ECU to build dental center in Spruce Pine
By Doug Boyd
ECU News Services
Wednesday, August 3, 2011

The mountain town of Spruce Pine has been selected as the site of an educational and patient-care facility for the East Carolina University School of Dental Medicine.

ECU announced Tuesday at Mayland Community College that it will build one of its community service learning centers in the Mitchell County community. Dental students and residents will train at the center and, together with ECU faculty members, will provide care to residents of the Mayland area — Mitchell, Avery and Yancey counties.

ECU Chancellor Steve Ballard praised the support of the local legislative delegation, community leaders and Blue Ridge Community Hospital, which will partner with the school to establish the center.

“They have made all the difference as we've tried to move forward,” Ballard said. “We're all tickled (a center) will be in Mitchell County.”

Spruce Pine, a town of about 2,200 near the base of Mount Mitchell, the highest peak east of the Mississippi, is the fifth site to be named for what eventually will be 10 such centers across the state.

Other sites identified so far are Ahoskie and Elizabeth City in eastern North Carolina, Lillington in central North Carolina, and Sylva in the western part of the state.
“North Carolina has one of the poorest dental-population ratios in the country,” said Dr. James R. Hupp, dean of the ECU School of Dental Medicine. “We're going to hope our school puts a dent in that in a very positive way.”

North Carolina averages about four dentists for every 10,000 people, far below the national average of 58 dentists per 10,000 people, according to the federal Institute of Medicine. The ratio has been affected by the fact that the state's population has increased faster than the supply of practitioners.

The 7,700-square-foot Spruce Pine center will be a fully functioning general dentistry office with 16 treatment rooms, X-ray equipment, educational space and more.

The state will own the land, and construction likely will begin next year, said Dr. Gregory Chadwick, associate dean for planning and extramural affairs at the dental school. Site selection is ongoing.

Full-time dental school faculty members will staff the center, along with dental hygienists and other staff. Fourth-year dental students and residents will train at the facility.

Chadwick has described the centers as similar to “moving the fourth floor of the dental school — the clinical training — off campus to rural areas of our state where dental services are needed.”

State Rep. Mitch Gillespie of Marion, chair of the House Appropriations Committee, said local and university officials worked six years to make the dental school and the Spruce Pine center a reality.

“These things don't just happen,” he said. “They don't magically appear. This took years to happen, and it's a miracle it ever happened this year the way the budget was.”

Spruce Pine dentist Jim Thompson said the center will help recruit dentists to the rural mountain town as well as other rural communities. Typically, he said, dental graduates look to practice in larger towns. Spruce Pine has three dentists; only one is younger than 60.

“I think it's going to be great for the area and all rural areas,” he said. “It's going to make a lot of difference.”

The ECU School of Dental Medicine will admit its first 52 students, all North Carolina residents, this month.
The shooting of an ECU police officer is simulated during an active shooter drill at the Health Sciences Building near PCMH on Tuesday morning. (Rhett Butler/The Daily Reflector)

Shooter drill tests police at ECU
By Jennifer Swartz
The Daily Reflector
Wednesday, August 3, 2011

A live emergency drill on East Carolina University's west campus Tuesday tested police response to a school shooter.

The drill, conducted by the Graham-based firm EnviroSafe Consulting and Investigations Inc., locked down the health sciences campus much of the morning and involved an estimated 150 employees, 26 Greenville police officers and 10 firefighters from Greenville Fire-Rescue.

The university, required to conduct two public safety drills each year, paid for the roughly $20,000 exercise through state public-safety funds, officials said.

Held on Health Sciences Drive just off N.C. 43 North, the drill unfolded just after 9 a.m. as ECU police Sgt. J. Cherry took on the role of an officer down.

Cherry approached two men played by actors outside the College of Nursing. As he spoke with the men, one suddenly opened fire, wounding Cherry in the leg.

As part of the drill, the men overpowered the officer and took his gun. An alert went out calling help to the scene.

Officers entered the nursing school to search for casualties and gunmen. They had not been briefed on what threats or challenges they would face.

