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Band Marches Through Flood of Adversity

How the “Spirit of the Carolinas” overcame hurricanes, injuries, and losing their practice field to continue to put on a show.



Flooding on their field has forced the marching band to improvise places to practice. Drone Photo by Michael Litty

By Sara Fox
Copy Editor

The UNC Pembroke “Spirit of the Carolinas” Marching Band has been a source of excitement at Braves football games since its founding in 2003. After over a decade of excellence, the UNCP Marching Band continues to bring music and school spirit to home football games with popular stand tunes and a thrilling new field show each year.

The band spends over 6 hours each week learning and perfecting their show, all leading up to halftime performances at each home football game. However, the spirited ensemble is not immune to adversity and has recently faced several

challenges following Hurricane Florence, as well as an injury resulting in the absence of their director, Marty Spitzer.

Hurricane Florence devastated North Carolina in September of 2018. The town of Pembroke felt the effects of the storm as it had not yet recovered from Hurricane Matthew, which hit in the Fall of the 2017. Much of UNCP's campus was flooded by Hurricane Florence's torrential rains, including the field at Pine Cottage where the Marching Band practices. The flooding also created ideal conditions for a mosquito breeding ground. Those obstacles would impact the band for the remainder of

their 2018 season, as they had to find a new field on which to rehearse. The solution was to split time with the football team and practice at the stadium once a week.

“Thankfully,” said Meggan Hollis, the band’s assistant director, “we have a good relationship with Athletics, and they allowed us to use the stadium on Mondays.” Although the band was grateful to have somewhere to practice, “it made it much more difficult for us to learn our drill” due to the limited amount of time that was able to be spent “doing the thing that makes us a marching band,” said Hollis.

It has also been difficult

for the Marching Band as they are currently preparing their show without their director, Marty Spitzer. Spitzer was unable to return for this season due to a leg injury obtained over the summer. The band’s interim director, Joseph Van Hassel, and Meggan Hollis have stepped up to direct the band in Spitzer's absence.

Hollis said that for her, the hardest part of Spitzer’s absence has been writing the entire drill on her own for the first time. “[Spitzer] has a lot of experience and tends to be pretty good at that...and I thought he was going to be sitting next to me and guiding me.”

From the perspective of the band members, it is

not always easy to adjust to change.

Amanda Holmes, a Senior trumpet player, said that the thing that has been the hardest about preparing without Mr. Spitzer is that she misses “his kindness and his encouragement.”

The UNCP “Spirit of the Carolinas” Marching Band is currently preparing their 2019 show entitled “Soul Train,” which features the songs “I Feel Good” and “Papa’s Got a Brand New Bag” by James Brown, “I’ll Be There” by Jackson 5, and “Proud Mary”, made famous by Ike and Tina Turner. The band will play at halftime during the next home football game on September 21 at 7 p.m.



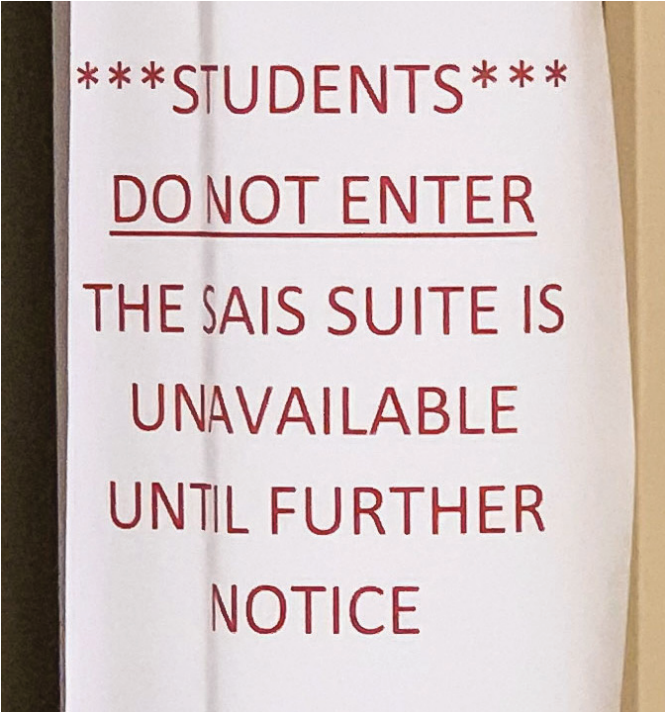
The band has altered its practice routine to adapt to the flood damage. PN/Photo by Jamal Pass.

