THE DAILY CLIPS

November 8, 2010

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

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Parents in Pitt County should expect to see a note sent home about their child's teeth. It won't tell them their child has no cavities or that he needs to go to the dentist for a checkup. Those kinds of notes won't be going home anymore because there isn't anyone at school to check the children's teeth.

Instead, parents in Pitt and six other eastern North Carolina counties will get a letter from the Oral Health Section of the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services telling them that there is no longer a public health dental hygienist to serve their elementary school children. Due to state budget shortfalls, Pitt, Lenoir, Wilson, Nash, Pasquotank, Currituck and Dare counties are among a dozen in the state left with no preventive dental program since late September.

“It just breaks my heart to see all these counties go unserved,” said Dr. Rebecca King, section chief of the Oral Health Section, which is part of the Division of Public Health. “I don't know who's going to fill in these gaps.”

For more than 20 years in Pitt County, that role belonged to Donna Smith, who served as a bridge between children and dentists. Through school screenings, she let parents know when their children needed to visit their dentist and told those who had no dentist how to find one.

State public health dental hygienists, first hired in the 1970s, now screen 200,000 kindergartners and fifth-graders each year for signs of dental problems. They place dental sealants on teeth of children at high risk for tooth decay. They teach children and educators how to prevent dental disease and collect data to help the state assess overall dental health. They consult with school nurses about children who complain of toothaches.
“We provide a service that no one else can,” said Smith, a public health dental hygienist who now serves Beaufort, Greene, Hyde, Tyrrell and Washington counties and hopes to be able to screen children in parts of Dare. “It's probably going to fall solely on the school nurses now because there is no one else.”

While it is true that school nurses will continue to see children who are in pain, Dr. John Pendill, a regional supervisor for the Oral Public Health Section, worries that in counties where the public health hygienist position has been eliminated, a large portion of the job will remain undone.

“We have had situations in the past where we've tried to work with nurses to screen specific populations,” said Pendill, who supervises 16 public health hygienists serving 43 eastern North Carolina counties. “They really haven't had training to identify the problems.”

Charla Holbrook, manager of school health services at Pitt County Memorial Hospital, said the 18 nurses that serve 23,000 students in Pitt County's 36 public schools have not been asked to try to fill in the gaps.

“It's much more complex than just opening a child's mouth and looking in it,” she said. “(The public health hygienist) came in and screened large groups of children and identified things that might become a problem before the child was in pain.

“We would not have the time or resources to do that consistently,” Holbrook said. “I honestly do not see (school nurses) as a solution.”

Pitt County Public Health Department Director Dr. John Morrow said the department, which provided office space for Smith, does not have staff available to pick up her workload.

“There are very tough choices,” he said. “As happens so often in public health, the prevention dollars get cut for the sake of treatment dollars.

“When you do that, you're going to end up paying a lot more later than if you made the investment on the front end and prevented it to begin with,” Morrow said. “But when you've got all these people standing there with a mouth that hurts, you've got to treat them.”

The county's only dental health employees staff the Smile Safari mobile dental clinic, which travels to public elementary schools in Pitt County to clean, fill and extract teeth and apply sealants. The clinic, begun in 2001, provides access to care for children from low-income families.

Access to care was one of the factors the state used to determine which counties would lose public health dental hygienists, King said. Gates, Hyde, Camden and Tyrrell, counties with no practicing dentists, all retained hygienists. Other factors included the percentage of children with untreated tooth decay. In 2008-09, 17 percent of the kindergarten students screened in Pitt County were found to have untreated decay, mirroring the state average. About 5 percent of fifth-graders had
untreated decay, compared with a state average of about 4 percent. By comparison, 32 percent of kindergarten students in Greene County had untreated decay. About 44 percent of fifth-graders in Pitt County and statewide have dental sealants, compared with about 21 percent in 1996.

“Pitt County is better off overall than what we were comparing with,” King said. “It's not perfect, but the choice we had to make was where are we going to put the people that we have left? ...We are now, with the new cuts, not serving 25 percent of the kindergartners and fifth-graders in the state.”

The new cuts are the result of a charge from the General Assembly for the Division of Public Health to eliminate $900,000 in positions. Because the Oral Health Section relies heavily on state funding rather than matching federal dollars, it became the first to lose jobs. After eliminating $400,000 in unallocated public health salaries, the division cut six hygienists' jobs (where the average pay is in the $50,000 range), left two retirees' positions open and shifted some staff to cover larger areas.

Dr. Alec Parker, executive director of the North Carolina Dental Society, said his organization is concerned about the effect the cuts will have on oral health, particularly in children. In conversations with state lawmakers, Parker and other Dental Society representatives have asked that the hygienist positions be reinstated if funding becomes available.

“To be honest with you, we really need more,” he said. “Just putting them back would be a start.”

The Oral Health Section's 2008-09 annual report indicated there was one public health dental hygienist for every 14,600 public elementary school children. According to the report, OHS's long-term goal was to expand the program to have a ratio of one hygienist to every 7,000 elementary school children.

“The Oral Health Section has taken cuts over the past two to three years that are really beginning to concern a lot of people, including us at the dental society,” Parker said. Parker is especially uneasy about how the cuts will affect Give Kids A Smile Day, an annual event designed to provide education and dental treatment to low-income children who do not have access to care. Last year across the state, more than 1,500 Give Kids A Smile Day dental health volunteers served more than 15,000 children.

In many areas, public health hygienists helped to identify children who needed but could not afford dental care and arranged for them to be seen on Give Kids A Smile Day. In Pitt County, Smith made appointments for more than 100 children.

