

Bus takes science on the road

BY NICOLE DUNCAN
STAFF WRITER

A hefty gift from the N.C. General Assembly during the past budget cycle has helped ensure the fate of DESTINY.

UNC's DESTINY Traveling Science Learning Program, which brings science education opportunities to state high schools, received \$500,000 from the state legislature.

This week and during the semester, DESTINY science education specialists are traveling across the state in two buses — Destiny and Discovery — with state-of-the-art lab equipment for students to gain firsthand experience.

The program was created in 2000 and has grown to offer 13 different labs that concentrate on a variety of current issues in science such as evolution, genetics and forensics.

DESTINY also focuses some of its labs on topics covered in the End-of-Course Tests.

"We're constantly trying to upgrade," said Lisa Pierce, a DESTINY science education specialist who travels around the state in the DESTINY buses.

One of the buses visited Avery County High School in western North Carolina on Tuesday to perform the "From Finches to Fishes"

lab with Kay Campany's and Pam Scarborough's biology classes.

Campany is a veteran of the DESTINY labs — this is her third year in the program.

"Each one I keep saying, 'this is the best one,' and I've got to quit saying that because they're all just fantastic," she said.

Teachers aren't the only ones excited when the DESTINY bus arrives. Campany said class attendance is 100 percent on DESTINY days.

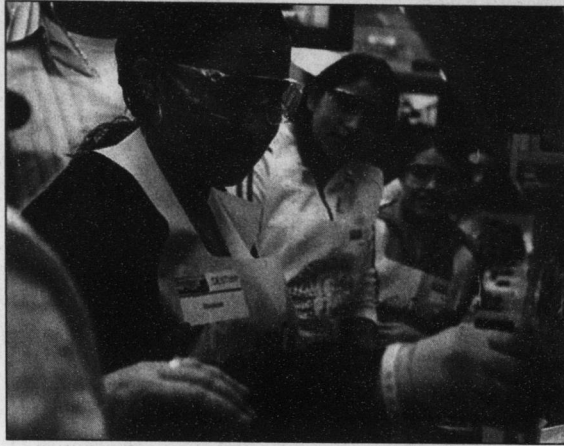
Pierce said that it takes a lot to get students interested in science, but that DESTINY is effective.

"They're high-school kids. They'd rather talk about their prom dates than DNA," said Pierce, who was a biology teacher before joining the program.

Teachers and DESTINY officials said that working with sophisticated lab equipment opens students' eyes to science careers.

"I've heard a lot of stories about students who didn't even consider science as a career," said Claire Bury, public relations manager for DESTINY. "And now just to have an opportunity to take place in a wet lab in the bus, it really changes their minds."

Without DESTINY's help, many high schools in North Carolina could



Lee County High School students engage in a scientific experiment in November while aboard a UNC DESTINY science learning bus.

not afford to perform these labs. "A lot of the schools have outdated textbooks and they're trying to teach, but they don't have the resources," Pierce said.

The program is funded by organizations such as GlaxoSmithKline, and NASA, as well as the state.

The funding from the N.C. legislature will ensure that DESTINY can continue to offer labs to classes

such as Campany's. "That speaks a lot for our state that they value teachers and students," Campany said.

The next stop for the DESTINY buses is Ashe County High School today, followed by Wilkes Central High School on Thursday.

Contact the University Editor at udesk@unc.edu.

Education in need of reforms, Spellings says

Affordability is next big challenge

BY JEFF SOPLOP
STAFF WRITER

U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings advocated significant reforms for the U.S. higher education system Tuesday at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C.



Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings said higher education reform is a priority.

Her speech was broadcast and webcast at 1 p.m. on CSPAN and the U.S. Department of Education's Web site.

Spellings spoke about the findings of the Commission on the Future of Higher Education, which she formed in 2005 to develop a national plan for reforming postsecondary education.

Throughout the past year, the commission has interviewed students, administrators and politicians about many facets of higher education.

