By Jackie Drake
The Daily Reflector
Tuesday, November 30, 2010

In addition to keeping students on track, East Carolina University's central tutoring resource is making plenty of progress of its own.

The Pirate Tutoring Center, founded in 2008, has nearly doubled the number of students tutored compared to last fall.

“It's amazing how many students have come through the door to find help,” acting center director Elizabeth Coghill said.

This fall, 2,159 students have been tutored, compared to 1,145 students in the fall of 2009. About half of those are freshmen, and one-quarter are sophomores. The number of tutors has increased as well, with more than 200 student tutors in more than a dozen subjects.

The center provides free tutoring services for ECU students in 1000 and 2000 level courses as well as specialized workshops, general study skills assistance and referrals to departmental services. Tutors are primarily upperclassmen who work on a volunteer basis and must have earned an A in the subject they tutor and maintain a 3.0 grade point average.

“We're really focused on the freshman year and supporting them through classes that can be challenging that first year,” Coghill said. “Once they lay that foundation, they're off to a good start.”
The center offers walk-in tutoring hours from 6:30-9 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday nights. Also started last year are daytime tutoring sessions by appointment.

“The night time appeals to the majority of students since they can walk in, but it's been nice to offer both,” Coghill said. “The tutors are great; they make everything so much clearer. I don't know what I would do without PTC tutoring,” a student responded on a survey conducted this spring.

Started in the Academic Advising and Support Center in the old cafeteria, the tutoring center got its own location in Joyner Library in August 2009, which Coghill says has been crucial to its growth.

Tutoring was available on campus before the Pirate Tutoring Center began, but it was decentralized and hard to find.

“In addition to tutoring, we've become a central resource,” Coghill said. “If we can't help them here, we help them find where to go.”

The PTC also collaborates with other departments — like anthropology, geology, music and economics — as well as the freshman writing center and chemistry learning lab.

The tutoring is “absolutely” having an impact on student GPA and retention rates, Coghill said.

The retention rate for freshmen tutored three times or more in 2008-09 was 89 percent compared to the overall campus retention rate of 79 percent.

One of the unique aspects of the center is that the tutors are all volunteer, Coghill said. “Most university tutoring centers pay their students, but with finances the way they are and us starting up in the middle of the crisis, we thought we would do what we could on a volunteer basis,” she said.

The tutors are “a great group of students,” Coghill said. “They are academically the top on campus, and they have a love of service.”

Tutoring also provides benefits to the tutors, who are part of a student government organization and can earn honors at annual recognition events. “We're not only helping students who are struggling, we're engaging those who are excelling, our tutors,” Coghill said. “We're working with two populations. It's a neat pairing.”

Contact Jackie Drake at jdrake@reflector.com or (252) 329-9567.
Former governor signs book
The Daily Reflector
Tuesday, November 30, 2010

Former North Carolina Gov. James B. Hunt Jr. and his former press secretary and now biographer, Gary Pearce, spoke and signed copies of “Jim Hunt: A Biography” at Greenville's Barnes and Noble Booksellers on Monday night.

An overflow crowd of more than 50 people filled a portion of the store as Hunt greeted old friends and political allies.

He spoke briefly about the book and about his role in the establishment of the Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University in the mid-70s.

Pearce also spoke, remarking on Hunt's stature in state politics before he and the former governor signed copies of the book.

The biography traces Hunt's rise from rural Wilson County roots to become the state's longest serving chief executive.
Chicod student Hannah Hendrix has some fun teasing up her hair with balloons and static electricity during an event called Newtonian Pandemonium held for fourth and fifth grade AIG students from Pitt County schools at the East Branch Library in Jaycee Park Monday, Nov. 29, 2010. (Justin Falls/The Daily Reflector)

Reflector.com
Festival puts the fun in physics
The Daily Reflector
Tuesday, November 30, 2010

Pitt County Schools hosted the Newtonian Pandemonium Physics Fest on Monday for gifted students.

The event, held at Jaycee Park in Greenville, was for academically or intellectually gifted (AIG) students in fourth and fifth grades from schools across the district. Along with parent volunteers, students were helped by physics professors and students from East Carolina University.

“The purpose of the event is to expand the student's knowledge of physics,” Suzanne Hachmeister, Pitt County Schools AIG lead teacher, said. “It allows all AIG children from different schools to come together and see one another.”

The event consisted of 25 different hands-on stations where students learned about different physics topics such as Isaac Newton's three laws of motion, Galileo's teachings, inertia, gravity, kinetic and potential energy and many more.

