

# The Daily Tar Heel

VOLUME 114, ISSUE 60

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 30, 2006

www.dailytarheel.com

## Officials address health care concerns

BY ALLISON NICHOLS  
SENIOR WRITER

University officials responded Tuesday to concerns that UNC Hospitals is not living up to its mission to serve N.C. citizens.

A petition signed by more than 1,100 people was presented Thursday to UNC-system President Erskine Bowles by retired UNC professor of medicine John Hammond and Florence Soltys, a UNC faculty member in the schools of medicine and social work.

Bill Roper, the CEO of UNC Health Care, unveiled two memorandums responding to the criticism and outlining his plans to improve the care that the system offers.

"We believe we've got our policies right, but now is the implementation — day-by-day, patient-

by-patient," he said.

Critics argue that UNC does not fulfill its mission to N.C. citizens because its financial assistance policies are both confusing and inadequate.

"Serving the people who are most vulnerable is the core of our mission," Roper said.

Petitioners were concerned that Roper cared more about a positive profit margin than about providing medical assistance to the state's indigent population.

In response to these accusations, Roper said fiscal responsibility is necessary to attract talented faculty and purchase cutting-edge technology.

"The need for a positive margin is so we can invest for the future," he said.

He said in the previous fiscal year, the hospitals gave away more uncompensated care than in any past year.

Roper reiterated that UNC Health Care will not turn away any patient who needs care. The hospitals' mission, he said, is to serve the people of North Carolina.

"The people who work at UNC Health Care do what they do because they're dedicated public servants."

Nearly all hospital employees could make more money elsewhere but choose to remain out of commitment to service, he said.

Roper said that he had heard about some of the criticisms brought Thursday before and that he already had been working on long-term initiatives to address them.

His plans include:

- Hiring more financial counselors and integrating state Medicaid counselors more;

- Changing the appointment reminder recording to avoid intimidating patients and decrease the 20-percent no-show rate;

- Better advertising the hospitals' financial assistance opportunities;

- Demystifying complexities across the system;

- And ensuring that consistent criteria for financial assistance is applied in each clinic.

UNC Health Care has not changed its policy, Chancellor James Moeser said. "They are making drastic changes with how they advertise that policy."

Bowles and Moeser both  
SEE HOSPITALS, PAGE 7



Bill Roper (right), CEO of UNC Health Care, responds to public concerns about operational changes in a meeting Tuesday in the Hedrick Building. DTH/JULIA BARKER

## Students recall Katrina havoc

Storm still shakes Gulf Coast natives

BY KATIE HOFFMANN  
FEATURES EDITOR

Senior year in high school normally is marked by traditions such as homecoming, senior skip day and prom.

Katy Doll's senior year was marked by disaster.

Two weeks into the school year, anticipation of Hurricane Katrina uprooted the now-UNC freshman



A home in Mississippi shows the devastation produced just after Hurricane Katrina, which hit the Gulf Coast one year ago Tuesday. DTH FILE PHOTO

from her home in Metairie, La., a suburb of New Orleans. Her family evacuated to Arkansas — where they had sought refuge from hurricanes twice before — for two weeks.

She made her way to Chicago, where she stayed with her grandparents for the semester, while her parents returned to New Orleans to assess the damage.

Doll is just one of many UNC students from New Orleans whose normal life was shattered by Katrina, and who — one year later — is still picking up the pieces.

Sophomore Samuel White, who has lived in New Orleans for 12 years, had just come to UNC for his freshman year when Katrina struck.

"It was about three weeks before we knew what happened to our house. The water hadn't receded enough," White said.

"I'd come back and check all the Web sites I could think of to see if anybody knew anything," he said.

Other students expressed similar feelings of hopelessness of being so far from their affected homes.

"I couldn't get in touch with my

family for a week, which was really hard," said senior Alex Wright, who is from outside of New Orleans. Her parents and younger sister found refuge in Florida with her aunt.

The process of moving on from the ordeal has been a slow one for these students — and one that is still going on.

Doll rejoined her parents in New Orleans a few days before they rang in the new year.

