UNC Charlotte planning for early college high school

Plans are under way to open an early college high school on the UNC Charlotte campus starting in fall 2014. It will be the first of its kind in Mecklenburg County for an innovative educational concept that has been growing in popularity across North Carolina.

Michele Howard, former dean of students, is the University’s director of Early College Programs and liaison to Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. The new high school will focus on STEM — science, technology, engineering and math — education, with a specific emphasis on energy.

“Charlotte is a major energy hub in the country so the identification and cultivation of future engineers is vital to our continued prominence in this area,” Howard said. “The investment of time and resources in this STEM school not only benefits CMS and the University but will also impact the city, state and region by increasing interest in the STEM disciplines and cultivating future engineering professionals.”

In early college high schools, students take a variety of required high school classes and tuition-free college courses. Once necessary approvals have been received, the new school would be housed near the Energy Production and Infrastructure Center on the Charlotte Research Institute portion of campus.

EPIC opened in a new $76 million facility in 2012, with a mission to produce the next generation of engineers and other workers for the region’s expanding energy-industry cluster. It has received financial backing from a number of energy giants, including Duke Energy, Siemens, Westinghouse and Areva.

The early college high school, a joint partnership between the University and Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, must be approved by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School Board as well as the State Board of Education and the UNC Board of Governors.

“This is the first early college program for Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, and we are very enthusiastic that UNC Charlotte is partnering with us to bring this unique opportunity to Charlotte-Mecklenburg students,” said Akeshia Craven-Howard, executive director of transformation for CMS. “The CMS and UNC Charlotte partnership will help to increase access to college as well as intentional exposure to career pathways in the engineering and energy sectors.”

For UNC Charlotte, the school will become a research and professional development site for STEM education and teacher preparation. It will feature a five-year curriculum that will enable students to earn their high school diploma and up to two years of transferrable college credit.

Howard said the timing is ideal for opening the school on the campus.

“There are more early college high schools in North Carolina than in any other state in the country,” she said. “We are certainly the leaders in this category.” — Paul Nowell

inside.uncc.edu

University’s Accreditation Formally Reaffirmed

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) has officially reaffirmed UNC Charlotte’s accreditation.

As a member of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, the University must complete the Reaffirmation of Accreditation process every 10 years to ensure it maintains compliance with SACS policies and standards. According to its website, SACSCOC is the “recognized regional accrediting body in 11 Southern states for those higher education institutions that award associate, baccalaureate, master’s or doctoral degrees.”

Accreditation is voluntary, but it plays a significant role in public perception of and confidence in the University, its academic degrees and programming and reputation, said Christine Robinson, executive director of the Office of Assessment and Accreditation. She led the University’s

Accreditation, continued on page 2

— CONTENTS —

Niner Choice Program ................. 2
Student Feature ...................... 3
Transitions .......................... 3
Surviving Spring Break ............ 4
Parent Feature ....................... 5
Academic Affairs Corner ........... 6
Staff Spotlight ....................... 6
Upcoming Events .................... 7
As the season slowly changes and trees regain their foliage, parents and students will begin to think about the next academic year. Common questions to ask are: Which classes should I take? Where do I want to live? Who do I want room with? And what’s my budget? When considering where to live, the most important question students and parents must consider will be: Is where I’m living safe?

As students begin to search for off-campus housing this spring, UNC Charlotte Off-Campus Outreach will be unveiling a new initiative called Niner Choice.

The Niner Choice Program is a taskforce between UNC Charlotte, the Office of Off-Campus Student Outreach and the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department. The goals of the Niner Choice Program are to promote increased security measures in University Area apartment communities, to increase relationships and communication between off-campus apartments and the University, to help students and their families make informed decisions regarding off-campus living options by providing them with criteria to consider, and to educate the apartment managers on how to make their properties as safe as possible for students.

To be a part of the Niner Choice Program, each apartment community will have to meet security requirements that have been set by the taskforce. The two standard levels for this program are the green and gold standard designations. A green standard will indicate the property meets the standard for safety and security. These include student only units, a peephole at each front door, dead bolt locks on exterior doors with three inch screws, windows are in working order and the apartment has a working smoke detector. In addition, each building number will be visible from the street and will have sufficient and reasonable lighting in all areas of the property.

The gold standard means the property exceeds the standard for safety and security. Gold standard properties will meet all of the requirements for the green standard and 5 out of the 10 additional requirements, including solid core doors if leased by the bedroom, high security strike plates on exterior doors, self-closing and locking front doors, lock and door re-enforcements, licensed and insured security company, fence surrounding the property, vehicle gate, blue light phones, surveillance camera and an alarm installed in each unit.

