarah Lindenfeld Hall
Staff Writer

DURHAM - It would be easy to pigeonhole Erich Jarvis in a kind of rags-to-riches tale.
He grew up poor in Harlem. His father, a drug user, was murdered. His family spent time on welfare.

Now he's an award-winning researcher at Duke University. Last month, he earned the prestigious honor of becoming a Howard Hughes Medical Institute investigator.

That designation will funnel as much as $1.5 million a year into his research on songbirds for at least the next five years. He hopes that his work studying the brains of birds will unlock ways to treat disorders in the human brain.

But Jarvis says his rise from impoverished beginnings isn't the full story of his life.

He grew up "psychologically rich," he said, never thinking that he wouldn't succeed. His family emphasized education. He grew up poor, but also ambitious.

"My mother always pushed having an impact on the world," he said.

As a student at the High School of Performing Arts in

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New York City, he was invited to audition for the Alvin Alley American Dance Theater, a well known African-American modern dance company.

But he opted to study science at Hunter College instead. In 1995, he was one of 52 black men of the more than 4,300 people who received a doctorate in biology in the United States that year.

"He's very humble about his own knowledge," said Fernando Nottebohm, Jarvis' adviser at The Rockefeller University, where he earned his doctorate. "He has a curious mind. You have to have that to be a good scientist."

Some consider Jarvis' subject of choice — bird brains — exotic. Mice, rats and monkeys are traditional lab animals because of proven similarities to humans.

Birds are different. Jarvis and other scientists are just now beginning to map similarities between humans and birds in their brains.

One behavior is similar. Like humans, songbirds, parrots and hummingbirds can reproduce sounds.

By listening to them sing and then dissecting their brains, Jarvis and other scientists have traced the pathways used in the brain for vocal learning for the three different types of birds.

Though the birds are only distantly related, they have several similarities in the way their brains function.

**Mending human brains**

Jarvis believes that human brains have evolved in a similar way.

If he's right, his findings could eventually lead to discoveries that could help repair the human brain and restore speech in people who have survived damage to the region of the brain that controls it.

Though Jarvis' research has focused on birds, his office walls are dotted with awards and recognitions, not pictures of parrots and finches. Birds and their songs are pretty, he said, but he's more interested in what's going on inside their brains when they sing.

Jarvis, who has taught at Duke since 1998, has scored big success. In 2005, he took home the National Institute of Health's Pioneer Award, which recognizes high-risk research. And there's more mainstream recognition. The magazine Popular Science named him among the Brilliant 10 of 2006 — top scientists younger than 45.

"He's bright, energetic and is just blessed with a creative intellect," said Jim McMamara, professor and chairman of Duke's department of neurobiology. "And he's certainly diligent and hardworking."

Jarvis was one of 1,070 scientists who applied for the Howard Hughes honor, named after the eccentric Texan who launched expensive ventures into everything from movies to airplanes. As a young man, Hughes called for the creation of an institution to support medical research in his will.

Only 56 researchers from across the country made the final cut this year. A dozen investigators have gone on to win the Nobel Prize.

**Hughes money flexible**

Scientific grants typically support specific projects, but the Howard Hughes award is different, said Jack Dixon, vice president and chief scientific officer of the Howard Hughes Medical Institute.

The researchers become employees of the institute and their salary and benefits, along with research costs, are covered fully. Howard Hughes investigators can use the money as they wish, giving them the flexibility to follow a path in their research that they hadn't expected.

"Our philosophy is that if we get the very best people and give them stable funding for a period of five years, they will know best when they come across some nugget of scientific information," he said. "If they decide to pursue that, we are completely supportive of that."

Said Robert Lekowtiz, one of the longest-serving Howard Hughes investigators and a professor at Duke: "You're free to just roam, to be creative, to follow your instincts."

That freedom appeals to Jarvis. So does the money. Money from private foundations such as Hughes helps offset the lack of a significant increase in the budget of the National Institutes of Health since 2003 as the government is strapped with the cost of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

And the NIH is conservative when it allocates money, researchers say.

"They're afraid to waste money," Jarvis said. "They're afraid to take risks."

This week, Jarvis spent a few moments talking with colleagues about improving space in his lab. He expects to hire five or six more people, both administrative workers and researchers, for his lab with money from the Howard Hughes program.

Jarvis said Duke needs to do more to mentor young researchers so more can take home awards such as the Howard Hughes honor.

"Is there a way to get more?" he asked this week. "In order to do that, we need to nurture our faculty more."

For his part, the nurturing in Jarvis' life began when he was a child in Harlem, in a family where material needs were great, but education was revered.

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sarah.lindenfield@newsobserver.com or (919) 629-8963
Stay the course

Far too many students drop out of high school. With all that's at stake, why should they be allowed to do so at age 16?

