THE DAILY CLIPS

October 1, 2007

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 durhanj@ccu.edu  Web site at http://www.news.ecu.edu
252-328-6481 FAX: 252-328-6300
Report details rare spasm-caused heart attacks in children

By Lindsey Tanner
The Associated Press

CHICAGO — Beth Meter is a cardiac nurse who has seen plenty of heart attacks, so when her son complained of sudden crushing chest pain that spread to his arm, she was certain he was having one.

Doctors at first didn't believe her. That's because her son had just turned 13.

A report from Ohio doctors documenting nine cases over 11 years in kids as young as 12 who confirmed the diagnosis. Luckily, 14 years later, the Strongsville, Ohio, teen is on heart medicine but is doing well.

"Pediatricians need to understand that this is a true and real condition," Mrs. Meter said. "Don't just pigeonhole any kid that's complaining of chest pain."

Dan Meter was among children included in a report by Drs. John Lane and Giora Ben-Shachar at Akron Children's Hospital in Akron, Ohio. All were stricken between 1995 and 2006 and most were treated at the Akron hospital. Lane treated a few of the earlier patients when he was at Rainbow Babies and Children's Hospital in Cleveland.

All lacked common risk factors for heart problems, such as obesity, family history, high blood pressure, unhealthy cholesterol levels and drug abuse.

The cause of their heart attacks was most likely a heart spasm that briefly cut off blood supply. Lane said, it is also a rare cause of heart attacks in adults.

All but one of Lane's patients were boys. Doctors are uncertain whether girls face a lower risk because there's little in medical literature about this type of heart attack.

Lane called it "an under-appreciated phenomenon." His report appears in October's issue of the medical journal Pediatrics.

See HEART, A9
HEART
Continued from A1

Chest pain is a common symptom in children, but 95 percent of the time, it's not heart-related and it is rarely life-threatening, said Dr. Reginald Washington, a Denver children's heart specialist.

Muscle strains and stress are among common causes of kids' chest pain. Most heart-related chest pain in kids is caused by infections, structural abnormalities or problems other than heart attacks, Washington said.

He said the Akron doctors' report "does a good job of telling physicians" they shouldn't dismiss heart attack as a possibility in children.

Dan Meter said the pain hit him during seventh grade social studies class in March 2006. A teacher noticed he looked pale, and Dan figured it was a stretched muscle. He didn't tell his mom at first.

"I didn't think that could happen to a kid," said Dan, now 14 and in ninth grade.

His mother took him to the doctor the next day, then to the hospital, where the pain returned and spread to his arm. Staffers there dismissed her concerns about a heart attack.

Dan was hospitalized for two days. Despite abnormal blood tests and imaging tests, he was told he likely had a heart infection and was sent home. His pediatrician ultimately him to see Lane.

Lane said parents should consult a doctor any time a child has sudden chest pain. A heart attack in children is typically a crushing-type pain that radiates to the arm or jaw or neck — similar to adults' symptoms. Lane said.

It is uncertain what causes spasm-related attacks, which don't involve the issues usually seen — narrowed arteries with plaque that bursts, leading to a clot that blocks blood flow.

Some overweight children have signs of early artery disease. But it takes years for that to lead to clot-related heart attacks, said Dr. Dianne Atkins, an American Heart Association spokeswoman and pediatrics professor at the University of Iowa.

Patients in the Pediatrics report were diagnosed through blood tests that showed abnormal levels of an enzyme made by injured or dying heart tissue. Many also had abnormal heart-imaging tests. Both methods are used to diagnose heart attacks in adults.

"In most cases we didn't see any permanent long-term injury in the heart function," and none of the patients has experienced any long-term problems, Lane said.

Although Dan takes heart medicine daily and nitroglycerin pills when occasional chest pain returns, he still snowboards, shoots hoops and does other hobbies he enjoyed before the attack.

"I try to keep it out of my mind," he said. "I don't want to be known as the kid who had a heart attack."

Still, he has advice for other kids who experience sudden, spreading chest pain.

"Don't be afraid to tell someone because it's very serious," he said.

On the Net:
American Academy of Pediatrics: www.aap.org
Rising cost of education leads to high-priced student loans

By Marcy Gordon
The Associated Press

The near doubling in the cost of a college degree the past decade has produced an explosion in high-priced student loans that could haunt the U.S. economy for years.

While scholarship, grant money and government-backed student loans — whose interest rates are capped — have taken up some of the slack, many families and individual students have turned to private loans, which carry fees and interest rates that are often variable and up to 20 percent.

