THE DAILY CLIPS

December 17, 2007

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
Health projects receive nearly $254K in grants

The Daily Reflector

Research projects led by faculty at the Brody School of Medicine, including one that exposes medical students to a summer of investigation, have received grants totaling $253,929 from the Brody Brothers Foundation Endowment Fund.

"These all address the major disease issues of eastern North Carolina, which include cancer, heart disease, diabetes and obesity," said John Lehman, associate dean for research and graduate studies at the Brody School of Medicine.

The grants come from an endowment established at the ECU Medical & Health Sciences Foundation by the Brody Brothers Foundation. The following researchers received grants:

- Carlos Campos, Dr. Ron Allison and Claudio Sibata of the Department of Radiation Oncology received $40,000 to test a device to measure radio-active sources used in high-dose-rate brachytherapy, a form of cancer treatment.
- Joseph Cory of the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology received $25,129 to study factors influencing chemotherapy directed at ribonucleotide reductase, an enzyme. Drugs that block the activity of ribonucleotide reductase block DNA synthesis and tumor cell division. Cory's study focuses on understanding what controls ribonucleotide reductase activity and how to exploit the ribonucleotide reductase site as an anti-tumor drug target.
- Dr. James DeVente of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology and Edward Seidel of the Department of Physiology received $40,000 to study the role of visfatin, a recently discovered chemical messenger, in women during pregnancy. Visfatin, like insulin, stimulates glucose transport into target cells such as fat. Thus, drugs that mimic visfatin action could substitute for insulin and bypass insulin resistance.
- Warren Knudson of the Department of Anatomy and Cell Biology received $48,300 to study the function of CD44, a protein, in a unique population of cancerous cells termed "tumor stem cells." The slowly dividing cells divide slowly, are not susceptible to most chemotherapeutic therapies and can repopulate tumors with new cancer cells. The goal is to determine whether the CD44 expressed from enriched human tumor stem cells differs structurally or functionally from CD44 associated with many other cell types.
- Mark Mammel of the Department of Microbiology and Immunology and Robert Lust and Jitka Virag of the Department of Physiology received $32,000 to study anti-inflammatory treatments for myocarditis. The research will focus on experimental autoimmune myocarditis, or inflammatory heart disease, to understand how certain bacterial or viral infections may result in inflammatory heart disease.
- Dr. Alexander Murashov of the Department of Physiology received $15,000 to study microRNA in diabetic neuropathy, the painful nerve damage caused by diabetes. Among other goals, this project will determine the therapeutic value of microRNAs in repairing nerve damage caused by diabetic neuropathy.

See ECU, B3
ECU

Continued from B1

- Maria Ruiz-Echevarria of the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology received $32,000 to study new targets and mechanisms for prostate cancer treatment. The objectives of this project are to understand the molecular mechanism underlying prostate cancer progression, confirm new targets for treatment and design novel therapeutic approaches.

- The Summer Scholars Student Research Program at the Brody School of Medicine received $32,000 to support research stipends. For the past 10 years, rising second-year medical students have had the chance to spend eight weeks during the summer doing medical research under the direction of clinical and basic science faculty members.

The endowment was established in 1999 when the Brody family donated $7 million to fund research projects at the medical school for cancer, diabetes and obesity, cardiovascular disease and other prevalent health problems in eastern North Carolina.

"We are grateful for the continuing support from the Brody family as shown by these important new research grants that focus on efforts by scientists at the Brody School of Medicine," said Carole Novick, associate vice chancellor for health sciences fundraising and president of the ECU Medical & Health Sciences Foundation.

Writing program seeks applicants

The Tar River Writing Project is accepting applications for the 2006 Invitational Summer Institute scheduled for June 26-July 24.

The Tar River Writing Project is part of the National Writing Project which seeks to help teachers become successful writing instructors. ECU is one of 20 sites nationwide.

To apply, visit www.TRWP.org.

Faculty members recognized

Three professors from the College of Nursing and a Brody School of Medicine program chairman recently received local and national recognition.

Janet P. Moye, assistant professor in the College of Nursing, has been selected a Robert Wood Johnson Executive Nurse Fellow. The three-year fellowship continues through 2010.

Moye is one of 20 fellows selected for the three-year fellowship, developed for experienced nurses in executive roles.

