May 2009

Dear Alumni, Parents and Friends:

We’ve had an exciting spring at Carolina, and I can’t believe my first year as chancellor is nearly over. There’s nothing more inspiring than seeing a sea of blue robes in Kenan Stadium for Commencement and knowing that we’ve just sent another class out to help solve the world’s problems. All over Chapel Hill there are plenty of reminders – think lots of T-shirts – of the Tar Heels’ national championship. We just welcomed home Anoop Desai from his top-seven finish on “American Idol.” The 2008 graduate and former Clef Hanger has been a wonderful ambassador for Carolina.

It’s been thrilling to help celebrate the remarkable academic achievements of our students and faculty. This edition of FYI is full of the details – from winning several of the most prestigious scholarships to securing a $17.5 million federal grant for solar energy research. Students and professors have distinguished themselves and Carolina in ways that will make you proud.

We’ve dedicated the Kenan Music and Genetic Medicine Research buildings and launched a Global Research Institute to tackle topics such as globalization and the future of North Carolina’s economy.

FYI is one way we share news. If we have your e-mail address, you’ll receive FYI Carolina Online. (To sign up, e-mail FYICarolina@unc.edu.) Please also check out my blog, holden.unc.edu.

Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu, who won the Nobel Peace Prize for leading the anti-apartheid campaign in South Africa, urged Carolina’s newest graduates to help make the world more compassionate. Tutu, an honorary degree recipient, addressed a Commencement crowd of about 30,000 people in Kenan Stadium. For video highlights, see http://www.youtube.com/user/UNCChapelHill.
Seniors Win Big in Rhodes, USA Today Competitions

Seniors Elisabeth “Lisette” Yorke of Hillside Boularderie, Nova Scotia, and Aisha Saad of Cary, N.C., both Morehead-Cain Scholars, were Rhodes Scholarship winners, the fifth time we’ve had two Rhodes winners in the same year. Since 2000, we’ve produced more Rhodes winners than any other state-supported university, and the ninth most of any public or private school. Saad and Yorke also were among only 20 undergraduates who made USA Today’s 2009 All-USA College Academic First Team.

UNC #1 for Luce Scholars After Passing Harvard

Carolina has passed Harvard and ranks No. 1 in producing Luce Scholars, who live and learn in Asia. Seniors Nicholas Anderson (a Robertson Scholar) of Weston, Conn., and Rachel Harper of Cary, along with 2007 graduate Jennifer Cimaglia (a Morehead-Cain Scholar) of Suwanee, Ga., were among 18 winners. It was only the fourth time in Luce history that three students from the same school were selected.

Undergraduates Take More Top Honors

Five undergraduates chosen for Truman, Churchill, Goldwater and Udall scholarships – among the most prestigious honors a U.S. student can win.

- Matthew Garza of Stockton, Calif. and a Morehead-Cain Scholar won the Truman Scholarship for graduate studies, bringing our total to 30.
- Katherine Deigan of Cary won a Churchill Scholarship for graduate work. Carolina has produced 14 Churchill Scholars.
- Ann Liu of Raleigh and Varun Puvanesaraj of Chapel Hill received the Barry M. Goldwater Scholarship, given to nurture careers in math, the natural sciences or engineering. We’ve had 33 Goldwater Scholars.
- Marion Boulicault of London and a Morehead-Cain Scholar won the Morris K. Udall Scholarship for academic excellence and commitment to the environment. Thirteen Udall winners are from UNC.

Carolina Covenant Shows Success

A new study of the first class of Carolina Covenant Scholars shows the program, which provides a debt-free education, helps qualified low-income students succeed in the classroom.

The program is a national model; more than 90 similar programs have been established at U.S. colleges and universities since Carolina announced the Covenant in 2003.

Our study asked if the Covenant helps close the gap for earning degrees between low-income and other students. We compared the first 2004 Covenant class with a group of 2003 students who would have qualified.

- Covenant students performed slightly better in graduation rates (62 percent in eight semesters vs. 57 percent, and 73 percent in nine semesters vs. 70 percent). Graduation rates for all students ranged between 74 percent and 75 percent.
- The retention rate for 2004 Covenant Scholars in their fourth year was considerably higher.
- 17 percent fewer Covenant students became academically ineligible.

Another encouraging sign: Covenant Scholars’ average grade-point average at graduation is within 2/10ths of a point of the average for all students.
**Stimulus Brings $17.5 million Federal Grant for Solar Energy**

Chemistry Professor Tom Meyer, one of Carolina’s great visionaries, led a coalition of scientists joined by the promise of solar fuels to secure a grant worth $17.5 million from the U.S. Department of Energy and President Obama’s American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Nationwide, 46 Energy Frontier Research Centers aim to accelerate breakthroughs in energy technology development. Our proposal was the only one funded in North Carolina and among 16 designed to create jobs.

Carolina’s center will study low-cost and efficient solar fuels production by artificial photosynthesis. Solar fuels could use the sun’s energy to make fuels from water and carbon dioxide for heating, transportation and energy storage. The technology we’re studying could also make electricity using inexpensive “solar shingles” on the roofs of buildings.

**Ernst Elected to American Academy of Arts and Sciences**

Carl Ernst, William R. Kenan Jr. Distinguished Professor of Religious Studies, has been elected a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, one of the nation’s oldest honorary societies. He’s our 37th academy member. Ernst, director of the Center for the Study of the Middle East and Muslim Civilizations in the College of Arts and Sciences, also just received a Guggenheim Fellowship to support his research.

**Gil Tapped as Next Arts and Sciences Dean**

Karen Gil, our own Lee G. Pedersen Distinguished Professor of Psychology and a professor of psychiatry, will become the next dean of the College of Arts and Sciences on July 1 following a national search. She will fill the position I vacated last year to become chancellor. Karen is a former psychology department chair and a two-time senior associate dean in the college. She’s passionate about our students and faculty, and I’m looking forward to working with her in this new role.

**State Budget Cuts Loom for 2009-2010**

The University hasn’t been immune to the global economic crisis. Our state faces some of the most serious budget challenges in its history. The projected state deficit for next year exceeds $4 billion. We’ve already reverted $36 million in state funds (7 percent) to help with the deficit, and we don’t know how deep the permanent state cuts will go. In March, we told senior administrators to reduce funding for programs, operations and staffing equivalent to a 5 percent recurring state budget reduction in time for the start of the new fiscal year on July 1. These reductions represent nearly $29 million in permanent (recurring) state funding.
No state funds were used to print this publication.

All indications are the rest of the budget process in Raleigh will be painful and will directly affect the University as we absorb our share of these cuts. We’re determined to do everything possible to preserve the quality of the education we can provide to our students. For the latest, see the Carolina Budget Information Web page at www.unc.edu.

Your Support Helps Sustain Excellence at Carolina
Private gifts and investment income provide 20 percent of our annual operating revenue — creating Carolina’s margin for excellence. We can use your help more than ever. Please consider making a gift to the Chancellor’s Unrestricted Fund, which supports our highest priorities, or to the school, program or department of your choice. A gift slip is enclosed, or you may give online at giving.unc.edu/gift.

Sincerely,

Holden Thorp