Many in the next generation of workers will be so debt-burdened they will have to delay home purchases, limit vacations, even eat out less to pay loans off on time.

Kristin Cole, 30, who graduated from Michigan State University’s law school and lives in Grand Rapids, Mich., owes $150,000 in private and government-backed student loans. Her monthly payment of $660, which consumes a quarter of her take-home pay, is scheduled to jump to $900 in a year or so, confronting her with stark financial choices.

“I could never buy a house. I can’t travel; I can’t do anything,” she said. “I feel like a prisoner.”

A legal aid worker, Cole said she may need to get a job at a law firm, “doing something that I’m not real dedicated to, just for the sake of being able to live.”

Parents are still the primary source of funds for many students, but the dynamics were radically altered in recent years as tuition costs soared and sources of readily available and more costly private financing made higher education seemingly available to anyone willing to sign a loan application.

Students with no credit history and no relatives to co-sign loans (or co-signing parents with tarnished credit) were willing to bet that high-priced loans were a trade-off for a shot at the American dream. But high-paying jobs are proving elusive for many graduates.

“This is literally a new form of indenture ... something that every American parent should be scared of,” said Barmak Nassirian, associate executive director of the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers.

More than $177 billion in private student loans were issued last year, up from $4 billion a year in 2001. Outstanding student borrowing jumped from $33 billion in 1995 to $86 billion last year, according to experts and lawmakers.

Rocketing tuition fees made borrowing that much more appealing. Consumer prices on average rose less than 29 percent over the past 10 years while tuition, fees and room and board at four-year public colleges and universities soared 75 percent to $12,796 a year and 65 percent to $30,367 a year at private institutions, according to the College Board.

Scholarship and grant money have increased, yet for almost 15 years, the maximum available per person in government-guaranteed student loans, which by law can’t charge rates above 6.8 percent, has remained at $23,000 total for four years. That’s less than half the average four-year tuition, room and board of $51,000 at public colleges and $121,000 at private institutions.
Sallie Mae, formally known as SLM Corp., has been on the winning side of the loan bonanza. Its portfolio of 10 million customers includes $28 billion in private and $128 billion in government-backed education loans. However, private equity investors who had offered $25 billion to buy the company backed out last week, citing credit market weakness and a new law cutting billions of dollars in subsidies to student lenders.

Citigroup Inc., Bank of America Corp., JPMorgan Chase & Co., Wells Fargo & Co., Wachovia Corp. and Regions Financial Corp. are also big players in the private student loan business. And there has been an explosion in specialized student loan lenders, such as EduCap, Nelnet Inc., NextStudent Inc., Student Loan Corp., College Loan Corp., CIT Group Inc. and Education Finance Partners Inc.

The question is whether everyone who borrowed will be able to repay. Experts don't track default rates on private student loans, but many predict sharp increases in years to come.

Dr. Paul-Henry Zottola, a 35-year-old periodontist in Rocky Hill, Conn., faces paying $1,600 a month on his student loan on top of a $2,300 mortgage payment and $1,500 on the loan he took out to start his practice.

His credit record remains solid but he owes more than $300,000 in student loans as he and his wife, Heather, an elementary school administrator, raise two young children.

"It would be very easy to feel crushed by it," Zottola said in an interview. "All my income for the next 10 years is spoken for."

Complaints about marketing of private loans — like ads promising to approve loans worth $50,000 in just minutes — are on the rise. The complaints have made their way to lawmakers, who see a need to regulate the highly profitable and diverse group of companies and the loans they make to college students.

In August, the Senate Banking Committee approved a bill that would mandate clearer disclosure of rates and terms on private student loans. The bill also would require a 30-day comparison shopping period after loan approval, during which time the offer terms could not be altered.
Students 

study in Hawaii

The Daily Reflector

A ship sunk off Hawaii nearly 100 years ago is providing multiple study opportunities for more than a dozen East Carolina University students and faculty.

A group from ECU's departments of maritime studies, economics and communication spent September in Hawaii documenting a pair of iron ships from the 1800s, the now-sunken Ivanhoe and its sister ship, Falls of the Clyde. The students are getting six credit hours along with diving experience. The Maritime Studies Field School is leading the effort.

The group first studied the Clyde, housed in Honolulu, to get an above-the-water understanding of the ship and its structure. Last week they visited the site of the shipwrecked Ivanhoe on the island of Kauai.

"When they document the Ivanhoe, they'll know what they're looking at," said Nathan Richards, ECU Maritime Studies professor and project leader. "They'll see the knees of the deck, the way the stern is constructed. Part of this field school is teaching the anatomy of a ship."

