

ECSU alums plan boycott

BY DERRICK LANKFORD
STAFF WRITER

Members of Elizabeth City State University's alumni association have decided to boycott city businesses during their homecoming weekend in October.

Paul Norman, head of ECSU's National Alumni Association, said the decision was prompted by price gouging by hotels during the celebration. He added that it was extended to all local businesses to make the boycott's impact felt across the board.

"This started out with hotels," Norman said. "Hotels are definitely the ones we have the beef with. But to make our impact felt, we are not going to do any business here."

Norman said he would not mind a small increase in hotel rates but that the prices have become unreasonable over time. "This problem did not start yesterday. We have watched the prices at hotels continually increase over the years, upwards of 40 to 50 percent."

James Prayer, a senior at ECSU

and president of the Pre-Alumni Association, said research has shown prices might even triple at some hotels during homecoming.

"I am in favor of these boycotts if things don't change," he said. "As a student and soon-to-be alumni, I still feel stuck in the middle. I just want to do what is fair."

Nick Patel, general manager at a Holiday Inn Express in Elizabeth City, said alumni are overreacting.

"This action is going to affect our business, and we're sorry the alumni feel this way, but there is no need to take drastic action such as this."

Patel also denied that his or other hotels were unfairly driving up prices. "Standard practice is that for special events, prices increase."

ECSU Chancellor Mickey Burnim said in an e-mail statement that alumni have acted with-in reason and are not attempting to harm the university.

"The alumni have always been supportive and cared deeply about their alma mater. They have stated that they are boycotting the hotels

and merchants in the community and not the university."

John Bell, mayor of Elizabeth City, said he hopes the various parties will be able to work this situation out. "I would have hoped we had outgrown using a veil of threat by now. ... I think both sides have used very poor judgement."

In January, the alumni submitted a request that the game be moved to Virginia, which Burnim denied. Alumni still plan to stay in Virginia during the weekend, and chartered buses will take them from their accommodations in the Chesapeake and Norfolk, Va., areas to the game in Elizabeth City.

The alumni will gather again to discuss the issue on March 4.

"I want this to be a win-win situation, but we have to start making plans and signing contracts," Norman said. "We are just looking for the fair solution to this problem."

Contact the State & National Editor at stntdesk@unc.edu.

ECU

FROM PAGE 3

"They've just simply found a niche," said McLawhorn, whose son, Alex, is an ECU distance-learning student.

McLawhorn said the online learning opportunity benefits many people who live in remote areas.

ECU also seeks to serve rural areas through its medical programs, which train future practitioners to treat the indigent and encourage them to work outside cities.

One such institution is the Brody School of Medicine, to which the legislature promised in August a \$60 million cardiovascular research center.

The university's current construction initiative, which includes a new School of Nursing, will put the Division of Health Sciences on

one campus.

Town-gown relations

The school plans to teach students how to lobby the legislature to boost finances, O'Donnell said. Students already have a voice in the city council, with some regularly sitting on a committee.

"There's a good working relationship between the university and the city," said Greenville City Council member Pat Dunn.

It pays for ECU and Greenville to get along, Dunn said. "We're the reason Greenville is expanding and getting new stuff. We put money into the town and we take money out," Sproat said. "(Our mascot) PeeDee the Pirate lives everywhere."

PeeDee the Pirate didn't have much to cheer about on the football field during the 2004 season, as his team won two and lost nine games, but students followed the team as

ECU ENROLLMENT

Student Enrollment, Fall 2004	
Undergraduate	17,510
Graduate	4,964
Doctoral	308
Medical	293
Total	23,075
Full-Time Undergraduate Tuition	
In State	\$1,727.00
Out of State	\$6,834.00
Full-Time Graduate Tuition	
In State	\$1,767.50
Out of State	\$6,925.50

SOURCE: EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY
DITHMARY JANE KATZ

if the record were reversed, Sproat said.

Pirate pride isn't limited to the sports arena. Students take great delight in being part of the ECU community, O'Donnell said.

"I've never met anyone on campus who wasn't proud to be here."

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DEDC

FROM PAGE 3

area," he said. Patterson said the support of the corporation is an indicator of broader support within the town.

The council is scheduled to review Patterson's proposal for a special-use permit March 21.

Andrea Rohrbacher, the corporation's chairwoman, said the group did not want to discuss the Panera and McCorkle plans without setting guidelines for what is within the group's jurisdiction.

But Rohrbacher said fixed guidelines would make the corporation a more viable advocate downtown.

"It will free up our time," she said. "It will make us focus on key and significant impacts on downtown."

The meeting will begin at 7:30 a.m. at the EmPOWERment Inc. office at 109 N. Graham St.

