Holding Court

NC State gives an official welcome to Randy and Susan Woodson
Holding court at a pep rally in Reynolds Coliseum last night, Chancellor-elect Randy Woodson told a welcoming crush of faculty, staff, students and alumni that he’s no stranger to the historic arena. As a high school student in southern Arkansas, he spent hours in front of the television, watching basketball great David Thompson swoop in for alley oops back in 1974, the year NC State won its first national championship.

On Wednesday, standing on the court where Thompson played, Woodson and his wife Susan enjoyed the cheers, signs, marquee and 40-foot inflatable wolf celebrating their visit to campus. The new chancellor officially takes over the first week of April.

Woodson told his new team that NC State combines a “glorious past with a bright future.”

He pledged to take the lead in recruiting and retaining star faculty who are key to the university’s ability to achieve its goals.

He urged faculty and staff to work together as one university, taking an interdisciplinary approach to solving problems, rather than operating as “silos” of separate colleges.

“University people need to work together to solve the great challenges,” he said.

He praised students’ work ethic. “They overachieve because faculty push them to do that,” he said.

As “the people’s university” and the institution with the most graduates in North Carolina, NC State has a responsibility to more than 170,000 alumni, Woodson said.

“Our job is to make sure the diploma they have on the wall continues to grow in value.”

He noted that Erskine Bowles, UNC system president, has called
NC State, the most important university in the state.

Woodson said that Centennial Campus, which existed only in the minds of visionaries 25 years ago, serves as an “outstanding example of what a dream can do at a university.”

As a land-grant university serving all 100 North Carolina counties, “our relationship with the people of North Carolina is paramount,” Woodson said. He promised to undertake a learning and listening tour to get better acquainted with the people and culture of the state.

As one of the premier land-grant universities, NC State has the power to shape the future of North Carolina, the region, the nation and world, Woodson said.

Back in high school, he also studied Latin, which enabled him to translate the state’s motto, esse quam videri: “to be rather than to seem to be.”

The motto also applies to the university, which will be considered great, “not because people say so but because we are,” he said.

Following the chancellor-elect’s remarks, the Woodsons greeted hundreds of well-wishers who stood in line to shake their hands and welcome them to NC State.

“I thought it was great,” said Steve Carlton, Staff Senate chair, as he waited in the line that snaked through the coliseum. “Having been on the chancellor search committee, I’ve listened to the chancellor before and some of his comments and they seemed right on point. He’s everything we expected.”

Jim Flowers, head of the Department of Agricultural and Extension Education, agreed.

“He’s right on, he was wonderful,” he said. “He recognized NC State’s heritage and looked toward the future as a land-grant institution. I think he has a great vision for NC State and the experience to make it happen.”
Peace Corps Director
Aaron S. Williams, Peace Corps director, will give a campus presentation at 6 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 18, in SAS Hall, Room 2235. Volunteers, prospective applicants, students and faculty are invited to attend. A reception will follow.

Into the Woods
Cockeyed characters in a fractured fairy tale delight audiences in this favorite musical. What begins as a lively irreverent fantasy in the style of The Princess Bride becomes a moving lesson about community responsibility and the stories we tell our children. Performances run Feb. 18-21 in Stewart Theatre. Showtime is 8 p.m. except for a 3 p.m. matinee performance on Sunday, Feb. 21. Some material may not be suitable for young children.

Obligation to Govern
Ekow Yankah, from the Cardozo School of Law at Yeshiva University will give a talk titled “Obligation to Govern and the State of Terror,” at 4:30 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 18, in Daniels Hall, Room 218.

Diversity Film Series: Part II
The Staff Senate Diversity Committee will be showing the remainder of the film “What’s Race Got To Do With It?” at 12:15 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 19, in the Monteith Engineering Research Center, Room 313.

