THE DAILY CLIPS

December 7, 2009

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

The Greenville Daily Reflector
The Raleigh News & Observer
  The New York Times
  The Wall Street Journal
    USA Today
  The Charlotte Observer
  The Fayetteville Observer
The Greensboro News & Record
  Newsweek
U.S. News & World Report
  Business Week
  Time

East Carolina University News Bureau
E-mail to durhamj@ecu.edu  Web site at http://www.news.ecu.edu
252-328-6481 FAX: 252-328-6300
Game takes organizers, fans on roller coaster ride

By Michael Abramowitz
The Daily Reflector

Sunday, December 06, 2009

A nasty weather forecast threatened to put a damper on East Carolina University’s celebration of the Conference USA football championship Saturday in Greenville, but the fans had something to say about it: “Aargh!”

Those who bought tickets for the game purchased a thrill ride worthy of Six Flags, as the Pirates defeated Houston 38-32 in a roller-coaster game that tested the heart and endurance of players and fans alike.

Ticket sales were brisk for about 72 hours after the Pirates’ win over Southern Mississippi earned them the right to host the championship game.

Then, a game-time forecast of rain and mid-40s temperatures brought a screeching halt to box office requests, officials said. Game day opened with about 13,000 tickets still available.

ECU Director of Athletics Terry Holland said the combination of weather and time played against the university’s marketing efforts. He praised the school and C-USA officials for their effort.

“It’s been hectic, selling the 30,000 tickets we did sell, and then dealing with the weather issues, then all the events the conference has around the game,” Holland said.

“Doing it all in a two-day time span is very difficult. Normally, you have more time than this,” he said.

Holland said bringing the championship game to Greenville would have a big economic impact on the area.

“Of course, it would have even more of an impact if it wasn’t a wet weekend, but it’s still going to be a great weekend for everybody involved and the community as well,” Holland said.

The game was not technically considered a home game for ECU. Conference USA officials make every effort to create a neutral environment that favors both teams interests, conference commissioner Britton Banowsky said.

“In all of our sports championships the passion is tempered a little bit to allow the visiting team a little more exposure and access,” Banowsky said. “We’ve done some of those things in terms of the way we dress the field to make something other than an ECU home game.”

Pirate fans responded to Banowsky’s request for temperance as they usually do.

“If they wanted a neutral site, they should have played the game in Charlotte,” said Bill Waters of Plymouth.

There were two fans in the stands who were most assuredly biased.

Elizabeth and Ronald Webber were there to cheer for their son, Pirate free safety Van Eskridge.

“We’re very proud parents today,” Elizabeth Webber said.

“It’s been a nerve-racking week for Van, waiting for this day to come so we can repeat as conference champs,” Ron Webber said.

Both of Eskridge’s parents agreed the Pirates would win the game if their son had a hand in it.
"Van is always ready to go," Ron Webber said. "He was born ready. Football has been his life since he was 6 years old, so he's been ready for this. And we're ready too, to take this win and be in Memphis on Jan. 2."

Elizabeth Webber said the conference officials could expect to hear them and the other Pirate fans loud and clear.

"They can expect us to be loud today," Elizabeth Webber said. "They'll hear us in the Houston section 'cause we're gonna rock this place today."

The lead changed sides several time during the first half as Houston pitted its characteristically strong offense against East Carolina's stronger defense.

On the other side of the field, Curtis and Deborah Edwards of Greenville watched nervously in the second quarter as the Pirates marched toward their second touchdown.

"My heart's not doing too well right now. It's been up and down all game," Deborah Edwards said.

She let out a scream as Pirate running back Giavanni Ruffin rushed up the middle for a touchdown, and a cannon shot was fired.

After Houston kicker Matt Hogan missed two extra point attempts, the Cougars went into the locker room at halftime with a 19-14 lead, leaving Pirate fans nervous about second-half strategy.

"Let's just keep it a controlled game," Waters said. "Twenty-eight points might just win it."

In his seat under the press box, ECU chancellor Steve Ballard inhaled for the first time in two quarters and talked during the break about his week as ambassador for the host team's university.

"It's been a great week," Ballard said. "Everyone in Greenville has been excited about this first opportunity to host a conference championship game. Houston has great fans, too."

The weather forecast tripped up everyone's plans for a sellout, but Ballard was thrilled about the energy being generated in the stadium, he said.

"Ticket sales were going straight up every day, but the forecast on Thursday was so bad that ticket sales absolutely stopped," Ballard said. "It's nobody's fault that the forecast didn't come true, but it made people plan to stay home."

The chancellor said he was enthusiastic about the second half and pointed to the sea of purple in front of him.

"That's Pirate passion right there," he said.

