

## UNC Chapel Hill expands pharmacy school to Asheville

By Justin Stewart

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UNC Chapel Hill's Eshelman School of Pharmacy recently selected UNC Asheville as an expansion site for its satellite pharmacy education program, according to UNCA News Services.

The UNC Board of Governors approved Chapel Hill's plan to extend their pharmacy education program to Asheville last Friday. The program will cooperate with the Mission Health System, Western North Carolina's major medical center.

"We've had a long and very beneficial working relationship with both Mission Hospital and UNCA," said David Etchison, communications director of the Eshelman School of Pharmacy's. "The decision to partner with those entities was really a no-brainer."

Chapel Hill's pharmacy school, originally partnered with Elizabeth City State University in 2005, will have its second graduating class in May. UNCA's program will be another extension of that partnership, according to the university.

"We've always had our eyes on Asheville as a site, ever since we established our satellite program at ECSU," Etchison said. "With Elizabeth City four hours to the east of Chapel Hill, we'll have Asheville about four hours to the west of us."

The Asheville area Chamber of Commerce instituted a \$2.5 million fundraising initiative to finance the program's start-up cost. According to the release, the Buncombe County Board of Commissioners and the city of Asheville pledged a combined \$700,000 toward that goal.

"The idea that local government is helping to bring the program here certainly benefits the campus," said Marianne Miller, UNCA news services director.

The new pharmacy extension at UNCA should not require any funding from the state. According to the state, the antici-

### UNC Eshelman School of Pharmacy

- Founded: March 1897
- The only public school of pharmacy in the state of North Carolina and one of the oldest in the nation
- Accredited by the American Council for Pharmacy Education
- Member of the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy
- Ranked No. 2 among the nation's doctor of pharmacy programs in U.S. News & World Report magazine's 2007 edition of America's Best Graduate Schools

**DEGREES OFFERED:**

- \* Doctor of pharmacy (PharmD)
- \* Doctor of philosophy in pharmaceutical sciences (PhD)
- \* Master of Science in Health System Pharmacy (MS)

Data courtesy of UNC Eshelman School of Pharmacy

**The pharmacy program plans to expand to UNCA, maybe as early as 2011, according to David Etchison, communications director for the Eshelman School of Pharmacy at Chapel Hill.**

pated finances of the partnership will be entirely covered after four years.

The expansion's projected expenses will be subsidized through tuition costs and monetary assistance from Mission Health System.

Mission agreed to fund half of the clinical faculty's salaries, according to news services.

Exactly when the extension begins at UNCA chiefly depends on the timeliness and extent of these contributions, according to Chapel Hill's Eshelman School of Pharmacy,

"It could start as early as 2011, but the establishment of the program is contingent on certain conditions from the UNC President's Office," Etchison said. "Most of those contingencies are financial, as there are some fundraising goals that have to be met before the program can officially kick off."

Similar to the existing satellite at ECSU, UNCA's program aims to educate more pharmacists in an area of the state where, according to Chapel Hill, health care providers in general are sorely needed.

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"We're targeting the more rural areas of the state and those areas of the state that have a greater need for pharmacists," Etchison said.

The Eshelman School of Pharmacy at Chapel Hill made WNC a focal point of their strategic expansion plan five years ago. UNCA's satellite program could enroll up to 40 doctor of pharmacy students a year, according to news services.

A pharmacology doctorate is the professional degree required to practice as a pharmacist.

"One of the best things about these satellite programs is that they are scalable," Etchison said. "There's not a huge investment in infrastructure for them. They don't have to maintain a certain size to keep their accreditation, because

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