They found six hostages, prompting authorities to call for Greenville police negotiators. Greenville Fire-Rescue also responded to help the wounded under the threat of gunfire.
When the simulated scenario was over about 12:30 p.m., a suspect, an officer and a victim were dead from their injuries, ECU officials said.

“We hope that a scenario like this never happens — they're very rare across the country,” said Bill Koch, ECU associate vice chancellor for health, environment and public safety. “But we have to be prepared these days. A scenario like this, all this planning and training helps us prepare for everyday campus safety.”

As part of the drill, ECU officials locked down the west campus and simulated a shuttering of the east campus, made an announcement over a public-address system and sent out several campus alerts.

“We're very good at taking larceny reports and other calls for services, but because these types of events, a shooter on campus, rarely happen, we have to train the hardest,” ECU Police Chief Scott Shelton said.

Last May, university officials conducted a similar exercise in a dorm on the main campus. The operation prompted police to employ more rifles, as well as shields and other gear, Shelton said.

“Last year's shooter drill was a great exercise for us to learn where we were deficient, not only in equipment but in training,” he said.

“From my observation in the emergency operations center, I was pleased how things went,” he said of Tuesday's exercise. “There's always lessons to be learned.

“I don't care how good you are in an exercise, you always look at communications,” Shelton said. “Communications is always the one thing we can get better at.”

Contact Jennifer Swartz at jswartz@reflector.com or 252-329-9565.
The University of North Carolina Wilmington has opened an inquiry into why its emergency alert system failed to notify the campus last week as police tried to hunt down a shooter who wounded a man in a nearby apartment complex, officials said Monday.

The gunman, whom police later identified as 18-year-old Reginald Gagnier Jr., was arrested on campus by university police shortly before 7 p.m. Friday, nearly three hours after a man was shot in the shoulder while at Seahawk Square Apartments. Though bordering university property, the apartment complex lies apart from campus, and the alleged shooter was not affiliated with UNCW, officials said.

While the incident illuminated a weakness in the university's notification system, it also demonstrated how UNCW tries to use technology to inform students, faculty and staff.

Shortly after the shooting, UNCW Police Chief David Donaldson instructed staff to disseminate a campus-wide alert via phone, text message and email in order to warn the community about the armed man on the loose.

The alert was never sent, however. The first message the campus received was a description of the suspect about 6:35 p.m., followed by an announcement 40 minutes later that Gagnier was in custody and being handed over to the Wilmington Police Department.

University officials said they were evaluating why the initial notification was never distributed, but Dana Fischetti, a UNCW spokeswoman, said the lapse appeared likely a matter of human error and not attributable to a technical issue.

"This is about making timely information available to the community so they can make decisions regarding their own safety," Donaldson said Monday.

"We're going to learn what we can from this situation and modify things accordingly," he said. "We remain committed to the safety of the campus community."
The university's notification system consists of a plethora of tools that officials can use to deliver warnings in the event of an emergency, whether that be a criminal situation like Friday's or a dangerous weather event. In addition to automated phone calls, text messages and emails, the university can also activate sirens, interrupt cable television, post to social media and display a message on its electronic marquee to warn its campus about possible threats.

The sirens were put in place in the wake of the Virginia Tech campus shootings in 2007, an event that prompted university officials to look at how to communicate warnings quickly.

In order to streamline the process, the campus police department handles the first warning messages, and then Fischetti's office handles secondary notifications. That way the first responders can get the initial information out faster than sending it through the communications office, Fischetti said.

On Friday, police had notified Fischetti's office they had sent out the initial round of notifications, but those had not.

"We were under the impression it happened," Fischetti said.

By the time both departments realized the alerts had never gone out, it was too late.

"When we found that out, the Wilmington Police Department had broken down perimeter and had said that there was no longer a threat," she said.

On Friday, officers responding to the apartment complex about 4:21 p.m. found 42-year-old David Carol with a gunshot wound to the shoulder.

As the Wilmington Police Department searched for the gunman with a K-9 unit and a helicopter, campus police established a perimeter to prevent the suspect from coming on campus. After the search came up empty, UNCW officers located Gagnier along Hamilton Drive near the edge of campus. When they arrested him, he was carrying a gun, Donaldson said.

