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ECU exploring partnerships for housing

By Josh Humphries
The Daily Reflector

Thursday, November 12, 2009

A new kind of building may soon be found on the campus of East Carolina University.

The ECU Board of Trustees facilities and resources committee held a special meeting Wednesday to discuss the possibility and regulations on partnerships with private companies to build housing units for students.

"Public-private partnerships have been around for a while," said committee chairman David Redwine. "It is something that the university needs to continue to look at and get a handle on."

The University of North Carolina system limits the kinds of agreements that universities can enter. Each campus can work with private companies for housing units, but academic buildings are funded by the General Assembly and built for longer use than any previously approved public-private partnership, said Rob Nelson, vice president for finance with the UNC General Administration.

Traditionally, residence halls have been funded like any other capital project, but with a state budget shortfall officials are not expecting a lot of funding in the near future.

As ECU’s undergraduate population continues to grow, the university is close to losing its distinction as a "residential" campus, which includes a requirement that at least 25 percent of its undergraduate students live on campus.

"ECU has grown faster than its facilities," said Board of Trustees Chairman David Brody.

In the fall of 2008, there were 20,974 undergraduate students at ECU and the campus had 4,656 beds available for students to live on campus. As the population increases, the campus will need more beds to remain above the 25 percent threshold.

"We are headed to becoming a commuter campus with a lot of apartments around the campus," Redwine said. "Personally, that is not what I want to see."

Many projects across the country with private partnerships build more luxurious quarters for students than the old standard two-occupant rooms.

Most include single bedrooms, private bathrooms, kitchens and other living spaces, according to committee documents.

There have been 235 privatized student housing projects across the country, mostly at public universities.

To date, 12 of the 16 UNC campuses have built housing on the public-private model including projects at Appalachian State with 788 beds, a project at UNC-Wilmington with 524 beds and a project at N.C. State with 440 beds.

Nelson said that the process can be very cost-effective, but that is not the only factor that General Administration will consider when approving similar projects in the future. Issues like risk, time of construction, revenue, debt capacity and operating costs would all be considered.

If a private company were to build a residence hall on the ECU campus, it would eventually become the property of the state and therefore needs to meet all the requirements of a residence hall set up by the General
Administration, Nelson said.

To meet the need for more residential space, the Board of Trustees is considering the purchase of Campus Towers, a privately owned housing unit off Cotanche Street that touches ECU's campus.

Campus Towers would add 343 beds to the campus, but officials disagree over the potential purchase.

The building is 25 years old and may not offer what students and parents have come to expect from quality student housing, officials said.

The expectation for more amenities and more space for each student should be a driving factor in the board's future decisions, said Chancellor Steve Ballard. Ballard wants ECU facilities to remain competitive with similar universities to continue attracting good students.

"A high percentage of our housing stock is not competitive," Ballard said. "We have to decide if we want to keep renovating or build brand new, which is what I want to do."

With state funding for capital projects at a near standstill, officials are attempting to meet demands while keeping costs low.

A public-private partnership could be just the ticket, said trustee Mark Tipton.

Officials will take a closer look at how housing fits into the ECU master plan, how any new buildings will be paid for and operated and the potential purchase of Campus Towers at the February meeting of the Board of Trustees.

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Benefit tonight remembers two killed downtown

By Kristin Day
The Daily Reflector

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After an East Carolina University student and a restaurant manager were killed by a gunman’s bullets outside a downtown dance club, friends and family of the victims and local businesses are working together to help others in the name of the victims.

Unk’s will host the inaugural “Feel the Beat, Not the Pain” benefit concert today in memory of Andrew Kirby, 27, and Landon Blackley, 21. The concert, scheduled for 5-11 p.m., will feature Big Hop, Cinder Cat, The Spittones and The Early Show. Proceeds from admission, as well as 10 percent of today’s sales at Unk’s and at least one location of Michaelangelo’s, will go toward the Charles Andrew Kirby Scholarship.

Andrew Harris, manager of Michaelangelo’s on Fire Tower Road and a good friend of Kirby’s, said he and Steve Hill, a teacher at J.H. Rose High School, are working together to create a scholarship to help pay for one Rose graduating senior’s college tuition. Harris, Hill and Kirby were in the same bowling league.

“We want to help out people in need, who really want to go to school, get a job and help the community,” Harris said. “Kirby went to school, so what better way to remember his name?”

“I knew Kirby and it’s unfortunate that he got killed,” Hill said. “He was a hard-working guy and a good-natured guy.

“This (the benefit) is something we all thought we could do to keep his name alive and underscore the tragedy, and have something good come out of it.”

