THE DAILY CLIPS

October 19, 2009

News, commentary, and opinion
compiled by the East Carolina University News Bureau from:

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When the Wright brothers came back to N.C.

If you live in North Carolina, you must know about the Wright brothers' first powered flight in 1903. It's the one memorialized on your auto license plate, the airplane picture with the words "First in Flight."

Yeah, that one.

But most of us don't know the brothers returned to Kitty Hawk for more flights five years later.

In his new book, "Conquering the Sky: The Secret Flights of the Wright Brothers at Kitty Hawk" (Palgrave MacMillan), East Carolina University's Larry Tise gives the first detailed account of those 1908 flights, which brought Orville and Wilbur international fame.

The Wright brothers had returned to Kitty Hawk in 1908 to fine-tune their flyer. They needed a machine reliable enough to fly for at least an hour with two passengers. That's what the U.S. military required before it would buy the technology.

They chose Kitty Hawk partly because it was isolated. They could perfect the plane in secret, without worrying about competitors stealing their designs. (Also, the sand softened hard landings.)

Here's the irony: Their flights ended up being about as secret as Michael Jackson's demise.

The brothers didn't realize that folks living on the Outer Banks would eagerly spread news of their visit. And any scoop about flight was hot news.

"You have to imagine if you picked up any major world paper, hardly any issue ... would appear without some story about flying," Tise says.

The very first news that Wilbur and Orville had returned to the Outer Banks was published in North Carolina newspapers.

But after that, many newspapers published wild tales that apparently came from Outer Banks lifesavers and fishermen. The Virginian-Pilot, for instance, reported a flight that hovered at takeoff and just before landing and covered 20 miles over land. The story ran before any flight had taken off.

As news spread, reporters converged at Kitty Hawk and ultimately witnessed a world record for an observed flight: 7-1/2 minutes. Though on the scene, they still bungled facts.

Still, their stories brought the Wright brothers newfound fame.

Tise, ECU's Wilbur and Orville Wright distinguished professor of history, has been interested in unanswered questions associated with the Wright brothers since he was a boy growing up in Winston-Salem.

These days, nearly everything written about the Wright brothers is derived from other works, he says.
Not this book. It's the result of research from letters and newspapers in the U.S. and Europe.

"I'm very, very proud to say this is based on all original stuff," he says.

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ROTC team takes third in Army Ten-Miler

By
ECU News Services

Sunday, October 18, 2009

A team of Army ROTC cadets from East Carolina University finished third in the ROTC division of the 25th annual Army Ten-Miler on Oct. 4 in Washington, D.C., and raised more than $4,300 for a charity focused on wounded soldiers.

Members of the Pirate Battalion were among a record 30,000 people from around the world competing in one of the largest races in the country. They finished behind Virginia Tech, which won the ROTC crown for the second straight year, and the University of Connecticut.

East Carolina runners completed the course with a collective time of 4 hours, 16 minutes, 42 seconds, a little more than two minutes off the winning time. Though ECU had eight members on the squad, only the top four times counted toward the team’s overall time.

The ROTC division included 56 teams representing almost 50 schools. East Carolina cadets whose times counted toward the overall time were freshman Taylor Bowen of Chesapeake, Va., 1:02:13; team co-captain and senior Kyle Bowen, 1:03:48; team co-captain and senior Ted Brennis, 1:03:57; and junior Lucas Weeks, 1:06:44. Other team members completing the race were Steven Owens, Nathan Rimpf, Angelo Iovino and Derek Vanino.

Taylor Bowen’s performance impressed his older brother, Kyle Bowen, who was a fellow member of the ECU Gold team. “This is a tough race,” Kyle Bowen said, “and to have the mental toughness and physical endurance needed to run at a 6:13/mile pace for 10 miles is really impressive.”

In total, ECU had 29 cadets and five cadre members compete in the race, which starts and ends at the Pentagon, crossing the Potomac River and running along the National Mall, looping around the U.S. Capitol building, to form a 10-mile circuit.

