THE DAILY CLIPS

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ECU mulls Cuomo request

N.Y. Attorney General Andrew Cuomo's office wrote ECU, seeking documents related to the university's connection with University Financial Services.

By Jimmy Ryals
The Daily Reflector

East Carolina University officials are reviewing a request for documents from New York Attorney General Andrew Cuomo.

Cuomo's office wrote ECU Chancellor Steve Ballard Wednesday, seeking documents related to the university's connection with University Financial Services, a Clearwater, Fla., company specializing in student loans and loan consolidation.

ECU has no contractual agreements with the company, university spokesman John Durham said Thursday. The business does advertise with the company that manages ECU's sports marketing.

"We applaud the attorney general's interest in protecting the welfare of students," ECU interim Provost Marilyn Sheerer said in a news release Thursday.

It's unclear what, if any, documents the university will share with the New York attorney general.

Cuomo's office requested documents from 40 universities Wednesday. They include the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and four other Conference USA universities: Alabama-Birmingham, Central Florida, Houston and Texas-El Paso.

The attorney general is probing whether university officials have adequately compared borrowing rates before contracting with University Financial and whether gifts from the company have influenced contracts, according to a news release from Cuomo's office.

While ECU has no direct connection to University Financial Services, the lender has an advertising contract with ISP Sports, the Winston-Salem-based firm that manages ECU's athletics marketing, according to John Justus, an ISP spokesman. University Financial Services ads appear periodically on the ECU sports Web site.

University Financial also runs an ECU-themed Web site touting its services. The site — http://ecupirates.usloans.com — describes the lender as "a proud paying sponsor of East Carolina University Athletics."

"Basically, they (University Financial Services) are an advertiser, just like a hundred other advertisers that we represent," Justus said.

Jimmy Ryals can be contacted at jryals@coxnc.com and 329-9568.
Duke to host tribute to jazz genius Monk

"Following Monk" opens in Durham on Sept. 15.

By Martha Waggoner
The Associated Press

RALEIGH — Jazz genius Thelonious Monk, whose North Carolina roots were evident in his music and his accent long after he moved to New York, will be celebrated next month during an 18-event tribute at Duke University.

"Following Monk" opens in Durham on Sept. 15 with the Kronos Quartet performing music commissioned by the festival, including three world premiere arrangements of "Round Midnight." The tribute ends Oct. 28 with a solo piano performance by Barry Harris, who lived in the same apartment with Monk during his final years. Monk died at age 64 in 1982.

In between, the Following Monk Institute will offer guided tours of Monk's birthplace in Rocky Mount, and the plantation in Newton Grove where his ancestors were slaves and where his relatives still live.

Aaron Greenwald, interim director of Duke Performances, said he was searching for a project when he learned Monk was being researched by Sam Stephenson of the Center for Documentary Studies, also housed at the private university in Durham.

"We got started, and it was so much fun, we ended up building this massive festival. We just couldn't help ourselves," Greenwald said.

"We realized how a) quintessential the man was as a musician and b) how he was bigger than jazz."
Duke fundraising sets record with $380 million

DURHAM (AP) — Duke University set a fundraising record in the past year as total gifts to the private university rose 11 percent to more than $380 million, the university said Thursday.

The donations were received between July 1, 2006, and June 30, and counted only money received and not pledges, Duke said.

During the previous 12 months, the university raised a record $341.9 million.

Duke said the gifts came from 91,000 donors, including nearly 41,000 alumni.

"Duke is a wonderful university, to a great extent due to the loyalty and generosity of its alumni and other donors," said President Richard Brodhead.

About 45 percent of Duke undergraduates receive financial aid and more than $80 million of the total was for scholarships, the university said.

The largest gift was $74.7 million from the Duke Endowment.

The endowment is based in Charlotte and was created by university founder James B. Duke.
DURHAM (AP) — Charlie Nelms, a former top university administrator in Michigan and Indiana, has been formally installed as the new chancellor at North Carolina Central University.

Nelms, 60, replaces James Ammons, now president of Florida A&M University in Tallahassee, and is the 10th person to be the state school's top leader. Nelms is former vice president at Indiana University and former chancellor at the University of Michigan at Flint and Indiana University East.
Coaches respond to latest reports

By Tony Castleberry
The Daily Reflector

Rumors of coaching changes in the East Carolina men's basketball program are false, or at least premature.

