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Help on the way
By Ronnie Woodward
The Daily Reflector
Tuesday, July 20, 2010

This summer, Ron Butler finalized a deal with East Carolina that he has been working on since he took over as Pitt County athletic director in February of 2009. The contract ensures that East Carolina will provide medical assistance for all six Pitt County high schools, beginning in August, as part of a graduate assistance program. Four high schools — J.H. Rose, South Central, Farmville Central and North Pitt — will have certified athletic trainers available in August.

D.H. Conley and Ayden-Grifton will have first responders provided by ECU. Those first responders will officially become certified athletic trainers after they finish their student teaching and pass their national exams in November.

Butler said Conley currently has a certified athletic trainer on staff part-time, so she will work with the first responder provided by ECU this fall.

“We want the best people,” Butler said. “These people are highly qualified, top of the line people who are trained to be athletic trainers.”

The need for athletic trainers was heightened in the area when J.H. Rose football player JaQuan Waller died Sept. 20, 2008, from second impact syndrome, which occurs when two relatively minor head injuries occur within a short time interval. Waller suffered a concussion during a practice on Sept. 17, and then suffered another one while playing in a game two days later.

Butler ran into Dr. Sharon Rogers, an assistant professor in ECU’s department of health education and promotion, at a seminar while Rogers was speaking about head injuries about six months after Waller’s death.

The two have been working on an agreement ever since.

“Tragedies can happen, and there are consequences if we make bad decisions,” Butler said. “ECU is working for the same thing that I’m working for, and that’s the best thing for these student-athletes.”

Pitt County Schools will pay East Carolina $34,686 (year one) and $51,249 (year two) for its assistance. Rogers said most of the compensation will go to the graduate assistants’ stipends.

“The ECU resources have been available for years, but Pitt County’s approach in the last 12 months has really demonstrated its commitment to the health and safety of its student-athletes,” Rogers said.

The GAs will work an average of 20 hours per week, but cannot work more than 25 in a single week.

School assignment

Butler revised a policy on school assignment in June. The new policy says that a student-athlete will be ineligible for 365 days if the student’s domicile is purposely falsified by the student, parent or legal guardian after the student-athlete participates in a contest.
In the previous policy, the athlete was suspended for one sports season.

**AED**
Two Automated External Defibrillators are now available to all six high schools, and one AED will be provided to each middle school. Last year, one AED was given to the high schools.

**Continuations**
Two policies implemented last year, drug testing and the three percent rule, will continue this year.
A minimum of 10 percent of each high school team will be drug tested randomly. Butler said less than two percent of the athletes tested last year tested positive. The three percent rule requires football teams to weigh their players every day from the start of practice through the first week of school in an attempt to eliminate drastic weight loss.
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Colonial-era shipwreck moved to Hatteras museum

COROLLA, N.C.

After surviving perhaps 400 years in the sand and surf off the North Carolina coast, the 12-ton remains of a shipwreck are making their final port-of-call.

What could be the oldest wreck ever found on the North Carolina coast was loaded onto the back of a truck Monday for a 90-mile trip to the Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum in Hatteras.

Salvaged from the pounding surf in April, the wreck has rested under the shade of an oak tree near the Currituck Beach Lighthouse for the past three months.

But the massive beams have shrunk a little and cracked in the hot, dry weather. Experts plan to place the wreck on a concrete slab next to the museum and soak the 17-by-37-foot remains in hopes of arresting the deterioration.

One possible preservative is a mixture of water and Elmer's wood glue, said David Moore, curator of nautical archaeology for the North Carolina Maritime Museum.

Moore was in Corolla on Monday observing the move.

Some local beachcombers had been aware of the wreck over the years, but it did not draw much attention until last December when Corolla property owner George Browne found the wreck completely exposed on the beach as if ready for launch.

Based on Browne's photos and description, state shipwreck experts came for a closer look and realized the wreck had not been recorded and was very old.

Since then, the Underwater Archaeology Branch of the North Carolina Office of State Archaeology, East Carolina University and now the North Carolina Maritime Museum have had roles in trying to decipher the wreck's age and origin.

Wooden pegs fastened beams to planks, a sign that dates the wreck to about the early to mid-1600s. Some of the beams turn upward naturally, made from trees found with just the right bend, Moore said. Faint rust discoloration on a few beams indicates iron fasteners secured the bottom beams to the keel, he said.

