THE DAILY CLIPS

December 11, 2008

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

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ECU trustees meet today to discuss possible tuition hike

By Josh Humphries
The Daily Reflector

Wednesday, December 10, 2008

Tuition and fees are likely to go up at East Carolina University next year, following of trend of increasing costs at nearly every university in the UNC system.

The ECU Board of Trustees will hold a special meeting at 2:30 p.m. in conference room A of the new East Carolina Heart Institute on the university’s Health Sciences Campus to discuss the increase.

The board delayed action on the topic at its November meeting in after rejecting a 2.41 percent increase proposed by Chancellor Steve Ballard.

Several members of the executive committee to the board indicated that the increase was too low, but a motion to raise the in-state tuition by 4.5 percent also failed.

The board decided to hold a special meeting this week to give administrators time to gather more information on what varying degrees of increases would mean for the university and its students before sending the final proposal to the UNC system Board of Governors for approval.

Ballard’s recommendation was lower than fee and tuition increases at UNC-Chapel Hill, N.C. State, UNC-Wilmington, Appalachian State and UNC-Greensboro, where increases are expected to be at 5.5 percent or higher.

The Board of Governors limits tuition increases at the state’s universities to a maximum of 6.5 percent a year.

ECU is the third-largest school in the UNC system, but ranks sixth for fees and seventh for tuition. Current tuition is $2,445; fees are $1,774.

The board’s health sciences committee will also meet today to discuss planning for the expansion of the size of the medical student classes and advocacy efforts for funding indigent care at the Brody School of Medicine.

Contact Josh Humphries at jhumphries@coxnc.com or (252) 329-9565.
Heart center debuts today

By Tom Marine
The Daily Reflector

Wednesday, December 10, 2008

Greenville officially becomes home today to a major cardiovascular center, devoted exclusively to the treatment and prevention of heart disease.

Officials from East Carolina University and Pitt County Memorial Hospital are gathering to celebrate one of their most significant partnerships — the East Carolina Heart Institute.

The dedication ceremony represents a culmination of the four-year partnership, which resulted in a 206,000 square-foot research facility at the university and a six-story patient bed tower at the hospital.

"The part that is so rewarding, as someone who is from this area, is to be part of a partnership that is really focused on improving health care for the people in this region," said PCMH President Steve Lawler. "We view the ECHI as more than just two buildings. It creates an incredible resource for the staff and those living in eastern North Carolina."

Lawler, who has helped work on the project from the beginning, said he hopes the ECHI becomes a clinical and intellectual home for everyone dealing with cardiovascular disease.

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in eastern North Carolina, according to an ECHI pamphlet. That means the local population far exceeds the national averages for heart attacks, strokes, high blood pressure, diabetes and extreme obesity.

The Heart Institute at ECU opened in September and the PCMH bed tower is scheduled to open in January 2009.

"The partnership between the hospital and the university is really an incredible story about commitment and a vision for the future," Lawler said. "We're working together on connecting quality and service, so patients have a seamless experience."

Lawler added his favorite moments during the four-year process have come from watching people with a common dream work together.

One of those individuals — Dr. W. Randolph Chitwood Jr. — will be the director of the institute.

"The dedication of the East Carolina Heart Institute is a culmination of a dream for me and the people of eastern North Carolina," said Chitwood, senior associate vice chancellor for health sciences at ECU and chief of cardiothoracic and vascular surgery in the Department of Surgery at the Brody School of Medicine.

"The collaboration between the university and the hospital was the essential part."

Chitwood said these two state-of-the-art facilities will put ECU and its Brody School of Medicine, as well as University Health Systems of Eastern North Carolina and PCMH on a new plane for researching and treating cardiovascular diseases.

"We are committed to specific training of nurses, doctors and health-care specialists in a multidisciplinary way to treat cardiovascular disease," said Chitwood.

The public is to get its first look inside the bed tower Sunday, when the hospital holds an open house of the $160 million patient care facility. It contains 120 cardiovascular beds.

