

# Cloning Questions Resurface

The thin line between science fiction and reality became even narrower on Nov. 25 when scientists announced that they had successfully cloned the first human embryo.

A team of scientists from Advanced Cell Technology Inc., a biotechnology firm in Worcester, Mass., reported in an online scientific journal that it had cloned three embryos it had grown to form four to six cells each before dying.

The results, while preliminary, have sent shockwaves through the science community as researchers hope they can now use the information to find therapies for now incurable diseases, such as cancers, Alzheimer's disease and even AIDS.

Almost immediately after the announcement was made on the Sunday morning television news circuit, a long-brewing debate was reignited.

Is stem cell research ethical? Should it be banned?

Prior to the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, the U.S. Congress appeared to be heading exactly in that direction.

In July, the U.S. House passed The Human Cloning Prohibition Act of 2001 by a vote of 265-162. The bill outlaws the cloning of human babies and bans the creation of cloned embryos for research.

President Bush added fuel to the fire this summer by saying that federal funds should only be used to further research on the 64 strains of stem cells already in existence.

Bush reiterated his stance a couple of weeks ago when he said he believes cloning is "morally wrong."

"The use of embryos to clone is wrong," Bush told reporters Nov. 25. "We should not as a society grow life to destroy it."

There is now intense pressure on the U.S. Senate to follow the House's lead and vote to ban all human cloning.

But the move might be a little premature.

ACT scientists have insisted over the past two weeks that the results of their research are only preliminary.

There is no way to know if the results will hold up in additional studies.

To ban any and all cloning now would keep us from knowing whether or not the method is effective.

Besides, prohibiting further stem cell research is not a cure-all solution.

If the procedure is banned in the United States, there is nothing to stop scientists from going to other countries to continue with their research.

Still we must proceed with caution. For every successful embryo that is cloned - whether for therapies or to clone a person - many others are destroyed, and potential lives are lost.

According to their report, ACT scientists went through 71 egg cells before they were able to grow a live embryo. And of the three cells that grew into embryos, all died after a few hours.

While no one knows for sure if the embryos could have survived and formed into a baby, the possibility exists that it could have happened.

So it is difficult to support committing millions of federal funds to support research where there is such a high risk of failure and potential lives could be lost.

Also, despite the claims of ACT scientists that they will not use the embryos to clone a human being, we do not know what others might do if given access to the technology.

And who is to say that other scientists have not already cloned human embryos but have yet to publish the results?

Is it possible that a few weeks from now scientists will announce the arrival of the first cloned baby?

No one knows for sure. And that's precisely the problem.

We do not know much of anything at this point.

So while it is hard to say that future stem cell research and cloning should be completely banned, it is also difficult to give the green light for additional research.

Yet despite our hesitations about which way stem cell research should proceed, one fact remains true.

Now that we have cloned the first embryo, there is no turning back.

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# Task Force to Discuss Tuition

By BROOK CORWIN  
Staff Writer

A task force will begin working out logistics and evaluating potential proposals for a campus-initiated tuition increase during its first meeting Dec. 11.

Provost Robert Shelton, co-chairman of the committee with Student Body President Justin Young, said the one-hour meeting will consist primarily of introductions and the distribution of background information. The meeting will be held at 3:30 p.m. in South Building and is open to the public.

"I think this meeting will be the most straightforward of them all," Shelton said. "The important thing is that we get the informational materials on the table so people can study them over break and form their views on the issue."

Shelton said the information presented at the meeting will include budgetary figures comparing tuition at UNC with tuition at its peer institutions and data examining UNC students' individual and family income. He also will reintroduce information he presented to the UNC

Board of Trustees at its Nov. 15 meeting.

The task force, which was called for by Shelton during that same meeting, plans to make a presentation at the Jan. 24 BOT meeting, when a formal vote by the trustees is expected to take place on a possible tuition increase.

Task force members said they don't expect to discuss the merit of any particular proposal during Tuesday's meeting, but they also said an evaluation of UNC's tuition policy as a whole might take place. "We'll need at some point to discuss our school's overall tuition philosophy," said committee member Eric Johnson, a senior history major. "That's where you have to start with this topic."

The dates for future meetings of the task force will be scheduled Tuesday after the individual committee members present their availability for



University Provost Robert Shelton says the first meeting will be held Dec. 11 and will be the most straightforward.

Winter Break. Committee member Shirley Ort, director of scholarships and student aid, said she does not expect any meetings to be held before the first of the year, but she added that most committee members are planning to be available during the week before classes resume on Jan. 7.

"It's my expectation that we're going to need to be available," Ort said. "That's a commitment I made when I joined the committee, and I've scheduled my calendar accordingly."

Johnson and James Alstrum-Acevedo, students on the committee, said they will be available for meetings the first week of January, as did committee members Doug Dibbert, president of the General Alumni Association, and Stephen Weiss, chairman of the Department of Computer Science. Shelton said he thinks the individual members of the committee will hold a variety of viewpoints on a possible tuition increase after they examine the background information. "Everyone will use these numbers differently," Shelton said. "Some people will say we should be more like Florida on the low end of tuition

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# Students Meet To Create Qatar Presentations

The seminar's six groups will present their platforms concerning a campus in Qatar to Chancellor James Moeser on Dec. 12.