Ruth Cannon's granddaughter was one of them. Twelve-year-old Michelle has been treated at the last three Give Kids A Smile events. The middle school student does not receive Medicaid or Health Choice, a health care program for children whose families make too much money to qualify for Medicaid but who cannot afford health insurance. Fillings Michelle has received at Give Kids a Smile Day would have cost Cannon nearly $2,000.
“It takes what I make to pay bills, just to keep the house going. I just don't have it,” Cannon said. “I can't do dental insurance for her because I'm not her legal guardian. We're in between the cracks, really. We'd be lost without it (Give Kids A Smile).”

Dr. Jasper L. Lewis Jr., a pediatric dentist whose office hosts volunteer dentists across the county for the local Give Kids A Smile event, said area dental health professionals are discussing ways to continue providing the service in the absence of a public health hygienist.

“This is a real concern,” Lewis said. “Public health hygienists already have the network in place that they can automatically go in (to the schools). We don't have that.”

Though he is not sure how Give Kids A Smile will make connections with families, Lewis said area dentists will find a way because the need is too great to let the program lapse.

“I have folks coming in here who have seen the public health hygienist, and they have assumed that was dental care,” he said. “That was the only dental care they got. She (Smith) is the only one they saw, and now she's not there.”

Smith said it is not unusual for public health hygienists to see children who have never sat in a dentist's chair. Some children tell her they don't own a toothbrush, and a look inside their mouths seems to confirm it.

Dr. Gregory Chadwick, associate dean for planning and extramural affairs at the East Carolina University School of Dental Medicine, is working to develop service learning centers in such areas of the state where dental school faculty and students can serve needy patients. Still Chadwick is concerned about the loss of public hygienists and worries that even deeper cuts in the Oral Public Health Section may follow.

“The public health hygienist, that's the first line of defense,” he said. “When you start taking prevention out of the equation ... the problem is they're going to show up at the emergency room, and that cost is going to have to be borne by the hospital,” Chadwick said. “Eventually it's going to be borne by the public.”

Pendill believes the real costs of the cuts may not be known for several years. Because data collection is one of the hygienists' roles, he said, it may be difficult to even assess the effects.

“Over time the decay rate will probably increase for the children, particularly those who are raised in poverty,” Pendill said. “Dental problems grow over time,” he said. “It will take a long time to see the effects of this because someone is not looking.”

Contact Kim Grizzard at kgrizzard@reflector.com or (252) 329-9578.
WWII artifact to get special Nov. 11 display

An artifact from the Battleship North Carolina Memorial will have a special display on Veterans' Day at East Carolina University.

A rubber relief map of the island of Iwo Jima from the battleship's collection will be shown from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Nov. 11 on the second floor of the Joyner Library on the ECU campus in Greenville.

The intelligence map was constructed during World War II by the U.S. Naval Photographic Interpretation Center to prepare for the invasion of Iwo Jima.

Made of cardboard, plaster and foam rubber, at an approximate scale of 1:12,500, it shows airstrips and key topographic features of the island.

U.S. military personnel used the map to train and to prepare for the assault on the key Japanese-held island, said Mary Ames Booker, curator of collections for the battleship memorial.

The USS North Carolina participated in the Iwo Jima campaign, but the map was not part of its wartime equipment, Booker said. Rather, it has been on permanent loan to the memorial from the U.S. Navy since the 1960s.

The map is currently being treated and conserved by Susanne Grieve, an ECU conservation instructor. She and conservators will work on the map for the next few months.

It will then be returned to the battleship and placed in the memorial's exhibit hall, Booker said.

– Ben Steelman

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The World Wide Web can be used as a powerful tool to gain attention. Pittsburgh rapper Wiz Khalifa knows that power first-hand.

The 22-year-old musician's success can largely be attributed to the fan base he developed through the Internet. His MySpace page has more than 27 million plays, and his latest mixed tape was the No. 1 searched topic on both Google and Yahoo.

Wiz Khalifa will perform at East Carolina University at 8 p.m. today in Wright Auditorium as part of his “Waken Baken Tour 2010.”

The 60-city North American tour kicked off Sept. 16 in Philadelphia and wraps up in Boston on Nov. 21. Big Krit will be tonight's opening musician.

Following in the footsteps of the do-it-yourself rapper, ECU student Jeremy Ware used the Internet to bring the musician to Pitt County.

“I did my research and contacted his booking agent,” the 19-year-old sophomore said. “He said that it would cost anywhere from $5,000 to $6,000 to bring him here. I didn't have that kind of money,” Ware said.

To garner interest in bringing Wiz Khalifa to ECU, Ware created a Facebook page dedicated to the idea in hopes of getting the ECU Student Activities Board to notice. “The Student Activities Board assisted with it a lot,” Ware said. “They took it the next step and got ECU to host the event.”

Tickets for the event went on sale Sept. 22, according to Ware, and were sold out by Sept. 23.
MTV named Khalifa “Hottest Breakthrough MC of 2010,” and he recently signed a multi-record deal with Atlantic Records. In April, he released the mixtape “Kush and Orange Juice” as a free download, and it became a top trending item on Twitter and Google.

His stage name is derived from khalifa, an Arabic word meaning “successor” and wisdom, which was shortened to Wiz when Khalifa was 15.

Contact Kelley Kirk at kkirk@reflector.com or (252) 329-9596.
An East Carolina University professor is among the creators of the first real-time, remote diagnostic hearing assessment that allows interaction between clinician and patient — a low-cost development that could bring much-needed treatment to rural and low-income patients around the world.

“There are people throughout the world who have no access to professional hearing health care,” said Dr. Gregg Givens, chairman of the department of communication sciences and a practicing clinical audiologist. “This gives clinicians the ability to remotely diagnose and treat hearing loss.”

ECU and Otovation, a leading provider of audiometer products for hearing professionals and care providers worldwide, are working together to make the system available, with a projected release date of mid-2011.

“Dr. Givens and his colleagues were visionary in seeing this many years ago as a potential improvement in assisting and delivering care for patients,” said Dave Davis, founder and president of Otovation. “We at Otovation believe very strongly in the quality of what they have developed, and we look forward to continuing to work with ECU in developing and bringing this important service to market.”

