Cuts to higher education lower than expected

By Josh Humphries
The Daily Reflector

Saturday, August 08, 2009

State funding cuts to higher education in Pitt County will not be as high as some earlier predictions indicated.

The state budget includes a 6 percent cut in funding to East Carolina University and a $14 million cut to the N.C. Community College System that will trickle down to Pitt Community College.

ECU officials have been planning for budget cuts for months, slowly increasing the expected cuts to double digits. ECU spokesman John Durham said there are still a lot of details to iron out, but the university secured funding for two major capital projects in this tough state budget climate.

"We are very pleased with the way all of higher education, including ECU, was treated by the General Assembly, especially given the really dire predictions early this year," Durham said.

ECU will receive $2 million for indigent care funding, a high priority for officials in recent years, and $3 million for operation of the dental school.

The university will also receive enrollment growth funding and financial aid help from the state. Durham also said that cuts to staff will be kept to a minimum under the current budget.

The university does not have its final budget in hand as the UNC Board of Governors will set the funding for the universities in the system.

Some schools in the University of North Carolina system will face larger cuts than others. The General Assembly is requiring the UNC Board of Governors to make cuts on a case-by-case basis rather than by cutting evenly across the board to each school in the system.

Indigent care funding will allow the Brody School of Medicine to continue providing health care to people in eastern North Carolina who cannot pay.

"East Carolina University has a mission of improving the health of residents of eastern North Carolina and the indigent care funding will go a long way toward helping us fulfill that mission," Durham said.

The university requested $8 million for dental school planning and operation and was allotted $3 million, an amount that will be enough to keep the school on schedule to open in the fall of 2011, Durham said.

A boom in growth at PCC will help the community college continue its missions, President Dennis Massey said.

PCC does not yet know what portion of the $14 million cut to the system will be imposed upon it, Massey said. But large growth in enrollment last year will build the school's coffers.

"The reality is if we did not have enrollment growth money we would be in very bad condition this year," Massey said.

"We had double-digit enrollment growth last year and getting that is offsetting the other cuts."

Massey said PCC is overwhelmed with student interest this year as well. Applications to PCC are up 50 percent
and Pell grant awards to students are up 27 percent over last year.

A boost in enrollment will help PCC in the future as each budget is tied to the number of students the community college serves.

"Overall we took a lot of cuts but we probably did about as well as anybody else," Massey said.

"We know the whole state is in a deep economic downturn and we are not expecting to be immune to that. But we are part of the solution with getting people back to work, and it's hard to do that with these reductions."

Massey said he does not expect to see a reduction in force, and the school is busy getting ready for the first day of classes that start at the end of the month.

"We are not sure how much cutting there will be but right now, our biggest goal is to get fall term up and running and do as much as we can to serve the needs of the community," he said.

PCC will also be taking a hit from a new rule that limits the kinds of classes that high school students can take on the college level for free. The General Assembly has limited waivers to math, science and vocational classes, a policy that is expected to impact hundreds of high school students in Pitt County.

The students will be allowed to take other dual enrollment classes at PCC, but now they will have to pay for them.

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ECU Notes: program, styled after reality-TV, teaches students about college life

ECU News Services

Saturday, August 08, 2009

Sure, teenagers love reality-TV. But can they learn anything from it?

East Carolina University thinks they can, and has incorporated the popular style of programming into orientation sessions as a way to educate incoming students about the adjustment to college life.

ECU staff and students created a series of videos styled after the MTV reality show, "The Hills." Called, "The Loft," the scripted drama focuses on six new college students adapting to university life and the challenges it can present.

Humorous and informative, the episodes address issues such as difficult roommates, time and stress management, study skills, alcohol and drug safety and body image. After watching each segment with students, ECU experts facilitated discussion and invited students to respond to questions about the video. Students were also advised about campus resources.

A group of ECU staff members came up with the idea to reach students through the reality-TV format.

"Every year for summer orientation, we try to evolve and do something that we think is a little better than the previous year," Karen Warren, director of Campus Wellness, said. "This year, we decided we would like to do something more like a reality show because that's so popular right now."

In past years, orientation sessions have used live skits and testimonials by students to give incoming freshmen a look at the issues and experiences they may encounter in college.

But, Bob Morphet, assistant director of the Center for Counseling and Student Development, said those methods did not always engage students.

"We saw lots of (cell phone) texting going on," he said. "So we thought, how do we try to push the envelope to at least have students begin to think about these issues, so when they come back in August it's not the first time they're seeing or hearing about these things?"