Gagnier faces a charge of assault with a deadly weapon with intent to kill. He was still in custody at the New Hanover County jail Monday.

Carol was discharged from New Hanover Regional Medical Center on Sunday, a hospital spokeswoman said.

Brian Freskos: 343-2327

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NCSU gets federal grant to study food poisoning

BY HELEN CHAPPELL - Staff Writer

RALEIGH–A national team led by N.C. State University has received a $25 million federal grant to research and help control the viruses that cause food poisoning.

The money, to be disbursed over five years, will establish the NCSU-based Food Virology Collaborative, an institute dedicated to studying and preventing foodborne viruses, such as noroviruses.

These viruses are the most common cause of food poisoning. Most who fall ill because of a norovirus recover on their own, but those with severe cases sometimes need hospitalization.

The grant is the largest ever awarded for food safety by the USDA's National Institute for Food and Agriculture. It also is the largest grant ever received by NCSU's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

"I think we can really make a difference for public health," said Lee-Ann Jaykus, a professor of food science at NCSU and the leader of the project.

N.C. Central University in Durham and N.C. A&T State University in Greensboro also are among the more than 30 partners receiving funding from the grant. The national team includes university, government and industry partners.

Noroviruses can be spread from person to person, and they are a major problem in the food supply. Infected people who handle food can spread the illness. Also, shellfish and even fresh produce can be infected through contaminated water.

Resistant noroviruses

There are many different strains of norovirus - more than 60 at last count, Jaykus said. Though the viruses cause the same symptoms when people become infected, they are quite different from each other in the lab.

This makes noroviruses tricky for doctors and scientists to detect. There's no routine way to test patients.

Making matters worse, noroviruses are resistant to most common disinfectants, so a virus can remain on a contaminated surface even after it's been cleaned.

"You're looking at almost the perfect pathogen," Jaykus said.
The grant will fund research and education on topics ranging from antiviral disinfectants to molecular virology.

At NCSU, Jaykus said, researchers will be working on better tools for studying noroviruses, which cannot now be cultured outside the human body. They will also use NCSU's expertise in agricultural extension to educate those in the food industry.

Scientists from NCCU will collaborate directly with the NCSU team. NCCU also will use the grant to support student internships in food science and outreach to the food industry, said Dr. Li-An Yeh, a professor of pharmaceutical science at NCCU.

**A&T tests disinfectant**

The N.C. A&T team will focus on using tiny particles of metals, such as copper oxide and silver, to disinfect fresh produce. Scientists have already shown that these treatments can kill bacteria.

The tiny metal particles could be integrated into food packaging or encapsulated in a gel, said Leonard Williams, an N.C. A&T professor of food science and the interim director of the Center for Excellence in Post Harvest Technology.

Jaykus said she is excited about the program's large scale. "Rarely do we have the opportunity to have this amount of money to address an important problem in a very, very multidisciplinary manner," she said.

Still, with the dramatic federal spending cuts included in Tuesday's debt ceiling deal, some involved with the norovirus grant are concerned about its future.

In large multiyear grants such as this one, "there is always ... a clause that indicates that the continuation is going to be based on availability of funds," said Cathie Woteki, USDA undersecretary for research education and economics.

But, she added, because the Senate has to pass an appropriations bill, "it's really early yet to be talking about how this deal is going to be affecting our grants program."

Jaykus said she is "cautiously optimistic" about the project's survival. Food safety is a very high priority for the USDA, she said.

"I feel pretty confident that the USDA has set aside adequate funds certainly for our first three years," Jaykus said. "I'm more concerned about the latter two years."
ETHAN HYMAN / UNC-Chapel Hill Chancellor Holden Thorp, center, listens as athletic director Dick Baddour talks about the NCAA investigation into the football program during a news conference on Aug. 26. Head coach Butch Davis is at left.

**Thorp targeted online by upset UNC fans**

BY KEN TYSIAC - Staff Writer

It was bound to happen.

In an Internet-crazed world, a controversial decision last week gave birth to a website demanding the ouster of University of North Carolina chancellor Holden Thorp.

