Welcome Home!

Willy the long-lost sea turtle gets a clean bill of health
Turtles don’t run in packs, but journalists do. That may explain the whirlwind of media coverage for the arrival of a young sea turtle named Willy, who jetted into the Raleigh Durham International Airport last Thursday after two years in Britain.

Willy shared her flight across the Atlantic with a BBC documentary film crew that is exhaustively chronicling the repatriation of the rare turtle to American soil. Never mind that Willy probably isn’t a U.S. turtle at all, but a seasonal immigrant from Mexico, according to turtle experts. She apparently wandered outside her usual migratory path along the East Coast in 2007 and, carried by currents, ended up in Britain’s Woolabombe Bay. Discovered on a beach, she was taken to the Weymouth Sea Life Park to recuperate from her ordeal.

As the American Airlines 767 carrying Willy made its approach to RDU last week, news teams from four local television stations set up their vans outside Cargo Building 3. Two stations prepared to go live so eager viewers could catch their first glimpse of Willy.

The Turtle Who Could Fly

Media star Willy the sea turtle gets a clean bill of health from NC State.

Article by David Hunt
Reporters and photographers from several print publications lounged inside the cargo hangar while a group of youngsters stood nearby in excited anticipation, brandishing signs with red hearts and green stars that proclaimed: “Welcome Home, Sea Turtle.”

Dr. Craig Harms, director of marine health programs at NC State’s College of Veterinary Medicine, arrived on the scene early, and began preparations to give Willy a complete medical check-up as soon as she landed. Harms serves on the clinical staff at the Center for Marine Sciences and Technology, a 51,000-square-foot facility in the coastal community of Morehead City that NC State operates in partnership with the state’s community college system, and he’s an expert on aquatic animals.

Also on hand were volunteers from the Karen Beasley Sea Turtle Rescue and Rehabilitation Center in Topsail, N.C., who had agreed to care for Willy until she could be released back into the wild on this side of the Atlantic. The Beasley center contracts with NC State’s College of Veterinary Medicine to provide medical care for all its turtles.

Security was tight, with a chain link fence separating those who had been cleared by the U.S. Customs Service from those who had not. The group on the outside of the fence included the media. The group on the inside included everyone else, even the children, who – coincidentally – had been cleared by customs days earlier for “Take Your Child to Work Day.”

The media relations staff at RDU explained the ground rules for the media event: Willy had to go through customs and then get her medical checkup. Then, and only then, would she be ready for the press. They weren’t kidding.

When an SUV carrying the turtle drove up to the cargo hangar, photographers from various news outlets began to snap pictures.

“No photos,” barked a security guard, as RDU employees herded the overly eager news people outside the building. A photographer from the News & Observer mused, “If they see how we transport our animals, then the terrorists win.”

Thankfully, Harms concluded his examination of Willy quickly, and the security guards threw open the hangar gates to the growing throng of Raleigh media. Jean Beasley, director of the sea turtle rescue center in Topsail, patiently answered a flood of questions while she and other volunteers posed with Willy, who sat quietly on a small table.

A week later, Harms and Beasley gave the Bulletin a progress report on Willy. She was in good condition, the veterinarian said, although a bit stressed from the long flight. A blood test showed elevated muscle enzymes, but no cause for concern.

“She seems to be settling in to her new digs,” Beasley said. “She likes dozing in the sun in her sunny tank. She’s anchored herself by the overflow pipe and then every so often paddles over to take a shower under the hose.”

After living on a British diet for two years, Willy is making a quick adjustment to more tasty fare, including North Carolina blue crab.

Beasley said Willy is still generating a lot of media attention from reporters around the country who are fascinated by the turtle’s globetrotting. It’s not surprising, she added.

“Willy is a Kemp’s Ridley sea turtle, the smallest and rarest of the seven types of sea turtles,” she explained. “Only two Kemp’s Ridley turtles are known to have survived after washing up in Britain.”

In fact, the last time a Kemp’s Ridley survived a transatlantic trip was 20 years ago. Beasley said she saw that turtle at Sea World shortly after it returned to the United States.