Unk’s owner Jeremy Spengeman says he hopes other businesses will join them in donating a portion of their sales.

“This is a really good cause,” Spengeman said. “It’s a way to get people out and do something positive.”

Students at J.H. Rose also are compiling several biographies Hill wrote on the people for whom Pitt County schools are named, and making a book. This book, Hill said, could be finished by the end of November and will be sold. Proceeds from its sales also will go toward the scholarship fund.

Harris said that even though the money will go to Kirby’s scholarship fund, the concert is just as much in honor of Blackley.

“I didn’t know Landon, but he also lost his life that morning,” Harris said. “So every event, every year, will be in honor of him, as well.”

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The Charles Andrew Kirby Scholarship will be awarded to a graduating J.H. Rose High School student who has been accepted and will be entering East Carolina University.

It is to be awarded to a student who has a documented work ethic while in high school. The scholarship candidate must be able to show (via pay stub) that he or she has held employment of at least 25 hours a month while a student at J.H. Rose for at least a year.
Winner must have at least a 3.3 grade point average, unweighted.

The scholarship money will be in the form of check that will be sent to East Carolina University in the students' name to pay for tuition.
UNC system may trim research leaves

CHAPEL HILL -- UNC system leaders will consider a policy change this week that will significantly curtail the research leaves that the system president and campus chancellors have traditionally received.

The change follows several months of discussion prompted by an examination by The News & Observer of the current leave policy, under which the university system granted leaves and paid $8 million over the past five years to 117 administrators.

The leaves are intended to help administrators transition back to the classroom, but The N&O's review found that some administrators had received the leaves and then retired, left for other jobs or lost the teaching job given to them. The review also showed that some of the leave deals exceeded the UNC system policy.

The policy has allowed the university president and campus chancellors with five years of service a one-year research leave at the same salary they earned in their administrative posts.

Under the changes proposed by UNC President Erskine Bowles, those leaves will be limited to six months at a salary level commensurate with those in the academic department in which the former administrators will return to work. They would also have to provide a work plan.

"If they're going to take research leave and this is done with public money, they need to be accountable," said Hannah Gage, chairwoman of the UNC system's board. "It gives form to what is expected of them."

The policy up for discussion today by the board's personnel and tenure committee centers on the president and campus chancellors. The board has held discussions about policies covering vice chancellors, provosts and other administrators and will tackle those in coming months.

The full board would vote on the change in January.
John Lindsay Winstead, Jr.

GREENVILLE

Dr. John Lindsay Winstead, Jr., 75, died November 11, 2009 at his home.

A memorial service will be conducted at 11:00 a.m. on Friday, November 13, 2009, in the Wilkerson Funeral Chapel.

Dr. Winstead, a native of Greenville, was the son of Dr. John Lindsay Winstead and Margaret Fleming Winstead. He was the grandson of former North Carolina Senator James Lawson Fleming and Loula White Fleming. He received his undergraduate degree from Duke University and a medical degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. In 1966, he returned to Greenville and opened a general surgery practice in his father's medical office. He continued his surgical practice in Greenville until his retirement in 1997.

Dr. Winstead was a long term member of the medical staff at Pitt County Memorial Hospital and also served as Clinical Associate Professor at the Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University. He was a founding member of Medical Review of North Carolina and served on their Board of Directors until 1998. He helped establish Greenville's first Ambulatory Surgery Center, the Surgicenter. Dr. Winstead was also a long term member of the Greenville Rotary Club, the Pitt County Medical Society, and the North Carolina Medical Society. He was a lifetime member of The Memorial Baptist Church.

In addition to his grandparents and parents, Dr. Winstead was preceded in death by a brother, Joseph Thomas Winstead.

He is survived by his wife of 52 years, Jean Butler Winstead; son, John Lindsay Winstead III and wife, Rambel of Cary; daughters, Margie Brohawn and husband, Michael of Cary, Linda Vlahos and husband, Lambros of Southern Shores and Susan Ingram and husband, Frank of Greenville; grandchildren, Tori Winstead, Marla Winstead, Ashleigh Winstead, Lesley Ingram, Megan Ingram, Sarah Ingram, Dimitrios Vlahos, Yanni Vlahos, and Nicholas Vlahos; brother, James Fleming Winstead and wife, Janice of Bloomington, MN; and sister, Lou White Winstead Lindanger and husband, Earl of Shreveport, LA.

The family will receive friends one hour prior to the service at the funeral home.

Memorial contributions may be made to The Memorial Baptist Church, 1510 SE Greenville Blvd., Greenville, NC 27838, or to a charity of one's choice.