Their idea? To speak students' language in a format they could enjoy.

"I think that reality-TV is a format students can relate to, and, with the facilitation piece, it becomes a good tool to keep the attention of our students while presenting them with these important messages," Warren said.

The short, high-quality videos were produced entirely by ECU staff and students. Staff members scripted and produced the scenes, while students served as cast and crew.

Heather Wilkinson of Student Life Communication and Advancement called production "the smoothest running week of so-much shooting I've ever done in my life. Our students did an amazing job and were so professional," she said.

The group produced eight videos to be shown at orientation sessions. More videos will be released periodically to a Web site dedicated to the program. The Web site will also host a blog, open chats with ECU staff and faculty,
information about campus resources and other materials. Students will be encouraged to use the Web site throughout their first year at college and beyond.

Mophet said the program helps ECU faculty and staff relate to college students while discussing important subjects.

“The hard thing is striking a balance. We need to sound like we know what we’re talking about, but not like we’re sermonizing,” he said. “I’m not going to tell students what to do and what not to do, but I do want them to think about the decisions they are going to make here.”

Researcher gets grant from biotech center

An ECU faculty member is among grant recipients who will share in $300,000 from the North Carolina Biotechnology Center as part of a program to foster university-industry collaboration.

Dr. Wayne Cascio, vice-chair of the Department of Cardiovascular Sciences in the Brody School of Medicine at ECU, and Research Triangle Park-based startup Entegron have received $100,000 to study the ability of freeze-dried platelets to help stop excessive bleeding during heart surgery or in patients taking anti-clotting drugs.

Their grant is part of the Biotech Center’s Collaborative Funding Grants program, which enables public-private teams to hire a postdoctoral researcher or technician to work at a North Carolina university under the supervision of an academic scientist on a topic of defined commercial interest.

The grant program is cosponsored by the Kenan Institute for Engineering, Technology and Science at North Carolina State University.

A researcher at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Parion Sciences received a grant to study drugs to treat dry eye, and a researcher at NCSU and Agile Sciences received a grant to help create a treatment for bacterial spot disease on peaches.

The Biotechnology Center is a private, non-profit corporation supported by the N.C. General Assembly. Its mission is to provide long-term economic and societal benefits to North Carolina by supporting biotechnology research, business, education and strategic policy statewide.

Cell phone drive assists Family Violence Center

For the second year, ECU’s Student Legal Services will conduct a cell phone drive to benefit the Family Violence Center of Pitt County.

Used phones, batteries, chargers and other accessories can be dropped off anytime at the main collection site, 1704 B Arlington Blvd. On-campus collections will be held once a month at Wright Plaza, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Aug. 27, Sept. 24, Oct. 29 and Nov. 19.

Dawn Gibbs, a paralegal in Student Legal Services, organized last year’s drive, which resulted in more than 327 phones and a lot of accessories being collected.

Gibbs hopes to surpass that number this year. “Hopefully, we can collect more, but if we meet last year’s amount, that would be good as well. Because of the economic crisis, the Family Violence Center has lost a lot of funding, so every penny helps,” she said.

Cell phone companies make a small, monetary donation to the center for each phone that can’t be reused. Working cell phones are activated to make 911 calls only. The Family Violence Program then loans these phones to victims of domestic violence for emergency use.

“This is a nice, easy way to keep the phones out of the landfill and help out people in need,” Gibbs said.

For more information about the drive, contact Gibbs at 737-1067 or e-mail gibbsmi@ecu.edu.

Student bests ROTC peers in physical test

ECU senior Theodore Brennis finished ahead of nearly 500 other Army ROTC cadets in the Army Physical
Fitness Test (APFT) held as part of cadet training at Fort Lewis, Washington. Passing the test is a prerequisite for becoming commissioned as a U.S. Army lieutenant.

Thousands of college students from around the globe converge at Fort Lewis each summer to attend Army ROTC's capstone training and assessment exercise, the 29-day Leader Development and Assessment Course (LDAC).

A native of Stafford, Va., Brennis scored 367 points on an extended scale; 300 is the Army’s standard maximum score. His achievement on the APFT placed him in the top two percent of his 500-person regiment. The test, which measures the student's strength and endurance, consists of sit-ups and push-ups, each timed over two minutes, and a two-mile run. Scores are aggregated into an overall official Army score.

Each cadet must pass the APFT on their fourth day of training.