While the wreck was still mostly buried, locals found French coins dating from as early as 1603 on the wood. Others have found parts of what is assumed to be the same wreck and turned them over to Joseph Schwarzer, director of the Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum.

So far, theories have the ship being made in the early to mid-1600s. It could have been built in Britain or France, given the coins found on the wreckage.
Centuries ago, ships were measured for taxes in how many barrels of wine, or "tuns," it would hold, Moore said.

This ship was large, possibly 500 tons and 100 feet long, Moore said. In comparison, Blackbeard's ship, the Queen Anne's Revenge, was 300 tons.

Likely a merchant ship, its owners would have missed it and its cargo and might have recorded its loss. Solving the mystery could mean searching shipping archives in Richmond, Raleigh, London and Paris, Moore said.

Monday morning, crews from the National Park Service and Barnhill Construction connected chains to a wooden sled under the wreck.

Using a front-end loader, the remains were pulled from the small lot to the road. About two hours later, the wreck was raised while a truck backed a long trailer beneath it for its final trip down the highway to Hatteras.

The trek southward was scheduled to begin about 10 p.m. Monday night, with escorts from the North Carolina Highway Patrol and local law enforcement, and was to end in Hatteras about 3 a.m.

Once the wreck is settled on the concrete pad near the museum, plans are to construct a building around it.

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Jordan goes from delivery to receiving
By Nathan Summers
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It's a little like going from driver to passenger, but the changes in Josh Jordan's football career are based on the good of his team and not personal benefit.
The sophomore former quarterback is spending the summer at East Carolina trying to get used to being in the receiving department as opposed to delivery.
Following the close of spring drills back in April, the once highly-touted passer out of St. Amant, La., opted to change positions instead of changing addresses, so Jordan is in the midst of learning the role of wide receiver.
Like most sacrifices, Jordan's new assignment requires as much unlearning as it does learning. It seems, however, the chance to play means a chance to be happy for Jordan.
"It's a whole different perspective on football," said the 6-foot-4, 218-pound Jordan, who was heavily coveted by Iowa State as a high school senior but who was plucked away by former ECU head coach Skip Holtz. "For one, I don't have the ball in my hands on every play and that's frustrating, but it's something I've got to get used to."
When Holtz left for South Florida in December and Ruffin McNeill brought a high-flying spread offense to ECU, Jordan was one of the inevitable few left on the outside looking in, so he prompted a conversation with McNeill about his future.
Although it was clear the new Texas Tech-inspired attack was not befitting his style, Jordan said leaving ECU never entered his mind.
"I thought maybe it would be best for me and I thought maybe I'd help the team the best at that position," Jordan said. "It's not really the quarterback style that I was recruited for, but I'm not trying to transfer. I'm always going to be a Pirate."
Had Jordan aimed for Ames, Iowa, after high school instead of Greenville, he might well be the Cyclones' starting quarterback by now.
Last season, five different players took at least a snap for ISU, but Jordan doesn't think much about that. Instead, he thinks about the state of things on and off the field at ECU.
"You’d be crazy to leave with everything that’s going on here — the stadium expansion, the fans are great and these coaches care about us," he said. "I just want to get on the field here, no matter what position."

As for the position transition, Jordan joins a receiving corps chock with membership, but his size and developing knowledge of the playbook could be great assets.

Now, if he can just stop thinking like a passer, he’ll be ready for the Pirates’ Sept. 4 opener with Tulsa.

"I think I’m pretty good at finding the holes, but it’s kind of hard for me to run the route and not do the (quarterback) read through my head," Jordan said. "It’s just natural, reading the movement keys when I’m running the route. So I need to get out of that and pre-snap reading on the defense to see what (coverage) they’re rolling to.

"It’s really not my business anymore. I need to start thinking like a receiver."

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Credentials question halts Duke gene trials

DURHAM – Researchers have stopped three clinical trials that rely on the work of a Duke University scientist who may have falsely claimed to be a Rhodes scholar on applications he submitted for federal grant funding.

The three trials are testing the genetic findings reported by cancer researcher Dr. Anil Potti and his colleagues. Last week, Duke placed Potti on administrative leave after allegations arose that on grant applications he embellished his résumé with the prestigious Rhodes scholarship.

Enrollment in the trials was halted Sunday at Duke and elsewhere. The next day, a letter signed by 31 researchers at universities across the nation sharply criticized the work conducted by Potti and Dr. Joseph Nevins, another Duke cancer researcher, noting “serious errors” in their science.

Efforts to reach Potti and Nevins were unsuccessful.

