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UNC president search favored Tar Heels

By staff writers Jane Stancill and Lynn Bonner. Stancill can be reached at 932-2013 or janes@newsobserver.com.

From the beginning of the search for a successor to UNC President Molly Broad, there was widespread pressure to put a North Carolinian in the job, according to e-mail messages and records obtained by The News & Observer.

However, one consultant hired by the search committee, William Weary, had "a dim view of the search committee's desire for a candidate with NC roots or connections," according to an e-mail message May 17 from UNC Vice President and General Counsel Leslie Winner to Brad Wilson, chairman of both the search committee and the UNC Board of Governors.

"I told him that that preference seemed to me to be nearly universal," Winner added. "Wilson responded: "The commentary continues to be universal. Everyone I talk with sayd [sic] NC, NC, NC. If they have a name it is either Jim Hunt or Erskine."

As everyone now knows, the UNC search committee and the Board of Governors chose North Carolinian Erskine Bowles for the job last month.

The decision happened without faculty input, despite pleas from professors.

In June, Faculty Assembly Chairwoman Brenda L. Killingsworth asked Wilson to include faculty on the search committee, saying in an e-mail message, "It is critical that the incoming president have the support and confidence of the faculty."

In September, the systemwide faculty group passed a resolution "strongly" urging the board to include professors in interviews of finalists.

Those requests were rebuffed.

But Killingsworth, a professor at East Carolina University, was included on a subcommittee that drafted a leadership statement — basically a job description for the UNC president.

Wilson said Wednesday he kept legislative leaders in both the House and Senate, as well as the governor's office, apprised of the progress of the search.
State to cover teacher raises

Governor's plan raises salaries for the rest of this year and for the upcoming three years.

The Associated Press

RALEIGH — The state will foot the bill this school year for Gov. Mike Easley's $75-a-month pay raises for teachers whose positions are paid for with local tax dollars, the Department of Public Instruction announced.

Gov. Mike Easley and legislators unveiled a plan last week to raise salaries for the rest of the school year, as well as for the upcoming three years. They want teacher salaries to reach the national average by the 2008-09 school year.

Some county administrators worried that they would have to find more money for teachers paid by local governments instead of by the state. State education officials told local leaders Tuesday that they will provide $7 million to assure that those teachers get equivalent raises.

"It was the intent of the governor to cover parity raises for the locally paid teachers," said Dan Gerlach, Easley's senior finance adviser. A communications mix-up delayed getting the news to school officials, he said.

In Guilford County, school administrators were pleased to learn they won't have to scramble to cover a nearly $400,000 budget gap.

"I'm surprised, but I'm glad," said Anita Sharpe, vice chairman of the Guilford education board. "That was the right thing to do."

Easley said he will work with the Legislature to get teachers a 5 percent raise over each of the next three years, at a projected annual price tag of $150 million. This year's state budget contained $85 million to pay for the initial raises announced last week.
ECU men are hitting the books hard, too

By Brock Letchworth
The Daily Reflector

When you have a mother who is a school teacher and a father who's a school principal, there's little doubt that education is one of the top priorities in your family.

That was the scenario for East Carolina men's basketball coach Ricky Stokes growing up, and the school-first attitude is one which Stokes has aimed to install in the members of this year's hoops' squad since taking over head coaching duties with the Pirates.

Stokes, who earned a bache-lors' degree in psychology during his playing days at Virginia and completed the requirements for a master's degree in counselor education at Virginia Commonwealth three years later, has made great strides in ensuring that Pirate players are just as familiar with their way to the classroom as they are the locker room as they prepare for the exhibition opener against North Carolina Central on Nov. 12.

"We've really stressed doing things right off the court as well as on the court," Stokes said. "I can honestly say we've had great improvement since we've been here. It really started in the spring because I don't know if you can have success on the court if you don't have success off the court."

Not too long after being hired, Stokes made the first steps toward achieving that success by cracking down on study hall attendance for the team five nights a week, which he and the players say have helped academic performances tremendously.

The study halls began as one-hour sessions, but eventually increased by an hour each night, and every session is mandatory unless a player maintains a 2.5 GPA. That average allows the player to attend only one session per week.