The Pirate Battalion had enough runners to field a second team — the Purple team — which finished 23rd in the ROTC division.

The Braxton Bragg chapter of AUSA sponsored the ECU Ten-Miler team and provided a “recovery” tent with food and drinks after the race.

For the second consecutive year, the Pirate Battalion’s cadets used the Army Ten-Miler as a fundraising opportunity for Azalea Charities’ “Aid for Wounded Soldiers” fund which works to "provide comfort and relief items for soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines sick, injured or wounded from service in Iraq and Afghanistan." This year’s effort yielded $4,340.

“As proud as I am of the young men and women who worked so hard and ran so fast during the race, I’m even prouder of the great heart the battalion showed in supporting this worthy cause,” Lt. Col. Steven Delvaux, ECU’s professor of military science, said of the cadets’ support for the fund. “I think the cadets’ fundraising efforts on behalf of our nation’s wounded warriors speak very loudly about the type of leaders they will soon be for our Army. They really get it.

“They understand that leadership is ultimately about service and they are bound and determined to serve those who have served us and to ensure that those who have bled for us and our country will be taken care of and will not be forgotten,” he said.
For more information on the fundraiser, visit the Army ROTC fundraising Web site at http://www.active.com/donate/TeamAzalea2009/woundedwarrior.

Graduate student receives award

Stephanie Hendricks, a second-year speech language pathology graduate student, received the Barbara Bremer Award on Oct. 1 during the 39th annual student symposium held at Rock Springs Center in Greenville.

The award is given annually to a graduate student in the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders in the College of Allied Health Sciences in recognition of clinical work that has made a recognizable difference in the life of a client.

Barbara Bremer is an alumna and longtime supporter of the department and its students. She has a bachelor's degree in nursing, and graduated from ECU with a master's of speech language pathology in 1983. Bremer works in private practice.

Four named master educators at Brody

Drs. Irene Hamrick, Ronald Johnson, John Olsson and Walter Robey have been named master educators for 2009 at the Brody School of Medicine at ECU.

Hamrick is an associate professor of family medicine and an ECU medical graduate. She leads the geriatric division and directs the geriatric fellowship at Brody. She joined the medical faculty in 1997. Hamrick was recognized for educational leadership, administration and outstanding teaching or mentoring.

Johnson is a professor of biochemistry and molecular biology. He has a doctorate from Northwestern University and completed a fellowship at the University of California. At Brody, he is studying how to fight bacterial infections by disabling bacterial RNA, funded by a $175,000 grant from the National Institutes of Health. He has been on the ECU faculty since 1991. Johnson was recognized for outstanding teaching or mentoring.

Olsson is an associate professor of pediatrics. Olsson has a medical degree from Pennsylvania State University and completed residency and fellowship training at Emory University. Olsson is associate director of the ECU Pediatric Healthy Weight Research and Treatment Center. He has been on the ECU faculty since 1998.

Olsson was recognized for outstanding teaching or mentoring.

Robey is an associate professor of emergency medicine. He has a medical degree from the Universite de Bordeaux and completed residency training at Morristown Memorial Hospital in New Jersey.

Robey joined the faculty in 1994 and is director of Medical Simulation & Patient Safety Lab. Robey was recognized for leadership and administration, teaching contribution or mentorship, innovation and curriculum development.

Faculty members and students may nominate faculty members to receive the award, and a committee of faculty members and students decides on the recipients.

Since the program began in 2002, 34 Brody faculty members have been recognized.

A list of winners is available online at http://www.ecu.edu/cs-dhs/medicateducation/edConsultation.cfm.

NCNA recognizes ECU alumnus, faculty

An ECU alumnus and a faculty member were recognized by the North Carolina Nurses Association during its annual convention.

