University of North Carolina system President Erskine Bowles delivered an eerily striking Stephen King impression last week, spinning a nightmarish yarn about the potential effect of a dismal state budget on the 17 UNC campuses. Unlike the horror master, however, Bowles' tale is nonfiction, one that should have school officials frightened for the future.

Highlighting the pressing construction and renovation needs facing state universities, Bowles called on school leaders to do more with less even as he noted the ill effects of repeatedly delaying pressing projects. Threading that needle will be no easy task when the state's very future hinges on a strong, vibrant and innovative university system.

On the heels of a recent Raleigh News & Observer report outlining some of the profound infrastructure needs facing the UNC system, Bowles outlined the bleak economic forecast for members of the UNC Board of Governors last week. The state faces a shortfall as large as $3.5 billion, while the UNC system counts a maintenance backlog of $2.1 billion for the coming year.

Schools struggling to fix leaky roofs and mend sagging eaves are unlikely to find favor when lawmakers return to work next year. The UNC system enjoyed a rare bit of sunshine in the otherwise gloomy budget approved for the 2009-10 fiscal year, but Bowles has already advised campus leaders to expect a 10 percent cut in state allocations as lawmakers try to make ends meet in the year to come.

At East Carolina University, Chancellor Steve Ballard has been vocal about the potential impact of budget cuts on the school's academic mission. He fears that fewer funds means a more difficult pitch in attracting and attaining talented faculty, eroding the quality of an East Carolina education. Deep cuts often make for higher tuition as well, a trend that threatens to price higher education beyond the reach of the state's poorest students.
The East Carolina community should be pleased to hear of Bowles' support for the dental school, one of three project areas for which he will seek expanded funding. However, the balance of his message is cause for anxiety at a university already operating at near peak efficiency.

As Bowles said, the needs of the UNC system, particularly the infrastructure needs, cannot be delayed indefinitely. Finding that money — through revenue reform, another bond referendum or other means — promises to challenge lawmakers in the coming year but a solution must be found.
ECU's Family Fare series to bring 'CSI: Live' to Wright Auditorium

CSI: Live

East Carolina University's Family Fare series will kick off at 7 p.m. Friday in Wright Auditorium with "CSI: Live."

The program, designed for ages 8 and older, is an interactive journey through the world of crime-scene investigations. The Mad Science presentation takes the audience through a scenario in which a crime is committed at the premiere of a Las Vegas magic show, requiring investigators to examine the evidence and test their theories.

Advance tickets are $9 for adults and $6 for children. All tickets at the door are $9. Call 328-4788.

Costume Party

The Greenville Recreation and Parks Department will host its annual costume party for special-needs children ages 6 and older from 6-8 p.m. Oct. 27 at C.M. Eppes Middle School. Co-sponsored by A Small Miracle, the event will include food, activities and music. To register, call 329-4270 by Friday.

ECU music

East Carolina University School of Music is sponsoring the following music programs for kids:

- Kids Music After School Vocal Music Program, ages 8-11, 4:30-5:30 p.m. Mondays through Nov. 22.

The program is designed to help students develop their singing voices, develop basic music reading skills, sing choral pieces, play instruments and participate in a variety of other musical activities. Children also will participate in research studies to further knowledge in the discipline of music education.

Cost for the fall season is $30 per family. To participate, e-mail the following information to wardj@ecu.edu: child's name, name of school, parents' names, phone number, home address and e-mail address. Call Jeffrey Ward at 328-2557.

- The East Carolina University School of Music is seeking fourth-through-sixth-grade beginning violin, viola, cello and bass students to participate in a teaching practicum for undergraduate music education students. String students with some prior experience in sixth through eighth grade may also participate in skill level appropriate classes.

The purpose of the program is to supplement beginning through advanced string offerings for those in public school programs, and offer group instruction to students who may not have access to a school music program. Students are expected to participate in their school string program if one exists.

Cost of the twice-weekly program is $45 per semester. For information, call Greg Hurley at 328-1245, or e-mail hurleyec@ecu.edu.