Hearing loss often goes untreated. The National Institutes on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders, a federal agency, estimates that only one in five people who could benefit from a hearing aid actually wears one.
For rural and low-income populations, access to hearing health care can be scarce. In eastern North Carolina, for instance, some counties have no audiologist. “Hearing health care in some of these communities just doesn't exist,” Givens said.

Innovations in telemedicine offer ways to increase access to services while improving quality of care and reducing costs. With this new hearing system, clinicians can remotely test patients around the world through local or area-wide networks as well as the Web. Assessments can even be performed using smart phones and tablet PCs.

The hearing test system will be suitable for use in varied settings, including nursing homes, schools, hospitals, correctional facilities and military settings. Givens and his colleagues began working on the project in the early 1990s as a way to get hearing care to people in rural and under-served areas. In the early years of development, they were stymied by hurdles in software and hardware development. The first Internet-based test on campus was conducted in the late 1990s, Givens said. The first of two patents was issued in 2005.

“It's exciting to see something you envisioned finally coming to reality,” Givens said. To learn more, contact Givens at givensg@ecu.edu or 744-6080. For more information on Otovation, contact Davis at dave@otovation.com or (610) 768-9300.

Poems by A.R. Ammons published

Two new collections of poems by the late A.R. Ammons, both edited by ECU English professor Alex Albright, have recently been published by small presses in Kentucky and eastern North Carolina. Ammons, who grew up on a subsistence farm near the southeastern North Carolina town of Whiteville, published 27 collections of poetry, before his death in 2001. For nearly 50 years a distinguished poet and professor at Cornell University, he received virtually every national award available to American poets, including two National Book Awards and the Bolligen and Ruth Lilly prizes. In 1981, he was one of the original recipients of the MacArthur Fellowship.


Broadstone Books publisher Larry Moore said, “I am delighted to bring back this favorite work by a master American poet in this new edition. At a time when the term ‘traditional values' is so abused and corrupted, it is essential that we be reminded of the truth of those values in such simple, quiet, elegant verse.”
“The Mule Poems,” by A.R. Ammons, is a limited edition chapbook of seven poems hand-stitched to a letterpress cover with 15 illustrations by ECU art professor Joan Mansfield. It was designed by Eva Roberts, an art professor at Meredith College.

Roberts was the original art director for the North Carolina Literary Review, which Albright founded in 1991 and for which Ammons was staff poet from 1991-96.

“Mules for Ammons came to be a poignant symbol of the old farming ways of life that he so much missed,” Albright said, “especially after he became so isolated from the South in his adult life.

“He often said all of his poems were North Carolinian because he was, and the farming life he came of age in, during the Great Depression, is the subject of much of that poetry.”

Ammons told an interviewer in 1980 that when he was a young boy, he wished to “grow up to be rich enough to buy a nice mule — I used to dream of having this frisky, wonderful mule, and it seemed to me the greatest thing in the world would be to be able to own one.”

“Instead,” Albright said, “he wrote these beautiful heart-rending poems about the mules his family owned, Kate and Silver.”

“The Mule Poems” is the first book published by R.A. Fountain, the small business run by Albright and his wife, Elizabeth, in the western Pitt County town of Fountain. It includes three previously unpublished poems.

Both books are available at University Book Exchange in Greenville, at Quail Ridge Books in Raleigh, and at R.A. Fountain, both in-store in Fountain and via its e-store at http://rafountain.com/catalog/.

Publication events for the two books are scheduled for Nov. 14 at 2 p.m. at Quail Ridge Books and for Dec. 3 at UBE as part of the Greenville arts community's Christmas Art Walk.

The Special Collections Department at Joyner Library holds the A.R. Ammons Papers, which includes writings, photographs, manuscripts and published literary works, audio recordings, original watercolors, and other items by and about North Carolina poet and educator A.R. Ammons.

The collection contains 713 items containing 21,539 sheets of material.

Professor attends White House event

Diane Rodriguez, professor in the Curriculum and Instruction Department in the College of Education, was invited to the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics. She participated in the National Education Summit and Call to Action Oct. 18-19 in Washington, D.C.

The summit was organized by Juan Sepulveda, the director of the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans.
White House personnel, directors of federal departments and other participants discussed education policy, civic rights and education equity, financial aid and other education issues.

On Oct. 19, President Barack Obama signed the executive order, “White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics.” The initiative seeks to expand educational opportunities, reduce the dropout rate, improve education outcomes, and deliver a complete and competitive education for all Latinos.

One of the key components of this initiative is to prepare Latino students “for college, a career, and productive and satisfying lives.” More than 11 million Latino students are in U.S. public elementary and secondary schools, constituting more than 22 percent of all pre-K-12 public school students.

Upcoming Events:

Tuesday: Screening of “Burning in the Sun,” part of the 2010-11 Southern Circuit tour of Independent Filmmakers, 8 p.m., Speight Auditorium in the Jenkins Fine Arts Center. Cambria Matlow, co-producer/co-director, will speak. Free for ECU students, general admission tickets at $5. Call 328-5386 for more information.

Wednesday: Cunanan Leadership Speaker Series presents author Sam Parker, 3:30 p.m., Wright Auditorium. Parker is the co-author of “212° the extra degree,” a bestselling classic in the field of motivational books. Hosted by the College of Business. Free and open to the public.

See www.ecu.edu/cs-ecu/calendar.cfm for times, places and more information on these events and other ECU upcoming activities.
The people of England can breathe easy today; the Guinness World Records will not erase their place in history for having the largest gathering of costumed pirates in the world — yet.

The world record of 6,166 pirates at a single gathering is still held by Hastings in the U.K. A Greenville record, though, of 813 swashbucklers showed up for “Blackbeard's Challenge” Saturday at Clark-LeClair Stadium in an attempt to “pillage and plunder” the record, according to event organizer and loyal Pirate Whitey Martin.

