



the Seahawk

Serving UNC-Wilmington Since 1948

VOLUME LII, NUMBER 5

WWW.THESEAHAWK.ORG

SEPTEMBER 14, 2000

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Incentives offered to alleviate teacher shortage

SOMER STAHL
STAFF WRITER

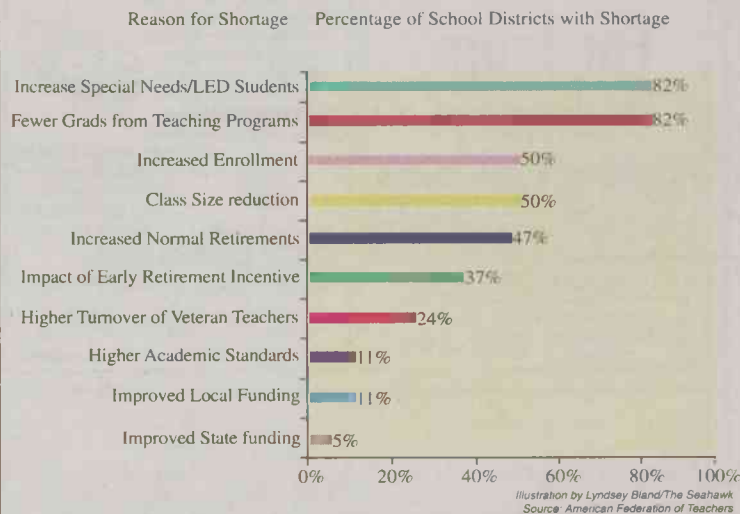
Teacher shortages across the country are forcing legislators to make immediate improvements in teacher benefits and to offer incentives to attract students to the field.

In a recent report, the American Federation of Teachers research department showed that 68 percent of the nation's largest school districts reported a lack of certified applicants for 1998-1999. The study cited increased school enrollment, increased number of special needs students, and fewer teaching program graduates as potential reasons for the shortage.

"I think what we're seeing is a lot of teachers coming to retirement age and increasing concerns about working environments," said Kathleen Benzaquin, director of the Teaching Fellowship Program at UNC-Wilmington.

UNCW is currently ranked third in producing the highest number of teachers in North Carolina. The Watson School of Education has an estimated enrollment of 1000 for the 2000-2001 school year but this number is not enough to fill the teaching void. Benzaquin said that last year North

CONDITIONS CONTRIBUTING TO TEACHER SHORTAGE



Carolina hired 9,000 new teachers. 3,000 of these students were graduates of in-state schools, about 4,000 came from out of state and approximately 2,000 transferred from other careers or came out of retirement. Still, an additional 9,000 teachers will have to be hired per year for the next ten years to alleviate overall shortage.

Alternative programs and incentives are being offered to attract people to the

teaching profession. Benzaquin said that the state is trying to get mid-level grads to teach, offering jobs to those with other degrees who will finish certification while they begin to teach in the classroom. The state is also giving incentives to bring teachers out of retirement.

Last Tuesday, Governor Jim Hunt suggested that North Carolina institute

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ASG President resigns amid allegations of larceny

Webster becomes second consecutive president to resign because of scandal

TODD VOLKSTORF
STAFF WRITER

The UNC Association of Student Governments (ASG) began the 2000 academic year in the midst of yet another scandal surrounding its president.

Cliff Webster, the 1999 - 2000 student body president at East Carolina University, was elected as president of the ASG at the end of the spring 2000 semester. In June, Webster was arrested and charged with misdemeanor and felony larceny for an apparent prank gone

awry. Webster is accused of stealing some "outdoor type" benches from the ECU campus.

This, the second of two ASG presidential scandals in two consecutive years, led to Webster's resignation at a special session of the ASG last Thursday.

Webster said he could not discuss the details about the incident due to court orders. He did however comment on his resignation.

"My heart said to stay, but my mind said to go," he said.

Webster said that he feels he was unfairly forced out of office and that there was no real reason for him to resign. He thinks of himself as an everyday guy who was elected because of a down-to-earth attitude.

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Hurricane Florence off N.C. coast

FROM STAFF REPORTS

A tropical depression that formed off Cape Hatteras last weekend blossomed into Hurricane Florence on Tuesday, and is being closely watched for possible movement toward the U.S. east coast.

Gene Funderburk, a forecaster with the Wilmington office of the National Weather Service, said Tuesday afternoon that the storm was expected to drift away from the coast. "It should move toward the northeast," he said.

As of Wednesday morning, the storm had

maximum sustained winds of 75 miles per hour, with little or no strengthening expected.

Assistant Vice Chancellor Dick Scott, who leads the UNCW emergency response team, said no response plans are in effect yet, but the university continues to monitor the storm. "If anything changes drastically, we're prepared," he said.

Official storm updates can be found on the internet at <http://www.nhc.noaa.gov>, and storm-related information from the university is available at 962-3991 or 1-888-657-5751.