Children's stories

The following children's story hours are scheduled locally:

- Sheppard Memorial Library, 530 Evans St. Call 329-4581.
  - Toddler story hour, 10:30 a.m. the first and second Tuesdays for children ages 18 months through 3 years.
  - Preschool story hour, 11 a.m. Wednesdays for ages 3-5.
  - Bedtime story hour, 7 p.m. Oct. 28 for ages 6 and younger and their families. Participants may wear costumes for the "Spooktacular Stories" event.

- Carver Branch Library, 618 W. 14th Ave. Call 329-4583.
  - Preschool story hour 10:30 a.m. Thursdays.

- East Branch Library, 2000 Cedar Lane. Call 329-4582.
  - Preschool story hour, 10:30 a.m. Tuesdays.

Boo! Hoo! The Greenville Recreation and Parks Department will sponsor Draw More!, for ages 8-13, from 4-5:30 p.m. Wednesdays beginning this week. Classes continue through Nov. 10 at the Center for Arts & Crafts at Jaycee Park. The course is designed to help participants improve drawing skills by drawing objects and things found in nature. Cost is $60 for city residents and $90 for others.

Participants may register at Jaycee Park, 2000 Cedar Lane, or online at www.grpd.info. Call 329-9546.

Goose Creek

Goose Creek State Park, 2190 Camp Leach Road, Washington, N.C., will sponsor Eagles Over Goose Creek at 3 p.m. Sunday. Once threatened with extinction, the bald eagle has made a slow and awe-inspiring recovery. Bring binoculars and meet at the Visitor Center for a brief presentation and then accompany a ranger to the Flatty Creek Overlook in search of eagles. For more information, call 923-2191.

Preschoolers and toddlers

The Greenville Recreation and Parks Department will spon-
or the following programs for toddlers and preschoolers and their parents. Classes will be held Mondays from Oct. 25-Dec. 6. Cost is $60 for city residents, $90 for others.

- Harvest Harmonies by Moving to the Music, ages 1½-3½ years, 9:30-10:30 a.m. Activities include singing, educational games and dramatic play.
- The Colors of Fall by Toddler Time, ages 2-4, 10:30-11:30 a.m. Activities will include crafts, story time and puppet shows.
- Play Dough and Picasso, ages 3-6, 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Students will learn about master artists and will paint and work with Play Dough.
- Dinosaur Discovery, ages 3-6, 3:30-4:30 p.m. Students will learn about dinosaurs through music, literature arts and crafts.
- Once Upon a Time ... for Pint-Sized Princesses ages 3-6, 4:30-5:30 p.m. Activities include dress-up, tea parties, stories and crafts.
- Jumpstart Toddler Montessori: The Colors of Fall, for ages 1½-3½ years, will meet from 10:30-11:30 a.m. Saturdays from Oct. 16-Nov. 20. Each week, students will be exposed to new educational concepts as well as exploring stations full of building blocks, cooking centers, train sets, puppets, and a toddler-size bounce house. Cost is $50 for city residents and $75 for others.

Participants may register at Jaycee Park, 2000 Cedar Lane, or online at www.grpdc.info. Call 329-4546.

Recreation

Pitt County Community Schools and Recreation, 4561 County Home Road, will sponsor the following programs for children and youth at The Zone, 4801 Reedy Branch Road, Winterville.

- Youth Open Gym Volleyball, 3:30-6 p.m. Mondays and Wednesdays through Dec. 1 Winterville. The program is for ages fifth through eighth grades.
- Youth Open Gym Basketball, 3:30-6 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays through Dec. 2. The program is for ages 12-16.

Entry fee is $5, and a parent must register participants on the first visit. Call 902-1975 or visit www.pittcountync.gov/depts/commschool.

Swimming

The Greenville Recreation and Parks Department will sponsor the following swim programs for children and teens at the Aquatics and Fitness Center, 921 Staton Road. Call 329-4041.

