The former dean of East Carolina University's new School of Dental Medicine, who resigned Tuesday after a state audit uncovered questionable travel expenses, will have to reimburse ECU for money he made moonlighting at another dental school, an ECU spokesman said Thursday.

Since 2009, Dr. James Hupp has worked as an adjunct faculty member at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's School of Dentistry, occasionally supervising students working in clinics, UNC spokeswoman Tiffany Brannan said.

She said Hupp has received less than $1,500 from UNC in three years. He remains an adjunct faculty member there, but due to his contract at ECU, officials at UNC decided earlier this year not to continue paying him directly.

Under Hupp's employment contract, he must notify ECU of any outside income and can't keep those earnings, according to ECU spokesman John Durham. "That's in his contract," Durham said. "If you generate outside income then that income goes to the university."

Outside income earned by Hupp for editing a dentistry journal also belongs to ECU.

Hupp's annual salary at ECU was $350,000 as of January. He began his employment at ECU in November 2008.

Durham said negotiations are ongoing to determine if Hupp will remain a member of ECU dental school's faculty and to decide on a potential adjusted salary.
“When he was approved as the dean of the dental school, at about the same time he was also granted tenure as a professor at the dental school,” Durham said. “He is a tenured professor and we are in negotiations with him about the details of his faculty position.”

The state audit released Tuesday cited irregularities in documentation and justification of travel expenses at the dental school. It also found that Hupp improperly accepted lodging and travel expenses on a trip to Germany from a prospective vendor of dental equipment. No equipment was ordered from the vendor as a result of Hupp's visit, but the audit notes that a trip to Germany to evaluate the equipment wasn't necessary as this can be accomplished through visits to other dental schools. Hupp has repaid ECU about $5,000 in travel costs.

The audit states that Phyllis Horns, ECU's Vice Chancellor of Health Services, had been discussing her concerns about excessive travel with Hupp and was using internal tracking mechanisms to monitor the time he spent traveling.

Irregularities in travel expenses by several other dental school administrators identified in the audit are under review by ECU.

While he was dean, Hupp was part of a successful lobbying effort to protect the fledgling dental school from budget cuts by the General Assembly.

The announcement of his resignation and the audit's release came the day after the Aug. 15 orientation for the first dental school class of 52 students. Monday is the first day of classes at the dental school.

ECU Chancellor Steve Ballard said Tuesday that all the audit's issues are being addressed. The dental school will continue as planned as “one of our proudest and most important initiatives,” he said.

Contact K.J. Williams at kwilliams@reflector.com or 252-329-9588.
Retooled ECU coach McNeill loving life

By Ron Morris
rmorris@thestate.com

GREENVILLE, N.C.

Terry Holland warns you at the outset.

“If you get close enough to him, he’s going to hug you, now,” Holland, East Carolina’s athletics director, says of football coach Ruffin McNeill.

Sure enough, an arm extended for a fist bump is spurned and McNeill bear hugs a visitor to his office. It is not the hug that startles the guest as it is the bounce to McNeill’s step and the pep in his voice. This man obviously loves life.

The 52-year-old McNeill returns for a second season at his alma mater with a new lease on that life. He is 130 pounds lighter since East Carolina lost to Maryland in December in the Military Bowl. He has a new hip. Instead of using a golf cart on the practice field as he did a season ago, McNeill challenges his coaches in wind sprints from station to station.

“You have to back up and look at where he was last season, really struggling to get up and down the field and chasing the refs, coming out of the locker
room, sweating profusely, struggling with his hip,” says Dr. William Chapman, McNeill’s gastric bypass surgeon. “The orthopedist couldn’t fix his hip because he was too big. He had been trying to lose weight, but couldn’t.”

The pain from his hip was at times even more unbearable a season ago than watching an East Carolina defense that allowed more points (572) than any team in NCAA history. Standing for an entire game became excruciating to McNeill, almost as painful as standing on a scale and seeing “388” flash before his eyes.

Then McNeill looked in the mirror. He saw a man living a dream that was morphing into a nightmare. His physical disabilities suddenly were preventing McNeill from his life aspirations.

McNeill was reared down the road from Greenville in Lumberton, the son of two educators. All he aspired wanted to do growing up was play ball — football or basketball — and maybe some day follow Dad’s footsteps into coaching.

McNeill was a four-year letterman and two-year captain as a defensive back for East Carolina. He went into coaching, first at Lumberton High School before joining the vagabond coaching circuit that included stops at Clemson, Austin Peay, North Alabama, Appalachian State, UNLV, Fresno State and Texas Tech.