Ryan Lewis, who received a bachelor's degree in nursing in 2008 from ECU, was named Rookie of the Year by the NCNA. He is an intensive care nurse at Wayne Memorial Hospital in Goldsboro. This year, he served as the northeast regional representative on the Professional Practice Advocacy Coalition for the NCNA.

Lewis first became involved with NCNA as a senior through ECU's nursing leadership intern program funded by a grant from the BB&T Center for Leadership. The mission of the program is to mobilize nurses to be effective partners and leaders in creating healthier communities in eastern North Carolina.

As a result, Lewis has been active with the NCNA since graduation. He also recently was elected to the national
board for the American Assembly for Men in Nursing.

Also at the convention, Janis Puglisi, a clinical instructor in ECU's nurse practitioner concentration, received the Outstanding Mentorship Award from the NCNA.

Puglisi has been at ECU since 2008. She works part time as a family nurse practitioner with the Yadkin County Health Department, and as a nurse practitioner volunteer at Community Care Clinic in Winston-Salem.

Puglisi has served on multiple committees with the NCNA and will attend a national conference on health disparities in November.

Puglisi received a master's degree in nursing from Duke University, a bachelor's of nursing degree from Florida Atlantic University and a bachelor's degree in music from the University of North Texas at Denton. She is pursuing a doctoral degree in nursing.

Upcoming events:

Monday: Rhett Iseman Trull poetry reading, 8 p.m., Bate Building, Room 1031. Greensboro resident and winner of the 2008 Anhinga Prize will read from her first collection of poetry, "The Real Warnings." Free and open to the public.

See www.ecu.edu/cs-ecu/calendar.cfm for times, places and more information on this event and other ECU upcoming activities.

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ECU names Hardy to vice provost position

The Daily Reflector

Friday, October 16, 2009

East Carolina University officials have named Virginia Hardy to the position of vice provost for student affairs. Hardy will assume the position on Jan. 1.

She has worked at the university since 1993 when she was a student counselor in the Brody School of Medicine.

"Virginia Hardy is an accomplished educator and leader who is known and respected across the campus and throughout the community," Provost Marilyn Sheerer said. "She is extraordinarily committed to the university and its students, and I look forward to working with her as we enhance the student experience at ECU."

Hardy is senior associate dean for academic affairs at the medical school, a position she has held since 2005. She served as the university's interim chief diversity officer from 2006-08, and she has taught in the medical school since 2000.

"Great leaders are essential to the success of higher education, and in Virginia Hardy, we have an exceptional leader," said Chancellor Steve Ballard. "She will be a member of the university's executive council, and she will be a mentor, teacher and example to our students."

Hardy holds a bachelor's degree in education from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, a master's degree in counselor education from ECU and a doctorate in counselor education from North Carolina State University.

Before joining ECU, she was a teacher and assistant principal at Wellcome Middle School in Greenville.

"It is an honor to be selected for this position," Hardy said.

"Students have been my primary focus all of my professional life and I am excited to join the excellent leadership team in Academic and Student Affairs," Hardy said.

Hardy has served as a member of the Pitt Community College Board of Trustees, the Red Cross of Pitt County, the Greenville Utilities Board of Commissioners and the Pitt County Board of Education Foundation.

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Calif. company looks to bring broadband service to area

By Brock Letchworth
The Daily Reflector

Sunday, October 18, 2009

A California-based wireless company is vying for federal dollars to help them provide broadband service to areas lacking it in eastern and coastal North Carolina.

Cleartalk, which builds wireless phone and high-speed Internet networks in under-served areas, has applied jointly for about $48 million under both federal broadband stimulus programs. If approved for either one, company officials say they plan to bring mobile broadband service to about 2 million people in 38 counties, including Pitt.

Officials say they will need 392 tower sites in the service area to do so. They will use existing infrastructure where available and build towers in rural and remote areas where none exist, Matthew Merritt, Cleartalk director for South Carolina and North Carolina, said.