Polar Plunge and 5K
We double dog dare you to dive into the chilly waters of Lake Raleigh in the Campus Police Department’s Polar Plunge to benefit the Special Olympics. Gather your co-workers and friends for the wintry leap at 11 a.m. on Saturday, Feb. 20, on Centennial Campus. Those who are less adventurous but more athletic can tackle the 5K run, which begins at 9 a.m. Costumes are encouraged. For details, registration and a video of last year’s plunge, visit http://www.ncstatepolarplunge.com.

Campus MovieFest
Mark your calendars for Campus MovieFest, an annual competition that provides students with equipment and technical assistance to make short videos. Winners will be announced at the campus cinema in the Witherspoon Student Center on the evening of Sunday, Feb. 21. The event is sponsored by the Union Activities Board, Housing, the IRB, DELTA, and the NCSU Libraries. Watch past award-winning films from other universities and find out more information at Campus MovieFest. To get involved as a volunteer or for other questions, contact Rick Gardner at 515-5168.

Plastic Fantastic Author
Eugenie Samuel Reich, author of Plastic Fantastic: How the Biggest Fraud in Physics Shook the Scientific World, will speak at 4 p.m. on Monday, Feb. 22, in Riddick Hall, Room 301. Registration is required at https://gsoars.acsad.ncsu.edu/pds.

Neighborhood Schools and Busing
The College of Education has organized a panel discussion, “Neighborhood Schools and Busing: The Changing Face of Our Public Schools,” at 4:30 p.m. on Monday, Feb. 22, in Poe Hall, Room 216.

Health Care Reform
Jonathan Cohn, author, journalist and health care expert, will give a public lecture on health care reform and American values, at 7:30 p.m. on Monday, Feb. 22, in Mann Hall, Room 216.

Concert Band Invitational
The university Wind Ensemble, directed by Dr. Paul Garcia, will host two high school bands, the Cedar Ridge High School Wind Symphony from Hillsborough and Scotland High School Symphonic Band from Laurinburg, at the Concert Band Invitational at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 23, in Stewart Theatre. Tickets are $8 for faculty and staff and $5 for NC State students. For more information, visit http://www.ncsu.edu/music.

Wachovia Executive Lecture
John J. Brennan, chairman emeritus and senior adviser to the Vanguard Group, one of the world’s largest investment management companies, will give a Wachovia Executive Lecture at 4:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Feb. 24, in the Nelson Hall auditorium. The College of Management series offers professional insight for students, the campus community and business leaders. There is no charge and no registration is required. Parking is available in the Dan Allen parking deck.

Music of China
The Price Music Center Lecture Series presents traditional and contemporary Chinese music at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, Feb. 24, in Titmus Theatre. Hsiao-mei Ku of the Duke Music Department and Jennifer Chang will perform traditional and contemporary pieces on violin and guzheng—a Chinese plucked zither. The program includes the world premiere of Mark Kuss’s “Sounds. Distant.” Tickets are $8 for faculty and staff and $5 for NC State students. For details, visit http://www.ncsu.edu/music.

Shaw Lecture: Homeland Security Research
NC State’s Shaw Lecture will feature a U.S. Department of Homeland Security research leader. Dr. Mary Ellen Hynes, director of research for the Infrastructure Geophysical Division in the Science and Technology Directorate, will speak at 1:30 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 25, in Mann Hall, Room 216. Her presentation, “Extreme Loading of Critical Infrastructure,” is sponsored by the Department of Civil, Construction and Environmental Engineering. The event is free but space is limited. Contact the department at 515-2331 for more information.

Kidstuff Series
Kids and kids at heart can enjoy a stage version of Eric Carle’s illustrated children’s books. Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia will perform an imaginative black light adaptation of The Very Hungry Caterpillar, Little Cloud and The Mixed-Up Chameleon at 11 a.m. on Saturday, Feb. 27, in Stewart Theatre. For details, visit Arts NC State.

The Bachs
Meet the Bachs – Johann Sebastian, Carl Philipp Emanuel, Wilhelm Friedemann, Johann Christian and Johannes Bernard – with the Raleigh Civic Chamber Orchestra. The famous family of composers takes center stage at 4 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 28, in the Talley Student Center ballroom. Tickets are $8 for faculty and staff and $5 for NC State students. For details, go to http://www.raleighcivicorchestra.org.