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ECHI timeline

1. July 2004 — General Assembly approves state budget with funding for a cardiovascular institute at East Carolina University
2. January 2005 — North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services approves Pitt County Memorial Hospital's proposal to build a new patient bed tower.
3. January and February 2006 — ECU and PCMH boards vote to name the institute the East Carolina Heart Institute
4. March 2006 — Ground broken for both facilities
5. April 2007 — Donation funds $2 million chair for heart institute at ECU
6. May 2007 — Officials mark construction milestone at ECU's portion of The East Carolina Heart Institute
7. September 2007 — Central utility plant at PCMH completed
8. April 2008 — Moyer Boulevard relocation at PCMH completed
9. September 2008 — The East Carolina Heart Institute at ECU officially opened
10. October 2008 — Construction completed on The East Carolina Heart Institute at Pitt County Memorial Hospital
11. December 11, 2008 — Dedication ceremony for both facilities
12. January 2009 — PCMH patient bed tower scheduled to open

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Reports: Holtz has turned down Orange job

The Daily Reflector

Wednesday, December 10, 2008

Reports surfaced late Wednesday night that East Carolina football coach Skip Holtz had turned down an offer to take over Syracuse's program.

At least two television stations reported that Holtz turned down a deal worth about $12 million.

Holtz could not be reached for comment on Wednesday to confirm or deny the reports.

Holtz reportedly met Monday with Syracuse AD Daryl Gross regarding the coaching position and possibly continued those conversations Tuesday and into Wednesday.

The fourth-year East Carolina coach, whose name has also resurfaced in relation to the opening at Auburn, is expected to fly today from New York to Memphis. There, Holtz will attend a Liberty Bowl press conference. The Pirates kick off Jan. 2 against Kentucky in that game.

The Post-Standard in Syracuse reported Wednesday Buffalo head coach Turner Gill might have had a second interview with Gross in the last couple of days, and that Temple coach Al Golden — also a candidate — was still in New York Wednesday following his attendance at the College Football Hall of Fame inductions Tuesday.

Syracuse football players were told to stay close to campus this weekend, according to the Post-Standard, in case a coaching hire is announced.

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College students cram in library study time

By Josh Humphries
The Daily Reflector

Wednesday, December 10, 2008

Joyner Library is a hopping place for the first few weeks of December, as East Carolina University students prepare for final exams and projects.

Library staff members say that the library is very busy, even late into the night, as part of the library is open 24 hours a day during exams.

Wednesday afternoon in the Teacher’s Resource Center, education students were putting the final touches on projects by laminating photos and gathering materials for presentations.

Down the hall, students were huddled in special group meeting rooms equipped with computer monitors to project PowerPoint presentations, while some students studied alone, staring at books with headphones over their ears.

The Java City coffee shop in the library had a steady stream of students looking for a jolt or a snack to keep them going through the finals days of the semester.

“It is obviously busier,” said Ginny Boyer, from electronic and continuing resources. “We get a lot of requests from answering questions and helping people find things or just a quiet spot to study.”

The library is the best place to meet for group work said Taylor Gates, a Fayetteville freshman taking finals for the first time.

Gates said she used the library periodically during her first semester and studies there only for certain exams. She does most of her study work in her dorm room.

She studied for about three hours Wednesday for her introduction to philosophy exam and her first semester is going about the way she imagined, she said.

“Its about what I thought it would be, its not killing me, but its not easy,” she said. “Sometimes I find the library very helpful. Its a good place to be for finals.”

Most students come in at night for study groups, said Boyer, who has worked as a night supervisor.

“There is an obvious pickup in traffic around exam time,” Boyer said.

“We have so many resources that students use for final projects and papers.”

The library has a program called, “Crunch Time” that allows students to e-mail or send a text message to a librarian who will respond to questions and suggestions for how and where to find information for final papers.