Old Main Classes Disrupted by Contractor Noise and Odor

Last Wednesday, September 11, contractors began removing carpet in the American Indian Studies department in Old Main to make room for new carpet. When the renovations began, students and faculty began to notice strong odors and sounds that disrupted classes throughout the week. Here’s what we know so far:

- Some faculty in offices close to the AIS department left work for the day or moved to different locations.
- Contractors reported the odor came from a chemical used to remove the tile adhesive.
- An air quality test was ordered and executed on Thursday. The results returned all clear on Friday.
- The odors continued on Thursday.

The Pine Needle will continue with updates on this story in future editions.



The AIS suite was off-limits to students during the renovations. PN Photo/AlexisPolson

By: Sara Goldsberry
Managing Editor

This year, UNCP Housing and Residence Life launched its new First-Year Residential Experience Program. The FYRE Program is loosely based on the Residential Curriculum Model of years’ past but it differs in that it offers first-year students a cohesive outside of the classroom experience.

Through the FYRE Program, all freshmen students are encouraged to achieve, aspire, serve and engage in the same activities, experiences and events both on and off campus. As an incentive to participate in the FYRE Program, freshmen students who attend 15 or more

FYRE Program events will receive priority selection for housing next school year.

On August 17, 2019, the FYRE Program held its first FYRE Kickoff, which was an all-day event that featured several programs, activities, and food. Freshmen students picked up their free FYRE t-shirt and attended PLAYfair in the Main Gym.

“We have the support and the participation; we’ve been overwhelmed by it. That was what our hope was, that students would recognize this as an opportunity to create community among all the first-year students and to be excited about it,” said Cynthia Redfearn, Associate Director for Housing and Residence

Life. At least 430 students attended the event.

The FYRE Program, partnered with the Office of Community and Civic Engagement for a plan to host a service site for this year’s 9/11 Day of Service. Pembroke Rural Fire Department was scheduled as the primary site for the FYRE Program with the Garden & Apiary and Care Resource Center which would have been alternate sites. Due to the threat of Hurricane Dorian, the 9/11 Day of Service was canceled so that students could stay safe and serve their own communities by being available to clean up damages from the storm.

“Always, you have to be prepared for the unexpected, as with the 9/11

day of service. Obviously, we didn’t have any control over that, but we will do the best that we can to maintain the schedule as close as we can to what is currently scheduled,” said Cynthia Redfearn. Housing and Residence Life and the Office of Community and Civic Engagement are continuing to work together to try to find more service opportunities for students this semester.

The FYRE Program is well underway at this point and has already held events such as the FYRE Kickoff, Keep Calm and Schedule On, Lunch and Learn, and the Roommate Game. Redfearn said, “We feel good about this first year; we feel good about the product we developed,” said

Redfearn.

First-year students interested in volunteering can register on UNCP Serve. First-year students who volunteer at one of FYRE’s service opportunities will be one event closer to reaching their FYRE Freshmen 15 and receiving priority housing selection for next school year.

Students who want to get more involved in the FYRE Program can look for FYRE events on BraveConnect or check flyers posted around campus for the FYRE Program flame logo.

Any questions about the FYRE Program can be directed to Cynthia Redfearn at cynthia.redfearn@uncp.edu.

Carlos Orozco: The Struggle Of Life

By: Naveed Ahmed
Contributor

On a dark, late night in Chicago, he had decided to hang out with his cousin at a beach which was five blocks away from his cousin’s house. He never knew this night in the city would have larger impacts on his life, and would affect his future decisions.