The stations were led by students from the ECU science education department, the ECU Physics Honor Society and D.H. Conley's National Science Honor Society.

“I hope it is a good experience for the kids to see college and high school students who love science,” Hachmeister said. “They can also be exposed to possible career paths.”

One of the biggest events of the day was a BMX pro-biker exhibition. After the rider performed, an ECU physics professor talked to the students about the different ways physics was involved in operating the bike.

Students at the event received beanie hats that look like an apple, in reference to Newton.
Students also were given individual passports to encourage them to listen at each station, where they earned a sticker for participating and then wrote down information about what they learned.
TCU to join Big East in 2012

Staff and wire reports

FORT WORTH, Texas — TCU is getting out of future debates about whether the Horned Frogs deserve to be in a BCS game. They are joining a league with automatic access.

The Frogs won’t have to be a BCS buster when they move to the Big East Conference, starting with the 2012 season. Win their new league, and they will be guaranteed a spot in one of the big-money games.

In the latest restructuring of the college football landscape,

See TCU, B2

TCU

Continued from B1

TCU’s board of trustees unanimously approved an invitation Monday to join the Big East in football and all other sports. The move from the Mountain West Conference becomes official July 1, 2012.

TCU athletic director Chris Del Conte said gaining automatic-qualifying status “was a big factor” in the move and gives the Horned Frogs “the greatest opportunity to compete for the national championship.”

The Big East, currently with eight football teams, has one of six automatic BCS slots.

“Access got easier, not the road,” said Frogs coach Gary Patterson, whose third-ranked Frogs (12-0) wrapped up their second consecutive undefeated regular season and Mountain West title with a 66-17 win at New Mexico on Saturday.

Big East presidents unanimously agreed Nov. 2 to expand the number of football-playing schools to 10. Villanova, which won the FCS national championship last season, has been considering since earlier this fall the possibility of moving up in classification to join the league.

East Carolina often has been mentioned in reports as a possible candidate for the Big East.

“ECU is not involved in conference realignment discussions with any conference other than CUSA’s initiative to partner with the (Mountain West Conference) to explore options for automatic qualification to BCS bowls,” ECU athletics director Terry Holland said in a statement Monday. “Those discussions take place at the Board of Directors’ level (the presidents and chancellors of the individual members of the conference with the conference commissioner). The athletic directors are kept in the loop on these discussions by the respective president or chancellor and the conference commissioner.”

Representatives for Conference USA and the Mountain West met in August to discuss BCS access and pooling their resources for more lucrative TV deals.

With all TCU sports moving to the Big East, it
will create a 17-team basketball league.

Big East commissioner John Marinatto said the league was aware of the logistical issues associated with having 17 basketball teams and nine football teams and that those issues would be addressed. He wouldn't discuss the possibility of even more schools being added to the league outside of what the league previously stated.

TCU is third in the BCS standings — the highest-ranked non-automatic qualifying team — and is in line for a chance to play for the national championship if Auburn or Oregon lose next weekend. The Frogs likely will play in the Rose Bowl if Auburn and Oregon both win.

"Who would have thought five years ago that the guaranteed fallback position is, you're going to the Rose Bowl, and one loss you're in the national championship?" Del Conte told a room filled with supporters and staff. "We're going to Pasadena, let's get fired up. We're going to the Big East, let's get fired up. ... It's a great time to be a Frog."

The pending departure of TCU continues a big shuffle for the Mountain West, which last summer announced that Boise State was leaving the WAC to join its league in 2011. That was expected to bolster the strength of the MWC and put the league in better position for possibly gaining an automatic BCS berth in the future.

But now so much has changed.

Utah is leaving the Mountain West for the expanded Pac-12 and BYU is going independent. Fresno State and Nevada, and maybe Hawaii, are going from the WAC to the MWC in 2012 after TCU leaves.

"Today's intercollegiate athletics environment is very fluid," Mountain West Conference commissioner Craig Thompson said in a statement. "Our board of directors and directors of athletics, as they have throughout the history of the MWC and with even more focus recently, will continue to analyze the landscape and chart our course in the context of ongoing changes."

Thompson said there were "conversations already under way with potential future members."

Del Conte said losing BYU and Utah was a "significant blow" to the Mountain West.

"It was not the same league that we joined," he said. "It's not the same home that we bought, it's not same home we were invited to, and things changed, the landscape changed."