- Dolphin Swim Club, ages 4-10, 4-5 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays from Oct. 26-Dec. 16. Swim evaluations will be held the first day of the session. Cost is $60 for members and $80 for others.
- Shark Swim Club, ages 10-16, 5-6 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays from Oct. 26-Dec. 16. Swim evaluations will be held the first day of the session. Cost is $60 for members and $80 for others.
- Saturday Swim Club, ages 5-15, 11 a.m.-noon. Saturdays from Oct. 30-Dec. 16. Swim evaluations will be held the first day of the session. Cost is $50 for members and $60 for others.

Special populations

The Greenville Recreation and Parks Department will sponsor the following programs:

- Special Olympics Team Basketball for ages 13 and older, from Oct. 30-March 4 at Elm Street Gym. Games will be played from 9-10 a.m. Saturdays. Call 329-4541.
- Special Olympics Bowling, 5:45-7:15 p.m. Wednesdays beginning this week and continuing through Dec. 8 at AMF East Carolina Bowl on Red Banks Road. Fee is $2 per game.
Team effort lifts ECU past Eagles
By Nathan Summers
The Daily Reflector
Tuesday, October 12, 2010

East Carolina football coach Ruffin McNeill gives his players and staff members 24 hours to get over a win or a loss and then get back to business. While that rule did not change in the wake of the Pirates' thrilling 44-43 win at Southern Miss last Saturday, the impact of such a victory will take much longer than a day to fully sink in.

Trailing 20-0 after the first quarter, the Pirates rallied to take a third-quarter lead, then fell behind again before ultimately scoring the game's final touchdown in the fourth quarter to claim the win that made the Pirates 3-0 in Conference USA.

“Individuals are good, but the best team will win championships, and we started forming a team in Hattiesburg,” McNeill said at Monday's weekly press conference. In the midst of a difficult four-game stretch that also included losses at Virginia Tech and North Carolina and which will end this weekend with a home showdown against N.C. State, the win in Mississippi was easily the most important for the 3-2 Pirates, and not merely because it was a victory.

In fact, it could be a defining moment in the first season with McNeill in charge.
“After getting down, we fought back and kept fighting as a football team,” McNeill said. “We had some mishaps happen in the game, some turnovers. I think our defense stepped up and swung back, held them to field goals at times with tough field position. You look at the final score, and it was big.”

The team in search of an unprecedented third straight C-USA crown took some major steps against the Golden Eagles, but now the challenge will be duplicating the things the Pirates learned.
McNeill is no stranger to overcoming tough odds, and in fact can readily recall the Texas Tech team, for which he was an assistant coach for 10 years, that came back from an even bigger deficit to beat Minnesota in the Insight.com Bowl back in 2006.

“We were down 31 with seven minutes to go in the third quarter, and I think it's one of the biggest comebacks in bowl history,” McNeill said of the Red Raiders' historic comeback for a 44-41 win. “I've been there. After 30 years, you've seen just about everything.”

While his Texas Tech days are well over, McNeill knows from that experience how much such a win can help a young team.
Having already beaten Tulsa on a Hail Mary throw in the team's season opener, the win at Southern Miss taught the Pirates a different but similar lesson, according to the coach.

“With the youth of this team, for them to be in that situation and fight their way back out, it was a learning experience we couldn't duplicate in practice,” McNeill said. “The last-second win here versus Tulsa was big because it taught them to fight to the end, that until the last whistle blows we've got a chance.

“This game taught us you'll fall behind but you keep fighting.”

Injuries
As has been the case for the entire season so far, the Pirates enter this weekend's game almost injury-free.
Losing redshirt freshman defensive end Justin Dixon for the season after a knee injury at UNC remains the only substantial injury through five games.
Junior linebacker Cliff Perryman (hand) and junior safety Devon Wallace (knee) are both listed as questionable for Saturday's noon kickoff.
Still out indefinitely are freshman offensive lineman Anthony Garrett (knee), sophomore defensive tackle Kemory Mann (shoulder) and senior safety Dekota Marshall (lower leg).

