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Our Views

An open door

College ruling makes sense for N.C.

North Carolina's growing population of undocumented, illegal aliens poses immense challenges to the future of the state. Federal inaction on immigration reform may be the cause of the problem, but officials in Raleigh bear the difficult responsibility for handling its effects.

In doing so, state office holders must draft compassionate, practical policies that respect the rights of citizens and legal immigrants. And in one area — determining access to community college — those principles are honored by Friday's statement from the Attorney General's Office.

Four times since 2001, the state has changed its approach on this sensitive issue in an attempt to reach a consensus between those who contend education should be accessible to all, and those who maintain that illegal immigrants deserve no such privilege. Friday marked the latest about-face when the Attorney General's Office said no law prohibits undocumented immigrants from enrollment.

That reversed a May ruling by that office barring admission at all 58 community colleges, And, given the confusion and turbulence over the issue, one might forgive the state Board of Community Colleges for withholding an official statement until it meets in August.

At that time, however, the board should confirm the attorney general's advice and allow undocumented students to continue their study. That decision will bring the state's community colleges in line with the University of North Carolina system, which allows illegal immigrants to enroll so long as they pay out-of-state tuition rates.

Community colleges, like Pitt Community College, represent an important step in an academic journey from secondary schooling to the work force or pursuit of a higher degree. Those who attend seek to hone their job skills or otherwise enrich themselves through a rigorous program of study. North Carolina should encourage all who seek that challenge in the interest of bettering themselves personally and professionally.

That should include illegal immigrants. State community colleges boast an enrollment of nearly 300,000, but only 340 students were undocumented when the May ruling was issued. Many of those young men and women did not decide to come here illegally — they were transported as children — and North Carolina need not penalize them.

Policies that favor education over exclusion can bring this population out of the shadows and expedite their integration into American life. The United States will not deport millions of illegal aliens, and policies that ease that translation should be favored.

North Carolina holds no power to reform immigration law and can only handle its affairs. In this case, inclusion remains the proper course.
University surpasses fundraising goal

The Associated Press

GREENSBORO — The University of North Carolina at Greensboro has surpassed a $100 million fundraising goal a year early and plans to continue the drive to raise money for student scholarships.

University officials said Tuesday that now that they’ve reached the goal for the Students First Campaign, they plan to continue the drive to increase undergraduate and graduate scholarships and faculty development.

The Students First Campaign began in 2004 with a $78 million goal. That goal was raised to $100 million in 2006.

The campaign has so far created 14 new professorships, more than 160 undergraduate scholarships, more than 35 graduate scholarships and 145 program endowments and student awards programs.
Road more traveled to BCS?

Holland: ECU has as good a shot as some BCS programs

BY NATHAN SUMMERS
The Daily Reflector

East Carolina might be in a better position right now to have a program-defining season than it would be if it got wooed away to a league aligned with the Bowl Championship Series in the future.

In fact, as the Pirates approach their 2008 season kickoff against Virginia Tech in Charlotte Aug. 30, ECU might better fit the profile of a potentially undefeated team now than it would if it were raking in the spoils of one of the BCS football conferences.

At least in the eyes of fourth-year director of athletics Terry Holland, ECU plays a schedule similar to the ones the small handful of non-BCS unbeaten teams have played in recent years to buck the system that controls college football's big bowl games.

Holland doesn't rule out the possibility of ECU — a veteran member of Conference USA — pulling off a stunner the likes of Boise State's upset win over Oklahoma in the 2005 Fiesta Bowl, after the Broncos romped through an unbeaten season in the non-BCS Western Athletic Conference.

He does think it would be difficult if ECU were suddenly duking it out in a BCS league.

"Realistically speaking, right now we have as good a chance as some of our competitors who are in BCS conferences," said Holland, who helped craft a 2008 ECU football schedule on which all four non-league opponents are members of BCS conferences. "They've never been to a BCS Bowl, and they're not likely to go to one in the near future either. It's like a false promise, almost, to say that just because you play in a BCS conference, you're going to be able to play in a BCS Bowl."

Holland is right. Just in the Atlantic Coast Conference — from which ECU will face the the Hokies, N.C. State and Virginia this season — five of 12 members have appeared in BCS games in the system's decade of existence. The ones that have made it hold a combined 1-9 record in those bowls.

The Southeastern Conference has sent six of its dozen members during the decade, and those six teams have gone 11-4.

Of course, playing in the bowl games is not the only advantage, though the automatic tie-ins for BCS games still seem to be a worthy gamble. Falling under the umbrella of the BCS also means corresponding national network television exposure and revenue.

Holland admits if the Big East came calling to invite
ECU football practice just days away, follow the Pirates at reflector.com

ECU into its roost, it would be tough, or impossible perhaps, for ECU to say no.

