

The Daily Tar Heel

Lecturer's e-mail sparks probe

U.S. EDUCATION DEPARTMENT TO INVESTIGATE INCIDENT FOR POSSIBLE BIAS

BY BRIAN HUDSON
ASSISTANT UNIVERSITY EDITOR

The Office for Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Education has launched an investigation of the University's policies regarding discrimination based on race, color, national origin or sex.

In a letter sent March 22, Chancellor James Moeser was notified that the OCR will be initiating a compliance review of UNC.

"Specifically, OCR will be investigating whether an e-mail sent by a teacher ... constituted harassment based on race or sex and

whether the University responded appropriately," the letter stated.

The investigation was spurred by an e-mail sent Feb. 6 by UNC English instructor Elyse Crystall to her class, chastising a student for comments opposing homosexuality.

After the incident, James Thompson, chairman of the Department of English, met with the instructor, the student who made the comments and the entire class. He also selected an observer to sit in on classes during the rest of the semester.

The e-mail incident came under

scrutiny by U.S. Rep. Walter Jones, R-N.C., shortly after it occurred. He sent a letter Feb. 19 to Moeser informing him that he intended to contact N.C. Attorney General Roy Cooper and the U.S. Department of Education to investigate possible sexual harassment and free speech violations.

"Taken alone, her charging that her student was 'heterosexist' appears to have violated the University's own sexual harassment policy," Jones stated in the letter.

The letter from the Education Department requests that

University officials provide a list of information, including copies of UNC's harassment policies and procedures and a description of how officials handled the incident.

Moeser disclosed his knowledge of the investigation and offered a response at Friday's meeting of the Faculty Council.

"I believe the response by the chair of the Department of English and the University was both timely and appropriate, tempered and measured," he said. "The chair has my full support. We will cooperate fully with the Office of Civil Rights."

Moeser also addressed UNC's commitment to academic freedom and integrity.

"We should not suppress any viewpoint, but we should require intellectual vigor. We will not treat any member of our community unfairly, and we will affirm the value of all members of our community," he said.

During the Faculty Council meeting, members unanimously passed a resolution on intellectual integrity and independence, calling for the University administration to protect the integrity of the class-



U.S. Rep. Walter Jones' scrutiny of an e-mail sent by a UNC lecturer spurred an investigation by the OCR.

room. "The Faculty Council ... recognizes a distinction between expressing arguments in an open discussion and presenting personal attacks on others, whether they are present in the classroom or not," the resolution states.

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Calabria taps four to fill top positions

BY BROOK R. CORWIN
UNIVERSITY EDITOR

The leadership for the 2004-05 executive branch of student government is now almost in place.

After a one-week interview and deliberation process by a committee of student government officials, Student Body President-elect Matt Calabria announced Saturday his appointees for four of the top five positions in his administration.

Junior Alexa Kleysteuber was tapped as student body vice president, junior Natalie Russell was picked as student body treasurer, freshman Bernard Holloway was selected student body secretary and junior Tre Jones was the choice for Calabria's chief of staff.

Calabria said the position of senior adviser will be announced in a few days. All the appointees must be approved by Student Congress, which will hold a special session Thursday to take up the matter.

The new officers were whittled down from between 15 and 20 applicants to a list of finalists

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NIGHT OF CULTURE



DTH/GILLIAN BOLSOVER

Georgina Kyei (left) helps Mary Nnenne Okeiyi change her costume backstage Saturday night at Africa Night, a performance put on by the Organization of African Students' Interests and Solidarity. About 200 people attended the show held in Hanes Art Center. The night highlighted African culture and the

experiences of students who have ties to both Africa and America. Africa Night was the closing event for Africa Week, which aimed to educate the University community about African issues. Saturday's activities included a fashion show, a drumming performance, a poetry session and a dance competition. For the full story, see page 7.

Gas prices hit record high

BY ALEX GRANADOS
STAFF WRITER

Daniel Hoiland, cashier at the N.C. 54 Citgo in Chapel Hill, said there have been 11 drive-offs in the past 12 weeks.

All of them made clean get-aways.

"Even though I have the name of (one) lady, since I didn't see her face, I can't do anything," said Hoiland, who is required to file a police report after each drive-off.

The increase in the number of drive-offs, Hoiland said, has occurred as the Chapel Hill area has seen substantial increases in the cost of a tank of gas.

AAA Carolinas spokeswoman Sarah Davis said North Carolina gas prices are hitting record highs.

"We've been breaking records in North Carolina each day this week," she said.

In Chapel Hill, a gallon of unleaded gas now costs \$1.73 at the Citgo where Hoiland works. That beats the former record of \$1.645 reached in August of last year.

Petro Mart, in the 11,000 block of U.S. 15-501, also is charging \$1.73 for unleaded gasoline. At the Texaco Station on the intersection of Franklin Street and Estes Drive, regular unleaded is \$1.72 per gallon.

Gas prices in Chapel Hill usually hover near the nationwide

average of \$1.70 per gallon.

Growing world demand, increased crude oil prices and a shortage of U.S. petroleum resources have led to this spring's rising gas prices, Davis said.

And experts say the cost of filling up is not likely to drop soon.

If gas prices continue to rise, there could be negative consequences for the state.

"When prices get to be \$1.80, it really starts to affect individuals in their home," she said.

Already, small businesses and the trucking industry are feeling the impact of costly gas rates.

If rates continue increasing, businesses ultimately will pass the heightened costs onto their consumers.

"If gas prices get extremely high, we could get a roundabout inflation effect," Davis said.

