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"With one child it's hard to do P.E. There are some things you have to have other people to play."

Melissa Jones
homeschool parent

STRONG BODIES, STRONG MINDS

CAROLINE GREEN and Greyson Sanchez race in a session of ECU's Homeschool Physical Education program. Classes, launched as part of a pilot program in the fall, attracted so many families that some students had to be placed on a waiting list. Top, ECU students Savannah Sanderson, Rebecca Odonnell and Bennett Johnson times Grant Collins, Will Styron and Christopher Mack-Gonzalez as they climb bleachers.

Dozens of homeschoolers on the move in ECU's P.E. program

BY KIM GRIZZARD
The Daily Reflector

At age 9, Anna Green has already completed her first course at East Carolina University, and the homeschooled third-grader ran circles around her classmates.

But only because that's what her teacher said to do.

Anna is among dozens of homeschoolers to enroll in ECU's Homeschool Physical Education program. Classes, launched as part of a pilot program in the fall, brought homeschooled students to campus once a week for health and fitness activities.

"The intention is to build a program to give homeschoolers the opportunity to meet others and participate in activities that they may not have had access to," Eva Price, an instructor in ECU's Physical Education Teacher Education program, said. "The hope is to give students who are homeschooled access to group games, activities and lifetime physical fitness.

See PHYSICAL, A9
JUSTIN JONES, Jayden Brown and Bradley Williams stack cups after running laps as part of an obstacle course. "I wanted something more structured than just playing with other kids," Justin's mother, Melissa Jones, said, "so I thought this was just a great thing."
PHYSICAL
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ideas.”

The spring session, which
begins next month for ages 5-
12, will be taught by students
in the university’s PETE pro-
gram. ECU physical educa-
tion majors will be responsible
for planning lessons designed
to help the children improve
their motor skills and fitness
level, as well as help foster peer
relationships.

“It’s really a program de-
signed to service two differ-
ent populations,” Price said.
“It’s a learning experience on
both ends, learning for our
students and hopefully the
homeschool students.”

Pairing university students
with homeschoolers is not a
new idea. Education students
at Indiana’s Anderson Uni-
versity have been working
with that community’s homes-
school families for more than
30 years. ECU’s homeschool
P.E. program is patterned af-
after an effort at Appalachian
State University, where ju-
nior-level physical education
majors design lessons for
children of different ages and
developmental levels.

Price said physical educa-
tion curriculum can be
a challenge for parents of
homeschoolers.

“Physical education is a lit-
tle different (from other sub-
jects),” she said. “A few of the
homeschool parents said they
don’t have an activity compo-
nent.”

Melissa Jones incorporates
plenty of physical activity
into her son’s schedule. Eight-
year-old Justin plays recre-
atonal soccer and basketball
and is a member of a local
swim team.

Jones even purchased a
book that offered physical
education activities for home,
but she found that many were
impractical for Justin, who is
an only child.

“With one child it’s hard to
do P.E.,” she said. “There are
some things you have to have
other people to play.”

Before Justin enrolled in
ECU’s program, his P.E. gen-
erally consisted of riding his
bike or playing outside with
some friends from his neigh-
borhood. His mother likes
the idea of having something
more structured.

“He can actually be in a
group setting,” she said. “It
teaches them how to be a team
and work together.”

Homeschool mom Lisa
Green has five children at
home, but even that is not
enough to make a team for
some sports, especially since
her youngest sons are 1 and 3.
Green took 9-year-old Anna,
7-year-old Caroline and 5-
year-old Harrison to ECU’s
inaugural homeschool P.E.
class in November.

“With homeschooling,
there are so many benefits, but
with P.E. you want to have a
big group,” Green said. “They
get P.E. (at home). We call
it recess. They get to go run
around outside.

“The organized activities,
the being coached by some-
body, they’ve loved it,” she
said.

After a recent session of
challenge activities styled
after TV’s “Amazing Race,”
Green’s daughters both told
their mother how much they
liked the class.

Their younger brother had
a different opinion.