The commission's report noted that although the United States enjoys great success in higher education, many other countries followed suit and now educate more of their citizens to more advanced levels.

The report states, "We remained so far ahead of our competitors for so long, however, that we began to take our postsecondary superiority for granted. The results of this inattention, though little known to many of our fellow citizens, are sobering."

Spellings observed that while higher education in the United States appears fine, considerable education problems must be discussed.

These issues include rapid rises in tuition prices, a poor record of college students graduating on time and overwhelming levels of debt accumulated by students.

Both the report and Spellings emphasized that reforming higher education should be a national priority because the demand for well-educated citizens is increasingly important in a competitive, highly

global economy. To fix these problems Spellings outlined her action plan to better prepare students, starting with high standards and accountability in public schools.

Spellings said the No Child Left Behind Act, a federal education program, has improved primary education.

But she said that high schools have not been able to replicate this success.

"A million kids drop out every single year," she said.

"And those who do graduate often aren't prepared for college."

Affordability is the next challenge facing higher education, Spellings said.

In the past five years tuition at four-year colleges has increased by 40 percent.

"Higher education's escalating sticker price has many parents facing the tough choice — whether to save for college or their own retirement," she said.

Rising tuition costs also are creating a barrier to higher education for lower-income students, Spellings said.

"For low-income, mostly minority students, college is becoming virtually unattainable."

Spellings stressed the importance of implementing reforms to the nation's higher education system.

"For the sake of our students and our future, this is one test we must not fail."

Contact the State & National Editor at stntdesk@unc.edu.

N.C. Hillel joins entrepreneurial push

BY ELIZABETH BEAVERS
STAFF WRITER

Future CEOs now can pick between two CEIs.

N.C. Hillel — an on-campus Jewish organization — recently created a pilot program known as the Campus Entrepreneurs Institute, offering another option in addition to the already existing Carolina Entrepreneurial Initiative.

John Kasarda, director of the Carolina Entrepreneurial Initiative, said the purpose of the program — which originated in 2003 — is to promote entrepreneurship across campus.

The original CEI offers first-year seminars that relate entrepreneurship to fields such as biology, religion and art. The program also includes the Carolina Challenge, a student-led competition that awards \$50,000 to the student or

team that develops the best commercial or social venture.

Kasarda said the Princeton Review and Forbes.com consistently rank the program as one of the best in the country.

The program focuses on non-business majors.

He estimated that the program involves 400 to 500 students, including 120 participants in the entrepreneurial minor.

The new minor, which was established last year, enrolls students of varying majors.

N.C. Hillel's program, bearing the same acronym, takes a less formal approach to student involvement with entrepreneurship.

The pilot program is part of a nationwide effort led by Hillel: The Foundation for Jewish Campus Life.

Valerie Kolko, N.C. Hillel's direc-

tor of statewide programs, said that the purpose of this student-driven program is to empower individual students to develop their own initiatives on campus through peer-to-peer engagement.

Kolko said 10 students are implementing projects through the program.

They must find 60 students not involved with Hillel to participate in their programs.

Sophomore Andrew Coonin is one of the students involved in N.C. Hillel's CEI.

He said he wants to complete a Jewish theater project, which will showcase plays with underlying Jewish themes.

He said the institute is different from other Hillel programs because it gives students a chance to explore Judaism without attending religious services.

Coonin said he believes N.C. Hillel's CEI offers a relationship-based opportunity that the other CEI might not provide.

"It's not so much about personal entrepreneurship but community entrepreneurship."

Kolko said that N.C. Hillel officials were unaware of the other CEI and that N.C. Hillel is "not looking to step on anyone's toes."

She said she wants to learn from the other program.

Kasarda said he isn't looking at N.C. Hillel's CEI as competition either.

He said the new program indicates a growing interest in entrepreneurship across UNC's campus — which is exactly what his CEI wants to accomplish.

Contact the University Editor at udesk@unc.edu.

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