The Ivanhoe was built in Glasgow, Scotland in 1868 and the circumstances of its 1915 sinking are unknown. The purpose of this field school is to begin to document what remains of the ship and to answer some of the questions surrounding the last few years of its existence.

The project is funded in part by a $40,000 grant Richards received from ECU's research development grant program.

Accompanying the maritime students are Michael McDermody, professor of communication, maritime studies professor Larry Babits, and ECU Coastal Resources Management doctoral student Calvin Mires.

McDermody is producing a documentary of the maritime program and Mires is working with ECU economics professor Craig Landry to conduct an economic study of the value people place on historical sites and monuments, such as the Clyde, which was closed recently to the public due to rust and disrepair.

Nurse manager earns top honor

A nurse manager at the Brody School of Medicine has earned the "Great 100 Nurse" award for North Carolina.

Ruth Vandiford, nurse manager for the Department of Family Medicine, has been recognized for her achievements in the field of nursing by The Great 100, a statewide grassroots peer organization. Annually the group recogniz-
Former ECU LB now making hits on big screen

By Jim Gentry
The Daily Reflector

In his time as a linebacker at East Carolina, Greg LeFever was known for his blistering hits on opponents.

But those were nowhere near as big as the tackles he's making these days. Of course, everything looks big on a movie screen.

LeFever, who played for the Pirates from 2000-01, has found a way to stay on the gridiron years after his collegiate playing days ended — as a football extra in feature films.

LeFever, who can been seen as a football player in "Invincible" and "We Are Marshall," also participated in football scenes in "The Game Plan," which opened in theaters last Friday and stars Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson.

"It's not a life of Cristal, caviar and limos for these gridiron thespians. While the stars of each movie have the stunt doubles to absorb hits, football players like LeFever didn't have that luxury.

KYRA SEDGWICK, left, and Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson, right, are shown in a scene from "The Game Plan."

To ensure a realistic look, the players don't let up when tackling.

"It's really weird because you'll strap up for like 12 hours and you're hitting all day long," LeFever said. "I separated my shoulder during 'We Are Marshall' in like the

See LeFEVER, C3

SPOTTING LEFEVER

Here's where to find LeFever in the three movies he's been in:

INVINCIBLE

"I play No. 55, (former Eagle) Frank LeMaster. You can also see me in the front when the coach is giving a speech in the locker room.

"I actually had two lines in that movie they didn't even get put in."

WE ARE MARSHALL

"I fumble the ball toward the end of one game and I had a couple of tackles. I also knocked down a pass in the ECU game.

"I'm also in the background of some of the training scenes wearing different jerseys."

THE GAME PLAN

"I'm wearing No. 56 (of the fictional New York Dukes) so hopefully you'll see me in it."
second week. They gave me a couple of days to chill to let it rest up but you have to strap it back up.

"Guys are really hitting out there."

Not that he's any stranger to hitting. After wrapping up his ECU career, LeFever spent a season playing in Tokyo before joining Montreal of the Canadian Football League in 2003. He played a season in the Arena Football League and had a couple of NFL tryouts before heading to Germany to play football last year.

But he's carved out a nice second career donning shoulder pads in front of the camera.

With the help of a recommendation from a former AFL teammate in 2005, LeFever was offered a chance to play a role in "Invincible," which starred Mark Wahlberg as Vince Papale, who made the Philadelphia Eagles during an open tryout.

Before stepping in front of the camera, the players spent weeks rehearsing the plays.

"They usually do a two-week, three-week training camp," LeFever said. "They'll go over three plays a day for two weeks so we can get the timing down. That's what the biggest thing is — timing."

When filming began, the combination of numerous takes and the physical play took its toll on the players.

"For the opening kickoff of the Dallas game, everybody had to get blown up on the Eagles' team," LeFever said. "We did it like 35, 36 times in one day. Guys had concussions, guys were throwing up. They'd get a 20-minute break and then have to go back and do it again."

"That was the worst day. It's not always like that."

After filming wrapped, LeFever flew to Los Angeles and filmed small roles for episodes of "Alias" and "Invasion" before heading to Atlanta in the spring of 2006 for "We Are Marshall."

And last October he joined Johnson, also a former collegiate player, on the set of "The Game Plan."

While he doesn't have any more acting work lined up at the moment, LeFever plans to head back west soon to try his luck again.

"I spent two months in L.A. and I'm hoping to get back out there," LeFever said. "I'm hoping to go back later this month or maybe in January. I have an agent out there.

"I just want to get out there and audition and see what I can do."