Digital Humanities Symposium
Three national experts in digital humanities will speak March 1-2 in a public symposium sponsored by the English department. Gain insights into the digital humanities, discuss sponsored grant opportunities, hear about some of your colleagues’ current projects and examine approaches to integrating the digital humanities into graduate and undergraduate curricula. Featured speakers are Jerome J. McGann from the University of Virginia, John Unsworth from the University of Illinois and Katherine Hayles from Duke University. For details, visit the event site.
Race, Gender and Age Disparities in the American Health Care System

Learn about disparities in health care access and outcomes during this panel discussion at 3:30 p.m. on Wednesday, March 3, in Mann Hall, Room 323. Panelists will identify particular challenges that confront different groups within our health care system and, when possible, offer practical ways to address these disparities. The panelists are Dr. Jason Allaire, associate professor, Department of Psychology; Dr. Alvin Headen Jr., associate professor, Department of Economics; Dr. James Kwanuka-Tondo, associate professor, Department of Communication; and Dr. Maxine Thompson, associate professor, Department of Sociology and Anthropology.

Faculty and Staff Notes

Felder To Be Honored
Dr. Richard M. Felder, the Hoechst Celanese Professor Emeritus in the Department of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering, will receive an honorary doctorate of engineering in May from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign for his contributions to engineering and science education.

Felder has lobbied for more effective teaching methods in engineering and science, publishing more than 200 articles in the field. He co-directs the American Society for Engineering Education National Effective Teaching Institute and regularly conducts teaching effectiveness workshops at universities around the world.

His textbook, Elementary Principles of Chemical Processes, co-written with former NC State professor Ronald Rousseau, was named in 2008 to the list of Groundbreaking Chemical Engineering Books by the American Institute of Chemical Engineers at its centennial celebration. Felder holds a Ph.D. in chemical engineering from Princeton University.

Roise Wins Service Award
Dr. Joseph P. Roise, professor of forestry in the Department of Forestry and Environmental Resources, received the Appalachian Society of American Foresters’ 2009 Distinguished Service to Forestry award at the society’s annual meeting in Greenville, N.C.

Kaltofen Named Computing Fellow
Dr. Erich Kaltofen, professor of mathematics, has been selected as a fellow of the Association for Computing Machinery, the world’s largest educational and scientific computing society. He was selected for contributions to symbolic and algebraic computation, algebraic algorithms and complexity theory.

Kaltofen earned a B.S. in technical mathematics from Austria’s Johannes Kepler Universithis and M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in computer science from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. He joined the NC State faculty in 1995.

University Awards for Excellence Open
Nominations are open for the 2010 University Awards for Excellence. Each year, units and colleges honor up to 48 employees who do not hold faculty rank. A committee selects five university-level winners from that group to be considered for the Governor’s Awards for Excellence.

College and unit award winners receive eight hours of time off and a $250 check. University-level winners are granted an additional eight hours of time off and an additional $250. To find out how to nominate an outstanding colleague, read the awards guidelines. Contact the coordinator for your unit for deadline information.

Check Your Paycheck
Please take time to review and verify your benefits deductions in your first paycheck of the year. You can review your payroll deductions online through MyPack Portal. Log in with your unity ID and password, then click on Employee Self Service. Under Payroll and Compensation, click on View Paycheck. If you find errors, omissions or issues with your benefits deductions, contact your assigned benefits consultant.

Brashear Leads Education Group
Elizabeth Brashear, coordinator of Cooperative Education, is serving as president of the North Carolina Cooperative Education Association. The association includes members from industry, community colleges, and four-year colleges and universities.

Crossley Elected to Honor Society
Michelle Crossley, academic adviser in First Year College, has been elected to Chi Sigma Iota, the international honor society for professional counselors, counselor educators and counseling students. Crossley is the 2009-10 treasurer for the Nu Sigma Chi chapter at NC State.