The gathering was held before East Carolina's football contest next door at Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium against Navy. Martin thought the record would be in easy reach with so many fans turning out for the game, he said, but few ECU students detoured to CLS on the way and Martin's dream fell considerably short.

There were specific conditions that had to be met, and Martin used all the social networking tools available to him to spread the word and share the rules so people who came out would not be disqualified.

To be certified by Guinness, registered participants' had to clearly resemble a pirate with appropriate clothing, a pirate-style hat or bandana; and an accessory such as a sword, hook, musket, parrot or eye patch. Once would-be pirates passed muster, they entered the stadium in carefully counted [and re-counted] increments of 100 and lined up along the outfield wall, where they had to remain in costume for a minimum of 10 minutes.
The process was monitored by Joanie Brooks, of Richard R. Cox, CPA, PA, an independent auditor who assured the qualifications and conditions were precisely met. All went according to Hoyle — and Guinness. There were hooked hands and patched eyes of all ages, even an amputee who wore an authentic wooden leg. Martin's first attempt for official sanctioning of a record attempt was turned down a few years back, he said.

“There are thousands of requests submitted worldwide, and less than one percent get to do it, so we were blessed to get approved this time,” Martin said. “The English have held this record since the 1940s, but it belongs here because eastern North Carolina is the home of the true pirates.”

When the pirates gathered and it was clear the record would remain intact, Martin thanked all who came out and promised another try.

Ann Holland, wife of ECU Director of Athletics Terry Holland, was among the costumed crowd with her grandchildren, seeking Queen Anne's revenge, she said, and Terry Holland stood inside the stadium, sans costume, to cheer on the contestants.

“They look like true pirates in every sense of the word. Fans who do this are very special, and we're very appreciative of them,” Terry Holland said.

When the required time limit expired and it was clear the record would not be broken, Martin took the field and thanked the fans who turned out.

“It looks like we haven't broken the world record today, or the American record, but before I die, East Carolina University and eastern North Carolina will own this record,” he said.

He told the attendees that it would be another year and a half before another opportunity to break the record would be given by Guinness, and he assured them more effective efforts at publicizing and presenting the event next time.

Martin's statement drew one response, in unison, from the costumed crowd: “Arrgghh!”

Contact Michael Abramowitz at mabramowitz@reflector.com or (252) 329-9571.
UNC system rethinks the way it funds campuses

CHAPEL HILL The UNC system wants to change its funding model to reward high-achieving campuses while hitting those that don't perform so well in the wallet.

The shift would end a long practice that guarantees campuses a set payment for each student they enroll. The practice, which gained steam in the early 2000s with the UNC system's "focused growth" initiative, prompted some campuses to fling open their doors.

But campuses didn't always have the resources to help all the students who came in, many of whom were the first in their families to go to college. Often, these students dropped out of college.

The change would tie enrollment growth funding directly to a series of academic markers such as retention rates, graduation rates and how long it takes students to graduate.

"We need to make sure people graduate - and graduate with diplomas that mean something," said UNC President Erskine Bowles.

A campus's retention rate - the percentage of students who return to college after their freshman year - would be key under the proposed change. Each
campus has a retention target to hit, and if it misses, its enrollment could be limited or even frozen.

The retention rates at all but three of the 16 UNC system universities now meet the set targets. Two campuses - UNC Greensboro and Western Carolina - would have restricted enrollment growth given their current retention rates. UNC Pembroke, where the retention rate is lower, would not be allowed to enroll additional students if the change were in place today.

**Accountability the goal**

Campuses have come to rely heavily on enrollment growth funding; each year, it is one of the UNC system's top priorities when lobbying for state dollars. Though the exact amount varies by campus and program, the UNC system receives about $12,000 in state money for each full-time student it enrolls.

But with the state facing a budget gap of at least $3.2 billion, university spending will come under heavy scrutiny when the General Assembly returns early next year. UNC system leaders say the change, which they hope to have in place in January, prior to the next legislative session, would provide a new level of accountability.

"This is a big philosophical change," said Hannah Gage, chairwoman of the UNC system's Board of Governors, which discussed the change Friday. "This is a way to show the state its investment is being protected."

The UNC system's campuses would not be measured with each other. Instead, each campus would be compared with a defined group of peer universities - most of which are public institutions of a similar size and student composition in other states.

**Policy not set in stone**

The board is expected to tweak the proposed policy before voting on it. One piece under discussion is the use of a six-year graduation rate to evaluate performance.

Clarice Cato Goodyear, a board member from Charlotte, wondered whether the six-year guideline, an industry standard for evaluating graduation rates, did a disservice to those campuses where many students graduate within the traditional, four-year time frame.
But Bowles and others defended the six-year rate, citing a rapidly-changing demographic among enrolled students.

"A lot of our students are not 18-year-olds coming in for four years," he said. "And we have lots of kids who, because of economic situations, drop out for a while."

The plan would offer financial incentives for those campuses with excellent graduation rates and who graduate their students quickly. It also allows incentives to campuses that are small, such as Elizabeth City State and UNC Asheville, and those that serve disadvantaged populations, like N.C. Central University.

The change does not appear to reward campuses that exceed their goals but don't want to add students.

That aspect could be improved, said Randy Woodson, chancellor at N.C. State University, which enrolls 34,000 students now and isn't looking to get much bigger.

"I'm all for rewarding success," Woodson said. "But for those of us who are reaching capacity, there has to be a model to reward success for campuses who don't want to grow."

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Best-selling author Sam Parker will speak at East Carolina University on Wednesday as part of the Cunanann Leadership Speaker Series, hosted by the College of Business.

The public is invited to attend this free event, which will begin at 3:30 p.m. in Wright Auditorium at ECU.

