Local men lend faces, voices to calendar

By Lynsey Horn
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Tuesday, December 14, 2010

A group of prominent Greenville men posed for the camera to show their support for the fight against domestic violence.

The Men of Peace calendar was created by the Center for Family Violence Prevention as a fundraiser and to bring awareness to the dangers of domestic violence.

“Since we are nonprofit, we are always looking for creative ways to raise money,” Chelsea Waters, community outreach advocate for the center, said.

Those featured in the calendar include East Carolina University head football coach Ruffin McNeill.

“Abuse hurts us all; teach peace by example,” he says in the calendar.

Others in the calendar include Greenville Police Chief William Anderson; the center's board chairman, John Guard; ECU professors and employees of the sheriff's office.

All of the men have worked with the center and advocate for a violence-free community. Each man provided a quote to accompany his photo.

“The quotes that every single man gave provides hope and shows their way of advocating for the community,” Waters said.

“Real love is filled with respect, support and affection. There is never an excuse for physical violence in a relationship. Simply stated, love shouldn't hurt!” Don Walter said in the calendar. He works in victim services at the Pitt County Sheriff’s Office.
“Children learn what they live. Teach them to live in peace, love and respect, not violence,” said Romeo Garcia Jr., a master sergeant in the sheriff's office. “Violence is a legacy you don't want to give to your children.”

Dr. Herb Garrison, an ECU professor of emergency medicine and director of the Eastern Carolina Injury Prevention Program, said, “The external wounds of domestic violence may heal, but the emotional scars last forever. We must do all we can to prevent domestic violence.”

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Early morning light finds new additions to the growing makeshift memorial the slain students on the campus of Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Va., Sunday, April 22, 2007. (AP Photo/Charles Dharapak)

Refector.com

Editorial: Protecting students
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The 2007 shooting that claimed 32 lives at Virginia Tech ushered in a new era of security on American college campuses. East Carolina University was among those institutions that conducted a thorough review of its emergency preparations and even conducted a “live shooter” drill to test reaction and response times in the aftermath of that tragedy.

While universities have instituted new security plans to keep students safe, the recent conclusion by the U.S. Department of Education faulting Virginia Tech's response to the shooting leave schools with no margin for error. Administrators need clarity in federal law and the certain knowledge that caution, even when well intentioned but wrong, will not be penalized.

Those arriving at East Carolina one Tuesday this May found the campus abuzz with activity, as emergency responders swarmed from building to building. Those without prior knowledge may have concluded the worst, but it was merely an exercise meant to test the system in the event a live shooter should attack the campus. Flaws were exposed and the university continues to improve a system that needs vigilant attention.

That has been the process for three years at East Carolina and at schools across the campus following the Virginia Tech shooting in 2007. In that case, a senior English major killed two people at a residence hall before moving to a classroom building more than an hour later. There, he chained the doors and opened fire in several classrooms, killing 32 people and injuring dozens more.

That illuminated the pressing need for campuses to develop security plans if they had not already done so. But with focus exclusively on how individual universities are addressing a changed landscape, the absence of clear federal legislation explaining schools' obligations to students has been overlooked.
Last week's report faulted Tech for not alerting students between the first and second shootings in a “timely manner” as the Clery Act specified. A vague standard such as that cannot be an enforceable mandate, yet the school could lose federal student aid as a result.

The onus for developing security strategies need not rest exclusively with university administrators. Rather, it should be a broad partnership of education officials, working together to hone successful emergency plans, mandated by reasonable standards of operation. That ensures a school like East Carolina is protected as it strives to keep students safe.

What happened at Virginia Tech is an unmitigated tragedy and, in retrospect, officials there should have done better. Let the nation learn from their loss and those mistakes.

Davis, a junior transfer this season, injured his non-throwing shoulder on Nov. 11, but he participated in two games to close out the regular season, playing despite the obvious pain he experienced as he was sacked twice in a loss to SMU.

"He's one tough hombre," McNeill said at the time.

East Carolina (6-6, 5-3 C-USA) has accepted an invitation to play Maryland (8-4, 5-3 ACC) in the Military Bowl at RFK Stadium in Washington, D.C., on Dec. 29, giving the starting quarterback more than a month to heal since his last game on Nov. 26.

Having Davis healthy offers the Pirates their best chance to defeat the Terrapins.
Davis is the nation's top point producer with 36 passing touchdowns and nine rushing. He accounts for an average of 22.7 points per game. The Pirates average 319 yards and 38.2 points per game - seventh and 12th in the nation, respectively.