“We’ve just had a pretty rare event,” she said. “Plus, if we ever needed something to distract us from all the gloomy news, it’s a feel-good story.”

And, she added, Willy’s return didn’t cost the taxpayers a dime. American Airlines arranged a free flight after bumping a dog off the plane to make room for the famous turtle. Airline officials thanked the dog (and its family) in remarks on Thursday.

Ironically, Willy was physically fit enough to make the trip more than a year ago. But the paperwork involved in bringing a rare animal into the United States is both complex and time-consuming to process, Beasley said.

“It involved embassies and a number of federal agencies, including homeland security, customs and immigration,” she said. “There were all kinds of criteria, treaties and rules to deal with.”
NC State employees will see changes in health insurance benefits and rates for 2009-10 and 2010-11. Here is a summary of the changes from Senate Bill 287, signed into law April 23 by Gov. Bev Perdue.

**Rate Increases**
- On July 1, there will be an 8.9 percent premium increase on all coverage tiers.
- On July 1, 2010 there will be another 8.9 percent premium increase on all coverage tiers.

**Benefit Changes**
The 90/10 Plus plan will no longer be offered as of July 1. Currently enrolled employees will have the choice of moving to the PPO Basic (70/30) or PPO Standard (80/20) during annual enrollment, scheduled for May 6-29. To change options, you must complete an annual enrollment change form, which will be posted on the benefits homepage by Monday, May 4. If a PPO Plus (90/10) participant does not submit a completed form by May 29, he or she and covered dependents will automatically default to the PPO Standard plan (80/20) effective July 1. Employees who switch or are moved to the 80/20 plan will no longer have to pay for employee-only coverage, effective July 1. Premium changes for dependents will occur in June payroll with coverage effective July 1.

At this time, no changes will be allowed in the contribution level of Medical Flexible Spending Accounts based on elimination of the PPO option, according to the NC Flex plan administrator. Universities in the UNC System have asked that the decision be reconsidered.

Deductibles, copays and coinsurance maximums will increase, effective July 1. See the Benefit Changes Chart for details.

As of Jan. 1, 2010, routine vision exams will no longer be covered under the PPO options. Annual enrollment for the NC Flex Vision Care Plan will be held in October for a Jan. 1, 2010 effective date.

**Prescription Drug Coverage**
The number of days’ supply for one copayment will change from 34 days to 30 days, effective July 1.

Prescription drug copays for preferred brand (without a generic available), and nonpreferred brand will each increase by $5, effective July 1.

Beginning July 1, a 25 percent coinsurance will be charged for specialty prescription drugs up to $100 for each 30-day supply. If you are currently taking a specialty medication, you will receive additional information in the mail.

The preferred brand copay tier (with generic available) will be eliminated effective July 1.

Beginning July 1, if a generic equivalent is available and you choose to have the brand name drug or your doctor prescribes “Dispense as Written,” you will be required to pay the difference between the actual cost of the brand name drug and the amount the plan would have paid for the generic equivalent, in addition to the generic copayment.

**Health Initiatives**
Effective July 1, 2010, you must attest that you or your covered dependents do not use tobacco products. If not, you may only opt for the PPO Basic (70/30) plan.

Effective July 1, 2011, you must attest that your weight and height ratios are within an evidence-based determined range. If not, you may only opt for the PPO Basic (70/30) plan.

**Insurance Cards**
Because of the shortened time frame, not all members who make changes will receive ID cards by July 1. Providers and pharmacies will accept your old ID cards in the meantime.

**Questions?**
Health benefits or pharmacy questions:
State Health Plan Web site at http://www.shpnc.org
Toll-free customer service for plan questions: 888-234-2416
Medco customer services for pharmacy questions: 800-336-5933
NC State Benefits Consultants: http://www.fis.ncsu.edu/hr/benefits/consultant.asp
Two budget-cutting moves announced this week will affect NC State employees: furloughs for state workers and the university’s plan for a permanent 5 percent budget reduction.

