THE DAILY CLIPS

August 30, 2010

News, commentary, and opinion
compiled by the East Carolina University News Bureau from:

The Greenville Daily Reflector
The Raleigh News & Observer
The New York Times
The Wall Street Journal
USA Today
The Charlotte Observer
The Fayetteville Observer
The Greensboro News & Record
Newsweek
U.S. News & World Report
Business Week
Time

East Carolina University News Bureau
E-mail to durhamj@ecu.edu  Web site at http://www.news.ecu.edu
252-328-6481
Geryca Foy and her mother, Sharon Brown, have been at East Carolina University together for the last three years. “I haven’t met a single person whose mom goes to school with them,” Geryca said. “I guess it’s made us more recognizable. We get the sisters thing a lot. No one ever just thinks mother and daughter.”

Justin Falls/The Daily Reflector

Kim Brown and her daughter, Chelsie, are not the only parent-child pair at Pitt Community College. “My medical terminology class has a mother and son in it together,” Kim said. “I’m just glad I’m in school, and I’m glad she’s in school.”

Scott Davis/The Daily Reflector

**Mother, daughter duos furthering higher education**

By Kim Grizzard
The Daily Reflector
Saturday, August 28, 2010

Thousands of students arriving at East Carolina University to begin fall semester last week bid an emotional farewell to parents they would not see again for weeks or even months. Geryca Foy didn’t need a long goodbye for her mom. A simple “see you around” would do just fine. It’s not that mother and daughter are not close; they are closer than most. They see each other three days a week at school.

Geryca, 24, is a junior majoring in apparel merchandising and French. Her mom, Sharon Brown, 49, who graduated from ECU in May, is working toward a master’s degree in English.

“This makes our third year together on campus,” said Geryca (pronounced like Erica with a J). “... I think it’s really cool.”
While many students relish college as a time to get away from parents, statistics indicate that today’s students are more likely than ever to share the classroom with Mom or Dad — if not their own, then someone else’s.

Adults who are working and raising families are the fastest-growing segment of the higher education market, according to statistics from the U.S. Department of Education and the University Continuing Education Association. The National Center for Education Statistics reported that the number of post-baccalaureate students age 40 and older increased 27 percent from 1995 to 2005.

Older students make up an even larger percentage of the student body at community colleges. According to the American Association of Community Colleges the average community college student is 29, and nearly 60 percent of the student body is older than 22. Sixteen percent of students are 40 and older.

Forty-six-year-old Kim Brown decided to join those ranks this fall when she enrolled at Pitt Community College. Her daughter, Chelsie, 19, is also a student at PCC.

“She (Chelsie) has been telling me for years... Why don’t you just do it?” Kim said. “So finally, I just did it.”

Kim, who works as a waitress, is studying to become an occupational therapy assistant. Chelsie is in PCC’s university transfer program. Kim, who attended college for a year after high school, went back to school a decade ago. But family and financial responsibilities of having five children made it difficult for her to finish.

Sharon had a similar experience after she started taking classes when Geryca, her only child, was 12. She wanted to be home in the afternoons to help her daughter with homework and drive her to after-school activities.

“She (Geryca) was a cheerleader in high school,” Sharon recalled. “I didn’t want to restrict her activities because I was trying to go to school. As soon as she was going to graduate, that was my decision; I was going back.”

The Johnston County resident enrolled at a community college, where she and Geryca were once in the same class. When Sharon decided to continue her education at ECU, she rented a room near campus. She drives from her home in Selma each Tuesday and leaves late Thursday in time for the weekend shift at the restaurant where she works.

Though they’re not roommates, mother and daughter spend a lot of time together when Sharon is in town.

“Every day that she’s here, I see her,” Geryca said, “and if I don’t, it throws me off.”

They go to lunch together, go grocery shopping together. They meet for coffee.

One thing they don’t do together is study. Geryca does her schoolwork amid music and other background noise; Sharon prefers reading in silence.

Still, her quiet study habits have spoken volumes to her daughter.

“She graduated with a double degree (English and history). I want to graduate with a double degree,” Geryca said. “She graduated cum laude. I have to at least try and do that.”

Geryca has worked to achieve nearly a 3.0 grade point average after flunking out her freshman year and spending several semesters in community college. Sharon has been inspired by her daughter’s determination to keep going.

“That’s the fuel to my fire,” she said. “When two people are in something together, that motivates. It’s almost like having a training partner. You don’t want to disappoint them.”

Kim was a straight-A student last time she went back to college. But Chelsie doesn’t like to see her mother as competition.

At home, they’re a team. Kim proofreads papers for her daughter, checking her spelling and grammar. Chelsie helps her mother on the computer, even getting up at 5 a.m. to get Kim registered for classes.
“A lot of parents have kids, and they can’t finish school,” Chelsie said. “My mom is 46, and she decided to get her degree in occupational therapy and work and raise kids. I’m not embarrassed like some people might be if their parents were coming to the same school as them. Some parents can be embarrassing.”

Both Sharon and Kim said they try to avoid making their daughters uncomfortable by keeping their parent-child relationship separate from their relationship as schoolmates. Kim has Chelsie use an alarm clock to wake each morning, rather than calling her for school. She does not insist that her daughter ride to school with her or meet her on campus between classes.

“I never see her.” Chelsie said. “So it’s like she’s not even here.”

Sharon almost never comes to Greenville to visit her daughter on weekends. She doesn’t tag along when Geryca is hanging out with friends.

“I’m always the mom,” Sharon said.

Geryca agreed.

“My mom just happens to go to school with me,” she said. “That’s all that it is.”

Contact Kim Grizzard at kgrizzard@reflector.com or (252) 329-9578.
Mirror, mirror on the wall, who has the most ads of them all?

By Kathryn Kennedy
The Daily Reflector
Sunday, August 29, 2010
A mirror hanging in the entryway of the ISP Sports office is more than just a mirror. It’s an animated billboard.

The Geico gecko strolls across the top of the reflective panel touting their insurance brand. Then an ad for Pledge cleaning supplies pops up.

“Cleans every surface, including this one,” it declares. “The hand washing is up to you.”

Were someone to step forward in order to lather and rinse or check their makeup, those ads would disappear offering the person a clear view of themselves and the room — just like a normal mirror.

It’s a bit of new technology that East Carolina University Pirate football fans will soon be accustomed to seeing. ISP, which handles the corporate sponsorships and broadcast rights for ECU athletics, partnered with a company called Mirrus this year to try out the new advertising medium, Vice President and General Manager Meghan Heinchon said.

“They saw college football venues as a perfect place,” she said.

While stadium renovations went on this summer, 162 mirrors were installed in the restrooms throughout Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium. They were free to the university, students and taxpayers, because Mirrus provided the hardware which is, in turn, paid for by the ads themselves. The corporate messages run on 15-second loops of video or a still image, displaying four advertisers per minute. Those can be changed by inserting a different memory card — like the type used in digital cameras and other media — into the mirror, Heinchon said.
Only national advertisers are participating in the marketing program, and ISP Account Executive Seth Horton said the cost is likely prohibitive for local businesses.

ECU is one of only three universities in the ISP network that were given the mirrors, Heinchon said. The other two are Georgia Tech and Virginia Tech. Heinchon added that the good relationship between ISP and the ECU athletics department made the opportunity easy to facilitate.