Maura S. McAuliffe, professor and director of nurse anesthesia in the College of Nursing, was one of 13 to receive the Pete Conrad Patient Safety Excellence Award from the National Quality Forum Safe Practices Maintenance Committee.

The award is given to individuals and organizations involved in the pursuit of patient safety. The forum is a voluntary standards-setting organization.

Dr. Edward Newton, professor and chairman of obstetrics and gynecology at the medical school, received the third annual Light of Hope Award. Newton was recognized for his work to establish the pre-birth service for women with high-risk pregnancies at Pitt County Memorial Hospital.

The award is funded by a $15,000 gift from Lockwood and Nikki Phillips of Morehead City to recognize a member of the obstetrical team who demonstrates outstanding support for pregnant women who are hospitalized for more than two weeks before delivery.
Ax grinders ride ignorance, AD's back

I'm so tired of reading opinions from obviously ignorant people trying to crucify the East Carolina University athletics director. People, give the man a break.

Since when does the financial aid department fall under the authority and supervision of the athletic director? Does anyone actually think Terry Holland actually approved and handed out the aid to his brother? And besides, I think I recall other problems existing in the financial aid section over its handling of loans some time ago. Sounds more like these letter writers have another ax they're trying to grind, but are too weak to actually say so.

As far as the athletic director hiring his brother to help in the Athletics Department, Holland is in a position of authority at ECU that should allow him the authority to hire his dog (figuratively speaking) for a job if his dog can do the job and does it well. Who should care?

Too often in this world today, too many people are just given a job regardless of whether or not they can do the job or whether or not they do it well, but more so just to satisfy some quota or federally mandated criteria. I do not recall any reports of Holland's brother just leaning on his shovel.

So ignorant people, get off the athletic director's back and allow him to do his job, and maybe we can all be happy for two more victories over ACC teams. Go Pirates!

GARLAND BECTON
Greenville
ECU police chief candidates set to visit Greenville today

By Jimmy Ryals
The Daily Reflector

Five candidates to be East Carolina University's next police chief will be in Greenville today.

The university will hold a social for the five finalists at 6 p.m. at the Murphy Center. The event will introduce the candidates to officials from ECU, the city of Greenville, the Greenville Police Department and other local groups.

said Elaine Worthington, executive assistant to interim Provost Marilyn Sheerer.

Janice Harris has been interim police chief at ECU since April. She replaced Robert Evans, who became a deputy with the Pitt County Sheriff's Office.

The five chief hopefuls include three current university police chiefs. All five come from outside North Carolina.

Adam Garcia of Reno, Nev., is the director of police services at the University of Nevada-Reno, according to a resume he provided to ECU.

He has been doing police work for 28 years and owns a law enforcement consulting business.

Rick S. Gregory of Newark, Del., is the chief of the New Castle County Police Department. He has been in law enforcement for 25 years, 22 of them with the Florida Highway Patrol.

Gregory C. Harris of Orangeburg, S.C., is chief of police at S.C. State University. He has been in law enforcement since 1988, working for five university police forces. Harris is an Army veteran.

Coleman McDonough is deputy commissioner of the Pennsylvania State Police. A police officer since 1984, he has spent his entire career with the Pennsylvania State Police.

Scott Shelton of Lee's Summit, Mo., is chief of police at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. He spent the first 25 years of his career with the University of Missouri-Columbia Police Department, taking his current position in 2001.

A full-service police department, the ECU force consists of more than 50 sworn officers and 17 support employees, according to the ECU Web site.

Jimmy Ryals can be contacted at jryals@coxnc.com and 329-9568.
More than 30 ECU physicians recognized as ‘Best Doctors’

More than 30 physicians at the Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University have been chosen by their peers for inclusion in the 2007-08 “Best Doctors” list. The annual list is compiled by Best Doctors Inc., a Boston-based group that surveys more than 30,000 physicians across the United States who have been included in previous listings.

About 5 percent of the physicians who practice in North Carolina make the annual list.