On Tuesday, in response to state budget shortfalls, Gov. Bev Perdue ordered a “flexible furlough plan” for all state workers, including higher education employees. In May and June, all state employees will see a reduction of half a percent of their annual salary.

For example, an employee making $30,000 would see a decrease of $75 in May and $75 in June for a total of $150. In return, state employees will be given 10 hours of flexible time off, which they may take any time between June 1 and Dec. 31.

April paychecks are in the works and will not reflect any changes, said Terree Kuiper, senior director for human resources.

Meanwhile, NC State released details of a permanent 5 percent budget reduction plan to cut $25.8 million in spending for 2009-10. The plan, spelled out in an April 23 document, breaks out reductions in three major university budgets: academic affairs, Agricultural Research Service and Cooperative Extension Service.

**Job Losses**

A total of 317 positions, 148 of which are vacant, will be eliminated. They include 99 faculty jobs, 94 EPA non-faculty jobs and 124 SPA jobs.

**Academic Affairs**

* 49 faculty jobs (41 vacant)
* 61 EPA non-faculty jobs (19 vacant)
* 108 SPA jobs (71 vacant)

Jobs eliminated: 218

**Agricultural Research Service**

* No faculty jobs
* 25 EPA non-faculty jobs (9 vacant)
* 16 SPA jobs (1 vacant)

Jobs eliminated: 41

**Cooperative Extension Service**

Most of the job cuts will come under a special federal retirement incentive.

* 50 faculty jobs (none vacant)
* 8 EPA non-faculty jobs (7 vacant)
* No SPA jobs

Jobs eliminated: 58

Overall, academic colleges received a 2.7 percent reduction, compared with 7.3 percent for administrative units in the provost’s office and 6.7 percent in other administrative units. The library budget was reduced by 3.7 percent and utilities by 1.7 percent.

Because of other budget issues, the colleges of Humanities and Social Sciences, Agriculture and Life Sciences, and Veterinary Medicine will make additional cuts not reflected in the totals for the 5 percent reduction, he said.

Cuts reflect the university’s priority of protecting undergraduate academic programs, said Dr. Larry Nielsen, provost and executive vice chancellor. “We directed the cuts away from core teaching responsibilities. A good example is that we’re cutting less than 1 percent of the seats in classes.”

A total of 1,965 class seats or 5,895 credit hours were eliminated with the cuts. That represents 0.8 percent of the university’s 750,000 credit hours, Nielsen said.

**What’s Next**

An additional 2 percent in strategic budget reductions are planned to bring the university’s total savings to $36 million, or 7 percent of the university budget. “Strategic cuts will be made one at a time as we are prepared to move,” Nielsen said. “Some of those cuts could take up to a year to implement.”

More job losses are possible because of those cuts, he added.

The UNC system’s Office of the President and Board of Governors will review the 5 percent budget reduction plan. “We are operating under the premise that this is the plan for the 5 percent reduction,” Nielsen said. “We have a plan, but the legislature could give us different reduction instructions.”

“The next thing to watch for is the House budget, which will be developed based on tax revenues,” Nielsen said. “Once we know that, we’ll have a much better idea what the sideboards are on the budget discussions.”

Despite the cuts announced this week, the university remains strong, Nielsen said. “NC State is a valued part of our state, and North Carolina values education. We know that they are doing the best that they can at the state level.”
Math and Stats Building Dedication
NC State will formally dedicate its new mathematics and statistics building at 3:30 p.m. on Friday, May 1. Self-guided tours of the facility will be held from 3:30 p.m. until 4:15 p.m., when the official ceremony will begin. The building is located at 2311 Stinson Drive, at the former site of Riddick Hall. The 119,000 square foot building will house state-of-the-art classrooms, computer labs, tutorial centers and meeting and study space for students and faculty from NC State’s mathematics and statistics departments. A partnership with Cisco will improve digital communications for students by providing access to live and on-demand video content from anywhere on campus.