“We were out in the city for two hours. All of a sudden, we could see police flashing lights, but fortunately they were looking for other people, and we were safe. On that night I saw people drinking, smoking and shouting violently on the roads which scared me. I was handicapped and roaming around the city in my wheelchair.”

“That was a moment when I realized, I should prefer to stay inside. It was precarious and I was nervous,” said Orozco.

Orozco is a student of philosophy at The University of North Carolina. For him life is a daily battle. Struggling to speak, he said that he can’t let his physical challenges get in his way.

“Being disabled is who I am. It is not what I am. It is a part of me whether I like it or not. I cannot change it, only try to change it. I am grateful for what I have got.”

Life was normal for Orozco until the age of ten. He did everything that an average kid could do. “I was totally normal, I could play basketball and soccer. Later I started noticing changes in me,” he explained.

He consulted a doctor about his deteriorating physical condition and was later referred to a neurologist in Chapel Hill who gave a genetic test.

The genetic test proved that Orozco had ninth chromosomes causing deterioration to his speech and muscles.

“At that time, it was a pretty new neurological disorder. One out of 50,000 people in the world suffer from it, and I was one of them.”



Carlos Orozco volunteers in the library and hopes to pursue a master’s in library sciences. PN/Photo by Naveed Ahmed

Orozco’s physical conditions worsened. He struggled to speak and move which confined him to a wheelchair ending his days of playing games. The challenge could not block his goals. He continued high school and graduated in 2013.

After graduation, he applied to The University of North Carolina and was selected. “I called the university and told them that I cannot join classes. They assured me to get back on campus whenever I wanted,” Orozco said.

His residence in Illinois was a battleground. Going outside and getting back to the house was difficult f as he lived on the second floor with his mom.

He moved to his aunt’s house in Indiana, but after three months, he returned to his mother’s residence.

“I was tired of staying inside and doing nothing,” said Orozco. Hoping for a normal life, he moved back to North Carolina.

Immediately, he was accepted at a handicapped accessible house. He was a physically challenged man placed with mentally challenged kids in a house where he found it hard to communicate.

“Being honest I am an introvert. I like to live alone and there is nothing

wrong in that. I am not mentally challenged. But, according to the state law, I fall under mentally challenged category due to a neurological disorder,” said Orozco.

Orozco started college at UNCP majoring in philosophy. He became interested in the subject after reading books on philosophy because he felt like he could connect to the authors through their analysis of questions.

For Orozco, the Accessibility Resource Center has been helpful, but he still hopes for more facilities on campus. “The

ramps should be wider, and on my way from apartment to academic block, there are some dust bins close to the ramps. They should be removed so I don’t need to squeeze,” Orozco suggests.

Orozco is a volunteer in the library at UNCP. “I want to work hardest, and it motivates me on daily basis. I want to do my master’s in library sciences. I love to read and working in the library is not physically demanding,” Orozco said.

In the future, he wants to transfer to UNC Chapel Hill to complete his bachelor’s degree in philosophy.

Take the Pine Needle “Bubble” Survey

Bubbling is the act of focusing on a cell phone or other electronic device while walking in public areas.

Many close pedestrian collisions and perhaps some unknown collisions have impacted this campus.

The Pine Needle will include the survey’s results in an article.

If you would like to be interviewed, contact Stephanie Sellers at sms069@bravemail.uncp.edu.

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This publication is available in alternative formats upon request. Please contact Accessibility Resource Center, DF Lowry Building.

Native American Speaker Series

Indigenous Language Expert Speaks at Pembroke

By Stephanie Sellers
Copy Editor

After a 16-year-long battle, Dr. Richard Grounds will finally participate in the 2019 Year of Indigenous Languages he had pleaded for with the United Nations.

Language is a central element that identifies a person’s heritage and loss of an indigenous language means that part of one’s heritage is lost. A person growing up knowing only English but identifies as Native American, is missing a large element of their heritage.

