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NAACP: Expel students for racist graffiti

RALEIGH (AP) — The North Carolina NAACP wants North Carolina State University to expel four students accused of painting racist messages about President-elect Obama on campus.

School Chancellor James Oblinger held a closed-door meeting Wednesday with NAACP President Rev. William Barber to discuss the graffiti in the campus free expression tunnel.

Barber wants an official response within 48 hours. Oblinger says both sides have agreed to move forward.

Four students admitted spray-painting the messages, including one that used a racial slur and suggested shooting Obama in the head.

Officials have said the unidentified students won’t face criminal charges because the writing wasn’t a hate crime since it was written on a wall where free speech is encouraged.
Greenville police discuss safety measures with ECU community

BY MICHAEL ABRAMOWITZ
The Daily Reflector

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hosted its monthly meeting at Mendenhall Student Center on the ECU campus Wednesday evening, the first of what it hopes will be a regular event, said committee chairwoman Diane Kulik.

"There is a lot of crime out there," Kulik told the audience, "so we're happy to be here."

Chief William Anderson explained that the committee meets monthly, normally rotating its sites among each of the five voting districts.

"Tonight's meeting was scheduled at the request of the ECU Student Government Association, who contacted city manager Wayne Bowers and asked him to bring the meeting to ECU," Anderson said.

Anderson made it a joint effort and asked officers from the ECU Police Department to come and discuss topics they deal with closely on and around campus each day, he said.

"I want to emphasize the excellent working relationship that's developed between the city and campus police departments since the city council decided to expand the jurisdiction of the campus police to a wider area off campus.... See POLICE, A7
within the past two years," Anderson said.
That provided extra eyes and ears and increased mobility around the area, he said.
"We now train together and collaborate on many issues, with the shared ultimate goal of a safer community for everyone," Anderson said.
GPD parking enforcement officer Corey Barrett explained the new parking rules for the Tar River University Neighborhood Association district that went into effect at the beginning of the semester and the impact they have had in the neighborhood.
Most streets north of campus now require a parking permit, available to residents only, to park between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. during the week. Several narrower streets in the district banned parking altogether. The new rules caused an initial furor among students.
"We will issue up to four citations to an illegally parked vehicle," Barrett said, "then we will tow the vehicle on the fifth citation."
Asked how the program is working, Barrett said the parking situation looks a lot better now. He said he didn’t know the number of tickets that have been issued so far, but noted that most students were complying, based on the visible absence of vehicles parked on side streets.
Greenville officer Mike Staffelbach, who patrols the city’s campus area, shared a list of safety tips with the audience, calling them a common sense approach to personal safety while on campus, in vehicles and at home.
An offender must have the desire, ability and opportunity to commit a crime, he said.
"There isn’t much you can do about an offender’s desire and ability, but you can take steps to control the opportunity," Staffelbach said.

EAST CAROLINA University Crime Prevention Unit officers Sgt. Stephanie Carnevale and Sgt. Derrr Stormer, standing behind, discuss programs and services that campus law enforcement officers provide for students, as members of the Greenville Police Community Relations Committee watch at Mendenhall Student Center on Wednesday night.

Chief Anderson described the most common types of crimes in the TRUNA neighborhood.
"We’re seeing increased break-ins and burglaries," Anderson said.
In a lot of cases it’s simply doors being unlocked, with criminals walking right in and taking laptops, TVs and other electronics, he said.
"They’re not particularly targeting the campus area; it’s simply a matter of convenience. They know students are busy and distracted and don’t always follow common sense advice," he said.
Most of the tips he shared focused on staying alert and aware, avoiding areas and times when crime is more likely and keeping belongings and property secure and out of plain sight.
Sgt. Derrr Stormer and Sgt. Stephanie Carnevale, ECU police officers, said that most campus crimes mirror city crimes, with the majority being home burglaries and vehicle break-ins.
They also talked about the many programs the campus department offers students, including domestic violence, sexual assault, SafeRide and Operation ID, which provides registration of all student valuables with the campus police.
Asked if there have been a lot of break-ins in the TRUNA neighborhood, Anderson responded succinctly, "Yes, quite a few, and in some of the adjacent neighborhoods, as well. We refer to TRUNA as one of our ‘hot spots,’" he said.
He also said they have made some good arrests in the neighborhood as well, referring to recent cases where Lt. Herald Hines, the area commander, and his officers made arrests for multiple burglaries committed by the same suspects.
The Police Community Relations Committee serves as a liaison between the police and the community, as an advocate for programs, ideas and methods and to share information and improve relations between the community and the Greenville Police Department, Kulik said.