Plagiarism: Prevention, Detection, and Reporting
Concern about plagiarism is on the minds of many who are teaching courses at NC State. Plagiarism is the subject of an upcoming webinar and listserv discussion co-sponsored by the Office of Faculty Development and the Teaching, Learning, and Technology Roundtable (TLTR). This webinar consists of presentations by Dr. Henry Schaffer, Jamie Larsen, Daun Daemon, Carrie Larsen, and Paul Cousins. Many practical ideas and tools are included to assist your work with students. The webinar has already been taped and is available for viewing at any time at http://www.ncsu.edu/faculty-development/teach-learn/plagiarism.html. You can submit questions by e-mail by pressing the “envelope” button at the top of the screen. You can access links by pressing the “paper clip” button at the top of the screen. The listserv discussion runs through May 8. To join, visit http://www.ncsu.edu/ltlr. For more information, contact Nancy Fire at nancy_fire@ncsu.edu.

Arboretum Hosts Gala
The JC Raulston Arboretum will hold its annual Gala in the Garden on Sunday, May 3, from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. The theme of this year’s event is “An Enchanted Garden Party.” In addition to a silent auction, guests will enjoy live music by the Southern String Band and gourmet hors d’oeuvres, including a special dessert reception.

Gala tickets are $60. Proceeds from the event will benefit the JC Raulston Arboretum, a working research and teaching garden of NC State University. To purchase tickets, contact Anne Porter at 919-513-3826 or anne_porter@ncsu.edu. For more information about the JC Raulston Arboretum visit http://www.ncsu.edu/jcraulstonarboretum.

Faculty Invited to Symposium
NC State has been invited to attend a faculty workshop at UNC-Chapel Hill at no cost. The theme of this year’s Spring Teaching Symposium is, “Teaching Well in a Time of Serious Budget Restrictions.” The symposium is scheduled from 9 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. on May 11. For more details and to register, visit: http://cfe.unc.edu/budget_restrict_agenda.html.

Wolf Pack N Go Sale
The large exodus of resident students can yield a massive amount of unwanted materials. The purge of materials is why University Housing and NCSU Waste Reduction and Recycling are collaborating for another “Wolf Pack n Go Sale” on May 15 at the E.S. King Village Community Center. The sale starts at 8 a.m and goes until 6 p.m. This is the fourth annual event where donated items left by students are picked up, stored, and sold to the public. All money collected from the sale will go toward environmental education.

Volunteers are needed for Tuesday (9 a.m. to 2 p.m.), Wednesday (6 a.m. to 7 p.m.), and Thursday (8 a.m. to 11 p.m.) shifts. All state employees are invited to use their Community Service Leave to volunteer. Beginning May 12, staff and faculty can also donate items in resalable condition at the donaton site, located in the lobby of the E.S. King Village office.

Young Writers’ Workshop
The Young Writers’ Workshop, sponsored by the NC State College of Humanities and Social Sciences and the Department of English, is a two-week, non-residential summer camp conducted in June with daily afternoon sessions to help young people develop their creative writing talents. The workshop is open to students who will enter the fourth through eighth grades in the fall. Tuition is $200 and the registration deadline is Friday, May 15. For more information, visit http://english.chass.ncsu.edu/youngwriters/youngwriters.html. A similar workshop for teens in the ninth through twelfth grades is held in July. Visit http://english.chass.ncsu.edu/youngwriters/teenwriters.html for more information.

Some Rhyme, Some Reason
Nationally recognized poets are coming to downtown Raleigh as part of a poetry reading series launched by English Department lecturers Chris Salerno and Chris Tonelli. The So and So Reading Series works in conjunction with the print journal the Raleigh Quarterly, which features work by the visiting poets, visual artists and others. Salerno and Tonelli not only run the reading series, but also serve as poetry editors for the Raleigh Quarterly.

The next reading will be held Saturday, May 16, at the Morning Times Cafe, and will feature poets Justin Marks, Kate Pringle and Chris Vitiello. More information is available at http://thesoandsoseries.blogspot.com.