This year, more than 5,800 ROTC cadets will attend LDAC in 12 ROTC regiments. Each 500-person regiment will undergo a 29-day cycle of progressive training, culminating in the regimental graduation ceremony.

Successful completion of the training is prerequisite to commissioning. Last year, 4,300 second lieutenants were commissioned through ROTC.
Dr. Darla Liles, an oncologist in Greenville, and C. Ashley Mann, a Cary dentist, have been honored as the 2009 Woman and Man of the Year by the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society.

Liles and Mann were the highest fundraisers in a 10-week campaign, and both went above and beyond in their efforts to support the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society’s mission to cure leukemia, lymphoma and myeloma, and improve the quality of life of patients and their families, a news release said.

Liles had great success as the first Greenville candidate raising more than $24,000 for blood cancer research and patient services. She sees patients and teaches medical students, residents and fellows at the Leo W. Jenkins Cancer Center at the Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University.

Since 2004, Liles has served as the program director for a fellowship program which trains young physicians in the specialty of hematology/oncology. She also treats patients with all varieties of blood and cancer diagnoses at an Edgecombe County outreach clinic operated by Heritage Hospital in Tarboro.

“I was honored to be the first individual from east of I-95 to participate in this event,” Liles said. “The Leukemia and Lymphoma Society has provided so much support for my patients and my staff over the years through their outstanding patient support services and continuing medical education programs for nurses, social workers and physicians.”

Liles’ fundraising efforts support LLS programs including financial aid, support groups, and peer counseling to patients and their families. Funds also support LLS’s investment in research, including $6.8 million in projects at UNC-Chapel Hill and Duke University.
Greenville doctor a straight shooter

Special to The Daily Reflector

Saturday, August 08, 2009

PALO ALTO, Calif. — Greenville’s Dr. Raymond Vickers, 82, won a bronze medal in archery at the Summer National Senior Games last week.

Vickers, a retired clinical professor of geriatrics at East Carolina University’s Brody School of Medicine, first picked up a bow and arrow at age 77, making his accomplishment all the more impressive, and surprising, even to Vickers himself.

“I never dreamed I’d ever see an ‘athlete’ ribbon around my neck, never mind a bronze medal,” Vickers said. “And to think, I just started archery so I could fill my newly-imposed free time, enjoy the outdoors and make new friends.”

Vickers’ journey to the Games started in 2004 when he joined a local seniors’ archery group. In 2007, after winning several local tournaments, he surprised himself by winning his age group in the North Carolina Senior Games.

The next surprise was receiving an invitation to the National Games this month.

More than 230 archers broken into age brackets from 50 to 90 years old vied for medals at Stanford University. Vickers competed next to an 81-year-old former chemist who has been bow-shooting for more than 40 years.

“I learned many new techniques from real experts who were happy to share their secrets,” Vickers said. “I gave my five previous gold medals to our grandchildren, but this national bronze is for keeps.”

Vickers’ only prior athletic experience had been competitive cross-country running and rifle-shooting in the 1950s while he was in medical school. While practicing medicine and raising four children, he only found time for recreational bowling until he retired from ECU.

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$180,000 Richard Cole, former dean, UNC-Chapel Hill
DAN SEARS, UNC NEWS SERVICES

$288,750 Patricia A. Sullivan, ex-UNCG chancellor

$210,000 James L. Oblinger, former chancellor, NCSU.
Robert Willett, Staff photo by Robert Willett

$58,834 Mark Padilla, former provost UNCA
UNC-A

$220,500 James L. Smith, ex-provost, ECU
Ex-university brass get leaves, payouts

'Retreat rights' at North Carolina universities come under attack for their discretionary and uneven application and the quiet approach to giving the money -- and because they can be costly.

BY DAN KANE AND ERIC FERRERI, Staff Writers

Last year, North Carolinians gave Beverly Washington Jones six months of pay -- $104,000 -- as she left the provost's job at N.C. Central University so she could prepare for her return to the classroom.

Jones took the UNC system-sanctioned administrative leave at the same rate of pay she earned as NCCU's top academic officer. But she didn't return to the university. At the end of the six-month leave, she retired.
Jones, a Durham native and former Durham school board member, said recently that though she had intended to return to teaching, a research project became so consuming that she retired to devote all of her time to it. Neither NCCU Chancellor Charlie Nelms, who removed Jones from the position as he created a new Cabinet, nor UNC system officials could require Jones to come back as a history professor or to return the $104,000.

