THE DAILY CLIPS

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Pirate fans want to see, hear the calls

This letter is written on behalf of the nearly 130,000 faithful East Carolina University Pirate fans that have attended our three exciting home games this season. Our team has played their hearts out and we are certainly proud to be Pirates.

That being said, I have two major concerns with the audio/video production of our home games this season. The first one regards the microphone worn by the referee used to explain the calls on the field. This microphone has not function properly all season long. It is frustrating, to say the least, as a concerned Pirate fan when we cannot hear the referee on the field addressing the booth and the fans. One would think a university with our resources could repair and test this microphone once and for all.

The second issue is the unwillingness to show controversial replays. It seems that Big Brother at ECU thinks that our fans cannot handle seeing a referee make an error. Or is it that someone thinks we are not smart enough to see a good call for ourselves? No matter which it is, the fans helped pay for that screen and we deserve to see reviews on it. ECU football is a first-class program, with a first-class athletic director, coaches, players and fans. Please allow us the opportunity to view the play and make our own determination as to how good or bad the call on the field was.

Thank you Coach Holtz, coaching staff, players and administrators for providing a top-notch football program. Again, on behalf of the entire Pirate nation in attendance at our remaining home games, I thank you for your consideration regarding these matters. As always, go Pirates!

ANDY TRUELL
Greenville
Efficiency tour encourages ‘greener’ homes

By Kathryn Kennedy
The Daily Reflector

Improving a home’s energy efficiency can be as simple as changing a light bulb or as labor-intensive as replacing insulation.

East Carolina University faculty member Robert Chin just bought 1,400 square feet of the fluffy stuff for his own attic. As an organizer of Saturday’s Greenville Area Green Building and Energy Efficiency Tour, he’ll urge others to do the same.

The second annual tour runs statewide this weekend, flooding Greenville with information, resources provided by Greenville Utilities Commission and an on-site example of an E-300 house in the Heritage at Paramount community. E-300 is a designation awarded by Greenville Utilities based on a structure’s overall energy efficiency potential and low heat loss.

Chin said the E-300 model home, 4006 Cindi Lane, features Energy Star windows, appropriately sized insulation, efficient heat and air conditioning systems and proper caulking and sealing. Gaps around a house yield higher heat and air conditioning costs, Chin said.

But the benefits of an energy efficient home aren’t just easier on the checkbook. They’re easier on the environment, too.

“Something has to be used to produce electricity, usually coal, sometimes nuclear,” Chin said. “The more electricity we consume, the more particulates go into the atmosphere.”

The tours start at 4008 Cindi Lane
Future UNC students may need higher GPA, SAT

BY JANE STANCILL AND ERIC FERRERI
STAFF WRITERS

CHAPEL HILL — The UNC system wants to raise minimum admissions standards to a 2.0 grade point average and 700 SAT score for all students enrolling in fall 2009.

The requirements could be ratcheted up to a 2.5 GPA and 800 on the SAT by 2013 under proposals debated Thursday by the UNC Board of Governors.

UNC officials said new standards would affect mainly six campuses: Elizabeth City State, Fayetteville State, N.C. A&T State, N.C. Central and Winston-Salem State universities, and UNC-Pembroke. Each of the schools was founded to serve minority students who didn't have options for higher education.

The proposals grew out of goals for improving graduation rates at all UNC campuses. The idea is to prevent dropouts by admitting only students who are prepared to succeed at a four-year college.

Higher standards could mean that more students are denied admission to a UNC campus and would have to pursue education at community colleges, said UNC President Erskine Bowles.

"Higher admission standards, we think, are a plus for the university and a plus for the kids," Bowles said.

Each campus would be allowed to waive the requirements for 1 percent of students under the plan, which is expected

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to come to a vote of the UNC board in January.

The effects

There would be little practical effect of the 2.0 GPA and 700 SAT standard, according to UNC data. Of nearly 30,000 freshmen last fall across the UNC system, only 35 students had lower grades and scores.

If the bar is raised to a 2.5 GPA and 800 on the SAT, then more students would be excluded. Last year, nearly 675 students would not have met those standards.

Eric Sparks, director of school counseling for Wake County schools, said new minimum requirements might lead middle schools to stress more heavily to their students the importance of academic achievement.

"It would be really important that eighth-graders know what a GPA is, know what an SAT test is, and are really prepared for the first semester of high school so they're not digging themselves out of a hole," Sparks said.

For many high school students, the real effect of the new standards would be minimal, said Elizabeth Gordon, chairwoman of the guidance department at Durham's Jordan High School, where students in 2005-2006 averaged 1084 on the SAT.

"I would think most public high schools are trying to aim their kids beyond that," Gordon said of the proposed standards. "Right now, most kids looking to go to a four-year college are looking beyond having a 2.5 and an 800 SAT."

NCCU's plans

In Durham, NCCU Chancellor Charlie Nelms made higher admissions standards an issue as soon as he arrived two months ago. Trustees at that institution approved a plan last month to increase the minimum GPA next fall to 2.3 for in-state students and 2.5 for out-of-state students, while increasing the minimum SAT score to 720.

But in an interview last week, Nelms cautioned that minimum standards should not be viewed as acceptable.

"We want to guard against the minimum becoming the optimum," he said. "Just because you have the minimum requirement doesn't mean you're competitive."

Nelms and others stressed the importance of pre-college preparation, and Nelms said he wants to recruit a higher level of student to NCCU. He will do so in part, he said, by luring area community college students, who bring maturity and two years of college-level study with them.