Boise State president Bob Kustra called TCU's decision disappointing "but not entirely surprising given the stakes of automatic qualification in the BCS bowl system and relative lack of access for non-AQ conferences."

He said the Mountain West was still a good fit for his school.

TCU could help the MWC land an automatic bid to the BCS after the Frogs are gone.

TCU's excellent 2010 (and its 2011 performance) will count toward the MWC's resume when the conferences are evaluated after the 2011 season.

BCS officials have said a non-automatic qualifying conference could earn an automatic bid for the 2012 and '13 seasons.

And if the Big East's BCS bid comes under scrutiny when the next TV contract ends after the 2013 season, TCU's 2010 season will also count toward the Big East's resume.

"It's too soon to speculate about what the BCS thresholds will be for the 2015 and beyond, but it seems likely that TCU's move will enhance the Big East's position," BCS executive director Bill Hancock said in an e-mail.

The Big East has schools in nine of the nation's 35 largest media markets and will be adding Dallas/Fort Worth, the fifth largest.

Villanova, which won the FCS national championship last season, has been considering moving up in classification in football and joining the league in which their basketball teams and other sports are already a member.

"We are excited about the addition of TCU, as they bring a great deal of value to the Big East," Villanova AD Vince Nicastro said Monday. "However, our timeframe has not changed. We are continuing to move forward with our comprehensive evaluation of FBS level football, and are still targeting a decision by the spring of 2011."
There it is, an emerging symbol of the Great Conundrum that stymies the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in these days of roiling controversy surrounding the football program of Coach Butch Davis. As the university awaits word from the governing body of college athletics, the NCAA, on what sanctions it may face related to potential academic misconduct violations in that program, a monument to wretched excess rises in Kenan Stadium.

Billed as the Carolina Student-Athlete Center for Excellence, the building will house an elaborate training center and the headquarters for academic tutors and advisers whose job it is to keep athletes in good standing in the classroom, and thus eligible for competition. The top three floors of the $70 million structure will offer plush game-time accommodations for the high rollers who fund the athletics endeavors.

Welcome to the big time, Carolina.

The gladiators
Davis, a former professional coach credited with rebuilding a scandal-plagued program at Miami, can't put the Tar Heels in contention for a national championship by himself. No, he knows he has to have the biggest, strongest, fastest players to do that, kids who have since junior high school been marked by college coaches as stars.

Unfortunately, some of those players are far from being the kind of top students normally found at this leading public university. They've devoted so much time and energy to developing their athletic skills, and yes, have so enjoyed being treated as stars, that school work has not been a priority.

Many come to Chapel Hill with academic qualifications that would not get them admitted as regular students. The NCAA has in recent years made admission for athletes easier, but with tougher rules on keeping those students on progress toward a degree.
At Chapel Hill, reported The News & Observer's Robbi Pickeral and Anne Blythe, about half of the football recruiting classes of the past six years have been admitted through a special committee that considers the applications of students who may fall below the averages on conventional measures such as the SAT test. Football recruits have been running several hundred points under the SAT average of regularly admitted freshmen.

Thus, to meet NCAA requirements that are meant to keep those athletes making progress toward a degree - and also to coddle the boosters who crave a powerhouse football program - that Kenan monument rises.

**Mission definition**
A university's real mission, which ought to make everything else pale by comparison, involves the education of young people and the advancement of knowledge. It is not to play football on television.

And frankly, the argument that a university focused on that academic mission also can devote tens of millions of dollars and frenetic attention to maintaining a nationally competitive athletics program is becoming harder and harder to make.

UNC-CH has long boasted of its high standards in athletics. Now, sanctions are faced because a tutor is alleged to have given "impermissible" academic assistance to some players. That is not all, as the NCAA also is considering contact and benefits several players may have had from agents. Some 14 players have missed at least one game this year, with seven being dismissed for the season. A top Davis assistant resigned in the wake of revelations about his connections with one agent.

Davis has said he didn't know of these issues and has vowed reform. He has been steadfastly supported by Athletics Director Dick Baddour and Chancellor Holden Thorp.

But these problems never should have happened. Never, period. The university community has been embarrassed, and that's not good for UNC-Chapel Hill's overall reputation, not just that of its athletics program.

Welcome to the big time, indeed.
Health giants' rivalry heats up

BY ALAN M. WOLF - Staff Writer

WakeMed claims that its rival, the UNC Health Care System, is using its status as a taxpayer-supported institution to create "predatory" competition and disrupt the Triangle's medical market.