They will be permanent fixtures, Heinchon said. The staff also considered adding the mirrors to Minges Coliseum and Clark-LeClair Stadium but they are unsure, at this point, if Mirrus is interested in expanding the service.

Contact Kathryn Kennedy at kkennedy@reflector.com or (252) 329-9566.
College of Nursing students enjoyed birthday cake last week in celebration of 50 years of nursing education at East Carolina University. The first students, all women, were enrolled in fall 1960.
Cliff Hollis/ECU News Services

Nurse anesthesia graduate students listen as Dr. Sylvia Brown, left, dean of the ECU College of Nursing, welcomes students, faculty, staff and alumni on Thursday to the college’s 50th birthday party.
Cliff Hollis/ECU News Services

cont'd...
Students welcomed back to campus
Saturday, August 28, 2010
ECU News Services
East Carolina University faculty and students returned to an institution that’s reaping accolades even as it copes with budget cuts.
Final enrollment figures won’t be available until Sept. 7, the 10th class day, but preliminary projections suggest enrollment will trend higher but remain similar to 2009’s total of 27,700 students. Also, the first-year class is projected to be slightly larger than the 2009 class; more female than male students are enrolling; the percentage of in-state students is increasing; and enrollment among minorities is increasing.
Chancellor Steve Ballard on Aug. 23 welcomed faculty at the annual convocation and addressed the university’s budget outlook, recent accomplishments and agenda for the year ahead:
No more academic cuts are expected this year, unless conditions “worsen considerably.”
Despite the state budget difficulties, the Honors College and the School of Dental Medicine are moving ahead.
ECU in September will receive the Freedom Award, which recognizes employers for their support of employees who serve in the National Guard or Reserve. ECU is one of only two universities in the award’s 14-year history to receive such recognition.
Funding for the biosciences building will be pursued aggressively.
University officials will work toward a UNC systemwide salary plan that helps retain excellent faculty and staff.
Improving student retention and strengthening graduate programs will remain strong priorities. ECU will re-energize its commitment to service with a project titled “Our Shared Direction: Building Partnerships for the East” that examines what workforce preparation, commitment to

cont’d..
economic and community development, and university expertise can mean in eastern North Carolina.

“We will strengthen and increase our service to the East and to North Carolina, in spite of the times,” Ballard said.

About 5,500 students moved into residence halls Aug. 18-21. Among them was Shalom Foster, a sophomore from Jacksonville whose family helped her move into Cotten Residence Hall.

“We really enjoyed having her home this summer, but we know it’s time for her to move on to the next level of life,” her father, Victor Foster Sr., said. “We want to give her the tools to be successful.”

During move-in weekend, the university tested its emergency notification measures on the east and west campuses. Emergency Notification Team tested indoor and outdoor speakers as well as other notification components of the ECU Alert system, including e-mails, text messages and computer-based warnings.

“Everything seemed to go pretty well,” said Tom Pohlman, environmental manager with ECU Environmental Health and Safety. “This is how we find weaknesses in the system so we can go back and ensure that those weaknesses are strengthened.”

Celebrating 50 years of nursing at ECU
College of Nursing students ushered in the first week of classes and kicked off an academic yearlong celebration of 50 years of nursing education at ECU on Thursday.

Nursing’s back lobby in the Health Sciences Building was transformed with purple and gold balloons, sheet cake and the traditional melody of “Happy Birthday to You.” In the front lobby, students picked up Pirate Nurse buttons, pins and viewed a display showcasing the history of the college.

Dean Sylvia Brown and Vice Chancellor Phyllis Horns, the Pirate mascot and ECU nursing student cheerleaders welcomed guests.

“It’s hard to believe about this time 50 years ago, we were just starting,” Brown said. The story goes that state leaders at the time had been debating whether to buy an airplane or start a nursing school. “To our good fortune, they decided to start a nursing program,” Brown said.

Horns, former dean of nursing, brought best wishes for another 50 years from Chancellor Steve Ballard, who she said recognizes the leadership of students, staff and faculty within the college.

“When we graduate students from this college, they go out and take on leadership roles worldwide,” Horns said. “It’s remarkable the work and growth that has gone on in this college.” The College of Nursing, ECU’s oldest professional school, provides the state with more nurses than any other four-year institution in North Carolina.

A National League for Nursing-designated Center of Excellence, the college has more than 1,100 students enrolled in baccalaureate, master’s and doctoral programs. There are more than 6,500 ECU nursing alumni “making a difference in the lives of people, and that’s what being a Pirate nurse is all about,” Brown said.

Other celebratory events will include lectures, homecoming, the induction of the Nurses’ Hall of Fame and a 50th springtime gala.

‘Music on a WIM’ coming to campus
The ECU School of Music will present the Women’s Initiative Music Series “Music on a WIM” celebrating the compositions and accomplishments of women in Western classical music with free public performances of music written by female composers.

The series will begin Wednesday at 11:30 a.m. in the lobby of the A.J. Fletcher Recital Hall on the ECU campus and continue with a new concert program at Fletcher on the first Wednesdays of October, November, February, March and April.

In addition, Music on a WIM performances will be scheduled on a variety of dates at high foot-traffic, non-traditional performance settings on the ECU main and west campuses.

Cont'd...
Prior to each performance, there will be a short presentation about the composer and what she brings to Western classical music. School of Music faculty member Catherine Garner, the concert series founder and artistic director, said the purpose of the WIM concerts is to educate the local and ECU communities about women leaders in the field of music, both past and present.

“It has been a desire of mine to promote the music of female composers, to empower the young women around me to the same successes as these composers, and to stoke young women’s curiosity about women composers’ accomplishments,” Garner said. “For example, have they ever wondered what the music of Robert Schumann’s wife, Clara, sounds like? What about Fanny, the sister of Felix Mendelssohn?”

She added, “Throughout western classical music there have been women, both composers and performers, who have been successful and made a name for themselves in spite of gender issues. With these concert experiences, I want people to see the potential for this new and fairly unexplored aspect of women’s studies.”

The performances feature faculty and students musicians from ECU, School of Music alumni and guest artists. For more information, call 328-6851.

**ECU presents virtual technology exhibit**

During the Boy Scouts of America’s 100th anniversary celebration at the 2010 National Scout Jamboree at Fort A.P. Hill, Va., the ECU College of Technology and Computer Science presented a virtual technology exhibit available to the more than 45,000 Scouts attending the 10-day event.

Scouts from all 50 states and 26 countries had the chance to experience more than 50 technological demonstrations, presentations and hands-on activities that included biology, robotics, energy virtual reality, and chemistry. TECS provided computers, large-screen monitors and a back screen classroom for the exhibit.

Presented by Chuck Lesko, assistant professor in the department of technology systems, the Scouts had the opportunity to dive into their own virtual world. They were able to create avatars, which are computer users’ representations of themselves or their alter egos, usually in the form of three-dimensional models used in a computer-generated, virtual digital environment.

“The exhibit was a hit from day one,” Lesko said.

For most of the demonstration sessions, it was standing-room only, he said. More than 140 demonstrations were conducted, giving thousands of Scouts an opportunity to look deeper into the world of virtual technology.