The 3G network service would be affordable and convenient for residents and businesses in those areas, Merritt said, noting that it would operate similar to networks the company has constructed during the past 10 years in Colorado, California, South Carolina, Idaho, Arizona, Alabama, Florida, Tennessee and Texas.

“We are trying to get broadband service to as many people as possible because we recognize its importance,” Merritt said. “With this, you could travel around and use the service anywhere, including your home, and it is much cheaper.”

Merritt said there are about 2,200 applicants seeking $28 billion in federal broadband stimulus funding. He said Cleartalk’s application should be attractive to those making the decision because it would be less costly per person than others.

Cleartalk’s cost per population is $12 per person under the RUS-BIP grant application and $24 per person under the NTIA-BTOP grant. Other applicants in N.C. have a cost structure between $250-$1,500 per person, Merritt said.

“I would say our cost structure compares very favorably with any of the 2,200 other applicants,” he said.

Merritt said the company would offer high-speed mobile broadband at less than $35 per month for five gigabytes. Merritt said that is about 50 percent less than the national average for similar service. A 25 percent discount also will be offered to "strategic institutions" such as schools and hospitals, he said.

A decision about the application is expected next month. Service could be ready for initial markets within nine months of receiving the funding, Merritt said. The entire project will take about three years to complete.

Plans for the broadband expansion already have the support of several legislators and other prominent figures in the state, including Sen. Kay Hagan, Sen. Richard Burr and Congressman G.K. Butterfield.

Hagan said implementing broadband access will help boost economic development in rural communities and keep them "vibrant."

"Increasing broadband access means connecting our communities to the world and increasing commerce in this
tough economy," she said.

Merritt said the service would be the first opportunity many in the 38 counties have had for high-speed broadband Internet access.

A 2008 report by Connected Nation titled The Economic Impact of Stimulating Broadband Nationally estimated that increased broadband adoption in North Carolina would create more than $2.4 billion in direct income growth and create or save more than 69,400 jobs.

Merritt said that equates to about $573 million in direct income growth and 16,400 jobs created or saved in the North Carolina counties targeted by Cleartalk.

Rick Niswander, dean of the East Carolina University College of Business, said he believes broadband access is essential for areas such as eastern North Carolina as society shifts from an industry-dominated economy to one that is based on technology and information.

"If eastern North Carolina is going to be successful in the information age that we are moving more towards every day, then broadband Internet access is absolutely vital in making that happen," Niswander said. "Otherwise, our citizens and young people are not going to have the tools they need to succeed in the information age. If we don't give them those tools, we are going to be left in the dust."

In addition to the grant money, Cleartalk is contributing about $10 million for the project. The company also has purchased more than $6 million in equipment licensed by the Federal Communications Commission to allow it to provide the voice and data service. Cleartalk will be hiring about 200 people in the state during the next 12-18 months if approved, Merritt said.

Merritt said anyone wanting to learn more about Cleartalk's attempt to bring broadband service to eastern and coastal North Carolina can visit the Web site www.connecttheeast.com.

Contact Brock Letchworth at bletchworth@coxnc.com or (252) 329-9574.

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Crowd gathers for ECU Homecoming events

The Daily Reflector

Friday, October 16, 2009

Freeboot Friday kicked off East Carolina University's homecoming with comments from head football coach Skip Holtz in addition to a visit from the ECU cheerleaders and a performance by the Shadow Players Stage Combat Group in downtown Greenville.

The event also included a homecoming skit performance, the ECU Dance Team and music by Jupiter Jones.

ECU's homecoming weekend continues today with an alumni association breakfast from 9-10 a.m. prior to the homecoming parade at 10 a.m. An alumni tailgate will be held at 1 p.m. prior to the Pirates' Conference USA game against Rice at 3:30 p.m. Pirate Gameday inside today will get you ready for the game.

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NCSU alumni get interim director

RALEIGH -- N.C. State University has chosen a former student body president to temporarily replace the director of the alumni association who was fired by interim Chancellor James Woodward last week.