ECU physicians on this year’s list are: Joseph Babb, cardiology; Paul Bolin, nephrology; William A. Burke, dermatology; W. Randolph Chitwood Jr., thoracic surgery; David N. Collier, general pediatrics; James J. Cummings, pediatric specialist; John M. Diamond, psychiatry; Raymond Dombroski, obstetrics and gynecology; Irma Fiordalisi, pediatric specialist; David Goff, general pediatrics; David Hannon and Glenn Harris, pediatric specialists; Karin Hillinbrand, general pediatrics; Howard Homesley, obstetrics and gynecology; Thomas G. Irons, general pediatrics; Bruce E. Johnson, internal medicine; Cynda A. Johnson, family medicine; Yash Kataria and Mani S. Kavuru, pulmonary and critical care medicine; Kaye McGinty, psychiatry; Daniel P. Moore, pediatric physical medicine and rehabilitation; Robert J. Newman, family medicine; Dale A. Newton, general pediatrics; Edward R. Newton, obstetrics and gynecology; Ronald M. Perkins, pediatric specialist; Charles S. Powell, surgery; Kathleen V. Previll, general pediatrics; Keith M. Ramsey, infectious disease; Michael Reichel and Charlie J. Sang Jr., pediatric specialists; Kenneth Steinweg, family medicine; Debra A. Tristram, pediatric specialist; Ricky Watson, family medicine; Charles Willson, Judy Wheat Wood and Joseph Zange, general pediatrics.

Dr. Roger Ove and Dr. Suzanne Russo, both cancer specialists, have joined the Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University.

Ove has joined the Department of Radiation Oncology as a clinical associate professor. He has a bachelor’s degree in physics and mathematics from the University of Pittsburgh, a doctorate in physics from Yale University and a medical degree from the University of Illinois.

He completed an internship in medicine at Saint Rafael’s Hospital in New Haven, Conn., and a residency in radiation oncology at the University of Maryland.

Before joining ECU, Ove was a faculty member at the University of Tennessee College of Medicine and the University of Alabama-Birmingham. Ove is certified in radiation oncology by the American Board of Radiology.

Ove’s clinical interests include head and neck cancers and prostate cancer. He is certified to perform radiosurgery, radioimmunotherapy, brachytherapy including Mammotite partial breast irradiation, image-guided radiation therapy and intensity-modulated radiation therapy. His research interests are in translational studies, radiosensitization and the technology of radiotherapy.

Russo has joined the department as a clinical associate professor.

Before joining ECU, she was an adjunct faculty member at the University of Tennessee College of Medicine, the University of Alabama-Birmingham and Wake Forest University.

Russo has a bachelor’s degree in biology from Boston College and a medical degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

She completed an internship in medicine and a residency in radiation oncology at UNC Hospitals.

Russo is certified in radiation oncology by the American Board of Radiology.

Russo’s clinical interests include gastrointestinal and thoracic malignancies, pediatric tumors and sarcomas. She also is certified to perform radiosurgery, radioimmunotherapy, brachytherapy including Mammotite partial breast irradiation, TheraSphere liver cancer therapy, image-guided radiation therapy and intensity-modulated radiation therapy. Her research interests include translational research, radiosensitization and molecular correlation with clinical outcomes.

Russo and Ove will see patients at the Leo W. Jenkins Cancer Center in Greenville and at the Marion L. Shepard Cancer Center at Beaufort County Hospital in Washington under the auspices of ECU Physicians, the group practice of the medical school.
ECU grads celebrate milestone
Former mayor urges new alumni to be strong leaders

The Daily Reflector

About 2,170 students graduated from fall semester, joining 883 summer graduates.

Former Greenville mayor Don Parrott spoke to students and their families on the importance of public service and being a strong, effective leader.

"Developing the leadership qualities that carry over into public service is something that happens over a period of time," said Parrott, a public accountant who graduated from ECU in 1965. "In my case, those skills were the ones that I acquired when I joined civic organizations and became a part of their leadership teams."

Chancellor Steve Ballard also spoke, as well as senior class officer Armand Vonsiatsky, faculty chairman Mark Taggart and Charles Hayes of the UNC Board of Governors.
Ballard issues regret, check

ECU chancellor says he did see an e-mail from Holland about his relative working at the Athletics Department.

By Jimmy Ryals
The Daily Reflector

East Carolina University Chancellor Steve Ballard issued an apology Friday evening and a $12,500 check to athletics director Terry Holland.

In a statement released around 6:30 p.m., Ballard acknowledged mis-speaking to a newspaper reporter about his awareness of a job and financial aid given to a Holland relative.

