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dth online
UNC's ROTC program lures recruits with skydiving and rappelling thrills. See the pictures online.

Saving Students' Cash?

A student committee is working to help students pay less — and get back more — for textbooks. See Page 7

End Game

John Bunting works to organize defensive line. See Page 9

Weather

Today: Partly Cloudy; H 91, L 66
Thursday: Partly Cloudy; H 92, L 71
Friday: T-storms; H 94, L 71



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Airport Closing Opposed

General Assembly could call the shots

By JON DOUGHERTY
City Editor

A provision in the N.C. House budget might halt UNC Chancellor James Moeser's plans to shut down the Horace Williams Airport.

The budget bill stipulates that the airport, located off Airport Road, will stay open until otherwise ordered by the N.C. General Assembly.

It was introduced into the House budget July 31, three months after Moeser announced that the University was suspending operations at the airport as soon as a new home could be found for UNC's air fleet.

The provision is not in the Senate version of the budget.

Moeser cited financial strain on the University and a lack of resources to make safety improvements as the main reasons for shutting down the airport.

UNC spent an average of \$250,000 to meet the airport's capital cost expenses. All told, the airport is expected to record an operating deficit totaling about \$100,000 for the 2001-02 fiscal year.

Rep. Verla Insko, D-Orange, said the provision, which was unanimously approved by the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Education, has arisen for multiple reasons.

"There are several influences at work here — there are private pilots who keep their planes at the field, people who want to refuel and land there and then sports fans who fly in for basketball and football games," Insko said.

The airport houses about 25 privately owned planes, seven of which are owned by the University.

Insko said she knows the proposal has backing in the Senate.

"I know several senators have (Area Health Education Centers) in their districts, and they don't want to see the program harmed," she said.

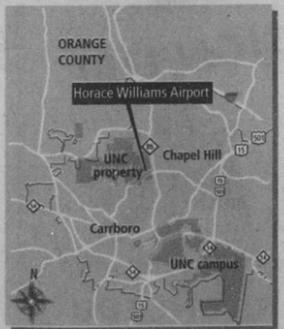
AHEC coordinates the transport of doctors from the UNC School of Medicine to other areas around the state. Faculty then provide their expertise for specialty clinics and educational programs. The program houses its fleet at the Horace Williams Airport.

Moeser said upon the announcement of the airport's closure that the site would stay operational until AHEC could be relocated.

Insko said the AHEC's transition might not move as swiftly as Moeser hoped.

"There are negotiations under way for a new hangar for the AHEC fleet,

See AIRPORT, Page 5



DTH/STAFF

"You wouldn't know we had a controversy on campus (Monday)."

CHUCK STONE, Journalism Professor



DTH/BRIAN CASSELLA

Students debating religion with "Pit Preacher" Gary Birdsong catch the attention of national media that flooded the campus Monday. The afternoon discussions of the freshman summer reading book provoked a flood of publicity — positive and negative — for UNC.

Return to Normalcy

Focus shifts from the contested summer reading program to UNC's 1st day of classes

By MEREDITH NICHOLSON
Assistant University Editor

Only one day after national media swarmed the campus to witness incoming students participate in discussions of the contested summer reading book, UNC students tried to get back to normal Tuesday.

Most students said that they thought the debate over the required reading of Michael Sells' book, "Approaching the Qur'an: The Early Revelations" had been blown out of proportion and that they were glad to see the controversy take a back seat to the first day of classes.

Jenna Searcy, a freshman from Harrisburg who read the book and attended a discussion section Monday, said her session was active. She was pleased freshmen read the book and discussed it because it allowed her to hear all points of view, she said. "Obviously, it created a lot of things to discuss."

Searcy said she saw a big circle of people debating the book in the Pit on Monday and that she was interviewed by one of the many camera crews on campus. But she said that all the fuss had faded down by Tuesday and that she did not talk about the book or reaction it generated in any of her classes.

Journalism Professor Chuck Stone, who was an active participant in a free speech rally held in the Pit before Monday's discussion groups, described the atmosphere as turbulent but productive. "We need to