

UNC Collaborates With Chinese on Beijing Olympic Study

BY ARMAN TOLENTINO
Staff Writer

As city leaders in Beijing prepare to host the 2008 Summer Olympics, faculty and students at UNC will follow their every move.

They are part of "Beijing's Olympic Decade," a project that focuses on the 10-year period that began in 1998 in which momentous change is expected to impact the city and the surrounding area because of the Olympic Games.

Twenty researchers from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences will collaborate with 30 UNC faculty

members.

UNC professors Judith Farquhar, Jim Hevia, and Gang Yue are coordinating the project, which consists of a multidisciplinary group of studies designed to explore the ways the Olympics will transform Beijing and the Western Pacific area.

"This study is unique," Farquhar said. "Past groups viewed the Olympics as an international institution of politics. We, on the other hand, are focusing on the city and reaching out into all fields of study to make it a multidimensional effort."

The study of China will be particu-

larly interesting because of the country's ongoing modernization process, Hevia said.

"A massive amount of economic growth is occurring right now, and this will happen alongside the preparation for the games."

Hevia said the transformation of China is one of the most astonishing world events.

"The city of Beijing is going to be totally rebuilt with a totally new infrastructure," he said.

Farquhar said she hopes the project will deepen and broaden the University's ties with scholars, policy-

makers, artists and the overall population in China.

"Part of the overall goal is to internationalize UNC and make students aware of issues going on in China and the rest of the world," Farquhar said.

Hevia said the study is an unprecedented effort because of its focus on collaboration.

"This is somewhat of a new idea," he said. "The project will help us know more about rapid social change in a globalizing situation."

UNC is the best institution to take part in this study, Hevia added.

"We have a broad and diverse faculty

with a comparative framework that they can bring into the study," Hevia said. "We have many bright researchers who can bring fresh questions to the views on China."

Students in the study abroad program in Beijing also will work with CASS social scientists.

"They won't be researchers, but they will have a snapshot view of Beijing," Hevia said. "At least one of the courses in the program will be related to the research study."

Researchers will be traveling back and forth between the United States and China.

The results will be published in both English and Chinese.

So far, the project has held two workshops, one in Beijing and one in Chapel Hill. Next July, UNC researchers will travel to Beijing to meet with their CASS collaborators for a third workshop.

"There will be a sense of equal contribution," Hevia said. "More importantly, though, we want UNC students to have an opportunity to see China in a new way."

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Orange County Coalition Aims to Educate on Drought

BY TERI DOMBROWSKI
Staff Writer

With the region's drought becoming more severe, Orange County officials have created a program to fight the problem and prepare for future disasters.

H2Orange, which went into effect in mid-August, is a coalition of agencies and nonprofit organizations working to educate the public about the severity of the drought, both now and in the future.

Eric Griffin, H2Orange chairman, said the group hopes to improve conservation. "H2Orange was created because the county wanted a coordinated response to the drought," Griffin said. "There were many agencies doing stuff for the drought that we wanted everything to be coordinated so they wouldn't duplicate efforts."

Although H2Orange has been operating for only a month, he said progress has been made toward awareness.

"Once word got out, it took out on its own," Griffin said. "No other county is doing this as far as I know."

He said H2Orange essentially is an education campaign, with a drought hotline and community outreach programs teaching water-saving tips.

Another important part of H2Orange is its donation campaign, the Drought Drive, which Griffin said allows nonprofit organizations and private donors to contribute bottled water and paper products to those who are unable to afford them.

He said this drive will give people access to these products, which might be required if the drought persists.

"People without finances do not have the resources, so it is hard to reduce,"

Griffin said. "You can't ask someone to do something if they can't afford it."

H2Orange also is working with the Orange County Department of Social Services and the Inter-Faith Council in its efforts to spread information about ways to save water and host donor drives.

Recently H2Orange worked with Wal-Mart to give 1,000 gallons of water to organizations in the area through the company's "Disaster Relief" program, said Wal-Mart representative Steve Dooley.

Dooley added that Wal-Mart plans to stay closely in tune with the drought to send relief to help the community.

Greg Feller, spokesman for Orange Water and Sewer Authority, the water supplier for the Chapel Hill and Carrboro area, said H2Orange helps provide much-needed information throughout the county. "H2Orange is a good initiative by Orange County and county agencies," he said. "H2Orange's efforts complement OWASA and bring additional resources."