In a Dec. 6 article, Ballard told a Raleigh News & Observer writer he hadn't seen an August 2006 e-mail from Holland announcing the relative was enrolling at ECU and taking a job with the Athletics Department.

In a statement Friday, Ballard said he had seen the e-mail and responded to it.

"The e-mail did not ask for approval for the arrangement, but it is clear from my response that I did not reject the idea," Ballard said in the Friday news release.

"Glad to have him," Ballard wrote in an Aug. 22, 2006, response to Holland about the relative's hiring and enrollment. An ECU spokesman released a heavily blacked-out copy of the e-mail Friday.

In the Dec. 6 story, Ballard said he may have received the e-mail but didn't read it.

"It came to an account that I don't look at as much as I look at my direct account," Ballard told the Raleigh newspaper. "I think Terry was trying to inform me of it at that time but I can say unequivocally that I"

See BALLARD, A13

BALLARD
Continued from A1

did not read that e-mail."

Ballard said he regrets the mistake.

"I deeply regret any confusion or erroneous conclusions that my mistake caused," he said Friday. "I truly did not remember having seen the e-mail from 16 months ago."

Ballard also gave Holland a check for $12,500, according to the news release. The check partially repays the athletic director for money he'd given ECU the previous week.

Holland had reimbursed the university for roughly $25,000 in wages and financial aid paid to a Holland relative — widely reported to be his brother, Jonathan Gregg Holland — for part-time work between August 2006 and Sept. 30.

"It is appropriate that (Terry Holland) and I share in returning these funds to the university," Ballard said Friday.

In a Nov. 1 report, university auditor Stacie Tronto called the relative's employment an inappropriate use of funding. Ballard called the arrangement a mistake Friday. His executive council has drafted policies to ensure similar incidents don't occur again, he added.

Ballard said he's altering his own e-mail practices. E-mails referencing personnel matters will get heightened scrutiny, he added.

Jimmy Ryals can be contacted at jryals@coxnc.com and 329-9568.
Tough road for ECU nursing grad

By Jimmy Ryals
The Daily Reflector

Her father suffered a massive heart attack and briefly lived with her. Through all that, her weekdays followed a strict schedule: work at PCC from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., then dinner and homework. Next came three or four hours of “mommy time” with her 1 and 2-year-old sons, who motivated her to push through graduate school.

She did homework between 11 p.m. and 2 a.m. On weekends, she worked at a rehabilitation center in Williamston or at Pitt County Memorial Hospital.

Life threw Campbell enough lemons that she took to calling herself the CEO of Country Time, maker of a popular lemonade, she said Thursday.

“It was just one thing after another,” Campbell said. “I really didn’t feel like I had anything to lose. I figured I might as well just stick it out one more week, one more semester.”

Two years of one-week and one-semester chunks later, Campbell is basking in the rewards for her hard work. Earlier this week, the PCC Board of Trustees honored her for being one of five finalists for the state community college system’s teaching excellence awards. Campbell advanced farther in the competition than any PCC nominee in the last five years, college President Dennis Massey said.

A full-time instructor since 2002, Campbell has been a lynchpin on a strong nursing faculty, Massey added.

“Amy herself has been an example of how our outreach and community service has really complemented the work in the classroom,” he said.

Today, she’ll graduate from ECU with honors and a master’s degree in nursing. Campbell participated in the May graduation but still had to teach two courses during the fall semester.

Roughly 3,000 students join Campbell in celebrating their exits from ECU this weekend. Two days of commencement events culminate today with a 10 a.m. ceremony at Minges Coliseum and two departmental ceremonies. Former Greenville Mayor Don Parrott will give the keynote speech.

Campbell is the College of Nursing’s outstanding 2007 graduate. During two years at ECU, Campbell was “very effective in role-modeling for other nursing education master’s students,” Everett said.

See GRAD, A13

GRAD

Continued from A1

JOHN SHEARIN speaks during commencement for the Theatre Department on Friday at Messick Theatre.

“Amy has been a leader in whatever she’s undertaken in the master in science of nursing program,” Everett said.

She also wrote a successful grant application to establish a new health education program for children.

The $4,700 project paired kids with teddy bears, teaching the children to check blood pressure and perform other simple medical tasks, she said.

Campbell will share her story with fellow graduates during a keynote speech at the College of Nursing’s 2 p.m. convocation ceremony. It’s a message of perseverance, she said.