The Pirates are seeking their first bowl victory since a 41-38 victory over Boise State in 2007 in the Sheraton Hawaii Bowl.

The Pirates are scheduled to arrive in Washington on Dec. 24. Players will practice five times on campus in Greenville before leaving on a five-day break.

The team will practice three days in Washington and have a walk-through at RFK Stadium on Dec. 28.

McNeill, in his first season with the Pirates, will coach in his 14th bowl game, though his first as a head coach.

After 10 seasons at Texas Tech, where as defensive coordinator he saw his teams participate in 10 bowls, McNeill expressed a complete comfort level with the preparation process. He said his staff will walk a fine line to keep players sharp while blending in conditioning and taking time for rest.

McNeill said the most important factor was for players to "focus" during designated football times as they balance academic finals and the excitement surrounding the game.

"I think we have a pretty good handle on it," said McNeill, who enters his 12th consecutive bowl.

McNeill said that he often told family members that if they saw him during the holidays it wasn't a good year for the coach.

"To be somewhere at Christmas, that means we're doing pretty good," McNeill said of his staff.

The Pirates will eat Christmas dinner as a team, along with family members of players and coaches.
Notes: ECU sophomore Josh Jordan announced to coaches that he plans to transfer after taking final exams. He will transfer to McNeese State in his home state of Louisiana and pursue his previous position of quarterback.

Jordan moved to wide receiver in the summer when the Pirates installed a spread offense.

With only a five-hour drive to Washington, East Carolina has had no problem selling tickets for its fifth consecutive bowl game. The Pirates have sold 8,200 of their 10,000 ticket allotment.

It's no surprise when factoring proximity and attendance at Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium this season.

The Pirates led the conference in attendance and set a school single-game record (50,410) against N.C. State on Oct. 16.

For more information about Military Bowl tickets, contact the ECU athletic ticket office at 800-342-5328 or www.ecupirates.com.

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MCNeill praises bowl system
By Nathan Summers
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The quest to establish a playoff system to determine the champion in college football's top division does not necessarily have an ally in East Carolina head coach Ruffin McNeill, at least if it means getting rid of the bowl system.

The Pirates' first-year coach chalked up a fitting 6-6 record through the regular season — the Pirates had one of the most lethal offenses in the nation, but one of the most porous defenses — meaning ECU was riding the bubble when bowl invitations were issued a couple of weeks ago.

Being on the receiving end of an invitation, McNeill is very quick to point out a bowl game is far more beneficial to his team than a national playoff system.

“I think the bowls need to be in place,” the ECU coach said at his pre-bowl press conference Monday. “The bowls are there to reward. The rewards clearly outweigh the negatives.”

Simply put, McNeill said if there was a way to do both a playoff and a bowl season in conjunction, he's all for it.

The Pirates are set to take on Maryland (8-4) on Dec. 29 at the Military Bowl in Washington, D.C., and McNeill said it's an honor to be one of 70 teams in the Football
Bowl Subdivision to participate in the bowl postseason, the fifth consecutive season in which the Pirates will play in a bowl.

“Every team works hard and every team prepares in the offseason, and bowls are a reward for the guys who are able to become bowl eligible,” McNeill said. “So I would be totally against throwing the bowls away, adamantly against the bowls being tossed out.”

The coach said he would be in favor of a system that awards playoff berths to the top four teams at the end of the bowl cycle.

“The bowls are one of the best things we do,” McNeill said.

Injuries

The Pirate head coach said the month between the end of the regular season and the bowl game has already done wonders for some of the Pirates' heavily-used starters like receiver Dwayne Harris, quarterback Dominique Davis, defensive tackle Josh Smith and linebacker Dustin Lineback.

Outside of the players lost for the season, there are just two names left on the ECU injured list. Safety Dekota Marshall remains out with his long-term recovery from a leg fracture last season, and McNeil said he is hoping the senior will be able to receive a medical redshirt for this season and come back to play in 2011 if he can't come back in time for the bowl.

Also listed as out is senior receiver T.J. Terrell (thumb). Out for the season are defensive linemen Michael Brooks (knee), Marke Powell (wrist) and Justin Dixon (knee) and offensive lineman Anthony Garrett (knee).

Transfer

Junior quarterback-turned-receiver Josh Jordan will bid farewell to the Pirates, telling McNeill he intends to transfer to McNeese State in an attempt to make it onto the field as a passer there.