While he's worn many jerseys on the gridiron and on the big screen, there is one other role he's looking to tackle — that of an active football player again.

"I just want to play," said LeFever. "I want to go back and play before I get too old. I want to give football one more shot."

LeFever, who currently lives in Greenville and helps out at Cambridge Behavioral Health Services, works out regularly at the gym in the Murphy Center on ECU's campus in hopes of resuming his playing career.

"Coach (Danny) Wheel and Coach (Mike) Golden are great," he said. "They're the best strength and conditioning coaches out there.

"Those guys and a guy like Skip Holtz, they make it great for older guys to come back here."

Jim Gentry can be reached at (252) 329-5594 or jgentry@com.
Annual fall tax conference scheduled for Oct. 19

The College of Business at East Carolina University will offer its annual fall tax conference on Oct. 19 at Brook Valley Country Club.

The conference is designed to help tax practitioners provide up-to-date services in today's competitive environment. It is open to the ECU community as well as the general public.

College of Business faculty members Dan Schisler, chairman of the Department of Accounting, and Joey Hagan, associate professor of accounting, will provide the course instruction.

The program will also feature Derek Piszenny, president of Carolina Wealth Management, and George Jackson, a faculty member at the Walter Davis Department of Business and Economics at Elizabeth City State University.

Topics will include estate planning for small- and medium-sized clients, the role of annuities in retirement and estate planning, prudent practices for investment stewards, and a tax law update.

No prerequisites or advanced preparation is required, but attendees should possess a basic working knowledge of the Internal Revenue Code.

The cost is $135 for certified public accountants and $125 for ECU Commerce Club members. The cost includes a course book with supporting materials for review or research. Sessions are also offered individually for $35.

For more information or to register for the conference, call the ECU College of Business Office of Professional Programs at 334-6377 or visit online at http://www.ecu.edu/cs-bus/professional programs.cfm.

The College of Business at ECU was founded in 1936 and has been accredited by the AACSB since 1987. It has more than 2,500 undergraduate students, 710 graduate students and 110 faculty members.
Carolyn Davis, chairwoman of the State Employees Association of North Carolina No. 80 District, received the District of the Year Award at the annual SEANC convention in Greensboro.

Davis received the award for her work and accomplishments for the association at the local and state level this year. A Greenville native, she has been a member of the SEANC for 29 years.

In addition to local district duties, Davis was the eastern regional representative, serving as the regional resource for the 15 districts in her region as well as a host of other responsibilities outlined in the SEANC bylaws.

Linda Sutton, president of the SEANC, presented Davis an appreciation plaque for her work as the eastern region representative.

At the state level, Davis has been a member of the State Scholarship Foundation Committee, served as chairwoman of the state policy platform and training committees.

Davis has been employed by O'Berry Center for 29 years and is the educational vocational director. District 80 has nearly 900 members and consists of mostly state employees at O'Berry Center.
Security cameras installed by police

By Kathryn Kennedy
The Daily Reflector

A few cars rolled along Fifth Street this week as stoplights changed and most sidewalks stood empty.

Greenville Police Maj. Kevin Smeltzer knows that. He watched it all from the air-conditioned comfort of his Greene Street office.

Security cameras are up and running downtown, Smeltzer said Friday, and the live video is accessible to police on any computer with an Internet connection.

This includes the laptops in many officers' cars if they are equipped with wireless technology, Smeltzer said the public may gain access at a later date.

The high-tech equipment can rotate 360 degrees, move up or down and zoom in or out—a service that costs approximately $5,000 per camera, Smeltzer said.

But he emphasized the importance of surveillance during downtown's busy weekend nights and, especially, this coming Halloween.

"In the past we put people on all the roofs with video cameras," Smeltzer said of the holiday. "We may be able to bring some of those officers down and take a wider amount of video using less people."

Smeltzer said it is "near-impossible" to gather accurate data about the origin of an incident by the time officers reach a scene and the inevitable crowd has gathered.

Video will show police what happened from start to finish.

Equally important is the digital record. Officers can take snapshots during the live feed and save it to their computers as tangible evidence for use throughout investigations or during prosecution.

And it can potentially be used as last-minute crime prevention.

"We may see someone about to cause trouble and keep that from happening," Smeltzer said.