By providing these standards, we are hoping to provide students with an environment off-campus that is both safe and enjoyable as they matriculate through their college experience. As you search for housing, please ask the apartment manager if the property is green standard or gold standard. For more information, check out our Off Campus Outreach website at offcampushousing.uncc.edu.

Sean Langley
Assistant Director for Off Campus and Volunteer Outreach

Accreditation continued from page 1

Reaffirmation of Accreditation efforts and worked collaboratively with colleagues from across the campus to complete the rigorous reaffirmation process. Earlier in 2013, a SACS accreditation team conducted an on-site visit and met with University leaders. The team also reviewed the University’s Quality Enhancement Plan “Prospect for Success” and called the work “incredible.”

The QEP is a comprehensive plan to infuse freshman curriculum with tactics aimed at enhancing students’ engagement in the UNC Charlotte experience, from their first days on campus, in order to improve learning and graduation.

~Taken from uncc.edu
A Leader beyond the classroom

ROBERT G. VALDERRAMA

Five Months until he must enter the real world. Five months until he’ll lose his precious declining balance. Five months until he becomes a UNC Charlotte alumnus.

Thirteen weeks is what senior Rob Valderrama has left in his undergraduate career. Valderrama is graduating in May with a degree in exercise science. He has accomplished many things this year, and his proudest is becoming senior class president. Valderrama is the first Latino senior class president. Being the first meant a lot to him because he saw this as a turning point for minority figures to be more involved in student government.

Along with being senior class president Valderrama is currently the student coordinator for Latino student services, alumni relations chair for Lambda Theta Phi Latin Fraternity Inc. and an intern for the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life. These leadership positions gave Valderrama the opportunity to visit Kingston University in London with UNC Charlotte faculty and staff. This trip opened his mind to new areas of thinking. He was moved by the passion for education reform in Europe and not just the United States. He decided that he wants to get his degree in education. The University of South Carolina and Clemson University are two graduate schools where he would like to study and obtain an internship with a branch of student affairs.

Deciding what to study was the easy part of his senior year, but there were a few challenges that are on his road. Learning how to apply for graduate school and preparing for the GRE (graduate record examination), a test that most schools require students to take if they want to enter a master’s program. The uncertainty of not knowing what you are going to be doing in the next four months. The transition from an undergraduate program to a master’s program is much like the transition from high school to college. You are a freshman again trying to navigate your way through this new system of standards and social norms. You’re nervous about the workload, and you’re unsure if you can balance everything. Valderrama has a plan to deal with these challenges. When asked what the five most important things he’s learned at UNC Charlotte he said: how to be a leader; how to use his time wisely; academic excellence is key; to give back to the community; and how to use his personality for networking.

With the skills he learned at UNC Charlotte, Valderrama is sure to be a success wherever his endeavors may lead him. The Dean of students Office is proud to have Valderrama apart of the student staff and wishes you the best of luck.

— Jadora Ross

Now is the time to encourage your student to get an internship

As a member of the Niner Nation Family, you were likely very aware of the excitement and challenges of your student’s transition to college life. Everything is new: registering, declaring majors, meeting roommates, and finding one specific classroom across a 1,000-acre campus. A lot of planning goes into this major life change, with discussions and preparation perhaps spanning years in advance.

The transition out of college should come with just as much planning. The UNC Charlotte University Career Center is available to students from the moment they arrive on campus through graduation and even into their time as alumni. But students shouldn’t wait to visit the UCC. Thinking about career planning your final months of college would be like asking your high school guidance counselor in April of your senior year what courses you should take to get into a good college.

This is where the Niner Nation Family can help. Encourage the student in your life to being planning now for post-college success by inquiring about budding interests and supporting exploration of opportunities to build skills and test careers through experiential learning.

One of the best ways for a student to gain hands-on experience in a career and to take a small step into the professional world is through an internship. Not only does an internship help a student better understand his or her skills and interests, but it also helps build a strong career plan. It’s one more step toward making your student more attractive to future employers after graduation. Most employers expect to see at least one — but preferably two — internships on a candidate’s resume. Many organizations look first in their intern pool when hiring full-time employees.

