



## **State of the University Address by Chancellor Rosemary DePaolo Thursday, Sept. 28, 2006**

It is truly a pleasure to welcome all of you to UNCW and this evening's reception.

Many of the university's most dedicated leaders, most devoted alumni, and most generous donors are here tonight. The Seahawk spirit permeates this room, and I thank you all for your friendship and deep commitment to the University of North Carolina Wilmington.

We are extremely fortunate to have dedicated leaders like the provost, our other vice chancellors, deans and cabinet members. It is their amazing dedication and quest for excellence that have helped lead us in the right direction. Thank you all for what you do to keep moving this university forward.

I am very proud to have the best group of trustees imaginable. They are engaged board members and take their responsibilities to this university seriously. I would like to ask the trustees, vice chancellors, and deans in attendance tonight to please stand. Thank you for the countless ways in which you make UNCW wonderful. Your dedication is invaluable to our students, to our university, and to me.

As I reflected on what I wanted to share with you tonight, my thoughts gathered around a defining theme for the past 12 months at UNCW: What a difference a year makes.

The first thing I will mention is the most visible – a physical transformation of campus.

At this time last year, many areas on campus were construction zones that created chaos with dust and detour signs everywhere. Now, thanks to generous support from students, alumni, donors and the citizens of North Carolina, our campus has been transformed. In the past two months, we have opened the Herbert and Sylvia Fisher Student Center, an incredible new place for students which was built with student fees that they wholeheartedly approved. We have also opened the Seahawk Village apartments, a new 524-bed complex which also includes a clubhouse and a swimming pool. We've renovated Kenan Auditorium, primarily to expand the restroom facilities, but also to add a new roof and some additional amenities. We have opened the academic wing of a wonderful Cultural Arts Building that includes a recital hall, proscenium theater, a black box theatre, art space, practice rooms and more. Work is still being completed on the performance space, but be on the look out for the grand opening celebration of this much-needed glorious new facility in January.

In a few months, UNCW will complete the Computer Information Systems Building, a superb facility that will include a financial trading room. We are well underway on constructing the second phase of campus apartments, Seahawk Landing. This 600-bed complex is located on the backside of Cornerstone Hall and will include a fitness facility and convenience store.

We are completing renovation of James Hall, one of our three original buildings, and will begin renovation of Kenan Hall and Friday Hall soon to provide more academic space for our faculty, staff, and students. Preliminary work on our next major building project, the School of Nursing is underway. Our nursing program has such limited space that we now have to turn away qualified students – an unacceptable situation given the chronic shortage of nurses across our state and nation.

UNCW is especially grateful to UNC President Erskine Bowles, the Board of Governors, the N.C. General Assembly and Gov. Mike Easley for supporting construction of the School of Nursing facility. I want you all to know that this was the number one capital project request for the UNC system and led the General Assembly's list of capital projects as well. At \$27 million, it is the single largest state appropriated capital project in UNCW's history. This new building will allow the School of Nursing significantly to enhance its student enrollment and dedicate increased space for classrooms and its state-of-the-art clinical simulation labs. Expect to be invited to a groundbreaking in the spring.

With all of this much needed construction and renovation of buildings, we are beginning to enjoy the necessary state of the art facilities our students deserve, creating the absolute best physical learning environment possible.

One of my highest priorities since arriving has been to seek approval from the Board of Governors and the state to increase state funding for UNCW.

Many of you have heard me speak about how woefully underfunded we are. Last year marked the first year that UNCW received \$7 million in adjustments from chronic underfunding. With this support as well as enrollment growth funding, UNCW recruited more than 70 new faculty members in a variety of disciplines. Our goal here is to reduce student/faculty ratios, with obvious benefits in terms of individual involvement in the classroom. While this funding helped us provide much needed faculty positions and support, we remain woefully underfunded. I continue to push this issue and remain optimistic that we will continue to make progress in this area.

Last year, we talked a great deal about the need to increase faculty and staff salaries, to make them more competitive in the marketplace, at least. This year, the state budget included 5.5 percent raises for staff and 6 percent merit raises for faculty. These increases will go a long way toward helping UNCW attract and retain talented faculty and staff.

UNCW is a community leader and an important force in the economy of Southeastern North Carolina.

The university has an estimated \$415 million annual economic impact on the eight-county region of southeastern North Carolina. UNCW has more than \$144 million of construction projects underway that will result in a cumulative economic impact of approximately \$540 million.

UNCW also contributes to the community by creating and hosting countless cultural events, offering a wealth of lifelong learning programs, and actively participating in partnerships with other educational institutions.

Our volunteer efforts alone last year totaled more than 31,000 hours, which translate, according to one national model, into an economic impact of \$560,000.