But improvements also must come at the K-12 level, Nelms said, pointing out that students who could face the 800 SAT minimum in 2013 are in middle school now. Universities, he said, need stronger relationships with feeder school systems and must be clear about the new expectations.

NCCU's enrollment has grown 50 percent over the past six years, but the university has struggled to retain many of those students. About 30 percent who enrolled in fall 2005 did not return for their sophomore year. That is close to the national average, though a bit worse than the average for the UNC system, which includes NCCU.

Universities measure graduation rates in six-year spans. According to UNC system data, 49 percent of NCCU students who enrolled in 2000 graduated within six years. The systemwide average was 59 percent.

"Got in ... flunked out"

Bowies said universities don't do any favors for students by admitting them if they aren't academically prepared.

He pointed to N.C. A&T State University, which grew its student body by 43 percent from 2000 to 2006. It has the lowest admissions standards in the system, he said, and only 38 percent graduate within six years.

"They all got in, they got no support, and they flunked out," Bowies said.

UNC officials say high school grades are a better predictor of college success than SAT scores. Among UNC system freshmen who enrolled in three years from 1998 to 2000, 70 percent of those with a 3.0 or better GPA graduated within six years, compared with just 29 percent of those who had 2.0 in high school.

Ironically, those with 1.9 or lower graduated at a better rate — nearly 37 percent. Many of those are athletes who get extensive tutoring, UNC officials said.

"It's a shame we can't give everyone else the same support as the athletes," said Hannah Gage, a board member from Wilmington.
BRIEFS
FROM STAFF REPORTS

WAKE COUNTY

Teen's death may be mystery for weeks

WILMINGTON — It could be weeks before authorities know for sure how a Cary teenager died in his dorm room at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington.

The Office of the State Medical Examiner will perform a toxicology test on William David Sword, said John Almeida, regional pathologist for the state medical examiner's office. The tests typically take weeks or months to complete.

Sword, 18, was found unconscious by his roommate in their sixth-floor room in Galloway Hall on UNCW's campus, according to a news release Wednesday.
Renowned anthropologist speaks at ECU

By Jimmy Ryals
The Daily Reflector

We’re all Africans.
 Americans, Bosnians, Colombians, Yemenis — we all crawled from the same cradle. That was the message famed anthropologist Richard Leakey brought to a group of 15 East Carolina University students and faculty members Thursday morning.

“We are an African species that has gone around the world,” Leakey said. “There is no question about that.”

Leakey, a professor at New York’s Stony Brook University, has unearthed more than 200 fossils tracing the origins of the human race.

His most famous find — a nearly complete, 1.6-million-year-old skeleton dubbed “Turkana Boy” — is a bedrock of the fossil record arguing that humanity began in Africa. Leakey found the skeleton near Lake Turkana in Kenya, the site of much of his work.

The son of famed archaeologists Louis and Mary Leakey, Richard Leakey is a former head of Kenya’s national wildlife department.

During an hour-long conversation Thursday morning with faculty and students, Leakey touched on a wide range of topics, including ongoing debate about missing evolutionary links, selling African nations on the importance of protecting primate populations and promoting conservation in some of the poorest places on Earth.

The question of conservation drew specific interest from his audience and pointed to the range of understanding required to grapple with life in undeveloped countries.

When a professor asked Leakey whether solar-powered stoves might be an energy-efficient cooking option for Kenyans, he responded with a list of points outlining why it might be impractical.

- Most Kenyans spend their days working and cook only at night, when no sun is available.
- The most densely populated parts of Kenya have limited access to sunlight during rainy seasons.
- An issue of principle, which Leakey said pointed directly at the global approach: Energy conservation can be a tough sell in Africa, since large-scale consumers in the developed world haven’t seriously confronted the issue.

“If the U.S. and Europe could be obviously more concerned about saving energy and finding alternatives ... I think you’d get a lot more sympathy when you spread the message around other countries,” he said.

Leakey offered advice to students in his audience.

“Whether you’re outstanding or not outstanding, I think the thing you have to look at is, what can you, as an individual, achieve?” Leakey said.

“And it’s your personal effort that will give you your rewards, not the efforts of other people.”

Interacting with Leakey brought life to textbook history lessons, said Kimberly Vinson, a senior biology major from New York City.

“It’s nice to see an academic who is in the field to contribute to what I’m learning, so I can actually see in real-life terms rather than just reading about it in a book,” Vinson said.

Leakey’s chat with students and professors followed a Wednesday-night lecture that drew roughly 1,500 people to Wright Auditorium. He discussed the origins and future of the human race.

Leakey was the headline speaker of the 2007-2008 Voyages of Discovery Lecture Series sponsored by the Thomas Harriot College of Arts and Sciences.

Peter White, director of the North Carolina Botanical Gardens, opened the series two weeks ago. Speakers from the University of Minnesota and Cambridge University appear in early 2008.

Jimmy Ryals can be contacted at jryals@coxnc.com and 339-9568.
• Upcoming


- Wachovia Freeboot Friday continues Oct. 19 with live music by beach band The Embers and local jazz musician and East Carolina University professor Carroll V. Dashiell Jr. The alive-at-five style event will be held at the corner of West Fifth and Evans streets from 5-8 p.m. with food, vendors, live music and a ton of purple and gold. Think of it as a tailgate warm-up. Free. Call 329-4200.