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ECU students march to stress safety on campus

The Daily Reflector

Tuesday, September 29, 2009

More than 100 East Carolina University students took a stand against violence toward women Tuesday night with the "Take Back the Night" and "Walk a Mile in Her Shoes" event on campus.

The students marched across campus to raise awareness about violence. About a dozen of the male students were wearing high-heels to symbolize walking in a woman's shoes.

The Take Back the Night event has been held at ECU for years, said Sue Molhan, victim advocate coordinator for the ECU Police Department. It is observed at campuses throughout the country and has become a tradition since the 1970s, she said.

Molhan said the male students wearing female shoes showed their commitment to fighting violence.

“They were showing off their footwear while emphasizing the importance of men being more involved in stopping violence against women,” she said.

The event came on the heels of an investigation by the ECU Police Department of a reported rape of an 18-year-old freshman female in the Tyler Hall early Saturday — an incident that proves the need for more awareness about violence against females, Molhan said.
Brown named permanent College of Nursing dean

The Daily Reflector

Tuesday, September 29, 2009

The East Carolina University College of Nursing has a permanent dean.

ECU's Vice Chancellor for Health Sciences Phyllis Horns appointed Sylvia Brown to the role on a permanent basis beginning Thursday. She has served more than two years as interim dean.

"Dr. Brown is extraordinarily well qualified to assume this role on a permanent basis," Horns said. "Her professionalism and commitment to the College of Nursing are visible and genuine. She brings a renewed energy to sustaining excellence in the college during the challenging realities of growing enrollments and shrinking resources."

Brown assumed the role of acting dean of the College of Nursing in November of 2006, and she has served as the associate dean for graduate programs since December of 2003. She succeeds Horns as dean of nursing.

"I am honored to serve as the dean in the College of Nursing," Brown said. "Our college has a rich history of educating nurses who are prepared to meet societal health needs and assume leadership roles. As we prepare for our 50th anniversary in 2010, I am excited about the future as we venture ahead to the next chapter of our history."

During Brown's tenure as associate dean, enrollment of graduate nursing students has grown more than 250 percent. She has been a faculty member at ECU since 1976.

Brown's research interests include the development of contemporary instructional strategies for nursing education, pain management and the effect of ovarian cancer diagnosis and treatment on patients and their families.

She has written or co-written more than 75 peer-reviewed articles and proceedings and 27 funded research grants. She is an active member of various professional and service associations on the local and national level.

An eastern North Carolina native, Brown is an alumna of ECU, earning a bachelor's degree in nursing in 1975 and a master's degree in nursing in 1978. She received a doctorate in education from North Carolina State University in 1982. She served as a staff nurse at Pitt County Memorial Hospital before beginning her academic career.

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Flu shots in demand

Most vaccine providers are ready for the rush, and public health officials are pleased.

BY SARAH AVERY
STAFF WRITER

Unusually early demand for seasonal flu shots has strained supplies at doctors' offices, but public health clinics and pharmacies report ample amounts available for the normal fall vaccination campaigns getting under way.

Spot shortages have occurred primarily because everyone is rushing to be first in line for shots — a phenomenon that pleases public health officials whose annual prevention advice often goes unheeded.

"We're glad people are showing interest early this year," said Dr. Peter Morris, medical director of Wake County Human Services. "It's an urban myth that early vaccinations won't protect you through the end of the season. It protects all season long."

What the seasonal vaccine will not do is protect people from the pandemic H1N1 strain that is hitting hard across North Carolina. A separate H1N1 vaccine is expected to be available toward the middle of October, but the first shipments are likely to be limited. As a result, health authorities will target people at high risk of complications.

The widespread outbreak of pandemic flu is serving as an incentive for people to get their seasonal shots, because no one wants to be hit with two different bouts of influenza.

"My concern is that elementary school kids are falling sick like flies," said Michael Bimonte of Raleigh, who grew frustrated last week trying to find a flu shot for his 7-year-old daughter. Many public clinics had not yet started flu shot campaigns, and some doctors' offices had run through the supplies they were shipped.

SEE FLU, PAGE 2B

FIND A SEASONAL FLU SHOT NEAR YOU

The Carolina Center for Medical Excellence maintains a list of flu shot clinics at pharmacies, grocery stores, senior centers and other sites. Just type in your ZIP code and how far you're willing to travel. The clinics are listed by date: www2.thecarolines-center.org/ftf/

Bimonte said he finally secured a shot for his daughter last Saturday through her pediatrician.

"There were 30 people sitting in the waiting room," he said.

Such demand is at least two weeks earlier than most years. Typically, early birds get their shots at the first of October, and the clinics pick up the pace throughout the month and into November.

Supplies are set at least half a year in advance, when doctors' offices, public
health clinics, pharmacies and other stores order vaccines based on historic patterns of use.

Rex Healthcare, for instance, ordered 7,000 doses to vaccinate staff, plus to offer patients at its doctor practices and urgent care clinics. That amount has been adequate in normal years, and so far that supply is holding up even with heightened early demand.

“We haven’t run out anywhere,” said Melody Hunter-Pillson, Rex’s spokeswoman. But Hunter-Pillson said about 30 percent of the order has yet to be filled, and there may be delays in the delivery pipeline.

The state, which gets a massive allocation of flu shots as part of its childhood vaccine program, has received nearly twice as much vaccine at this point in the season compared with last year. Of 895,000 doses ordered, about 390,000 are available. Last year, the state was allocated about 575,000 doses and got 210,000 in the first delivery, said Amy Caruso, spokeswoman for the state’s immunization branch.