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Editorial: With UNC system buildings needing maintenance, Bowles right to hold off on new projects

Published: Monday, October 11, 2010 at 3:30 a.m.

Fix it first.

Erskine Bowles is right. The soon-to-retire president of the University of North Carolina system has told the board of governors that requests for new buildings aren't likely to make it into next year's budget request. His directive wasn't merely a nod to austere times but also a response to reports that while new buildings have gone up at campuses around the state, many of the existing buildings have been allowed to deteriorate.

The News & Observer of Raleigh reported last week on the deplorable condition of some buildings at the state's finest institutions, even as the state has spent billions of dollars from annual allocations and a $2.5 billion bond issue voters approved in 2000.

Much of that money did go toward renovations, but according to Bowles state universities would need $2.1 billion to address all renovation and maintenance needs. They won't get all of it, not with the General Assembly facing significant budget cuts in the coming year.

Many of the greatest needs are at the system's older campuses, including N.C. State, where one building is in such bad shape that university officials are embarrassed to put it on the tour for prospective students and their parents.

UNCW has the advantage of being one of the "newer" campuses. Construction on the College Road campus began in 1961; most of the buildings have been added within the past 35 years. When the board of governors met at UNCW last month, Chancellor Rosemary DePaolo
emphasized the university's commitment to upgrading and maintaining the campus.

The university also used much of its share of the bond issue for renovations and expansions while also building three new classroom buildings.

Bowles apparently still is willing to ask for money to build facilities that address growing needs and job opportunities in the state, including a dental school at East Carolina and a nanoscience building that would represent a joint effort between N.C. A&T University and UNC-Greensboro. Even those might be longshots with the budget shortfall now estimated at $3.5 billion to $4 billion for the 2001-12 fiscal year.

But ignoring maintenance and repair needs now will only add to the expense later. We can "make do," but we can't allow our public institutions to crumble – from the outside or the inside.

Our state universities must come up with realistic budget requests that reflect today's financial realities, focusing on the most pressing needs. That means first focusing on items directly related to students' education and taking care of the facilities they already have.
Thorp highlights positives

CHAPEL HILL In his annual State of the University address, UNC-Chapel Hill Chancellor Holden Thorp attempted Monday to trumpet university accomplishments that may have been overshadowed of late by the high-profile investigation into the football program.

In an eight-minute address released on the campus website, Thorp extolled the virtues of the university's two newest Rhodes Scholars, its best-yet annual take in research funding, an innovation project and other achievements.

Highlights:

UNC-CH faculty brought in a campus record $803 million in research funding - a 12 percent increase over the previous year.
The Times Higher Education Magazine in London ranked UNC-CH 21st among American universities and 30th among the world's top 200 institutions.

The Innovate@Carolina, introduced recently, attempts to better harness university research and find better ways to use it. This won't be easy, Thorp concedes, because it carries a $125 million price tag.

Money is tight again this year. The state's budget situation is still bleak, and public universities have been told to prepare budget-cut scenarios of 5 percent and 10 percent for next year.

"That means more tough choices when we've already reached the point at which we can't cut without harming academics," Thorp said in his address.

UNC-CH and all public universities face a lot of uncertainty in the near term. Next year's budget deliberations will surely be dicey again. This fall's elections could shake up the political landscape. And a new UNC system president, Tom Ross, takes office Jan. 1.

And for UNC-CH, there's the NCAA investigation. It took another turn Monday with the university announcing that several star players would not return to the team.

Here's what Thorp said about the football investigation in his address:

"We will protect and safeguard the academic integrity of the university. All students are equal in the eyes of our student-run Honor Court, and that's how we'll proceed in honoring a 130-year-old tradition of student governance.

"I'm convinced that we can be both an academic powerhouse and field a competitive football team without sacrificing our integrity," Thorp said. "That's the only way we'll do it, and I know everyone involved is committed to that. We know you expect us to uphold Carolina's values, and we will."