Kevin Howell, assistant to the chancellor for external affairs and a former lobbyist for Gov. Mike Easley, will fill the post while the university looks for a permanent replacement, according to an announcement sent to the alumni association.

He replaces Lennie Barton, who had held the job since 2003. Woodward said that the association's membership growth had stagnated in recent years and that Barton hadn't developed a proper plan for the association's finances.

Several members of the association's board objected to the firing and wrote the chancellor to say that they thought the reason was administration displeasure over an alumni magazine article about campus culture and the Mary Easley hiring scandal.

Howell is a member of the alumni association's board of directors and the State Board of Education. He graduated from NCSU in 1988 with a B.A. in political science, then earned a law degree from UNC-Chapel Hill.

He'll report directly to the chancellor, rather than to a vice chancellor as Barton had. His title will be interim associate vice chancellor for alumni relations and executive director of the alumni association.
Roll up your sleeves

Pitt County residents line up to get H1N1 flu vaccine here

By Josh Humphries
The Daily Reflector

Friday, October 16, 2009

More than 1,000 Pitt County residents lined up to get H1N1 flu vaccines Friday.

The Pitt County Health Department held a flu clinic at the Cooperative Extension Office all day Friday. Dr. John Morrow, health department director, said officials ran out of injectable vaccines at 3 p.m. after giving more than 600 doses to children and adults. FluMist vaccines were available at the site until 5 p.m.

"I was not surprised by the turnout," Morrow said. "Everything ran smoothly, and the wait was usually no more than 10 minutes for each person."

The county received its first doses of vaccine for the H1N1 virus this week. More shipments are expected soon, Morrow said.

To respond to patients with flu-like symptoms who cannot make it to the doctor during office hours, University Health Systems of Eastern North Carolina is opening a special clinic beginning Monday.

UHS is opening FluCare, a walk-in clinic for anyone age 6 and older who needs attention for flu symptoms.

FluCare is opening at 5 p.m. Monday and is limited to managing flu symptoms in children and adults. It will be staffed by nurse practitioners and physician assistants.

The FluCare hours of operation are 5-9 p.m. weekdays and 1-5 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays. No appointment is necessary. The facility is at 600 Medical Drive. Beginning Monday, call 847-9888 for more information.

Officials say that flu-like symptoms likely are the result of the H1N1 virus, and the seasonal flu has not reached Pitt County this year.

Contact Josh Humphries at jhumphries@coxnc.com or (252) 329-9565.

FLUCARE CLINIC

What: Walk-in clinic for anyone age 6 and older with flu-like symptoms; no appointment necessary.

Where: 600 Medical Drive.

Hours: 5-9 p.m. weekdays beginning Monday; 1-5 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays.

The swine flu is causing an unprecedented amount of illness for this early in the fall, with the deaths of 11 more children reported during the past week. See more on A3.

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Summers Column: Kass’ collegiate dream has different, but happy, ending

Monday, October 19, 2009

Dreams have a funny way of looking much different in reality, but that doesn’t mean living them is any less gratifying.

The five-year college experience for Rob Kass at East Carolina will end in a completely different way than he ever would have or could have planned it. That pretty much makes it a standard college experience.

Kass will be able describe in great detail the things his college life taught him and the ways it changed him. But as similar as his story might be to most, his dream differs from the average in that it seems to have been realized before the expiration of the fast-ticking clock of college athletics.

The former star prep passer from Longwood, Fla., seemed to have very specific plans for how his dream would look, where it would happen and what it would entail.

Kass chose ECU as its stage and diligently worked his way into the Pirate football framework as the odds-on favorite to replace quarterback James Pinkney after the 2006 season. But before Kass could make his first career start, a DUI arrest changed his dream fast and forever.

It put him in a new, unwanted kind of spotlight, one that was counter to the blueprint he expected to live. It changed everything.