The "retreats right" policy under which Jones was paid as she prepared to teach again, is in broad use at North Carolina's 16 public universities, UNC records show. Over the past five years, taxpayers have paid about $8 million to 117 administrators who either returned to the faculty or left the university. In 24 cases, the payouts were for $100,000 or more.

A News & Observer review found that these agreements, along with other transitional payments, offered sizable sums of money with few or no strings attached, in at least three cases violated UNC system policies and in some cases rewarded administrators with as much as a year's salary for a job poorly done.

Jones' case stands out because she didn't return to teaching, but NCCU has used retreat rights twice, far less than most universities in the UNC system. UNC-Chapel Hill, for example, has rewarded more than 25 administrators with paid leaves or enhanced pay for lesser positions, including former Chancellor James Moeser.

Moeser was paid $390,000 last year to prepare to teach; this year, he will be paid more than $234,000 for his work co-teaching one class each semester and mentoring faculty members who are considering going into administration. His salary is nearly twice the average salary paid to other full professors in the music department.

The universities have retreat rights policies in place to help administrators, who often haven't taught in several years, retool for the classroom. The policies are under review, in part because of recent publicity about such agreements at N.C. State University, but also because of a tight state budget. Legislators spent last week raising taxes and cutting programs to close a revenue gap of more than $4 billion.

UNC officials say the policies are needed but acknowledge that the agreements need to be tightened.

"There has to be a system of accountability in place," said Hannah Gage, chairwoman of the UNC Board of Governors. "We have a policy that appears to have some holes in it."

A perk that pays

University administrators are among the best-paid employees in state government. UNC-Chapel Hill Chancellor Holden Thorp, for example, makes $420,000 a year, more than three times Gov. Beverly Perdue's $139,590 salary.

Retreat rights, however, are a lesser-known perquisite. Such payouts are rare beyond academia, and they have been handled in such a way that the public rarely hears about them. They hit the spotlight this spring, however, when NCSU Chancellor James Oblinger did not disclose the full terms of a retreat rights agreement with his second in command, Provost Larry Nielsen.

Those terms would have allowed Nielsen, who had taken the blame for hiring Mary Easley, wife of then-Gov. Mike Easley, to make an additional $310,255 as he made the transition to a faculty job.

The deal, which NCSU's board of trustees later rescinded, is now part of a wide-ranging federal investigation into Easley's dealings. Nielsen will get six months at his annual salary of $298,700 -- $149,350 -- then drop to a faculty salary of $156,715 when he returns to teaching late this year.
Oblinger was forced to resign over his failure to disclose the additional compensation and because of his role in Mary Easley's hiring. He's returning to the faculty and is now exercising his retreat rights agreement -- six months' leave at his annual chancellor's salary of $420,000, a total of $210,000. (Since he had not reached five years as chancellor, he did not qualify for a one-year leave, as Moeser did.)

Oblinger will drop to a faculty salary that has not yet been set, university officials say.

UNC System President Erskine Bowles has since been reviewing retreat rights agreements at all 16 campuses. In an interview, Bowles said he sees three problems: The agreements are too generous in terms of length and salary, they fail to identify what an administrator will do on leave and they are not thoroughly reviewed by the respective boards of trustees or the board of governors before they are approved.

"It certainly could use some reform," Bowles said.

Bowles' recommendation will include limiting the paid leaves to no more than six months, and at the rate of an "appropriate" faculty salary. The UNC Board of Governors is expected to consider Bowles' proposals at its meeting this week.

But Bowles said he will not call for an end to retreat rights agreements. They are a key part of the compensation package for faculty members at major public and private universities, he said, and to curtail them would put the state's public universities at a competitive disadvantage.

"You have to have retreat rights to be competitive, and I say that based on discussions I've had with a number of recruiters and other leaders in higher education," he said.

More than a dozen public university campuses and systems grant administrative leaves of varying length and compensation, according to a survey by the UNC system. Duke University does as well, a spokesman confirmed. Wake Forest University has offered administrative leaves in the past but has no formal policy and doesn't do so consistently, a spokesman said.

A benefit that counts

UNC officials also say the leaves help administrators become effective professors after years away from teaching. Administrators who have gone on the retreats say they study the latest research in their fields and brush up on their teaching skills.

"There's no question I have benefited enormously, having the cushion of this time away to reflect and gain a sense of what I want to do," said Moeser, the former UNC-CH chancellor who concluded his eight-year tenure last summer.