The study hall requirements combined with an attendance policy handed down by ECU Director of Athletics Terry Holland, now gives players no excuse for not making the grade.

"It helps us a lot because we have time set aside to work on our schoolwork and we have help from the tutors," said junior guard Japhet McNeil, who was named to the ECU honor roll during the spring semester. "I've seen a change in focus. Everybody's at it in study hall, and that's good because like coach says, 'If stuff is handled off the court, your game will

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Study halls helping team

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take over for itself."

Along with McNeil, sophomore Taylor Gagnon and senior Will O'Neil also earned academic accolades last season, as each were named to the Conference USA Commissioner's Honor Roll. Other members of the team have seen their grades rise during the last two semesters, including senior forward Mike Castro — a criminal justice major.

"It's helped me get organized," Castro said of study hall. "And it's helped me a lot with my tests. I think all the guys are seeing the effects of the time spent in there."

This season, the team has set a goal of a combined 2.5 GPA. According to Stokes, his responsibility for helping the players reach that mark begins from the first day he and his fellow coaches sit down with a player's family.

"We're an extension of their family," Stokes said. "Because of that, we wouldn't do anything we would not do with our own family."

That includes tough love at times. While the coaching staff doesn't have a long list of rules, they expect the players to abide by the ones they do have, including guidelines like being on time and being accountable.

Stokes believes recruiting the proper people is the most efficient way to guarantee ECU becomes the productive team it wants to be on and off the hardwood, however.

"We're not going to bring in any athlete that we don't feel like has a chance to graduate, and we're going to do our best when they get in here to ensure that they do," Stokes said. "Wherever they are, we expect maximum effort from them and we expect them to achieve. It's a really small number of guys who play college basketball who go on to play at the next level. It's nice to dream, but you also have to prepare yourself for life after basketball."

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Increasingly, college presidents are career fund-raisers

By Justin Pope
The Associated Press

The outgoing president of Randolph-Macon College in Virginia, Roger Martin is an Oxford-trained church historian. His successor is a career fund-raiser who brought in about $3 billion for his last two employers.

The appointment last week of Robert Lindgren to lead the small, 175-year-old liberal arts college about 15 miles north of Richmond is the latest example of a trend in higher education: Schools are looking for more than a scholar these days when they hire a president.

Lindgren fully grasps Randolph-Macon's academic mission, said search committee chair Harold Starke. But, he added, "fund-raising was certainly high on the list (of criteria), as it would be for any college of any size today."

For years, college presidents — including four of the first six at Randolph-Macon — were often clergymen. Gradually, the pipeline shifted to scholars in such fields as classics and English and, more recently, to scientists. But almost always, candidates were teachers and deans promoted through the academic ranks.

Now as the complexity of running a college and the pressures of fund-raising have intensified, schools have become less picky about their presidents' scholarly credentials. Increasingly, they are looking to candidates from the business and fund-raising worlds — prompting concern from some faculty about priorities.

In a Chronicle of Higher Education survey of nearly 1,400 four-year college presidents that was released this week, 22 percent described their previous job as nonacademic university vice president or a similar post.

A broader American Council on Education survey found 33 percent of college presidents in 2001 had never held a faculty position, up from 25 percent in 1986. About 15 percent came from outside academia, up from under 9 percent in 1996. Those numbers have likely increased.

Florida Southern, Albright and Muhlenberg are among the colleges that recently appointed presidents whose previous jobs were fund-raising at another school, while the University of Kentucky and others have tapped business executives.

Each of those new presidents have doctoral degrees, but some public universities eager to attract more state funding have proven willing to sacrifice the doctoral credential for political connections. The University of North Carolina tapped former White House Chief of Staff Erskine Bowles, while Radford University hired the head of the Virginia Lottery. In Colorado, the community college system and two of its campuses are led by former members of Gov. Bill Owens' cabinet, only one of whom has a doctorate.

The reason is clear: the job of college president is increasingly a financial one.

The Chronicle survey found 53 percent of presidents worked on fund-raising every day, more than any other activity. Asked how they defined success, the most common reply was "having a balanced budget," beating out "excellent quality of educational programs."

A president's "legacy is almost always cited in terms of how many buildings were built, how much the endowment has grown," said Rita Bornstein, a former president of Rollins College in Florida, who previously headed development at the University of Miami.