Both teams played tough in the second half and the score heaved and shifted like Queen Anne's Revenge off the Carolina coast during a gale storm. Each time ECU fired the cannon and raised the Jolly Roger, Houston's Cougars clawed, scratched and roared back. The score was 38-32 in favor of the Pirates late in the fourth quarter.

The Webbers' forecast for a big game for their son Van Eskridge proved prescient.

After the Cougars' defense stopped Pirate running back Dominique Lindsay on a fourth and 1 to get the ball back with 1:47 to play, Houston quarterback Case Keenum lofted a ball deep for receiver L.J. Castille in the end zone that bounced off the shoulder pad of defender cornerback Travis Simmons and ricocheted to Eskridge for his second interception of the game, putting the Cougars down for good.

After that, it will be on to Memphis and the second consecutive Liberty Bowl appearance for the ECU Pirates.

Vinnie Brown, Class of '99, advised some safety precautions for any future teams that head to Greenville for a championship game.

"They need to move a lighthouse to the west side of town along U.S. 264, warning any team that wants to come and take our championship that there's a storm waiting for them here. It's not safe to come to Greenville anymore," he said.

Contact Michael Abramowitz at mabramowitz@reflector.com or (252) 329-9571.
Researchers say NCAA needs head-injury rules

College football's governing body needs to catch up with the National Football League and mandate guidelines to deal with concussions, say leading researchers from the University of North Carolina and Duke.

The NFL announced stricter return-to-play guidelines on Wednesday for professional players who have suffered concussions. But unlike pro football and the state's high school football organization, the National Collegiate Athletic Association does not have a universal policy on concussions, despite ample evidence that repeated head injuries have caused permanent brain damage to football players at all levels. In some cases, the injuries have proved fatal.

Researchers such as UNC's Kevin Guskiewicz and Duke's Joel Morgenlander, both of whom have served as NFL consultants on concussions, think the NCAA should develop specific regulations governing head injuries.

"Most universities have tried to put in place a more comprehensive program," said Guskiewicz, the director of UNC's Sports Medicine Research Lab. "Some haven't reacted as quickly as others. That's when the NCAA needs to step in and evaluate it."

The NCAA did not respond to several requests for comment this week.

Studies show damage

Football thrives on violent collisions, but the NFL came under increasing scrutiny as studies showed the long-term impact of multiple head injuries. A number of studies published from 2004 to 2007 have indicated a substantial link between NFL concussions and later-life risk for depression, Alzheimer's disease and cognitive impairment.

At the local level, the deaths in 2008 of two North Carolina high school football players led to testing, tougher guidelines and calls for certified athletic trainers to be present at all games.

New NFL rules

The NFL's new policy requires a player who has a concussion to remain out of action on the same day if he shows certain symptoms, including memory gaps, dizziness and headaches. The previous standard, established in 2007, kept a player out of a game only if he lost consciousness.

Morgenlander, a Duke neurology professor who worked with the NFL for three years on a committee studying mild traumatic brain injuries, said the NCAA has an opportunity now to follow suit with its own standard.

"It's reasonable for the NCAA to say, 'We're worried about our players, too,'" he said.

Cam Sexton, who played quarterback at Catawba College this season and previously at UNC, put it
more bluntly, saying there "absolutely" should be NCAA-wide regulations. Sexton suffered the second concussion of his college career this season Oct. 10 in a game against Carson-Newman. Two weeks after the hit, the quarterback couldn't shake the constant headaches and decided to call it a season. He still hopes to play professionally.

The tough-guy ethos

Tough guidelines could protect players from themselves, Sexton said. Even in college, Sexton said, players are fighting to keep jobs and often ignore injuries to get back on the field.

"If you set the guidelines, it takes away some of the pressure," Sexton said. "It helps protect the player, and in a game where everyone is getting bigger, faster, stronger."

Dr. David Berkoff, the Duke football team's physician, said the biggest challenge on all levels is altering that tough-guy ethos.

"The culture of, 'Ah, we're tough, we'll just play through it,'" Berkoff said. "That's what needs to change."

Mike Hanley, the head athletic trainer at East Carolina University, fears that the NFL regulations, which rely on players to be honest about their symptoms, will lead players to lie about their condition.

"You hope that doesn't happen, and you hope you're able to build a rapport with your players so they will tell you," Hanley said.

Evaluation after a hit

The N.C. High School Athletic Association adopted guidelines last year that prevent a athlete from returning to a game or practice after a concussion until he or she has been evaluated and released by a doctor. The physician must fill out a return-to-play form.

Wake County schools administer a computer-based test that creates a score to be used as a baseline for assessment after a player is injured. The 20-minute test consists of questions that measure memory, recognition, reaction time and ability to focus.

ECU, UNC, Duke, N.C. Central and Wake Forest all use computerized neuropsychological tests for their athletes.