Moeser, a musician by training, has been in university administration for decades and last supervised students 23 years ago at the University of Kansas. This fall he'll co-teach a first-year seminar focusing on music and the arts.

"Could I have done it without a research leave?" Moeser said. "Sure. But I would not have been approaching the fall with the same excitement and anticipation as I am."

Molly Broad, the former UNC system president under whose leadership the leave policies were created, said campus chancellors need time to again become familiar with their areas of expertise, which are often in fields that have progressed swiftly during their time away from day-to-day teaching.

"You're not doing the student a favor if you put a former chancellor in a classroom to teach a course on a subject he's been out of touch with for a long time," she said.

Broad was a beneficiary of the policy she championed; upon leaving the UNC system presidency at the end of 2005, she continued earning her full salary -- $331,254 -- for a year as she prepared for a new career teaching public administration and leadership at UNC-CH's
School of Government. Broad spent about a year and a half in that UNC-CH post, training county managers and other public administrators, before leaving for the presidency of the American Council on Education.

Jones, the now-retired NCCU provost, had spent more than three decades at that university before retiring at the end of 2008. A historian, Jones spent part of her six-month administrative leave researching a book on Helen Gray Edmonds, a longtime NCCU history professor.

"I found it's really going to be a monumental study," she said, explaining why she then retired rather than go back to teaching at NCCU. "I realized I'd really need the time to do it. Hopefully, I can teach a course after this book is done. I'm hoping it will pay back [the university] in terms of the research on Doctor Edmonds' life."

Last year, Fayetteville State University paid former Provost Carol Blackshire-Belay $72,500 to go on leave for five months. That's more than twice the time she spent as provost; she resigned after less than two months in the position. During her paid leave, she was required to produce a report on "faculty development models."

Blackshire-Belay could not be reached for comment. After she returned to FSU for the spring semester, the university decided not to renew her contract.

She is one of four former provosts at FSU who have stepped down in the past five years. Combined, they have received $416,663 in paid leaves.

Not a new benefit

Retreat rights agreements for UNC administrators have been around for decades. UNC records show them as far back as 1973, when the 16-campus system was organized.

Bill Friday, UNC president from 1956 to 1986, said such agreements were rare then. They were put in place on a case-by-case basis, often to resolve a personnel problem. He said six months is long enough to prepare to teach and the administrators should only be paid a professor's salary that matches their experience and qualifications.

"I can only speak for myself, but once you leave the administration, you go back into the role you did before. And if that means you were a senior professor, then your salary will be in that level of competition," he said.

UNC system records show that since Friday's tenure, several chancellors have received leaves of six months to a year at full pay. But there was no system policy until 2005, during Broad's tenure. The Board of Governors adopted a policy that granted a yearlong leave with full pay for presidents and chancellors who had served at least five years. They could also then return to a faculty position at 60 percent of their chancellor's pay, or at a pay comparable to faculty members in similar positions, whichever was greater.

In the meantime, UNC officials were also offering leaves to lesser administrators, such as provosts, deans and vice chancellors. A policy approved in 2003 states that chancellors can offer their deputy administrators up to a year's leave at their full salaries before they return to the faculty. Upon return, the former administrator would be paid a salary comparable to similar faculty members.

Any agreements that offered more than the UNC policy need the respective university's board of trustees' approval.

At least one campus did not follow those requirements. At NCSU, Oblinger, in three cases, offered deputy administrators more pay than they would have been entitled to once they rejoined the faculty. UNC system officials say three other campuses, including UNC-CH, had "inconsistent" policies or practices that provided more money for administrators when they
returned to the faculty.

NCSU Chancellor James Woodward received a yearlong leave with full pay when he stepped down as UNC-Charlotte's chancellor in 2005. He returned as a faculty member at 60 percent of his chancellor's salary before taking the interim chancellor's job at NCSU.

He said it may be hard for the public to understand paying for these leaves but it is important for the universities to offer them.

He said leaves were granted to former professors with tenure, and if they have tenure "It's because you've been a very good faculty member."

Rep. Rick Glazier, the state House's chief education budget writer, is one of those folks in need of an explanation. Glazier, a Fayetteville Democrat, said he and his colleagues are hoping to rein in the leave agreements. The new state budget requires a study of the policies.

Glazier said he supported giving universities the flexibility to pay severance or move someone to a lesser job at a higher salary, but only to avoid costly litigation. He said the state can't afford an extended study leave for administrators, or to pay them more than what their faculty job typically pays.