Signed by former head coach Skip Holtz, Jordan didn't fit into the passing system of the new ECU coaching staff, and attempted to make the switch to receiver.

But the St. Amant, La., native appeared in just four games this season and made no receptions.

“It was a tough decision, but I understand where he's coming from,” McNeill said of Jordan. “We hate to see him go, didn't want to lose him, but he had a great point. He said, ‘Coach, I want to play, and I know I've got some good guys in front of me.’”

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Amid shrinking budgets, end is nigh for UNCW building boom
A few projects will break ground this year, then expansion likely to slow for a while

By Jason Gonzales
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Amid a state budget crisis, the University of North Carolina Wilmington feels lucky to be breaking ground on some major constructions projects in the coming year.

But that could be it for a while as the days of aggressive building at the school are over – at least for now.

With state budget cutbacks and cost-saving efforts in place throughout the UNC system, officials on the campus say money from the state for future projects might not be available until 2013, and any new buildings would come several years later.

"There is a lot of work that is being done on campus now, but in the horizon I don't foresee building to be as aggressive," said Charles Maimone, vice chancellor for business affairs. He said a list of about 15 projects the school would like to see built have mostly been put on hold.

Officials say the building projects are crucial because the student population has increased by more than 3,000 students in the last decade, to 12,552 this fall, and now more than 40 percent of UNCW students live on campus.
Maimone said the university has been playing catch-up to accommodate that growth. "The impact of growth, especially in our residential population, has significantly impacted the demand on our infrastructure," Maimone said.

**Already in the pipeline**

Before the announcement of major funding cutbacks, UNCW had received state money in 2007 to build a $35 million psychology building that will break ground sometime next year.

"The money barely squeezed through, and if the state hadn't already committed to giving us the money for the building they would have withdrawn funding," Maimone said. The building is to accompany the school's newly built nursing building and will someday be joined by an allied health building – a top-priority project that has fallen to the chopping block until state funds become available.

UNC Board of Governors Chairwoman Hannah Gage said the General Assembly is, for obvious reasons, focusing on the budget shortfall.

"This doesn't mean that we don't have a list of important and badly needed projects," she said. "We do, but our top priority right now is funding the university and protecting the academic core and the quality of education."

Maimone said he hopes the allied health building will receive funding by 2013, which would allow students, faculty and staff to use the building by 2015 or 2016.

Building such as the allied health building can take up to two years to plan before construction begins, he said, which creates a lag between the time the building is planned and when the building can be constructed and used.

Gage said, however, that buildings will continue to pop up around the campus and campuses through state money already allotted or through other funding sources.

"Building continues, but the pace and scale, in most cases, is more moderate," Gage said. Work will proceed on the many energy-saving, safety and other minor projects that are in the works around the campus, said Mark Morgan, director of architectural and construction services.

"The vast majority of the activity you will see is a facelift," Morgan said.

But seven major projects have been completed this year or are set to begin next year, Maimone said.

The School of Nursing building and the Center for Marine Sciences Oyster Hatchery are done. Soon to come are the MARBIONC Building, the Burevitch Animal and Field Support Facility, the psychology building and expansions to Wagoner Dining Hall and the Student Recreation Center.
In total, these projects will cost about $130 million, but only three were funded by state money acquired in years past – the psychology and nursing buildings and the oyster hatchery. Both of the health buildings will be used for classroom, office and some research space while the hatchery will be used primarily for research and development, Maimone said.

The two buildings that will be funded through borrowing money will be the MARBIONC Building and the Burevitch facility.

The Burevitch building will be a used for performing autopsies on marine species, Mamoine said. The MARBIONC Building, which is a major part of the Center for Marine Sciences, will be used for research and lab space.

The building is funded through a $15 million National Institute for Standards and Technology grant, and the university will foot the other half of the bill, said Steve Fontana, the senior technology development officer of the Center for Marine Sciences. "When the federal government gives you $15 million, you find a way to pay for the building," Fontana said.

The university was initially going to ask the General Assembly to help fund the building, but with the grant, the university decided to finance the other half through a public bond sale, Maimone said.

The state and the university hope that the activities at the MARBIONC building will help boost the economy through the creation of marine science products, Fontana said.

"The rationale behind the federal government giving us the grant is to continue with local marine science research so someday that will lead to potential spinoff companies, thus fueling the economy," Fontana said.