Most of area schools follow the same protocol. A player is not allowed to return if he loses consciousness or has dizziness, headaches, nausea or loss of memory within 15 minutes of the hit. And before players can return to practice they need to be symptom-free at least 24 hours, 48 in more severe cases, and remain that way after a cardiovascular test.

"They can lie about symptoms," Hanley said, "but they can't lie about their reaction time."

Staff researcher Denise Jones contributed to this report.

jp.giglio@newsobserver.com or 919-829-8938
ECU Notes: College of Nursing holds second Unity Day

ECU News Services

Sunday, December 06, 2009

East Carolina University’s College of Nursing students, faculty and staff got to know each other a little better on Nov. 19 during the second annual Unity Day.

Organized by leadership students in Dr. Kathleen Simpson’s class, one of the event icebreakers asked participants to get signatures on an ECU bingo card with 16 squares ranging from “find a first semester nursing student” to “find someone wearing turquoise jewelry.”

Scavenging for signatures, as well as enjoying cake and a slide show from the early days of the college, brought everyone together.

“This is a really special day,” said Sylvia Brown, who was surprised with a flower bouquet in honor of her permanent appointment as dean on Oct. 1. “We are a big college with a down-home feel. Events such as this help us continue that tradition.”

In kicking off the event, Brown said it’s evident that faculty, staff and students care for each other and make a dynamic team.

“No matter what age we are, mentors are important to us,” she said.

She challenged everyone to be a leader, an encourager and to take care of each other.

Guest speaker Gale Adcock, a 1978 alumna, adjunct faculty member and director of corporate health services for SAS in Cary, spoke about how students shape the college and the qualities that nursing students share: humility, confidence, energy, resilience, empathy and compassion, authenticity, honesty, courage, trust and joy.

“You’re the magic,” Adcock said. “You get to decide what happens next. That’s the shared experience I wish for you.”

As part of the day’s activities, students signed a banner including what Pirate nursing means to them, from changing lives to learning to become a great nurse.

Senior Candace Concord of Fayetteville said she enjoyed the event. “It’s a good opportunity for everyone to come together,” she said.

**Surgeon studies cancer impact on black patients**

New research published in the November issue of the Journal of the American College of Surgeons shows that African-American patients with colorectal cancer are more likely to be diagnosed with advanced disease and are less likely to undergo surgical procedures compared with Caucasians, suggesting that improvements in screening and rates of operation may reduce differences in colorectal cancer outcomes for African-Americans.

Racial disparities previously have been demonstrated in numerous studies for a number of cancers, typically due to unequal access to care. As a result, the identification and elimination of these disparities has become a national public health priority.

“Colorectal cancer is the only gastrointestinal cancer that is routinely screened for and can be effectively treated,
yet African-Americans still have a profoundly lower survival rate than Caucasians," said Dr. Timothy L. Fitzgerald, ECU associate professor, Department of Surgery, Division of Surgical Oncology. "Our analysis suggests that these disparities may be attributable to a lack of access to or use of care. It is imperative that screening and treatment are delivered equally to all patients."

ECU researchers used four years of population-based Medicare and Medicaid administrative claims merged with the Michigan Tumor Registry and identified data for 18,260 patients (older than 66 years) with colorectal (11.31 percent African-American), pancreatic (14.38 percent African-American), gastric (17.49 percent African-American) and esophageal (13.50 percent African-American) cancer.

Key data used in the analysis included likelihood of late-stage diagnosis, likelihood of surgical treatment after diagnosis, and survival.

In evaluating an unadjusted analyses, researchers discovered that African-American patients with colorectal cancer were more likely to present with metastatic disease (23.17 percent versus 14.75 percent Caucasians) and less likely to undergo operations (71.25 percent versus 79.05 percent), regardless of socioeconomic factors. This finding was the case even when the analysis was confined to patients with localized, surgically treatable diseases.

The median survival of African-Americans with colorectal cancer (39 months versus 56 months) and esophageal cancer (five months versus nine months) in the study was significantly less than that for Caucasians. Survival was similarly poor for pancreatic and gastric cancer patients regardless of race.

In conducting a multivariate analysis, the research team found that African-American patients had a higher likelihood of dying from colorectal cancer than Caucasian patients did. However, this difference did not persist when adjustments were made for disease stage and presence or absence of a surgical procedure.

There was no association between survival and race for patients with esophageal, gastric or pancreatic cancer. Other variables of interest and statistical significance were median household income below $35,000, a dual eligibility insurance status and older age, all of which were negatively associated with colorectal cancer survival.

ECU dean elected to national board

Alan R. White, dean of ECU’s Thomas Harriot College of Arts and Sciences, has been elected to the board of directors of the Council of Colleges of Arts and Sciences. The announcement was made at the annual meeting of the CCAS, held Nov. 11-14 in Baltimore.