“Virtualization is a technology that these Scouts will live with the rest of their lives,” Lesko said. “Our hope here is that they are more aware of what virtual technologies are all about. Maybe we inspired a few of these young men to learn more about the technology field, but most importantly we hope that they had fun doing it.”

**Upcoming Events:**


Wednesday: Opening of the Collaborative Learning Center, Joyner Library, 3-5 p.m.

Thursday: Cell Phone Drive, sponsored by Student Legal Services, 10:30 a.m.—1 p.m., Wright Plaza. Cell phones can also be dropped off at the SLS office at 2302 Old Cafeteria Building. Donated phones will benefit the Family Violence Center of Pitt County.
Officials use new approach to educate residents

BY MICHAEL ABRAMOWITZ
The Daily Reflector

The Greenville Police Department has designed new approaches to educating residents, primarily East Carolina University students, about nuisance noise and underage consumption of alcoholic beverages.

Responding to citizen concerns about activities in the downtown area, several new signs to inform motorists about ordinances against loud music emanating from vehicles will be posted along East Fifth Street in areas adjacent to downtown and the East Carolina University campus, Lt. Rob Williams said.

Concerns about noise and underage drinking also will be addressed with the creation of cards that provide information about the most common noise ordinance violations and the more commonly violated Alcoholic Beverage Control statutes, Williams said.

The information cards will be distributed as part of patrol officers' normal duties in areas heavily populated by college students, he said. The cards will be distributed by Code Enforcement officers from 2:30-4:30 p.m. Tuesday at the ECU Merchant Fair on campus, Williams said.

News of the plan prompted a response from some ECU students in neighborhoods adjacent to the downtown area.

"It won't have any impact at all on behavior in this area," senior Nick Snyder said.

"It's expected that noise will be coming from downtown. As for the cars, dude, subs (sub-woofers) are awe-

See APPROACH, A7

APPROACH

Continued from A1

some," Snyder said. "I guess it's obnoxious sometimes if it wakes you up.

The student said police cracking down at the beginning of each semester when freshmen move in is a tradition in Greenville.

"Handing out flyers is a waste of materials, because kids will be kids," Snyder said.

Mike Pontier, also a senior, said he had no problem with the idea of distributing information about the ordinances.

"It sounds like the police are just trying to help out some citizens who
are concerned, but I've never been concerned about either of those things," Pontier said. "I've been hearing about it for years, but I guess I'm just used to it. That's how a democracy works, right? First they talk about it, then they put it in the paper, then they give you a card, then they charge you. Will the students pay attention to it? No."

Pontier said students don't worry about the prospect of being fined for their behavior.

"The chance of getting a $100 fine is not going to change anyone's lifestyle," he said.

Neither will signs at the outskirts of the downtown area deter students from their normal behaviors, Pontier said.

"They're going downtown to get drunk," he said. "I think the real reason for the warnings and signs is to get more money for the city. I think the city has more to be concerned about with other types of crimes than they do about drinking."

Students who come to ECU know what to expect, Snyder said, adding that it is part of why they come.

"Incoming freshman know they're going to party here. It's expected," the senior said. "They're not going to a small Baptist college in rural Missouri. They're going to ECU, and they're going to party."

Contact Michael Abramowitz at mabramowitz@reflector.com or (252) 329-9571.

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL

The Greenville Police Department enforces statutes related to consumption of alcoholic beverages by persons younger than 21. These statutes include:

- Consume malt beverage/unfortified wine in a public place.
- Purchase and/or possession of an alcoholic beverage by a person younger than 21 years of age.
- Selling or giving an alcoholic beverage to a person younger than 21 years of age.
- Possession of a fake identification card.
- Using a fake identification card by a person younger than 21 years of age to purchase an alcoholic beverage.

Fines and court costs for alcohol-related offenses can total several hundred dollars. Additionally, for certain offenses, civil penalties of more than $1,000 can be levied by the State of North Carolina against offenders.
Muslims celebrate holy month with neighbors
By Michael Abramowitz
The Daily Reflector
Sunday, August 29, 2010
Greenville’s Muslim community continued its observance of the holy month of Ramadan with dawn-to-sunset fasting interspersed with prayer and meditation on Saturday. Then they welcomed neighbors of all faiths to their house of worship for food and conversation.
The custom of hospitality, an integral part of Muslim faith practice, brought together hundreds of worshipers at the Islamic Center Mosque on Evans Street, first to pray and then to share a feast of Middle Eastern, Asian and North African dishes.
Invited guests included various Christian and Jewish clergy from the Interfaith Alliance of Eastern Carolina, Greenville’s Human Relations Council, Rabbi Alysa Stanton of Congregation Bayt Shalom, Mayor Pat Dunn and other city officials, mosque member Abdel Rahman said.
“We usually invite guests on the third or fourth Saturday of Ramadan,” Rahman said.
Ramadan is the holiest month in the Muslim lunar calendar, occurring this year between Aug. 11 and September.
“Fasting, self-restraint and devotion in various forms are common in the divine faiths of the world,” Rahman said. “In our holy book, the Qur’an, God has mandated this month for fasting and to honor the time when the Qur’an was revealed to our holy prophet, Muhammad, peace be upon him.”
The ultimate goal of the ancient traditions of Ramadan is a higher consciousness of the relationship between the faithful and God, Islamic Center board member M. Saeed Dar said.
“It’s a lifelong process, but in this month, we do even more toward that goal, including the fasting,” Dar said.

The Islamic community contributes more than 500 people to the ethnic and religious diversity of greater Greenville, many of whom are professors and physicians at East Carolina University and Pitt County Memorial Hospital and its related medical centers.

“Many people do not realize that there is such diversity in Greenville,” Dar said. “Living here has been a special and pleasant experience.”

The city has been home to Said Said, a statistics professor at East Carolina University, since 1982.

“I don’t know what it is like to be a Muslim in another city, but I consider our life and growth here as one of God’s blessings,” he said.

The mosque has plans for the addition of a community center to offer more recreational outlets for youth. In addition to being a house of worship, the mosque also offers Sunday school lessons, ladies groups and other social services to its congregants.

The Ramadan event at the Islamic Center occurred simultaneously with events in New York City, where a controversy is brewing over the possibility that a mosque will be built in the shadow of the fallen World Trade Center.

“I’ve been in Greenville for 30 years. There is no relationship between what we are seeing nationwide and what we have here,” Dar said.

The local Muslim community has not been polled for their opinions about the New York mosque controversy, but Dar said it is an unfortunate situation based on the political gain that some seek by attacking the at-large Muslim population and faith.

“It’s become a political football rather than a religious or social issue,” Dar said. “In reality, the property for the proposed Islamic center is already owned by the Muslims there, and there is already a mosque that has existed there for some time without incident.”

For the Rev. Bob Hudak, rector at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, the Ramadan interfaith social was an important part of his ecumenical life. The sharing of faith traditions is a crucial part of building bridges between people, he said.

“It’s part of the transformation that’s taken place in my life after 9/11, when I served in Georgia and contacted the local Muslim center,” Hudak said. “Crossing that bridge has made me more aware now than ever that our world is too small for anything but truth and too dangerous for anything but love.”

Contact Michael Abramowitz at mabramowitz@reflector.com or (252) 329-9571.
PEOPLE IN THE NEWS SPOTLIGHT

ECU marketing professor publishes book set, explores Internet's influence on business

Tracy L. Tuten, an East Carolina University marketing professor, has published a book set that explores how the latest Internet innovations continue to impact business.