Only two cameras are stationed

See CAMERAS, B3
CAMERAS
Continued from B1

downtown: one at the corner of
Fifth and Evans streets, another
corner of Fourth
and Cotanche streets facing an
alley by Rumors nightclub.
Smeltzer said he envisions
placing six to eight cameras in
the area as funding becomes
available. Those would be fed
to a central command center
with a large plasma screen,
divided to show all footage simulta-
neously.
East Carolina University
Police have used a similar
system since 2000 and found it
helpful.
"Before the cameras in the
downtown lots, we used to
have something like six or sev-
en auto break-ins a week. Now
we're down to three or four in
a year," said ECU Police Maj.
Frank Knight.

"They're not a cure-all but
they are a big help in detecting
criminal activity and identify-
ing suspects after a crime."
After college, buried in loans

Students' debt may hurt economy

BY MARCY GORDON
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The near-doubling of the cost of a college degree in the past decade has produced an explosion of high-priced student loans that could haunt the U.S. economy for years.

Though scholarships, grants and government-backed student loans — whose interest rates are capped — have taken up some of the slack, many families and students have turned to private loans, which carry less and interest rates of up to 20 percent.

Many in the next generation of workers will be so debt-burdened they will have to delay home purchases, limit vacations, even eat out less to pay loans off on time.

Kristin Cole, 30, who graduated from Michigan State University's law school and lives in Grand Rapids, Mich., owes $150,000 in private and government-backed student loans. Her monthly payment of $660, which consumes a quarter of her take-home pay, is scheduled to jump to $800 in a year or so, confronting her with stark financial choices.

"I could never buy a house. I can't travel; I can't do anything," she said. "I feel like a prisoner."

A legal aid worker, Cole said she may need to get a job at a law
LOANS
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A

firm, "doing something that I'm not real dedicated to, just for the sake of being able to live."

Soaring tuition

Parents are still the primary source of funds for many students, but the dynamics were radically altered in recent years as tuition costs soared and sources of readily available and more costly private financing made higher education seemingly available to anyone willing to sign a loan application.

Students were willing to bet that high-priced loans were a decent trade-off for a shot at the American dream. But high-paying jobs are proving elusive for many graduates.

"This is literally a new form of indenture ... something that every American parent should be scared of," said Barmak Nassirian, associate executive director of the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers.

More than $17 billion in private student loans were issued last year, up from $4 billion a year in 2001. Outstanding student borrowing jumped from $38 billion in 1995 to $85 billion last year, according to experts and lawmakers.

Rocketing tuition fees have made private borrowing that much more appealing. For almost 15 years, the maximum available per person in government-guaranteed student loans, which by law can't charge rates above 6.8 percent, has remained at $23,000 total for four years. That's less than half the average four-year tuition, room and board, which is $51,000 at public colleges and $127,000 at private institutions.

The question is whether everyone who borrowed will be able to repay. Experts don't track default rates on private student loans, but many predict sharp increases in years to come.

Crash ahead?

Critics say what happened in the mortgage market could happen in the student loan market. New York Attorney General Andrew Cuomo, who conducted a nationwide investigation, said the parallels between the two markets are "provocative."

Demand for bundled student loans sold to institutional investors worldwide fueled lending to students. The market for private student loan-backed securities leapt 76 percent last year, to $16.6 billion, from $9.4 billion in 2005, according to Moody's Investors Service.

The student loan-backed securities market has yet to suffer noticeable effects of a global credit squeeze that was triggered this summer by a mortgage meltdown of borrowers with risky credit.

But "once the economy starts to slow, you're going to see a large increase of these people in bankruptcy court," said Robert Manning, a professor at Rochester Institute of Technology who has written about college students and credit cards.

And a 2005 change to bankruptcy law means lenders can garnish wages if someone doesn't pay.

"Should private student loans suffer the same sort of failure as (subprime) mortgages, as students graduate or drop out and find themselves unable to pay, we will do serious damage not only to the lives of many students but also to the economic and social fabric of our country that depends on college graduates for its strength," said Luke Swarbrook at the U.S. Public Interest Research Group.
Laser eye surgery leaves thousands with problems

Of millions of patients, more than a few have serious, lasting complications

BY SARAH VOLLMER
STAFF WRITER

Millions of Americans have undergone laser eye surgery to correct bad vision, and along with the procedure's popularity something else is coming into focus: its hazards.

Advertising stresses the surgery's safety, and most procedures are successful. Tiger Woods, who relies on keen eyesight as the world's best golfer, pitches it as a quick and painless way to restore sharp vision. Even the U.S. Air Force, long skeptical of the surgery, changed its policy in May to let people who had LASIK apply for pilot training.

But every year thousands of Americans who undergo LASIK are left with chronic pain, dryness of the eyes, distorted night vision and even blindness, according to Food and Drug Administration statistics.

