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Todd Roberts begins chancellorship

BY ADE ILESANMI

On Monday, October 25, Dr. Todd Roberts officially began his term as Chancellor of NCSSM. As a native of Durham and having been born in Watts Hospital, Roberts notes that he has always been interested in NCSSM and has admired what it has done for its students. When he learned that the position of chancellor was open here, he decided to apply for it. This decision, however, was kept as confidential as possible.

"The only person that knew I was applying was my wife. I didn't tell my family in Durham," said Roberts. When he and his family did learn that he got the job, they celebrated by going on a summer vacation and spending time with their Durham relatives.

Since he was elected as chancellor earlier this August, he and his family, which includes his wife Dr. Arleen Song, a native of Greenville, NC, and their four children Lucy, 8; Nicholas, 6; Christopher, 4; and Grace, 2, have had to make a lot of changes, including moving all the way from Ann Arbor, MI to Durham. They are currently trying to sell their house in Michigan, so while Roberts is working here, his family will be in Ann Arbor until the house is sold.

While Roberts is here, he plans on picking up where former

Chancellor Gerald Boarman left. Part of Roberts' plan is to talk to faculty, staff, and students to learn more about the current status of the school.

According to Roberts, he wants to gauge "where NCSSM needs to be in next few years in order to maintain its status as the best high school in United States."

Roberts believes that in order to achieve this goal, NCSSM must continue to provide high quality education to students, review where it is as an educational institution, and decide what needs to change and what should remain the same. He also plans to access funds for more projects in the next few years, including the proposed Discovery Center.

"I think [the Discovery Center] will enhance the experience for students, residentially and educationally. I think it's critical, moving forward, to maintain the kinds of facilities that we have," explained Roberts.

In regard to how college funds have changed for students who can no longer receive the Tuition Grant but may still participate in the Articulation Agreement, Roberts understands that the two payment plans are very different, but believes that the Articulation Agreement is still an effective measure, even in comparison to the Tuition Grant.

"I don't think [the

Articulation Agreement, is] equivalent. I think, in the absence of the Tuition Grant it provides students the opportunity to earn college credit while offsetting some of the costs," said Roberts.

Nonetheless, Roberts hopes students apply to institutions on the basis of their quality of education rather than just the Articulation Agreement.

Information has been circulating about the

number of juniors who have left this trimester, and Roberts is anything but indifferent to the issue.

"It's a little over twice the normal amount. What we need to do is figure out why that is," said Roberts. He understands that NCSSM's academic rigor and the separation from one's home environment can be intimidating and discouraging for some students, but he wants students to understand that NCSSM's goal is to help students in the long run.

While one class has been leaving in greater-than-average numbers, there is talk that a sophomore class may be added to the student body within the next ten years. This topic, in particular, has been controversial among NCSSM faculty, staff, and students alike. Roberts has said that he needs more time to understand the pros and the cons of the situation.

For now, Roberts is focusing on making himself known at NCSSM. He is frequently found at soccer games or eating with groups of students in the cafeteria. He sees knowing members of the community as crucial to running the school effectively.

NCSSM has had a history of its chancellors only staying ten years at a time. Upon being asked how long he plans to stay, Roberts expressed that he hopes and expects it will be for a long time.



Photo taken from www.ncssm.edu

Dr. Todd Roberts expresses eagerness to begin his chancellorship.

NCSSM students build rain garden

BY SEON KANG

Members of NCSSM's Envirothon Club and Accept the Greener Challenge are building a rain garden to help filter out nitrogen from passing rainfall before it reaches Ellerbe Creek. The group is also helping a local resident dig a rain garden in her own yard.

The EPA has a goal to reduce nitrogen levels by 40% in this area because excessive levels of nitrogen in our water can cause algal blooms and harm wildlife. Rain gardens serve the purpose of retaining run-off water a few days after it rains, during which the nitrogen and phosphorus in the water can be absorbed and used by plants.

Because of the heavy fertilization required for the upkeep of the soccer field and the large area of impervious surfaces on campus, NCSSM over-pollutes the streams that its storm drains flow into.

The Envirothon Club and Accept the Greener Challenge

want to change that.

After some initial testing,

the groups have chosen an area next to the west exit of Hunt as

the location for a potential Rain Garden.

Once built, a rain garden would reduce NCSSM's impact on the environment and contribute towards complying to the Falls Lake Watershed plan.

The NC Division of Water Quality aims to reduce nitrogen by 20% by 2016 in the Falls Lake Watershed and 40% by 2036.

Currently, according to senior Michelle Ye, the Envirothon Club and Accept the Greener Challenge are waiting for the administration's approval and funding before they continue with the project, which could be pricey.

"The plants in the rain garden provide aesthetic value and also use the nitrogen to grow. I am deeply committed to this project because I believe it is a big step in the right direction and that our school should be a leader in environmental responsibility," Ye said.

When asked about why she was interested in this project, junior Kayla Christianson responded, "I wanted to participate in this project because I think we, students, as the younger generation, have a more vested interest in the condition of our planet than the older generations. Therefore, I think it is our responsibility to take charge of protecting the environment and advocate for changes that would help it."

Junior Deborah Montes believes that NCSSM is a good place for a rain garden because the students here are actively aware and involved in the community.

Montes said, "I think it's great that we as students have the ability to start a project like this that can make a real impact on our community and a local creek. At my old school, this probably would never have been possible. We'll be able to make something beautiful and help preserve local wildlife at the same time."

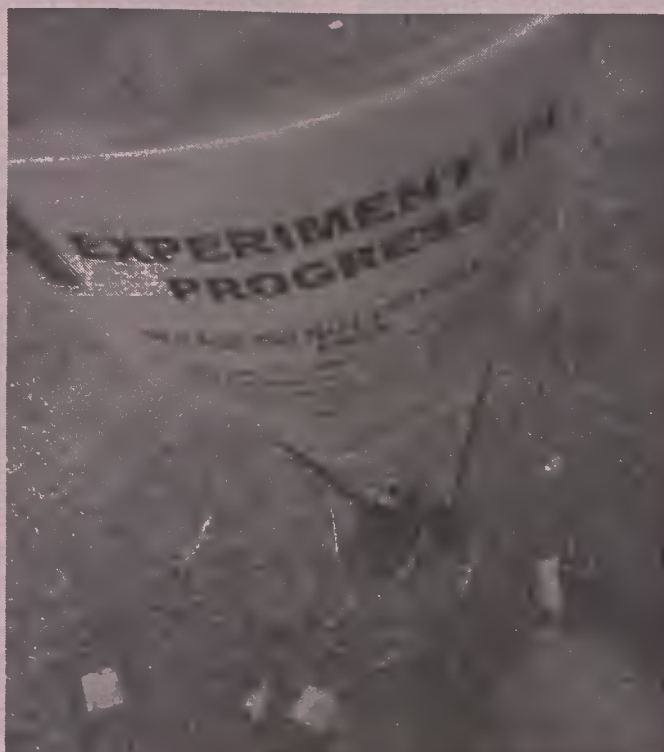


Photo by Jaehee Yoo

An area near the West exit of Hunt has been blocked off to perform tests for a potential Rain Garden.