DELTA Grants Available
Distance Education and Learning Technology Applications (DELTA) offers grants to support distance education initiatives at NC State. For eight years, DELTA’s Innovation in Distributed Education Application (IDEA) grants have provided funding and personnel support for the planning, design, and development of distance education courses and projects. Proposals can be submitted electronically at http://delta.ncsu.edu/ideagrant/. Proposals must be submitted no later than May 21 at 5 p.m.

Parking Reduced During Construction
As part of the Partners Way Deck Expansion project on Centennial Campus, approximately 40 spaces will be unavailable for parking until August (five on each of the floors).

Faculty and Staff Notes
Kessel Wins Nebula for ‘Pride and Prometheus’
As a fledgling science fiction author in the early 1980s, John Kessel got a boost when he won the prestigious Nebula Award for science fiction and fantasy writing. Twenty-six years and eight nominations later, the NC State English professor has done it again, taking home one of the most highly esteemed awards a science fiction author can receive.

Kessel won the Nebula Award for Best Novelette for “Pride and Prometheus,” a tale involving characters from Jane Austen’s “Pride and Prejudice” and Mary Shelley’s “Frankenstein.” “It’s a story about the difficulty of finding the proper mate,” Kessel says, “and how initial impressions are not always the most trustworthy.”

The award was presented April 25 in Los Angeles.

“For I have achieved overnight success,” Kessel says. “I believe I now hold the record, 26 years, for the length of time between winning my first Nebula and...
my second." He won his first Nebula for the novella “Another Orphan,” in 1982. The Nebula Awards are given to the best science fiction and fantasy novel, novella, novelette and short story, as voted on by active members of the Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America, Inc.

Kessel has also found success as a mentor to aspiring writers at NC State, where he teaches American literature and fiction writing. One of his students, Josh Eure, won this year’s highly coveted Dell Magazines Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Science Fiction and Fantasy Writing (formerly the Isaac Asimov Award).

Poultry Club Funds Flocks

The Poultry Science Club raised $2,000 to buy flocks of poultry for farmers in developing countries.

Club members, who had been collecting donations since last fall, gave their money to Heifer International, a charity that works to end hunger and poverty by providing livestock, including poultry, to small-scale farmers and communities, said Crystal Mitchell, the group’s treasurer.

Raising money for Heifer International was one of the club’s service projects. The club was named the top poultry science club in the nation during the International Poultry Expo in January.

Mexico Travel Canceled Because of Swine Flu

Following the advice of the U.S. State Department and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), NC State is restricting all official travel to Mexico because of an outbreak of H1N1 swine flu.

The State Department issued an alert for U.S. citizens of the health risks of travel to Mexico, and the CDC also issued a notice recommending that American citizens avoid all nonessential travel to Mexico. This travel alert expires July 27.

University officials recommend that if you’re returning from abroad, closely monitor your health for seven days. If you become ill with fever and other symptoms of swine flu, such as coughing, sore throat and possibly vomiting and diarrhea during this period, call your doctor or clinic for an appointment right away.

When you make the appointment, tell the doctor your symptoms, where you traveled and if you have had close contact with a person infected with swine flu.

As of Wednesday, there were no confirmed cases of swine flu on campus or confirmed cases in North Carolina. Check the university home page and student health services page regularly for updates.

Food Scientists Win National Award

The Institute of Food Technologists honored a team of NC State, federal and corporate scientists with an Industrial Achievement Award for a significant advance in applying food science to food production. NC State collaborated with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and Industrial Microwave Systems to develop continuous-flow microwave sterilization.

This type of food processing preserves quality and nutritional value in low-acid, shelf-stable foods. After several years of research and development with NC State and the USDA’s Agricultural Research Service, Yamco, a commercial food processor in Snow Hill, N.C., has built a facility to use patented technology to produce sweet potato puree.

NC State is the first university to win the award twice and only one of four universities to receive it in the 50 years it’s been given, according to Prabhat Kumar, a doctoral student in the Department of Food, Bioprocessing and Nutrition Sciences. NC State won in 1994 for developing ultra-pasteurized liquid whole eggs with an extended shelf life. The university has completed development work to enable preservation of berry purees, low-acid vegetable purees and multiphase products such as soups and sauces, the IFT Web site noted.