Boyer said things really start to pick up in the final two weeks of the semester before exams begin, because a lot of classes have final projects or papers rather than exams.

The library gets around 20,000 visitors per week, a number that stays steady over the course of the semester, but more students return and borrow books in the final days of the term.

Amy Smith, TRC curriculum stacks manager and student supervisor, said her staff of nine students have been working non-stop re-shelving books that are coming in at an unprecedented pace.

“We are getting a lot of books returned,” she said. “You have to turn in borrowed books before you can
graduate.

"It has been busy, but, for the most part, people just want it to be quiet and for things to be stress-free."

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Teen volunteer among 20 honored by state

By Tom Marine  
The Daily Reflector

Wednesday, December 10, 2008

A high school senior from Pitt County received one of the state’s top volunteer awards last month.

Ian Bryan was honored with the Medallion for Outstanding Volunteer Service for his efforts with several local programs. He has worked as a volunteer with Pitt County Community Schools and Recreation, the Teen Court Program and as a VolunTeen Program leader in the Pediatric Center at Pitt County Memorial Hospital.

Bryan, who attends D.H. Conley High School, attended a special luncheon in Greensboro along with the other top state volunteers. Although he was slightly nervous to be the youngest award winner there, Bryan said he was excited to be a part of it.

“It was really cool to hear what everyone else had done to win the award,” said Bryan, who recently turned 18.

As for his future, Bryan said he is focused on getting accepted into East Carolina University, hopefully as a Merit Scholar. That will lead him to the Brody School of Medicine, he said, where he plans on specializing in pediatric medicine.

When asked what keeps him driven to volunteer at PCMH, Bryan said it is seeing the look on the children’s faces after helping them. He said they don’t feel like hospital patients; they feel normal again.

“It does give me some pride, but I’m there to volunteer, not get anything else,” said Bryan. “I go to help other people who need it.”

Gov. Mike Easley announced the recipients of the award, which is presented to the top 20 volunteers in the state and awarded by the N.C. Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service.

“All of these volunteers have dedicated their time helping others and improving North Carolina,” Easley said. “Without their services, some important needs of our citizens might otherwise have gone unmet.”

As part of the N.C. Award for Outstanding Volunteer Service program, this recognition honors individuals, groups, teams and businesses that make significant contributions to their communities through volunteer service, according to the Pitt County Office of Public Information.

The program, which began in 1978, has recognized about 16,000 individuals for their service.

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Turn it to the left

Noise is damaging children's hearing

By By JANE E. BRODY
New York Times News Service

Thursday, December 11, 2008

Michael became hooked on headphones in his early teens. He walked the streets of Brooklyn day after day
with his favorite music blasting directly into his ears. By his early 20s, the sensory hair cells in his inner
ears had been permanently damaged and Michael had lost much of his upper-range hearing.

The Children’s Hearing Institute reports that hearing loss among children and young adults is rising in the
United States, and that one-third of the damage is caused by noise.

According to the American Academy of Audiology, about one child in eight has noise-induced hearing loss.
That means some 5 million children have an entirely preventable disability that will stay with them for life.

The academy has begun a “turn it to the left” (the volume dial, that is) awareness campaign in hopes of
protecting current and future generations of youngsters from unwittingly damaging their hearing. Often, the
problem is not detected until children develop persistent ringing in the ears or begin to have learning or
behavior problems in school because of trouble understanding speech.

Although newborns are now routinely screened for hearing loss, there is no federal mandate for screening
the hearing of school-age children. What testing is done often fails to check hearing at high enough pitches,
a federal research team pointed out in the journal Pediatrics.

Surrounded by noise

We live in a noisy world. Young and old alike are beset by sounds over which we may have little or no
control: power mowers, leaf blowers, snow blowers, car and house alarms, sirens, motorcycles, Jet Skis,
loudspeakers, even movie previews.