Tuten, an associate professor in ECU's College of Business, is editor of "Enterprise 2.0: How Technology, e-Commerce, and Web 2.0 Are Transforming Business Virtually." Published in July by Praeger Publishers, the two-volume book set grew out of her first book on social media marketing, "Advertising 2.0: Social Media Marketing in a Web 2.0 World."

"The Web has a profound impact on marketing as well as other areas of business, influencing both management and strategy," Tuten said. "In 'Enterprise 2.0,' I set out to find the top experts in their respective areas — all tied together by the theme of Web 2.0's influence on business. It definitely includes some of the latest thinking on the topic."

In addition to being the book's title, Enterprise 2.0 is the industry term for the business tools and processes that are made possible by Web 2.0 technology, the second generation of the World Wide Web that involves social networking as well as more dynamic and shareable content. Research predicts that enterprise spending on Web 2.0 technology will reach more than $4.5 billion by 2013.

Tuten said despite this rapid growth and strong interest, little is available to inform organizational leadership about the resources and potential applications of new Internet technologies — or about the challenges Enterprise 2.0 poses at the organizational and individual levels.

"Every day, business leaders read about the shift in essential business practices and consumer-buying behavior brought about by the Internet," she said. "This two-volume set introduces readers to these shifts and shows them the way forward, looking at both the micro and macro levels of impact."
Tom Campbell: New UNC president’s success good for all of N.C.
Sunday, August 29, 2010

The UNC Board of Governors deserves applause for its selection of Tom Ross as the next president of the UNC system. His character, experience and leadership make him the man for this time. Our state and its people are literally woven throughout the fabric of his life. The Greensboro native grew up in a home where his father worked in one of our state’s core businesses, textiles. Educated at Davidson, Tom attained honors at UNC law and over the next few years taught at the UNC Institute of Government, practiced a bit of law and served as chief of staff for Congressman Robin Britt. Tom was already wise beyond his years when appointed a judge of Superior Court, but over the next 17 years Judge Ross had to face both the voters as well as the people in sorting out serious legal issues. His maturity and leadership were tested when he was charged with heading a 23-member committee that established the first structured sentencing guidelines in North Carolina. Ross passed with accolades from all sides.

Those most familiar with Ross identify him as head of the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation, one of the largest and most significant philanthropic organizations in the state, indeed the South. His leadership further elevated the stature of this foundation. Davidson College trustees understood the uniqueness of the man they selected their new president three years ago.

UNC’s Board of Governors examined Ross’s background, character, experience, seasoned leadership skills and his unequalled love for and knowledge of this state in making their choice for their new President. Ross will face significant challenges as he takes over our 23 campus system, perhaps the single most influential organization in our state, larger than and as complex as any Fortune 500 corporation. With state appropriations of about $2.7 billion (around 12 percent of our total budget, but only a fraction of the total university budget) there are serious financial pressures. For the next few years North Carolina will be in a time when dollars are limited so Ross will be forced to demand both accountability and efficiency from the system. Competition and demands among the individual institutions are large and growing, along with the ongoing struggles between professors, administrators, researchers, students, disparate boards and support groups. A big sports fan, Ross will face continuing challenges over whether universities rule athletics or vice versa. Then there is the always significant challenge of accounting to and requesting funding and authority from the legislature.

Perhaps Tom Ross’ biggest challenge will be to provide visionary leadership for a state that desperately needs it. President Emeritus William Friday clearly understood the role our universities can play in our state’s economic, cultural and educational success as well as his leadership role in those areas. Tom Ross is uniquely qualified to assume this mantle and use his position to challenge and help us move forward. We pray his success because, in no small measure, his success will also be our state’s success.

Tom Campbell is former assistant North Carolina treasurer and is creator/host of NC SPIN, a weekly statewide television discussion of state issues airing Sundays at 12 a.m. on WITN-TV and on Cable 7 Sundays at 10:30 a.m., Mondays at 8:30 p.m., Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. and Friday at 9 p.m. Contact him at ncspin.com.
2-0 start crucial for Pirates

For a guy facing modest expectations for his first season as coach, Ruffin McNeill will have two must-win games right from the word hke.

Long term, the odds are that few ECU fans will emphasize very little about Sunday's opening game against Tulsa and another the following Saturday against Memphis.

But with both Conference USA games in Greenville and a foreboding non-league schedule that could end in an 0-4 run for the Pirates, McNeill's first season at his alma mater will evolve into a crisis management ordeal should one of the first two end in a loss.

If ECU's general history holds, McNeill gradually will restock the roster with enough talent and expertise to contend for league titles and spring occasional upsets against the steady diet of nonconference foes he'll face from the ACC and Big East.

Logically, that process should take three or four seasons to complete. But it's a tenuous blueprint. Given that aggressive non-league philosophy, building and maintaining program momentum will always be a tricky task for ECU.

McNeill, athletic director Terry Holland and most of the team's fans agree that such scheduling is necessary to provide the program with a robust regional identity in an area dotted with ACC programs.

But while the strategy essentially has proven to be both sensible and productive, it also leaves almost no room for error in Conference USA games.

To put it another way, the potential for invigorating upsets comes with a steep downside potential.

On paper, McNeill's almost completely inexperienced first team should have a reasonable chance to win five or six games, make some noise in the C-USA East and form the foundation for a run at seven or so wins in 2011 and maybe eight or nine in 2012.

But player confidence is an inordinately important factor for the Pirates, as it is for most teams from outside the primary BCS huddle.

A 3-9 or 4-8 start almost certainly would extend McNeill's glide path and possibly ignite a mood of unusual urgency entering spring and preseason 2011 camp.

That's why these first two games are so critical.

The Pirates are favored against Tulsa and will be against Memphis, barring a big opening-game misstep.

If the new coach can start 2-0, then 5-7 or 6-6 will be there for taking. But if the Pirates take an 0-2 or 1-1 record to Virginia Tech on Sept. 18, the outlook for the rest of the season becomes gloomy.
ECU grad to be appointed to N.C. schools board

PLYMOUTH, N.C. — A graduate of East Carolina University will be appointed to fill the State Board of Education seat formerly held by Kathy Taft, who died after being attacked last March.

Jean Woolard, of Plymouth, will represent a district covering more than a dozen counties in eastern North Carolina, according to Chrissey Pearson, a spokeswoman for the Governor’s Office.

Woolard taught at Plymouth High School, serves on the board of directors of the North Carolina Association of Educations and is a member of National Education Association and Association of Classroom Teachers.

She holds a bachelor’s degree in business education with a minor in history and a master’s degree in education with a concentration in business from East Carolina University.

Authorities say that Taft, 62, of Greenville, was attacked, beaten and raped by an intruder while staying at a Raleigh home. She died at WakeMed on March 9. A nearby resident, Jason Keith Willford, 30, has been charged in connection with her death.

• Web Editor: Anne Johnson

Copyright 2010 by Capitol Broadcasting Company. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.
EAST CAROLINA SEASON PREVIEW

Pirates will have a new coach, new look

BY EDWARD G. ROBINSON III
STAFF WRITER

GREENVILLE - Ruffin McNeill often speaks with his hands, sometimes punching the air to demonstrate his point from a boxer's perspective.