You might remember McNeill as the assistant who served as interim head coach during Texas Tech’s Alamo Bowl victory against Michigan State in January of 2010 after Mike Leach was dismissed. Then East Carolina came calling when Skip Holtz bolted for South Florida.

McNeill’s hiring was a marriage made in the purple-and-gold splashed heaven of Greenville. East Carolina, which plays in Conference USA, long has been considered a stepping-stone job for young coaches en route to bigger challenges. Holland and the athletics department were thrilled to find a coach who wanted to be in Greenville forever.

McNeill, who says he never has been a “Looking Louie”-type guy, made that clear during his search for a new house in Greenville. House after house, his Realtor mentioned its re-sale value.

“I don’t mean any harm, but I’m not looking for a resale,” McNeill finally told the Realtor. “I’m staying here.”
A 6-7 record was not what McNeill wanted in his first season back, but that was not the worst of it. Even allowing 76 points to Navy, 62 to Rice and 51 to Maryland was not that bad compared to what was happening to McNeill personally.

His expanding physique and deteriorating hip were keeping McNeill from being the husband to his wife, Erlene; the father to his children, Renata and Olivia’ and the mentor to the 100 or so kids who wear East Carolina jerseys in the fall.

McNeill made a decision to do something about it, even if it meant two major surgeries squeezed into a six-month window so he would be fit for practice in August. To undergo hip replacement surgery in April, McNeill needed to lose 100 pounds following his January bariatric surgery.

“He used this to be a role model for an entire community, particularly in eastern North Carolina where diabetes and obesity are very prominent on people’s minds,” Holland says of McNeill, who has followed the surgeries with public service announcements to tell his success story.

“Now I can be a better father, better husband and be a better coach and mentor,” says McNeill, whose goal is to lose 50 more pounds and get to his playing weight of 225. “Now I have more energy. My mind is clearer and I’m able to give them more. The young men, the guys on the team, they know they mean a lot to me and I’ll do anything in the world for them. I played here, I went to school here, now I’m one of them.”

McNeill can talk to his players about residing in Belk Dormitory, where he lived as an East Carolina student. He is as likely to listen to Guns and Roses music with his players as Vince Gil with his assistant coaches.

Nothing gets McNeill more excited than leading his team onto a field with purple smoke billowing into the air and “Purple Haze” by Jimi Hendrix blaring over the public address system. The mere mention of it has McNeill pointing to his forearm to show goose bumps.

Those goose bumps will be out in full when McNeill leads his team out of the tunnel at Bank of America Stadium on Sept. 3 when East Carolina opens the season against South Carolina in Charlotte.

Once to the sideline, no doubt, McNeill will begin searching for people to hug.

Slimmed-down McNeill walking the walk for East Carolina after offseason of self-improvement

By Associated Press

GREENVILLE, N.C. — Ruffin McNeill is lurking around the East Carolina practice fields.

There’s no longer the giveaway sound of his golf cart as he pulls up to watch a drill. No hearing him labor to move with a painful arthritic hip or a nearly 400-pound frame. Instead, McNeill is popping up out of nowhere behind his surprised players.

“Like a ninja,” he said with a proud smile.

Consider it a smaller benefit from an offseason in which McNeill shed about 130 pounds following weight-loss and hip-replacement surgeries. The golf
cart that was once essential equipment is now a seldom-used option, while his improved mobility allows him long daily walks — even 90 minutes in the August heat — that would’ve been impossible only a few months ago.

“I feel like myself;” McNeill said. “I feel great. My mind has so much energy, and physically I have the energy. It’s really made a difference. I look forward to each day. Not that I didn’t before or I was in depression or anything like that, but there was so much pain involved. ... And I never realized how much pain I was in until I didn’t have the pain.”

The transformation heading into his second season at his alma mater is remarkable. McNeill, 52, looks years younger. He eats less but healthier. He can barely wear a new clothing purchase before it looks baggy around his smaller frame.

Compare that to a year earlier, when the former Pirates defensive back walked with a pronounced limp and relied on the golf cart. Before weight-loss surgery in January, McNeill peaked at 388 pounds. He had the hip replacement procedure in April, shortly after the Pirates closed spring practice.

Players and assistant coaches can’t stop praising the man they affectionately call “Coach Ruff.” Linebacker Justin Dixon joked that it’s as though McNeill has discovered a twin brother. Inside receivers coach Donnie Kirkpatrick said seeing McNeill is “like going back in time.”

“The captain of the ship has to set the example,” Kirkpatrick said. “I think the players respected him from Day One, but I think it made them respect him even more. We ask these kids to train, we ask them to eat better, we ask them to give up some of the college life. We strive to tell them to do what’s best for them and their bodies.

