

After Hurricane Floyd, locals urged to remain vigilant

by ALLISON BIGGAR

Staff Writer

Dr. Steve Lyons, hurricane expert with the Weather Channel, presented a lecture on "Carolina Hurricanes" last Tuesday in Cameron Auditorium. During the lecture, Lyons emphasized the importance of being prepared for hurricanes so that North Carolina residents can avoid the level of damage the state has experienced during recent storms.

"What we're seeing is that there is a lot more to damage today," Lyons said. "The damage can be worse than what you have seen in the nineties and they can be worse than Fran."

Hurricane Fran, a Category 3 on the Saffir-Simpson scale, did \$3.2 billion worth of damage to the Carolinas.

Lyons also warned audience members not to think that since there has been so many hurricanes lately the next hurricane season will be calm, a common misconception. He compared the probability of being hit by a hurricane to the same random elements of chance in flipping a coin.

"What happened in the past is past," Lyons said. "There is the same probability of having

hurricanes in this next season as we did last season."

Lyons stressed the importance of being prepared for a hurricane and not taking warnings lightly.

"The people that try to fool themselves into thinking that they are not going to be hit are fooling themselves...because it's inevitable that sooner or later another cyclone will visit North Carolina," he said.

Lyons advised people to be prepared for a hurricane by taking their most valuable possessions.

"You can replace a couch but you can not replace a picture at your wedding," he said.

Hurricane Floyd was the most damaging storm in North Carolina history.

The inland flooding from the storm did substantial damage to the homes and possessions of many who did not live near the coast. Forty-nine deaths were attributed to Floyd's flooding.

"Most people die from water, not from wind," Lyons said.

Hurricane flooding is dependent on tropical cyclone size, speed, topography, pre-existing rain, percolation and run-off rate.



Hurricane expert, Dr. Steve Lyons of the Weather Channel delivers lecture on Carolina hurricanes.

Lyons said wind speed typically begins at 50 miles per hour and is often locally unpredictable due to damage cascade and flying debris. He emphasized the damage that trees can cause during a storm. Many buildings are reinforced against storms, but they are not protected from objects such as trees falling on top of them.

"It's really sad because [a hurricane] can re-

ally change the picture of a neighborhood very quickly," Lyons said when showing slides of a Miami neighborhood devastated by falling trees during a hurricane.

Many audience members expressed gratitude for Lyons lecture, since the Cape Fear region has been hit by so many storms in the recent past.

"I enjoyed the lecture because I am a resident of Wilmington, so hurricanes that come here have always affected me and my life," said freshman Mary Sims. "I am trying to decide [whether or not] I am going to live at the beach next year, and hurricanes play a big factor in that decision."

Lyons's areas of expertise include marine meteorology, tropical meteorology, satellite meteorology, and southern hemisphere meteorology. He has a doctoral degree from the University of Hawaii and has held distinguished positions with the National Hurricane Center, National Weather Service, and the Joint Institute for Marine and Atmospheric Research. Lyons has served as the Weather Channel's tropical program manager since 1998.

The UNCW Graduate Student Association sponsored the lecture.

Faculty Senate hears Biology Department complaints on writing

by TODD VOLKSTORF

Correspondent

The Faculty Senate recently rejected a resolution from the biology department that was critical of student writing proficiency. The resolution, aimed specifically at the English Department and UNCW administration, focused on the Biology department's view that a large percentage of UNCW undergraduates have unacceptable writing skills.

The resolution said: "...it is the responsibility of the English Department to teach proper grammar, punctuation, and spelling in required composition courses."

The biology department also charged that each academic department should stress more writing assignments and "promote proper grammar, punctuation and spelling." The resolution also said that the English Department should "assess the proficiency of all freshmen and transfer stu-

dents in written English," and prescribe additional courses as needed.

"What I have noticed over the years is that a substantial percentage of my students cannot write in a manner that would be considered literate," said biology professor Joe Pawlik.

Pawlik said that earlier efforts to seek improvement from the English department were unsuccessful, and the issue needed to be brought to the Faculty Senate's attention.

"I think it (the original resolution) was a very fair and clear delineation of the problem," he said.

English department Chairman Dick Veit said the resolution, "didn't take into account the larger picture of the need for writing across the curriculum program."

The biology department didn't talk to any members of the English department before they submitted the motion.

"The English department certainly felt that it [the biology department] wasn't completely in-

formed," Veit said.

After the resolution failed, the English department made an alternative motion regarding the problem. The motion, which passed, called for a Senate-appointed committee to examine writing programs at other institutions, which will allow UNCW to develop a similar plan.

According to the Senate minutes, "there was considerable, sometimes strained, discussion on these motions." Members of the English and biology departments discussed who is having problems, and whether or not UNCW students know how to write when they graduate. Both sides agree that there is no easy fix to the problem and that it may take some time to implement a successful solution. They also agree that students should write more in their respective disciplines.

Pawlik expressed a willingness to work with other departments to solve the problem.

"We're willing to step up to the plate and work on this because we perceive a problem," he said.

Veit said he was frustrated at the suddenness of the issue's introduction.

"Generally in universities when things like this [resolution] are done, there is consultation, and there was no consultation on this one," he said.

As a result of the discussion, there may eventually be a 'writing across the curriculum program' at UNCW. Students would be required to take a certain number of "writing intensive" courses as a graduation requirement, Veit said.

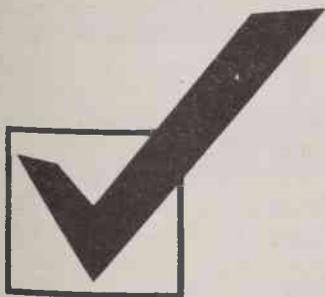
"We used to have an assessment policy and as it turned out, very few students were at an extremely low level," he said.

Pawlik, though, believes that an assessment policy is an important part of the solution.

"There needs to be an assessment process headed by the English Department," he said. "Without one, we're not going to get anybody to get better with this. How do you know if a student needs help without assessing his abilities?"

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