Lumberjack Falls Short of Final

Forestry student Logan Scarborough dominated the lumberjack competition at the Southeastern Conclave, missing an invitation to the championship by two points.

Scarborough, the favorite, finished first in three of four events: underhand chop, standing block chop and single buck. But he misjudged a cut in the fourth event, stock saw, earning no points. He was among seven competitors disqualified in that event.

ESPNU plans to air the competition in July as part of the Stihl TimberSports Collegiate Challenge. Winner Brad Sears of the University of Arkansas-Monticello will compete in June in Columbus, Ga.

Hill Honored for Post-Disaster Housing Design

David Hill, assistant professor of architecture, received one of four 2009 Faculty Design Awards from the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture (ACSA). The award, presented at the annual meeting in Portland last month, recognizes a post-disaster housing project that Hill completed with Professor Laura Garofalo of SUNY
Buffalo and Nelson Tang.

Hill and Don Kranbuehl, adjunct professor of architecture, also spoke at a recent meeting of the Construction Specifications Institute’s Raleigh/Durham chapter. They made a presentation on building information modeling and collaborative practice.

Campus 23rd in Recycling Contest
NC State finished 23rd in a national Recyclemania competition in its second year of participation. In the 10-week contest, NC State amassed 484,497 pounds of recyclables in the Gorilla Prize division for collecting the highest tonnage of recyclables, regardless of campus size.

For Landfill on the Lawn, one of the featured events, student volunteers compared trash from two residence halls: Lee, which has a trash chute, and the Honors Village, which does not.

“Sixty and 50 percent of the waste thrown into the dumpster was recyclable, reusable or compostable at Lee Residence Hall and the Honors Village, respectively,” said Analis Fulghum, education and outreach coordinator for Waste Reduction and Recycling. “We still have a lot of room for improvement.”

See Sculpture Class’ Work in Cary
Roofops peek from the ground at Cary’s Bond Park on High House Road. The sculptures – tips of six house roofs – are the creation of Dana Raymond, art and design associate professor, and his basic sculpture students. Class members were commissioned to design, build and install temporary public sculptures, which were installed for the Spring Daze Festival on April 25. The sculptures will remain on display for 30 days.

This commission is the third one in Raleigh’s surrounding communities for Raymond and his students during the past six years. The other two are permanent sculptures in Knightdale and Garner.

Students Invest Time in Training
Graduate students who completed two specialized training programs in teaching were recognized April 22.

Thirty-one students completed the Certificate of Accomplishment in Teaching and 18 took part in Preparing the Professoriate. Provost Larry Nielsen thanked them for devoting time to learning how to teach effectively. Nearly 70 of their colleagues, friends, family members, faculty and staff attended an ice cream social to celebrate.

Both programs are part of the Graduate School’s Preparing Future Leaders (PFL) initiative, designed to offer training, support, and professional development experiences for graduate students. More than 2,100 graduate students have taken professional development workshops and seminars since PFL was established in 2007, said Dr. Duane Larick, dean of the Graduate School.

Certificate of Accomplishment in Teaching recipients are Amit Awekar, Computer Science; Eric Bancroft, Mathematics; Erin Bancroft, Mathematics; Dr. Geoffrey Bell, Marine, Earth and Atmospheric Sciences; Steve Bernacki, Plant Biology; Karen Bliss, Mathematics; Christian Casper, Communication, Rhetoric and Digital Media; Jeff Dalton, Liberal Studies; Jeremy Green, Marine, Earth and Atmospheric Sciences; Janine Haugh, Mathematics; Andrea Hunt, Sociology and Anthropology; Brenda Johnson, Zoology; William Johnstone III, Zoology; Ali Kefeli, Industrial and Systems Engineering; Taylor Krohn, French; Lucas Layman, Computer Science; Louis Levy, Mathematics; Hosun Lim, Textiles; Brandon Mayes, Computer Science; Colleen Munro-Leighton, Chemistry; Kylie Parrotta, Sociology and Anthropology; Ryan Pekarek, Horticultural Science; Christin Phelps, Communication, Rhetoric and Digital Media; Brandon Puckett, Marine, Earth and Atmospheric Sciences; Leigh Samuel, Technical Communication; Scott Sink, Forestry; Derek Sollenberger, Computer Science; Summar Sparks, English; Stephanie Teixeira-Poit, Sociology and Anthropology; Lisa Tichavsky, Sociology and Anthropology; Robert Watson, Mathematics; Stacy Weiss, Curriculum and Instruction; and Li Yang, Industrial Engineering.