Parker is the co-author of "212° the extra degree," a best-selling classic in the field of motivational books. He also is the author of "Smile & Move" and "SalesTough."

In 1998, Parker co-founded Richmond-based Give More Media Inc., a group that produces and publishes information, ideas and inspirational content. He worked as a salesman for more than a decade in various industries including office products, financial services, pharmaceuticals, joint replacements and software.

"Learning how to give one extra degree in business and in life can have a huge impact," Rick Niswander, dean of the College of Business, said. "Sam Parker excels in inspiring others to strive for excellence, and his insights are sure to enrich, energize and inform our students, faculty and citizens alike."

The Cunanann Leadership Speaker Series is made possible by a gift from alumni Steve and Ellen Cunanann of Richboro, Pa. Matching funds are also provided by the Johnson & Johnson Foundation. The series brings distinguished leaders to Greenville representing for-profit and nonprofit firms, entrepreneurial activities, government and public affairs.

Topics highlight leadership, professional development, ethics and the role of business in modern society.

For more information about Parker, visit his website at www.just212.com
BRODY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

Pulmonary specialist joins Brody faculty

Dr. Abid Butt, a pulmonary specialist, has joined the Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University and its group medical practice, ECU Physicians.

Butt joined the faculty as a clinical assistant professor of Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine in the Department of Internal Medicine. He comes to ECU following a fellowship in pulmonary and critical care medicine at Westchester (N.Y.) Medical Center.

A native of Pakistan, Butt has a medical degree from Quaid-E-Azam Medical College in Pakistan. He completed residency training at New York Medical College.

Butt is board-certified in internal medicine and board-eligible in pulmonary and critical care medicine. He also is a member of the American College of Chest Physicians.

Butt’s clinical interests are asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, sarcoidosis, clinical education and lung cancer. His research interest involves outcomes of demographic factors in critically ill patients.

Butt is fluent in Urdu, Punjabi and Hindi.

Butt sees patients at the Moye Medical Center. Appointments are available by calling 744-1600.
Keihin Carolina Systems Technology donates $10,000 to TECS at ECU

Keihin Carolina Systems Technology LLC, a Tarboro company that manufactures engine control systems, has donated $10,000 to East Carolina University's College of Technology and Computer Science (TECS) to help promote science, technology, engineering and mathematics education (STEM) across eastern North Carolina.

In partnership with Edgecombe Community College and Edgecombe County Schools, these funds will be used to help promote interest in technology and engineering related fields of study. The partnership is designed to interest students in a path of study in science and technology programs of higher education at ECU.

Keihin, a manufacturer of engine control systems for Honda and Acura automobiles, personal watercraft and ATV’s, has a long-standing relationship with TECS to help promote STEM education across all of eastern North Carolina.

"In our effort to help develop eastern North Carolina, we are anxious to strengthen our relationship with East Carolina University and continue hiring regional candidates to positions within our company," Chris Eckhardt, vice president of operations for Keihin Carolina Systems Technology, said. "KCST has had great success with interns and graduates of the ECU College of Technology and Computer Science joining our team in various departments including engineering, information technology, and quality engineering."

The partnership will include sponsorship of information sessions and discussions with local schoolchildren and educators and scholarships awarded to students with an interest in engineering and technology.

TECS hopes the donation will encourage other technology-based industries throughout eastern North Carolina to reach out to the education community and steer students toward careers in engineering and technology.

“Our college is very excited about this generous donation from Keihin,” David White, dean of the college, said. “Our director for the center for technology and innovation, David Harrwood, has played a key role in bringing the college and Keihin together on this very important venture.”
ECU considers gazebos to enforce smoking ban

By KRISTEN MCAVOY
Updated: 12:25 AM November 4, 2010

East Carolina University’s Student Government is considering a proposal to decrease student smoking violations on campus.
At a recent meeting, students proposed building gazebos on the university’s campus in an effort to encourage students to smoke in designated areas only.

“We do have a smoking ban on campus, and it is largely not abided by and a lot of times it is not abided by especially when it rains,” said Tremayne Smith, the student body president at ECU.

The school’s current policy prohibits individuals from smoking within 25 feet of university buildings.
“No one wants to stand out in the rain and smoke a cigarette,” Tremayne said. It is unrealistic to expect students to smoke in the rain; so, the gazebos are a solution to enforce our campuses’ smoking ban, he said.

While the proposal has not yet been presented to administrators, many student leaders said they hope it will be implemented.
Similarly, UNC officials are having trouble enforcing a smoking ban.

A ban was implemented at UNC in 2008 which prohibits smoking within 100 feet of any University building. On rainy days, students who wish to smoke are out of luck unless they choose to stand in the rain or violate the ban.
Allen O’Barr, the director of counseling and wellness services at UNC, said it was a good idea to provide shelter for people who choose to smoke.

While many are in support of making a shelter for smokers on campus, neither UNC nor ECU has ever issued a smoking citation.
“No student has ever been ticketed for smoking too close to a building,” Doug Boyd, spokesman for ECU, said.

Randy Young, spokesman for the Department of Public Safety, said he has never given a smoking citation, because it differs from other illegal substance violations. “It is very hard to enforce to begin with because of the fact that the use of cigarettes is short in duration and if we respond by complaint, usually the person has left the area by the time we get there.”
Also, Young said it is difficult to prove a person was smoking within 100 feet of a university building.

“We give verbal warning, but we don’t track those numbers,” he said. Some education officials question whether bans have really decreased smoking, and whether more programs are needed to discourage smoking.

At UNC, students have access to programs at student health services to help them quit smoking. O’Barr said, “we have made services available through Counseling and Wellness Services and have had very few people take advantage of them.”

