THE DAILY CLIPS

September 23, 2008

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 FAX: 252-328-6300
Pioneering surgeon to open East Carolina lecture series

BY JOSH HUMPHRIES
The Daily Reflector

Pioneering surgeon Dr. Randolph Chitwood will kick off a series of lectures at East Carolina University this week.

He is the first of series of academic speakers in the 2008-09 Voyages of Discovery lectures. Chitwood's lecture, at 7 p.m. Wednesday in Wright Auditorium on campus, is titled "Medical Discoveries and Innovations in the Twentieth Century."

Chitwood is the first heart surgeon to perform robot-assisted heart valve surgery in North America. He will discuss how he does the procedure and show a live video feed of a simulated operation during the talk.

Surgeons from around the world come to Greenville to learn the da Vinci Surgical System techniques, developed by Chitwood, at the Brody School of Medicine, the first U.S. institution to perform robotic-assisted mitral valve surgery.

The Cardiovascular Center at Pitt County Memorial Hospital, directed by Chitwood, now performs 1,200 cardiac surgical, 3,000 interventional and 5,000 catheter-based procedures every year.

The lecture series is aimed at the public, not just the academic community, said John Tucker, director of the lecture series and a history professor at ECU.

"These lectures are not technical," Tucker said. "They will be public lectures meant to address the concerns of the educated public. Its not for a small group of doctors."

Tucker said the series — now in its second year sponsored by the Thomas Harriot College of Arts and Sciences — is designed to add to the cultural experience of ECU and Greenville.

"This is another layer of cultural interaction with the public, with the students and faculty, that we hope to see contribute to a higher level of culture and understanding of the liberal arts and sciences and the world we live in," Tucker said.

"This is what the university was needed."

The lecturers in the series are chosen by the faculty of the College of Arts and Sciences as represented by various committees, Tucker said.

This academic year will feature six speakers on topics ranging from religion to evolution, creative leadership and local history.

The series ties new lectures with lectures that have existed in the college for decades like the Brewster Lecture in History and the Sallie Southall Cotton Lecture, a lecture given by a prominent female each year.

Each lecture requires a $10 ticket.

ECU faculty, staff and students get in to the lectures for free.

Josh Humphries can be contacted at jhumphries@coxnc.com and 329-9565.

UPCOMING LECTURES

All lectures are at 7 p.m. in Wright Auditorium on the ECU campus.

Oct. 8 Walter Isaacson, CEO of the Aspen Institute and former CEO of CNN, will deliver "Creative Leaders Who Have Shaped Our World."

Nov. 18 Marcus Borg, Emeritus Professor of Religion and Culture at Oregon State University will present the Jarvis Lecture in Religion and Culture titled "Christians in the Age of Empire."

Jan. 27, 2009 Eugenie Scott, executive director of the National Center for Science Education will present the Sallie Southall Cotton Lecture titled "Darwin's Legacy in Science and Society."

Feb. 25, 2009 Felipe Fernandez-Armesto, author of Millennium: A History of the Last Thousand Years, will present the Brewster Lecture in History titled "Vespucci: The Man Who Gave His Name to America."

April 2, 2009 Stephen Lucas, professor at Birkbeck University of London will present the Thomas Harriot Lecture titled "Thomas Harriot: New Worlds of an Elizabethan Scientist."

BORG

SCOTT
We Were Wrong

Health fair to be held Saturday

Material submitted by the university contained an erroneous report about the health fair planned this weekend. Here's the complete report with the correct information:

As part of the N.C. Schweitzer Fellows Program, seven medical students from ECU's Brody School of Medicine are teaming up to present a community health fair, 1-5 p.m. Saturday at the Little Willie Center at 807 W. Fifth St.

The health fair will feature food demonstrations, fitness performances, step and dance team routines, master gardeners' advice and contests for children. Called “B.L.O.O.M. n' P.L.A.Y.,” the fair is the final event of a month-long canned food drive being held at the Brody School of Medicine to benefit a new food bank to serve west Greenville. To help, bring a canned food item to the fair Saturday. The food bank is being spearheaded by the Little Willie Center and the ECU Schweitzer Fellows.
The Day
ACROSS THE STATE

Tutu to speak at UNC commencement

RALEIGH — Nobel Peace Prize winner Desmond Tutu has been picked to speak at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill’s spring 2009 commencement.