Learn more on Sept. 24 at 5:30 p.m. at the Museum of the Southeast American Indians at The University of North Carolina at Pembroke. Grounds will offer a presentation on his work as the Executive Director of the Euchee/ Yuchi Language Project. The presentation will include an introduction to the Yuchi language and introduce their traditional foods.

Based in Sapulpa, Oklahoma, Grounds works with Yuchi Elders in creating new fluent speakers using immersion language methods. The immersion method is using only the language to be learned in daily activities. That means, asking for needs to be met, permission to go outdoors to play, answering questions and having conversations. Children are the primary learners in the immersion language method.

The original immersion language program began with four fluent Yuchi speaking indigenous elders and is now a family-centered collaboration.

After completing his Ph.D. in the History of Religions at Princeton Theological Seminary, Dr. Grounds taught at St. Olaf College and in the Anthropology Department at the University of Tulsa. He is the chair of the Global Indigenous Languages Caucus and

served as the Expert for the North American Region at the Expert Meeting on Indigenous Languages.

On March 28, 2013, Grounds was awarded the Humanities in Education award from the Oklahoma Humanities Council. The Oklahoma Senate also presented a citation of recognition to Grounds.

On Sept. 10, 2019, Grounds agreed to an audiotaped interview, greeting and ending in the Yuchi language. Over the course of three separate conversations, the mystery of how languages can disappear evolved into a narrative on the historic reality of the outcome of culture dominance. As the dominant culture prevails,



Dr. Richard Grounds (far right) and family, following a Ribbon Dance at the Yuchi ceremonial ground. Submitted photo.

its language becomes the accepted language.

Approximately 6,500 languages exist in the world today and 97% of the world’s population speaks only 4% of these languages and only 3% speak 96% of the remaining languages. Most of these languages are spoken by indigenous peoples and will continue to disappear without intervention. With the loss of language, is loss

to preserve our gifts given to our peoples.”

The international Year of Indigenous Languages at the United Nations is to push recognition of native languages. “Our languages are in very big trouble. That is the result of the assault on our people and our culture, the assault from Europeans taking our properties and trying to stop our languages,” said Grounds.

Sociolinguistics study authored by Dr. Clare Dannenberg and Dr. Walt Wolfram “The Roots of the Lumbee Language” shares that “Language and dialectical differences that involve groups unequal in their power relations are typically subjected to the so-called language inferiority principle, in which the language of a socially subordinate group is perceived as linguistically unworthy as compared to the dominant group.”

Grounds was animate when speaking of the assault on indigenous peoples’ culture, “You know they implemented boarding school systems and took children from their homes. It was a very explicit attack on the children and the goal was to stop the children from learning from their elders.”

Grounds’ zeal continued into the subject of colonization of today’s indigenous youth and how to replenish native ways through awareness. He shared how their ancient traditional foods were lost

to colonization and how the European diet ideology has led to an increase in unhealthy eating habits among indigenous peoples.

Grounds expressed a desire to introduce indigenous foods to the general public to raise awareness of his culture.

“Unspoken: America’s Native American Boarding Schools,” a documentary film by the University of

Utah, Chief Sitting Bull is quoted as saying, “If the great spirit had wanted me to be a white man he would have done so.”

Grounds’ upcoming presentation is sponsored by the American Indian Studies Department’s Native American Speakers Series and the Teaching and Learning Center. Contact Dr. Jane Haladay for details at haladayj@uncp.edu.

...the language of a socially subordinate group is perceived as linguistically unworthy as compared to the dominant group.

of history and traditions.

“What our elders tell us is that our original languages were given to us from our creators. It is our central core that connects us to all our activities; dancing, festivities, ceremonies, and storytelling, history, traditional medicines, knowledge of the stars, the caring of plants, even how to live in a particular place,” said Grounds first in the Yuchi language, and repeated in English. “All of these are linked through our languages. In the big picture we feel like that by keeping our languages alive we are helping to protect and preserve our creator’s work and so in some real sense we feel like we are doing the creator’s business



Dr. Richard Grounds demonstrates “dâ” (ceder) to the daily toddler Yuchi language immersion class. Submitted photo.