UNC Charlotte students now have one more option when it comes to internships. It’s called the University Professional Internship Program, and it provides opportunities for full-time sophomores, juniors, and seniors to work under an on-campus mentor while earning academic credit and earning $10/hour. Students can explore possible careers, test real-life skills and build professional knowledge and competencies without leaving campus. UPIP assignments are 10 to 15 hours per week for a fall or spring semester, or up to 40 hours per week in the summer.

UPIP opportunities exist across a spectrum of disciplines and departments, including the Urban Institute, the Budget Office, Athletic Media Relations, Student Activities, Human Resources, Marketing, the IDEAS Center and various academic departments including Civil and Environmental Engineering, Computer Science, and Geography.
The Niner Nation Family enjoys spring break just as much as UNC Charlotte students do but are also just as concerned with safety and security as their parents are. This year, we compiled a list of tips and reminders for your students as they plan and partake in their spring break adventures:

PLANNING
When planning spring break, please advise your students to consider the hazards associated with their destinations. Popular spring break locations include Panama City Beach and Miami, Fla. Cancun, Mexico and the Bahamas. Local travel agents are able to assist in the reservations and the discounts, but by planning through advertised student travel agencies like Student City (www.studentcity.com), your child is guaranteed to be grouped with other students his or her age and have a tour operator nearby to help out when needed. If a passport is required, make reservations to apply in advanced and allow ample time for arrival. According to the US State Department, the average time to get a passport processed and returned by mail is four to six weeks.

PACKING
When most students picture their spring break, it’s in a warm tropical setting with abundant sunshine. What they may forget is that spring break is the first week of March, still in the winter season and most places are still very chilly. Remember to pack for a wide variety of weather conditions. Bring a coat and a pair of comfortable shoes no matter where you plan to go. Sunscreen, aloe vera, medications, and shampoo are amongst the most forgotten items when traveling. Remind your students to make room for these items. If they’re flying, make sure to visit the Transportation Security Administration’s website — www.tsa.gov — to get updated information on what is allowed in carry-on luggage.

TRAVELING
No matter where your student is going and by what means, make sure they are traveling during the daylight hours and with people they know. If driving, ensure that your student receives a proper routine car check-up and is aware of the driving laws the states they’ll be visiting. If flying or taking other forms of transportation, ensure that your student has the proper documentation and is aware of all travel regulations.

PARTYING
So let’s face it. While on spring break, your student may partake in some drinking or partying. While it may be a difficult subject to broach, it’s important for them to know to remain hydrated and never attend a party without a friend. Encourage them to use the buddy system so no one is left alone or separated from their group. Make sure they know to choose a designated driver for the night before leaving for the bars or parties. Explain the signs of alcohol poisoning and the side effects of common “date rape” drugs. And discuss the importance of safe sex. UNC Charlotte’s Student Health Center provides free information and materials on these subjects to all students.

ALTERNATIVE SPRING BREAKS
Your student might be spending his or her spring break differently. UNC Charlotte offers several types of alternate spring breaks where students partake in mission trips and philanthropy around the world. The Off Campus and Volunteer Outreach and education abroad office offer several options students may want to consider. Many alternative spring breaks are partnered with spring academic courses and require advanced enrollment.

The Dean of Students Office Volunteer Outreach department also offers several alternative spring breaks throughout the United States. Alternative spring break is a unique service-learning experience where students engage the community. In March, 37 UNC Charlotte students and five chaperones will travel to St. Carneys Point, New Jersey,
**PARENT FEATURE**

**Being a 49er was always in my Son’s Heart**

**Sherri Beckwith-Smith, Mother of freshman, Clark Beckwith**

As our family was moving from Charlotte to Connecticut in 1997, my then 2-year-old son Clark wrote his name in chalk on the patio with the message “I’ll be back!” Fast forward two moves and 16 years later and guess what? He’s back! We now live in Atlanta and the search for colleges began in Clark’s junior year of high school. I suggested the University of Georgia and he said “how about UNC Charlotte?” I wanted to look at Georgia Southern and he said “I want to live in Charlotte.” Despite my many attempts at in-state tuition, my diehard Carolina fan wanted to go home. We visited UNC Charlotte for an open house and there was a little part of me that hoped he’d change his mind. He had never lived away from home before, and I wasn’t sure it was going to be everything he hoped it would be.

I was dead wrong. The campus looked gorgeous that weekend, talk of football was in the air and the staff was extremely friendly. Yep, he was going to be a 49er. The day his acceptance letter arrived in the mail was a day I will never forget. He actually gave me the letter and asked that I have it framed because it symbolized the beginning of his life as a Charlottean. UNC Charlotte is where he was headed and Charlotte is where he plans on staying.