Esperanza Spalding
Bassist/vocalist/composer Esperanza Spalding appears in concert in Stewart Theatre at 8 p.m. Friday, March 5.

Armed with uncanny instrumental chops, a siren voice that spans three languages, and composing and arranging skills that weave together the best elements of the old-school with the progressive, this 24-year-old is taking the jazz world by storm. Call 515-1100 for ticket info.

Bulletin

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Editor: D’Lyn Ford
5 Questions with Dr. John Vandenbergh
A renowned biology professor explains how chemicals affect our bodies.

Article by Mick Kulikowski

This week at the world’s largest and most important scientific conference, two NC State faculty members will discuss the effects of “hormone mimics” or endocrine disruptors on human and animal health, fertility and puberty.

Dr. John Vandenbergh, professor emeritus of biology, and Dr. Heather Patisaul, assistant professor of biology, both study endocrine disruptors like soy products and a compound in plastics called Bisphenol-A (BPA). BPA is a chemical found in baby bottles, water bottles, canned foods and an array of other consumer products.

Vandenbergh organized a symposium, “Consequences of Endocrine Disrupting Agents in the Laboratory and Home,” on Saturday during the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, in San Diego. Before he left for the conference, we asked him for an overview of the research.

1. What does most of the scientific evidence say about the effects of endocrine disruptors?

The preponderance of scientific evidence says that, for an adult to have low exposure to BPA, we can’t say that it’s extremely harmful. Our bodies are pretty well developed and the doses are pretty low. Plus our livers are good at detoxifying things. But they’re no good at it during fetal development.

I served on the national toxicology panel, an expert panel on the risks of BPA. We concluded in 2008 that there was “some” concern over exposure of fetuses and newborn infants to BPA for brain and behavior changes. We also pulled from hundreds of studies eight important scientific papers that showed fetuses and newborns were susceptible to effects from BPA. The result is that the six major plastic baby bottle manufacturers started producing baby bottles that were free of BPA. The states of California and Minnesota have banned BPA. Canada has placed BPA on a banned substance list. The European Union is re-exploring the BPA issue.

I work with organizations to assess ways of helping protect the public (from the potential harm) of endocrine disruptors. A bill on protecting the American people from endocrine disruptors has been introduced in both the Senate and the House. We estimate that about $64 million in funds is needed to do the research necessary to fully answer your question.

2. Have you or your family made any lifestyle changes (avoiding soy products or drinking from plastic bottles) due to the research on endocrine disruptors?

Absolutely. In my family, we use the microwave, but only with glass or ceramics, and never with plastic wrap to cover food. I love plastics; they’re a very important part of our world. The biggest problem with food in the world is microbial contamination. Plastics play a big role in protecting us from microbial contamination – look at meat at the grocery store, for example.

3. Do you have other scientific interests?

One of the concerns I have as a scientist is how we’re using animals in research. I’m a trustee for an organization called SCAW – Scientists Center for Animal Welfare. It is really interested in helping scientists do good research, but use as few animals as possible. We would like to see more targeted work, started by biochemical and cell-based tests on chemical compounds to pick out which most likely to require animal testing. I think it’s very clear that we have to do that animal testing, but if we’re going to do it, let’s do it with as few compounds as necessary with the right doses so we can use as few animals as necessary.

4. Shouldn’t a retired professor be taking it easy on some beach instead of organizing symposia?

I’ve been blessed with robust health and a supportive family. But the time since the discovery of DNA has been one of the most exciting times in biology. I can’t back away from something as exciting as biology is today. I’m not doing hands-on things, but I read the literature and have been invited to serve on a number panels and programs to help make some of the decisions as it relates to the future of this field.

5. On the lighter side, are you bringing your surfboard and “hanging 10” while you’re in San Diego?

[Laughs] No, this will be a short, work-filled meeting. I’ll attend a few of the other sessions. I arrive in San Diego on Friday (Feb. 19) and come back home on Sunday (Feb. 21).