LASIK — which stands for laser-assisted in situ keratomileusis — uses lasers to cut and reshape the cornea. It can improve eyesight without complications, but equipment flaws, a surgeon's error or a failure to screen out patients whose eyes are unsuited for the treatment can cause the operation to go awry.

The American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery, which represents about 9,000 ophthalmologists specializing in laser eye surgery, estimates that only 2 percent to 3 percent of the more than 1 million LASIK surgeries each year are unsuccessful. But Food and Drug Administration records of clinical studies show that six months after the surgery, up to 28 percent of patients complained of eye dryness, up to 16 percent had blurry vision and up to 18 percent had difficulty driving at night.

The Triangle, home to two medical schools, is a hot spot for LASIK; 11 eye centers will perform LASIK on about 8,000 patients this year, according to market research.

One of the leaders is Duke Eye Center, whose LASIK surgeons are among the best-trained and best-equipped in the field. But even surgery at Duke's level has damaged a few patients' eyes beyond repair.

One of those patients is Matthew Kotsovolos, 38, of Raleigh. He was the Duke Eye Center's head of finances and received the surgery for free June 8, 2006. It gave him 20/20 vision but left him with intensely dry eyes and excruciating facial pain. He wakes up with sore eyes every morning, wears special goggles to preserve eye moisture and worries when the pain in his face will kick in.

"I traded in my glasses for permanent head pain, eye pain and these things," Kotsovolos said, pointing to the goggles.

Nine months after his surgery, Kotsovolos quit his job at the Duke Eye Center, took a 25 percent pay cut and started work as business manager in the Duke University Medical Center's gastroenterology division. He is organizing a support group for LASIK patients with complications.

"It may help inform people that this is a surgery with real risks that are understated by LASIK surgeons," Kotsovolos said.

Alan Carlson, head of the Duke Eye Center, said his experience with LASIK is that complications are rare. Carlson, who did not operate on Kotsovolos, said only a handful of the roughly 6,000 LASIK patients he has treated at Duke since 1998 ended up with problems. The eye center does very well in

SEE LASIK, PAGE 8A
LASIK
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A

patient satisfaction surveys, he said.

But Carlson acknowledged that the procedure can cause serious complications.

"It's imperfect surgery in an imperfect world," he said.

How many LASIK patients develop post-surgery complications is obscured by a lack of regulation and reporting. Because health insurers don't pay for LASIK, they generally don't track complications. The FDA doesn't require reports from doctors, and regulatory enforcement has been largely limited to re-calling malfunctioning lasers.

Post-LASIK lenses

Evidence of problems is accumulating. Some of the strongest is the growing market for contact lenses designed for people who have undergone LASIK and still have vision problems, some seeing worse than before the surgery. One of the leading post-LASIK lens makers is Medilens Innovations, a Front Royal, Va., company founded in 2000.

Robert Breeze, an optometrist and Medilens' president, said his company provides hard contacts to more than 2,500 post-LASIK patients annually and business is increasing about 10 percent every year. Breeze said his company serves more than 200 people per year who have been seriously disabled by the surgery.

"I don't get to talk to happy LASIK patients," he said.

By the end of the year, Synerg-Eyes of Carlsbad, Calif., plans to bring to market the first line of contact lenses designed specially for laser eye surgery patients with complications who cannot tolerate hard lenses.

A trial version of the Synerg-Eyes contact lenses have given Paula Cofer, 49, of Tampa, Fla., some relief from dry, itchy eyes and night vision so distorted that she sees up to eight moons.

The specially fitted contacts cost $300 every six months, Cofer said. Contact lenses solution, sterile saline solution, artificial tears and lenses rewetting drops run another $150 to $160 per month.

"Life was very simple then," she said about the 30 years she wore glasses. "Now, it's very complicated."

Limitations of LASIK

Patients with complications are starting to fight back on the Internet and through support groups. Medical research in the past three years has come up with insights about LASIK worrisome enough that some eye surgeons have begun to ease away from the procedure.

"We've learned the limitations of LASIK," said Dr. Stephen Pfuegfeider, professor of ophthalmology at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston.

An expert in laser eye surgery for more than 15 years, Pfuegfeider is increasingly falling back on an older, less invasive procedure known as photorefractive keratectomy, or PRK, which involves only the surface of the eye.

In the past three years, the number of LASIK procedures at Baylor has dropped from about 70 percent to about 50 percent of all laser eye surgeries.

At Duke, LASIK makes up about 80 percent of all laser eye surgeries. Carlson, head of the Duke Eye Center, is comfortable with that.

"Dry eye hasn't been a big problem," he said.