WakeMed submitted a formal request Monday for financial statements and other records from UNC Health, to determine whether the system is using public money to "shift services and gain an unfair competitive advantage over WakeMed, other hospitals and physician practices throughout the community."

The request escalates a battle between two of this region's health-care titans. It's a fight that could roil the region's health industry and affect medical care that thousands of people receive every year.

WakeMed, which is trying to protect its position as the largest hospital system in fast-growing Wake County, contends that recent actions by UNC and its subsidiary Rex Healthcare will drive up medical costs for consumers and hurt care in the Triangle.

Those actions include recent partnerships with local physician practices, including some associated with WakeMed, and proposed expansions at Rex's main Raleigh campus. "We have serious questions about government funding being used to destabilize a market," WakeMed CEO Bill Atkinson said. "State-sponsored predatory behavior is just not cool. I don't know how else to say it."

WakeMed is seeking, among other documents, audited financial statements and federal tax forms for UNC Health, Rex and Triangle Physicians Network, a nonprofit subsidiary UNC and Rex set up in October to operate a network of local doctors' practices.

WakeMed also wants correspondence between UNC or Rex officials and any physicians on its medical staff.

"We have received the records request and we're reviewing it," said UNC Health spokeswoman Karen McCall. "UNC is committed, as always, to complying with the obligations of the public records law."

UNC Health CEO Bill Roper has said that physician affiliations and expansions will help provide needed services to meet increasing demand. He also said that the federal health overhaul is spurring such moves to reduce medical costs and improve quality.
"All that we do has to be done in a way that meets the health needs of our fellow North Carolinians, and improves the care that they receive," Roper told the Wake County Medical Society this month. "We believe academic institutions, local health care providers and physician groups will work even more closely together in the future, as we together face pressure to serve patients better and more cost-effectively."

Roper couldn't be reached for further comment on Monday.

"The new environment is affecting all providers," said Bob Seligson, president of the N.C. Medical Society. "Hospitals and doctors are becoming very competitive, and they're doing what they can to put themselves in the best position for what's to come."

WakeMed, a private nonprofit that doesn't receive state funding, has long ties to UNC. For more than 30 years, UNC has used WakeMed as a teaching hospital, and the two institutions often refer patients to each other.

But WakeMed officials are angry about recent actions by UNC and Rex that they think threaten its business, and its home turf:

- In October, UNC Health announced an affiliation with Wake Heart & Vascular Associates, a huge cardiology practice in Wake County long associated with WakeMed.

- In June, Rex announced plans for a $120 million expansion at its main Raleigh campus. The project will include a new facility for heart care, a profitable speciality that has long been dominated by WakeMed.

- UNC Health recently began advertising its children's hospital in Chapel Hill on a billboard on New Bern Avenue in Raleigh, just down the road from WakeMed's campus and its new children's hospital.

WakeMed officials question whether UNC Health should be given millions of dollars in taxpayers' money every year to pay for competitive steps that duplicate existing services and hurt other health providers.

UNC Health will receive $36 million directly from the state this year, as well as higher reimbursement rates to treat Medicaid patients, Atkinson said. With the tough economy and ailing state budget, he said, it doesn't make sense for UNC Health to use that taxpayers' money simply to steal a bigger share of Wake County's market.

UNC Health officials point out that the system receives state money because it provides annual charity care worth more than $280 million to patients from across North Carolina, including people from Wake County.

Another issue for WakeMed is that UNC Health doesn't disclose how much financial aid it provides Rex for expansions, or whether some of it is taxpayers' money, Atkinson said. And Rex, which is a private nonprofit hospital that UNC has owned since 2000, is
expanding its services but with no plans to improve care for poor patients in Wake County, he added.

The public records request is designed to help WakeMed officials understand UNC Health's strategy, where its money is coming from and where it's going, Atkinson said. "If they're forthcoming, it will make it easier to have a dialogue about what's next," Atkinson said. "There's just so much money moving around under the cloak of darkness. We just want to have the light of public scrutiny."

UNC officials could simply reject WakeMed's request on the grounds that it would provide rivals with competitive, proprietary information. UNC Health does not disclose specific financial results for Rex, on the grounds that it is a private subsidiary. Orange Quarles III, the president and publisher of The News & Observer, serves on Rex's board. WakeMed's next steps could include a "wide array" of options, Atkinson said. He declined to provide specifics.