Describing East Carolina's defensive intentions this season, the Pirates' coach snapped a few short jabs.

"You're in a fight, let's swing first," he said.

That's the plan for the Pirates' defense as described by the first-year, first-time college head coach, who arrived here after 10 seasons at Texas Tech. He expects the unit to run and swarm, engulfing opponents in a sandstorm of blitzes and momentum-stuffing tackles.

"Let's attack," said McNeill, who served as a defensive coordinator for three years at Texas Tech. "Let's try to predict tempo from a defensive point of view. Let's play a lot of kids on defense. Everyone gets a chance to make plays."

As the Pirates open the season against Tulsa on Sunday, returning on the heels of back-to-back Conference USA championships, the focus centers on a team installing a new spread offense - known at Texas Tech as the "Air Raid" - and replacing a fifth-year starter at quarterback.

With the departure of head coach Skip Holtz, who took over the program at South Florida, the Pirates must adjust to a new head coach.

East Carolina must replace

SEE ECU, PAGE 3C

New ECU coach Ruffin McNeill wants the Pirates to be an attacking team on both offense and defense.

CHUCK LIDDY - cliddy@newsobserver.com

cont'd...
Matt Dodge, a first-team all-conference punter, who led the league last season and was drafted by the NFL's New York Giants.

Important tasks, for sure, yet the Pirates are attempting something with an even tougher degree of difficulty on defense.

They must replace nine defensive starters, including an entire defensive front, a monumental task rarely forced upon teams.

"I've never seen this before," Pirates defensive coordinator Brian Mitchell said. "Never. It's amazing."

Gone are senior defensive linemen Scotty Robinson, Jay Ross and C.J. Wilson, who was drafted in the seventh round by the NFL's Green Bay Packers. Also departed are linebackers Nick Johnson, Chris Mattocks and Jeremy Chambliss, along with safeties Levien Neal and Van Eskridge.

Plus, junior defensive tackle Linval Joseph, the unit's top returning player, declared for the NFL Draft and was selected in the second round by the Giants.

Those players took their heavyweights, bruising style of defense with them, leaving the Pirates without the nucleus of a squad that finished with the conference's top scoring defense, allowing opponents only 21.9 points per game.

Under McNeill, the Pirates will keep the same multiple 4-3 scheme up front, though they will look like an entirely different team once the ball is snapped.

With undersized players, they now prefer speed over power.

"This is a lot of blitzing, a lot of responsibility football," ECU senior defensive tackle Josh Smith said. "Knowing when to have your gap. We move around a lot. It's very fast football."

Last year, with 300-pound-plus players such as Ross and Joseph on the line, the defense battered opponents, wearing them down and forcing them to punt — a bend-but-don't-break mentality.

Now?

"We want to take the ball," Smith added. "We want to give our offense every chance we can to score."

To accomplish that, ECU coaches have stressed "running to the football." It's the catch-phrase of training camp.

Mitchell has asked his players to sprint to the football on every possession and understand the basics of their technique and assignments. But effort is the most important component, especially since coaches may signal the green light to go on any given down.

"The task is running," ECU senior linebacker Dustin Linebacker said. "We're sending linebackers, sending ends, safeties, we're blitzing, we're running all over the field."

Replacing nine defensive starters, many whom had held their positions for multiple seasons, the Pirates are left with inexperienced players.

Practice time features many simulated game situations in order to provide players with some frame of reference. Second- and third-team players will see time this season.

"We've got to try and rotate as many guys as we can because at the pace in which we're going to ask them to go, we're going to need to have fresh players in every three or four plays," Mitchell said.

"They've opened the door for everyone," Marke Powell said. "If you're on the roster, you've got an opportunity."

Senior linebacker Melvin Patterson looks forward to finally recording some significant minutes after playing behind Johnson for three seasons. He is listed second on the depth chart at middle linebacker.

He said he attacked summer workouts and is usually one of the first to arrive to practice.

He said players such as junior defensive end Maurice Mercer, junior linebacker Steve Spence and senior linebacker Wes Pittman soaked up numerous lessons from the players in front of them.

He said if they play fast and with confidence, they may surprise some doubters — like their coaches' snappy jab.

"You want to make a notion that you're a great defense," Patterson said. "That you love playing defense. You take pride in what you do. Pride in your stance. Pride in running to the ball. Pride in gang-tackling. Just a unit that ... enjoys playing defense."
EAST CAROLINA

2009 record: 9-5 overall 7-1 C-USA

2010 SCHEDULE

Sept. 5 Tulsa
The Golden Hurricane returns 16 starters, including nine on offense.

Sept. 11 Memphis
After a 2-10 finish last season, the Tigers return 16 starters. New coach Larry Porter will search for improvements.

Sept. 18 at Virginia Tech
The Hokies finished last season with a win over Tennessee in the Chick-fil-A Bowl. They are ranked in the preseason as one of the top teams in the nation.

Oct. 2 at North Carolina
With LSU, Georgia Tech and Rutgers as their first three games, the Tar Heels will have a good read on T.J. Yates, their offense and just how explosive the defense remains.

Oct. 9 at Southern Mississippi
The Golden Eagles reached the New Orleans Bowl last season and finished with a 7-6 record. Their defense boasts experience with nine starters returning.

Oct. 16 N.C. State
The Wolfpack has quarterback Russell Wilson and motivation to finish better than last season's 5-7 record. Oh, and motivation to beat their eastern North Carolina rival.

Oct. 23 Marshall
The Thundering Herd limped to a 7-6 record last season, defeating Ohio in the Little Caesars Pizza Bowl. First-year coach Doc Holliday gets a chance to guide the program.

Oct. 30 at Central Florida
ECU leads this series 8-1. That may be more difficult this year with George O'Leary's team returning 22 starters from a team that finished 8-5.

Nov. 6 Navy
The Midshipmen have befuddled opponents over the past two seasons with a hard-to-stop option offense. Coach Ken Niumatalolo has 16 starters back from a team that won the Texas Bowl.

Nov. 11 Alabama-Birmingham
ECU holds a 5-4 record in the series after a 37-21 victory over the Blazers last season.

Nov. 20 at Rice
The Owls finished fifth in Conference USA's West Division and struggled with a 2-10 record.

Nov. 26 Southern Methodist
The Mustangs finished second in Conference USA's West Division and closed out the season with a win in the Sheraton Hawaii Bowl. They return 18 starters, including eight on offense.

PLAYER TO WATCH:
Dewayne Harris, SR, WR, 6-0, 205
His speed is expected to pay dividends in the Pirates' new spread offense. Last season, as a slot receiver, he caught 83 passes for 978 yards, though he stood out most as a member of special teams. He was named Conference USA special teams player of the year, ranked 19th nationally with a 27.0-yard kick return average.

BEST-CASE SCENARIO
The Pirates find instant success under first-year coach Ruffin McNeil. They implement their new spread offense with a new quarterback and find cohesion on defense despite their inexperience. Standout players emerge from the backup ranks after getting an opportunity to play.

WORST-CASE SCENARIO
Outsiders are looking at the season as the first in a difficult rebuilding project in Greenville. The Pirates could falter early in a new offense and never work out the kinks, applying pressure to a defense that can't hold.