When it comes to reducing the high school dropout rate, there's no lack of interest, or study commissions, or good intentions. There's simply a shortage of effective action.

How worrisome is the problem? Last year in North Carolina, only 69.5 percent of high school students graduated in four years. More than 23,000 Tar Heel students dropped out of school in the 2006-07 school year.

Think of the blasted futures those numbers represent. Think of the loss to the state and to the nation.

For years there have been study commissions and recommendations. Now the State Board of Education has decided to use graduation rates to help set teacher bonuses at high schools.

No lack of interest there, or good intentions. But effective action?

It's hard to see that it will be.

What is the board really asking teachers to do? If there is any demonstrable link between their efforts and the myriad, almost intractable causes of school dropout-itis, it can't be a strong one.

Then there's the mystifying message the State Board is sending.

On the same day that it authorized the anti-dropout bonuses, the board voted to eliminate writing tests for fourth-, seventh- and 10th-graders. Hyper-emphasis on testing, a product of the No Child Left Behind Act and various state-level measures, is being dialed back. That's probably wise, but education officials seem to be flitting from one problem — student underachievement — to another — dropouts — without offering an effective solution to either. (A committee will formulate anti-dropout specifics later.)

The board also risks leaving the impression that one way to raise graduation rates is to make school easier. Is that the plan?

Several suggestions for cutting the dropout rate were detailed on the Other Opinion page Friday by the High Five Regional Partnership for High School Excellence, a group that has received financial and leadership support from this newspaper. High Five calls for parents, businesses and civic and religious groups to reach out to youngsters and raise their expectations and abilities.

A notably specific recommendation is that the General Assembly increase the age at which students can legally drop out. That age is 16, lower than in most states.

Sixteen is shockingly young to allow someone to make such a decision, with all its disastrous consequences. How can we allow it? Because, "realists" say, it's too disruptive to have older students in school who don't want to learn.

It is a burden, no doubt. But it's also a signal that school isn't offering enough good choices and solid guidance to counteract the lure of minimum-wage employment. Those choices must not be limited to vocational education, but yes, top-notch training in hands-on trades that pay well should be front and center for many of the youngsters whose bent is not conventional academics.

Above all, we need to provide some tough love — to say that in this state, no one younger than 18 can opt to drop out. And then we have to provide the goods to back it up.
Open up chancellor selection

Holden Thorp's selection as chancellor at UNC-Chapel Hill provides more evidence of why searches for the top jobs at UNC campuses should be open.

Thorp, 43, is a Fayetteville native who did his undergraduate work at Chapel Hill and returned there to teach in 1993. He has been dean of the College of Arts and Sciences for the past year.

"I'm so grateful for the opportunity to lead the best university in the world," he said when his new job was announced.

If the search committee had required him to run across campus in only his underwear, surely he would have done so.

"I don't know about that," Thorp said last week, "but I wanted the job."

The committee conducted a private search and recommended candidates to Erskine Bowles, UNC system president.

Bowles chose Thorp, offering him the job as Bowles pumped gas at an Exxon in Greensboro as they traveled back from a meeting. (That prompted this great quote: "It's a good thing I didn't run in to get some Nabs," Thorp said.)

Thorp said he would have applied if the search committee had released the names of the finalists. In some searches, finalists appear on campus to answer questions from students and faculty.

But he said he's not sure he would have done so if he had been applying for the top job at another university: "That would have created a lot of problems for me back home at the college."

Those who run searches often fear that some good candidates won't apply if their names are made public. It's a legitimate concern, although overstated.

Being a finalist to run a top-notch organization and not getting the job doesn't hurt a career; it can help it, as long as the move would have been a clear step up.

That some candidates might not apply for a job needs to be balanced against the many benefits of having a search in which the finalists are named publicly.

Robert Fox, president of New Dominion Bank in Charlotte, led the search in 2004 for a new chancellor at Appalachian State. Fox said he was advised by a consultant and then-UNC system President Molly Broad to conduct a private search. They feared good candidates would not apply if he named finalists, Fox said.

But Fox gauged his risks and rewards. He knew the faculty wanted to be part of the process. "As a businessman assessing risk, I thought the lesser risk was to have the faculty on board instead of against you," he said last week.

His committee named six finalists who visited the campus and met with students, professors and residents. His committee recommended three candidates.

No candidate dropped out of the process when informed that names would be made public. Broad chose Kenneth Peacock, who has been a successful chancellor.

When hiring at the highest levels, you can't afford to make a mistake. A public process helps avoid mistakes. The candidates' strengths are highlighted and weaknesses are exposed.

"It was kind of a further background check," Fox said. "I assure you there's no way [a private firm] could have done the kind of job a group of faculty and staff members could do in having colleagues all over the country."