A UNC spokeswoman said phone calls and emails to Thorp about the firing of football coach Butch Davis have slowed. But some disappointed fans have unsuccessfully asked for ticket refunds and asked for explanations from the Rams Club athletics booster group.

Nine days before the start of football practice, Thorp fired Davis, explaining that allegations of nine major NCAA violations that included academic fraud have eroded the university's reputation.

Fans who were disappointed with Davis' dismissal responded by creating fireholdenthorp.com.

They are organizing a campaign to finance billboards in the Triangle advancing their cause. Matt Littlejohn, a Raleigh insurance and risk management consultant and Rams Club member who's a spokesman for the
website, said fans are upset with the timing of the decision as well as the firing.

"I feel like a strong leader would have been able to handle this more appropriately," Littlejohn said, "and I think Holden Thorp is in over his head."

Littlejohn said Thorp's handling of the situation has damaged UNC's reputation as much as the actions of the football players who took the impermissible benefits that led to the NCAA investigation.

In an email response, UNC spokeswoman Nancy Davis wrote that Thorp is getting great support from UNC system President Tom Ross, the Board of Trustees and faculty members. Nancy Davis wrote that Thorp is hearing from some alumni who are upset, but also from many who think he made the right decision.

According to Davis, Thorp has been able to focus on the university's budget and consult with people about the search to replace departing athletics director Dick Baddour.

"The chancellor knew his decision wouldn't be embraced by everyone, but he was resolved that it was the right call to make," Nancy Davis wrote. "We think that most Carolina fans will look ahead now and support Coach [Everett] Withers and our student-athletes."

**Trustees back Thorp**

Wade Hargrove, a Raleigh lawyer sworn in as chairman of the school's Board of Trustees on July 24, reiterated Tuesday the board's support for Thorp in his controversial decision.

"The board understands fully the difficulty of the decisions, the implications it would have," Hargrove said, "but taking into consideration the long-term interests of the football program, the university's athletics program as a whole and the university's academic mission and its responsibilities to all students and those who care so deeply about Carolina, the decision was the right decision."

At the Rams Club and the athletic ticket office, UNC officials are trying to keep the support of fans.

UNC has sold 32,500 season-ticket packages, and associate AD Clint Gwaltney said there have been a handful of calls from fans wanting refunds. The 32,500 is about 2,000 short of last year's total, but Gwaltney said that
was expected because popular opponents N.C. State and Virginia Tech aren't on this year's home schedule.

But having a coach fired just nine days before preseason practice starts put UNC in an unusual situation because fans had purchased their season tickets. Ticket holders who ask for their money back have been told the school's policy is no refunds and no exchanges.

"The football season is going to be played," Gwaltney said. "There are going to be Tar Heels on the field and there will be Tar Heels in the stands to support them."

'Our fans are angry'

Support from alumni and fans is critical for the Rams Club, too, as the athletic booster group finances facilities improvements at Kenan Stadium.

Rams Club executive director John Montgomery said that after a year and a half, the club has raised $22.5 million toward its five-year goal of $35 million for Kenan Stadium improvements that will include a club seating area and an academic support center.

Montgomery said he has heard from distressed fans and reminds them that the Rams Club's primary mission is to fund scholarships for athletes.

"Right now people are emotional, they're confused," Montgomery said. "Our fans are angry. So we're talking with them about that mission. We're talking with them about supporting this football team, Coach Withers, and the rest of our sports."

Littlejohn, who represents the fireholdenthorp.com website, said he plans to continue attending games and supporting the team. He hopes the Tar Heels will bond together through adversity and play in the ACC championship game Dec. 3 in Charlotte.

But he said Thorp has mismanaged the situation, and said fans would like Thorp out before the school hires an AD to replace Baddour.

"I would say 100 percent of the Carolina fans that want to see Holden Thorp fired definitely are not comfortable seeing him make the next hire for the athletic director," Littlejohn said. "... This is an extremely important hire, especially for Carolina football."

ktysiac@charlotteobserver.com or 919-829-8942
A new temporary "William Peace University" sign competes with the old "Peace College" sign at the school in Raleigh. Peace recently announced the name change.