"I'm very happy to have the opportunity to serve a national organization such as CCAS," White said. "I've been attending CCAS annual meetings since I first became a dean in 2000, and I am pleased to be able to give back to an organization that has helped me learn more every year."

The council is composed of accredited, baccalaureate granting colleges, schools and divisions of arts and sciences from across the United States. The nonprofit organization provides its member institutions a forum for discussing common problems of higher education, and encourages, initiates and supports programs and activities to improve the intellectual stature and public understanding of the disciplines within the arts and sciences.

"This is the main organization for colleges of arts and sciences specifically, and it serves deans, associate deans and department chairs in all the arts and sciences disciplines," White said. "The CCAS has been a particularly active advocate for the liberal arts. I especially like their motto and activities supporting 'Networking Arts and Sciences Deans' and 'Deans Helping Deans.'"

The CCAS board consists of 12 members from different institutions. This year, White was among 13 candidates vying for seven open positions on the board. He will serve a three-year term.

White, who is a plant cell biologist, has been dean of the Thomas Harriot College of Arts and Sciences since 2005. Previously, he served as dean of the College of Science and Mathematics at North Dakota State University in Fargo, N.D. from 2000-05, and was chair of the Department of Botany at the same institution for three years.

Williams to receive HHP service award

Walter Williams will receive the first ECU College of Health and Human Performance Distinguished Service Award. The award will be presented Dec. 19 during the college’s fall commencement ceremony in Minges
Coliseum’s Williams Arena, which is named in honor of him.

The award recognizes alumni or special friends who have demonstrated uncommon and exceptional service to the college.

“Walter’s service to the college, university, and the community has been sustained over multiple years and is truly legendary,” Glen G. Gilbert, dean of the College of Health and Human Performance said. “His outstanding commitment has been demonstrated by his work on our college advancement council since its inception in 2000. Numerous students benefit annually from the Walter and Marie Williams endowed scholarship. We are proud to recognize his longstanding service.”

Williams is a 1951 graduate of ECU’s College of Health and Human Performance and a 1955 graduate of the College of Education. He is founder of Trade Oli and a dedicated ECU supporter.

Upcoming events:

- Tuesday: ECU Choral Holiday Concert, 8 p.m., St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, 401 E. Fourth St., Greenville. Free.
- Thursday: The N.C. Agromedicine Institute’s Open House, 3-6 p.m., ECU West Research Campus (1157 VOA Site C Road, Greenville).

See www.ecu.edu/cs-ecu/calendar.cfm for times, places and more information on these events and other ECU upcoming activities.
What a finish!

Pirates earn respect with second title

By Nathan Summers
The Daily Reflector

Saturday, December 05, 2009

For East Carolina football, respect has always been tough to get.

Constantly being forced into the role of underdog has paid some big dividends for the Pirates over the years, however, and none have been as immense as Saturday’s.

The Pirates stunned favored Houston, 38-32, to claim their second consecutive Conference USA championship, and the win was fueled from the very beginning by what ECU players perceived as a show of disrespect by the Cougars.

Prior to the game, Houston’s entire team gathered at midfield and jumped up and down on ECU’s logo, often perceived as a slight to the home team in the unwritten rules of football. The display that followed — ECU built a 31-19 lead on high-scoring UH in the second half and never looked back — was boosted by what ECU players saw in the pregame.

“You want respect from your opponent every week,” senior running back Dominique Lindsay said. “Always being underdogs, you get used to the role, and it’s kind of fun because you like to see the look on the other guy’s face when you come out victorious and you proved people wrong.

“Them stepping on the symbol in the middle of the field, that really fired the boys up, and it showed they don’t respect us and they think they’re going to come in here and it’s going to be an easy win.”

Lindsay, who rolled over the 1,000-yard mark in rushing during Saturday’s win, is a perfect illustration of the determined approach brought to the team by head coach Skip Holtz.

In his five seasons, Holtz has managed to change the way ECU plays by changing the way his players think. That effort began with Holtz’s first recruiting class.

“That’s all we talked about, making history, building a legacy every week,” Lindsay said of the high expectations the players put on themselves. “Everybody wants to be a leader, and when you have people like that, good things are going to happen.”

The 9-4 Pirates became the first team in Conference USA history to win consecutive championship games. Next, they’ll have the chance to avenge last year’s season-ending loss to Kentucky when they travel to their second straight Liberty Bowl Jan. 2, where the Pirates are expected to take on Arkansas. It is the fourth straight bowl appearance for ECU.

“When you get someone who’s not just a coach but a great leader, you can build a great program,” senior quarterback Patrick Pinkney said of the difference Holtz has made. “When you have togetherness and can focus on winning games, you can win championships.”