"In this new light, the investigators of three clinical trials ... elected to suspend enrollment of new study subjects ... until a full review of the underlying data and a re-review of the science can be completed," Duke spokesman Douglas Stokke said in a written statement.

The studies were relatively small trials, said Dr. Michael Cuffe, Duke's vice president for medical affairs. One was set to enroll about 270 breast cancer patients at Duke and other centers in the region; another aimed to enlist 117 lung cancer patients; a third sought 150 lung cancer patients. In all, about 109 patients in the Triangle and elsewhere had signed up.

Those participants will continue on the study’s prescribed drug regimens, which in most cases were common therapies. Some of the lung cancer patients, however, were testing a drug that has not been approved to treat that form of cancer.

Cuffe said patients who have already enlisted in the trials are not in danger.

"Each of the trials consists of approved, widely used treatments," Cuffe said. "Therefore, we have confidence in the safety of the trials. With these new allegations being raised, we acted out of an abundance of caution ... and went ahead and closed the trials."

Potti’s research involved a genetic test that he claimed could predict who might respond well to certain cancer drugs; the trials were testing that approach.

Potti’s genetic analysis has been questioned since he first published his results in 2006. According to the letter from the other researchers, scientists could not recreate Potti’s discovery, leading them to question whether it was true.

In science, the ability to reproduce results in other labs is crucial for the field to advance, because researchers use one another’s work to build and expand on breakthroughs. As a result, poorly documented methods - or false results - hamper progress.

Of particular concern to the outside scientists was the prospect that patients were put at risk by their participation in the clinical trials using Potti’s work. They said the unproven genetic analysis could result in patients being prescribed an improper treatment.

"It is absolutely premature to use these prediction models to influence the therapeutic options open to cancer patients.” states the letter.
The letter was dated July 19. A spokesman for the cancer institute, Rich Folkers, said the agency received the letter Tuesday but could not comment on its allegations.

It's the second time in a year that the cancer trials involving Potti's findings have been suspended. Duke shut down enrollment late last year when scientists first raised concerns that patients might be at risk. After an outside review, the trials were restarted this year.

As a result of the résumé allegations, Stokke said the university is investigating all of the concerns surrounding Potti and his work.

Questions about Potti's credentials emerged last week in The Cancer Letter, a newsletter that covers cancer issues.

According to The Cancer Letter report, Potti wrote on various applications to the National Institutes of Health and the American Cancer Society that he won a Rhodes scholarship in Australia. On one application, the report said, Potti said he won the Rhodes in 1995. On another, it was 1996, according to the report.

On later bios, he dropped the Rhodes claim, it stated.

The Rhodes Trust does fund 11 scholarships each year for Australian students to study at Oxford University in England. But Potti's name is not on the list of Rhodes winners on the trust's website.

According to The Cancer Letter report, Potti responded to the newsletter's questions with an e-mail message in which he said he was a Rhodes nominee. He did not respond to subsequent questions, the newsletter stated. It also reported other discrepancies in Potti's background.

If he did pad his biography, Potti may have committed a crime. The federal False Claims Act prohibits, among other things, falsifying applications to receive grant funding.

Potti, who came to Duke in 2003 from the University of North Dakota, has brought federal funding to Duke from a variety of sources, but some of that money is now in question. After hearing about The Cancer Letter report, the American Cancer Society late last week froze payments to a $729,000 research project it was funding in Potti's lab.

The controversy is emerging not only as a blemish for Duke, but as a blow to scientific integrity. In recent years, public skepticism has emerged over the existence or seriousness of global warming, the safety of vaccines, and the seriousness of a pandemic flu outbreak.

"It's one of the real dilemmas in maintaining public confidence," said Mark Hall, a medical ethicist and professor at Wake Forest University. "The scientific community needs to police itself and get rid of bad apples. But at the same time it demonstrates it's able to police itself, it's calling attention to dirty laundry."

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N.C. health plan overpaid for services

An audit has found that the state health plan overpaid for some outpatient services at 33 hospitals across North Carolina over five years.

Twenty-three of the hospitals have reached settlement agreements with the health plan, agreeing to repay a total of $784,446. Negotiations are under way with the remaining 10 hospitals.

The audit examined a five-year period, from July 2003 to June 2008, during which the health plan had direct contracts with the hospitals examined. The audit found that some of the hospitals didn't give required 30-day notice of rate increases, didn't fully apply the discount negotiated for services purchased by state employees or otherwise did not live up to contracts.