“No, I didn’t like it,” he
said after an activity that in-
volved climbing up and down
bleachers in Minges Colise-
um. “I super-duper liked it!”

Still, the class is not just fun
and games. Homeschoolers
are taught lessons on heart
rate and how to choose snacks
that are good for them. They
are sent home with calendars
that suggest ways the family
can be active each day, such
as creating an obstacle course
in the park or having a push-
up contest.

Price said the homeschool
class is designed not only to
give children a chance to take
part in large-group activities
but to take home ideas for
things they can do in their
own backyard.

Parents are invited to either
drop their children off or stay
and watch classes to pick up
tips on ways they can teach
physical education at home.

Jones found several ideas
she could use at home, but
Justin wants to sign up for an-
other session at ECU.

In this case, his mother
welcomes the chance to have
someone else be her son’s
teacher.

“It’s not really about the
teacher,” she said. “It’s about
the P.E. class.”

ECU’s Homeschool Physical
Education program is sched-
uled to being its spring session
next month. The session, which
continues through April, is $20
per family. Call 737-2394 or e-
mail PRICE@ecu.edu.

Contact Kim Grizzard at
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ECU offers textbooks, registration, tuition payments all by computer

BY KIM GRIZZARD
The Daily Reflector

East Carolina University students return to classes on Friday, but don't expect the crowd to be out the door at the book store.

Or at the registrar's office. Or at the cashier's office.

It's not the cold weather that's keeping the wait short. And it's certainly not enrollment, which stands around 27,000.

Students are spending less time standing in line because of the services the university has begun to make available online. From registration to tuition payments and even shopping for textbooks, students can do nearly everything they need to get ready for a new semester without setting foot on campus.

"They could be in Vail on the ski slopes; they could be on a beach somewhere," ECU Registrar Angela Anderson said of the universi-

ty's online course registration system. "It's day and night from when I started."

When Anderson began working in the registrar's office in 1993, she remembers students camping out to be first in line for the courses they wanted. As she arrived at work at 6 a.m. to begin registration, she would have to step over students stretched out on the sidewalk.

Now a student can lounge on the sofa at home and sign up for classes beginning in late October. Both distance education and on-campus students have a chance to register for classes via computer.

"So many of the things they do now, they can take care of themselves and not have to get out if it's snowy and icy or 102 degrees," Anderson said. "We've grown from that to where registration opens, it's a matter of turning on a button. It's totally different."

A little more than a decade ago, students would go from the line at the registrar's office to wait outside the cashier's office. They would stand in line there to make tuition payments or sign checks for financial aid.

When Executive Director of Communications John Durham arrived at ECU in the early 1990s, he remembers looking out his office window and seeing the line form outside the Spilman Building, which then housed the cashier's office.

"At the beginning of every semester, the line of students that were doing business with the cashier's office would get almost to downtown along Fifth Street," Durham said. "It was several blocks long."

Since the availability of the Higher One system, which allows students to receive financial aid funds electronically, the lines have virtually disappeared.

"They don't have to come to a building," Durham said. "They don't have to sign anything; and, more to the point, don't have to

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stand in line. It’s been a huge timesaver for students and a huge convenience.”

Two days before classes, ECU student Jackie Ondus was still at home in Franklin County, visiting with her sister. Though residence halls opened for the semester on Tuesday, Ondus didn’t plan to return to campus until today to get ready to start classes on Friday.

“Everything is done online now,” said Ondus, a sophomore communication major. “All I have to do is go and unpack, pretty much.”

For more than 800 ECU students, getting textbooks for the new semester is simply a matter of unpacking. Dowdy Student Stores offers students an online shopping option.

“They go to the Web site, they click on what they need, we pull the books, box them and they come to the store and pick them up,” Director Wanda Scarborough said. “With the new technology, it’s nothing like it used to be.

“I can remember when we had to close the door and let some people out before we could let any more in,” said Scarborough, who is entering her 40th year at the university, “but we don’t have to do that any longer.”