“He has led that charge in sacrifice. ... He doesn’t just talk the talk, he actually walks the walk.”

McNeill began working out in a swimming pool between surgeries to help him lose weight. He’ll soon return to those workouts and has added walks around the stadium complex and the busy multi-lane Greenville Boulevard corridor lined with strip malls, big-box stores and restaurants.

He walks six days per week and takes a different route depending on the time he has available, typically from 45 to 90 minutes. He said the walks help him clear his mind as he observes things he never noticed before while driving.
He also made sure to walk during the hottest parts of summer days so he would be prepared for training camp.

“That time is going to be blocked off,” he said. “I’m not going to sacrifice that time. Me being healthy is a plus for everyone around.”

The players often spot their coach on his treks and give a honk of support from their cars.

“You drive by the stadium and you’ll see him out walking in the heat,” defensive back Bradley Jacobs said. “Man, you’ve got your coach out there working for us.”

McNeill said in the spring that he was motivated by several goals, including being in the best shape possible to one day walk his two daughters down the aisle. Now his focus is on helping the Pirates reach a sixth straight bowl game and repair a defense that ranked as one of the nation’s worst last season.

At least his health is no longer a distraction.

“I’m able to move around so much better,” McNeill said. “I feel better physically and mentally and spiritually, really.”

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The idea of building an intermodal transportation center in Greenville has potential, both as a hub for buses, taxis, bicycles and the prospect of passenger rail service, and as an economic development incubator. Now, eight years since the proposal emerged, concerns about the chosen location — bordered by Cotanche, Evans, Eighth and Ninth streets — threaten prospects for its completion.

With the project now in the property-acquisition phase, the city cannot afford to see the center's promise go unrealized from a lack of commitment when construction concludes. Greenville's leadership should make certain that all key stakeholders remain supportive of this initiative, knowing that the path to success can only be traveled together.

Eight years ago, Greenville embarked on plans to build an intermodal transportation center in the heart of the city, a facility for buses, taxis and bicycles. It stemmed from a comprehensive study of transportation in the city and looked at the future for easing congestion and moving greater numbers of people on public transit options like the GREAT bus system.

The years since have seen the City Council's slow march on the project — building partnerships with East Carolina University and Pitt County Memorial Hospital, securing federal funds for the center, conducting numerous public hearings to solicit citizen input and finally, in 2008, choosing a site for the facility. Progress has been made at a deliberate pace, promoting open discourse and encouraging participation.

The first signs of dissent came in February, when council members Bryant Kittrell and May Joyner objected to the chosen location as well as the sluggish pace of progress. It has accelerated with the concerns expressed by Don Edwards, former president of
Uptown Greenville, and officials at East Carolina, who are worried about bus traffic threatening pedestrian safety in an already busy location.

Supporters like Mayor Pat Dunn and Assistant City Manager Thom Moton, who serves as project manager, are justifiably frustrated by the timing, since there has been ample opportunity over eight years to raise these issues. Yet, this can be better viewed as an opportunity to make certain that a project with its roots in 2003 will still blossom in the future.

The city cannot proceed without the stakeholders, and confirming expressions of support could provide the energy needed to see this project to completion. The city should waste no time in gathering those involved, securing that pledge and deciding, finally, how best to turn this dream into reality.
James Chandler

Dr. James Arthur Chandler, 61, died peacefully in his sleep Wednesday, August 17, 2011 surrounded by his family. A memorial service will be conducted Saturday at 11 a.m. in the chapel at St. Paul's Episcopal Church. The family will receive friends from 9:30 am until the funeral hour.

Mr. Chandler, a native of Ohio, had been a resident of Greenville for a number of years. He received his undergraduate degree from Western Carolina University and his doctorate from the University of Tennessee in Human Ecology. He was a professor at East Carolina University in Hospitality Management.

He is survived by his wife of 16 years, Dr. Joyce H. Chandler; daughters, Aubrey L. Cash, of Greenville, Jennifer C. Herrera and husband, Shannon, of Waynesville, and Laine Eubank and fiance, Khahn Dang, of Savannah, Ga.; and grandchildren, Gabrielle Cash and Joselynn Dang.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Department of Hospitality Management at ECU, Attn: Robert O'Halloran, Ste 152 Rivers Bldg., Greenville, NC 27858. Arrangements by Wilkerson Funeral Home and Crematory, Greenville.


Published in The Daily Reflector on August 19, 2011
ECU soccer's new identity
By Ronnie Woodward
The Daily Reflector
Friday, August 19, 2011

While sitting in class or hanging out around campus, East Carolina's soccer players no longer have to explain to their peers where their stadium is located.

