THE DAILY CLIPS

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ECU's Carson retires after 40 seasons

- Men's track and field coach announces his retirement after officials discover two secondary NCAA violations.

The Daily Reflector

Bill Carson, who spent the last 40 years as the men's track and field head coach at East Carolina, announced his retirement Wednesday after officials in the ECU athletics department found and self-reported two secondary NCAA violations.

According to a release from the university, the secondary violations include "a failure to adhere to university policies and procedures mandated by the NCAA regarding the filing of documentation forms and a subsequent lack of disclosure."

"While there was no recruiting or competitive advantage involved with these violations, I failed to handle the administrative end of this position," Carson said. "I didn't modernize and keep up with the paperwork in recent years. It's my fault and it falls on my shoulders. There certainly wasn't any cheating or anything like that.

See CARSON, C4

BILL CARSON has retired after 40 years as a track coach at ECU.

CARSON'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Coached four athletes to CAA Rookie of the Year honors and two CAA Athletes of the Year.
- Led the Pirates to three consecutive Southern Conference titles in the 1970s.
- Served as an assistant coach for the United States Junior Olympic team that attended the World Junior Championships in Italy in 2004.
- Named the NCAA District III Coach of the Year in 1988 and Southeast Region Coach of the Year in 2002.

— ECU Media Relations
CARSON

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which would jeopardize the integrity of East Carolina University, our program and collegiate track and field.

"I admit to the violations and those are self-reported. There were no recruiting violations, no enticements or anything like that but, nevertheless, we don't want any marks against us that would hurt these kids who currently are in or have been a part of our program over the years."

Often when universities self-report violations to the NCAA and a coach voluntarily steps down, further penalties from the NCAA are avoided.

According to an ECU source, the university will assist both the NCAA and Conference USA in completing the investigation into the matter, and will file a report with the NCAA at a later time.

ECU Director of Athletics Terry Holland also announced that Curt Kraft, who currently serves as ECU's head women's track coach, would assume oversight of the men's program for the remainder of the 2007-08 season.

Carson, 70, has been head coach of the program at ECU since 1967.

During his tenure, the Pirates advanced at least one athlete to the NCAA national championships in 18 of the last 19 years.

Carson also has coached 70 All-American selections and had 40 champions in individual events at the IC4A, Colonial Athletic Association or Conference USA championships.

Carson was named the NCAA District III Coach of the Year in 1988 and Southeast Region Coach of the Year in 2002. Among Carson's accomplishments, he was named president of the IC4A in 1999, was named as head coach of the South team at the 1993 United States Olympic Festival and served as the Broad Event Chairman for Sprint Development for USA Track and Field from 1991-97.

He coached four CAA Rookies of the Year and two CAA Athletes of the Year.

In addition, his Pirate teams won three consecutive Southern Conference titles in the 1970s.

Included in his list of prominent athletes is Lee McNeill, who was a five-time All-American at East Carolina before representing the United States at the 1988 Olympics in Seoul, South Korea. McNeill competed on the 4x100-meter relay team.

Carson served as an assistant coach for the United States Junior Olympic team that attended the World Junior Championships in Italy in 2004.

He served as the team's sprint coach and directed two relay teams to world records and a total of 12 gold medals.

"Coach Carson is a legend in the East Carolina University athletics department and will continue to be a friend, fan and ambassador for us, on both a personal and professional level," Holland said. "We wish him the best in his well-earned retirement and count on seeing Coach and Mrs. Coach (Ruth Ann) at athletic and other campus events for many years to come. He has certainly earned the recognition of the track community, both nationally and internationally."

"Coach Carson and ECU Athletics are committed to NCAA rules compliance and to responding immediately to violations, even those classified as secondary violations."
ECU student leaves UNC leadership post

By Jimmy Ryals
The Daily Reflector

An East Carolina University student has given up his post as leader of the University of North Carolina system student body.

Marques Cole Jones, an ECU graduate student, resigned Monday as president of the Association of Student Governments.

Jones' resignation followed controversy over his conviction on criminal charges.

On Aug. 1, Jones was found guilty of misdemeanor assault with a deadly weapon in Craven County. He was acquitted on two other charges, assaulting a female and breaking and entering. Jones has appealed the conviction to the Craven County Superior Court.

The charges resulted from a Feb. 14 altercation in Havelock allegedly involving Jones, the mother of his son and her mother.

"If my situation was resolved, I would not be resigning," Jones said Wednesday. "But I have to give a lot of attention to my situation and also provide comfort to my family. It has been a difficult time for us all."

Jones maintains his innocence. His appeal is due to be heard Tuesday.

"I'm not concerned about the outcome," he said. "I'm just ready for it to happen. I'm 100-percent confident that it will be resolved and I'll be proven innocent."