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With 3 players gone, UNC will tighten rules

CHAPEL HILL UNC athletic director Dick Baddour says that because of the compliance system the school has in place, he will fight the idea that there were institutional control issues in the Tar Heels football program.

At the same time, the school will tighten parts of that system in the wake of a double-barreled NCAA investigation that left three star players - defensive tackle Marvin Austin, defensive end Robert Quinn and wide receiver Greg Little - kicked permanently off the team Monday. The investigations have focused on improper agent benefits and possible academic misconduct.

UNC dismissed Austin, and the NCAA ruled Little and Quinn permanently ineligible for violating NCAA rules regarding sports agent benefits, preferential treatment and ethical conduct. Little and Quinn lied during three NCAA interviews, an NCAA news release said.

The NCAA says Little took benefits worth $4,952 and Quinn took benefits worth $5,642. Baddour said Austin accepted benefits worth $10,000 to $13,000.

Over the past three months, one other player has been declared ineligible to play this season, four additional players have been reinstated after missing at least one game and six more remain sidelined and in limbo.

"I'm standing before you telling you, and I know Butch [Davis, UNC's head football coach] would agree, I wish we had done more," Baddour said during a Monday press conference. "I'd like to relive that part."

For the first time since the initial investigation was announced in early July, Baddour acknowledged that the school must be ready to answer NCAA questions about whether a lack of institutional control - which could lead to harsh sanctions, if it is affirmed - contributed to the program's problems.

According to the NCAA, there are four "pillars" of institutional control:
compliance systems, monitoring and enforcement, rules education and a commitment to compliance.

**How NCAA assesses control**

NCAA spokesperson Stacey Osburn said in an e-mail message recently that when reviewing violations to determine whether there was a lack of institutional control or failure to monitor, investigators look at the duration and frequency of violations, the visibility of violations, warning signs to the university, number of involved student-athletes or teams, number of involved staff members, significance of impermissible benefits, recruiting or competitive advantage gained, and whether the violation was reported by the university or came from an outside source.

Baddour said that in "Phase 3" of the investigation - which comes after information is gathered on all the individual athletes involved - the school, with the help of the Faculty Athletics Committee and an NCAA investigator, will look at how the compliance program works and what can make it better.

"It is not saying that the NCAA has concluded that there are other issues, institutional control issues," Baddour said. "... There's a lot of smoke around here. I mean we can't deny that there's a lot of smoke around here, which means we've got to go deep. And we've got to look, and they're going to help us."

As the investigation continues, Baddour and Davis said, new policies are already being put into place:

Football players will have to fill out a sign-out sheet if they leave campus for longer than 24 hours - detailing where they are going and for how long. They also must let a position coach know if their plans change.

"That's critically important as to where they're going, who's going with them, who's paying for the particular trips," Davis said.

In the past, players signed out (in much less detail) at the end of both semesters, before spring break and after summer sessions. But it's not uncommon for schools not to have sign-out mandates at all. N.C. State coach Tom O'Brien said Monday that Wolfpack players don't have to sign out when they leave for vacation, and he doesn't expect that to change.

Financial planners, agents, or "anybody that might represent [the players'] personal interests" will have to contact the athletes through the football
administration to set up appointments. "And those appointments with players are going to have to take place in this [football] building, so that no longer will they be making contact with people outside ... [and we'll] at least have some kind of knowledge of what's going on."

It is not against NCAA rules for players to meet with agents at any age, as long as they don't sign, or accept extra benefits. But the NFL Players' Association prohibits agents from making contact with football players until after their junior seasons.

From the time they are freshmen, UNC educates players about agents and extra benefits. Then after their junior seasons, players with NFL potential participate in agent days and seminars. For potential pros, UNC now wants to intensify that education from the beginning.

"Don't wait until a kid gets to be a rising star as a junior or a potential rising star as a senior - because as we have found out in the case of one of these individuals, he was just a sophomore," Davis said. "And obviously, legally you have assumed that people are unscrupulously not going to go and reach out to your freshmen and sophomores. That may not be true anymore."