“Having your master’s (degree) and education is something you can never lose,” she said. “You can lose a lot of materialistic stuff, but you won’t lose that. So that was a lot of my motivation.”

Jimmy Ryals can be contacted at jryals@coxnc.com and 329-9568.
LESS POMP IN THIS CIRCUMSTANCE

But despite smaller crowds, area’s winter graduates have plenty of pride

By Kristin Collins
Staff Writer

Chapel Hill — The blue-robed graduates at the Smith Center on Sunday drew a smaller crowd than a typical basketball game.

But if the radiant smiles and fists pumping the air were any indication, earning a college diploma is just as sweet at Christmas-time as in springtime.

Hundreds of students graduated from Triangle universities this weekend, some a semester early and some a semester — or three — late.

Winter graduates mark the occasion with ceremonies far humbler than the football field extravaganzas most universities put on in May.

“They look past us a little,” said Brian Haines of High Point, who was earning a sports science degree Sunday after four and a half years at UNC-Chapel Hill. “This is no Kenan Stadium and all that, but that’s not what it’s all about. We’re just as happy.”

UNC-Chapel Hill, N.C. Central University and Meredith College all held high school-size ceremonies in gymnasiums over the weekend, and N.C. State will do the same Wednesday. Duke, St. Augustine’s and Shaw universities don’t hold winter commencement exercises, instead telling grads they can participate in the spring ceremonies.

Students at UNC-CH said there are some benefits to graduating at a time when most people are thinking about cookies and Christmas shopping.

“Less traffic,” quipped Caleb Queen of Asheville.

His friend, Micah Chiles of Mooresville, said winter graduates face less competition for jobs. He already has a sales job lined up with Johnson & Johnson in Florida.

Other students said that staying an ex-

See Graduation, Page 11A

Triangle Winter Commencements

- UNC-Chapel Hill held its winter commencement Sunday. Meredith College and N.C. Central University held winter graduation ceremonies Saturday.
- N.C. State University will have its winter commencement Wednesday.
- Shaw University and St. Augustine’s College do not hold winter commencements. Students who earn degrees in winter can participate in spring commencement.
- Duke University does not hold a university-wide winter commencement, but some of the larger schools have ceremonies for students who graduate from their programs in winter. Other students who earn degrees in winter can participate in spring commencement.
tra semester left them with few of the regrets that many on-time grads have when they leave campus for the real world. A few weeks into their ninth semester, some said, they started feeling eager to get on with their lives.

"A lot of friends have moved on, and it's time for me to go," said Biniam Tekola, a drama major from Charlotte.

The parents who filled seats at the Dean Dome, excitedly waving and clapping, said they were no less proud of their winter graduates.

Paul Byrd of Hickory said his son, Philip, graduated late because he wanted to spend an extra semester studying in Australia. In the past six months, he bungee-jumped from cliffs and snorkeled the Great Barrier Reef.

Byrd nearly glowed as he talked of watching his son grow and learn over the past four and a half years. "He's curious, and he has a love of learning," Byrd said. "He's got friends all over the world, and that's a great thing to be able to say coming out of college."

A few were disappointed, however, that a small winter graduation doesn't earn students more individual recognition.

At UNC-CH, undergraduates did not march across a stage or receive a diploma and a handshake. The diplomas arrive by mail in March.

"I'd kind of like to hear her name," said Elaine Bunn of Zebulon, whose daughter graduated a semester early with a degree in dental hygiene.

Winter grads also don't get expensive out-of-state speakers. UNC-CH called on faculty members Hudding Carter, a former journalist and spokesman under President Jimmy Carter.

Hudding Carter told the graduates that, in a time of great turmoil, they must find ways to serve their country. He said he favors a period of required national service for all college-age Americans.

Carter recalled watching President Kennedy's inauguration. "His words warmed my blood and thrilled my soul then," Carter said. "They still do. Ask not, he said, 'what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country.'"

Most of the graduates recognized that the pomp of the ceremony would soon be forgotten. Only the achievement will remain.

Melantha Murphy graduated from N.C. Central on Saturday with 10 of her family members watching. She was the first in her family to earn a college degree.

It took her five and a half years to get her degree in mass communications while holding down a series of full-time jobs, one of which required her to work from 1 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. at least four days a week.

Murphy is also a severe diabetic. In her sophomore year, she also battled meningitis and pneumonia.