"There's always something," Gov. Willie Stark said in "All the King's Men," and he was right. You want to know that something before making a decision, not when it's too late.

Littleton was first

In this column two weeks ago, I credited The Carolina Journal with leading the way on the story that led to the imprison-ment of former U.S. Rep. Frank Bal-ance. Actually, The Littleton Observer was first on that story.
New institute puts NCCU in biotech mix

By Eric Ferrerri
Staff Writer

Durham — To the science-challenged, the western wall of N.C. Central University's new biotechnology building looks like little more than a collection of bricks and windows.

But to a student of genetics, it is an inside joke that hints at the high-minded discovery taking place within. The vertical brick-and-glass pattern is cast in the image of a microarray chip, a lab tool commonly used to analyze thousands of genes at a time.

This facility is the Biomanufacturing Research Institute and Technology Enterprise, better known simply as BRITE. It opens this morning and is expected to give NCCU a signature program and a significant presence in the rich Research Triangle biotech community. The $20.1 million facility was built with money from the Golden LEAF Foundation, the organization created to distribute tobacco settlement money to economic development ventures. The state has kicked in $6 million in annual operating funds, allowing university leaders to build a faculty heavy on industry experience.

It is a rare venture for one of the state's historically black public institutions and illustrates the university's growth and growing ambition.

"It's a big deal because it positions the university to be able to attract an array and quality of students, faculty and staff and research dollars like other institutions like Duke, [N.C. State] and Carolina," said NCCU Chancellor Charlie Nelms.

The building and its fledgling pharmaceutical sciences program — in which students will learn how to discover and manufacture drugs — is a response to the state's thriving biotechnology industry and its need for skilled workers. The BRITE facility is part of a consortium called NC Biotech that also includes biotech programs at community colleges and N.C. State. The

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idea is to develop workers for every stage of the drug-creation process, from basic science on the front end to manufacture and quality control on the back end.

By 2010, the program is expected to have 200 students in bachelor's and master's programs. Eventually, NCCU plans to add a doctoral degree in pharmaceutical sciences.

New science community

Drug manufacturing is a staple industry across North Carolina, with 18,000 to 18,000 employees statewide and 7 percent to 10 percent annual growth, said Kathleen Kennedy, a vice president with the Research Triangle Park-based N.C. Biotechnology Center. NCCU’s venture fits nicely into the larger whole, she said.

“They can train students in the whole continuum,” Kennedy said. “From basic research to getting the product actually on the shelf in the pharmacy.”

The 52,000-square-foot building is one of two science facilities west of Fayetteville Street, NCCU’s traditional campus border. Its location is both symbolic and necessary — a new, cutting-edge venture so large it needed the sort of space the campus core couldn’t accommodate.

Campus officials hope the BRITE building, with its massive, glass-fronted, two-floor foyer and broad, mirrored eastern wall, will be an eye-catching centerpiece of a new science community on this western edge of campus.

Inside, students in the two-year-old program will learn how to discover and make drugs in laboratories built to replicate work done by drug manufacturers.

Easley to speak

N.C. Central University’s BRITE facility will be dedicated at 10 a.m. today with Gov. Mike Easley as the featured speaker.

The building is on Lawson Street, one block west of Fayetteville Street adjacent to the main NCCU campus.

The dedication will be held in the shade of the building’s main-level breezeway.

Luring the staff

Li-An Yeh, recruited in 2005 from Eli Lilly to start the program, has spent nearly three years recruiting faculty, designing labs and classrooms and ordering the sort of high-end lab equipment more often found at private companies.

The state’s substantial annual operating fund commitment lets Yeh lure professors from private industry, which traditionally pays better. It helps that she can offer the use of, for example, a $450,000 nuclear magnetic resonance machine, used to determine chemical structures.

“Faculty tell me they can’t [think of] any instrument they want, because it’s already here,” said Yeh, who has hired 11 faculty members and has six spots left to fill.

Yeh is looking for top credentials: One new hire was trained at Harvard, another at Stanford. Two came to NCCU from drug company Eli Lilly, while a third was hired away from Biogen Idec, another pharmaceuticals company.

Gordon Ibeau left his post as a drug discovery scientist at Eli Lilly two years ago, lured by NCCU’s promise that his research could center on neurodegenerative diseases such as Alzheimer’s and Huntington’s. Scientists are still struggling to understand the root causes of these afflictions so they can be countered or treated with drugs. At BRITE, Ibeau is teaching students how research is done while working in his chosen specialty area.

“At universities, you’re not driven by profit,” Ibeau said. “Companies have priorities, and you just go by the priorities they set.”

eric.ferrer@newsobserver.com
or (919) 956-2415.