

CAMPUSES From Page 1

"We don't want to reinvent the wheel or recreate things," said Senate Majority Leader Tony Rand, D-Cumberland. "As it goes on, schools will develop different strengths."

John Sanders, a former UNC-system Board of Governors member, said the system structure was not created to have equal programs at all system schools.

He said that not only is there no need for total equality but that it also is not affordable for the state. As the state budget crisis continues to limit the options available to universities, universities will continue to increase specialization, Sanders predicted.

But as system enrollment continues to increase, universities are pressed to expand offerings to accommodate the needs of the new students.

East Carolina University's enrollment alone is slated to increase from 20,500 to 27,500 by the end of the decade.

ECU Chancellor William Muse said whether the university continues to grow largely is dependent on the actions of the N.C. General Assembly. The tight budget situation forces schools to be more competitive in lobbying for funds.

Sanders said that when requesting and allocating funds, BOG members must do what is best for the system as a whole and not show favoritism to a region of the state or to a specific university. "The university has a lot of friends, and sometimes they have narrow points of view."

Sanders pointed to the BOG's recent rejection of Elizabeth City State University's request to create a pharmacy school as an example of the board exercising necessary restraint. "A pharmacy school in your part of the state may not be necessary."

UNC-CH Provost Robert Shelton also said that in hard financial times it is particularly important to assess need

and to control duplication, which leads to concentrated resources and fully developed programs. "If you ask the taxpayer, 'Would you rather have one world-class program or three mediocre programs?' I think I know their answer to that," Shelton said.

Shelton added that he relies on the system to allocate funds appropriately. "I think the challenge of the (UNC-system) Office of the President is how to fund each campus according to its needs," he said. "You don't want to rob one to pay the other."

But the competition for resources creates the opportunity for tension between institutions. "Anytime you have a family of 16 institutions ... there's going to be a certain amount of friction," Sanders said.

Shelton, however, said he has never experienced friction. He said improvements at other universities won't change the quality of UNC-CH's education.

"I don't in any way feel threatened by the success of other universities," he said. "I think as the system gets stronger, that's good for Chapel Hill, as long as money due to the University does not go elsewhere."

In addition to the UNC system, regions of the state surrounding each campus benefit from the growth of universities and their increase in national recognition.

Dennis Marstall, assistant to Charlotte Mayor Pat McCrory, said UNC-C plays a key role in the city's development by attracting new businesses to the area and boosting industry.

"We're excited that they are an active player in the city," he said. "We are attracting more people from out of state and across the nation."

Marstall said local officials are encouraged by the continued growth of UNC-C and would like to see it gain classification as a research institution, like UNC-CH and N.C. State. "I think there is a strong desire by the elected officials and even more so by the business officials for a different designation."

Sen. Ed Warren, D-Pitt, attributes much of the growth in Pitt County to ECU and to the quality health care and cultural events the university brings.

Muse said graduates are more likely to remain in the area and to fulfill regional needs. The university is planning a doctorate program in medical family therapy and another in technical and professional writing.

Muse said ECU also is investigating a nursing doctorate because of the lack of nursing instructors in the area. He added that any time ECU examines the need for a new program, it considers both system and regional demand. "As the medical school has demonstrated, there is a definite need in the eastern part of the state for physicians," he said.

The medical school at ECU has become nationally regarded, but Muse said the school maintains its local emphasis. "You never desert your roots; you serve the region you're located more than other areas," he said.

But despite the school's regional focus, Muse said, ECU administrators hope it will continue to increase in statewide and national recognition.

"Every school wants to be more widely known and more highly regarded."

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ing Messellemi's complaint.

The sluggish economy in recent months, combined with a shortened shopping period, have raised concerns over the potential for a profitable holiday season. Many stores rely on the period between Thanksgiving and Christmas for the bulk of their yearly sales.

According to the N.C. Retail Merchants Association, some are thrifty because of fears about the economy.

The throngs of shoppers who filled SouthPoint's corridors Friday died down by weekend's end, said UNC junior Anna George, a saleswoman at Bath & Body Works.

She said that Saturday, when the mall opened at 7 a.m., shoppers did not begin to arrive until almost 9 a.m. George said the situation Sunday was similar. "It's not very crowded today," George said. "The mall's been kind of slow."

But some argue that the lag might not be indicative of the way the rest of December will play out. "This Christmas is going to be huge," said Kim Biese, sales manager at the American Greetings gift shop in SouthPoint.

She added that she does not expect outside factors to hurt this year's sales.

Holiday sales make up between 25 percent and 50 percent of annual sales for the store, Biese said.

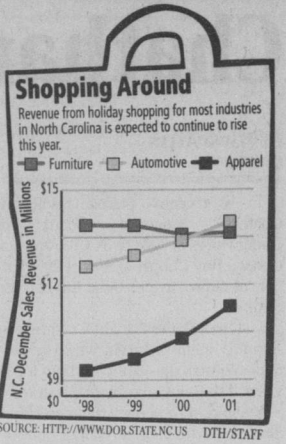
Businesses likely do not need to worry, said Mark Vitner, vice president and senior economist for Wachovia Corporation. "Every year there are predictions that it's going to be a tough season, but every year (sales have) gone up."

Holiday sales went up 4.1 percent in 2001 even with the economic ramifications of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. This year sales are predicted to rise 4.3 percent, but Vitner emphasized that predictions always are on the conservative side.