**Transition at Peace bumps up against tough women**

BY JANE STANCILL - Staff writer

RALEIGH At the edge of the historic Peace College campus near downtown, the signs at the stately brick entrances are covered with white banners proclaiming a new identity: William Peace University.

The women's college won't admit full-time male students until fall 2012, but the transition is under way.

College officials will soon redesign catalogs and brochures to incorporate the new name and recruit men to the campus. They'll consider what male sports to offer and where to put a men's locker room. And this fall, the faculty will start a discussion about courses that could be tailored for male or female audiences, a plan that experts say is likely to run into legal trouble.

At the same time, the furor over the change shows no sign of dissipating among many students and alumnae.

More than 1,000 have organized on Facebook, where they push petitions, plan protests and take orders for T-shirts that read "Preserve the Peace College Legacy." They have posted a copy of William Peace's handwritten will from the 1800s; the founder donated $10,000 and eight acres for the education of women.
And they have taken aim at the new signs and the new name, which they derisively refer to as "WPU." One woman posted a photograph of her 93-year-old mother, a Peace graduate, beating the new banner with a cane.

The college's trustees announced the changes last month, the same day the board voted on the name change and coed shift. A strategic planning committee had considered the college's options for several months.

'Tears all around'

College officials insist the change is necessary to ensure that Peace survives. Todd Robinson, chairman of the trustee board, said the decision was not made casually or enthusiastically.

"There were tears all around the table," he said.

It's not a matter of board members wanting the school to be coeducational, Robinson said. "It's a question of what's economically viable going forward."

Peace, like all private colleges, is heavily dependent on tuition from students. In a letter to alumnae, Robinson and other board members pointed out that after Peace made the change from a junior college to a four-year degree-granting institution in 1996, full-time enrollment rose from 448 in 1996 to 681 in 2003.

But, Robinson's letter said, since 2003, with the exception of two years, the number of full-time day students has declined. And though the college is not in immediate financial danger, Robinson said, it never reached its target of 850 as set out in a 2006 strategic plan.

President Debra Townsley, who took the helm at Peace a year ago, has taken the heat for many of the decisions. She has recently conducted webinars to explain what is behind the changes.

"You look at the competitive landscape," Townsley said in an interview Tuesday. She listed the statistics: National data show that 2 percent of women will consider attending a women's college. A half dozen women's colleges are within a two- or three-hour drive from Raleigh, including the larger Meredith College across town.

Townsley said Peace has the capacity to reach 1,000 or 1,200 students if it can draw from a broader pool of male and female students.

It's not a new predicament. In 1950, there were more than 200 women's colleges in the United States. Today, about 50 are in operation. The rest closed their doors, merged with other colleges or went coed.

"If you're a women's college, this discussion goes on," Townsley said. "This is a continual discussion."

Alumnae prefer to consider the example of Mills College, a women's school in California, where officials decided in 1990 to admit men. That set off a strike,
student protests and a boycott of classes. Weeks later the board reversed its
decision and Mills remains a women's college today.

On Facebook, alumnae speculate on why trustees conducted closed deliberations
and a quick vote. They mourn their alma mater; some have already rushed to the
bookstore to buy Peace College rings and other paraphernalia before the
traditional logo disappears.

The new one, with the William Peace University name, was registered with the
U.S. Patent and Trademark Office on March 9, just weeks after college officials
insisted the coed plan was not in the works.

Robinson said the trademark was separate from the decision to go coed. He said
several other names were under consideration, but he declined to identify them.

Betsy Boddie, a 1946 graduate from Rocky Mount, is a longtime donor, but she
won't give money in the future, she said.

'Terribly disappointed'

Boddie was an honorary trustee, until the college sent a letter recently informing
her that she was no longer needed in that role. Honorary trustees had been
welcome to attend trustee meetings and voice their opinions without voting. No
more.

"I'm terribly disappointed and very sad and angry about the secrecy," said Boddie,
whose daughter and two granddaughters are Peace alumnae. Another
granddaughter will consider other options, she said.