While respect is still hard to come by, the 9-4 Pirates successfully did what ECU athletics director Terry Holland urged his teams to do when he took over six years ago. The Pirates have become a dominant team in C-USA.
"I cannot think of a better day," Holland said on the field after the game. "It's a wonderful day for our fans. What a show they put on, and what a show the team put on on the field."

The Pirates' 2008 C-USA title was won at Tulsa, but this time it was witnessed by 33,048 on a cold, wet day inside Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium.

"This celebration had an entirely different feel to it, having the opportunity to celebrate at Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium with our home fans," said Holtz, who accepted the C-USA championship trophy and the Liberty Bowl bid on the field before inviting fans onto the field to join the celebration. "It was just absolutely awesome."

Contact Nathan Summers at nsummers@reflector.com or (252) 329-9595.

Copyright 2009 The Daily Reflector All rights reserved. - -
**Pirates repeat in Conference USA**

**GREENVILLE --** With his team around him and the Conference USA trophy in front of him, East Carolina coach Skip Holtz grabbed the microphone during the on-field championship ceremony.

"You guys are aaawwweeeee-sommmmeee!" Holtz screamed.

It was an awesome day for the Pirates, 38-32 victors over No. 18 Houston on a misty, rain-soaked Saturday afternoon at Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium.

ECU (9-4) withstood 527 passing yards and five touchdowns by Houston's Case Keenum to win its second straight C-USA title and return to the Liberty Bowl in Memphis, Tenn., on Jan. 2.

Arkansas (7-5), from the SEC, is the Pirates' likely opponent.

The Pirates' bend-but-don't-break defense intercepted Keenum three times, including the game-clincher in the end zone by safety Van Eskridge on the last drive of the game.

With the ball in his hands, it looked like Keenum would make one last throw to lead the Cougars (10-3) to the comeback. He lofted a go-route pass to receiver L.J. Castile at the front, left corner of the end zone, but the ball bounced off ECU corner Travis Simmons' shoulder and into Eskridge's hands.

"I was just in the right place in the right time," said Eskridge, one of ECU's 28 seniors.

It was Eskridge's second pick and ECU's third.

Keenum had thrown only six interceptions, in 584 attempts, in the first 12 games of the season.

Keenum finished 56-of-75 for 527 yards and five touchdowns - mind-boggling numbers, but not enough.

ECU forced four turnovers and turned the first three into 17 points.

"Obviously, turnovers were the difference," Houston coach Kevin Sumlin said. "You can't turn the ball over, and they capitalized on the turnovers."

And while Houston was throwing for yards at will, the Cougars ran for only 30 yards on 19 tries, and seven of those attempts were by a scrambling Keenum.

Meanwhile, ECU ran for 151 yards, with Dominique Lindsay (75 yards) and Giavanni Ruffin (55) each scoring two touchdowns.

Then there was ECU's advantage on special teams.

Houston kicker Matt Hogan, the team hero on Nov. 7 with a winning 51-yard field goal at Tulsa on the last play of the game, missed three extra points.
The Cougars also made the mistake of kicking to ECU's Dwayne Harris, the championship game MVP. Harris, who has returned three kickoffs for touchdowns this season, took back Hogan's first kickoff 69 yards to set up the Pirates' first TD, a 1-yard run by Lindsay.

Keenum's right arm had the Cougars up 19-14 at the half, but ECU scored the game's next 17 points.

ECU senior quarterback Patrick Pinkney hit Harris for a 22-yard TD, one of nine catches for 123 yards, on the first drive of the third quarter.

A Houston fumble set up a 37-yard field by Ben Hartman, and then Eskridge's first interception led to Lindsay's 7-yard TD and a 31-19 lead.

Keenum led two quick scoring drives in the fourth quarter, sandwiched around a 20-yard TD run by Ruffin.

Keenum's fifth TD, a 24-yarder to James Cleveland (19 catches, 241 yards), made it 38-32, then Hogan's PAT was blocked.

After a fourth-down stop at Houston's 36 gave Keenum one last shot, ECU's defense was up to the task.

Holtz, who has led the Pirates to four straight bowl games, could hardly stand the excitement. Six times in the postgame media conference he used the word "awesome."

"I can't say thank you to this senior class enough," Holtz said.

The second conference title, the 33rd overall win for the group, Holtz's first recruiting class, was thanks enough.

East Carolina 38,

No. 18 Houston 32

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>7</th>
<th>12</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>13</th>
<th>-- 32</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Houston</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>7</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>14</th>
<th>-- 38</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>East Carolina</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Wolfgang Puck Worldwide donates cookware to ECU

Working with state-of-the-art facilities and cookware creates a professional atmosphere for students in the Department of Hospitality Management at East Carolina University. Wolfgang Puck Worldwide Inc. recently contributed to that atmosphere by donating nearly 300 pieces of its professional grade cookware to the hospitality management program.