“We used to say it's right behind (the) baseball (stadium),” senior Jessica Abshire said, referring to the previous soccer facility on ECU's main campus, Bunting Field, which was merely a playing field with a couple of metal bleachers on one side that provided limited seating for fans.

The Pirates will play their first game in their new stadium tonight when they host Southeastern Conference member South Carolina at 7. The facility is still located behind East Carolina baseball's Clark-LeClair Stadium, but it is one that holds around 1,000 fans and has similar amenities and a similar look as the venues surrounding it.

“It just raises the level of respect that we get as a women's soccer program,” Abshire said. For the senior class, this marks its third home stadium in four years.

ECU played at Bunting Field from 1996-2009 before holding its home games at the North Campus Recreation Complex, which is about five miles from main campus, last season.

“This feels like our home,” said Amanda Malkiewicz, a senior and recent Preseason All-Conference USA selection. “At North Rec, we didn't really feel much ownership because it really wasn't ours.”
One of the major advantages of the new stadium is its ability to host night games. Bunting Field did not have lights, which head coach Rob Donnenwirth said was a disadvantage because it hindered scheduling.

ECU did play some games under the lights last season and Donnenwirth said evening games usually have better energy because they have more fans. The Pirates had 1,183 spectators at a 1-0 victory over N.C. State at the North Campus Recreation Complex last year.

This year, three of the Pirates' first four games are at home, with all of them starting at 6 p.m. or later.

“We're ready and we're excited,” Donnenwirth said. “I think we'll have a good crowd (against South Carolina) and I'm sure the Pirate Nation, whether they are football fans or soccer fans, will want to come out because they want to see this.”

East Carolina is scheduled to play 11 games in Greenville this year, compared to six played last season. Also in 2010, the Pirates had to play 11 consecutive contests away from Greenville.

Senior Kimmy Cummings said earlier this week that all of the aspects involved with the construction of the Pirates' new home have been a joy to watch.

“We saw this being built,” she said. “We've been told about this since we were recruited here and to finally see it come true ... we feel like we've earned this.”

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The Wilmington Star News

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Editorial

UNCW resource guide meets a need; chancellor has more important worries

New UNCW Chancellor Gary Miller has much bigger concerns to address than dealing with an outspoken professor's objection to a resource guide for gay and lesbian students and faculty. Yet with budget cuts and a new academic year bubbling on his front burner, Miller and his administration are busy trying to stamp out a small fire.

Associate Professor Mike Adams is no stranger to controversy. His conservative blog makes a point of stirring the pot. Among his occasional targets is the university, which he sees as a bastion of liberal ideology and political correctness. He particularly took issue with a resource guide that includes a list of churches identified as gay-friendly. To him, it's a misuse of student and taxpayer money, as well as an infringement on religious freedom.

He suggests that the University of North Carolina Wilmington is "selecting" churches for students, which would be unconstitutional if that were in fact what was happening. Instead, the resource guide is an attempt to help students and faculty members who don't fit the traditional heterosexual mold find places on and off campus that openly welcome gay and lesbian customers, worshippers and members.

However, this sort of guide is common practice for university resource centers that focus on helping lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students feel at home in a new environment.

There are many guides to help students and faculty members navigate campus life. The university's comprehensive roster of student groups on campus lists many types of organizations – including 19 diverse religious organizations on campus, ranging from mainline and evangelical Christian to Jewish to Muslim to very untraditional worship circles. Most of these organizations hold regular meetings or worship services on campus. Likewise, the university provides lists of other organizations that each serve the need of a segment of the student body. The resource guide serves the
needs of a particular group of students and – just as important – faculty members.

Part of the goal of the resource center, as with other university-produced resource guides and campus organizations, is to help with student and faculty retention. People who don't feel welcome on campus or in town aren't likely to hang around for long.

Adams and other critics have a right to their opinion, as do those who view his comments as bigoted and backward. But the university has an obligation to its students and its employees, and one of those responsibilities is to help them adjust to life in Wilmington and on the UNCW campus.

It is not merely a nice gesture, but essential to attracting and keeping a diverse student body and retaining qualified faculty and staff. After all, a university is more than an institution. It is also a community.

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Women enjoy college more than men, survey says

By Daniel de Vise

Not only do women now attend college in greater numbers than men: according to a new survey, they also enjoy college more and have a better attitude about attending.

Women are more satisfied with college than men, according to a new Pew Research Center survey. Half of female graduates surveyed—but only 37 percent of men—rated American higher education as excellent or good in terms of value. Women were also more likely to say college had helped them grow personally and intellectually.