"Whatever it once was, as a sort of academic custom or practice, those times have passed," Glazier said. "And from a taxing perspective, regardless of what happens at a private institution, in a public institution supported by taxpayer dollars, that's not a practice that should continue."

Database editor David Raynor contributed to this report.

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Bowles' recommendations

UNC President Erskine Bowles has made the following recommendations to reduce the cost and increase the accountability of leave packages for administrators who return to the faculty:

• Senior administrators with five years' experience or more would be limited to a six-month paid leave at an appropriate faculty salary. They would then take a faculty position at that salary. Anything more than that would require Board of Governors approval.

• An up-front agreement would detail what is expected on the leave and what work the former administrator would do upon return.

• These agreements would require the approval of the Board of Governors for presidents, vice presidents or chancellors, or university boards of trustees for other senior campus administrators. Those boards would review all previous agreements before granting additional ones.

• Bowles would allow administrators hired under current policies to retain the rights to the more lucrative leave packages.

Read UNC President Erskine Bowles' recommendations for curbing paid leaves.

Read the lists of administrators who have received leaves and additional pay:
UNC leaves cost you $8 million

In the past five years, 117 UNC system administrators have stepped down and received paid leaves or were allowed to keep their current salaries while working lesser-paying jobs. Some who return from their leaves will receive higher salaries than their peers among the faculty. These personnel moves have cost taxpayers more than $8 million. Critics are calling for reform. Data about some who stepped down:

JAMES MOESER

$390,835

Former UNC-Chapel Hill chancellor: Continued to receive his chancellor's salary for a year as he went on a research leave. He is to return to the faculty this year and will be paid 60 percent of his previous salary to teach music, more than $234,000.

MOLLY BROAD

$331,254

Former UNC system president: Received president's salary for a year as she went on research leave. She returned as a UNC-Ch professor and was paid at a higher rate than her peers but left for another job after 18 months.

PATRICIA A. SULLIVAN

$288,750

Former UNC-Greensboro chancellor: Received chancellor's salary for a year to prepare to return to the faculty.

A. EDWARD UPRICHARD

$249,325

Former UNC-Greensboro provost: Received provost's salary for a year to prepare to return to faculty. UNCG officials say he is now working three-fourths of the time.

JIM WOODWARD

$230,391

Former UNC-Charlotte chancellor: Received chancellor's salary for a year to prepare to return to the faculty. Received 60 percent of chancellor's salary while professor of civil engineering. In June, he became interim NCSU chancellor.

JAMES L. SMITH

$220,500

Former provost, East Carolina University: Received provost's salary for a year to prepare to return to the faculty. He is still there.
JAMES OBLINGER
$210,000
Former N.C. State University chancellor: Will continue to receive his chancellor's salary as part of a six-month leave before he returns to the faculty. Oblinger resigned as chancellor after failing to disclose the full terms of a settlement involving Provost Larry Nielsen's resignation, and after records showed Oblinger played a role in the hiring of Mary Easley.

RICHARD COLE
$180,000
Former dean of UNC-CH School of Journalism and Mass Communication: Received dean's salary for a year to prepare to return to teaching, then continued to receive the same salary as a professor. UNC says his pay was not cut because his salary as dean didn't reflect extra pay for administrative duties.

WADE HOBGOOD
$172,250
Former UNC School of the Arts chancellor: Paid a year's salary as part of a research leave, then found a position as a mass communication professor at UNC-Asheville and was paid $103,350 a year. After two years, he left.

LARRY NIELSEN
$149,350
Former NCSU provost: Will continue to receive his provost's salary as part of a six-month leave before he returns to the faculty. He resigned over criticism about the hiring of Mary Easley.

BEVERLY WASHINGTON JONES
$104,000
Former N.C. Central University provost: Forced out of her $208,000-a-year job, Jones took a six-month leave at her provost's salary to prepare for a faculty position. She then retired.

T.J. BRYAN
$89,583
Former Fayetteville State University chancellor: Received a paid five-month leave at her chancellor's salary to prepare to return to the faculty. She taught online classes for one semester at 60 percent of her chancellor's salary, and then two more semesters at a professor's salary. She then left the university. She has sued the UNC system over her move down from chancellor.

MARK PADILLA
$58,834
Former UNC-Asheville provost: Received a paid six-month leave to prepare to return to the faculty. UNCA documents show he intended to find another job and he did, as a provost for Christopher Newport University in Virginia. UNCA agreed to pay up to $2,500 in travel expenses as he hunted a job.