Contact the State & National Editor at stntdesk@unc.edu.
Bowles leaves legacy of efficiency at UNC

CHAPEL HILL In 2005, Erskine Bowles showed up for his job interview with UNC system leaders toting a copy of the university's long-range plan. He thrust it in front of his interviewers and asked them what they knew about it. It quickly became apparent he knew more than they did.

"His copy was dog-eared, underlined, highlighted," John Davis, a member of the UNC system's Board of Governors who interviewed Bowles that day, recalled Friday.

That was an early indicator of the depth and pace of work Bowles would demand in his five years running the state's public university system. He attended his final meeting of the UNC system's governing board Friday, and he will retire at the end of December.

He'll then be president emeritus, a distinction formalized by the board Friday.

"My job has been simply to make the sum greater than the parts," Bowles said. "I've loved it."

Bowles reflected at length Friday, mostly praising campus chancellors and the many staff members at the university's Chapel Hill headquarters. Bowles took office preaching efficiency and accountability. Five years later, the work force in that Chapel Hill office is 35 percent smaller.

His decisions have not always been popular. Two years ago, he oversaw the elimination of 935 non-faculty jobs across the UNC system as a way of cutting the budget. He now acknowledges he may have cut too much from the administrative side.

But his colleagues have praised him for making tough decisions and demanding campuses be accountable for their performance and use of public money.
"Erskine is a roll-up-your-sleeves kind of leader," said Hannah Gage, who has worked with him as chairwoman of the UNC system governing board.

"He is without pomp and without pretense. With each challenge, he asks himself one thing - what is the right thing for the university? His moral compass is strong and always clear."

Bowles came to the university from the worlds of politics and business. He had no experience in higher education but proved a quick learner, his co-workers have said.

And his business acumen and desire for efficient management proved useful in guiding the university through year after year of budget cuts.

"Erskine knew how to lead in a crisis," Gage said. "He steadied us in a period of uncertainty."

Bowles' successor, Tom Ross, attended Friday's meeting and takes office Jan. 1.

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Name honors a lifetime of building

CHAPEL HILL Two of the new buildings within the new physical sciences complex at UNC-Chapel Hill are named for loyal alums who donated millions to the project.

And then there's Murray Hall, named for a man who has given far more. Royce Murray has been called the "heart and soul" of the chemistry department at UNC-CH, an assessment that seems fair, given that he is now in his 50th year as a faculty member there. Now, a new chemistry building he helped design bears his name, an unusual honor, though not unique.

Universities generally name new buildings for big donors or historic campus figures.

"I thought it was unreal. Surreal, I think, is the word," Murray said of his new honor. "This doesn't happen if you're still alive."

Murray is actually one of two current faculty members for whom a building in the new science complex is named. The nearby Brooks building is named for Fred Brooks, the longtime computer science professor.

At first, Murray's name was to adorn a quadrangle within the new science complex, which is still under construction off South Road.
But the recession slowed the project. There's no quadrangle yet, so the university put Murray's name on the new chemistry building instead.

"We wanted something significant named for Royce," said Chancellor Holden Thorp, a chemistry professor himself who has published several joint journal articles with Murray. "He's a humble guy, but he has unbelievably high standards for science and for how you treat your students and colleagues."

Murray won't be working in Murray Hall. There's something strange and vaguely egotistical about doing so, he says. Plus, he has decades of research, journals, texts and photographs dotting the walls and jamming the bookcases of his not-for-the-claustrophobic office in the Kenan Labs building adjacent to the new science complex.

"I'd probably never get them put back together the way I want," he said. "Too much of a headache and not necessary."

And he's not about to complain about his current building. After all, he helped design it.

**His building legacy**

In fact, you might say Murray has minored in building design over the course of his half century on the UNC-CH campus. In the late 1960s, he was the one-man building committee designing the Kenan Labs building. Years later, he had an indirect hand in the planning of the Morehead labs building by virtue of his role as chemistry department chairman at the time. Earlier this decade, he was enlisted yet again, this time to head a committee of faculty members designing the new science complex.

"That's a big deal," said Thomas Meyer, a longtime Murray colleague in UNC-CH's chemistry department. "The design guys don't always get it right. You need a scientist in the middle of it."

The new science complex is slated to cost more than $250 million, making it the largest project in campus history. Five buildings have been built thus far, with two more in the works. It sits tucked into the elbow of campus formed by the intersection of South Road and Columbia Street, in part on the site of the former Venable Hall, the dank, quirky, oddly-laid-out chemistry headquarters that spawned love-hate relationships with students for 83 years before being demolished in 2008.

In planning the complex, Murray and others hoped to create an interdisciplinary work environment, where faculty members and students from various sciences could work in proximity. The basic notion was to maximize brain power by getting big thinkers closer to each other. The result: chemists, physicists, astronomers, marine scientists and computer scientists all within walking distance of one another.

It's a concept with merit, Murray says now. But at 73, he's still an old-school thinker: "With the science complex, we've accomplished the mingling of disciplines in many
"ways," he said recently. "But the idea that it's necessary to mix the disciplines is full of corn. It's not the only way science is grown."

**Shaping the future**

Over the years, Murray has grown quite a lot of science. And scientists. One was Lowry Caudill, class of '79, who wound up in Murray's lab while working on his senior research project. The experience shaped and inspired him.

"I got to see what big-league academic research was all about," said Caudill, who now lives in Durham. "I got to watch a master at his craft."

Caudill, who would go on to co-found Magellan Laboratories, a drug development company, found a way to pay Murray back for the experience. It was his $5 million gift to the science complex project that funded the naming of Murray Hall. (Caudill's name is on another building in the complex.)

Murray's area of expertise is analytical chemistry, which he describes, essentially, as "the science of measuring chemical things." He teaches undergraduate and grad level courses and runs two labs totaling about a dozen researchers, an effort underwritten by grants from three federal agencies. He made his first big splash in 1974 when he introduced the world to the concept of chemically modified electrodes, which proved a valuable tool for researchers studying fuel cells, chemical sensors and solar energy conversion.