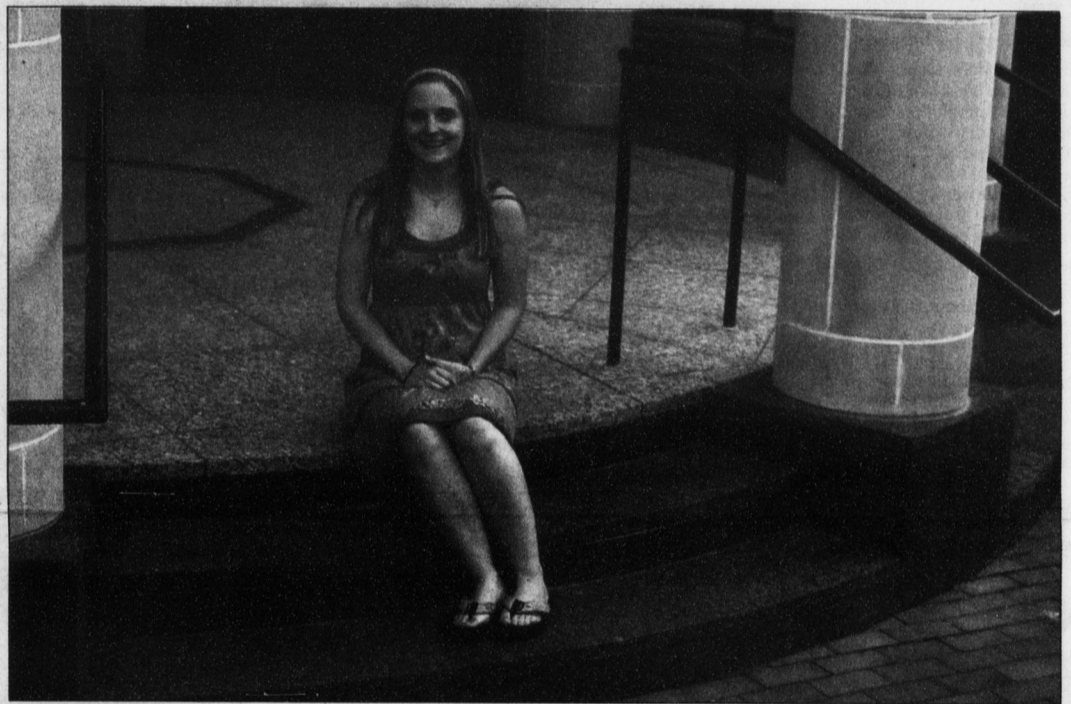
Her family had a lucky break when three of her uncles, her grandfather and a cousin — all contractors — were able to replace her roof.

"It was impossible to get a contractor," Doll said. "You basically have to know someone."

"You would go to Lowe's, and there would be a group of people looking for jobs. Or there would be people waiting for a shipment to

SEE KATRINA, PAGE 7

## THE FINAL VICTORY LAP



Senior Christine Pate sits outside the Law School on Tuesday afternoon. Pate, who is in her ninth semester majoring in biology and Spanish, is taking a little extra time to complete her degree because she switched majors several times and had to take time off due to an illness. DTH/JULIA BARKER

BY JULIA FURLONG  
SENIOR WRITER

Johnny Lechner isn't just a guy who wakes up in his toga at noon everyday.

"Sure that is happening some days a week definitely, but I couldn't do that for 12 years," said Lechner, 29, who is at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater for his thirteenth and final year of college.

"It was more or less my friends started to graduate, and I got cold feet, didn't know what I wanted to do with my life," Lechner said of his decision to spend more than a decade as an undergraduate.

He could graduate now with three majors and three minors, but he opted to wait one more year to study abroad — for the second time.

The extended education student has become so famous — or infamous — in Wisconsin that the state legislature passed a law requiring students with three majors and three minors to pay double tuition.

But he would not have been able to stick around as long at UNC. "I think we would have caught him," said Bobbi Owen, senior associate dean for undergraduate education.

UNC discourages students from extending their college careers a la fictitious career college student Van Wilder.

More UNC students are graduating within four years than in the past, and the Board of Trustees recently instructed the University to improve graduation and retention rates even more, Owen said.

Traditionally students could complete nine semesters without a formal petition to remain at UNC. But Owen said this year UNC, like the University of Virginia, will start the paperwork after eight semesters.