The two projects that round out the construction activity, are expansions to Wagoner Hall and the Student Recreation Center.

While Wagoner Hall will be funded through money generated through dorm food sales, Maimone said, the Student Recreation Center is being funded through student fees. Campus recreation director Tim McNeily said students approved a fee increase so the school can pay to more than double the recreation center.

"The building is too small and it is too overcrowded," he said.

The expansion will add nearly a building and a half to the existing complex, he said. "I think that the university will be proud of what the students helped build and that this will be the most beautiful building on campus," he said.

**Looking ahead**
The future of building on campus is unclear, Maimone said. The university will review it's five-year master plan next spring and decide on the direction the school needs to take during the slim funding years, he said.

"It's obvious that we won't be as heavily involved in the construction business," he said. But Gage thinks that's not all bad. The lack of construction funds from the state, she said, gives the school and the system a chance to focus solely on their biggest priority – learning.

"The buildings are important but, it's what goes on in the buildings that makes the difference," she said. "We shouldn't lose sight of that."

"We've had to hit the pause button in some respects because of the economy, but if you're a long-term thinker, we can use this time to improve our operations, our graduation rates, and be beautifully positioned for the next stage of growth and expansion when it comes," she said.

As for enrollment growth, a construction pause won't be a limiting factor. Population growth will continue until it reaches the cap of 15,000 students.

As the university grows, Terry Curran, UNCW associate provost for enrollment management said, the university will continue to increase the standards of excellence for incoming students to help the school reach the goal of retaining and graduating a high number of students,

However, even with continued student population growth, Maimone said he hopes to see buildings funded sooner rather than later.

He said his biggest concern is that the students will have to continue to learn without the resources that they need to gain a strong education.

Prior to the construction of the nursing building, students had to work out of trailers with limited lab equipment, he said.

"The construction plan is fundamentally about enhancing the resources to help increase the academic level," he said.
Colleges boosted by military students
By Eric Gorski
Associated Press / December 10, 2010

For-profit college companies are taking in enormous amounts of federal student aid money by recruiting and enrolling military service members, veterans, and their families, with questionable returns, according to a report from a vocal Senate critic of the industry.

Citing low student loan repayments and high dropout rates at for-profit schools in general, the report from Senator Tom Harkin urges Congress and the federal agencies involved to act now to make sure the programs are not being exploited. A representative of for-profit colleges responded that the enrollment growth ought to be celebrated and that active-duty military and veterans are choosing schools that serve their needs.

The report from Harkin, chairman of the Senate Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee, stops short of saying the schools are failing veterans or the taxpayers. But it does provide a snapshot of how successful for-profit colleges have been in enrolling military personnel and veterans after the government greatly expanded their college benefits through the Post-9/11 GI Bill of 2008 and more generous Department of Defense education programs.

Between 2006 and 2010, combined Defense Department and Veterans Affairs education benefits received by 20 for-profit education companies increased from $66.6 million to a projected $521.2 million, an increase of 683 percent, the report says.

Among the more detailed findings:
- Between 2009 and 2010, revenue from military education benefits at 20 for-profit education companies increased 211 percent.
- In the first year of the Post-9/11 GI Bill, the VA spent comparable amounts — $697 million and $640 million respectively — on tuition for students attending public schools and students attending for-profit schools. But that supported 203,790 students at public schools, compared with 76,746 at for-profits.
- Because of high tuition charged at for-profit schools, students receiving Post-911 GI Bill benefits received 36.5 percent of the money distributed, though they account for 23 percent of the bill’s beneficiaries.

“Given what we’ve already uncovered about the quality of education at many for-profit schools, I have serious concerns about whether the veterans who enroll at these schools are getting the education they deserve,” Harkin, an Iowa Democrat, said in a statement. “This report raises serious questions about whether some for-profit education companies
view providing education to our service members and veterans as incidental to ensuring a robust profit for their company.’’

Harris Miller, president and CEO of the Association of Private Sector Colleges and Universities, an industry lobbying group, questioned the report’s tone.

“Many of these students are choosing our schools over other alternatives because our institutions meet their needs for flexibility and career-focused outcomes,” he said. The dollars from military benefits, the report said, allow for-profit schools to evade a federal rule that no more than 90 percent of their revenues come from federal Title IV money, such as Pell Grants. GI Bill and Defense Department aid is exempt from that rule, something Democratic lawmakers have pledged to try to overturn and for-profit colleges oppose.