Because students ordering online also pay for their textbooks online, they can simply show their student identification, check to make sure their order is complete and leave with their books.

A similar service has been made available to students during orientation for several years, but, three years ago, the university began offering in-store pickup to upperclassmen as well. The free service, which normally takes about five business days for processing, allows students to select either new or used textbooks and then arrange a time to pick them up.

“It took about five minutes,” said Sydney Hopkins, a sophomore nursing and Spanish major from Raleigh. “They do it all for you.”

Durham said that while many of the lines that once marked the beginning of a semester have been erased, no one seems to miss them.

“There are still some lines,” he said, laughing. “There are lines to get football tickets.”

Contact Kim Grizzard at kgrizzard@reflector.com or (252) 329-9578.
Cold front may bring smatter of snowflakes

There are no winter weather advisories expected at this point, but that could change over the next day or so as the front approaches.

The Daily Reflector

A cold front headed to Pitt County and Greenville tonight should keep area residents alert for changing weather conditions, National Weather Service meteorologists said Wednesday.

It still looks like the front will approach from the west tonight and move into Pitt County and Greenville into Friday, according to NWS forecaster Mark Willis.

With that comes a chance of wintry precipitation, primarily in the form of snow toward Greenville, Willis said.

"It doesn't look likely to produce enough moisture to produce significant snow accumulation. We can expect an inch or less at this point," he said.

Even a light accumulation could produce travel problems for the Friday morning commute, Willis said.

There are no winter weather advisories expected at this point, but that could change over the next day or so as the front approaches, Willis said.

As the front moves eastward from Pitt County, it looks like it will produce a mix of rain and snow closer to the coast. But even some of the coastal locations could see a change over to snow late Thursday night, into Friday, Willis said.

"We're looking at a dusting up to a half-inch along the coast at this point," he said.

The story for Saturday and Sunday is shaping up as dry but very cold for the area.

"It doesn't look like temperatures are going to get out of the thirties during the day, with lows dropping into the lower twenties and even perhaps the upper teens in locations away from the coast."

See WEATHER, A9

POLL: What do you stock up on when there's a chance of snow? Vote online at reflector.com.
WEATHER
Continued from A1

Willis said.

East Carolina University officials will keep a close eye on the weather before making any decisions to delay or cancel the first day of classes for the spring semester Friday, said ECU spokesman John Durham.

"You have to take into consideration the outlying areas as we have both employees and students who travel from places all around," he said.

"We pay close attention to current conditions and forecasts from several sources and if it looks like it would be dangerous for our employees or students to come to campus we will delay opening or cancel classes for the entire day."

Pitt County Schools spokesman Heather Mayo said officials also will be watching the weather as the weekend approaches.

"School officials will continue to monitor weather for the next 24-48 hours," she said.

Officials will alert parents and staff of any delays or closings through the AlertNow system that automatically calls parents of students, the school system Web site, the system's information hotline and local media outlets, Mayo said.

The State Highway Patrol urged caution on the roads for drivers as the emergency operations center in Raleigh is getting geared up for any possible inclement conditions, said 1st Sgt. M.A. Williams of Greenville's Troop A.

"As we always advise when weather conditions get dangerous, if you don't have to be out there, don't drive. The more traffic out there, the greater the likelihood of collisions," Williams said.

For those who must drive, slow down and increase your stopping distance, turn your headlights on and stay alert to your surroundings, the trooper said.

State Department of Trans-
Officials launch third effort to fund Steele center

Planners have closed loopholes from previous attempts and elaborated on the master plans for the center and neighboring Elm Street Park.

BY KATHRYN KENNEDY
The Daily Reflector

 Greenville Recreation and Parks Department officials hope the third time's the charm as they launch another effort seeking grant money for a renovation of Elm Street Gym that would be accessible to the city's special needs populations.

The proposed Drew Steele Center has been an applicant in the state’s Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF) for the past two years. The request for $500,000 was rejected both times. Recreation and Parks Director

See STEELE, A9

A LARGE CROWD turns out Wednesday evening at the Elm Street Center in Greenville for a meeting on the Drew Steele Center.
Gary Fenton said the project ranked 29th out of 85 total applications last year.