EDWARD C. ROBINSON III
The UNC system's new boss will face stern challenges but has the tools to be an outstanding leader.

Service has defined the career of Thomas W. Ross. And now Tom Ross will ascend to a job whose potential for service to the people of North Carolina is almost incalculable – president of the University of North Carolina system. The Board of Governors has chosen well, selecting a leader who knows the state intimately and has shown commitment to its finest principles.

Does Ross have experience that directly proves his ability to manage an enterprise sprawling over 17 campuses across the state, with 215,000 students and vast research responsibilities? Well, he has not led an organization that large. Few people have.

However, Ross will come to the UNC General Administration offices in Chapel Hill from the presidency of his alma mater, highly regarded Davidson College near Charlotte. His tenure at Davidson, while relatively brief, has immersed him in the issues and challenges facing higher education today.

What stands out about Ross is the ease with which he can be expected to adapt to the president's role as the universities' chief advocate.

Around the capital, Ross is well-known for his lengthy tenure as a Superior Court judge, during which he led a reform of the state's sentencing policies. He headed the Administrative Office of the Courts and then moved into one of the most influential jobs in the state's philanthropic sector as executive director of the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation. Seven years in that position surely attuned him to the state's pressing needs in the areas of education, social justice and community uplift.

A healthy university system – along with excellent public schools and a robust network of community colleges – does in fact stand to be indispensable to the state's uplift in years to come. The challenges, though, are manifold.

The retiring president whom Ross will succeed on Jan. 1, Erskine Bowles, has negotiated treacherous budget waters during the sustained economic slump. It is hard for the system to meet the demands of a growing state when the budget mantra is cut, cut, cut. But never does the importance of higher education become clearer than when the economy is in turmoil and people struggle to acquire the knowledge and skills that can give them the edge to succeed. Those educational opportunities must be close at hand, and their costs must not become prohibitive.

The UNC system is leaner in the management ranks than it was when Bowles took office in 2006, and frugality at the top goes far toward ensuring taxpayers that they are getting good value. Ross must be a careful steward while at the same time championing investment where it most benefits students, faculty and the general public. This former judge looks to be a good bet to make the tough decisions on which public higher education in North Carolina, and in many respects the state's future, for the next several years will rise or fall.
Duke confirms résumé padding

Researcher Potti is still on leave

BY SARAH AVERY
STAFF WRITER

Duke University officials confirmed Friday that one of their star researchers padded his credentials, but they'll wait to decide his fate until determining whether scientific findings may also have been manipulated.

Dr. Anil Potti, a cancer genetics researcher whose work has reaped more than $1 million in grants, has been on paid administrative leave since July, amid allegations that he falsely claimed to be a prestigious Rhodes scholar.

In addition, other scientists have challenged Potti’s research, igniting a scandal that has tarnished Duke. Potti has had to publish significant corrections to his work and faces continuing charges that his findings were not only wrong, but may have been deliberately embellished.

Last month, the editors of one scientific journal issued a letter of concern about their prior publication of Potti’s research. Short of a retraction, the action by Lancet Oncology is considered a serious rebuke.

Efforts to reach Potti on Friday were unsuccessful.

‘Substantial concern’

Through spokesman Michael Schoenfeld, Duke officials said a review of Potti’s résumé and academic credentials raised “issues of substantial concern” that have resulted in sanctions.

Schoenfeld declined to say what the sanctions were.

“A final decision about Dr. Potti’s future status as a Duke employee and faculty member will also be informed by the results of the research misconduct inquiry and the independent external evaluation of the science,” Schoenfeld said in a prepared statement. “Until such time, he will remain on administrative leave from his research, teaching and clinical responsibilities.”

Allegations about Potti have swirled in academic and research circles in recent years but blew into a full storm late last year when scientists at MD Anderson Cancer Center in Texas publicly challenged the validity of Potti’s discoveries. He said he had developed a way to use genetic markers to predict which cancer patients would respond best to certain chemotherapies.

Interrupted trials

Duke researchers were testing Potti’s approach on cancer patients in the Triangle and elsewhere — 109 people eventually were enrolled — raising concerns by the Texas scientists that patients could be harmed if the science were ill-founded.

Duke suspended the trials last year, and asked for an outside review of Potti’s work. The reviewers, who remained secret, cleared Potti, and Duke resumed the trials.

This summer, however, the added concerns about Potti’s résumé arose, published in a scientific weekly called Cancer Letter. In response, Duke launched another probe, this time also investigating potential research misconduct that may have violated Duke policies or federal law. It is illegal to provide false information on federal grant applications.

Duke also has been seeking an outside agency to conduct a full review of Potti’s science. Schoenfeld said he could not yet name that agency but noted that it would be “one of the country’s leading research bodies” and that Duke would provide all of Potti’s data and information for scrutiny. He said developments on that inquiry were still unfolding.

sarah.avery@newsobserver.com
or 919-829-4882
College crowd smokes 'spice' that imitates pot

As college students return to the Triangle, some are cracking open lip balm-size jars and plastic bags of a legal herb product that mimics the effects of marijuana.

K2, or Spice, is a lab-made leafy green drug that looks and smells like oregano, with hints of blueberry, citrus and other flavors. The designer drug is showing up at tobacco and head shops, misleadingly labeled as “incense.” The labels also inform buyers that the contents are not fit for human consumption, but behind closed doors the “incense” is being puffed as a legal alternative to marijuana.

K2 and similar products have been outlawed in six states this year, including Tennessee, and six other states are considering banning the products. The U.S. Marine Corps has asked shops near its North Carolina bases not to sell the product to their troops, and the man who created the drug in a research lab warns of such side effects as increased heart rate and blood pressure and unpredictable effects on mood.

The synthetic drug was created in the early 1990s, but started showing up in tobacco and convenience stores in the United States late last year.

Bert Wood, chief executive officer of the N.C. Partnership for a Drug Free North Carolina, had to Google “K2” when he was asked about his organization's stand on the product.

"I have never heard of it," Wood said. "But here's the big picture: Since cave people hit two sticks together to get sparks, we have looked at ways to feel different. If K2 mimics the effects of getting stoned, then we are not encouraging young people to use it."
Sen. William Purcell of Laurinburg sponsored a bill in 2009 that outlawed salvia, another herbal product, with hallucinogenic effects comparable to those of LSD and psilocybin.

Purcell said he heard about K2 a couple of months ago. He says if he's re-elected this fall, he will investigate K2.

"I'll probably take a look at it and get more information," he said from his Scotland County home. "Then we will see if something needs to be done about it."

'Selling like crazy'

In the meantime, the drug is flying off the shelves of Triangle stores that carry it.

"It's selling like crazy," said R.J. Crumpler, an employee at the Hazmat shop on Franklin Street, near UNC-Chapel Hill. "More than cigarettes, more than pipe tobacco, posters or T-shirts."

The prices vary, depending on the potency of the product, but K2 usually sells for $20 to $40 a gram.

Crumpler figures the store sells at least 20 grams a day. "It's more than that on some days," he said.

Blake Tippett, 26, is one of Hazmat's regular K2 customers. Blake is back in school at UNC-Chapel Hill this semester after leaving in 2007 when he hurt his back and underwent two surgeries.