"We learned there were some discrepancies and went back to find out what happened," said Linda McCrudden, the director of communications for the N.C. State Health Plan.

"It's good business to do this. We're going to monitor these issues closer in the future."

The new audit follows a review completed in November that identified six North Carolina hospitals that owed the state $2.5 million in refunds for overcharges.

This year, the health plan has a budget of $2.56 billion to provide medical coverage for about 867,000 state workers, teachers, retirees and their families.

According to the audit, records from 49 hospitals - including Wake Med, Rex Hospital, Duke Hospital and UNC Hospitals - were examined and found to have been in compliance.

The state plan no longer has direct contracts with hospitals.

In 2008, the state signed a contract with Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina to manage its health plan after skyrocketing costs required a $658 million bailout with taxpayer funds.

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Rex cancer center approved

State regulators have approved Rex Healthcare’s plan to build a $60.1 million cancer center at its main campus in Raleigh.

The five-story addition is part of a bigger expansion planned at Rex. It’s also the latest in a series of major medical projects under way or proposed across the Triangle.

The N.C. Cancer Hospital at Rex will coordinate patient care with the $207 million N.C. Cancer Hospital in Chapel Hill, which the UNC Health Care System opened last fall. UNC bought Rex 10 years ago.

Rex, which is Wake County’s second-largest hospital after WakeMed, is expanding its cancer services to handle increasing demand from this region’s growing population.

“This is exciting news for all of us, and especially for the many cancer patients who we serve,” Rex CEO David Strong wrote in e-mail to employees.

Other area hospitals also recognize surging demand for cancer care. In Durham, the Duke University Health System is building a $240 million addition to its cancer center. And earlier this month, Duke Raleigh Hospital opened its renovated, 12,000-square-foot cancer center, part of a broader set of improvements at the facility in North Raleigh.

The Rex project will add 71,542 square feet of space and renovate 21,624 square feet of existing space. The facility will include new equipment and a range of services for oncology patients. It will be built at the front of Rex’s existing cancer center.

Rex officials expect to break ground in the fall of 2011 and open the center in early 2014.

One goal is to create a cancer center that will allow patients from in and around Wake County to access specialized care at UNC without driving to Chapel Hill.

The project is one piece of Rex’s “Vision 2030” plan to expand and modernize facilities at its 65-acre campus at the corner of Blue Ridge Road and Lake Boone Trail in Raleigh.

Last month, Rex also applied to regulators for a $120 million upgrade at its flagship hospital. That project would include a bigger facility for cardiovascular care, an expanded surgery center and a new entrance for surgery patients.

The state’s Certificate of Need laws limit new medical projects to control health costs. State analysts review projects based on patient volume, projected demand and other factors.
There’s an electronic resource out there that’s providing college students with inventive new ways of maintaining their GPAs without required reading, tedious essays or hours of studying. It’s the Internet, and it has led to a new kind of cheating that educators are trying to combat with technology and another look at what counts as plagiarism.

Don McCabe, a professor at Rutgers University Business School, has written extensively on academic dishonesty, cheating and plagiarism. He recently conducted a survey of 14,000 undergraduates over the past four years, in which about two-thirds of students admitted to cheating on things like tests, homework and assignments.

He tells NPR’s Neal Conan that students say they don’t always understand that what they’re doing is against the rules.

McCabe says students tell him that what they learned in high school is different from what colleges ask from them, and that colleges need to do a better job of communicating their expectations. In some cases, McCabe believes the plagiarism line is blurry enough that this may be true — but often, this defense is just an excuse.

McCabe says another commonly heard justification for cheating is that it’s done to level the playing field.

"They see other students cheating and getting away with it and getting ahead in this great GPA race," which makes them feel like they’re being "unfairly" left behind, McCabe says.

But Kirk Hanson, executive director of the Markkula Center for Applied Ethics at Santa Clara University, thinks the No. 1 rationalization for cheating is a heavy workload. He tells Conan that that sort of thinking can set cheaters up for a lifetime of cutting corners.

"Unfortunately, if you adopt that kind of convenience rationalization when you’re in college, it will carry over as part of your character into later life," Hanson says.

McCabe and Hanson agree that while students at all levels resort to cheating, it’s those at the top and at the bottom who tend to cheat more.

"The top’s cheating to thrive, the bottom’s cheating to survive," McCabe says, "and those in the middle are content with their grades and just go along in life and are happy."