His influence reaches far from Chapel Hill. For the last 20 years, Murray has edited Analytical Chemistry, the best-read journal in the field. He's been active in professional organizations as well.

But science doesn't consume Murray entirely. He travels. He gardens. "My wife drags me to the movies every once in a while," he says. He recommends "Secretariat," by the way - "if you like horses."

A few years back, Murray considered retiring. So he decided one fall semester not to take any new graduate students, a first step toward phasing out his career.

It didn't take.

"I realized, darn it, I like what I'm doing," he said. "So I'm going to keep doing this as long as I can."

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Will they scrimp on schools?

BY STEVE FORD - Associate Editor
As a colleague of mine remarked, Republicans' motto as they saddle up to take control of North Carolina's General Assembly could be, "Do less with less."

We're about to get an earful of that old conservative anthem celebrating the virtues of limited government and low taxes. And on principle, who's to disagree? Nobody wants more government than we need, and nobody wants to pay taxes swollen because of bureaucratic inefficiency or bloat.

But that doesn't mean the philosophical divide between conservatives and liberals (which more or less correlates with the partisan divide between Republicans and Democrats) over the core issue of government's proper size and mission is a trivial one. It's all about parsing needs and wants, and then figuring out who should pay how much.

Those in line to pay the most often argue that the state can get by with doing less. Yet when the budget knife starts cutting, who gets hurt? If it's the young and the vulnerable, the cutters have been too clumsy.

The two sides' beliefs as to how the public is best served are about to be vigorously tested - perhaps no more so than in the arena of education.

Together, the state's educational enterprises - public schools, community colleges, universities - swallow the largest share of money routed each year into the General Fund. For example, the budget for July 2009 through June 2010 set aside $7.4 billion for the schools, $1 billion for the community colleges and $2.7 billion for the UNC system. The total budget (this was current operations, not capital): $19 billion.

That budget was prepared under severe duress as state revenues plunged amid the recession. The situation was even worse this year. Helped by
federal stimulus funds, legislators and Gov. Beverly Perdue were able to stave off serious cuts in public school expenditures.

For the next budget cycle, however, the immovable object of education costs is about to meet the irresistible force of a monster shortfall that looks to be in the range of $3.5 billion. And then there's irresistible force No. 2: Republicans' determination to put the budget in balance, as the state is obligated to do, via spending cuts alone. They've as much as said no new taxes except over their dead bodies.

Of course nobody should be eager to raise taxes while jobs are scarce, families are struggling to keep their homes and companies are caught in the recession's downdraft. But especially when it comes to the state's investment in our schools, the picture without some kind of revenue infusion can't help but look grim. So much money will be needed to close the shortfall that it will be hard to avoid whacking into the budget's largest line item.

The bitter irony is that, as the Public School Forum of North Carolina points out, this has never been a state that shot the moon with its public school outlays.

Now, says the Forum, which has kept a sharp eye on the state's education scene since the mid-1980s, the budget squeeze could push North Carolina close to the bottom in a ranking of per-pupil expenditures.

How could that happen? The Forum says North Carolina during the last fiscal year ranked 42nd in state and local outlays for school operations - $8,743 per student. The U.S. average was $10,190.

Nobody would suggest that every state toward the top of the list is getting good value in spending more than we do. But what if North Carolina did find itself trailing the pack? That not only would signal real deficiencies in school quality, but also would amount to a failure of our responsibility to the state's youth. It's not the sort of thing businesses or families deciding where to locate like to see.

The legislature's new Republican bosses will be perfectly entitled to look for ways to make state government more cost-effective. They should. And their aversion to taxes should mean a disciplined approach to spending. But just because the Democrats have taken a broader view of the government's
responsibilities, that doesn't mean they've necessarily been undisciplined.

This is the fork in the philosophical road. The belief that investments in public education should be generous - they are, after all, investments with a proven record of success - does not translate into a belief in waste, feather-bedding and inane curriculums.

School systems should be well-enough funded so that every student has a capable teacher in an uncrowded classroom. Right-sizing should not always mean down-sizing and operating on the cheap. And the same applies to other state services such as higher education, mental health, environmental protection and the courts.

Let's hope that an improving economy takes some of the pressure off the state's budget-balancers. And if the Republicans can look beyond the self-serving calls for spending and tax cuts echoing from the special interests who propelled their campaigns, perhaps they will be able to reconcile their sincere beliefs in limited government with a budget strategy that can at least come close to meeting the state's critical needs.

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What Do You Mean I Can’t Take This Course?

By PAMELA PAUL

WINDSOR G. HANGER, a 2010 Harvard graduate from Asheville, N.C., had been excited to finally squeeze in a course called “Painting Day and Night” senior year after recreational dabbling while in high school. But then she showed up the first day to find 25 others with a similar vision. Thirteen would have to disappear. To her shock, the instructor sprung an impromptu test, asking everyone to spend the next few hours painting still lifes.

“Some people were as terrible as I was, but others were phenomenal artists,” Ms. Han-ger recalls. “At Harvard, there are always students extremely talented in every way. The athletes are Olympians, the artists have had their work commissioned since the age of 15. It’s a tough environment to try something new.”

Ms. Hanger was so demoralized she didn’t even bother with the follow-up interview. “To go in to an introductory class and be asked to paint something right away was pretty frustrating,” she says. “I didn’t have a shot.”

Students and parents are often taken aback by the fallout of rejection associated with, yes, registering for class. After the 18-year slog that is Getting Into College and the price tag accompanying the prize, you would think you’d gain access to the full collegiate oyster: the chance to debate international relations with Paul Kennedy at Yale, to join intimate writing workshops with Joyce Carol Oates at Princeton, to create art at Harvard.
You would be wrong. Students get shut out of classes all the time, and not just because of program reductions due to budgetary shortfalls. Studio art is just one subject that might not welcome the amateur, even at the introductory level. Writing courses are notoriously hard to break into. (John Updike was famously rejected from certain writing classes he applied to while at Harvard.) Competition is also fierce for seminars led by star professors.