The university buys the most sophisticated lasers on the market, he said. Patients are screened for risk factors and informed of what they can and cannot expect from LASIK. A surgeon might even do the surgery on one eye at a time.

Those precautions did not prevent Laurannell Burch, a former Duke medical researcher, from suffering a serious complication after undergoing LASIK at the Duke Eye Center.

Burch, 47, said that since the surgery March 31, 2004, her eyes sting and burn all the time, her eye tissue is wrinkled like a Ruffles potato chip and her night vision is distorted.

"[The damage] is noticeable and on the front of your mind all your waking hours," Burch said. "There's no escape."

In the winter, she takes an anti-anxiety pill about 15 minutes before she drives home in
Duke leader apologizes in lacrosse case

President Brodhead says the university should have given falsely accused players more support.

BY JANE STANCELL
AND ANNE BLYTHE
STAFF WRITERS

DURHAM — Duke University President Richard Brodhead apologized Saturday for the school’s lack of full support for the three lacrosse players falsely accused last year of raping an escort service dancer.

It was Brodhead’s first public apology for the university’s handling of the case, which drew worldwide media attention.

Brodhead said his own biggest regret was “our failure to reach out to the lacrosse players and their families in this time of extraordinary peril. Given the complexities of this case, getting the communication right would never have been easy. But the fact is that we did not get it right, causing the families to feel abandoned when they were most in need of support. This was a mistake. I take responsibility for it, and I apologize.”

He added that some faculty made statements that were “illjudged and divisive” and Duke should have done more to underscore that these were the beliefs of individuals, not the university as a whole.

And, he said, by deferring to the criminal justice system and “not repeating the need for the pre-

SEE BRODHEAD, PAGE 8A
BROДHEAD
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A

supposition of innocence equally vigorously at all key moments, we
may have helped create the impression that the university did not
care about its students. This was not the case, and I regret it as well.”

Brodhead, who did not take questions, made his remarks during a
speech at the Duke Law School. He was there as part of a
two-day conference focused on the lacrosse case and how it was
reported by the media.

“If there’s one lesson the world
should take from the Duke lacrosse case,” Brodhead said, “it’s the
danger of pre-judgment and our need to defend against it at
every turn.”

His short speech was greeted
with a standing ovation by many in the crowd. It is not clear
whether the apology will appease
Brodhead’s critics, including alumni, players’ families and blog-
gers, who for months have at-
tacked the administration’s han-
dling of the situation.

Too late?

Jay Bilas, an ESPN sports com-
mentator who played basketball at
Duke, said the apology was ap-
propriate but “woefully late.” In
June, Bilas wrote a letter to the
Duke alumni magazine suggesting
that Brodhead was not an ap-
propriate leader, but the letter was
not published until this week, when it was posted online.

“The confidence in his ability to
lead has been eroded,” Bilas said
Saturday. “While Dick Brodhead is
a terrific person and would make a
wonderful head of the English de-
partment, he has demonstrated his
ineffectiveness and his inability to
lead, especially in a crisis.”

A seven-member committee of
trustees and professors is con-
ducting a regularly scheduled re-
view of Brodhead’s first three
years as Duke president. The
panel will give its evaluation to the
full board of trustees by the end of
the year.

Jack MacMillan, an Iron Duke
athletics booster from Hickory,
said the apology would help Brod-
head weather the storm. “Any-
thing he says will help the matter,”
said MacMillan, 71. “The admin-
istration just folded up like an ac-
cordion when that case hap-

ened.”

Duke law professor James Cole-
man said in looking back on the
case, it is important to recognize
that events were tied together.
“None of this stuff happened in a
vacuum,” he said. “What Duke
did affected what others did.”

Emily Rotberg, a 2007 Duke
graduate and former student jour-
nalist, said critics of the univer-
sity’s early response are usually
“ignoring the context of complete
confusion.”

Early reticence

Brodhead said he was initially
concerned that if Duke spoke out
too forcefully it might have ap-
ppeared that “a well-connected
institution was improperly at-
tempting to influence the judicial
process.”

But he added, “Even with all
that, Duke needed to be clear that
it demanded fair treatment for its
students. I took that completely
for granted. If any doubted it, then
I should have been more explicit,
especially as the evidence
mounted that the prosecutor was
not acting in accordance with the
standards of his profession.”

In his remarks, the president
announced that Duke would host
a national conference of college
student affairs administrators to
discuss procedures for handling
students who get charged with
crimes.