We attend rock concerts, weddings, parties and sports events at which the music is so loud you can hardly
hear the person sitting next to you. At home, televisions, stereos and computer games are often turned up
so loud that listeners cannot hear a doorbell or a telephone.

Many “modern” restaurants have opted for noise enhancement instead of abatement. And try having a
conversation in a school cafeteria at lunchtime.

Any time you need to shout to be heard by someone near you, your hearing is most likely to be in a decibel
danger zone.

As if environmental noise were not enough, now we besiege children with noisy toys and personal listening
devices that can permanently damage their hearing. Toys that meet the safety standards of the American
Society for Testing and Materials can produce sound up to 138 decibels, as loud as a jet taking off. Yet
workplace rules require hearing protection for those exposed to noise above 85 decibels.

A series of studies conducted in 2002 among 116 infants by researchers at Johns Hopkins indicated that
even moderate background noise can interfere with how they learn language. The effect on babies’ hearing in
a noisy house is similar to what an older person with age-related hearing loss may encounter at a crowded
cocktail party.

A landmark study in 1975 found that children in classrooms on the noisy side of a school had lower reading
scores than those whose classes were on the quiet side.
Noise-induced hearing loss can come about in two ways: from a brief exposure to a very loud noise or from consistent exposure to moderate-level noise.

Thus, there is much concern about the lasting effects of MP3 players that are turned up loud enough to block out surrounding sound, like street noise. An MP3 player at maximum volume produces about 105 decibels — 100 times as intense as 85 decibels, where hearing damage begins. (For every 10 decibels, sound intensity increases tenfold.)

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health says 110 decibels can produce hearing damage after just 1 minute, 29 seconds of exposure. The League for the Hard of Hearing cautions that "noise levels above 85 decibels will harm hearing over time" and that levels above 140 decibels — the pain threshold — can damage hearing after just one exposure.

New bone-conduction headphones that hook over the ears and pass sound through the skull to the inner ear may not solve the problem. While they allow listeners to hear an oncoming car or a person speaking, users may turn up the volume to overcome ambient noise, damaging the 15,000 tiny hair cells in the inner ear that transfer sound energy to the brain.

Once damaged, hair cells can neither be repaired nor replaced. The damage makes it difficult to hear high-pitched sounds, including certain speech sounds and the voices of women and children. Tinnitus, a continuous ringing, roaring or clicking in the ears, can also result.

Protecting young ears

Before buying noisemaking toys, parents would do well to listen to how loud they are. If the item comes with a volume control, monitor its use to make sure it is kept near the lowest level.

Consider returning gifts that make loud noises, or disable the noise-making function. Or restrict the use of noisy toys to outside play areas. Children who play computer games and stereo equipment should be warned to keep the volume down. Time spent in video arcades, where the noise level can exceed 110 decibels, should be strictly limited. Most iPods have a control that allows parents to set a maximum volume.

Avoid taking children to loud action movies. If you do go and the sound seems deafening, ask the management to turn down the volume or insist on your money back. Children who play in bands and teenagers who use power tools, gardening equipment or guns should be made to wear hearing protection, available at pharmacies and hardware and sporting goods stores.

The League for the Hard of Hearing urges parents to encourage participation in quiet activities, like reading, watching family-oriented films, doing puzzles, making things with construction toys, playing educational computer games, drawing and painting, and visiting libraries and museums.

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King's Singers to perform holiday concert

Monday, December 01, 2008

East Carolina University's S. Rudolph Alexander Performing Arts Series will present the King's Singers at 7:30 p.m. Dec. 11 in Wright Auditorium.

To celebrate the holiday season, The King's Singers will present their unique take on a traditional English carol service. The program combines songs for the season with warm winter readings from works by English poets.

Regularly performing more than 100 concerts every season, The King's Singers present audiences around the world with their incomparable musicianship, charm and wit.

Their repertoire includes medieval music, masterpieces of the Renaissance, lieder, folk, pop and jazz and even contemporary commissions from leading composers. They are constantly expanding their repertoire.