The wide assortment of cookware will be used in the department’s new state-of-the-art kitchen laboratory to enhance the educational experience of students preparing for careers in lodging, food and beverage, and convention and event planning.

“The donation of these items will assist students in their management of culinary experiences by blending the business of hospitality with knowledge of food preparation and presentation,” Robert O’Halloran, department chairman, said.

Jacqui De Chabert-Rios, visiting assistant professor of hospitality management who oversees several of the food laboratory courses said, “Wolfgang Puck has had a long commitment to the hospitality industry as both a restaurateur and culinary. He has created three highly successful business enterprises within the industry. Mr. Joe Essa, managing partner and president of Wolfgang Puck Worldwide Inc. and advisory board member for our department, was the catalyst for this gift. We are so grateful to Joe and WPW for their donation and excited to have this high-quality cookware in the labs. Having the best tools for our students will provide an even higher quality educational experience.”
ECU sleep disorders center receives program accreditation

The East Carolina University Physicians Sleep Disorders and Research Center in Greenville recently received program accreditation from the American Academy of Sleep Medicine (AASM).

"The American Academy of Sleep Medicine congratulates East Carolina University Physicians Sleep Disorders and Research Center on fulfilling the high standards required for receiving accreditation as a sleep disorders center," Dr. Clete Kushida, AASM president, said. "The center is a significant resource to the local medical community and will provide academic and scientific value in addition to the highest quality care for patients suffering from sleep disorders."

To receive a five-year accreditation, a sleep center must meet or exceed all standards for professional health care as designated by the AASM. The accreditation process involves detailed inspection of a center's facility and staff, including an evaluation of testing procedures, patient contacts, and physician training.

Additionally, the facility's goals must be clearly stated and include plans for positively affecting the quality of medical care in the community it serves.

The American Academy of Sleep Medicine accredits more than 1,800 sleep medicine centers and laboratories across the country.

The East Carolina University Physicians Sleep Disorders and Research Center, located at 521-A Moyer Blvd., is directed by Dr. Sunil Sharma and is located. For more information call 744-5481.
Officer thought UNC student had a gun

The Archdale police officer who shot and killed Courtland Smith thought the UNC-Chapel Hill student had a gun.

All that police found was a cell phone.

Smith, the fraternity president killed in the early hours of Aug. 23, was drunk and acting aggressively when two police officers tried to question him after a traffic stop on Interstate 85, Randolph County District Attorney Garland Yates said Friday. He said that the shooting was justified.

Yates presented this narrative Friday in a news release:

Smith repeatedly walked toward the officers, hands concealed, even as they urged him to stop. When he whipped out his hand from behind his back, displaying a black object, Officer J.P. Flinchum shot him five times. Smith died soon after.

The release portrays Smith as troubled. Not long before the incident, Smith had "sent an email to family members indicating suicidal intent," Yates wrote without elaborating.

The shooting followed a night of drinking at the Delta Kappa Epsilon house on the UNC-CH campus. Smith left the party late in the night and began driving. A half-empty bottle of Jack Daniel's whiskey was found in his Toyota 4Runner. His blood-alcohol level was 0.22, far above the legal limit of 0.08.

Don't do anything stupid

According to Yates, the Archdale police officers gave Smith several chances to show his hands and stand still. At one point, they urged Smith to "not do anything stupid," because they just wanted to talk with him.

"Mr. Smith continued to advance directly toward Officer Flinchum, who had retreated to the rear of his patrol car on the passenger side," Yates wrote.

"While facing officer Flinchum from about 10 feet away, Mr. Smith suddenly drew his right hand from behind his back while holding something black in color. Officer Flinchum fired five shots from his Glock .40-caliber service pistol. Mr. Smith immediately collapsed to the ground."

Police found a black cellular phone on the ground near Smith's body.

Smith's death resonated at UNC-CH, but also within the 24-officer Archdale Police Department.

The department had dealt with shootings by officers before, but none with so high profile as Smith's, said D.R. Gibbs, who became chief there just months before the shooting.

Flinchum has still not returned to regular police duty, and Gibbs said it isn't clear when he will.
Flinchum has been on the force two years after five years with the Randolph County Sheriff's Office.

"It really takes a toll on him," Gibbs said. "It's been very stressful. No law enforcement officer wants to take anyone's life."

At UNC-CH, friends of Smith's have struggled with the notion that he was suicidal or depressed, as was suggested in an early autopsy report and again Friday in Yates' statement.

On an initial autopsy report, Guilford County Medical Examiner Gordon Arnold had listed "depression" as a contributing condition to Smith's death.