Calls and/or text messages to assistant coaches Mack McCarthy and Chris Ferguson in the past two days have yielded either denials or no comments concerning the futures of the assistants and head coach Ricky Stokes.

Stokes and director of athletics Terry Holland are both on vacation and are unavailable for comment.

On Wednesday, Ferguson denied rumors linking him to an assistant's position at Oklahoma State, saying he had not spoken with anyone in the Cowboys athletic department.

McCarthy did essentially the same thing Thursday night after reports surfaced claiming Stokes was going to be reassigned to a different position within the Pirate athletic department and McCarthy would assume interim head coach duties.

"Not to my knowledge," was McCarthy's reply to a text message asking if he was going to be taking over for Stokes. McCarthy declined further comment, but added that Stokes and Holland were the ones who could best address such inquiries.

Ferguson, in Wednesday's telephone interview, admitted he had fielded questions concerning the Oklahoma State position as recently as this week while on the road recruiting. He also said the Cowboys had offered him a job while he was an assistant at Tennessee.

Despite those links, Ferguson said he planned on being on the sidelines for East Carolina this season.

The rumors of coaching departures certainly don't help an already struggling ECU program that finished 6-24 last season in Stokes' second year. Assistant coach Larry Dixon left for an assistant's job at Winthrop and director of basketball operations Jeremy Shyatt accepted a position at Virginia Commonwealth.

Shyatt has been replaced by Mark Thompson. Darryl Labarrie also was hired to join McCarthy and Ferguson as an assistant coach on Stokes' staff.

Holland is expected to be back in town on Aug. 9.

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See COACHES, C3
At home with Shakespeare

New York actress, ECU grad returns for starring role

By Kelley Kirk-Swindell
The Daily Reflector

It's been almost eight years since Rocky Mount native Kris Lundberg has been in her home state.

The East Carolina University graduate lives in New York, where she is a professional actress.

For her homecoming, she's performing the role of Bianca, sister of the shrew, in Shakespeare's "The Taming of the Shrew" at the Carolinian Shakespeare Festival.

"It's such a nice change to be back in North Carolina," she said. "I do love New York dearly but it can wear on you after a while. It's nice to be back with Carolina people who are so gracious."

The annual festival will present "The Taming of the Shrew" through Aug. 19 at the New Bern Civic Theatre. Performances will be held four times a week, Thursdays through Sundays.

"The Taming of the Shrew" is one of Shakespeare's earliest works and reflects the 14th-century Spanish tale about a young man who married a strong, fiery woman.

According to Lundberg, artistic director Mary McGinley has made a few interpretations of the original work.

"She's put an incredible spin on it," Lundberg said. "It's set in Miami and very fun. Everything is a battle of the sexes."

The actors still speak the Shakespearean text as it was written in the late 16th century, however, to preserve the integrity of the work.

"It's amazing to me that you can do something in the modern setting to make it so cool and funky," Lundberg said.

Bianca is often regarded at the ingenue, but Lundberg believes there is more to her character.

"I think there was an untold secret about Bianca that was never explored," Lundberg said. "I find her to be in the presence of the men in her life, she is very flirtatious and demure. But when she's in the company of her sister, the apple doesn't fall far from the tree. They are both wench's and shrews."

"She's so much more than what people have delved into. She's been a joy to explore."

Lundberg's first job after moving to New York was as the fight director for Shakespeare in the Park(ing) Lots productions of "Henry IV," parts I and II.

In addition to a starring role in the New Bern play, Lundberg is the fight director in this production.

"It's been an interesting challenge," she said. "I've never done a show where I was a fight director as well as having as starring role."

She received her fight credentials while attending Marymount College in London.

"I love to fight," she said. "I've always been a very physical performer."

Lundberg studied classical theater while in school in England during her junior year.

"I wanted to study abroad," she said. "I
Want to go?