Boddie is talking to other alumnae about what can be done.

"We are going to try everything that we possibly can to get the college back," she
said. "They did away with what we know as Peace College."

For now, college leaders are batting down rumors. Though the college no longer
requires chapel attendance, Robinson said Peace would continue its historic link to
the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Other traditions will carry on if the students so
choose, Townsley said.

When the announcement was made last month, leaders said the college would
offer single-sex classes targeted to male and female students in "disciplines where
research shows that women and men learn differently."

That won't pass legal muster, say experts on Title IX, the federal law that
guarantees equal opportunity in education.

"There is no question that under Title IX you can't just willy-nilly have some
classes be single sex and some classes be coeducational," said Fatima Goss
Graves, vice president for education and employment at the National Women's
Law Center. "They're on a little shaky ground here."
It's unclear what classes would be for students of one sex only. The faculty will consider the issue this fall, said Betty Witcher, psychology professor and moderator of the Faculty Assembly.

But Townsley was noncommittal about the plan Tuesday, saying only, "We're exploring it."

Witcher said the faculty found out about the coeducational move at the same time it was announced publicly. But professors sensed it would happen at some point. "I think all of the faculty realize we needed to do something as a college," she said.

Elsie Totten, a 1949 graduate, credits Peace with giving her the self-confidence to go into business for herself in Durham, where she ran a downtown gift shop for many years. She fondly remembers daily chapel and the fact that the dean required students to wear gloves when they traveled by bus.

"I won't live to see what the outcome will be down the road," she said of William Peace University, "but I can't believe it's good."

jane.stancill@newsobserver.com or 919-829-4559

**Peace College**

**Founded:** 1857

**Profile:** Private women's college affiliated with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

**Enrollment (Fall 2008):** 642 full-time students, 70 part-time students

**Tuition, room and board (2010-11):** $33,720

**Annual budget:** $18 million

**Endowment:** About $40 million

**Sources:** Peace College, U.S. Department of Education
Feds raid Northern Virginia university

By Daniel de Vise

Immigration authorities raided a little-known Northern Virginia college Thursday, seizing computers and documents and leaving a population of approximately 2,000 mostly Indian students in limbo.

A letter posted to the Web site of the University of Northern Virginia in Annandale states that agents from Immigration and Customs Enforcement and other federal agencies arrived at the campus Thursday morning and took “many items, such as computer hardware, equipment, and paper documents.

“We at UNVA were very surprised at the events that occurred yesterday,” said the university’s chancellor, David Lee, in the letter. He urges students to ignore the rumor mill and continue attending classes, which apparently will go on. A meeting for concerned students was scheduled for 10 a.m. today.

The web site states UNVA is “a major international university”; according to an account in the Chronicle of Higher Education, it serves a population of about 2,000, most of them Indians whose presence in the United States hinges on their educational status.

Some of these students are not pleased.

Erina Rajbhandari said in an e-mail she enrolled in January, has attended class regularly, done all her homework and otherwise “followed all the rules that an international student is required to follow.”

“If UNVA will close, I would lose so much that I have worked for,” she wrote. “My parent’s hard-earned money will go to waste, the time and effort I have expended to get A in all my classes will all go in vain.”

Rajbhandari states that “I have not seen anything illegal going on in the school. It is true that the administration at UNVA is not perfect, but this does not mean they violated the law. [As] for me, I followed all the rules, regulations and laws.”
Students fear they will either be deported or have to start their education over at another school.

Pavan Kumar Kura said in an e-mail, “If I need to transfer to [another] university, [that] means I need to start from the first step of my master’s. I cannot pay [the] tuition fee again.”

A letter posted to the ICE Web site instructs students that they may either continue study at the university or seek transfer to another accredited institution. UNVA’s own accreditation is shaky, according to the Chronicle account.

“Officials from ICE’s Student and Exchange Visitor Program served UNVA with a notice of intent to withdraw UNVA’s authorization to admit foreign students,” Cori W. Bassett, a spokeswoman for ICE, said in a statement. “UNVA students should call the SEVP Response Center at 703-603-3400 for guidance.”

This post has been updated since it was first published.