After the ceremony was over, she and her family celebrated her perseverance over a meal at IHOP.

"Graduation's graduation," Murphy said afterward, "whether it's in May or December."

---

For more photos of UNC-Chapel Hill's graduation ceremony, go to newsobserver.com.

kristin.collins@newsobserver.com or (919) 829-4881
Facebook fertile ground for study
Researchers glean social trends online

BY STEPHANIE ROSENBOOM
THE NEW YORK TIMES

Each day about 1,700 juniors at an East Coast college log on to Facebook.com to accumulate "friends," compare movie preferences, share videos and exchange cybercocktails and kisses. Unwittingly, these students have become the subjects of academic research.

To study how personal tastes, habits and values affect the formation of social relationships (and how social relationships affect tastes, habits and values), a team of researchers from Harvard and the University of California, Los Angeles, is monitoring the Facebook profiles of an entire class of students at one college, which they declined to name for privacy reasons.

"One of the holy grails of social science is the degree to which taste determines friendship, or to which friendship determines taste," said Jason Kaufman, an associate professor of sociology at Harvard and a member of the research team.

In other words, Facebook — where users rate one another as "hot or not," play games like "Pirates vs. Ninjas" and throw virtual sheep at one another — is helping scholars explore fundamental social science questions.

"We're on the cusp of a new way of doing social science," said Nicholas Christakis, a Harvard sociology professor who is also part of the research.

Social petri dish

Facebook's network of 58 million active users and its status as the sixth-most-trafficked Web site in the United States have made it an irresistible subject for many types of academic research.

But it is Facebook's role as a petri dish for the social sciences — sociology, psychology and political science — that particularly excites some scholars, because the site lets them examine how people, especially young people, are connected to one another, something few data sets offer, the scholars say.

Social scientists are mining Facebook to test traditional theories in their fields about relationships, identity, self-esteem, popularity, collective action, race and political engagement.

Much of the research is continuing and has not been published, so findings are preliminary. In a few studies, the Facebook users do not know they are being examined. A spokeswoman for Facebook says the site has no policy prohibiting scholars from studying profiles of users who have not activated certain privacy settings.

Eliot Smith, a professor of psychological and brain sciences at Indiana University, and a colleague received a grant from the National Science Foundation to study how people meet and learn more about potential romantic partners.

"Facebook was attractive to us because it has both those kinds of information," Smith said.

Shyam Sundar, a professor and founder of the Media Effects Research Laboratory at Penn State, has led students in several Facebook studies exploring identity. Researchers learned that while people perceive someone who has a high number of friends as popular, attractive and self-confident, people who accumulate "too many" friends (about 800 or more) are seen as insecure.

And in "The Benefits of Facebook 'Friends,'" a paper this year in The Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, Nicole Ellison, an assistant professor at Michigan State University, and colleagues found that Facebook use could have a positive impact on students' well-being.
Stem cells used to fix breast defects

BY MARILYNN MARCHONE
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SAN ANTONIO — For the first time, doctors have used stem cells from liposuctioned fat to fix breast defects in women who have had cancerous lumps removed.

The approach is still experimental, but holds promise for millions of women left with cratered areas and breasts that look very different from each other after cancer surgery. It also might be a way to augment healthy breasts without using artificial implants.

So far, the procedure has been tested only on about two dozen women in a study in Japan. But doctors in the United States say it has great potential.

“TThere’s a growing push to try to involve the plastic surgeon particularly for this reason — to try to avoid a defect,” but once one develops, options to repair it are limited, Patel said.

The implants sold today are for reconstructing breasts after mastectomies. They aren’t designed to fix odd-shaped deformities from, lumpectomies or radiation.

Doctors can try making the other breast smaller so they match, transplanting a back muscle to boost the flawed breast, or rearranging tissue to more evenly distribute what’s left. But these involve surgery and leave scars.

Mini implants of fat tissue have been tried, but they often get resorbed by the body or die and turn hard and lumpy. The recent discovery that fat cells are rich in stem cells — master cells that can replenish themselves and form other tissues in the body — renewed interest in their use.

In the Japanese study, doctors liposuctioned fat from 21 breast cancer patients’ bellies, hips or thighs. Half was reserved as the main implant material; the rest was processed to extract stem cells and combined with the reserved fat. This was injected in three places around a breast defect.