Also, UNCW generates the knowledge base to serve governmental and business leaders. For example, on October 10 the Cameron School of Business will host the 2006 Economic

Outlook Conference. The presentations and panel discussions will focus on the region's economic vitality, especially in the real estate and health services areas.

Then, beyond pure economics, there are the numerous ways in which UNCW serves, collaborates, and enriches our communities. The Division of Public Service and Continuing Studies' newest initiative, Scholarly Community Engagement, promotes initiatives to design positive social change. For example, the initiative has secured \$511,000 in private foundation giving to support an obesity prevention research study involving more than 30 nonprofit, government and faith-based organizations.

The School of Nursing in partnership with the Coastal Area Health Education Center and New Hanover Health Network started a program this summer, The Camp Brigade of Nurse Exploring Seahawks – known as Camp BONES – designed for middle school students from Brunswick, Columbus, New Hanover, Pender and Duplin counties who demonstrate the academic proficiency and interest to pursue a health care career. It shows them opportunities, it points them down the right career paths, and it recruits students from historically underrepresented populations in health care - African Americans and Hispanics from rural communities and males - thus addressing the regional and national need for a diverse, culturally sensitive health care work force.

The first group of 10 students came to campus in July and stayed a week. They practiced delivering babies with the nursing school's simulation mannequin, learned CPR and dissected cow's eyes. They loved it! They spent a second week at New Hanover Regional Medical Center, shadowing nurses and other health care professionals.

The university's partnership with Coastal Carolina Community College and the Camp Lejeune Marine Corps Base also exemplifies our commitment to our region. Among scores of programs offered to our marines and their families, let me single out Camp Special Time, a free weekend program for children with special needs from military families at Camp Lejeune. It helps the children, it gives respite to the parents, and our volunteer students gain hands-on experience, skills and confidence as they care for and interact with children with various degrees of disabilities.

But our core mission is teaching, and our academic programs and excellent faculty and staff are second to none.

We have, quite simply, exceptional programs and a world-class faculty and staff. I do not exaggerate when I say that excellence is the norm at UNCW.

Earlier this month, thanks to the efforts from the terrific faculty and staff in the Watson School of Education, we received word that the university was named a recipient of the 2006 Christa McAuliffe Award for Excellence in Teacher Education by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities. Only one other public university in the nation received this honor for leadership and innovation in teacher education. I am most proud that we are being recognized nationally for the great work we are doing in producing some of this country's very best teachers.

Because this state's need for school principals and administrators is nearly as critical as its need for teachers, UNCW received unanimous approval last spring from the North Carolina Graduate Council to begin planning a doctoral program in educational leadership and administration. Once finalized, it will be our second doctoral degree program.

Last year, two alumnae from the Watson School of Education earned top honors in their fields. Sharon Byrdsong, who earned a master's degree in 1998, received the 2006 Middle

School Principal of the Year Award from the National Association of Secondary School Principals. Wendy Miller, Class of 1987, was named the North Carolina Teacher of the Year by the state Department of Public Instruction.

At the Cameron School of Business, the Master of Science in Accounting (MSA) program is known for the quality of its graduates and, thus, it has a strong placement record. Over 90 percent of our business school's MSA students accepted full-time positions before they graduated from the program and many received multiple job offers. Both MSA and MBA students continue to benefit from the outstanding faculty teaching in those programs as well as mentoring provided by area business leaders and retired executives through the Cameron Executive Network.

The faculty in the Cameron School of Business also devised an innovative program that serves our MBA students as well as local businesses. As participants in the MBA Learning Alliance, student teams spend 15 months working closely with small-to-medium size regional clients to help them improve their businesses. This year, nearly 80 students are participating on 16 Learning Alliance teams.

Who makes our academic programs so phenomenal? Our incredible faculty—who continue to achieve recognition for their dedication to teaching and scholarly activity.

Russell L. Herman, a professor of mathematics, was recognized for his amazing passion for teaching when he was selected as an Excellence in Teaching 2006 winner by the Board of Governors.

Frank Bongiorno, professor and chair of the Department of Music, just received the 5th annual J. Marshall Crews Distinguished Faculty Award presented on behalf of the UNCW Alumni Association and Past Chair's Council.

John Morrison, a professor of physics and physical oceanography, supervises the Galapagos Ocean Lab (GOL) initiative, a comprehensive effort focused on understanding the natural and human-induced variability in the ocean and how these changes affect biodiversity in the Galapagos Archipelago.

Mark Spaulding, an associate professor of history, and president of our Faculty Senate, was one of only 20 scholars nationwide selected to attend a two week seminar on teaching the Holocaust at the U.S. Memorial Holocaust Museum in June.