By JAMIE DOUGHER  
Staff Writer

The student seminar formed to discuss the possibility of establishing a satellite campus of the Kenan-Flagler Business School in Qatar will meet today to begin preparing its presentations for the chancellor.

The presentations, set to take place Dec. 12, will outline the 10-page term paper each group of students will write.

Originally, Professor Bob Adler of the business school and chemistry Professor Holden Thorp randomly placed students into six groups that would make the presentations.

But the students suggested dividing the groups into those in favor of the satellite campus, those opposing it and those undecided about the proposal.

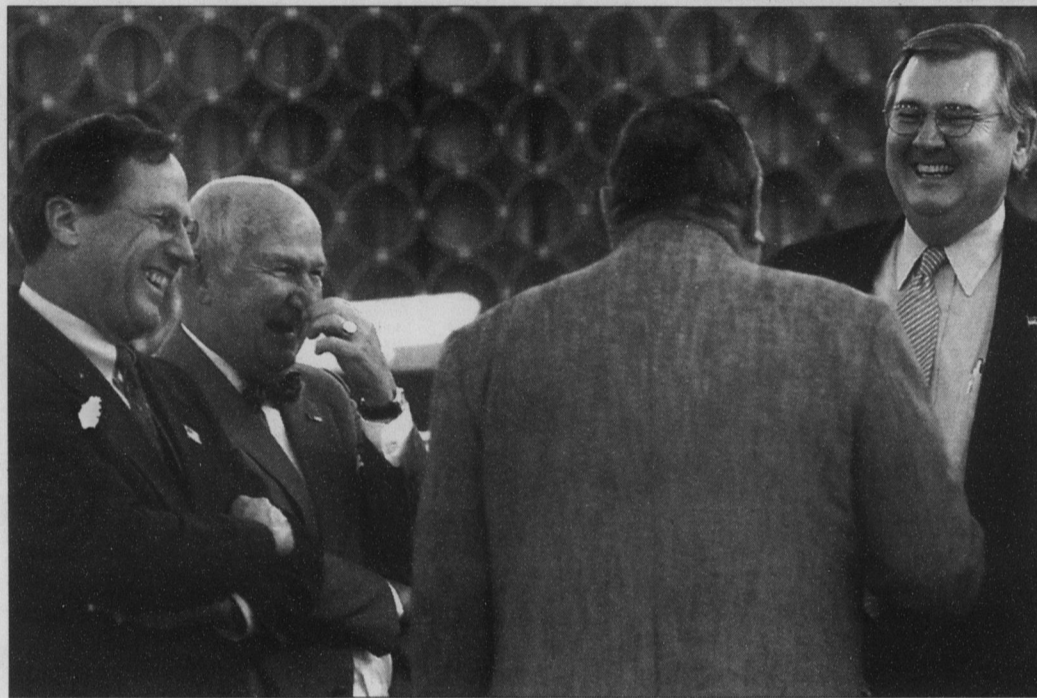
Student Body Vice President Rudy Kleysteuber said Adler and Thorp have been open to suggestions regarding the structure of the presentations. "They are very informed on the issue, and they're open about their own positions."

While both Adler and Thorp have said they are in favor of establishing the satellite campus, Kleysteuber said they are open to dissenting opinions. "They have made a conscientious effort to invite professors who disagree," he said.

Adler said he and Thorp are excited to hear the presentations, and he said he knows Chancellor James Moeser is excited as well.

"If the quality of the presentations is even close to the questions and comments the students have been making, it will be an awesome afternoon," he said.

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N.C. Sens. Allen Wellons, Hamilton Horton, Aaron Plyler and Tony Rand celebrate the adjournment of the General Assembly. Lawmakers concluded the longest legislative session in N.C. history Thursday morning.

# Longest N.C. Legislature Session Ends

The 2001 N.C. General Assembly session was extended because of debates on sales tax increases, a state budget and redistricting.

By MIKE GORMAN  
Staff Writer

RALEIGH - State legislators ended the longest N.C. General Assembly session in history late Thursday - but not without a last-minute flurry of legislative activity.

The legislature convened its most recent session Jan. 24 and remained in session for 317 days. Each chamber has met for more than 170 days.

Thursday's final Senate session was marked by rapid-fire bill passage and a number of absentee legislators. Only 33 of 50 senators were present when session convened Thursday morning.

"The (amount of) time we spent here was

awful, but we did some good things for the state," said Senate President Pro Tem Marc Basnight, D-Dare.

In the House, legislators slouched in their chairs Thursday, munching on candy and chatting with each other.

Throughout the day, legislators worked on last-minute unpassed legislation, including a bill that might redefine the Board of Governor's role.

Many members of the legislature said they are glad the session is over and publicly have expressed displeasure at its length.

Most long sessions, which meet in odd-numbered years, usually end in July or early August.

First-term Rep. Alice Underhill, D-Pamlico, said she is glad that she can finally go home to her family.

"I've found it to be an interesting but frustrating experience," she said. "My family's been supportive of me being away for so long, but I think they're really looking forward to having me home."