Two years later, Kass has gone from suspended quarterback to co-quarterback to backup quarterback to no quarterback.

And yet the story has a happy ending.

While the Kass dream was to throw as many winning touchdown passes as humanly possible, the Kass destiny was becoming a tight end in his final year of playing eligibility, and being on the receiving end of a touchdown.

For Kass, changing positions was a means of creating a new football identity for himself. Despite the ticking clock, the aim was to make the switch in time to make a more serious, consistent contribution to a team that at some point became more important than an individual career.

It meant Kass becoming one of the other guys on the field, one of the 10 who don’t get the ball hiked to them on every play, and who in many cases might never touch it at all unless something goes very wrong.

Fittingly, however, Kass got his hands on it against Rice last Saturday.

A few weeks after making his first-ever reception, and several games removed from having his first potential touchdown catch go flying about 10 feet over his head, Kass found himself wide open and holding a touchdown pass in the first quarter, a strange twist in the dream of a touchdown passer.

Perhaps showing a little of what he’s learned in five years, Kass didn’t do any over-the-top celebrations. He caught a 2-yard pass from starting QB Patrick Pinkney, enjoyed the end zone and the roar of the crowd for a couple of seconds and got out of the there.

While it wasn’t exactly wild, it wasn’t exactly short-lived either. Every person on the entire ECU sideline got a
high-five as Kass paraded slowly down it in the moments that followed.

The dream of being a college football player for Kass remains uncompromised. Like most dreams, it took some drastic shaping and molding and fixing and rethinking to make it come true.

Much of it went according to plan. But the unexpected changes to it were the ones that made it one worth protecting and seeing through.

Kass has found the end zone again, and he’s done a 180-degree turn, because this time around, he’s standing in it.

Contact Nathan Summers at nsummers@coxnc.com or (252)329-9595.

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October 17, 2009

Officials See a Shortage in Vaccine for Swine Flu

By DENISE GRADY

Health officials on Friday predicted a shortfall in the supply of swine flu vaccine, as the numbers of cases, hospitalizations and deaths grow to levels unprecedented for this time of year.

Flu caused by the H1N1 virus is now widespread in 41 states, and flu-like illnesses account for 6.1 percent of all doctor visits.

"That's high for any time, particularly for October," said Dr. Anne Schuchat, the director of the National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Forty-three children have died from swine flu since Aug. 30 — about the same number that usually die in an entire flu season. Nineteen of the 43 who died were teenagers, and 16 were ages 5 to 11 years old; the rest were under 5.

"These are very sobering statistics," Dr. Schuchat said in a news briefing, "and unfortunately they are likely to increase."

Fifteen percent to 20 percent of the patients who were hospitalized for the flu wound up in the intensive care unit, a rate comparable with that for seasonal flu. Although the disease continues to spread, its severity is not increasing.

Projections of the supply of swine flu vaccine have widely varied. During the summer, health officials said 120 million doses would be ready in October. They later dropped the estimate to 40 million doses by the end of the month.

Now, Dr. Schuchat said, they expect only 28 million to 30 million doses, adding that the exact numbers were impossible to predict and could change daily. She said vaccine manufacturers were reporting that production was behind schedule.

"I wish we could be more predictable, but this is how influenza vaccine goes," Dr. Schuchat said.

"Vaccine production for influenza is pretty complex," she said in explaining the delay, "and the complex process this year is taking a bit longer than we had hoped. The yield of antigen is lower than they had hoped for."

The antigen is the part of a virus included in vaccine to stimulate the body's protective response. It is crucial; a vaccine will not work without it.

Dr. Schuchat also said that once batches of vaccine were prepared, they had to be tested for potency and purity.

"We are not cutting any corners," she said. "It's important to us that this process be done carefully and safely."

She acknowledged that some people were having trouble obtaining vaccinations, saying, "I'm sorry it's a difficult time in terms of looking for vaccine."