With the recent album release "Landscape and Time" having been described as possessing "singing of rare distinction," and "stunningly high musical standards," they have maintained their place at the apex of a cappella singing, and are counted amongst the world's elite classical performers. They celebrated their 40th anniversary this year.

They have joined forces with many famous orchestras such as the London Symphony, the Cincinnati Pops and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra; and many famous soloists, including Emanuel Ax, George Shearing, Evelyn Glennie and Bruce Johnston of the Beach Boys. These collaborations have often resulted in recordings to add to the group's discography of nearly 100 albums.

Tickets are $10-$32. Call 328-4788.

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MILESTONES

Know people in our area being honored or recognized for their achievements? Has someone won a special award? Share your milestones by going online to share.triangle.com and clicking on "News." Or send e-mail to yourtriangle@newsobserver.com.

5 ECU students' valor lauded

Five East Carolina University students were recognized this month for their efforts in responding to two separate emergency situations on campus.

"You are all examples of the ECU spirit," Chancellor Steve Ballard told the students. "You are part of a truly unique community here at ECU."

In February, two students responded when the driver of the ECU transit bus they were on lost control of the bus while attempting a turn.

Cameron Kirby of Cedar Grove and Chelsea Mungal of Winterville were recognized with the ECU Hero Award for their efforts to stop the bus and aid the driver.

Also recognized were Mike Rose of Newport, Jacob Powell of Raleigh and Nickolas Benfield of Taylorsville, who came to a fellow student's aid in August when a nonstudent attacked her in a Fletcher Residence Hall bathroom. They were able to subdue the attacker until ECU police arrived on the scene.

Powell is a first-year ECU student majoring in business education. He plans to teach high school after graduation. He is a 2008 graduate of Southeast Raleigh High School and the son of Paul and Robyn Powell of Raleigh. He is also involved with the ECU Hillel student organization.

In addition to the ECU Hero Award, the three men also received the Medal of Valor Citizen's Award from the ECU Police Department. It is the highest civilian award that a police department can bestow. This was the first time it has been awarded at the university, according to ECU Police Chief Scott Shelton.
ECU's Holtz could discuss future today

If East Carolina football coach Skip Holtz is ready to shed light on his future, he will get an opportunity to do so today in Memphis, Tenn.

Holtz and Kentucky coach Rich Brooks are scheduled to answer questions at an afternoon Liberty Bowl news conference. Their teams will play in the Jan. 2 game.

Syracuse athletic director Daryl Gross, who is seeking a replacement for ousted coach Greg Robinson, has discussed the opening with Holtz. But thus far, there's been no indication regarding Holtz's intentions.

In four seasons at ECU, he has a 29-21 record, including an upset win at Tulsa last Saturday for the C-USA championship.

For most of this week, Holtz and his family have been in New York, where he attended National Football Foundation Hall of Fame ceremonies that honored his father, Lou. According to the ECU sports information department, Holtz was scheduled to fly from New York to Memphis today for the afternoon's events.

Lou Holtz said Wednesday that he thought Skip was still sorting things out but could stay put.

"I have no idea what he will do. He's starting to look at it, but his focus lately has just been on that conference championship game," the elder Holtz said.

Other candidates have been interviewed, according to Syracuse-area news reports. One of those, Buffalo coach Turner Gill, has also interviewed for the Auburn job that Tommy Tuberville vacated. Also on the list is New Orleans Saints offensive coordinator Doug Marrone, a former Syracuse player.

If there's anything to be read between the lines on the Holtz front, the logical assumption has to be that he's weighing the Syracuse opening while continuing to keep his options open on other fronts, possibly even Auburn.

One possibility is that Syracuse could demand a stiff buyout contract clause should Holtz accept the job and then leave quickly for another school, say, Notre Dame.