Americans actually see college as more useful for women than men: 77 of survey respondents said they think a college credential is necessary for a woman, but only 68 percent said so about men. The survey reached a representative sample of 2,142 adults.

Women once trailed men in higher education attainment. But they surpassed men in college attendance around 1990, and a wide gender gap has opened. As of 2010, 36 percent of women ages 25 to 29 had attained a bachelor’s degree, as compared with 28 percent of men. Men are more likely than women to be drawn into manual labor, incarcerated in prison, enlisted in military service or delayed in completing high school.

Other findings:

• Women are more pessimistic (or realistic?) than men in assessing the affordability of college. Fourteen percent of women surveyed agreed with the statement that most people can afford college today, compared with 26 percent of men.
• Women apparently get more help from their parents than men these days in paying for college. Forty percent of women, but only 29 percent of men, reported that their parents had paid for college.

In typically schizophrenic fashion, survey respondents overwhelmingly opined that it was a good thing more women than men are graduating from college. But when asked whether it was also a good thing that fewer men than women are finishing college — the same question, rearranged — they emphatically disagreed.
An aerial photograph of James Madison University’s remodeled Bridgeforth Stadium. A $62.5 million renovation to Bridgeforth Stadium gives the Dukes a home field that looks like what a top college football program might have and is also the biggest in the Colonial Athletic Association.

After $62.5M stadium renovation, James Madison looks to measure up on the field

By Associated Press

HARRISONBURG, Va. — James Madison linebacker Pat Williams left campus for the summer to work at an internship in northern Virginia and was stunned when he got back.

Williams, the Dukes’ leading tackler the past two seasons, saw a $62.5 million renovation to Bridgeforth Stadium that gives the Dukes a home field that resembles what a top college football program might have.

“It was kind of overwhelming,” he said of the purple-framed stands that rise 135 feet with 17 luxury boxes between the top section and the lower tier.

Along with the excitement over the renovated stadium, which now is the biggest in the Colonial Athletic Association, enthusiasm for the program may also be at an all-time high.

James Madison is picked to finished second in the rugged conference. That would be a welcome rebound after consecutive 6-5 finishes left them out of the playoffs.
Expectations for the Dukes’ fan base rose significantly in 2004, when they claimed their first Football Championship Subdivision national title.

They had been to the playoffs four times in five seasons from 2004-08, but haven’t been back since losing 35-27 to Montana in the semifinals of the FCS playoffs at Bridgeforth in 2008.

“We’re very aware that we’ve set the bar very high here,” coach Mickey Matthews said. “Two 6-5 seasons and you’d have thought we’d won one game. That’s kind of where we are at James Madison now. The bar is very high and you’ve got to win a lot of games here.”

A year ago, the Dukes seemed back on track early when they stunned No. 13 Virginia Tech 21-16, but an injury to starting quarterback Justin Thorpe in the opener and four consecutive losses erased a 4-1 start, and when the field for the FCS playoffs came, JMU was out again.

Matthews compares the first impression visitors have shared of the stadium with that of going to the White House or their first up-close glimpse of the Empire State Building in New York. He says the renovations, made on the home sideline and in the only open end zone, give it “an SEC feel.”

“There are many people, when they first come to the stadium, that are kind of taken back because it hard to understand how tall it is, how big it is,” he said.

With the renovation, capacity has increased from about 15,700 to 25,000. That’s a boon for students because as many as 1,500 of them were turned away from some games last year, athletic director Jeff Bourne said.

“There’s an aura in here, and it’s unreal,” Thorpe said shortly before dancing out onto the field for the team’s first practice in the stadium as music blared from the also-new gigantic video scoreboard that measures 60 feet across by 24 feet.

The visiting sideline still has concrete stands, but Bourne said the next phase of upgrades could make that section look similar to the home side and increase capacity to about 40,000.

He said a shortage of restrooms also has been addressed on the new side, but parking could become a trickier proposition for the general public. The school has sold nearly 7,000 season ticket packages, and has increased parking areas for boosters closest to the stadium. The school intends to provide shuttle buses to some parking locations.
Bourne dispelled the notion the stadium’s expansion is a prelude to a move to the larger FBS, formerly known as I-A.

“I-A is really not on the radar screen at this point,” he said. “The bottom line is to be the absolute best program in the FCS right now, head to toe.”

Bourne said that means having the best facilities, a goal of getting into the playoffs and doing well every year.

“If we can do that, we’ve postured ourselves where we need to be with regard to the big picture,” he said. “Who knows? If something down the road we’re to ever change and we were to decide to look in that direction, we would at least be poised for it.”

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