Rep. Jean Preston, R-Cartaret, said the

extended session was the result of poor intra-party management.

"When you have a political majority but can't get a consensus in your own party, you've definitely got management problems," Preston said. "As for the length of the session, there's no excuse why we could not take up the state's business by the end of July."

Preston said she, along with other members of the Republican party, would support session limits in the future.

Basnight said the extended session serves as an example of why the legislature needs session limits. "If it doesn't, we should all lynch ourselves out front, all 170 of us," he said.

Delays in the legislature characterized the prolonged 2001 session - a session marked by a contentious debate during the construction of a state budget, partisan battles over redistricting lines and public criticism for both possible budget cuts and an increase in taxes.

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# Comedian Displays Photographic Flair

By BROOKS FIRTH  
Staff Writer

Altered images decorate the Union Art Gallery, familiar photographs precariously bordering on the absurd.

One image is a businessman shoved into a urinal. Another is an infant running through a field, clutching an oversized hypodermic needle flanked by youthful soccer players.

This is just some of the "Surreal Photomontage Art" created by UNC junior David Townes.

You might have seen him. Anyone who has been to a Chapel Hill Players show or to the Student Union front desk, where he works three days a week, knows this familiar face. Or do they?

Average in height and dress, above average in his work and play, Townes is quite a character.

Several characters, in fact.

Performing for two years and counting with the on-campus sketch and improvisation group CHiPs, his fellow players are quick to point out what he brings to the group. "He has lot of excitement and energy," said fellow CHiPs member Marc Mongiardo.

Jon Karpino, another CHiPs member, also said he thinks Townes adds an

interesting element to the ensemble.

"There have been some great moments in practice where Dave was a monkey, and he watched everything with the perverse fascination of a monkey. It's been really great," he said.

To help bring realism to his many characters in CHiPs, Townes admits to being an avid people watcher, especially from the Union desk. He flashes a mischievous smile that means trouble. "I'm the guy that's watching you when you think no one else is."

And this is where his talent truly lies - taking the everyday and creating something worth watching. Most obvious in his collages, he has a knack for giving people something to talk about.

"Even though they are ridiculous, they are based on things we hold to be true. It's fun to manipulate things from real life," he said.

It's this kind of playfulness with a solid base in reality that Karpino believes Townes brings to CHiPs. "Dave has a really great sense of wacky characters who take themselves really seriously," he said. "It's really fun to improvise with Dave because when you are improvising, you have to take it seriously."

But while Townes displays a soft spot for the absurd, it's his handle on reality

that tends to influence his aspirations.

"For the longest time, people thought I should be a game show host," he said.

He added with a straight face, "But I knew I wasn't as smart as Alex Trebek or as good-looking as Pat Sajak, so I probably wouldn't have made it."

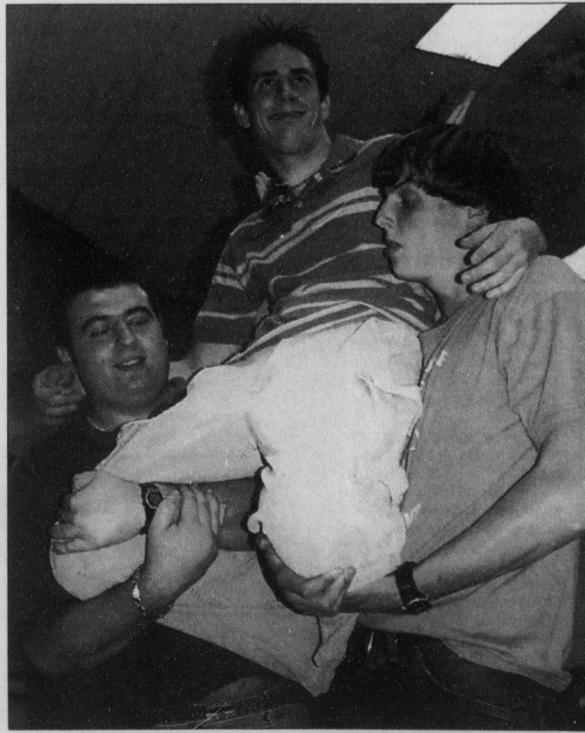
Rejecting the lights of quiz show stardom, Townes has dreams of being behind the camera instead. A double major in advertising and media production within the School of Journalism and Mass Communication, he says he would love to direct television commercials. And if they are as popular as his surreal collages, people might start looking forward to commercial breaks.

That's because people seem to love David's offbeat photomontage work. To date, he has sold roughly 15 pieces and says he has gotten good feedback. "I've gotten a lot of supportive e-mails, people who enjoy walking by," he said.

Calling his body of work a "personal habit," Townes' artwork, like his other projects, hints at intentions and inspiration beyond simply ridiculous situations.

"A lot of them are autobiographical I think." Then, flashing that playful smile again, he added, "I'm not going to tell you which ones though."

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David Townes (center) practices for Chapel Hill Players with fellow improvisational actors Marc Mongiardo (left) and Ben Piner.

DTH/REBECCA O'DOHERTY