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REFERENDUM

FROM PAGE 3

The \$4 fee for both undergraduate and graduate students, which was first passed in 2003, is pending approval from the Board of Trustees and the UNC-system Board of Governors.

The Renewable Energy Special Projects Committee was created to find appropriate ways to use renewable energy on campus.

Committee members have proven themselves capable of this task after scoring a \$137,500 grant from the State Energy Office that will help fund the addition of solar panels to the roof of the renovated Morrison Residence Hall.

The project includes the installation of photovoltaic solar panels to provide solar-heated water to the building.

Student members of the committee were responsible for the initiation of efforts to equip Morrison with renewable energy resources,

said Ray DuBose, director of energy services and staff member of the committee.

DuBose said that because the committee would not be able to fund any projects without the student fee, committee members decided it would be best to put the money in a student residence hall.

The committee is composed of seven students and four administrators.

Student members of the committee for the 2005-06 academic year will be appointed by the speaker of Student Congress, the student body president and the Graduate and Professional Student Federation president, just as in years past.

"(The Renewable Energy Special Projects Committee makes) Carolina a leader in our area and in the world, as it is in so many other aspects," DuBose said.

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CAMPUS Y

FROM PAGE 3

idea of exit reports to ensure better continuity of power but said he could do more to increase membership in the Campus Y and strengthen the organization's diversity.

While Campus Y awaits the selection of its male co-president, Menghrajani said she is ready to get started.

"There's a lot I can do (as co-president)," she said. "This is my senior year, so I can put all my effort into it. I'm really excited. I

can't wait to get to work."

As co-president, Menghrajani said she hopes to "unify the Y."

"If we pool our resources and collaborate, we can grow more and make the Y a better resource to help the community."

In light of this year's voting excitement, Menghrajani also said she hopes to change the procedure for Campus Y elections.

Online voting, she said, would be more convenient than having people vote at the Campus Y building, especially if the election continues to coincide with student

body president elections.

Will Davis, who ran unopposed, was named the Campus Y's next minister of information.

Virginia Carson, director of the Campus Y, praised the candidates' efforts.

"All of them are committed to the Y's mission of social justice and pluralism," she said. "The larger impact, I think, is that the election reinforced their motivation and commitment to each other."

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SINGLE

FROM PAGE 3

der to management positions.

Still, Owen couldn't stop thinking of other single mothers who cannot rely on education or family resources. She came across a book called "Something You Should Know," written by Clement Watt in 1912, that inspired her to create a cross-training program to help other single parents — a project that would become Avadon Alliance.

The program, incorporated in 2001, matches women with jobs through a business-skills training program. It enables single mothers who have not been able to find work or afford a college education to learn a trade hands-on.

"A lot of times what happens is (the mother) was not the wage-earner in the family, so she has no work experience," Owen said.

She asks area businesses to donate their expertise to the women in the Avadon Alliance program, and in turn, the women teach what they have learned to someone else in need.

"The way to really help the community is to tool your business when you need help ... to bring in these ladies to learn," she said.

Aside from financial charities, some say, simple camaraderie

might be the key to uplifting single parents' spirits.

Montie Roland, publisher of NCSingleParent.com, hosts an online community of single parents.

The site, now in its third year, features forums, advice columns about divorce and legal issues, Web links and events for single parents. Attorneys write articles and question-and-answer sections on the site.

Roland's idea also came as a result of a divorce when he decided to address the questions he repeatedly heard about being a single parent.

The first step to helping other single parents, he said, is to make them aware of the pain and suffering that some have experienced.

The second step is to show single parents that there are a lot of single parents out there and to direct them to different groups.

Some of the site's dedicated readers get together for outings, such as the "Stray Dog Thanksgiving Dinner" for single parents without family nearby.

John Posthill, a single parent raising two teenage daughters, also said community support is important in adjusting to the lifestyle.

"It was a tremendous shock to have this happen. It was very

stressful initially," he said.

Posthill, an engineer at a firm in Research Triangle Park, said his employer and daughters' school have been supportive of him taking the role of a single father.

He became a member of the Cary chapter of Parents Without Partners, an international nonprofit organization. The group hosts outings and social support for single parents and their children.

Posthill said that because he is a father, he isn't the typical single parent, though research shows that more men are heading single households. "Sometimes, it's simply a raised eyebrow, and sometimes it's a look of impress," he said.

While more groups are surfacing from the underground community, some single parents say these organizations should strive to advertise to the general public.

"If I had had resources available to me, there were many times I could have used help with clothes and school supplies," said Sandy Rueda, who raised her five, now-adult daughters on her own.

"Had there been an advertisement on TV or something guiding me in the direction, I would have knocked on their door."

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