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Records Reveal Lot Owner's Criminal Past

BY ELIZABETH BREYER AND KIM MINUGH
University Editors

Tar Heel Parking owner Gustave "Gus" Frederick Mueller, the target of recent student complaints, has an extensive criminal record, including several violent and sexual crimes dating back to 1986, The Daily Tar Heel has learned. Mueller, a 32-year-old Chapel Hill resident, has been under fire in recent days for falsely advertising secure, easily accessible parking spaces at a cost of \$300 per year and for conducting business in an unsatisfactory manner. ("Tar Heel Parking is) trying to cheat

us out of \$600," said Shane Landrum, a sophomore journalism major, who, along with his roommate, purchased a full-year lease from the company. But this isn't the first incident to put Mueller's credibility in question. According to police reports, Mueller has been charged with a number of crimes since 1986, when he pled guilty to six break-ins in Chapel Hill. He was tagged the "toe-sucking burglar" by police after teenage girls reported waking up to find a man fondling or sucking their toes, the News & Observer reported in 1997. He was already suspected in 21 local burglaries at the time, reports state.

Mueller's record also includes a 1996 conviction for indecent liberties with a child. He pled guilty in that case to involvement with a 15-year-old girl who worked for him and received a sentence of eight to 10 months in jail, six months intensive probation and 4 1/2 years regular probation, according to police reports. The jail time was suspended, but the probation was left standing. In 1997, he was charged with second-degree rape of a 20-year-old acquaintance, reports state. The charge of second-degree rape, which was dismissed, involves the use of force but no weapon. Mueller has also been charged with

assault and parole violations, the most recent of which was a November 1999 charge of indecent liberties with a child. Police reports stated that Mueller and a 16-year-old girl were observed alone at the restaurant that he owned and managed, Romano's Pizza, which has since been torn down. The restaurant formerly stood on the site where Mueller is now leasing parking spaces, and the rubble littering the lot is from that building's demolition. Mueller and the girl said they were living together, police reports state. But the terms of the probation that Mueller received after his 1996 conviction prohibit him from being alone with

a female under the age of 18 in his place of business or residence. He could not be reached for comment Tuesday. More grievances against Mueller came to light Tuesday after several students said they were unsuccessful in trying to obtain refunds. Students began filing complaints against Tar Heel Parking with Chapel Hill and University police Saturday, claiming fraud and false representation after they found the lot did not measure up to their expectations. And where Carolina-blue fliers See MUELLER, Page 5

ASG Leader Announces Resignation

Cliff Webster will step down as the lone student on the Board of Governors in the wake of criminal charges.

BY KATHLEEN HUNTER
State & National Editor

For the second year in a row, the UNC Association of Student Governments president will resign in the fledgling days of his administration. ASG President Cliff Webster announced Tuesday that he will step down at a Sept. 7 special meeting of the association.

The announcement comes just days after reports surfaced in newspapers across the state that Webster had been arrested June 30 on one count of felony and one count of misdemeanor larceny.

The East Carolina University graduate student allegedly stole two metal benches from the ECU campus in August 1999.

Webster, who took office July 1, will appear in court Nov. 3.

Last fall, ASG President Nick Mirisis resigned after admitting to plagiarizing a paper at UNC-Charlotte.

Although he has called a special meeting to name his successor, Webster did not seem completely convinced Tuesday night that he had made the right decision.

"My heart tells me to stay in the position, and my brain tells me to go," he said.

As ASG president, Webster is also the only student representative on the Board of Governors. He said a fear that the criminal charge might damage his credibility with board members led to his decision to resign.

UNC-Chapel Hill Student Body President Brad Matthews said he supports Webster's decision. "I think as an association, it is time to unify and move forward," Matthews said.

But who will take Webster's place as the lone systemwide student representative remains to be seen.

ASG Vice President Liz Gardner, a UNC-CH senior, said she intends to pursue the post.

Gardner said she is excited at the prospect of leading the ASG. "There is so much to be done," she said. "I feel I have the qualifications necessary."

Richard Wheelahan, a junior at Appalachian State University, also said he is considering running.

Wheelahan lost to Jeff Nieman in last year's special ASG presidential election following Mirisis' resignation.

But Wheelahan said he is still trying to decide whether he wants to throw his hat in the ring a second time.

Andrew Payne, N.C. State University's former treasurer, ran against Webster in April. He said he is consulting with N.C. State student gov-

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N.C. Legislators: Tuition Not Way To Increase Pay

Several state lawmakers say they will push for a bill that would fund faculty salary increases at all UNC-system universities.

BY ALEX KAPLUN
Assistant State & National Editor

State legislators gathered in Raleigh on Tuesday to discuss future plans for funding faculty salary increases — plans not involving raising tuition for UNC-system students.

Several members of the committee said they would like to introduce a bill called the Excellent Universities and Community Colleges Act at the upcoming legislative session that would require the legislature to gradually increase faculty salaries over a four- or five-year span.

The legislation would be similar to the Excellent Schools Act the N.C. General Assembly passed several years ago, which funded annual pay increases for public school teachers.