"I don't think there is any doubt that everybody not in a BCS, automatic-qualifying league would move to one of those leagues if they had the opportunity," Holland said. "Somebody getting mad at somebody else for leaving a league doesn't make any sense at all. If they're moving up, especially."

Still, Holland is mindful that doing it the Boise State way has given hope to every competitive member of every non-BCS conference.

But without a zero at the end of its record at the end of the regular season, no team that plays outside of the BCS confines has a chance under the current system. That is the main thing Holland would like to see change.

Noting the dream seasons of Boise, Utah and Hawaii as the ones to help pave a new road into the BCS country club, Holland still thinks there needs to be more access.

"The truth of it is, we need automatic qualification," Holland said. "We need some method of being able to say, if we have a good season but don't go undefeated necessarily (ECU would qualify).

"Now, the teams that are..." See BCS, C4

**BCS**

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lucky enough to have a schedule that includes a few BCS teams that aren't very good in that particular year are the ones that have the best chance to go undefeated and qualify in that manner. Then they get criticized for having a weak schedule."

Holland said he wouldn't mind staying in Conference USA long term if it included greater access to the biggest bowls.

While he could never promise ECU wouldn't leap at the chance to seek greener pastures, he wouldn't mind keeping the cow right where it is either.

"I'd like to think you can play a tough schedule, perform well in your conference and have a chance to play in a BCS Bowl," Holland said. "If that can be gotten through Conference USA, the Big East or wherever, that's everybody's goal, not just East Carolina's. Our energy right now should be to figure out some way to create a scenario so that our teams have something to play for at the very highest level."

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Duke, UNC-CH Join in German

2 schools to merge doctoral programs

BY ERIC FERRERI
STAFF WRITER

DURHAM — As the faculties of German graduate programs across the country dwindle in number, resources and scope, the faculties at Duke and UNC-Chapel Hill are joining forces in the hope of bucking this ominous national trend.

Starting this fall, doctoral students in German at UNC and Duke will all be part of the same program, a rare venture for humanities departments at major universities.

These graduate students — six to eight a year are expected to enroll — will, like students in the Duke/UNC Robertson Scholars program, take courses at each university. Once finished, they will receive a diploma with both institutions' names on it. Tuition and fees for the students, who will teach undergraduate courses, will be fully funded for five years.

Undergraduate German programs at the universities will remain separate and distinct. The joint graduate venture is the result of several years of planning and a long feeling-out process, during which time faculty members at the two institutions went to conferences together, brought visiting professors in from Germany to teach at both universities, and started a monthly work-in-progress seminar during which students and professors alike reported on work they were doing.

It was a test period, said Ann Marie Rasmussen, chairwoman of Duke's Germanic Languages and Literature department.

"The faculty would have to get along," she said. "People have to want to change."

For years, German departments have shrunk as interest in undergraduate language courses — a German department's bread-and-butter — has waned in comparison with other disciplines. A 2006 study by the Modern Language Association found that enrollment in German language courses at U.S. colleges had risen 3.5 percent over four years. Over that same span, enrollment in Spanish courses grew 10.3 percent, in Italian, 22.6 percent, Japanese enrollment increased 27.5 percent, and enrollment in Arabic courses, while still comparatively small in total numbers, jumped 126.5 percent.

"It's this whole shift," Rasmussen said. "This expansion of what 'international' means and our awareness of the entire globe."

As a result, German graduate programs at UNC-CH and Duke had been forced to pare their offerings to a few areas of expertise. Duke's German department, for example, has shrunk from eight full-time faculty members to four this year, though Rasmussen said the drop came all at once in 2007 thanks to the retirement of one professor, the unexpected death of another, and the departure of two more for jobs elsewhere.

UNC-CH's faculty members have held steady. There, the merger is a way to navigate uncertainty, said Clayton Koell, who is chairman of the German Language and Literatures Department at UNC-CH.

"There won't be a place for more than a few exceptional German graduate programs in North America," he said.

The sales pitch to the two faculties has been this: By joining forces, they can once again create a curriculum with broad reach — teaching everything from basic German language to gender studies, critical theory, psychoanalysis, early modern German, medieval, and Jewish studies, Rasmussen said.

Sara Lemnox, a German studies professor at the University of Massachusetts and president of the national German Studies Association, said foreign language departments across the nation are struggling, in part because faculty in the humanities don't bring in grant funding like those in the sciences do, and perhaps also because of a societal de-emphasis on the value of literature. The Duke/UNC merger, she said, is a good idea.

"I think it's a great move," Lemnox said. "Now they can offer a comprehensive program again. Neither could do it alone."

Rasmussen said this sort of joint venture hinges largely on geography; it is unusual for two such academic programs to be close enough to each other that students can easily take courses and teach at both campuses.

And Rasmussen hopes faculty will teach on both campuses as well.

"If we're asking [students] to do it, we should do it, too," she said.

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