Against that backdrop, college trustees reason that it's foolish to limit the applicant pool to those who have mastered the kind of narrowly focused scholarly work required to earn a doctorate and ascend the academic ladder.

"Faculty don't want to work for poor, badly managed institutions. But some worry about the new presidents' commitment to the unique culture of academic life."
Johnson & Johnson says it might not complete deal to buy Guidant

By Ashley M. Heher
The Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS—Johnson & Johnson warned Wednesday it might pull out of a $25.4 billion deal to buy Guidant Corp. because of potential liability arising from the medical device maker’s sweeping product recalls and a regulatory investigation. But Guidant officials said J&J was legally bound to go through with the deal.

"Recent product and communications issues have certainly had an impact on our business in the near term," Guidant chief executive Ronald W. Dollens said in a statement. "However, we believe that the fundamentals of our business are strong and our markets and products have attractive prospects for growth."

Meanwhile, analysts said J&J, which makes health care products ranging from baby lotion to drug-coated heart stents, might be turning its focus to Guidant’s rival, St. Jude Medical Inc., in its quest to diversify.

"J&J needs something like Guidant to revitalize its growth," said Jan Wald, an analyst with A.G. Edwards & Sons. "People are now thinking that if J&J does walk away, St. Jude is in their scopes." St. Jude Medical, which makes pacemakers and defibrillators, is based in St. Paul, Minn.

St. Jude spokeswoman Angela Craig said the company does not comment on speculation.

Indianapolis-based Guidant shares sank $2.70, or 4.3 percent, to close at $60.40 on the New York Stock Exchange where it had fallen to a 52-week low of $59.25 during in the day. J&J shares lost 60 cents to finish at $61.30 on the NYSE.

St. Jude Medical stock rose $2.10, or 4.3 percent, to close at $50.44 after briefly reaching a new 52-week high of $50.70. At Wednesday’s closing price, St. Jude Medical is worth about $18.4 billion.

Wednesday’s market speculation and corporate posturing came as the Federal Trade Commission gave conditional approval for the New Brunswick, N.J.-based J&J to acquire Guidant, which is based in Indianapolis.

J&J quickly issued a statement saying recent recalls of Guidant-made implantable devices and regulatory investigations have had a "material adverse effect" on Guidant and that it was not required to close the acquisition. J&J officials said negotiations to restructure the terms of the proposed buyout had not yielded a compromise.

"Johnson & Johnson cannot assure that the companies will resume those discussions or, if discussions do resume, whether they will be able to reach agreement on revised terms that would allow Johnson & Johnson to proceed with the transaction," the statement said.

Pulling out of the agreement could cost J&J $700 million, according to the merger agreement. But if J&J can prove the recalls have adversely affected Guidant, it won’t have to pay the termination fee, said Randy Katz, an attorney specializing in mergers and acquisitions with Bryan Cave LLP in Irvine, Calif. He reviewed the agreement with The Associated Press.

Since June, Guidant has recalled or issued warnings about 88,000 heart defibrillators — including its top seller, the Contak Renewal 3 — and almost 200,000 pacemakers because of reported malfunctions. The company faces multiple suits from patients and shareholders, as well as a reported criminal investigation by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

Federal prosecutors in Boston and Minneapolis last week issued separate subpoenas seeking documents about Guidant’s devices and its Ventak Prizm R 2 and Contak Renewal R 1 and 2 defibrillators.

The J&J-Guidant deal was announced in December. Guidant shareholders overwhelmingly approved the deal April 27, and European regulators signed off in late August after requiring the combined company to sell operations in niche markets for cardiovascular devices to guarantee fair competition in the EU’s 25 member states.

The FTC said Wednesday that J&J would have to divest devices used in bypass graft surgery and allow another company to license certain drug-eluting stent technology to avoid violating federal laws regulating competition with the Guidant deal. The agency said J&J would also have to end its agreement to distribute certain products used in heart surgery.
Margaret T. Dixon

Mrs. Margaret Taylor Dixon, 76, passed away Tuesday, Nov. 1, 2005. The funeral service will be conducted Friday at 11 a.m. in the Wilkerson Funeral Chapel. Entombment will follow in the Mausoleum at Pinewood Memorial Park.

