

ECSU's shut-down during water shortage a first in the history of the UNC system

By Tarsha White and
Kysha Gary

New Dorm residents returning to campus in early January had no idea they would soon be drinking from bottled water and using portable toilets.

These were just two of the methods ECSU students employed to survive the city's water crisis.

In January, due to bad weather and freezing conditions, water mains burst throughout the city, depriving many Elizabeth City residents of water for up to several days. ECSU, along with College of the Albemarle, was forced to close down for five days--a first for any school in the history of the UNC-system.

"The water system was so old it couldn't withstand the weather," explained Rick Gardner, mayor of Elizabeth City.

Gardner said plans are underway to construct a new \$21 million dollar water treatment system to prevent any future problems. Money

for the treatment system will come from grants and low interest loans that the city has applied for through state and federal government.

Gardner said he asked leaders of area schools to shut down until the city could repair broken lines and build up water pressure. Although ECSU's Chancellor Jimmy Jenkins "did not want to close the University down," the Chancellor agreed that closing the school down was the best option under the circumstances, Gardner said.

University officials closed the campus down Jan 18. and reopened on Jan. 22. However due to low water pressure, students were sent home again until the 25th.

Low water pressure persisted, however, forcing some students to use portable outdoor toilets which the University set up outside the new dorm and at Mitchell-Lewis.

Students living in the new dorm were sent to the Holiday Inn for one night.

Several ECSU students com-

plained about being called back to school, only to be sent home again. They said the University should have remained closed until the water problem was solved.

"Coming back to school without any water and no means of bathing was unsanitary," said Alicia Steward, a senior accounting major from Hertford, N.C. "As an off-campus student, it was an inconvenience to me because there was no notices sent out. I travelled a long way from home only to be told that classes were cancelled, wasting my time and money."

Charles Belfield, a junior from Bertie County who lives in Doles Hall, agreed with Steward. "I feel that we should have been sent home until the water problem was fixed because in order for a college students to have good study habits they need to have a clean and sanitary environment."

Alisha White, a senior business major from Plymouth, N.C., said that although the water crisis was caused by circumstances beyond the

University's control, ECSU officials should have made better arrangements for students in the new dorm.

"I think they should have made arrangements for us to stay in the hotel when the students first returned back to school and the water problem still was not solved all over campus," said White. "This would have allowed us to continue to with our academic affairs without missing any further days in the semester."

Marcia Thompson, a senior computer science major, complained about the portable toilets.

"They put those out-houses out there as if someone was really going to go outside in 20-degree weather to use those 'cans,'" said Thompson. "I think that the situation was very unsanitary, especially for women."

University officials have extended the academic calendar by five days to make up for the missed time; however, graduation will still take place on May 8.

All majors to mandate a language requirement

By Michelle Meketi

Attention ECSU freshmen who think your curriculum is too hard: how do you feel about conjugating French verbs or studying the Spanish dictionary?

If a General Studies advisory committee follows through with its plans to recommend adding a foreign requirement to the curriculum, you may also be required to take two semesters of a foreign language before graduation.

Such a change in the curriculum would only affect freshmen, according to Sherry Lewis, a member of the advisory committee.

ECSU is currently the only school in the UNC-system that does not have a foreign language requirement for the core G.E. courses, Lewis said.

Adding a foreign language will be a good requirement to have, said Lewis, "just to provide students with the experience of learning a foreign language."

Lewis admitted, however, that fitting the requirement into some majors, like education, will be difficult because some departments are near the maximum number of hours allowed for a four-year

program, and none of the other courses can be eliminated to make room for the proposed foreign language requirement.

ECSU currently requires a minimum of 43 hours to fulfill the general education curriculum. Most schools in the UNC system require as many as 50 hours to meet their general education curriculum.

The advisory committee is working on trying to fit the six-hour foreign language requirement into the G.E. studies division of courses.

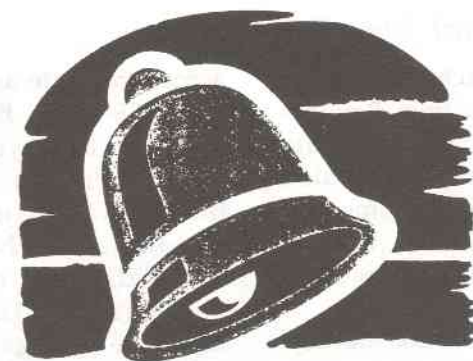
ECSU's administration had been "pressing this (foreign language) issue for a few years," according to Dr. Linda Florence Callahan, Chairperson of the Department of Language, Literature & Communication and a member of the committee. "They just want to ensure that the graduates of ECSU will have the same opportunities as graduates of other universities that require a foreign language."

Callahan said she supported the foreign language requirement.

"I see it as an advantage for our students," she said, adding that studying a foreign language "will make our students more competitive in the job market."

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