The General Assembly approved tuition increases this summer at five UNC-system schools, including UNC-Chapel Hill, to fund increases in faculty salaries.

A report conducted by UNC-system officials indicates that the tuition increases generated about \$8 million this year in faculty salary increases for the five universities.

But several state legislators have rejected the idea of funding future faculty salary increases through tuition.

"(The tuition increase) was a temporary fix and could not be used on a regular basis," said Sen. Charles Carter, D-Buncombe.

Carter also said a tuition increase that would raise faculty salaries to a satisfactory level would violate the N.C. Constitution, which calls for tuition to be as low as possible.

University advocates said they hope the legislature will provide the \$28.5 million UNC-system schools would need to remain competitive with other comparable public schools nationwide. Several schools in the system would also require another \$13.5 million to compete with private institutions. But these funds would likely have to be generated by the universities themselves, not the General Assembly.

Rep. Verla Insko, D-Orange, said employee salaries make up approximately 80 percent of a university's budget, an amount that is impossible to fund with tuition.

She said the legislature must pass faculty pay increases for UNC-system schools to remain competitive with other schools. "The General Assembly has to come to the plate for faculty salaries."

The State & National Editor can be reached at stntdesk@unc.edu.



Chancellor James Moeser meets with supporters of the Sonja H. Stone Black Cultural Center on Tuesday afternoon to answer questions and concerns about cultural diversity on campus.

Chancellor Lends Support to BCC

The forum included discussion on affirmative action, hiring more minority faculty and other racial concerns facing the University.

BY KIM MINUGH
University Editor

Chancellor James Moeser pledged his dedication to minority issues Tuesday while meeting with supporters of the Sonja H. Stone Black Cultural Center.

"We are at a University that is really committed to diversity and inclusion," Moeser said. "I pledge to work with you to make sure this happens."

Moeser said he is anxious to see the creation

of a freestanding BCC, a plan that was finally set into motion last year. Although the late Chancellor Michael Hooker gave his approval to the plan in November 1997, funding was not secured until September 1999, when the organization was given \$6 million of a \$28.6 million bequest from a deceased alumnus.

"It's a very exciting time to be here," Moeser said. "I want to thank my predecessor Chancellor Hooker for making the opportunity for this building to be built."

But the controversial building was not the only focus of the meeting. Moeser also emphasized the importance of incorporating black culture into the student body, faculty and staff.

And he urged all students to work toward improved race relations. "Your job in part is to reach out past your comfort zone," he said. "Part of your University experience should be

to reach out beyond the familiar."

Moeser, who called himself a firm believer of affirmative action, promised to actively bring diversity within the University realm. "We don't just sit back and wait for the African-American pool to come to us," he said. "It means we go out and actively recruit people of color."

He also said retention is a critical issue. Moeser said it was students who broke the mold of the Jim Crow South years ago. He called for continued enthusiasm and tolerance.

"I think it is students who can show that multiculturalism can work today," he said.

"Every time there's a one-to-one relationship between (races) we've moved one step closer to understanding each other."

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Provost Finalist Opens Up in Campus Forum

BY MARK THOMAS
Assistant University Editor

As he solicited support from the University community Tuesday, one of the five candidates for the provost's chair said he favors a cap on enrollment to maintain UNC's tight-knit community.

Dr. Robert N. Shelton, one of five candidates for provost, led an hourlong question-and-answer forum and fielded a variety of questions from a sparse audience of students, faculty and staff at Wilson Library. He also touched on issues such as hiring and retaining faculty and how he envisioned his role should he be selected.

Shelton has been vice provost for

research in the office of the president at the University of California since 1996 and is a professor of physics at the University of California-Davis.

He said his biggest worry as provost would be balancing UNC's role as a university of the people, which likely would entail increasing enrollment to some degree while still maintaining the intimate feel on campus.

"How do you do that and not give off a sense of elitism?" Shelton asked rhetorically. "It is a balancing act."

Shelton went on to note that campus officials might look at changing admissions standards as a means of maintaining both responsibility to the state and its people while preserving UNC's atmosphere.

"(The University) would have to be more selective," he said.

The provost operates as the chief academic officer for the University. The next provost will also assume the role of executive vice chancellor, whose duty is chief financial officer and University spokesman.

Shelton said UNC's relatively small enrollment compared to other universities was part of the position's appeal.

"A big part of what excites me about coming here is that this is a very small community," he said. "I would lose interest rapidly if (UNC) had plans to take on an enrollment of 45,000 people."

With nearly a quarter of UNC's faculty expected to retire in the next seven

years, Shelton said the role of provost takes on increased importance.

"There are a lot of positions to be filled here — the provost is going to be involved in selecting them because he is going to have to work with them," he said.

Shelton said the similarities between the University of California and UNC system, combined with his background, make him a perfect fit here.

He said, "I think those two systems have, at their core, a sense of responsibility to be among the premiere institutions in the country."

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Dr. Robert N. Shelton answers questions at an open forum Tuesday afternoon. He is the first of the five provost candidates to visit UNC.

If you can achieve puberty, you can achieve a past.

Truvy Jones