Puffing for pain relief

Tippett said he finds it "rather interesting" that K2 is legal but thinks that will change quickly. Last week, he purchased about 6 grams of "Black Mamba," another powerful herb product.

Tippett, who wants to work as a journalist when he graduates, said he's not happy about the prospect of K2 being outlawed.

He said he smokes synthetic weed because it helps relieve the pain from back injuries that ruptured one disc and herniated another.

"I'm in the category of those people who smoke because it has helped to make me a healthy, 200-pound person able to walk around without wearing a back brace," he said.

Tippett said K2 and synthetic marijuana products like Black Mamba have helped his back pain "more than any other opiate under the sun."

A potent, brief high

N.C. State University sophomores Ethan Haynes and Kevin Catts haven't given much thought to the potential medical benefits of synthetic marijuana. They say they puff on K2 because it's fun.

Haynes and Catts strolled into the Kitsch smoke shop off Hillsborough Street last week and went straight to the front counter where the shop features a full line of the herbal incense products. They pored over the K2 offerings: Standard, Spice, Blueberry, Blonde and Funky Monkey, before choosing the Summit brand, which sells for $30 a gram.

Haynes says that students all over NCSU's campus are puffing on K2 and that he smokes it about once a week. He said the high kicks in about a minute after a couple of puffs. The high, although more potent than marijuana's, is short-lived - about 30 minutes to an hour.

The substance in K2 that mimics the effects of marijuana is known as JWH-018. It was first developed in the summer of 1993 by John W Huffman, an organic chemist at Clemson University.

From JWH-018 to K2

Huffman developed the substance while looking for new pharmaceutical products similar to tetrahydrocannabinol, or THC, the active ingredient in marijuana. The J, W, and H in the substance's name are Huffman's initials. The "018" acknowledges that the compound was the
18th cannabinoid that the lab developed. (Cannabinoid refers to the organic chemical substances in cannabis, or marijuana.)

Last week, Huffman said his work did not lead to the development of any new legal medications. He did not receive a patent for his invention, and he did not sell the formula, which creates "a pale amber goo."

So how did the compound wind up being sprayed as a light mist on dried leaves and sold as synthetic weed on the Internet and in head shops and tobacco stores across the country?

"I assume that someone with some scientific knowledge found it in a publication in a scientific journal," Huffman said in an e-mail message last week. "It is inevitable that psychotropic compounds will find their way into commerce. There are greedy and irresponsible individuals worldwide. This is just another example."

Huffman added that he receives no royalties from the sales of K2 or any other product that uses his formula.

Terrie Sonya of Granite City, Ill., offers K2 for sale at her website, K24Sale.com. Sonya, who also sells the product out of a liquor store she owns, claims that she did not know people were smoking it as an alternative to marijuana.

"I really don't know what people are doing with it when they take it out of the door," Sonya said. "We market it as incense and sell it as incense."

Sonya said she started selling K2 in October and the product quickly outpaced her store's alcohol sales. She thinks pending legislation in Illinois to ban K2 would shut her business down.

Huffman described the effects of the substance he developed as "considerably more potent" than marijuana. He warned that the product increases users' heart rate and blood pressure and has unpredictable effects on one's mood.

So far, there has been no research to determine the long-term effects of smoking K2.

Side effects reported

But last month a New York Times blog fielded comments from readers who reported experiencing seizures, paranoia and heart problems after smoking the fake weed. The blog writer, Malcolm Gay, stated that the comments "are likely representative of the over 500 reports made to poison control centers across the country this year."

Not every tobacco or head shop near a Triangle college campus sells K2. Smoke Rings, just across the street from Hazmat on Franklin Street, doesn't sell the stuff. Neither does Sam's Quik Shop on Ninth Street, near Duke University in Durham.

Many of the head shops on Hillsborough Street carry the product, but their employees and managers declined to comment.

After Catts and Haynes, the NCSU students, bought that bag of K2 last week, they mulled the possibilities of their next legal weed purchase.

"Funky Monkey," Haynes suggested to Catts. "We should try that the next time."

thomas.mcdonald@newsobserver.com or 919-829-4533

Get the biggest news in your email or cellphone as it's happening. Sign up for breaking news alerts.
UNC AD: No end in sight

Chancellor Holden Thorp and athletic director Dick Baddour both voiced support for UNC coach Butch Davis on Thursday.

BY ROBBI PICKERAL - STAFF WRITER

It is too early to tell whether North Carolina's investigation into possible academic misconduct extends beyond the football team, athletic director Dick Baddour said Friday.

"As I said [Thursday] night, we will use this as an opportunity to look into every aspect of the program; we're early in the process, so part of what we're doing is evolving, so I don't want to get into the details of what other sports could be involved," Baddour said in a phone interview.

"But the first thing you want to do is see, in this particular case, who the tutor was registered to be working with, and who was assigned to her - and do due diligence in those areas. You've got to keep in mind that we're not at the end, but as I said last night, we are past the beginning. So I'm not prepared to say... I don't think we can include or exclude anything."

Baddour, UNC chancellor Holden Thorp and football coach Butch Davis announced during a news conference on Thursday night that the school is investigating whether a tutor - who was employed by both UNC and Davis - committed academic misconduct while working with football players. A source familiar with the investigation said the issue involves inappropriate help on papers the football players were required to write for class. No. 18 UNC opens the football season next Saturday against LSU in Atlanta, and it's unclear when, if or how many players might be suspended for the
Although Baddour would not name the tutor or the athletes involved, he clarified several points to The News & Observer on Friday:

♦ The school started looking into the possible misconduct when a player being interviewed during the NCAA's investigation into possible improprieties with sports agents brought up the tutor's name. That interview, however, was not associated with any academic issue, Baddour said, and the player did not bring up the tutor's name in an academic context. But once UNC heard the tutor's name, "we thought we should do our due diligence, and started looking into things."

♦ Baddour said that the tutor was employed by the university before she was hired by Davis. When Davis signed on to become head football coach in the fall of 2006, he approached the academic support office and asked for suggestions for an academic adviser to tutor his son, Drew (who is now 17 and the starting quarterback at East Chapel Hill High). "She had been involved in the academic support program, and I'm confident in saying at that time, she was highly regarded," Baddour said. He said that Davis did not put his players in contact with the tutor.

♦ Asked if he was "confident" that only one tutor was involved, Baddour said that was too strong of a word. "We're towards the beginning or middle. We have due diligence to do. At this point, using a point like 'confident', would mean it [the investigation] is toward the end. I just know that we're going to take the steps that we need to take to look into all aspects of it. So that means you have to set some priorities. We need to put some resources into this, and we need to take care of what's immediate. When we complete that work without taking a deep breath, we'll go to another stage until we are done."

♦ Baddour - with Thorp's blessing - was the person who appointed former athletic faculty representative Jack Evans, former faculty president Lissa Broome, senior associate athletic director John Blanchard and director of compliance Lance Markos to lead the school's investigation.

♦ Team spokesman Kevin Best said that all of UNC's football players are scheduled to meet with fans at tonight's "Meet the Heels" event at Kenan Stadium. Baddour said: "I hope our fans will come, and enjoy this team and embrace this team. This team needs the support of Carolina fans as much as any time."

rubb: pickeral@newsobserver.com or 919-829-8944
UNC details academic help

CHAPEL HILL -- It is not easy to become a tutor or a mentor for athletes at North Carolina's Academic Support Program.