What: Carolinian Shakespeare Festival
When: 8 p.m. Fridays-Saturdays, 2 p.m. Sundays and 7 p.m. Thursdays through Aug. 19
Where: New Bern Civic Theatre
Cost: $16 for adults, $15 for seniors and $5 for students with I.D.
Call: (800) 346-2770
Visit: www.csfest.net

wanted to experience how different people in different cultures use drama in their lives.”
She spent a year in England and then returned to finish her bachelor's degree at ECU.
She graduated in 2000 with a bachelor of theater education and moved to New York to pursue her career in teaching and acting.
ECU rising sophomore Von Lewis plays Tranio in the New Bern production. Tranio is Lucentio’s servant who later impersonates his master.
“It’s my third Shakespeare role,” Lewis said. “The only parts before this I had three or four lines. I have over 30 lines in this production.”
This is his second Carolinian Shakespeare Festival; he played murderer number 3 in “Macbeth” last year.
But Lewis is no stranger to the stage. The Vanceboro native has been active in the New Bern Community Theater since he was 12.
“My chorus teacher at the time was doing “Kiss Me Kate” at the New Bern Civic Theater,” he said. “She took the class to a dress rehearsal. I fell in love with theater that night. I’ve been auditioning and rehearsing ever since.”
Once Lewis graduates from the professional acting and musical theater program, he plans to move to New York, as well.
“Maybe I’ll pursue a master’s degree at Tisch or Brown or Rutgers in professional acting,” he said. “Hopefully, I’ll get on Broadway.”

Contact features writer Kelley KirkSwindell at 329-9596 or kkirkswindell@coxnc.com.
Public records bill goes to Easley

Compensation of officials at issue

BY DAN KANE
STAFF WRITER

State and local public agencies would have to disclose the total compensation paid to top officials if Gov. Mike Easley signs legislation approved Thursday by lawmakers.

The House and Senate overwhelmingly voted to make the compensation—which includes bonuses and other perks—paid to top officials public. But lawmakers gave public hospitals the right to deny such information for all but their top executives.

The legislation also bars the public from learning the details of contracts reached by public hospitals to buy medical practices. The measure arose from lawsuits by newspapers against public hospitals that had denied public information requests.

State Sen. David Hoyle, a Gaston County Democrat, said House and Senate conferees settled on a compromise that requires public hospitals to report the total compensation for the top five administrators and the top five salaried officials.

That mirrors what private nonprofit hospitals have to provide in their tax returns, which are public records, Hoyle said.

Other public hospital employees would no longer be required to disclose any compensation.

All other public employees would have to report total compensation.

Hoyle filed the bill after The Charlotte Observer lost a lawsuit to obtain the total compensation of executives at Carolinas Health Care System. Other public agencies began using the court decision to deny reporting total compensation paid to officials.

The other part of the merged bill, shielding contracts to buy medical practices, came after a Wilkes County newspaper won a lawsuit requiring the county hospital there to provide the information. Sen. Tony Rand, a Fayetteville Democrat, said that information should be kept private to help public hospitals better compete with private hospitals, which do not have to disclose such information.

Staff writer Dan Kane can be reached at 829-4861 or dan.kane@newsobserver.com.
August 2, 2007

Education Dept. Criticized for Loans Oversight

By JONATHAN D. CLATER

The federal Department of Education, after months of criticism for lax oversight of the student loan program, still has no system to detect and uncover misconduct by lenders and protect student borrowers, new government report said yesterday.

The report, by the Government Accountability Office and released by Congressional Democrats, found that the department had “no oversight tools” to see whether lenders were giving improper incentives to college to steer student borrowers their way, and, that since 1989, the department had offered lenders no “comprehensive guidance” on what incentives might be forbidden. In 20 years, the report found, the department has tried to punish only two lenders for violating government rules.

The department does not have a way to find out whether universities are improperly limiting students’ choice of lenders, according to the G.A.O., the government’s main research arm.

The report, the agency’s first since revelations of potential misconduct in student lending this year, said the department’s lack of oversight of federal student loans “may have resulted in some students taking loans with higher interest rates or fewer borrower benefits.” Over all, the report portrays an agency that may at times react to outside complaints, but does not “proactively detect” problems.

In a letter included with the accountability office’s report, the department agreed with many of its finding.

In a statement issued yesterday, Katherine McLane, a spokeswoman for the Education Department, said, “Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings takes very seriously the department’s oversight of schools and lenders.” Ms. McLane added, “We have taken a number of steps to tighten our oversight responsibilities of federal student financial aid programs.”