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NAACP responds to graffiti at NCSU

Leaders present demands to Oblinger

By Jay Price
Staff Writer

Raleigh - State leaders of the NAACP presented N.C. State University Chancellor James L. Oblinger with a list of demands during a closed-door meeting Wednesday about racist and threatening slogans painted in the campus free expression tunnel after the presidential election last week.

They want the entire university system to establish clear policies against such acts, and for NCSU in particular to start mandatory diversity training for freshmen and to expel the four students who confessed in the incident.

In a news conference after the 90-minute meeting, NAACP officials called the slogans terrorism and race-based threats rather than graffiti. They compared the situation with Virginia Tech before the shootings there in April 2007 that left 32 dead, when faculty missed warning signs that a student was dangerous.

"It's wrong, it's ugly, it's vile, and it's not protected by freedom of speech," the Rev. William J. Barber II, state NAACP president, said.

The university is withholding the names of the four guilty students. Barber said his group had met with hundreds of students the night before who feared for their safety. Some were even afraid to wear an Obama button, said Chapel Hill civil rights attorney Al McSurely, who accompanied the NAACP leaders.

University police had to call in the U.S. Secret Service to investigate the incident because it included a threat to President-elect Barack Obama.

Within hours, four students were identified via video surveillance images, and they confessed. University police and secret service agents questioned them, and federal agents searched their homes and computers.

University police said last week that federal agents decided there was no serious threat to Obama, and that the Wake County District Attorney's Office had said there didn't appear to be any state crime, in part because the words had been painted in a tunnel where graffiti is encouraged.

Barber said NAACP leaders planned to seek a meeting with Erskine Bowles, UNC system president, next week. As for their demands of NCSU, they gave Oblinger 48 hours to respond.

After the meeting, Oblinger gave only a brief statement and took no questions.

"I believe we had a positive meeting," he said. "I believe both sides understand the situation from each other's perspective and we're moving forward."

Keith Nichols, a university spokesman, said NCSU leaders were pulling together a task force to examine diversity issues. Oblinger hadn't given it marching orders yet, he said, but it would likely perform a broad review.

Maritz Adonis, an NCSU student senate member who attended the meeting with Oblinger, said she planned to introduce a bill Wednesday night to establish policy defining hate crimes and making them punishable by expulsion. The bill would also urge the university to expel the four students involved in last week's incident.

NAACP officials revealed that the words painted on the tunnel were more explicit than a university spokesman indicated last week. They showed a photo of one part of the graffiti that read "Let's shoot that n______ in the head," and said there also was the slogan "Hang Obama by a Noose" and references to the Ku Klux Klan.

In an interview Tuesday, Oblinger said the university wouldn't release the video used to identify the students who painted the graffiti because it was part of an investigation.

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Yoga gains respect among doctors

BY SARAH AVERY
STAFF WRITER

The ancient practice of yoga is finding a new following — among doctors and medical researchers who work to discover its benefits for a variety of illnesses.

Researchers at UNC Hospitals are studying yoga's benefits for people with irritable bowel syndrome. Doctors at Duke University recently completed a study showing that yoga provided significant improvements with hot flashes, sleep and energy levels for postmenopausal women with early breast cancer.

And in Eastern North Carolina, an oncologist in Beaufort County sees improvement in his patients who take yoga classes.

