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Health and safety director correcting campus problems

By Terri Boykin
Co-editor

Chancellor Julius Chambers has created a new department to deal with health and safety on campus, hoping to correct problems that have plagued the University for years.

Malcolm Magnum, a 1972 graduate of NC Central, has been the director of the Health and Safety Office for some time, operating under the Physical Plant. But in February, Chancellor Chambers separated the office from the Physical Plant.

"The Chancellor wanted to put more emphasis on the health and safety issues here on campus, and part of the responsibility of the director is inspections," said General George H. Walls Jr., who reports to the chancellor on health and safety issues.

"It's sometimes organizationally cumbersome if the inspector inspects the person who is his boss. So we wanted to give the health and safety officer some independence."

The inspector works with federal and state OSHA and insurance companies that insure the University. "The inspector works with the insurance people on fire alarms, sprinkler systems, and a whole array of things to make sure that we are in compliance with all applicable regulations and therefore maintain our insurance rating," said Walls.

Magnum says he has a huge job ahead of him. He has been meeting with many of the 957 employees on campus to learn of any problems that he or other inspectors may have missed. He listens as frustrated people tell him of problems that have existed for years, while his secretary writes them down.

Magnum acknowledges that they have a right to be upset; some of these problems were first noted over 10 years ago, yet he says they have never been fixed. "We get inspected by several state agencies, and for a number of years we have had these discrepancies noted on these inspections," said Walls.

"Up until last year, when we really started working on this, there hadn't been a whole lot done to correct them," said Walls. "Part of the reason this happened is a lack of funding. We just very frankly didn't have the money to do it."

One example Walls gave was fire hazards. Over the years people have stuffed old furniture, books

and equipment away somewhere or they created unauthorized storage spaces, such as under stairwells.

"What we've done to address that is to go through just about all the buildings on campus and weed out the good from the bad. The stuff that was just absolute junk we trashed, and the stuff with some resale value we put into the state resale system."

Walls said, "Many of the things we're working on to fix now have been known. They have been repeat citations on insurance and safety inspections. None of what we're working on is a mystery or a surprise."

One of the worst recent problems was the fire system in Chidley Annex. After the fire last year, NCCU quickly hired a contractor to install a new fire alarm system. Ordinarily, blueprints for all renovations and repairs must be approved by Magnum, but in the rush to repair the dorm, that step was forgotten.

Magnum said, "I found out [about the work] when it was 75 percent installed. When it was finished, the contractor was paid before the work was inspected." "The alarms are operational in Chidley Hall Annex," Walls emphasized, "but they have not been passed by the insurance people. We know what we need to do to fix that. We have an estimate. Part of the stuff is the contractor's responsibility and they've agreed to do it, and part of it is the University's responsibility."

The money for the repairs is not in the present budget, said Walls. The estimate will be given to the chancellor and the Financial Affairs office, who will attempt to find money elsewhere in the University's budget. If necessary, then the request will be sent to General Administration of UNC systems.

"It's a health and safety issue, and normally these take priority over other issues that you can put off. Health and safety you can't really afford to put off. If anything would happen to a student, faculty or staff member because of something we failed to fix that we knew about, then the University is liable."

The new department also wants to start a preventative maintenance

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Signs of
the Old
South
The
Discovery
Channel
presents
a series
on the
migration
of
African
Americans
beginning
Feb. 12.
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Polls show continued strong support for education programs

(From the United States
News Department of
Education)

Two out of three Americans do not favor cuts to federal education programs, according to a new Washington Post-ABC News poll. At a time when the American people want smaller, more efficient government, they continue to show strong support for investments in education, according to this survey and other recent national polls.

The Washington Post-ABC News poll, released January 6, found that while eight of 10 people surveyed favor a balanced budget

amendment, two of three said they would not support such an amendment if it meant that education or Social Security would be cut.

A poll conducted by the Times Mirror Center for The People & The Press, released on Dec. 8, found that 64 percent would increase spending on public schools if given the opportunity to set federal budget priorities, while only six percent would decrease spending.

Among 14 government programs cited, support for public schools was second only to anticrime programs. And a New York Times/CBS poll, conducted December 6-9, found that 59 percent oppose cuts in education, while

22 percent support cuts.

"People know education is the key to prosperity and the wisest investment we can make in our children's and our nation's future," said U. S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley. "We can continue to make these investments while working to make government leaner and more efficient. That's what President Clinton's Middle Class Bill of Rights is all about."

The President's proposals call for tax cuts for middle class families with children and tax deductions for education.

The cuts would be paid for through savings achieved by downsizing government. Riley said "the President's proposals strike the right balance between reducing government and investing in our most important resource — people."

The polls conducted in the past few weeks and months are consistent with other surveys taken in recent years.

A 1993 National Opinion Research Center poll found that 71 percent supported greater investments in education.

"The American people's message has been consistent over the years," Riley said. "They are willing to spend on education, but they demand results."

"They want safe schools, disciplined classrooms, challenging academic standards, and a commitment to a high quality education for every student. That's what the President and I, joining with bipartisan majorities in the Congress, have worked to achieve over the past two years."

"The American people are telling us, 'Don't go back, keep moving forward,' and that's what we intend to do."

Installation of library circulation module temporarily delayed

(News release from the
James E. Shepard
Memorial Library,
NCCU)

Installation of the circulation module for NCCU Libraries has been delayed until changes are made in the database. These changes will require additional programming which is scheduled to take place early in February.

After the programming is completed, the database must be checked for accuracy by the NCCU cataloging staff. Scanners must also be installed. The circulation module of the new automated system should be operational by March 1, 1995.

Meantime, library users must check out books the old fashion-

ed way, by completing charge cards by hand. Library users are asked to be patient while the new circulation module is being installed.

Library users can still use the online catalog terminals of the new automated library system to search libraries at NCCU, Duke, UNC at Chapel Hill, and North Carolina State University. The library staff would be happy to show anyone how to use the online terminals.

Permanent TRLN cards are available at the circulation desk of the Shepard and La--r School libraries which allow NCCU students and faculty to check out books directly from libraries at Duke, UNC-CH, and North Carolina State.