Jones announced Sept. 26 he would leave the president's position, according to The Daily Tar Heel, the student newspaper at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He was to exit by Oct. 6.

At an Association of Student Governments meeting in Pembroke last weekend, he declined to resign, saying he needed time to form an exit strategy, the paper reported.

Jones disputed the account published in the UNC-CH newspaper. He said his resignation, as announced at the Sept. 26 meeting with UNC system student body presidents, was contingent on completing an exit strategy. Jones said he wasn't able to meet with the other presidents and his cabinet before the Oct. 5 and 6 meeting in Pembroke, making it impossible to plan.

For the last two years, Jones was student body president at ECU and a member of the ECU Board of Trustees. He was elected Association of Student Governments president in April. Association Senior Vice President Cody Graspy will replace Jones, said Kemal Atkins, director of student and academic affairs for the UNC system.

Jimmy Ryals can be contacted at jryals@coxnc.com and 329-9563.
Our Views

Direct, open

East Carolina responds well to incident

East Carolina University officials acted with appropriate concern and restraint at news that a possible noose was discovered in the basement of Belk Residence Hall last month. They treated the matter with the necessary seriousness and made sure it was properly investigated.

However, the university is also right to use this episode as an opportunity for an open dialogue about diversity and tolerance at East Carolina. By being open to concerned groups, confronting the matter directly and advocating for greater understanding, the school can make sure this incident has a positive outcome.

When a student reported last month about finding a possible noose in Belk Residence Hall, the university acted promptly. East Carolina police officers spent more than 100 hours on the case before deciding the length of rope was not conclusively a noose. Administrators offered their assessment in a frank manner, clearly attuned to the racial overtones were such an item found.

Coming on the heels of the worrisome case in Jena, La., East Carolina officials were justified in their concern. There, nooses were placed in a tree on a high school campus as an unmistakable symbol of racial intimidation. The situation escalated to involve physical confrontations between students of different races. The involvement of the criminal justice system — in this case pressing overly harsh charges against black juvenile defendants — prompted outrage and a reminder that prejudice still finds safe harbor in this nation.

At East Carolina, the situation is starkly different. There is no firm evidence the rope found by a student was, in fact, a noose. There is no indication that the rope was intended as a threat, racial or otherwise. And the university administration has addressed the matter in an open and even-handed manner, which was needed.

Greenville does not have an exemplary record on race relations, and a recent debate over how best to honor the memory of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. resulted in greater division rather than a more united community. Still, the vast majority of citizens live and work without attention to race or culture, and the city has done well to embrace projects and initiatives that celebrate the community’s diversity.

Central to those efforts is East Carolina. The university stands at the heart of the city, and its commitment to support diversity and to prove itself a leader in tolerance and understanding has a powerful impact on the community it calls home. That approach should be recognized and celebrated.

When an issue like this emerges, that record is crucial in adding credibility to the school’s response. But the administration’s actions are still vitally important, and it has done well to confront fears, soothe concerns and open the lines of dialogue.
Piano concert

East Carolina University's S. Rudolph Alexander Performing Arts Series presents pianist Olga Kern in concert at 7:30 p.m. today at Wright Auditorium.

Kern won the gold medal in the 11th Van Cliburn International Piano Competition in 2001. She made her first appearance in Greenville during the 2002-03 SRAPAS season. On tonight's program are works by Liszt, Rachmaninoff, Chopin and Scarlatti.

Tickets are $10-$32. Call 328-4788 or visit www.ecuarts.com.
‘Big time’ French at UNC-Chapel Hill

News item: Major university sports programs and booster clubs in the U.S. of A. last year raised $1.2 billion, according to the Chronicle of Higher Education. And in this area at least, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill can boast, we're Number One. Yes, the total over yonder on Highway 54 was $51 million.

Athletics Director Dick Baddour reported to the university's Faculty Council recently that the $51 million figure wasn't cash he hauled directly to the bank, that it involves wills and all that, and that the figure wasn't perhaps what it seemed. In addition, to add a little perspective, the total raised for athletics is indeed a fraction of what the university puts together for academics. And Baddour noted that money had to be raised for everything from facilities in several sports to the contracts for basketball coach Roy Williams and the relatively new guy in town, Butch Davis, a fellow charged with rescuing the football program so that it can regularly whip up on Notre Dame. (Truth is, this year the Fighting Irish might be at risk from St. Mary's, but that's another story.)

Anyway, it may be that a few faculty members are worried about the university's image being tied to a top ranking in athletics fundraising. Is that really, you know, something of which to be proud?