Preparing the Professoriate fellows are Ali Kefeli, Industrial and Systems Engineering; Alex Capaldi, Mathematics; Amy Gaffney, Communication, Rhetoric and Digital Media; Angela Shores, Counselor Education; Bilgen Yuncu, Civil, Construction and Environmental Engineering; Callie Prater, Entomology; Cary Rivard, Plant Pathology; David Padgett, Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering; Eric Tucker, Chemistry; Jessica Springer, Industrial and Systems Engineering; Joseph Burdis, Mathematics; Katie Liszewski, Mathematics; Mary Bridget Kustusch, Physics; Matthew Krachey, Zoology and Biomathematics; Michael Allocca, Mathematics; Dr. Shawn Holmes, Mathematics, Science, and Technology Education; Dr. Travis Breaux, Computer Science; and Tarek Aziz, Civil Engineering.

The Poultry Science Club’s donation will buy poultry for farmers in developing nations.
Staff members in the Employment Services department in Human Resources meet with every employee who is being laid off as a result of state-mandated budget reductions at the university. And even though the initial meetings take place under pretty stressful circumstances, they bring more than just a sympathetic ear to the table.

“We want them to know right from the start that they have a lot of support,” says Kathy Lambert, who heads the department. “We’re going to help them get through this. They will land on their feet.”

The university offers a comprehensive package of benefits when jobs are eliminated, including severance pay, extended insurance coverage, assistance with employment searches, even networking and support groups.

After the initial meeting, employees are invited to sit down with an employment consultant who helps them revise or create a resume, practice their interview techniques and begin planning their job search.

They also receive a detailed explanation of the benefits NC State provides employees who have been laid off as a result of a reduction in force:

- Severance pay based on years of service and age
- Re-employment priority for 12 months to state positions in agencies and universities
- Health insurance continuation for 12 months (if currently covered)
- Counseling services through the university’s employee assistance program
- Assistance with job searches, resumes, applications and practice interviews
- Meetings with a benefits consultant to discuss individual benefits and retirement options
- Classes on resume development, interviewing, effective networking and Web-based job searches
- Networking/support group meetings with other employees to share job-search tips and strategies

Lambert says the staff in Employment Services is working hard to provide valuable services and support in a difficult time. She notes with pride that NC State offers far more support than most private employers do.

“It’s not easy for the employees facing a job loss and it’s not easy for our staff,” she says. “But since we know we do so much good for them, that’s what helps us get through it.”

Research Specialist Jennifer Lowther, whose position in the genetics department was eliminated in March, found another job at the university shortly before the state of North Carolina placed a hiring freeze on many open positions through the end of the current fiscal year.

Lowther took advantage of many of the services offered through Employment Services, including assistance with her resume. And she attended several workshops, including classes on interviewing tips and networking.

Within weeks, she landed a job as a research specialist in the Department of Microbiology. The new job is a good fit for Lowther, who graduated with an undergraduate degree in microbiology from NC State in 2003.

“This job definitely matches with my background and I feel like I’m able to bring a lot more to the table,” she says.

While the situation was stressful for Lowther, she appreciates the assistance she received from the staff in Human Resources. “I’m very thankful for how incredibly supportive they were,” she says. “They were more than willing to help me.”

Jennifer Lowther has a new job in microbiology.