"There's been an explosion of data using yoga as a treatment option," said Dr. Shelley Wroth, an obstetrician at Duke Integrative Medicine and a yoga teacher. She said studies have found that yoga helps people suffering diseases such as hypertension, anxiety, arthritis, chronic back pain, carpal tunnel syndrome, fibromyalgia, stress, depression, diabetes and epilepsy.

"It shows so much promise," Wroth said.

A recent study at Duke involved breast cancer patients who were experiencing severe hot flashes and other menopause symptoms. Because of their illness, they were prohibited from taking hormone replacement therapy, so yoga was proposed as an alternative. The study found significant improvement among the women in the study who took yoga classes, compared with another group of women who did not.

"There's a lot of reactions to stress that exacerbate the menopausal symptoms," said Laura Porter, co-author of the Duke study. "Yoga — the physical poses and the more cognitive aspects of it — dampens the..."
YOGA
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1B

But even as science establishes yoga’s benefits, less is known about why it helps. Porter and others postulate that the practice reduces stress through stretching poses, practiced breathing and meditation. For patients, stress reduction may pack extra potency.

“By taking care of stress, you’re starting to eliminate some of the diseases that are caused by it,” said William Frey, who is leading a yoga class at Rex Healthcare in Raleigh as part of a UNC-Chapel Hill study among patients with irritable bowel syndrome.

Frey said he began offering yoga eight years ago through UNC-CH’s Program on Integrative Medicine.

“There was some concern we might be bringing spiritual elements into a very clinical setting,” Frey said. “Getting the word out was difficult — so much else was going on that was scientifically based, this was pushed off. But as people have seen its staying power, and see the results and research, there’s beginning to be more respectability.”

Causes not clear

Yoga’s legitimacy has increased with interest by the National Institutes of Health, which now funds studies on yoga and its affect on diseases. But some skepticism remains, in the medical profession and among patients.

Gioia O’Connell, a 54-year-old breast cancer survivor from Apex, said she wasn’t sure that yoga would help her. Her main hesitation was that yoga stemmed from Eastern roots, and she worried it was incompatible with her Christian faith. Still, she signed up this summer as part of the study at Duke.

“I have to tell you, it was energizing,” O’Connell said. After being diagnosed with cancer in 1994 and undergoing a lumpectomy, chemotherapy, radiation and rounds of daily drugs, she felt wrung out. “It helped with stiffness, aches and pains. And the breathing really did help my energy level.”

Dr. John Inzerillo, an oncologist in Washington, N.C., said he has seen that benefit often for his patients. He began teaching yoga about five years ago as part of a busy practice in Goldsboro.

“We had breast cancer survivors, lymphoma survivors. Over the course of time — three or four months — I could see a lot more flexibility,” he said, noting that patients also said they felt less stressed.

About three years ago, Inzerillo began practicing what he had been teaching and scaled back. He quit the Goldsboro practice, set up shop in Washington and wrote a book, “Passion Beyond Pain,” about the importance of striking a thoughtful balance in life to overcome pain.

“I made life changes to allow me to get more enjoyment out of life and be more effective at work,” he said. “People get disconnected from the things that really mean something in life.”

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Workplace wellness seminar set for next week

By John Henderson  
Rocky Mount Telegram

Tuesday, November 11, 2008

Wellness programs that could save Rocky Mount businesses thousands on health care costs are being outlined at an upcoming seminar.

The Rocky Mount Area Chamber of Commerce is sponsoring “Wellness in the Workplace,” a seminar Tuesday where experts will offer tips on how to adopt the wellness programs to keep employees healthy and at work. The event, which will include exhibitors, is scheduled from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at Nash Community College’s Business and Industry Center.

The keynote speaker will be East Carolina University professor David Chenoweth. Chenoweth has addressed worksite health forums at home and abroad, including a 2005 forum in Czechoslovakia sponsored by the European Union.