Gary Shoesmith, economist with the Babcock Graduate School of Management at Wake Forest University, said that unlike past increases, this hike could be permanent.

The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries is charging \$36 or more for one barrel of gasoline, Davis said.

The organization has cut its output even as world demand has exploded. Since the beginning of

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THE GOLDEN ROAD

Order taps new members, lays out future challenges

BY BROOK R. CORWIN AND AMY KINGSLEY
STAFF WRITERS

While the deep voice told Jason's tale, the golden fleece, arched over center stage, occupied the only pool of light in the darkened Hill Hall Auditorium.

The tale ended and another spotlight ignited, which skidded over the audience to the tune of Wagner's "Ride of the Valkyries." Cloaked figures charged down the aisles and frantically searched for the year's inductees.

The ritual separated, one by one, UNC-Chapel Hill's best athletes, scholars and leaders from onlookers transfixed by the spectacle of the tapping ceremony for The Order of the Golden Fleece.

These new argonauts, as members are called, were part of the first fully open tapping ceremony in the order's 100-year history. As part of the ceremony, the argonauts were given a lecture on the nature of excellence by Francis Collins, director of the National Human Genome Research Institute.

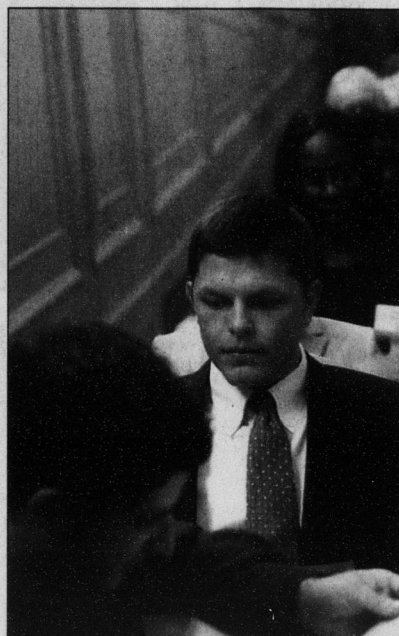
About 12 hours later, the new members gathered with more than one hundred of their fellow argonauts to honor one of their own and learn about the University issues their order will need to tackle in the future.

William Friday, president emeritus of the UNC system and a member of the order's class of 1948, was honored as the "Argonaut of the Half-Century."

Speaking at the front of a ballroom in the George Watts Hill Alumni Center full of argonauts he identified as exemplary members, Friday dedicated the award to all the members of his Golden Fleece induction class. "They looked around and saw what needed to be done," Friday said. "And from then on, they changed the face of North Carolina."

The award's presentation came in the middle of a morninglong event that began with a historical account of the organization by Argonaut Nick Herman, who is writing a book on the order's history, and ended with a seven-member panel of University leaders discussing the critical issues they see as most affecting the future of UNC-CH.

Panel member Julius Chambers, director of the



DTH/PATRICIA LAPADULA

Golden Fleece inductees Daniel Waxman (front) and Jason Langberg wait to be tapped Friday.

UNC-CH School of Law's Center for Civil Rights, spoke on the importance of ensuring access to UNC-CH for minorities across the state.

Chambers said that the University has made significant progress but that a perception still exists

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Former worker brings lawsuit

Alleges UNC bias regarding cancer

BY EMILY STEEL
ASSISTANT UNIVERSITY EDITOR

UNC-Chapel Hill now is tangled in a lawsuit with a former administrator who alleges that she was discriminated against and ultimately fired because of her battle with breast cancer.

Anora Robbins, who worked for eight years as the senior director of services in the Office of Human Resources, was diagnosed with locally extensive and invasive breast cancer in November 2000 and continues undergoing extensive chemotherapy treatments.

She received a notice of her discontinued employment, effective March 31, 2003, in September 2002.

"It was just a very bad situation, and it shouldn't happen to someone who has cancer," Robbins said. "That is what the (Americans with Disabilities Act) is there for, to insist that people make accommodations. But UNC(-CH) did nothing."

Robbins said she is seeking the reinstatement of her position at the University, compensation for lost salary and benefits and payment for attorney fees.

A judge of the U.S. District Court in Raleigh denied the University's motion to dismiss the lawsuit March 22, and the case is slated to move forward.

Amy Reeder, a Charlotte-based lawyer who is representing Robbins, said she expects the case to last between six months to one and a half years.

"Hopefully, we can reach an early resolution of this case," she said.

The N.C. Department of Justice is representing the University in the case. Noelle Talley, spokeswoman for the department, did not return a series of calls and e-mails.

Robbins claims UNC-CH failed to grant reasonable accommodations that would have better allowed her to recover from cancer and fired her because she tried to arrange such accommodations.

Robbins requested in spring 2002 that she be allowed to use some of the six months of leave she had accumulated, but her request was denied.

The lawsuit states that Laurie Charest, associate vice chancellor for human resources, responded to Robbins' request by saying, "There are some jobs that cannot be done on a part-time basis."

Charest said she could not comment on the lawsuit because state law does not permit her to discuss personnel issues.

Robbins said she continued to

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CASTING CALL

"The Young and the Restless" comes to UNC to recruit talent for professional roles PAGE 2

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FOR THE TROOPS

U.S. Rep. Bob Etheridge rallies Pittsboro students PAGE 2

SPORTS

ERROR OF THEIR WAYS

Florida State fielders tally 10 miscues in the Tar Heels' 12-6 win Sunday PAGE 12

WEATHER

TODAY Partly cloudy, H 61, L 43

TUESDAY Showers, H 59, L 43

WEDNESDAY Few showers, H 62, L 40