But Chief Medical Examiner John Butts later amended that report, crossing that word out, along with the words "alcoholism" and "depression" under Smith's medical history. "No prior history of depression or alcoholism," Butts wrote.

Members of Smith's fraternity had balked at Arnold's initial characterizations of mental illness.

"We are dumbfounded," the group wrote at the time in an official statement. "Courtland was cheerful and optimistic. We are not autopsy experts, but we are confused."

UNC-CH Chancellor Holden Thorp declined to comment on Yates' ruling Friday. Smith's parents, who live in Houston, could not be reached.

No more parties

The shooting highlighted alcohol concerns at UNC. The university's Greek Judicial Board placed the DKE fraternity on one year of social probation - prohibiting mixers and cocktail parties - and shortened its pledge period from eight weeks to four. DKE ran afoul of the campus judicial board in part for violating policies prohibiting alcohol at recruiting events.

The fraternity pleaded guilty to the violation and also volunteered to offer a mandatory information session each semester on rules and regulations, to create three new fraternity vice presidents in order to have more members in leadership positions, and to sponsor a Habitat for Humanity house in Smith's name.

Christopher Rice, the fraternity's alumni adviser, wrote in an e-mail that people associated with DKE are struggling to deal with Smith's death.

"We miss our friend and brother more than most can imagine," Rice said. "As a fraternity we are doing our best to be together and support one another and will continue to do so as Courtland would want us to move forward."

eric.ferreri@newsobserver.com or 919-932-2008
Virginia Tech report finds more errors

RICHMOND, Va. -- During the deadliest campus shooting in American history, Virginia Tech officials locked down some administrative offices and warned their own families more than an hour and a half before the rest of the campus was alerted, according to revisions made in the state's official report on the incident.

The revelations come more than 2-1/2 years after the gunman, Seung-Hui Cho, went on a rampage that killed 32 students and faculty members before taking his own life, and 10 days before oral arguments were to begin in lawsuits challenging the university's handling of the matter.

They do not change the original thrust of the report - that university officials could have saved lives by notifying students and faculty members earlier about the killings. But they provide a more detailed picture of the mistakes made by university officials in handling the emergency.

The report, for instance, indicates that students who were initially locked down at West Ambler Johnston residence hall, where the first two victims were killed, were later released from the building by the police and allowed to attend their 9 a.m. classes. Two of those students went to class in Norris Hall, where they were killed by the gunman.

And university officials failed to contact the family of the gunman's first victim, Emily Hilscher, until after she had died, even though Hilscher survived for three hours and was taken to two hospitals before her death.

But the revised report - produced at the insistence of parents of the victims and totaling more than 200 pages - made no new recommendations.

Shootings kept quiet

The timeline in the new report suggests that officials were reluctant to spread the news about the first two shootings. For example, at 8:45 a.m. on the day of the shootings, the report says, "A Policy Group member e-mails a Richmond colleague saying one student is dead and another critically wounded. 'Gunman on the loose,' he says, adding, 'This is not releasable yet.'"

And at 8:49, the report adds, "The same Policy Group member reminds his Richmond colleague, 'Just try to make sure it doesn't get out.'"

The campus community was not formally notified of the first two shootings until 9:26. The shootings at Norris Hall began at 9:40.

While conceding that university officials had a responsibility to avoid causing panic, parents of victims expressed frustration at the report's findings.

"These were serious mistakes, and we still don't feel like everything that should be known has been revealed," said Lori Haas, the mother of Emily Haas, who was wounded in the shootings. "Tech officials
had to be careful, but they should have acted faster."

Another parent, Holly Sherman, whose daughter Leslie was killed, said, "It angers me that it took this long to get some answers."

The new report said that the university president's office was locked down about 30 minutes before a formal warning was issued to the rest of the campus and that the local police, in Blacksburg, took more than half an hour longer than was initially believed to begin looking for a suspect, a fact first reported by The Richmond Times-Dispatch.

The report also says that at least two members of the university's Policy Group, which was assembled to manage the crisis, let their own families know of the first two shootings, in the residence hall, more than 90 minutes before the group warned the rest of the campus.

University objects

Mark Owczarski, a spokesman for the university, said the revised report was inaccurate and lacked context. "The revised report describes the two people who alerted their families as Policy Group members, and they were not," Owczarski said. "It also inaccurately describes the actions of those two individuals who alerted their families as though it occurred with approval of senior officials. It did not."

Owczarski said the two people who alerted their families were secretaries for university officials.

One secretary mentioned the shooting while calling her son to wake him up for class, he said. The other was visiting her mother when she was called by campus officials and told to get to work because there had been a shooting. Before leaving, she told her mother of the situation, Owczarski said.