He has served on numerous boards, including the N.C. Governor’s Council on Physical Fitness and Health, as well as the Medical Advisory Board for the Wellness Councils of America. Since 1979, he has directed the undergraduate Worksite Health Promotion Option at East Carolina University. Other experts who will be speaking include the following: Mike Shinner, human resources director for the Eaton Corp.; Nanette Herbert, vice president of benefits and compensation for Boddie-Noell Enterprises; Lois McNeal, wellness manager for Hospira; and Jessica Smith, employee health and safety coordinator for Nash County.

Smith said Nash County was able to lower its insurance premiums by starting up a wellness program four years ago.

“Employer-paid health insurance has become the most expensive employee benefit,” she said.

Nash’s wellness program offers employees the chance to voluntarily participate in a health-risk appraisal. In return for undergoing blood work, employees are given free insurance.

The testing not only helps the business save money on insurance, but can detect chronic illnesses, Smith said.

“Part of the reason for them taking the health appraisal and having lab work done is so we’re able to identify issues or problems early on, especially when it comes to diabetes or heart disease, which are top killers,” Smith said.

Those interested in attending the forum can call 973-1211. The event includes a luncheon. Individual tickets are $15.

A table with eight seats can be purchased for $110.

A study released in October by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina showed that companies willing to make small investments in wellness initiatives, such as paid time off for doctor visits and health screening in the workplace, see long term results.

The study showed that companies that offer comprehensive wellness programs see a 25 percent to 30 percent decrease in medical and absenteeism costs in about 3.6 years. Eddie Baysden, the chief executive officer of the chamber, said the forum will be offering tips for smaller businesses to adopt wellness programs.

“That is the focus of this forum,” Baysden said. “Frankly, a lot of the major employers in the county already have...
wellness programs."

Bobbi Booth, director of membership development for the chamber, said two local health care providers who are chamber members suggested the forum.

She said the Twin Counties fare poorly in wellness statistics.

"It has high obesity rates, high diabetes rates," she said.
Transfers' academics on radar for NCAA

Junior college players considered higher risks

By Steve Wieberg
USA TODAY

Junior college transfers might offer football, basketball and other college sports teams a quick, competitive fix. But it too often comes at a cost, says the NCAA, which is weighing how to address lower graduation rates and other academic concerns associated with those players.

The association is looking on several fronts into remedies that could include toughening transfer guidelines and, more controversially, requiring junior college imports with the greatest academic risk to sit out a season before competing at their new schools.

That proposed "year in residence" has long been opposed by junior college officials — including Wayne Baker, executive director of the Colorado-based National Junior College Athletic Association, who calls it an "unfair requirement."

The issue is bubbling as former junior college standouts play key roles in major college football's national championship race.

Terrence Cody, a 6-5, 365-pound nose guard, anchors the defensive line for No. 1-ranked Alabama. Texas Tech has risen to No. 2 in part on the strength of an improved defense on which ends McKinney Dixon and Daniel Howard have totaled 10 sacks and 11 tackles for loss.

More than 6,000 athletes in 2006-07, the most recent year studied by the NCAA, went through junior or community colleges on the path to Division I. That's about one in every 19 overall. The proportion is particularly high in baseball and men's basketball, where two-year college transfers accounted for more than one in every six players.

They accounted for a little more than one in 13 in the top-tier Football Bowl Subdivision (formerly Division I-A).

The problem, according to the NCAA: Junior college products are most likely to become academically ineligible and leave their new schools, pulling down their teams' Academic Progress Rates (APRs) and subjecting the teams to scholarship cuts and other sanctions. In '06-'07, the association says, about one in every nine junior college transfers in men's basketball and football wound up in poor standing.

The association's new Academic Cabinet has identified the issue as a top priority for the coming year. It has asked for additional research on junior college recruits' readiness and success in the classroom, with an eye toward rules changes that could go into effect in 2010.