At a public workshop Wednesday he stressed the importance of both persistence and patience. He said officials have closed loopholes from previous attempts and elaborated on the master plans for the center and neighboring Elm Street Park.

“We want to turn an old gym into a first-class recreational facility that would be accessible to all,” Fenton said. “It’s worth impatiently waiting for and it’s worth aggressively fighting for.”

Nonprofits, businesses and individuals throughout the community already have raised $500,000 for the center through the Drew Steele Foundation — like the proposed facility, it’s named for a local youth with Down syndrome. His friendship with East Carolina University Football Head Coach Skip Holtz and constant presence on the Pirates’ sideline put a face to the project.

Drew’s father, former ECU basketball coach Mike Steele, said he’s not discouraged by the difficulty in winning PARTF funds.

“I think the economy and cutting of budgets played a big role,” he said Wednesday. “I know everybody is working very hard to make this happen.”

Steele pointed out that the Elm Street Gym is badly in need of repairs and renovations anyway, and is a good match for the foundation’s aim.

“It would be nice for those kids to have a place they can go that they know is just for them,” he said.

If funds are awarded by the state in either May or August, work on the Drew Steele Center would progress in two phases.

The first phase includes infrastructure needs, such as accessible rest rooms, but also a new gym floor that accommodates basketball, shuffleboard, indoor soccer and volleyball.

New bleachers, an accessible weight room and a horticulture area are also in the master plan.

Fenton noted that the center must be able to open following the first phase to meet PARTF guidelines.

The second phase can still be tweaked, but currently includes the installation of a therapeutic pool, dressing rooms and a tree house, among other things.

Attendees at Wednesday’s workshop posed questions about pursuing in-kind donations for construction needs, the connection to existing greenways and potential partnerships with Pitt County Schools.

Fenton thanked them for their efforts and stressed his commitment to the Drew Steele Center.

“It’s important to see some results of what they’ve given,” he said.

This year’s application is due Jan. 31.

Contact Kathryn Kennedy at kkennedy@reflector.com or (252) 329-9566.
NCSU set to announce chancellor

A longtime Purdue University administrator is expected to be named the next chancellor at N.C. State University.

William "Randy" Woodson, Purdue's current provost, is the top choice of UNC President Erskine Bowles and will likely be hired Friday morning by the UNC system's Board of Governors, four university and government sources confirmed. The sources did not want to speak publicly about the selection until after the board's vote.

For months, a search committee has conducted a secret process to find the next leader of the state's largest university following last year's shakeup at the highest levels of the campus.

Board chairwoman Hannah Gage declined to comment on the status of the search Wednesday, but the university system released an updated agenda for Friday's meeting that includes a chancellor election. No other university system campus is on the cusp of hiring a new chancellor.

Members of the NCSU search committee have also declined to comment this week.

Woodson, 52, reached Wednesday night by a reporter with the Lafayette Journal & Courier, declined to answer questions about the NCSU job. "I am not able to comment," Woodson said.

He said that he was traveling, but when asked whether he was in North Carolina, declined to say where he was.

Purdue is in central Indiana and, like NCSU, is a large, public, land-grant university. Woodson has been Purdue's chief academic officer since May 2008; prior to that he spent four years as dean of the agriculture school there. He began his Purdue career in 1985 as a horticulture professor.

He would succeed James Oblinger, who resigned last June amid questions over his role in the hiring of former first lady Mary Easley. James Woodward, the former UNC-Charlotte chancellor, has served as NCSU's leader in the interim and has been a steadying force.

Oblinger was paid $420,000 a year. Woodson's current salary is $309,000. His pay is unchanged from last year due to a university salary freeze to help cope with the budget problems.