**Was the damage preventable?**

Neither Baddour nor Davis is sure that, even with a stricter system in place, the agent benefits or academic misconduct would have been totally prevented. "It can happen anywhere ... but it can't be an OK thing for us to say, 'Well, because it could happen somewhere else, it's going to be acceptable here,'" Baddour said. "... We've just got to be as aggressive as we possibly can. And kids know when they come to the University of North Carolina ... they're going to have to do serious academic work; they're going to have to know when they're going here, they're buying into a level of compliance that's important to us."

Baddour said he is convinced that UNC does not lack institutional control, and that the university has a strong compliance program in place.

"And I think that anybody who looks at that program would say we're doing more than significant things to protect our institution and to protect individuals," Baddour said. "Obviously we need to do more, and that's what this review process is going to do for us, is to establish things we can do better. And we're absolutely committed to that."

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No word on who 'agents' are

UNC and the NCAA would not reveal on Monday who provided benefits to UNC players Greg Little, Robert Quinn and Marvin Austin, even as coaches here and across the country criticize, in broad terms, the influence of agents on college players.

UNC-Chapel Hill and the NCAA said the players broke rules about receiving agent benefits. On Monday, Austin was dismissed from the team by UNC and the NCAA ruled Little and Quinn forever ineligible to play college football.

Alabama coach Nick Saban has called agents "pimps." One of his players, Marcell Dareus, was sanctioned this season for receiving improper agent benefits related to two trips to Miami.

Austin, Little and Quinn were also sanctioned, in part, for taking trips to Miami.

UNC-CH head coach Butch Davis has said agents make life difficult for coaches.

But a spokeswoman for the NCAA said the organization doesn't have oversight of agents and will remain silent on that aspect of the investigation.

"NCAA decisions are regarding those our rules have jurisdiction over," NCAA spokeswoman Stacey Osburn said.

She referred other questions to UNC-CH.

Neither Athletic Director Dick Baddour nor Chancellor Holden Thorp would name names.

Baddour said he couldn't even say how many people were involved in giving improper benefits to players.

"It's so varied I'm not prepared to speak off the cuff on that," he said.
Asked whether it was safe to say that multiple agents are involved, he also hesitated and said he wasn't sure how to answer.

"You kind of get wrapped up in who's an agent, who's not an agent, who was representing someone - was it a friend or whatever," he said. "You should think about it in terms of agents, but you also have to think of it in terms of extra benefits and preferential treatment and all of that when you're accumulating the dollars involved."

The phrases "extra benefits" and "preferential treatment" generally refer to NCAA rules against athletes receiving any special arrangements from university employees, boosters or others, including former players. The university has previously said, for example, that a tutor who was an employee had been too close with players.

The NCAA blasted Little and Quinn on Monday, saying they didn't tell the truth about taking a combined $10,000 in trips, jewelry and more.

Separately, UNC said star player Austin also took benefits, worth at least $10,000.

The N.C. Secretary of State's office is investigating possible violations of the state's uniform athlete agent act, which requires agents to register and prohibits agents from giving anything of value to student-athletes before they sign a contract and from making false representations to athletes and their families.

Baddour said there is no evidence the athletes had committed to any agent for representation.

Baddour also said there is no evidence that the gifts or benefits to the players were tied to former associate head coach John Blake, who resigned last month as the university learned that he had been receiving money from sports agent Gary Wichard. Blake and Wichard say the money was loans to Blake or was gifts to cover private school tuition for Blake's son, and that they have a long relationship in which they consider each other like brothers.

In an e-mail message late Monday, UNC-CH spokeswoman Nancy Davis said that records about who gave the benefits are part of each student's education record.

"We determined," she wrote, "that there were multiple occasions of the student-athletes receiving benefits - for example, trips, meals and gifts -
from people who include agents, prospective agents and financial advisers."

But she wouldn't say who those people are.

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