In its letter to the G.A.O., the department outlined the efforts, including creating a “workgroup” to review lender compliance with the law. In June, the department proposed rules banning certain marketing practices by lenders. But the G.A.O. report notes that these rules will not take effect until July 2008, at the earliest, and calls for the department to act sooner.

The student loan industry has faced increasing scrutiny of its business practices as tuition has skyrocketed and more students have been forced into debt to finance their education. Last year, students took out mor
than $85 billion in federal and private loans to pay for college.

Inquiries by Congress, the news media and various state attorneys general have exposed tangled financial relationships between colleges or individual college officials and student lenders — relationships that the department did not detect, the report said. The investigations have revealed practices by the lenders like paying colleges commissions or bonuses in exchange for business, and giving college officials free trips, meals and other perks to win spots on so-called preferred lender lists, on which students rely when selecting a loan company. They have also found colleges where financial aid administrators held stock in lenders they recommended to students.

In testimony before Congress in May, Ms. Spellings pointed to the removal of federal student aid program in 2005 from the accountability office’s “high-risk list” for fraud, waste and abuse of as a sign that the Education Department was resolving “financial integrity and management issues.” But the G.A.O. report, requested by members of Congress last year, undermines that earlier conclusion.

The new report puts a harsh light on the internal workings of the Education Department. For example, if the department suspects misconduct by a lender, it has no established procedure on how to respond, the report says. The department may send a company a letter asking it to “cease the activity” that may be questionable. But it does not monitor whether those letters work, the report found.

In addition, before October 2006, the department did not have a centralized system to track external complaints — by consumers, by colleges or even by other lenders — about possible misconduct by lenders. In more than a dozen instances from 2001 to 2006, the department may not have concluded whether specific conduct complied with regulations at all, the report found.

As if to underscore the report’s criticism, the New York attorney general, Andrew M. Cuomo, who in Congressional testimony in April described the department as “asleep at the switch,” announced yesterday that he was expanding his inquiry into the student loan industry.

Mr. Cuomo said his office had sent subpoenas and document requests to dozens of universities around the country, demanding information about arrangements with student loan companies that rewarded college athletic departments with payments for steering students to particular lenders.

The G.A.O. report recommended that the department come up with ways to detect misconduct by lenders — for example, by finding out how colleges choose which loan companies to include on their lender lists. It also recommended giving lenders guidance on what incentives are prohibited, before the new rules take effect next year. And the report called on the department to come up with a way to decide how to respond to violations of rules; by writing a letter, imposing a fine or expelling a lender from the loan program.
Congressional Democrats trumpeted the report as further evidence that the department had failed to protect students and their families.

"This report again underscores that the Department of Education completely defaulted on its responsibilities to protect the nation's student loan programs," Representative George Miller, the California Democrat who is chairman of the House Education and Labor Committee, said in a statement yesterday. "There is simply no excuse for this administration ignoring repeated warnings about potential lender abuses, both from independent agencies and even from lenders themselves."

Senator Edward M. Kennedy, Democrat of Massachusetts and chairman of the Senate Education Committee, said, "Students and families should be deeply concerned that the Department of Education failed to enforce the laws designed to protect them from unscrupulous lender tactics for so long."

Michael Dannenbreg, director of education policy at the New America Foundation, based in Washington, said the report was significant for finding that the department lacked procedures for determining when and how to enforce rules on lenders.

"The processes aren't there," Mr. Dannenbreg said. "But it's more than that, because even if the processes were there, there's evidence that they don't seem to be taking their enforcement responsibility very seriously."
Health

To Lower Triglycerides, a Moderate Workout is Best

By Nancy Shute
Posted 8/2/07

Doctors have been saying for years that exercise helps lower cholesterol levels, but surprisingly little effort has been expended on finding out what kind of exercise works best. Now, there's some unexpected evidence. New research on exercise in overweight, sedentary, middle-aged people with elevated cholesterol levels reveals that different types of exercise have vastly different effects on blood lipids, and those effects last for varying lengths of time. More exercise isn't necessarily better, the team found. But none is really, really bad.