If hired, Woodson would come to NCSU following a tumultuous year for the university. Because of the fallout from the Easley hiring and a related federal investigation, NCSU suffered a blow to its reputation and a crisis of leadership. Besides Oblinger, the provost and trustee chairman also resigned. At the same time, North Carolina's public universities endured staff layoffs and cuts during the state's budget crunch. Funding difficulties are likely to linger for the university system and for NCSU, which has more than 31,000 students and 8,000 faculty and staff.

As provost, Woodson oversees Purdue's academic enterprise, hammering out department budgets and directing campus deans. But he has not had experience at the helm of a large campus, answering to
competing interests, including legislators, alumni, students and athletic boosters. A colleague said Wednesday night that he will surmount that challenge.

'Universally respected'

"Randy is, I think it's fair to say, universally respected and liked here and it's a significant loss for us, and a big gain for you," said Michael Dana, a professor in Purdue's Department of Horticulture and Landscape Architecture. He has known Woodson since 1985, when Woodson first came to the university.

Woodson's talent and charisma are so obvious that he rocketed up the career ladder at Purdue, seldom being able to settle into a new role long before being plucked for a higher post, said Dana.

Woodson is particularly skilled at the delicate job of forging consensus among headstrong academics, said Dana.

"He's very good at bringing these strong personalities together and taking their input and making everyone feel like they're on the same page, whether it's about hiring decisions, new departments, or whatever," he said. "And he values people's opinions, but isn't afraid to make a decision."

Woodson is familiar with budget turmoil: He's one of the point men in Purdue's fight to handle a projected $30 million deficit in its next two-year budget cycle, which starts in 2011, according to stories in the Journal & Courier. And it may have its current budget cut too, as state leaders are expected to announce cuts soon of $45 million spread across the university system. Woodson is co-chairman of a Purdue committee charged with finding to cut spending.

As a researcher, Woodson has done extensive work in the field of plant science. He and his research group have published more than 100 journal articles and book chapters, according to Woodson's biography on the Purdue University Web site.

Woodson has proven a popular provost because of the emphasis he has placed on the value of teaching and research, said Howard Zelaznik, chairman of Purdue's faculty.

Zelaznik, who could not confirm Wednesday that Woodson was taking the NCSU job, said faculty members at Purdue were happy with Woodson's leadership.

"I can say with full confidence that there is never a negative word about him," said Zelaznik, a health and kinesiology professor.

"He's been a wonderful provost. He thinks like a faculty member first and like an administrator second. It's a great thing from a university's perspective."

Woodson became Purdue's agriculture dean in 2004. He was an associate dean before that, during which time research money from external sources increased from $25 million in 1998 to more than $40 million in 2004, according to a Purdue news release.

Staff writers Rob Christensen and Jane Stancill contributed to this report.

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Rex brings team of heart specialists on board

Rex Healthcare is immersing itself in the business of mending hearts.

The Raleigh hospital announced Wednesday that it is forming a cardiovascular specialists practice. Three of the physicians are leaving competing practices affiliated with other hospitals in Wake County.

"We've had a good program, but it's time to take that program to the next level," said Lisa Schiller, director of communications for Rex Healthcare. "This is the team of physicians that will take us there."

Rex Healthcare's move into the heart business is another sign of the competitive health care market in the Triangle. WakeMed-Raleigh campus has long offered a thriving vascular heart center. Duke Raleigh Hospital counts cardiovascular care among its specialties and is planning to expand its heart services in the coming years.

Rex already has a strong reputation in heart care. Medicare quality rankings in the last two years show that Rex placed first in heart attack survival rates of hospitals in the Triangle.

While many heart specialists use Rex's facilities, the hospital has never employed cardiologists, let alone had a specialists practice.

James Zidar, currently with Duke Cardiology of Raleigh, will lead the practice. Joining him are Sameh Mobarek and Bruce Usher, both currently with Wake Heart and Vascular Associates, and Deepak Pasi and Mohit Pasi, both now with Carolina Cardiology Consultants.

The practice will start in the third quarter of 2010. In addition to an office at Rex's main campus on Blue Ridge Road, the practice will have offices at Rex facilities in Cary and Wakefield.

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