Clark immediately joined a fraternity, Phi Sigma Kappa, and developed friendships with some amazing young men. An enthusiastic fan of all sports, he has attended every home football and basketball game and many soccer games, too. He even attends his classes. Clark is doing whatever it takes to make sure he gets to stay at UNC Charlotte through graduation. That’s one of the many benefits of sending your kids to UNCC – they don’t want to leave so they do what it takes to get the grades to stay!

We have been happy with every aspect of our UNC Charlotte experience. Clark’s professors have been very approachable, his dorm life is fun yet safe and he loves the food choices that come with the meal plans. The communication between the school and the parents is phenomenal. For this out of state mom, I truly feel that I’m getting my money’s worth.

**Spring Break continued from page 4**

Maryville, Tennessee and Mandeville, Louisiana. Foregoing the traditional spring break activities, the UNC Charlotte students and staff will volunteer their time in several communities from March 3-8. Volunteers will work each day from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. providing critical home repair to dilapidated homes, constructing new homes and working at the Habitat Restore. In addition to UNC Charlotte volunteers, there will be over 100 other students from Vanderbilt University, NC State University and the University of Massachusetts.

Each year, this trip has a tremendous impact on UNC Charlotte students and the communities they assist. As a result of the overwhelming success this trip, student participants are pursuing building homes in El Salvador next year.

**Internships continued from page 3**

Summer UPIP opportunities will be posted at www.career.uncc.edu beginning February 13. Students are invited to attend workshops with Dr. Carrie Silver, UPIP Program Manager, focusing on creating excellent application materials. Check career.uncc.edu/events for a full list of events or contact Dr. Silver directly at c.silver@uncc.edu.

No matter when you read this, now is the time to talk to your student about plans for the college-to-office transition. If your student has not yet considered an internship open the conversation today. A little career exploration today can help your student earn a dream job tomorrow.

– Carrie Silver, PhD, University Career Center

**COMMUNICATION**

We know you’ll likely spend the week your student is away on spring break biting your nails, cleaning the house to keep busy and worrying incessantly. If they are traveling abroad, communication could be difficult as phone coverage and Internet access may be spotty. It would be a good idea to speak with your student’s phone provider to find out if there will be additional charges for international calls and if there are plans available for those instances. Set up times to talk before they leave so you know when to expect calls, texts or emails. And know that while they’re away, they’ll be missing you just as much.

– Christina Nesbit

**The Collegiate Recovery Community at UNC Charlotte supports students in recovery from addiction.**

The CRC offers weekly 12-step meetings, peer support, seminar classes on recovery issues and eligibility for a $1,000 tuition scholarship if the student has a minimum of six months of sobriety and a GPA of 3.0 or higher.

Housing for students in recovery will be offered on campus starting fall 2014. Off-campus housing is currently available with community partner The Loft at Hope Homes. Please contact Carol Rose if interested in the CRC or for housing needs at crose3@uncc.edu or 704-687-0813.

The CRC is planning a 6K trail race at Reedy Creek Park on June 21st. For more information go to: [www.heroesinrecovery.com/heroes6k/charlotte-nc/](http://www.heroesinrecovery.com/heroes6k/charlotte-nc/)
Dear Parents and Family,

Joan F. Lorden  
Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

As your student begins to settle into his or her routine this semester, I want to encourage you to help them push their boundaries. We ask a lot of our students because we expect that the graduates of UNC Charlotte will go on to do great things and become leaders in our communities. We offer many opportunities for students to stretch their skills and explore new opportunities, but your encouragement always helps.

The poet William Butler Yeats once wrote “Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.” That fire began with you teaching them life's lessons. Now, it is up to us, the Niner Family, to nurture those flames.

We achieve this through a number of programs and activities aimed at engaging our students. One way we accomplish this is having undergraduates work one-on-one with professors to conduct original, independent research. This engages students in the process of discovery early in their academic careers, and allows them to make a contribution to any field of study from philosophy to physics, arts to aerospace, English to engineering.

This process builds confidence and character. Students who participate in research projects tend to do better in their majors and are more prepared to advance in their careers. Encourage your student to check out undergraduate research opportunities on campus and elsewhere.

Undergraduate Research Conference

Students can share what they've learned and the research they've conducted at the annual UNC Charlotte Undergraduate Research Conference (URC). At the URC, held at the J. Murrey Atkins Library on April 25 this year, undergraduates will have a chance to share their innovative and exciting research with their professors, peers and other members of the UNC Charlotte community.