They receive four hours of training before they are hired, including instruction on NCAA compliance. At the beginning of each semester, they sign a form agreeing to follow academic honesty policies. At the end of each semester, they sign another form stating they have neither witnessed, nor committed, any academic fraud or violations.

They can't type athletes' papers.

They are not allowed to communicate with athletes over e-mail or work with them anywhere outside the Academic Support Center.

They are given handbooks to remind them of the procedures.

But despite the checks and balances, UNC finds itself investigating whether a former tutor who was employed by both the school and Tar Heels football coach Butch Davis committed academic misconduct while working with football players.

Arising from the ongoing NCAA investigation into possible improper contacts between football players and sports agents, the new probe, announced Thursday at a joint news conference by athletic director Dick Baddour, university chancellor Holden Thorp and Davis, could take weeks to complete. The investigative team appointed by Baddour will try to figure out whether the Academic Support Program failed, and if so, how it could happen.

"If you looked at all of this two months ago - there's not a lot of margin of error for what's appropriate," said Baddour, who continues to express confidence in the program. "This is gut-wrenching for us. But I want us to get better. I want to find ways for us to get better."

Tutors and mentors

The Academic Support Program - temporarily located in Kenan Stadium's Pope Box while the new five-story Carolina Student-Athlete Center for Excellence is being constructed as part of the $70 million east end zone project - opened its doors in 1985. Its director reports to the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences but also coordinates with John Blanchard, the senior associate athletic director for student-athlete services, who reports to Baddour.

Each semester, the program employs 25 tutors and 25 to 30 academic mentors at roughly $10 to $12 an hour. About a fourth of the tutors, who work individually and in groups on specific subjects such as history, math or writing, come from the community and include retirees and former teachers, Blanchard said. The other three-fourths are UNC graduates and
A mentor, Blanchard said, is more like an academic coach who helps students navigate through a semester or a school year.

"They're able to give feedback right away. If you have a paper due with two weeks left in a semester, you're not going to start that a week before it's due - we're going to plot that out together. So it teaches kids strategies to navigate the semester, especially with time management."

About half of the mentors come from UNC's Teaching Fellows Program; the other half are graduate and undergraduate students. While the majority of UNC's approximately 800 student-athletes use the tutoring services at least once during their career - "sometimes, to try to bring a B to an A," Blanchard said - only about 70 athletes per semester are assigned mentors, based on their academic history.

Mentors are assigned one to four athletes apiece and sometimes coach the same athletes for up to three years.

Tutoring and mentoring duties are not mutually exclusive, however. "We will have some academic mentors who may pick up some tutoring assignments," Blanchard said.

That was the case regarding the tutor who is being investigated; she no longer works for the school.

**Learning the rules**

Whether hired as a tutor or as a mentor at UNC, both become indefinitely regarded as "institutional staff members" as per NCAA rules, meaning they are subject to the NCAA's bylaws on extra benefits and academic fraud.

As part of their four-hour introductory training, Blanchard said, tutors and mentors are instructed by the compliance office on NCAA rules, and they leave with a copy of a handbook that spells out the rules in detail.

According to those handbooks, an institution must report unethical academic conduct to the NCAA if a professor, student or coach is knowingly involved in arranging fraudulent academic credit for a prospect or enrolled student-athlete. Some examples that might lead to a ruling of academic fraud:

- Preparing and typing papers for a student-athlete.

- Signing a student-athlete's name on an attendance sheet when participation/attendance is part of the final grade.

- Improper academic assistance from an institutional staff member, regardless of credit obtained.

What is improper?

According to Blanchard, who took a similar position at Minnesota after the Golden Gophers committed one of the most notorious cases of academic fraud in the 1990s, "most cases of academic fraud have to do with writing assignments." So during training, the school's writing center teaches tutors and mentors the do's and don'ts. The rule of thumb: Editing becomes a violation when the thoughts on a paper are no longer those of the student-athlete.

Tutors and mentors are told never to type on a student's computer and to read papers on printouts; never to accept papers via e-mail, and if it is necessary to write on a paper, to direct comments only toward grammar, citing and questions on factual content.

A source familiar with the investigation has told The News & Observer that the current issue involves an unnamed tutor's inappropriate help on papers the football players were required to write for class. Baddour said Friday it's too early to tell
whether the academic misconduct extends beyond the football team.

'Checks and balances'

Although the NCAA defines academic fraud, it's up to individual institutions to come up with the specific rules at their schools to make sure it doesn't happen. And the policies vary.

At N.C. State, for instance, would-be tutors are given a test after their four hours of rules instruction, and they must earn an 80 percent to become a tutor, said Carrie Leger, the Wolfpack's director of academic support. Then they are retested on the rules four weeks later and must earn an 80 percent again. In addition, State's tutors must be juniors with an overall GPA of 3.0 or higher and are expressly forbidden from being Facebook friends, exchanging e-mail addresses or phone numbers with the athletes they tutor, or socializing with them.

"You do your best to build in checks and balances, training, expectations in every part of what you're doing," Leger said. "And if something doesn't feel right, it's not right. We're constantly talking about that, we constantly communicate with our tutors, and with each other."

UNC's handbooks don't expressly forbid tutors or mentors from friending athletes on social media sites, but "our training spells out that you're not to be personal friends," Blanchard said. "You're not to hang out. It's a professional relationship, and we want to keep it professional."

In addition, all work must be done in the Academic Support Center, and tutors and mentors submit a daily report after meeting with athletes.

Blanchard, who is part of the team investigating the possible academic misconduct, said he remains proud of what the people in the Academic Support Program have done in the past, and the work they are doing now.

"We are paying close attention to the investigation," he said. "It's just begun, and as that goes, if we learn things where we're maybe falling short, we'll make the necessary adjustments. I just know we have high standards."

---

**SERIOUS TURN OF EVENTS**

The news that possible academic misconduct had been found at the University of North Carolina indicated a serious turn in the investigation that previously had focused on possible improprieties with sports agents.

Results of previous cases demonstrate how seriously the NCAA takes academic misconduct. Perhaps the most serious case is in NCAA history took place in the late 1990s, when the NCAA found that tutor Jan Genglehuoff prepared approximately 400 pieces of course work for Minnesota's basketball players.

The penalties were severe. The school vacated its appearances in the 1994, 1995 and 1997 NCAA tournaments, including a trip to the 1997 Final Four. The NCAA gave the school five years of probation and reduced its scholarships.

Coach Clem Haskins, who was found to have known about the fraud, was fired and effectively banned from college coaching for seven years.

Here are some other recent cases of serious academic misconduct and how the NCAA handled them:

- Florida State vacated wins in 10 sports and was placed on probation for three years in an academic fraud case that involved 61 athletes and three university employees in 2006 and 2007. Iconic football coach Bobby Bowden, who had retired with 382 career wins, saw that number reduced by 14.
- Georgia vacated a total of 30 men's basketball wins in 2001-02 and 2002-03, withdrew from the 2003 SEC and NCAA tournaments, returned revenue from the 2002 NCAA tournament and did not renew coach Jim Hamrick's contract for violations that included A grades awarded to three players for work they did not do in a physical education class.

Ken Tysiac