Irish coach Charlie Weis, whose 6-6 team lost to the Orange late in the season, will return for the 2009 season. His four-year record in South Bend is 28-21, but just 9-15 in '07 and '08. There is little chance he could survive another mediocre record in '09.

Holtz, a Notre Dame grad, almost certainly would be among the candidates should the Irish go looking, and he does not have an expensive contract exit clause at ECU.

There's no apparent pressure from ECU on Holtz to make a quick decision. The fact that he doesn't have an agent means he will move through the process at a pace he selects. It's entirely possible, of course, that other jobs will become open during the next few weeks.

Eventually, however, a prolonged decision-making period can be just as taxing on the coach and prospective schools as it is on fans. At ECU, Holtz has the makings of another successful team in 2009 and his players are more anxious than anyone to get a definitive statement from their leader.

The only certainty at this point is that Holtz isn't yet prepared to say without reservation that he'll be back at ECU in '09. Perhaps that will change today.

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NCCU identifies student who died

FROM STAFF REPORTS

DURHAM - N.C. Central University has confirmed the identity of a student found dead in a dormitory room on Tuesday evening but has not said how he died.

Anthony Pettaway, a sophomore from Charlotte, was found in his room in Richmond Hall, the university announced.

"The entire university community is saddened by the passing of Mr. Pettaway, and our thoughts and prayers are with his family at this difficult time," said NCCU Chancellor Charlie Nelms.

The investigation into the cause of death continues, but university officials said there was no indication of foul play.

Those who would like counseling were asked to call the NCCU Counseling Center at 530-7646.
Health-care issues: equality, recession

BY JONATHAN B. COX
STAFF WRITER

Health care is one of the fastest-growing sectors in the Triangle and is rapidly becoming a bedrock industry for the North Carolina economy.

But this state faces many challenges in the health-care system — brought about by changing demographics and, at least right now, a deepening recession.

Those were among the topics discussed Wednesday in Raleigh at a forum hosted by Duke University Health System. It assembled hospital executives, doctors, politicians and public health practitioners to discuss an array of issues the state must tackle.

THE ISSUES: Ensuring patients of all backgrounds receive equal treatment. Minorities report quality of care that is inferior to that of white patients, according to data from a researcher at the conference. Fixing that problem, in part, likely will require more training for medical workers.

But training is another difficult area, said Bill Atkinson, chief executive of WakeMed Hospital. There might not be enough teachers to prepare the number of workers needed to handle a growing population of older people. That requires new thinking — using serious video games, for instance — to help fill gaps.

In addition to all the operational challenges facing the industry, there are health risks as well. Childhood obesity is one.

"It's a serious, serious threat," said Bill Pully, president of the N.C. Hospital Association. The costs of dealing with follow-on illnesses prompted by obesity will be too great to manage, he said. Without change, "childhood obesity will sink the system."

THE SOLUTIONS: In some cases, finding solutions requires a different way of thinking, Atkinson said.

"What we describe as problems today really are filled with opportunities," he said.

He pointed to emergency rooms as an example. They're often crowded with people seeking care. And that's a good thing, Atkinson said. "The fact that they trust us is a very good sign."

Instead of trying to change patients' behavior, hospitals need to respond to

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them by developing services "in and around the environment people are coming to," he said.

Victor Dzau, chief executive of Duke University Health System, said he hoped the forum helps spark new thinking. It is an annual event, but one Duke decided to hold in Raleigh instead of Durham this year to emphasize the scope of the problems and solutions.

"While traditionally people would say, 'You're in this market,' 'You're in that market,' I think those lines really no longer exist," he said. "Hopefully, this will serve as a catalyst" to spark collaboration "with each other to find ways to solve problems that no single system can solve."

THE ECONOMY: At least one problem is beyond the direct control of hospitals: the economy. As unemployment rises, they're seeing more uninsured patients and patients who are putting off elective procedures. That's prompting changes in hospital operations as some slow hiring, put off expansion and limit other expenses.

"I don't think we are recession-proof," Dzau said.

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