Some of the findings come as no surprise: The most vigorous types, who sweated off the caloric equivalent of jogging 20 miles a week for six months, raised their HDL "good" cholesterol levels, and maintained those benefits two weeks after they stopped exercising. A second group, who did the equivalent of jogging 12 miles a week, saw somewhat less improvement. (The exercisers didn't actually run, but rather used treadmills, elliptical trainers, or stationary bicycles, and raised the ramp or increased resistance so that they were working hard.)

What startled researchers was that people who followed a more moderate exercise program, the equivalent of walking 12 miles a week, lowered their triglyceride levels by about 25 percent, twice as much as the hard-core group. And they maintained that benefit for two weeks, while the triglyceride levels of the more vigorous exercisers rose after five days without exercise. High triglycerides are considered a risk factor for metabolic syndrome, which is linked to diabetes and heart disease.

The team was frankly baffled by the big differences. "The good news is that moderate exercise has a lot of benefits," says Cris Slentz, an exercise physiologist at Duke University Medical Center who is the lead author. "On the other hand, vigorous exercise increases cardiovascular fitness." The report, part of an ongoing study on exercise and heart disease, was published in the August Journal of Applied Physiology, and included scientists from Duke and East Carolina University. Slentz imagines a day when doctors will give patients personalized exercise prescriptions, based on their lipid profiles.
If any doubt remained, sitting still is a terrible idea. The folks who were asked to do no added exercise as a control group, didn't just not improve—their health actually deteriorated. Over the six months, their LDL cholesterol levels rose, they gained 2 pounds, and they grew half an inch around the waist. "We think the data shows that exercise is really not optional," says Slentz.

Experts disagree on the right formula to maintain cardiovascular health and reduce the risk of stroke, heart disease, and diabetes. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends 30 minutes of moderate exercise at least five days a week, while the Institute of Medicine says 60 minutes a day is best. That debate will continue, but meantime anyone willing to get up off the couch has a reasonable goal. Most sedentary people can work their way up to walking 12 miles a week without getting hurt, physiologists say. (The study participants took two to three months to get up to that amount of exercise.) And, Slentz notes, those walks can be tackled in 10- or 15-minute chunks in the course of the day. "Almost every drug has side effects," he notes. But with this approach, "you don't even get sweaty."

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Loan probe expands to athletic departments

New York inquiry targets 40 schools

By Steve Wieberg
USA TODAY

Forty college athletic departments, from Georgetown to Auburn to Kansas to UCLA, were ensnared Wednesday in a New York state investigation of irregularities in the college loan industry.

Widening an inquiry into whether kickbacks were accepted for steering students to loan providers, state Attorney General Andrew Cuomo announced that his office had served the athletic departments—38 in the NCAA’s top-tier Division I—with subpoenas and records requests.

Also subpoenaed was a Florida-based loan provider, Student Financial Services, doing business as University Financial Services (UFS).

“We suspect that UFS has relationships with these athletic departments,” Cuomo spokesman Jeffrey Lerner said, “and we want to know exactly what these relationships entail.”

At least a dozen of the schools feature loan-consolidation links on their athletics websites that take viewers to a UFS page customized with schools’ colors.

Cuomo’s office said it is investigating whether the athletic departments evaluated UFS’ interest rates before recommending its loans or their endorsements of UFS were based purely on payments from the lender. Among the records subpoenaed and requested are documents showing UFS payments and any benefits given by UFS to any school employee, including meals, trips and other perks.

At Kansas, associate athletics director Jim Marchiony reacted angrily. The school does not have a relationship with UFS, he said, explaining that KU’s multimedia rights-holder—formerly ESPN Regional, now Host Communications—contracted with UFS.

Schools often sell television, radio and other media rights to Host and other companies, which recoup their costs by selling sponsorships. There is a link to UFS on the Kansas athletic department home page. “We don’t refer anyone to them. We don’t suggest they go to UFS. UFS has bought the same sponsorship your local grocery store will buy,” Marchiony said.

Before targeting athletics, Cuomo’s investigation of ties between lenders and universities has generated more than $10 million in settlements from lenders and universities. It uncovered cases in which schools steered loans illegally to lenders; schools and lenders struck revenue-sharing agreements; and financial aid directors received gifts, trips and stock.

Contributing: Kelly Whiteside