And in light of the new option to have three areas of study, Owen said rules were amended to keep students from delaying graduation to fit an extra major or minor.

"We're not going to let that happen," she said. Now if a student delays graduation for a fifth year, they can only graduate with one major.

Of the class that entered UNC in 1969, 52.1 percent graduated in four years and 64.7 percent graduated in six.

Fast-forward three decades, and it's another story. Of the class

SEE SUPER SENIORS, PAGE 7

## Online ticket trial sees few bumps

BY ERIN ZUREICK  
UNIVERSITY EDITOR

Registration for the first online ticket distribution is closed, and students should begin to hear today whether they'll receive tickets.

Officials said most problems encountered so far have been minor — an online link sent out via an informational e-mail originally was incorrect, and some students who enrolled late had difficulties.

More than 6,000 students had registered for general admission football tickets to the Sept. 9 Virginia Tech game as of Tuesday afternoon, said Clint Gwaltney, director of ticket operations.

A total of 12,000 student tickets are available for the game, which is serving as a trial run for basketball distributions.

Selected students will have until mid-



Athletics Director Dick Baddour said the online ticket process is needed to allow every student a chance at a seat.

night Friday to confirm their attendance. They can reserve as many as two tickets.

The temporary nature of ticket policies is one of the biggest obstacles facing distributions, athletic officials said.

Before the bracelet system was introduced, students camped out for tickets. Officials said when the switch was made to bracelets, similar complaints were heard.

"We need to come up with a policy

that stands the test of time," said Steve Kirschner, associate athletic director for communications. "We want to get the most fans in the seats the easiest way possible."

Athletics Director Dick Baddour said it's important for every student to have a chance at a ticket. "Another concern of ours was that all students have access," he said.

And students shouldn't assume fans will be any less enthusiastic because tickets are obtained online, said Winston Crisp, assistant vice chancellor for student affairs.

Waiting in line Saturday morning wasn't possible for many, Crisp said.

"Don't think for a minute that those folks aren't going to be just as rabid."

The online method also will be used for the Nov. 18 N.C. State football game.

SEE TICKETS, PAGE 7

## Youth center coming to town

Boys & Girls Clubs seeks Chapel Hill site

BY ERIC SHEPHERD MARTIN  
ASSISTANT CITY EDITOR

After three years of planning, the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Orange is expected to begin serving the public this fall.

Abby Kimbrough, president of the clubs' Orange County board of directors, said the club will secure a lease in Chapel Hill within the next three weeks, although she wouldn't disclose an exact address.

"We have goals, and one of them is to open the club and start serving kids by the first of November," Kimbrough said.

Until then, the board will search for an executive director.

No one is being considered for the posi-

tion yet, but Kimbrough said she'd prefer someone with previous club experience.

With a history dating back to the Civil War, the Boys & Girls Clubs of America has served the nation's youth through athletic and academic aid programs.

Children in the clubs work with volunteer counselors and often form lasting bonds.

The goal is to give students a place to go after school where they can develop character and leadership along with health and life skills.

The board of directors is aiming to raise \$250,000 — a year's operating expenses — before the club opens.

Like YMCA, the Boys & Girls Clubs aims to promote wellness for the nation's youth, but the club caters more to children with special needs.

SEE CLUBS, PAGE 7

### CORRECTION

Due to an editing error, the Tuesday front page "This day in history" incorrectly stated when the UNC football team beat USC and went on to play Alabama in the Gator Bowl. The game occurred in 1993. The Daily Tar Heel apologizes for the error.

### ANNOUNCEMENT

#### WE'RE HIRING

Want to join the nation's top college newspaper? Meet the editors at an interest meeting from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Thursday in Union 3503.



### sports | page 10

#### ONE IS ALL YOU NEED

The Tar Heels take down UNC-G, slipping past the Spartans by a single goal. Freshmen played a key role in the victory.

### this day in history

#### AUGUST 30, 1973 ...

The Department of Housing reports that students who want to paint their dorm rooms have a choice of 20 colors of free paint available in abundant supply.

### weather

T-Storms  
H 86, L 70

### index

police log ..... 2  
calendar ..... 2  
games ..... 9  
sports ..... 10  
opinion ..... 14