Last year, Charles Ward, professor of chemistry, and Gabriel Lugo, associate professor of mathematics and statistics, conducted a research project funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF) designed to create a virtual learning community in science and mathematics. Their efforts demonstrate an ongoing interest from our faculty to incorporate new technology, new computer applications, and new teaching strategies throughout curricula.

Perri Bomar, professor of nursing, conducted a series of studies to determine why racial minorities enroll in experimental cancer treatment trials at relatively low rates. She was joined in this research by professors James Johnson and Nora Noel in psychology thanks to a grant from the National Cancer Institute to New Hanover Regional Hospital that focuses on improving cancer outcomes for African-Americans. The studies aim to increase minorities' participation in such trials.

John Bennett, a professor in the Department of Health and Applied Human Sciences, was chosen as the national president-elect of the Alliance for Athletics, Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance.

Leslie Hossfeld, an assistant professor of sociology, is engaged in pioneering research that examines the impact, meaning, and solutions to joblessness in Southeastern North Carolina. This research is part of a national trend in "public sociology," or sociology in the public's interest in which sociologists apply the knowledge of the discipline to contemporary social needs.

Steve Meinhold, political science, was invited by the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to facilitate the Higher Education Institution involvement in FEMA National Response Plan after Hurricane Katrina.

Midori Albert, an associate professor in forensic anthropology, also received a call to assist in New Orleans and the gulf coast region after Hurricane Katrina. Her expertise was utilized in the grim task of identifying remains from that horrible tragedy.

David Monahan, an assistant professor for film studies, had his film *Monkey Junction* accepted into several film festivals, and his newest film *Ringo* is winning awards nationwide.

Our faculty are first and foremost teachers, but they also conduct an amazing amount of research for a university not classified as a research institution. In fact, UNCW conducts more research than several North Carolina universities categorized as "research institutions." One of our strategic goals, creating a powerful learning experience for our students, is profoundly evident through the research efforts of our faculty. Research informs instruction, providing faculty with numerous opportunities for "teachable moments" with students in the field, in the lab, in the library, etc. This past year, more than 40 departments or units received research awards.

The Center for Marine Science is our research leader. Earlier this month, the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences awarded UNCW a five-year \$7.53 million competitive renewal grant to further delve into the acute and chronic effects of inhaling toxic particles generated by red tides on Florida's west coast. Daniel Baden, William R. Kenan Distinguished Professor of Marine Sciences at UNCW, is the program director for the study, one of the most far-reaching and inclusive in the history of red tide research.

The award was timely and allowed the researchers to carry out an extensive exposure study on Florida's beaches this past weekend during a major red tide episode. It is the largest oceans and human health grant awarded by the NIEHS, and the largest NIH grant ever awarded to UNCW. It is the first "beach to bedside" study in the United States.

The Center for Marine Science administers single-year and multi-year grants and contract awards that exceed \$35 million in total value. This research support includes collaborations with six research entities in North Carolina as well as research institutions in seven states and five countries. Funding for marine science research at UNCW has grown exponentially, and during the past five years totals one-half of the \$99 million in funding for marine science research within the 16 campuses of the University of North Carolina.

UNCW is committed to conducting research with immediate public applications. Our faculty, staff and students are searching for methods to improve water quality, treat cystic fibrosis, reduce violent behavior among college students, and improve cognitive retention among older people, to name just a few of the phenomenal and worthy projects underway.

Perhaps most importantly, and this we claim as our unique accomplishment in the system, we are at pains to make student research an important component of the classroom and field experience. We are truly the state's only teaching/research university.

Speaking of our students, UNCW continues to attract bright and very talented students.

The current freshmen class overall is quite impressive; the average SAT is 1150. UNCW has had the highest three-year increase in SAT averages among the 16-campus UNC system.

This fall, UNCW enrolled a higher percentage of students from southeastern North Carolina than in previous years. The kids from this region are smart, and they deserve the opportunity to attend UNCW, which was the first choice for 74 percent of our freshmen.

Our total enrollment exceeds 12,000, and 11.4 percent of them are students of color, compared to 10 percent last year. I'd like to share some examples of the bright and determined students we have here at UNCW.

Rebecca Hamner, class of 2006, received a Fulbright Scholar award to study endangered dolphins at the University of Auckland in New Zealand.

Joel Davenport, a senior in film studies, was the first UNCW student to have a film accepted by a major international film festival. Joel's film, *The Drill*, was accepted into FilmGate International Student Film Festival over the summer. The film festival received 112 total entries from around the world and accepted 37 films.

