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the Seahawk



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Kaitlin Helms

Meet the new Freshman Class President, Kaitlin Helms

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STAFF WRITER

As of Sept. 15, Kaitlin Helms was elected Freshmen Class President. It seems this young student who resides in Cornerstone Hall has set high ambitions for herself in student government, as well as in life. After being inducted into the SGA, Kaitlin has set three top priorities as president, and has already begun to make progress on them.

Helms has reported that her first priority will be to advocate a free laundry plan for students living on campus. "I have been communicating with representatives from ECU because they have the cost of laundry built into the tuition. I do already know that their rates for room and board are cheaper than UNCW, and that microwaves and refrigerators are provided in every dorm room," Helms said. Her first mission is only beginning, but Helms intends to see it through. "I want to speak with Dick Fauson (Director, Auxiliary Services) and whomever else I can in order to find out how the money students spend on laundry each year is used for the university," Helms said.

The second priority for Helms is to support the students wish to have a UNCW football team. "I would like to create a campaign for a football team here, even though it will be a long-term goal, I at least

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Student Health Center improves sexual and reproductive health services

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ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

Over the past year UNCW's Student Health Center has taken many steps to ensure that the caliber of its services matches that of its new facility. One particular area in which the SHC has made considerable efforts to improve has been sexual and reproductive health issues, specifically sexually transmitted diseases and emergency contraception for women.

Emergency contraception, commonly referred to as the "morning after pill," has caused much controversy since becoming legal in the United States. Just last month, after much effort, the SHC was able to switch its brand of emergency contraception from Lo/Ovral to Plan-B, which has the potential to be 89 percent effective if taken properly.

"We have always wanted to use Plan-B because it is simpler, more effective, and there are less side effects," Dr. Peter Meyer, Medical Director for the Student Health Center said.

Although the SHC does not keep statistics on the number of students that request emergency contraception, there has been a significant demand for it. According to Dr. Meyer, at least several women each week request EC.

"We try to make the access to Plan-B as easy and as streamlined as possible, and we expect the demand to increase," said Meyer.

Last year students made 10,805 visits to the Student Health Center, and the numbers for this year have increased significantly, from 768 visits in August 2004, to 1,044 in August 2005.

The most common STD treated by the SHC last year was Chlamydia, with 23 reported cases. Herpes was second with 15 diagnoses, followed by four cases of HPV, and one case of gonorrhea. There were no diagnoses of syphilis, or HIV.

According to Dr. Meyer, these statistics do not accurately reflect the rates of sexually transmitted infections on campus. This is mainly due to the fact that many students



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The Student Health Center recently moved from Friday annex to newly remodeled facilities in Westside Hall. The SHC has made several recent attempts to improve services in the area of sexual health.

receive medical attention elsewhere such as Urgent Care, clinics or family practices. Unfortunately, another reason is that in many cases infected persons can remain asymptomatic for years after being infected. It is estimated that one-fourth of people with HIV are unaware that they have contracted the disease.

"UNCW is not a hotbed of sexually transmitted infections, but it is still an area of concern that we need to closely monitor," Dr. Meyer said.

Until recently the SHC did not conduct HIV/AIDS tests for students which was of notable concern considering the fact that North Carolina

had the fifth highest number of new HIV infections in 2003 (among states with confidential name-based reporting), yet ranked only 12th in the rate of sexually active persons that reported having been tested for HIV, at just under than 50 percent, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation.

However, last year due to a grant from Friends of UNCW, a volunteer organization aimed at helping the university, the SHC was able to launch an HIV/AIDS testing service and give 160 free tests to students. Currently, an HIV/AIDS test

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Comparison of sexually transmitted infections:

UNCW vs. U.S.

Sexually Transmitted Infection	UNCW cases 2004-05	U.S. cases 2003
Chlamydia	23	877,478
Gonorrhea	1	335,104
Syphilis	0	7,177
Genital Herpes	15	203,000*
Genital Warts/ HPV	4	264,000*
HIV/AIDS	0	902,223

* New cases reported in 2003 based on initial visits to physicians offices.