After the dancer claimed she
was assaulted at a lacrosse team
party March 13, 2006, Brodhead
forced the resignation of the
lacrosse coach and canceled the
Duke lacrosse season. All charges
against the players — David
Evans, Reade Seligmann and
Callin Finnering — were eventu-
ally dropped. Attorney General
Roy Cooper declared the players
innocent and Mike Nifong, the
Durham district attorney who
brought the case, was disbarred.
Evans graduated in 2006, and
Seligmann and Finnering trans-
ferred to other schools.

Brodhead said he hoped that
someday the case would be for-
gotten. “But if it is remembered,”
he said, “let’s hope that it is re-
membered the right way; as a call
to caution in a world where cer-
tainty and judgment come much
too fast.”

jane.stancill@newsobserver.com
or (919) 956-2464
Too hard-fought

The chancellors of N.C. A&T State University and N.C. Central University have responded properly to the midfield brawl that marred the end of last Saturday’s football game. They made it clear that the fight was wrong and that future ones won’t be tolerated.

One might question why it took A&T’s Stanley F. Battle and NCCU’s Charlie Nelms until Wednesday to respond to the fracas, but it was an understandable delay. The two are relatively new to their posts. And questions remain unanswered about the fight, which broke out after visiting NCCU of Durham won a close game against its Greensboro archrival.

Reports say that NCCU players gathered on the A&T logo at the center of the field and began jumping up and down on it in a disrespectful show of gloating. On came a rush of A&T players. Did some NCCU coaches instigate the display, as has been suggested? And just how serious was the fight? No injuries were reported, although some players were affected when a security officer used pepper spray.

The immediate response from the A&T side was to say the next football game between the two schools would be called off. But the apologies by Battle and Nelms at a joint news conference, and their resolve to prevent further such incidents, ought to be good for a reprieve. This rivalry dates to 1924, and if good sportsmanship can hold sway, keeping the series going would be worthwhile.

Meanwhile, a player from each school has been suspended for a game, and an investigation continues. If it’s found that coaches helped start the fight, serious discipline is in order for leaders who should know better.
NELMS CHALLENGES NCCU TO AIM HIGHER

Graduation, customer service, litter get chancellor’s focus

By Eric Ferreri
Staff Writer

Durham — N.C. Central University’s new chancellor asked a lot of his constituents Friday. He wants students to amp up their academic expectations considerably. He wants faculty and staff to call people back when they leave a message.

And everyone should pick up litter, lest they become too accustomed to living and working on a sloppy campus.

These were among the demands Charlie Nelms laid out for the NCCU community during his first university-wide address. They come from his initial observations after two months as the institution’s leader.

In a 25-minute address, Nelms said he wants NCCU to become the top liberal arts college in the Southeast — a lofty goal for an institution struggling to retain students. Nelms’ arrival has coincided with a new push by the UNC system to improve retention and graduation rates at the state’s public universities. Nelms told students Friday he expects all students who enroll to graduate.

“Unless you have graduation as your destination, you shouldn’t be here,” Nelms said. “We’re deceiving ourselves if we settle for less than that.”

UNC system campuses measure graduation rates over six-year spans. At NCCU, just 49.3 percent of students who enrolled in 2000 graduated within six years; the system average was 59.3 percent.

Nelms’ message resonated with DaVarres Alexander, a senior from Charlotte.

“I definitely think it’s important and needed here,” Alexander said of the chancellor’s push for better performance. “By raising the expectations for students, you will reap the benefits on the other end.”

U.S. News & World Report released its first ranking of the nation’s top historically black colleges this week. NCCU placed 16th out of 70, in a three-way tie with Bennett College and Elizabeth City State University.

Nelms spent a good deal of time Friday talking about customer service — the very basic answering of phones and returning of messages that students expect but don’t always get. Everyone on campus, he said, needs a “new attitude” in terms of service and courtesy.

“If you get a call from a student, return the call to the student,” he said, eliciting one of the largest rounds of applause all morning.

To that end, all NCCU employees — starting with administrators — will undergo service training provided by the university’s human resources department, Nelms announced.

Nelms has apparently also been frustrated by litter on campus. He challenged everyone who lives or works on campus to adopt the block around their dorm or place of work, a commitment to help clean things up.

“We won’t leave newspapers on the floors of our classroom just because you didn’t put it there,” he said. “Appearance does matter.”

That particular lesson may take awhile to sink in. As the McLendon-McDougal Gymnasium emptied after Nelms’ address Friday, attendees left plenty of convocation programs — and a few soda bottles and the like — scattered on chairs or on the ground.

eric.ferreri@newsobserver.com
or (919) 956-2415