Doctors think the stem cells will keep the tissue from dying and form lasting mini implants.

Eight months after treatment, “about 80 percent of the patients are satisfied” with the results, said the lead researcher, Dr. Keizo Sugimachi of Kyushu University in Fukuoka, Japan.

The treatment is expected to cost $3,000 to $5,000, said Cytori’s president, Dr. Mark Hedrick. The company sees potential for cosmetic breast augmentation of healthy breasts, but for now, “our plan is to focus on an unmet medical need” in cancer patients, he said.

Lumpectomies

More than 100,000 women have lumps removed each year in the United States. These operations, lumpectomies, often are done instead of mastectomies, which take the whole breast. But they often leave deformities because as much as a third of a woman’s breast may be removed.

“It’s almost a euphemism” to call it a lumpectomy, said Dr. Sydney Coleman, a plastic surgeon at New York University who has consulted for Cytori and is interested in the stem cell approach.

The defect “initially may not be as noticeable” but it often gets worse, especially if the woman also has radiation treatment, said Dr. Sameer Patel, a reconstructive surgeon at Fox Chase Cancer Center in Philadelphia.
The chancellor of East Carolina said Friday that he was wrong when he reported that he did not have advance knowledge about financial aid and an athletics job given to the brother of ECU athletic director Terry Holland.

Holland’s brother had been paid $25,000 as part of the arrangement — payments an auditor deemed inappropriate.

Holland later repaid ECU and, amid media reports, had said that he informed chancellor Steve Ballard of the arrangement ahead of time. Ballard had told The News & Observer that he was not aware of the situation until the auditor began looking into it.

But a news release issued late Friday included redacted copies of e-mail messages between Ballard and Holland about the arrangement.

Ballard said in the release that he now shares responsibility for the improper employment and has given Holland a personal check for $12,500, half the amount Holland recently repaid the university.

“IT turns out that not only did I read the e-mail, but I also replied to it,” Ballard said in the release. “The e-mail did not ask for approval for the arrangement, but it is clear from my response that I did not reject the idea.”

“I deeply regret any confusion or erroneous conclusions that my mistake caused,” the chancellor said. “I truly did not remember having seen the e-mail from 16 months ago.”

The e-mail was sent by Holland on Aug. 22, 2006, and mentions an arrangement that would provide financial aid and a job in the athletics department for his brother, a non-athlete student at ECU, the release said. Holland canceled that arrangement, effective Sept. 30, 2007, after the auditor’s inquiry began. The university said no rules applied to the situation and so none were broken. New ones are being drafted.

In the Dec. 5 interview with The N&O, Ballard said he had not read the e-mail.

“It came to an account that I don’t look at as much as I look at my direct account,” the chancellor said at the time. “I think Terry was trying to inform me of it at that time, but I can say unequivocally that I did not read the e-mail.”

Ballard said in Friday’s release that he became aware of his error after he asked the university’s internal auditor for a copy of the e-mail in question from the university’s computer system.

Ballard also said he has apologized to Holland “for my actions.”
NCSU and tobacco

The Nov. 29 article “NCSU’s tobacco ties loosening” did not mention the well-documented health impact of secondhand smoke, which is why the General Assembly decided to ban smoking from state buildings and doorways starting Jan. 1. The U.S. Surgeon General released a definitive report on the health effects of secondhand smoke in June 2006 stating that there is no risk-free level of exposure to secondhand smoke. Breathing secondhand smoke is known to increase the risk of lung cancer and heart disease among otherwise healthy non-smokers.

NCSU Chancellor James Oblinger should be applauded for his efforts to reduce student and staff exposure to secondhand smoke at NCSU. It is important for Wolfpack students and staff to know that North Carolina has a high-quality, free, confidential Quitline providing personalized services proven to help tobacco users who want to quit. It’s available 8 a.m. until midnight daily, in English, Spanish and a variety of other languages. The number is (800)-784-8669.

While we all understand tobacco’s history in our state, N.C. State is to be congratulated for preparing its students for a healthier future.

Leah Devlin
State Health Director
Raleigh
Is it cancer? Faster, more precise tests ease stress

BY JEAN P. FISHER
STAFF WRITER

Last fall, for one agonizing hour, Susan Maddox was certain her breast cancer had spread to her lungs.