Mrs. Dixon, born Aug. 30, 1927, to the late Arthur and Susan Tucker Taylor, was raised in the Black Jack community. A graduate of Chico High School, she also attended Greenville Business School and Pitt Community College. She worked at East Carolina University in Student Health Services, retiring with 30 years of service.

Mrs. Dixon was a devoted and active member of Black Jack Free Will Baptist Church her entire life. She loved to travel, visit with friends and attend her church, but most of all enjoyed spending time with her family. She was devoted to her brothers and sisters, and loved time spent with her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Her loving Christian spirit will be missed.

Mrs. Dixon was the widow of Hubert Evans Jr., who died in 1986, and J.D. Dixon, who died in 1999. In addition to her parents and husbands, she was preceded in death by brothers, Carlton and David Taylor; and sisters, Jean Taylor, Pauline Freeland and Edna Veillette.

She is survived by her daughter, Sue Evans Cosby and her husband, F. Spencer Cosby Jr.; her son, Hubert Wayne Evans; two grandchildren, Lisa Burleson and her husband, Robert G. Burleson, and Ashlie Evans; two great-grandchildren, Trey Burleson and Grace Burleson; three sisters, Mary Taylor Barber, who was her twin, Myrtle Taylor Rayford and Faye Taylor Francis; a special cousin, Blanche Haddock Stocks; and several nieces and nephews.

The family will receive friends tonight from 6 to 8 at Wilkerson Funeral Home. Memorials may be made to Black Jack Free Will Baptist Church, 2513 Black Jack-Grimesland Road, Greenville, NC 27858; or the Pitt Memorial Hospital Foundation, Fund for Palliative Care, P.O. Box 8489, Greenville, NC 27835-8489.
Dr. Melvin John Williams, 90, of Greenville died Tuesday, Nov. 1, 2005. A graveside service will be held at 11 a.m. Friday in Maplewood Cemetery, Wilson.

He was born Feb. 13, 1915. Dr. Williams received his undergraduate, graduate and doctorate degrees from Duke University. He received his divinity degree from Duke University and was an ordained minister.

While at Duke, he enjoyed participating on the wrestling team and won numerous awards at track and field events. He served as professor of sociology at Albion College, Wesleyan University, Florida State University and Stetson University. He retired from East Carolina University, where he founded and chaired the graduate and undergraduate programs of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology. He authored numerous publications, including the groundbreaking book, "Catholic Social Thought: Its Approach To Contemporary Problems." His professional honors include: Who's Who in America, 1970-1981, and Who's Who in the World, 1974-1975. As an ordained minister, he served as a guest minister for churches in several states. He was past president of the Deland, Fla., Lions Club and was a lifetime member of the Greenville Lions Club, where he held many offices. He was a member of the Sons of the American Revolution.

Music was a very important part of his life, and he performed as an active member of several church choirs. His faith was an integral part of his life, and he was a longtime member of Jarvis United Methodist Church, where he taught Sunday school and sang in the choir.

He married the former Frances Virginia Clark on Oct. 15, 1936, and they recently celebrated their 69th anniversary.

He was preceded in death by his parents, John Presley and Mary Jenera Wilkerson Williams; daughter, Dorothy Virginia Williams; and 11 brothers and sisters.

Dr. Williams is survived by his wife, Frances Virginia Clark Williams; two daughters, Kay Williams Yount and husband, Bradley, of Cashiers and Deborah Williams Little and husband, Monte, of Greenville; three sons, Melvin John "Johnny" Williams Jr., Steven Clark Williams and wife, Jennifer, all of Greenville, and Eric Stanton Williams and wife, Anne, of Charlotte; a sister, Ethel Clark of Durham; nine grandchildren, and 13 great-grandchildren.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be directed to Jarvis United Methodist Church, 510 S. Washington St., Greenville, NC 27834, Hooker Memorial Christian Church, 1111 Greenville Blvd. S.E., Greenville, NC 27838, or The Greenville Host Lions Club, c/o Roy Berbert, 316 Windsor Road, Greenville, NC 27838, or the charity of one's choice.

Arrangements are by Joyner's Funeral Home, Wilson.