"The idea here is not to be punitive. It's to focus on academic preparedness," says Oklahoma athletics director Joe Castiglione, who chairs a separate panel focusing on academic concerns — including those revolving around junior college transfers — in football. "We're seeing more and more junior college transfers reach a campus with a two-year degree but not necessarily any more prepared than they were coming out of high school. I hate to put it that bluntly."

Two bowl subdivision football programs, Temple and San Jose State, were hit with NCAA sanctions this year for posting repeatedly low APRs after bringing in recruiting classes laden with junior college products.

Those transfers accounted for more than half of then-Temple coach Bobby Wallace's signees, 45 of 86, over a three-year period ending in 2005. At San Jose State, they made up 40% of the recruits (29 of 72) over the same three years.

San Jose State athletics director Tom Bowen cautions against jumping to conclusions, however.

Over four years ending in 2006, the Spartans signed 34 junior and community college transfers. Eight never enrolled, and one died after playing in three games. Ten of the remaining 25 became ineligible, went on academic probation or withdrew, according to the school.

Fifteen made the grade: 10 graduating and five still playing or in school and in good academic standing, according to the school.

"If you want to sign 25 junior college kids a year, great. What's your mind-set for the academic component? How do you vet those kids?" Bowen says. "You have certain (junior college) coaches who get their kids lined up and get all their remedies taken, and they (players) can transfer and walk in anywhere in the United States. Those are really solid kids.

"I think it's very dangerous to start making sweeping generalizations."
Drug costs for seniors growing

Some premiums up 329% over 3 years

By Julie Appleby
USA TODAY

Elderly and disabled people in Medicare prescription drug plans with the largest enrollments will pay 43% more on average in monthly premiums next year than when the drug program began in 2006, and some enrollees will see increases of as much as 329%, two analyses show.

The rising costs "are wreaking havoc on seniors' wallets and are simply not sustainable in the long run," says Rep. Henry Waxman, D-Calif, who chairs the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

Overall, the Medicare drug program is costing taxpayers less than originally estimated. The government's drug spending on the program fell by 12% to $44 billion in the fiscal year that ended Sept. 30, largely from the widespread use of low-cost generic drugs. The government pays part of the drugs' costs for seniors and helps subsidize premiums for low-income people.

Still, seniors have seen their actual expenses for premiums and drug co-payments go up each year. Insurers have raised prices for many reasons, including increases to cover higher drug costs and more prescriptions filled.

Monthly premiums in the drug-only plans will go from an average $26.03 in 2006 to $37.10 next year, according to Avalere Health, a private consulting company. People who signed up for a policy marketed as the low-price leader in 2006 — Humana's standard plan — will pay $40.83 next year, up from $9.51 in 2006, according to Avalere's analysis and a similar one from the Kaiser Family Foundation, a non-partisan research group.

Humana raised premiums to reflect its actual costs, according to its government filings. Spokesman Tom Noland says its prices remain competitive with other insurers.

The amounts Medicare beneficiaries pay at pharmacy counters are their share of drug costs, particularly for brand-name products, jumped in many plans as well — from $1 a month per prescription to more than $13 per drug, Avalere reported.

Enrollment for the drug program next year will begin Saturday. About 17 million people are enrolled in drug-only plans and an additional 9 million are in plans that cover both drugs and medical care.

Avalere and Kaiser looked at drug-only plans with the largest enrollments. Kaiser studied six plans nationally that cover about half of all enrollees. Avalere studied plans that cover about 60% of the enrollees.

Medicare spokesman Jeff Nellis says most beneficiaries should be able to find a plan that is the same price or cheaper than what they're paying now, as long as they are willing to change plans. In some cases, the lower-cost plans cover medical care and drugs and are offered by private insurers as an alternative to traditional Medicare.

Yet many seniors are worried. Mary Madden, 80, a retired administrator from Cleveland, says her premium will rise next year from $33.70 to $38.20, and the monthly amount she pays for two of her drugs will go from $30 to $38 each.

She's tempted to drop out of the program and go without drug coverage — but she knows she'll face a financial penalty if she rejoins later. "So, I'm leaning (toward) staying in," she says.