As of Wednesday, Dr. Schuchat said, 11.4 million doses of the H1N1 vaccine were available, with more being shipped. She predicted that by early November, there would be widespread vaccine availability and information on where
people should go for it.

Explaining how just 30 million doses could translate into widespread availability, a spokesman for the disease centers, Tom Skinner, said: “‘Widespread’ means it’s going to be in a lot of places. It doesn’t mean that a lot is going to be in a lot of places. It just means it's going to be out there.”

Dr. Schuchat acknowledged that some people had fears about the H1N1 vaccine, but she emphasized that it was safe and urged pregnant women to be vaccinated because they were especially prone to severe complications and had accounted for a disproportionate number of deaths.

Studies of the swine flu vaccine are being conducted in pregnant women. But, Dr. Schuchat said, “if I were pregnant, I would not wait for the results of those trials; the risk in pregnancy has been very striking.”

On the seasonal flu, Dr. Schuchat said 82 million doses of vaccine had been distributed, out of an expected total of 114 million.

But the vaccine has been running low in some areas. Dr. Schuchat urged the public to “keep looking” and emphasized that there was time because seasonal flu did not usually take hold until December. Virtually all cases now are the H1N1 swine flu, she said.
Furor Swirls Over College Chief’s House

By MONICA DAVEY

Education officials in North Dakota called Friday for an audit on the construction of a house built for the president of North Dakota State University, who resigned last week amid mounting questions about the project’s huge cost overrun, to a total of more than $2 million.

Joseph A. Chapman, president of the public university, in Fargo, announced Wednesday afternoon that he would depart in January. In a telephone interview, Dr. Chapman, 67, said he had long planned to step down by the end of this academic year anyway, adding of his role, “It’s just not as much fun as it once was.”

But in an e-mail message to students and employees of the university, the state’s largest, he also referred to the growing debate. “Controversies in recent days,” he said, “have created distractions that have made it impossible for me to provide the leadership this institution deserves.”

Friday’s call for a detailed audit was issued by a committee of the North Dakota Board of Higher Education and followed expressions of concern by state lawmakers and others over the recently completed on-campus house, whose cost ballooned in two years by more than 100 percent from the $900,000 that the university’s foundation was initially authorized to spend on it. The recommendation for an audit now goes to the full State Board of Higher Education, which will vote on the proposal.

In an editorial in September, The Bismarck Tribune described the house and its rising price tag, at that point an estimated $1.47 million, as “so far outside the values of people of the state it will become a grandiose symbol of excess and arrogance.”

Some in North Dakota had also begun to raise other questions: about the $50,000 a year the president’s wife received from the foundation for serving as an “ambassador” for the university, about money the foundation spent on the president’s travel and about his compensation. Dr. Chapman received some $438,000 last year, a university spokeswoman said, including salary, deferred compensation and benefits like a car allowance.

The foundation’s authorization to spend $900,000 in private donations on the house, to replace one that was razed, was issued in the fall of 2007 by the higher education board and the state legislature. But about $500,000 of the overrun is believed to have come from public money, generated by the university from things like parking fees, said William G. Goetz, chancellor of the North Dakota University System.

Dr. Chapman said he had intentionally distanced himself from decisions about the foundation’s construction of the home and had had little sense that costs were being exceeded until well after the fact.

But in a letter to state officials, James C. Miller, the foundation’s executive director, suggested that Dr.
Chapman and his wife had expressed a wish to move into the home quickly, requiring an expedited process in which “normal design and construction” methods were not followed. Of that claim, Dr. Chapman said, “I don’t feel like I put any undue pressure on anybody.”

Dr. Chapman has been president for 10 years, a period of significant growth for the university. Student enrollment has risen to more than 14,000, from 9,600, and a second campus was opened in the downtown section of Fargo, not far from the main campus. The number of doctoral programs has expanded to 44, from 18, and annual research spending has more than doubled, to $115.5 million.