Griffin said he foresees the program as a long-term plan, adding that the drought disaster will not be solved any time soon.

"H2Orange is going to be a multi-hazard disaster planning group," he said. "Disasters have to be planned for. We will talk about zoning, limiting development and other solutions."

Griffin said that although the organization does not have a lot of direction as to future activities, he is confident that H2Orange will be around for a long time.

"It will still be needed to plan for any future problems."

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QURAN

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judge rules that the taxpayers have the legal standing to sue, the case is still moot because the program they objected to is over and "they could not demonstrate the probability that some future Program would feature another book involving Islam or any other religion."

"It is undisputed fact that no previous Program has ever assigned a book addressing a religious topic," the motion continues.

The judge has not yet set a date to decide on the motion.

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STADIUM

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many people were around," she said. "It's really loud."

Jon Watson of Rifenberg Construction, the other company working on the project, said he is concerned about pedestrians. He said speeding cars might be dangerous to pedestrians whose sidewalk space has been diminished. The crew is monitoring the situation, but if it gets worse they might alert the Department of Public Safety.

"Hopefully this phase of construction will be the most disruptive on Stadium Drive," said Tim Saunders, transportation planner for the DPS.

Saunders said he does not anticipate further inconveniences, but he said completion dates are tentative, delays are possible and there soon will be similar construction on Ridge Road.

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House Speaker Jim Black, D-Mecklenburg, also said most appropriations are fair game again in considering where to make additional cuts.

"There are a lot of varying ideas about what we should do," he said.

Lee also said appropriations conferees have yet to determine precisely where the cuts will be made but that education more than likely will not be spared.

He said the general education budget – including that of the UNC system – will take about a \$21 million hit. An additional \$28 million provided for K-12 class size reduction – one of Easley's pet projects – likely will be removed.

But Rep. Verla Insko, D-Orange, said House conferees are favoring a 0.8 percent cut across all departments to recover the lost lottery revenue.

The cut would remove an additional \$14 million in funding from the UNC system, which is already facing a 2.4 percent systemwide cut. The combined cuts would bring universities' total losses to \$56 million.

Insko said 4-year institutions will not suffer alone, as the community college

LEE

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the universities, as well as community colleges," he said.

Gurlitz said losing Lee in the Senate might negatively impact the UNC system because Lee has been a strong advocate for the universities – especially UNC-Chapel Hill – during the process of trimming the budget.

Kinnaird said she hopes the University will not be hurt by Lee's loss but recognizes that there will now only

system stands to lose an additional \$6 million and public schools could take a \$47 million blow.

The Department of Health and Human Services might also be trimmed by an additional \$28 million, Insko said.

"I'm concerned about the cuts to health and human services," she said. "I'm also concerned about the educational cuts."

"Both of those cuts concern me because they come on top of other cuts."

A conference committee – composed mostly of Democratic leaders from both chambers – has been working to reconcile the differences between two budget proposals since the House passed its budget Aug. 13. The Senate passed its version of the budget June 19.

Tuesday's setback came as legislators were nearing the completion of the conference report required to finalize the state budget.

Despite the \$70 million gap lawmakers are scrambling to fill, they still plan to finalize a budget by the end of the week, Black said.

"I'm ready to wrap it up and get out of here."

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LOTTERY

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the lottery by today's deadline by including the lottery provision in the budget conference report filed Monday night. But the lottery was severed from the report Tuesday morning when House leadership determined the budget did not have enough support to pass with the provision.

"I made the decision this morning to send the conference report back to committee (to remove the lottery)," Black said. "I had discussions with a lot of people and made that decision."

The lottery referendum folded into the budget conference report came within two to three votes but never had enough support, said Rep. Verla Insko, D-Orange. "It was my impression that they never had the votes," she said.

Though lawmakers speculated that the lottery never had the necessary support, they said some representatives were more likely to allow the lottery provision's passage when it was tacked into the budget proposal.

"It lost favor when it was removed from the budget," said Rep. Edd Nye, D-Bladen. "It was going to lose anyway."

Although the lottery issue is dead for this session, some said it will continue to be a topic of debate in the future. "It will come up next year," Black said. "And the year after that and the year after that."

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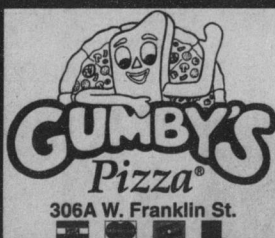
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