Some student presentations reflect research conducted as part of a classroom assignment, others share findings resulting from senior honors thesis, while others still are the product of the one-on-one work with our faculty. The sum of this work demonstrates the diversity of research topics and methods conducted on campus, as well as the wealth of intelligence, creativity, and perseverance of the student body at UNC Charlotte.

Students’ oral and poster presentations are judged during the conference and prizes are awarded in the different fields of study. Students participating in the URC can also choose to compete for Honors College research awards, as well as for one of five $1,000 Atkins Library Undergraduate Research Awards.

This year’s URC will collaborate with the Sustainability Conference traditionally sponsored by the Levine Scholars Program. To highlight UNC Charlotte’s commitment to sustainability-related research, the URC will offer an additional award competition for all students whose research is related to economic, social or environmental sustainability. This multidisciplinary contest is for all sustainability-related presentations.

At UNC Charlotte, we believe in your student’s abilities and potential. We ask all of our students to always be intellectually curious. Pursuing undergraduate research opportunities at UNC Charlotte allows them to further develop the skills that will help them know where and how to find the answers to the stimulating questions of our time.

STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Sarah Jefferson

Patience, problem solving, multitasking and critical thinking are just a few qualities that it takes to work in student conduct at a university level. These qualities are exactly what Sarah Jefferson displays in her role as the assistant director for Student Conduct and Outreach at UNC Charlotte. Jefferson grew up in a small town in Ohio where she attended Bowling Green State University for her B.A. in liberal studies and continued her education there for her master's degree in college student personnel.

While Sarah was a student at Bowling Green State University she kept herself busy by spending time working in the women's center, helping women find the resources to pursue their goals. Based on her experiences in her undergraduate program, Sarah was inspired to pursue a degree in higher education. Along with a great experience being involved in activities at school, Sarah was lucky enough to have multiple key mentors who kept her motivated and inspired to pursue her career. During her time at BGSU, Sarah kept a close relationship with her academic advisor who helped keep her focused while pursuing her career. Sarah worked as a retention coordinator and academic advisor in the College of Arts and Sciences at BGSU before she came to UNC Charlotte.

When Sarah first arrived to UNC Charlotte she was an intern, and while working within this internship she was introduced to now Dean of Students Christine Davis. Working with Christine Davis sparked a new interest for Sarah: student conduct. Due to Sarah’s great experience at UNC Charlotte as an intern, she decided to accept a job and make her work full time here. Sarah spends a large portion of her time at work meeting with students about conduct issues. Her experiences while working at UNC Charlotte have helped her grow in many ways.

“"The job is more than I expected, I have grown immensely as a professional,” she said. “Every day I learn something new.” When Sarah isn't dealing with conduct issues she spends her time working on new ways to reach out to students on campus. Sarah’s office is located in the Dean of Students office where she is constantly interacting with students and new people. Her favorite part about being at UNC Charlotte is the people, and she is very proud to have the opportunity to be a 49er.

– Jennifer Jones
EVENTS AND EVENT LINKS

Feb. 19 - 27

Theatre: 4:48 Psychosis
7:30 p.m., Robinson Hall, Black Box Theater
College of Arts + Architecture event calendar and tickets

Wednesday Feb. 28

Music Recital: Baritone Emery Stephens
5:30 p.m. / Rowe Recital Hall
College of Arts + Architecture event calendar and tickets

Charlotte 49ers women's basketball vs. Florida International University
7 p.m. / Halton Arena
Ticket information

Friday, Feb. 28

A Queen and Her Crown - A celebration of natural hair exhibit
All day / Student Union – 2nd Floor Rotunda
Free

Charlotte 49ers softball vs. Stony Brook
1 p.m. / Phillips Softball Complex
Non-ticketed sports event; free during regular season

Charlotte 49ers softball vs. Liberty
3 p.m. / Phillips Softball Complex
Non-ticketed sports event; free during regular season

Charlotte 49ers Baseball vs. Creighton
4 p.m. / Robert & Mariam Hayes Stadium
Ticket information

Charlotte 49ers Men's Tennis vs. George Washington
12 p.m. / Halton – Wagner Tennis Complex
Non-ticketed sports event; free during regular season

Charlotte 49ers women's tennis vs. Florida International University
2 p.m. / Halton – Wagner Tennis Complex
Non-ticketed sports event; free during regular season