Some courses have always required the professor’s permission or a portfolio review. But with the cost of higher education soaring, and top colleges teeming with class valedictorians, high expectations are even higher.

“Parents have this incredible pressure throughout the school years to build a résumé, and when your child finally gets to college and the competition’s still there, you think, wait a second — when can you finally buy the experience that you want?” says Rob Lippincott, whose daughters attend the University of Pennsylvania and the University of Vermont. “It’s exasperating!”

After taking one introductory writing class at Oberlin, Theresa Traber’s daughter, Francesca, submitted a portfolio for the next level and was locked out. Her audition for a theater class was likewise a flop. “It didn’t surprise me because the writing program at Oberlin is pretty elite and elitist, but I was pretty angry at the time,” Ms. Traber recalls. “Just because she wants to do medicine, does she have to do that exclusively?”

“Part of the reason Frannie went to Oberlin,” she says, “was to get a liberal arts education, even though she’s a science person.”

The liberal arts tradition of studying broadly goes only so far. Schools want to maintain small class sizes, and faculty is limited. Top professors want the most promising students. Universities want the most accomplished alumni.

But, parents wonder, when can a student acquire new skills or develop budding interests if not in college? Why should a student who got into the Ivy League have to re-audition? And if a student wants to try the stage, even if she can’t act worth a darn, or chirp along with the choir, aren’t parents paying for the privilege?

“People come in with a consumer mindset,” says Matthew Santirocco, dean of the College of Arts and Science at New York University. “And I agree with them: if you’re getting a private education, you should be able to take the courses you want, when you want them. But whether there’s a sense of entitlement or not, there’s a university mindset, too.”

While N.Y.U. tries to meet student demand for coveted courses — language, creative writing, popular seminars — he says, “We will always have wait lists. We have to be realistic.”
Sylvia Watanabe, chairwoman of Oberlin’s creative writing department, says this in defense of selectivity: “We can’t accommodate the many students who come to Oberlin who want to major in creative writing.” But, she says, being choosy benefits the most dedicated. “The higher that bar is set, the more writing students feel they can accomplish. We get some pretty astonishing work coming out of our courses at the 200 level.”

Indeed, creative writing classes are not for dilettantes.

“We don’t teach people to write — they are already writers,” says Ms. Oates, a professor in Princeton’s creative writing program. Ms. Oates, along with literary luminaries like Edmund White, Chang-rae Lee, Paul Muldoon and Jeffrey Eugenides, read student portfolios and rank them to determine which students qualify to take a class. “These are not composition classes for students to learn to write,” she says. “They are fiction-writing workshops for people who know how to write.”

Zachary Solomon, a senior at Princeton majoring in comparative literature, didn’t qualify when he submitted poetry his freshman year. “Those who got in received a congratulatory e-mail, and the rest of us were wait listed or rejected,” he says. “It was kind of like the college application process.” He ultimately gained admittance his sophomore year.

And pity the student who has never set foot in a darkroom. To take any class within Princeton’s photography program, students must submit a portfolio and undergo a lengthy interview about their experience prior to college. “I took photography for four years in high school,” says Grace Remington, who qualified her sophomore year.

Colleges often track students early, favoring those fine arts, engineering or pre-med students who dutifully log in prerequisites and barrel along within their major. Professors will prefer upperclassmen, majors and minors, and “A” students, especially when selecting among students for advanced classes and seminars for which they have discretion.

As a sophomore at the Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University, Amber Gibson has had no trouble getting into the journalism courses she needs. But she is not so privileged when it comes to other subjects.

“For my electives, I get no priority,” she says. At registration, when Ms. Gibson put in her “shopping cart” a popular Russian mafia class whose professor had great ratings, the course was already full.

At Yale, “Studies in Grand Strategy” has become, as the historian Paul Kennedy puts it, “a cult among cult classes.” The course is co-taught by John Lewis Gaddis and Charles Hill, a onetime Reagan adviser. This year, John D. Negroponte, a former deputy secretary of state, is helping out. Henry Kissinger makes annual visits.
“If you’re an ambitious Yalie and you want to be president or secretary of state, it has become a thing that you have to take this class,” Dr. Kennedy says. Each year, around 100 undergraduates compete for 15 spots (nine go to graduate and professional students). This year, Dr. Kennedy says, he and his colleagues expanded the class to two groups of 24.

Drew Beattie, who taught the painting course coveted by Windsor Hanger, says winnowing his class is his least favorite part of teaching. “You try to extend the range of people in the class, because the opportunity for group discussion and critique is enormous.” But in the end, he says, classes are often filled with majors or underclassmen strongly leaning toward the concentration.

“You can imagine the uproar if you’re a major and find out the professor has an interesting conversation with a physics major and lets that person in instead.”

Julie Sue Auslander was initially peeved at the “narrow inflexibility” of Tufts when her son, Ryan, was not allowed to take the level of French class he wanted. Apparently, having lived in two French-speaking countries, his spoken skills were considered too strong relative to his less-than-stellar grammar.

“I equate it to a five-star hotel,” she says. “If you’re paying five-star prices, you should get a five-star experience.” At a five-star hotel, she explains, if you ask for something outside the box, they get it for you. “He wasn’t asking for something special,” she says. “To me, the experience should be personalized to his needs.”

But after conveying those sentiments to Ryan, he said she had it all wrong. In one of his computer courses, he told her, “the professor’s philosophy is to let everyone in.” He complained of “too many people with too many levels, and people weren’t doing the work.”

Her son’s point led her to reconsider. She adds now: “Maybe being overly accommodating doesn’t end up accommodating anybody.”