University chancellor Holden Thorp said Monday a committee of students and faculty chose the 76-year-old South African anti-apartheid campaigner.

Tutu led protests around the world to end racial segregation in South Africa in the 1980s, and served as the first black Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town.

Tutu won the Nobel prize in 1984 and continues to push for democracy, freedom and human rights around the world.

The university graduated more than 5,000 students in its spring 2008 commencement.
Not ready for college

Our view:
Schools fall short in preparing students for higher education.

Imagine your children earning B's in all their high school courses and then being told that they have to take remedial courses before they can earn credits at the state university.

You'd be upset, and you'd have plenty of company. As many as 43% of community college students are enrolled in a remedial class. At four-year colleges, the number is nearly 30%. The cost for colleges and taxpayers: more than $2 billion a year.

There's plenty of blame to go around. High schools dumb down courses and inflate grades. Too many children put too little emphasis on schoolwork, and too many parents let them.

That's just a starter list. Teachers often are overworked and underpaid. Many high schools fail to instill writing and reading skills needed to survive in college, and many states set low academic standards, especially in math.

Last but not least are state universities that shrink from dipping their hands into the often messy affairs of K-12 schools. As a result, those schools never learn exactly what they should be teaching.

The result is a national scandal, neatly laid out in a report released last week by Strong American Schools, a nonprofit group trying (mostly without success) to get education issues addressed in the presidential election.

The report, "Diploma to Nowhere," reveals that:

➤ Nearly four of five remedial students had a high school grade point average of B or better.
➤ More than half the students taking remedial classes in college say they were good students in high school who always completed their assignments.
➤ Nearly six of 10 remedial students say they should have been challenged more in high school.

How to dig out of this hole? Some of the best ideas are coming from the 23-campus, 450,000-student California State University.

At Cal State, only 54% of freshmen tested proficient in English; 63% in math. To combat this, Cal State devised an "early assessment program" for 11th-graders, a test that piggybacks onto the regular state exam. Students who opt to take the extended test (this year, 75% of students did) find out if they're on the path to handle college.

Those who pass the test automatically qualify to take for-credit courses at a Cal State campus. Those who don't pass (and many don't; only 17% passed the English portion this spring) have their entire senior year to pick up the academic pace. Cal State has offered the nation a model for working its way out of this dilemma.

Now what's needed are imitators elsewhere.
Don't blame high schools

Opposing view:
For results, let critics put their money where their complaints are.

By Gerald N. Tirozzi

The National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) is delighted to have Strong American Schools as a partner in promoting a common agenda of closing the achievement gap and ensuring that all students receive a high-quality education. But its “blame and shame” message — while easy to reduce to a headline — ignores more complex realities and does little to advance that common agenda.

Middle schools get unprepared students from elementary schools. High schools get unprepared students from middle schools. Unlike middle and high schools, however, colleges choose their students. Many colleges, eager to put bodies at desks to meet a bottom line, admit unprepared students and undermine school leaders’ efforts to raise high school achievement levels.

Should colleges expect that a high school diploma is evidence enough of college readiness? The answer is as varied as the 50 sets of state standards. The disparities among states leap from the page when state proficiency scores are compared with the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) scores, the only national barometer available.

If NAEP scores are any indication, some states have rigorous standards and some don’t, and we can’t ignore the shortcomings of a national accountability system that allows for 50 definitions of success. This very reality has prompted NASSP to call for rigorous national standards for K–12 education for all students.

Of the $14 billion appropriated for Title I, the financial driver for No Child Left Behind, approximately 5% goes to high schools and a combined 15% goes to middle and high schools. Critics of public education lament the shortcomings of secondary schools, but they sit quietly on the sidelines as Congress debates the need to fund middle level and high school reform.

These naysayers are conspicuously absent in discussions of the massive funding and resource disparities between our richest and poorest students. Educators are eager to see how slick ads, glossy reports, and generous school bashing can shrink the chasm between the haves and have-nots of our society. Our minds remain open to the possibilities.

Gerald N. Tirozzi is executive director of the National Association of Secondary School Principals.