A chest X-ray ordered during her annual oncology check-up at Duke University Medical Center showed a suspicious dark spot. To Maddox’s surprise, her oncologist immediately phoned the cancer center’s radiology team and asked that they work her in for an unscheduled CT scan. Her painful hour began.

Scientists are trying to find ways to speed the delivery of news about cancer — good and bad.

For many patients, follow-up tests take days, even weeks to arrive at a diagnosis, heightening anxieties and stress. While cancer screenings save lives by catching tumors when they are smaller and easier to treat, the high-tech imaging tools medicine relies on are imprecise. They can’t tell whether a blob of cells is a malignant tumor or a harmless growth.

That means patients must wait for further analysis, often from a biopsy in which a small sample of tissue is cut out and studied.

"The vast majority of women who are called back with abnormal mammograms do not have cancer, but we are obligated to work them up and find out," said Dr. Etta Pisano, a UNC-Chapel Hill radiologist who has dedicated her career to improving breast imaging. "There is no such thing as a perfect test."

INSIDE
FINDING IT:
Surgeons use tracking system to map patients’ lungs.

For every 1,000 women screened, up to 150 will have an abnormal mammogram, according to national statistics. Somewhere between two and four out of the 1,000 women will actually have cancer.

For lung cancer, the scans are notoriously unreliable. One recent study found that computed tomography scans found lung nodules — which often lead to surgical biopsies — in 70 percent of patients scanned, but only 3 percent of patients actually had cancer.

One new effort led by Duke University radiologist Dr. Edward SEE CANCER, PAGE 12A

CANCER
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A

Patz Jr., aims to develop a blood test, similar to the one that signals prostate cancer in men, for lung cancer. Patz’s team reported earlier this month that it was 80 percent successful at telling patients with lung tumors from patients without them. Their method, which looks for four different blood markers associated with lung tumors, could eventually lead to a blood test for lung cancer.

Resolution in one day

Duke also has led the Triangle in working to make the anxiety-provoking process of sorting out abnormal cancer scans faster and less stressful for patients. Maddox, the breast cancer survivor, is a prime example. She knew whether she was dealing with a recurrence the same day her routine chest X-ray raised a red flag.

Within 30 minutes, Maddox got the more sophisticated scan and welcome news: the sinister spot wasn’t cancer. It was a blood vessel the X-ray had gotten a strange view of.

"Thank God they were able to get me in that afternoon," said Maddox, 57. "That one hour when I didn’t know was just torture. What would it have done to me if it had been one week?"

Duke strives, whenever possible, to work patients in for same-day follow-up scans and even biopsies, said Dr. Thomas D’Amico, medical director of clinical oncology at Duke. Even pathology studies are typically done on-the-spot, so there’s no waiting for days to learn whether biopsied tissues are cancer.

“We’re talking about whether these people have cancer,” D’Amico said. "We’re sensitive to what that means."

But Duke’s system, which has cancer specialists and related clinicians all under one roof, is not the norm. Most patients must wait days or even weeks to get in for the follow-up scans, physical exams and biopsies that decide their fates.

Morgan Wilkinson of Apex knows all too well. In 2005, it took four or five appointments with Raleigh doctors over two or three weeks to discover that the blip on her mammogram was not cancer.

"After a while, I was like, ‘Just give me resolution,,’" Wilkinson said. "I just wanted an answer."

Dr. Lisa Tolnitch, a Raleigh surgeon who specializes in breast cancer, doesn’t think it’s right for women to have to work so hard just to find out whether they have cancer. She partnered with a Raleigh radiology practice three years ago to have a radiologist in-house. Since then, Tolnitch has offered patients same-day follow-up mammograms if their screening reveals an abnormality.

Getting patients back for biopsies, if they are needed, usually takes a few days, Tolnitch said. When everything lines up right and her patients can clear their own schedules, it’s sometimes possible to go from screening to biopsy results in the space of a week, Tolnitch said.

Still worth the wait

Women who must wait longer can take comfort in knowing that the arduous process of getting answers truly saves lives. Breast cancer deaths have dropped steadily since the 1990s, according to the National Cancer Institute. Researchers credit early detection as one of the factors driving the trend.

"The goal of mammogram is to find cancers before they can be detected with manual exams," Tolnitch said. "It’s better to find it, if it is cancer, when it’s smaller. The smaller the better."