In Wake County, Morris said vaccine supplies have been arriving in the past few weeks, but the health department didn’t start offering flu shot clinics until enough supply was on hand that it could meet demand without interruption. The county will start offering shots Thursday.

Orange and Durham counties also began their flu shots this week.

Also, for the first time this year, children will have access to free seasonal flu shots at schools. Federal stimulus money has been allocated to pay for the school-based programs, which are slated to begin later this month.

“I’m pretty sure the supply will even out” as the rush dies down, said Gayle Harris, public health director for Durham County. She said the real challenge will hit when the H1N1 vaccines arrive and people begin elbowing for those shots.

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Angry students knock some cents into NCCU

BY ERIC FERRERI
STAFF WRITER

DURHAM — When N.C. Central University officials realized that they needed to charge more for a student activity fee than anticipated, they told students to settle up. The difference? One penny.

Commence chaos. Hundreds of students stood in line Monday afternoon, pennies in hand, after a false rumor began circulating that those who didn’t pay would be fined $25.

For its penny, NCCU prompted some unprintable thoughts from a disenchanted student body.

“It was just a penny,” said JeLisa Wilson, a senior. “But it got everyone in a mood. In a frenzy.”

By evening, a campus administrator sent an apologetic e-mail to students. While there was a one-cent student fee increase, the university had erred in asking students to settle the balance, and no fees or late charges would be imposed, he wrote. The adjustment will be made next semester.

“Mistakes happen,” wrote Alan D. Robertson, NCCU’s vice chancellor of administration and finance. “When they do, we do our best to set things right because we sincerely appreciate you and your relationship with NCCU.”

NCCU would have netted $85.01 if all 8,501 students enrolled this fall had settled up.
No need to backtrack

The State Board of Community Colleges made a common-sense, if politically risky, decision in voting to admit illegal immigrants to its 58 campuses. The move might even be characterized as bold. It remains in limbo, however, during a 60-day public comment period, and isn’t slated to take effect until next fall.

But now there are justifiable concerns among some advocates for the change: first, the out-of-state tuition rate of $7,700 a year (part of the requirement for these undocumented students) will be prohibitive for many if not most such students. Second, some state legislators have made an issue of this step, saying illegal immigrants should not have access to these colleges, and there is a possibility that lawmakers will reverse the board decision. Unfortunately, both Gov. Beverly Perdue and Lt. Gov. Walter Dalton, no doubt mindful of the political unpopularity in some corners of the board’s stance, have been on record against it.

Now that the state board has jumped the hurdle of allowing the students to enroll, with the understanding that any illegal immigrants can gain admission only after legal residents are admitted, it would be a sad retreat indeed. Only South Carolina among other states does not allow undocumented students to enroll in community colleges. And North Carolina’s public university system allows them if they attended high school in the United States.

Republican leaders in the General Assembly have signaled they’ll seek to undo what the state board has done. That’s nothing but pandering to a cynical view that the children of illegal immigrants, children who typically are in this country through no decision of their own and thanks to a disgracefully inept immigration policy from the federal government, should be denied the opportunity to improve their lives, at no cost to taxpayers.

Let us hope calmer, more humane and more sensible voices prevail if this matter does come to the legislature.
September 29, 2009

Task Force to Colleges: Treat Betting Like Booze

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Filed at 2:53 p.m. ET

LAS VEGAS (AP) -- Colleges and universities should take more steps to curb problem gambling by piggybacking outreach efforts onto campaigns against alcohol and drug abuse, a national gambling task force said Tuesday.

The Task Force on College Gambling Policies said in a report that schools should treat gambling as a health issue, and establish policies to restrict wagers on campuses and treat students who develop addictions.

While nearly half of college students surveyed reported gambling during the past year, a 2005 report shows only 22 percent of colleges have written gambling policies, said the group, which was established last year by the Cambridge Health Alliance and funded by the National Center for Responsible Gaming. The health alliance is a teaching affiliate of Harvard Medical School.

"It is important, we believe, for schools to send a clear, unified message about acceptable behaviors," said Christine Reilly, a task force member and executive director of the Institute for Research on Gambling Disorders in Beverly, Mass.

"It's very common for schools to have different rules for alcohol use ... and for gambling, and so we think this is an issue that colleges should think about," Reilly said.

Among the 10 recommendations outlined in the report, the task force said universities should establish clear, written gambling policies that comply with laws, actively campaign against problem gambling, and help treat students if they develop gambling disorders.

"If a student presents himself to a university health service with a physical problem such as kidney disease or a fractured hip, the college will bend over backward to assist the student," said Peter Emerson, the task force's chairman. "Addiction is in a different category."

Task force members said colleges should survey their campuses to gauge gambling activities and find out what types of betting are occurring. Reilly said nationwide data is not recent enough to determine how online gambling -- which is technically illegal though still accessible for many -- and states that have recently allowed gambling affect student gambling habits.

The American Gaming Association said in its 2009 annual report that 37 states had some type of casino in 2008, including commercial casinos, American Indian casinos, racetracks, card rooms and electronic gambling devices. The industry group said commercial casinos took in $32.54 billion in gambling revenue last year.
The National Center for Responsible Gaming is the affiliated charity of the American Gaming Association, and is funded by contributions from commercial and American Indian casinos, casino equipment manufacturers and others.