Catherine McCall, a graduate of our MFA program in creative writing, has recently published a very successful novel, *Lifeguarding: A Memoir of Secrets, Swimming, and the South* to great reviews from *Publishers' Weekly*, *USA Today*, *Entertainment Weekly* and the *Chicago Sun-Times*. Our MFA students and graduates have published 10 novels or non-fiction works since the program began in 1996; another seven novels are slated for publication in 2007.

Our student-athletes brought home four CAA championships in men's baseball, men's basketball, and women's and men's swimming and diving. Six UNCW teams were recognized with the NCAA's public recognition award for scoring in the top 10 percent academically in their sports, and our student-athletes have an 86 percent graduation rate, one of the best graduation rates in the state. Yesterday, the National Collegiate Athletic Association released the latest student-athlete graduation rates, and once again, UNCW has fared well, tying for the highest rate among men's basketball players in the Colonial Athletic Association (CAA) and tying for second with Davidson behind only Wake Forest among North Carolina institutions.

In figures released late Wednesday by the NCAA, the Seahawks posted a graduation success rate (GSR) of 92 in men's basketball, sharing the CAA lead with the College of William & Mary. I am extremely proud of the great work we do as one of the leading universities in the nation for graduating our student athletes.

Here are two fine examples...

Michelle Jarman, class of 2006, became the first UNCW golfer to compete in the U.S. Women's Open when she qualified early last summer. With a final cumulative 3.991 grade point average, she was one of just 29 women nationally to earn an NCAA post-graduate scholarship. *ESPN The Magazine* recognized her and four other UNCW students nationally for their academic pursuits.

Michael Krayner, one of the most decorated swimmers in UNCW history, was selected the CAA 2005-06 Male Scholar Athlete of the Year. He double majored in chemistry and marine science, graduated in May with a 3.9 grade point average, and he is now a graduate student in chemistry at NC State.

What's helping all of this to happen? Increased support this past year from alumni and donors has helped us soar.

In June 2006, UNCW celebrated its second record fundraising year in a row. Thanks to you and other generous donors, contributions to UNCW totaled more than \$7.2 million, a 32 percent increase compared to the previous year.

Alumni Herbert and Sylvia Fisher, for whom the student center is named, gave \$2 million in May, the largest gift by individual donors in UNCW history. Total alumni participation in giving for 2005-06 exceeded 13 percent, compared to 8.79 percent in 2002-03.

The growth in contributions and support bodes well for our increasing efforts to obtain private, philanthropic gifts for the university. It is imperative that we significantly enhance the funding for our students, faculty and academic programs through compelling, focused fundraising initiatives.

The incredibly generous gifts UNCW received last year include 23 new endowed scholarships and 21 annually funded scholarships. I guarantee these scholarships, and others, helped UNCW recruit intelligent, talented, deserving students who truly benefit from the experiences available on our campus. It is no coincidence, in my opinion, that we had 51 students among last year's incoming freshmen who scored 1300 or higher on the SAT, and this year, we have 113 freshmen who scored 1300 or better.

Because UNCW is so good at what it does, the university is consistently recognized by national ranking organizations. Once again, and for the ninth year in a row, U.S. News & World Report has ranked UNCW in the top 10 of public master's universities in the South.

The Princeton Review placed UNCW in the "Best in the Southeast" and "Best Value" categories, noting that our university is one of the best overall bargains - based on cost and financial aid - among the most academically outstanding colleges in the nation.

And just last week, Kiplinger's Personal Finance placed UNCW on its list of 50 "Best Values" among the nation's public colleges and universities.

Clearly, UNCW is a very good university, but we have no intention of holding the line. We're Seahawks, and it's our nature to soar.

How will we reach new heights? By building on our strengths.

- Recruiting bright, talented students.
- Supporting our highly qualified faculty and staff.
- Enhancing our safe, attractive campus.
- Emphasizing diversity and international study.
- Winning championships the right way.
- Strengthening our relationships with you – our most trusted alumni, donors, leaders, and friends. You have always been there for UNCW, and I know we can continue to count on you for guidance and support.

Because of that, a year from now, we shall again be counting what a difference a year makes, and I already know we'll be able to report similar astounding progress.

UNCW cannot get there without you. You are the difference makers. You provide leadership, ideas, commitment and support. You contribute to scholarships, programs and activities across this campus. You serve as ambassadors for the university in our community, and around North Carolina.

With your steadfast dedication, UNCW will continue to transform into the North Carolina University known for providing students with the most powerful learning experience possible. We will be even farther on our way to being recognized as the quality alternative to the mega campuses, a more comprehensively sized jewel for all those very bright students who seek the intensive interaction that is the hallmark of the UNCW experience.

You are helping make a difference for our students, and because of you they will go on to make a difference on our campus, in their communities, in our state, and beyond.

Thank you for all you do for this great university.