Absolutely, we say. In fact, after decades of hand-wringing about the escalation of athletics, the occasion of the university's top ranking in this particular category is reason for the academic crowd to adopt the clearly successful fundraising strategies of the booster club. Maybe the academic side has tried to be too dignified. Let's have the folks from Arts and Sciences and what-all try to appeal to the same emotion that drives sports fundraising.

For example, the sports folks hitched a lot of fundraising to landing expensive coaches (men's basketball and football head coaches get about $2 million a year apiece) who could lead the Tar Heels to the promised land of championships. And they talked about the need for palaces for competition, which may mean putting millions more into football facilities, for example. They cautioned that if contributors didn't come across, the athletics program might slip into decline, and a not-so-secret memo detailed the gravity of the situation:

"In our view," it said, "the world faces many potential crises, in this order: war, flood, famine, Heels go 5-7. We gotta get Butch."

In any case, let's see how we might apply the athletics fundraising strategy to, say, hiring someone for Romance languages:

"The Arts and Sciences division at the university acknowledged today that it is pursuing Pierre C'est La Vie, the noted scholar, to head a division of its French curricula. Toward that end, the university will begin a fundraising campaign to raise an endowment that would cover $3 million a year for C'est La Vie's salary and benefits package. In addition, the university says it will seek from French boosters an additional $125 million to build a replica of the Eiffel Tower on the campus main quad. The replica will include sightseeing stations, tours, a virtual view of Paris and a Starbucks."

"Officials explained that to hire a scholar of C'est La Vie's stature, the university must be prepared to compete with campuses all over the country. 'We heard,' said one official, 'that Michigan offered fresh pastries every morning and said it would build him a chateau stocked with the finest French wines.'

Chapel Hill officials, in responding to this offer, called in experts from the muscadine vineyards throughout North Carolina to see how they might compete.

"One high-ranking university official defended the expensive pursuit of C'est La Vie, saying, 'Look, this man is French, for goodness sakes! Do you know how prestigious that would be? And he's said to be an expert on conjugation and punctuation and enunciation and two or three other 'ations. Naturally, when you go after someone like this, you have to be expected to pay top dollar. There is a fairly well-substantiated rumor that he is a distant cousin of Victor Hugo.'"

"In short, the university believes that the hiring of Professor C'est La Vie is crucial if we are to keep our French department in the top tier of higher education. If we want to stay 'big time' in Romance languages, we simply have to go after people of this caliber. It is, as the athletics department people put it, absolutely necessary if the university is going to compete in this area."

Next up, we hear, the hiring of a historian with authority in the area of 19th century Texas. The big fundraising challenge — matching other offers for the Alamo.

Deputy editorial page editor Jim Jenkins can be reached at 829-4513 or at jenkins@newsobserver.com.
Ideas abound for state colleges

A wish list takes shape at forum

BY JANE STANCILL
STAFF WRITER

RALEIGH — The University of North Carolina Tomorrow Commission made a stop Wednesday at N.C. State University, where it hosted one of several regional forums to hear ideas on what the public wants from the state's university campuses.

UNC President Erskine Bowles and the Board of Governors established the commission with the aim of making the UNC system more responsive to the needs of the state and a changing economy.

Many of the ideas were proposed by business and community leaders.

UNC Board Chairman Jim Phillips said some common themes have emerged at the regional meetings, such as the need for more teachers and nurses, as well as a well-prepared workforce.

"You hear consistencies, but you hear real differences based on where you are, which confirm the urban-rural, two North Carolinas theme," Phillips said. "If you go to the rural areas, the concerns are very fundamental: How do we access the opportunities the university provides?"

The commission's report on the state's needs is due by the end of the year.

University leaders will come up with a response plan in the spring.

Among the ideas expressed Wednesday:

Train more teachers

- "I would suggest we take a very close look at the schools of education." — Howard Lee, chairman of the State Board of Education.
- "This is not simply a school of education problem. This is a math and science department problem at universities." — John Dorman, president of the Public School Forum of North Carolina, who suggested a broad, campus-wide recruiting program such as Teach for America.

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Control costs

- "At N.C. State, there have been proposals for a hotel, a golf course, and other totally unnecessary items. Hotels, golf courses, sports teams and on-campus concerts do not educate students. Maybe some alumni want the university to market prestige, but I simply want a degree from State to mean that I received a quality education." — NCSU graduate and UNC-Chapel Hill doctoral student Jenna Robinson.

Prepare students for a world economy


Create more industry-university partnerships

- "What we have here on [NCSU's] Centennial Campus is something that is the envy not only of people in this country but all over the world." — Tom Rabon, executive with Red Hat.

Reach out to rural North Carolinians

- "We need satellite campuses in some of our rural downtowns." — Andrea Harris, president of the N.C. Institute of Minority Economic Development.