But W. Gerald Massengill, the former State Police superintendent who led the state's investigation, rejected the contention that Policy Group members did not alert their families. "I remember almost with certainty the names assigned to the messages that went out, and they were officials," Massengill said.
December 7, 2009

Binghamton Student Says He Warned Officials

By MICHAEL S. SCHMIDT and MICHAEL D. REGAN

VESTAL, N.Y. — In this small upstate college town, there were many who tried to comprehend how a popular 77-year-old professor who championed antiwar philosophies would have come to such a violent end: stabbed to death in his office on Friday, by, the police said, a graduate student whom he knew.

Then there were those who said they had noticed signs of erratic behavior by the suspect, a graduate student at Binghamton University, who, they said, was becoming increasingly fearful — so much so that his roommate said he had warned university officials of his concerns.

The suspect, Abdulsalam S. al-Zahrani, 46, remained held without bail on Sunday, charged with second-degree murder in the death of the professor, Richard T. Antoun.

The two knew each other through Binghamton’s graduate program, where the professor served on the dissertation committee for Mr. Zahrani, who is from Saudi Arabia.

On Sunday, Mr. Zahrani’s roommates — who had lived with him for about three weeks in a three-bedroom apartment in downtown Binghamton — recounted how the suspect, who spoke of financial problems, often mentioned death and said he was being persecuted because he was Muslim.

“I said he was acting oddly, like a terrorist,” said one of the roommates, Souleymane Sakho, a graduate student from Senegal. “When I informed them, it was for them to understand that the guy was violent or he may be violent.”

Mr. Sakho said that he told his academic adviser who is overseeing his dissertation about Mr. Zahrani, and that the adviser referred him to the school’s counseling center. Mr. Sakho said that the head of the counseling center told him to avoid interaction with Mr. Zahrani and said he should look to move out of the apartment.

A spokesman for Binghamton University declined to comment on what university officials may have been told by Mr. Sakho about Mr. Zahrani’s behavior, citing a continuing investigation by the district attorney of Broome County.

The district attorney, Gerald F. Mollen, declined to discuss many details of the case in a telephone interview, only saying that an autopsy performed on Dr. Antoun showed that he died of multiple stab wounds.

“There are no new details and we are not going to be providing a debriefing every minute for every development,” Mr. Mollen said.
About 10 days ago, the police were called to the three-bedroom apartment, according to Mr. Sakho. He said he was sick of Mr. Zahrani's constantly asking him if he was afraid of death and told him to stop. Later that night, Mr. Sakho said he told his other roommate, Luis Pena, also a graduate student, that he "had enough of the situation." Hearing them, Mr. Zahrani came out of his bedroom and accused Mr. Sakho of threatening him, Mr. Sakho said.

"I'm not the kind of person to make threats because I am a peaceful person," said Mr. Sakho, recalling the conversation. "I just want you to stop what you are doing."

Mr. Zahrani then called the Binghamton police, who arrived at the apartment several minutes later, Mr. Sakho said.

"I came out and wanted to explain what Zahrani was doing and they told me to go back to my room," Mr. Sakho said.

Dr. Antoun, an anthropology professor who focused on Islamic and Middle Eastern studies, retired in 1999, becoming a professor emeritus at Binghamton, which is considered a jewel of the New York State university system. He still advised several students studying for master's and doctoral degrees and came into the office every day, according to Nina M. Versaggi, an anthropology professor who has an office a few doors down from Dr. Antoun's.

Dr. Antoun held season tickets to the Binghamton men's basketball team and had plans to attend Friday night's game. "I had just talked to him a couple of hours earlier; we ran into each other in the mail room," said Dr. Versaggi. "We both have tickets to the basketball game and he said he planned to go to the game. Even though the team is rebuilding, he said they were showing some promise. He was just happy as usual, just a good-humored man."

Dr. Versaggi declined to discuss many of the specifics of the events on Friday. She said that although her office is a few doors down from Dr. Antoun's, she first learned of the stabbing when she received a phone call and was instructed to go into "lockdown mode."

"He was a scholar in the true meaning of the word," said Dr. Versaggi. "A very peaceful and gentle man, and he was a professor who spent his entire career working towards fairness and justice. The only firm stance he has ever taken on any issue is that he was antiwar and a peace activist. The last time I remember him protesting was against the Iraq war."

Mr. Sakho and Mr. Pena said that Mr. Zahrani told them he had lived in Montana before returning to Binghamton to finish his doctoral thesis. They said he told them that the university had recently denied his request for financial support; they added that he never talked about Dr. Antoun.

Mr. Sakho said the last time he saw Mr. Zahrani was around 1 a.m. on Friday, when Mr. Zahrani woke him up and once again asked him if he was afraid of dying. Mr. Sakho said he did not respond to Mr. Zahrani and went back to sleep.