Online condolences at www.wilkersonfuneralhome.com
Dubois to give update on UNCC football plans

Posted: Thursday, Nov. 12, 2009

UNC Charlotte Chancellor Phil Dubois is expected to give an update today in Chapel Hill on the university's efforts to launch a football program.

Dubois will discuss the matter during a committee meeting for the UNC Board of Governors.

The briefing comes a month before Dubois is supposed to recommend whether to continue with plans to start a football program at the Charlotte campus by fall 2013 or to delay it. That recommendation, and a subsequent vote by university trustees, is set for Dec. 11.

In a memo prepared in advance of today's meeting, Dubois said that leaders won't know until early next month whether it makes sense to move forward with football. But he said that if the campus does stick with the 2013 schedule, it will ask the Board of Governors for an increase in student fees starting in fall 2010. -- April Bethea
A feast of doubts for college freshmen come Thanksgiving

By Robin Mamlet and Christine VanDeVelde Special for, USA TODAY

It's called the "turkey drop" – when first-year college students break up with their high school sweethearts over the Thanksgiving holiday. But there's a risk that freshmen might break up with their college, too.

The turkey drop is just one of the precipitating factors. Homesickness, roommate conflicts, academic pressures, difficulty forming new friendships – any of them can cause college freshmen to leap to the conclusion that they've chosen the wrong school and that transferring to another is the answer.

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In most cases, though, students shouldn't let a moment of self-doubt make them start the college application process all over again.

It can happen no matter how mature or accomplished a student is. Kelly Schryver, a junior at Brown University in Providence, had excelled at her secondary school and been president of her class every year since seventh grade. "But I was taken aback by the anonymity of being a freshman," says Schryver, remembering how she felt freshman year between Thanksgiving and winter break. "No one talks about how it may not be amazing at first, so you feel very alone. You automatically question whether you'd be happy somewhere else."

A need to belong

College administrators are familiar with this Thanksgiving milestone for freshmen.

"You have to find yourself in your institution," says Hannah Stewart-Gambino, dean of Lafayette College in Easton, Pa. "Belonging remains unbelievably important for students at this
stage in their lives, so the self-doubt that sets in midsemester of the first year is generally about belonging, socially and academically." Some students hit their stride from the start, but for others, finding their niche can take time, especially amid the unbridled freedom and independence of the freshman year.
"I like to say that to come to Stanford is to be offered a drink of water from a fire hose," says Julie Lythcott-Haims, Stanford (Calif.) University's dean of freshmen and associate vice provost for undergraduate education. "Whether it's the 600 student organizations or 70-some majors offered, everything is an option, and students have to learn to engage with that multiplicity. ... It takes time to get one's footing."
Schryver quickly found her footing academically, and that pulled her through. "I came back from Thanksgiving and sobbed in the bathroom all night," she says. "But the academics were amazing. I had really close relationships with my professors, and that was the light at the end of the tunnel.
"Even if things didn't change for me socially, I knew I'd have an awesome academic experience."
Meanwhile, whether a student's concerns may be triggered by a demanding math class, a long-distance romance, or just missing Mom's home cooking, parents are not always prepared for a phone call from a distraught child. So how should they respond? "Very often, students just want to vent," Lythcott-Haims says. "They usually want parents to be a loving, supporting ear, and they want to be reassured they have made a good choice."

**If those doubts persist...**
For most students, these doubts are a normal part of the pattern of adjustment – college administrators call it the "I'm miserable and need to transfer ... oh, nevermind" phenomenon. "We know from all the data that most students will settle into a pattern and be successful," says Mabel Freeman, assistant vice president of undergraduate admission and first-year experience at Ohio State University in Columbus.
If a student's homesickness or doubts persist well past Thanksgiving, though, experts agree it is probably a good idea to get counseling. Or forge ahead and explore transferring. Emily Wohlford enrolled as a freshman at a small university in Chicago but had a hard time establishing a group of friends with common interests and never really found her niche. When she visited the University of Minnesota, she was struck by the camaraderie and authenticity of the Twin Cities campus. She applied to transfer and enrolled this fall. "It felt like a homecoming," says the UM sophomore. "I found the place I need to be."

But parents shouldn't immediately overreact to what is a normal adjustment by hitching up the U-Haul or instigating an intervention from the university administration or counseling center. "Be a safety-net parent, not a helicopter parent," Stewart-Gambino says. Instead, she advises, encourage your child to branch out and make connections – join a choral group, volunteer at the campus hospital or explore a new learning opportunity such as a film society. Schryver joined a club lacrosse team and turned a class business plan into a cake-baking service. "Now everyone knows me on campus as the 'Cake Girl,'" she says. "It made me realize it's a smaller world here than I thought it was. I'm totally happy now."