One option is for WakeMed to escalate its legal fight.

It is also increasing its lobbying efforts. On Monday, Atkinson sent an e-mail message to hundreds of local physicians affiliated with WakeMed, inviting them to attend forums at WakeMed's Cary and Raleigh hospitals on Tuesday where he'll discuss the situation. WakeMed is also lobbying state officials, especially as the General Assembly returns in January. WakeMed's consultants include Joyce Fitzpatrick and Gary Pearce, two Raleigh public relations veterans with strong political connections.

Rex, meanwhile, is using Capstrat, another powerful Raleigh PR firm.

WakeMed won't hesitate to seek answers from state lawmakers, Gov. Bev Perdue and leaders at the larger UNC system, said Atkinson, who has a doctorate in public policy. "UNC is a great institution, but there are ramifications to what they're doing," he added.

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Tim Ghazzawi helped form Bilingual Backpacks, a student initiative to send school supplies and bilingual books to the underprivileged students of Arturo Quesada School in Ayaloma, Ecuador, after a summer trip there.

College students on break fix others' lives
By Betty Klinck, USA TODAY
November 30, 2010

This winter, thousands of college students nationwide will cut their sleigh riding and hot chocolate sipping short to travel around the country and the world on service trips.

About 72,000 students went on "alternative" break trips in 2009, most of them spring break. But of 1,430 winter, spring, summer and weekend alternative breaks, about 140 were during winter break, says Samantha Giacobozzi, programs director for Break Away, an alternative-break resource that represents more than 140 participating colleges.

Many students seek winter trips because the break is longer and more conducive to longer experiences and international trips, Giacobozzi says.

"All of our trips are international this winter," says Shoshanna Sumka, who coordinates alternative breaks at American University in Washington, D. C.

Matthew Barnes, an American University comparative politics master's student, is leading a trip to Colombia this winter. He says that after his alternative break last spring to Colombia, where students worked with non-governmental organizations to construct a humanitarian zone and lived with a displaced family, he chose to return during winter because the longer break would allow students to accomplish more.

Winter trips can allow students to more easily use their experiences as a catalyst for community service and civic engagement back home during spring semester, says Melody Porter, associate director of the Office of Community Engagement and Scholarship at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Va.
"Personally, I'm a huge fan of winter trips. Our winter break is incredibly long," says William and Mary senior Brian Focarino, who is leading this winter's Haiti trip, where students will work on several projects in Port-au-Prince, from planting trees to caring for kids at a children's hospital to distributing health kits in tent communities.

"We have five weeks off, so I think winter trips are preferable, especially for international trips," he adds.

As with any international trip, student leaders and faculty supervisors must be aware of the country's safety conditions on the ground, and Porter says that she and the students have been keeping updated on the cholera crisis in Haiti before their January trip.

Both the U.S. State Department and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention maintain travel warnings for Haiti, but Porter says students are being trained to recognize and respond to cholera symptoms.

Focarino says students have formed many community and grass-roots service efforts on campus and in the community as a result of alternative break trips, and that he hopes this winter's Haiti trip "empowers students to be agents for change" even after they leave Haiti.

The University of Maryland in College Park requires all student trip leaders to organize a local service activity to "make sure they are continuing with service and thinking about how they can contribute locally," says Elizabeth Doerr, coordinator of Community Service-Learning Immersions.

Last summer's trip to Ecuador led to the formation of "Bilingual Backpacks," a student initiative to send school supplies and bilingual books to the underprivileged students of Arturo Quesada School in Ayaloma, Ecuador, where the group volunteered last summer, Doerr says.

Alternative breaks are meant to cultivate "a society of active citizens, of people who make community a life priority," Giacobozzi says. "We see alternative breaks as being a catalyst for pushing students to become activist citizens."

Five universities, including William and Mary, University of Maryland and American, plan to provide this type of long-term, meaningful service as part of the four-year Haiti Compact, a commitment to devote well-informed, non-damaging and long-lasting aid to Haiti, which is still recovering from last January's earthquake, after which most unskilled volunteers were discouraged from traveling there, Giacobozzi says.

Focarino says that includes not taking potential jobs away from Haitians with their service.

"Alternative breaks can really get a young person into doing this (service) and then when they go back home, they seek out similar experience near campus," says Maureen Curley,
president of Campus Compact, a national coalition of more than 1,100 colleges dedicated to community service and civic engagement.

"Episodic volunteering is a way that you can introduce a student to the power of service," she says.