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Salaries may have been too cushy

BY DAN KANE, Staff Writer

At least four University of North Carolina campuses have offered additional compensation to administrators that may go beyond what policies allow, records show.

At N.C. State University, those perks were offered three times in violation of the policies. NCSU had to rescind three such deals that would have allowed senior administrators to receive additional pay for up to three years before they reverted to a faculty salary. The deals had not been approved by NCSU's Board of Trustees, as the UNC system requires.

UNC system officials now say in a memorandum that the policies and practices at three other campuses -- UNC-Chapel Hill, Appalachian State University and UNC-Pembroke -- need to be examined "to ensure they are in full compliance with Board of Governors policy."

Data from those campuses show that some department heads were receiving all or part of their administrative stipends or extra pay after they returned to the faculty. The system policy requires board of trustees approval if stipends continue more than a year after an administrator returns to the faculty.

The memo, written by UNC system officials Jeff Davies and Kitty McCollum, said the Board of Governors should also clarify which levels of administrators are eligible for research leaves and whether they should be eligible to get any part of their administrative salaries when they return to the faculty.

ASU has a policy that allows former department heads to continue to receive all or part of their stipends for up to eight years, depending on how long they served in those jobs. The policy has cost $266,000 in the past five years.

UNC-Chapel Hill has let 12 department heads keep a higher salary as they return to teaching. Overall, this has cost at least $86,000; it's unclear how much more because for nearly all the department heads, UNC-CH officials listed the payments only for the year of the step down.

Officials at UNC-CH and ASU said their department heads aren't senior administrators, so they aren't covered by the UNC system policy. UNC-Pembroke, which paid small stipends, says it is ending extra pay for department heads who return to the faculty.

The deals NCSU had to rescind came to light with Larry Nielsen's secret deal to step down from NCSU's provost post and return to the faculty. NCSU records show those deals hearkened back to a standard arrangement NCSU offered to administrators several years ago that can be more costly than the UNC systemwide policy.

NCSU records show that chancellors there had offered at least nine deans and two vice chancellors the right to a phased-in salary reduction once they returned to the faculty. Over three years, the salary would be reduced to one comparable to a peer professor.

When the UNC Board of Governors adopted a systemwide policy in 2003 that did not include the more costly salary-reduction provision, then-NCSU Chancellor Marye Anne Fox provided
the UNC system with a list of the administrators who had it.

The list included Nielsen and the man who succeeded Fox, James Oblinger. Both men were deans in 2003. Neither exercised those rights as deans because they were promoted into new jobs that brought them under the UNC system policy. Neither could be reached for comment.

NCSU correspondence shows that Oblinger continued to offer the three-year salary step down without board approval.

He gave it to Nielsen and two vice chancellors, Terri Lomax and Marc Hoit. When Nielsen's deal became public in an episode that ultimately forced Oblinger to resign as chancellor, NCSU renegotiated the agreements with Lomax and Hoit. In the meantime, NCSU continues to follow the more lucrative policy with those on the 2003 list who have opted to return to the faculty.

In April, Kathryn Moore, the College of Education dean, resigned to take a faculty job. In her resignation letter, she cited that she was entitled to receive a year-long retreat at her full $203,904 salary, plus the extra money as her salary was reduced, over three years, to roughly $165,000. She also asked that if she retired before the fall of 2010 she not have to repay any of the money. In an interview, Moore said that Nielsen granted her requests. She said they were standard policy.

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Kids lose, and they gain
At weight-loss camp, they experience healthy food, exercise and acceptance

BY RUTH SHEEHAN, Staff Writer

WILSON - Anthony Hood and Lindsey Kandel headed home from summer camp over the weekend with dirty clothes and phones full of new contacts. But Anthony and Lindsey are not your typical campers. Camp Shining Stars is not your typical camp.

Anthony, a 15-year-old high school freshman from Charlotte, arrived for his first day weighing 504 pounds. Camp director Ira Green had to buy a special scale (up to 1,000 pounds) to accommodate his size.

Lindsey, a rising junior, is a return visitor. She started at age 8, when she weighed more than 200 pounds.

Camp Shining Stars, held on the campus of Barton College in Wilson, is a weight-reduction camp for adolescents. The kids call it, simply, Fat Camp.