Even with the shortened period between Thanksgiving and Christmas, Vitner said, he expects spending to remain steady. "There are six fewer shopping days, but consumers started earlier."

Some business owners said they stepped up their pre-Thanksgiving advertising because of the shortened season, while others put items on sale before the traditional Thanksgiving Day start.

Durham resident Stephanie Jenkins, who was shopping in KB Toys, said that she was out of town Friday but that she likely would not have ventured to the mall because of crowds. She added that she expects to spend less money this holiday season to reduce the impact on her family. "We may be doing less, trying to save money like most of the country,"



But despite concerns, Vitner expressed confidence that both stores and consumers will enter the new year no worse off than before. "People's perception of the economy is a lot worse than it actually is."

Assistant State & National Editor Jennifer Samuels contributed to this article. The State & National Editor can be reached at stntdesk@unc.edu.

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lent," Hunt said. "We have to get governors to action - to assert their leadership. That means big changes, not small, little changes. We've got to have a quantum leap in the quality and skill of political leadership."

Hunt said Easley has shown courage in educational leadership by implementing policies to reduce class size, to establish the "More at Four" program and to raise teacher salaries.

UNC-system President Molly Broad said both Hunt and Easley have taken appropriate measures to secure education as a priority in legislation.

"North Carolina is blessed," she said. "I must commend Governor Easley for his stout-hearted commitment to protecting the classroom. He held firm, and he succeeded, and that gives us confidence that he will be able to do it again."

Easley said he hopes old and new governors alike will take the initiative to support education in their respective states.

"You, as governors, have to lead in education," he said. "It's not going to happen on the federal level; it's not going to happen on the local level. You have to make sure the funding is there."

"You don't have to come in and change everything. You have to work together - one administration with the next."

Kentucky Gov. Paul Patton said lead-

ers must keep up with education initiatives or the state's school systems will suffer.

"Education is the most important issue your state has," he said. "You are the leader for education in your state. If you don't exercise that leadership in your state, you will fall behind."

Outgoing Georgia Gov. Roy Barnes said education needs to be the primary issue governors concentrate on while in office.

"Education has to be the number one priority to a governor each and every time," he said. "You're going to be blamed for everything that is going wrong anyway, so you better get ahead now. ... And it's good policy."

"You can never satisfy everyone."

Now that you're elected, you have to be sure you make the decisions necessary no matter what the consequences are."

Barnes said Georgia, like many other states, has implemented accountability programs that have improved education during his past four years in office. "For years, we've wondered what the magic recipe is for better education. ... Now we know what it is ... and it's called accountability."

The symposium will continue at the Hunt Institute today with a discussion on President Bush's "No Child Left Behind" program with U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige.

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

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EMPLOYEE FORUM From Page 1

Composed of all 10 former Employee Forum chairmen, the new task force will meet for the first time Friday afternoon, when it will brainstorm ideas and develop a plan of action for approaching the issue, Griffin said.

It hopes to prepare a report and to present it to the BOT by the end of the academic year.

"It will give us a channel for unfiltered communication to the board and back from the board," Griffin said.

Former Employee Forum Chairman Linwood Futrelle said he hopes the task force can add clout to the forum's resolution and convince the board that the group needs to be represented equally.

"The students (have a voice) and we don't, and that's just not the American way," said Futrelle, who was forum chairman in 1998. "We care deeply and we want to have the voice. If you have one (group represented), you should have all."

While the Employee Forum is push-

ing forward, Faculty Council Chairwoman Sue Estroff has found a different avenue to influence the board. Estroff formally became a member of the BOT's University Affairs Committee on Nov. 20 even though she missed the meeting because of a conference.

Committee Chairman Rusty Carter said it was a reasonable first step in getting the faculty a voice.

"We are actively trying to find a way to give faculty a conduit to the board," Carter said at the committee meeting.

Griffin said he would not be satisfied with a position on a BOT committee. "I will take any form of communication I can get," he said. But, he also said, "I would like to see the employee chair sit on the Board of Trustees."

Even if he accepts a committee position, Griffin said, it wouldn't end his efforts to get direct access to the board. "I'm not a quitter," he said. "We may not be successful. It may be 10 to 20 years before we get that seat, but I think that it's a goal we need to work toward."

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Sen. Kerry Announces Presidential Intentions

WASHINGTON — Massachusetts Democrat John Kerry, a leading Senate liberal and decorated gunboat officer during the Vietnam War, said Sunday that he is taking a first step toward running for president in 2004.

He took aim at President Bush's policies on taxes, education, Iraq and the Middle East, saying, "There is a better choice for this nation."

Bush, asked Sunday night about the prospect of running against Kerry, smiled at reporters but said nothing.

Kerry, a 58-year-old former prosecutor first elected to the Senate in 1984, has said for the past year that he was seriously thinking about a run in 2004. He was unopposed for re-election in

November to a fourth term — the first Massachusetts senator in 80 years with no major-party opposition.

"I'm going to file this week an exploratory committee, a formal committee, and I'm going to begin the process of organizing a national campaign," Kerry said on NBC's "Meet the Press."

An official announcement of his candidacy is months away, Kerry said.

Exploratory committees are established by budding candidates mainly to raise money, finance travels around the country and help gauge voter support.

"When you really get into the formal stage, which I am now entering, you find out who's prepared to be there, you see if you can raise the money," Kerry said. "It becomes real."

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