But this is no body-shaping spa for rich kids. This camp is a nonprofit aimed at reducing the nation's rocketing obesity rates, especially among those most likely to be affected -- poor and minority children, children from troubled homes.

By the age of 18, nearly one in three kids in North Carolina is overweight or obese, according to Sheree Vodicka, a dietician with the state Division of Public Health who works on the Eat Smart, Move More campaign.

Vodicka firmly believes the state should focus on combating obesity among preschoolers, but she applauds Green's camp for trying to pull teens and preteens back from the precipice.

"These are kids who have adult-onset diabetes at ages 9, 10 or 11," Vodicka said. "If these kids don't turn it around now, they'll be on dialysis by the time they're 30 and dead by the time they're 40."

For Anthony, whose county-supplied nutritionist and social worker raised $3,000 for him to attend camp for three weeks, losing weight was a matter of life and death.

On the day of his arrival, his body fat and body mass index numbers were off the charts. He couldn't walk, much less run, the benchmark distances Green uses to measure campers' progress. Forty yards, 100 yards, a half-mile.

By the end of his second week, Anthony had lost 32 pounds; he'd done daily calisthenics and was playing basketball, softball and kickball. He'd even gone swimming in Barton's indoor pool.

"The kids tell us this is their first chance to experience playing on a team," said Green, the camp director. "This is the first time they weren't the last ones chosen."

Sharon Sarvey, an assistant professor of nursing at East Carolina University who helps Green run the camp, recalled how some of the kids had never worn a swimsuit before.

Their lives are profoundly limited by their size.

She pointed to a study that compared the quality of life of obese children to that of children on chemotherapy. Pretty grim.

Even at Camp Shining Stars, where the kids are constantly joking around, it doesn't take much probing to uncover the pain beneath the surface.

Shantale Perrain, 16, entered foster care five years ago. In that time, she said, she has lived
with 25 families and attended 10 schools.

She said she relied on comfort foods to get her through the hard times. "Kids made fun of me. They call me the Big Fat Gorilla and the Big Black Ape," she said.

Her social worker helped her find -- and pay for -- Camp Shining Stars.

Unlike many fellow campers who went to Shining Stars kicking and screaming, Shantale said she was desperate to attend. She wanted to lose weight, to gain confidence.

"I wanted to feel pretty," she said.

In the first two weeks, Shantale lost 15 pounds. What she gained, though, was far more significant. Unconditional love from people who understood her.

Now, she is frequently a cheerleader for the other kids, running up and down during calisthenics in the un-air-conditioned gym. "Keep your feet moving!"

For Shantale, this is the closest thing she's had to family in a very long time.

Green started his camp seven years ago, out in the mountains of North Carolina. He'd helped run other camps but became interested in weight loss camps after going through bariatric surgery at ECU's medical center. He changed to a nonprofit two years ago, when he moved to Barton, to make it more accessible, financially, to a broader array of kids.

"When I was going into surgery, I told [surgeon] Dr. [Walter] Pories, 'If I survive this thing, I'm going to do something so kids don't end up here,'" he recalled.

Over the years, Green and Sarvey, another graduate of bariatric bypass with Pories, have refined their approach. They boast of no magic cures. They offer healthy foods and plenty of exercise in a structure that demands accountability and ensures lots of support.

All of the kids lose weight and gain muscle mass whether they stay the full six weeks or only three. By the end of this summer, Green reported, this year's 32 campers lost a total of 652 pounds.

Getting them to maintain food diaries and keep exercising once they get back home can be trickier.

David Rosario, an identical twin from Bessemer City, said that until he came to Camp Shining Stars, the only muscles he regularly exercised were the ones that moved his thumb across the face of the TV clicker. But when he and his brother get home, he plans to ask his foster parents for a tennis racket.

"Tennis is a fun sport!" David said, as if it were an amazing discovery.

Lindsey, from Georgia, is very close to her ideal weight. She didn't have many pounds to lose this summer. But she likes to go back to camp for a tuneup every year or two.

"It's so nice to be somewhere you don't have to worry what people are thinking about you or saying behind your back," she said.

As for Anthony, Green has amended his general agreement with campers that if they call or e-mail him weekly with their weight for 20 weeks, they get part of their tuition back in the mail. (Normally, the rate is about $1,000 per week, including meals, activities and sessions with a nutritionist and exercise physiologist, among others.)

In Anthony's case, it's a little different.

If Anthony calls Green every Sunday with his weight, he gets to keep the scale -- with the understanding that someday, just maybe, he won't need it.