In the battle of Dans, Bishop defeats McCready in District 9 Special Election

By Michael McGuinness
News Editor

In a battle for District 9 (which includes Robeson County), Republican Dan Bishop defeated Democrat Dan McCready and two others for the vacant seat. Bishop netted 50.7% of the vote, while McCready polled 48.7%.

While McCready tried to reach voters by running a campaign that stressed “country, not party,” he ran out of steam as the summer progressed. During the initial election in November 2018, McCready lead his Republican challenger, Mark Harris, by 15 percentage points in Robeson County. Yesterday, he took the county by a single point.

Bishop, a pro-Trump Republican, took Union, Cumberland, Richmond, and Bladen counties. Bishop’s victory gives Republicans 199 members in the House of Representatives, where

Democrats still have a 36-person majority.

The race was highly contested by both parties and not just at the state level. Both parties spent millions on the special election. According to Ballotpedia.org, McCready raised \$4,950,631 and Bishop raised \$1,954,335. McCready and the Democrats spent \$4,470,124 and Bishop spent \$1,761,558. While he was outraised and outspent, Bishop had one asset to fall back on—President Donald Trump.

Trump visited Fayetteville just before the election to drum up support for Bishop and was active on Twitter on his behalf as well. Pres. Trump endorsed Bishop early in the nomination cycle in January of this year.

The special election was being held because of organized voter fraud on behalf of the former Republican candidate, Mark Harris, who decided not to pursue the Republican nomination due to health concerns.



Democrat Dan McCready makes his way through the crowd at a rally for supporters on Feb. 22, 2019, in Waxhaw, N.C. McCready will be facing Sen. Dan Bishop in a special election in September. PN Photo/Jeff Siner

Cal State universities may up their college admissions requirements. But will that hurt low-income students?

By Nina Agrawal
Los Angeles Times

LOS ANGELES — As a high school freshman, Jennifer Velasquez worked every day after classes helping her mom sell elotes, raspados and tacos from a street cart in East Los Angeles. With rent to pay and siblings to support, they would often work late into the night, sometimes until 2 a.m. — and she would get only a few hours of sleep.

It’s why, in part, she failed Algebra I. She repeated the class her sophomore year, and then moved on junior and senior years to Geometry and Algebra II, determined to meet the requirements for admission to the California State University system. She was accepted to California State, Los Angeles, and, last month, Velasquez, 19, became the first in her family to attend college.

“It was difficult,” Velasquez said. “If I had to do four years of math, it would have been more difficult.”

Velasquez is among the students, parents, educators and Los Angeles school board members who are opposed to a proposal by Cal State University to require a fourth year of math, science or other quantitative high school coursework for admission, laying bare a tension between two imperatives in California education.

On the one hand, Cal State is seeking to raise standards and academic preparation for all high school students, especially in math. Yet this objective has become mired in a debate about disparities in educational access and quality that disproportionately harm high school students of color and those from low-income families in the state. Some fear that these students’ access to Cal State will diminish if the proposal is adopted.

“Black and Latinx students and low-income students can and do achieve at high levels,” said Elisha Smith Arrillaga, executive director of Education Trust-West, a nonprofit group focused on educational equity, at a recent hearing on the proposal. “But when we look at other facts, at data on access and on opportunity, it becomes clear that these students are also given barriers by our education system that limit their access to the teachers and to the courses that they need to attend college.”

The Cal State proposal would require incoming freshmen, beginning in 2026, to have taken four years of quantitative reasoning, which the university defines as “the ability to think and reason intelligently about measurement in the real world.” The board is scheduled to hear a formal proposal later this month and could vote on it as soon as November.

The requirement could be met by an additional year of math or science, an elective with quantitative content such as statistics or computer science, or some career and technical education courses. An exemption would be allowed for students who cannot meet the requirement because their school doesn’t offer a qualifying course.

James Minor, assistant vice chancellor, noted this isn’t the first time that controversial policies that try to improve student success and close equity gaps have been proposed. He cited the development of the “A-G” requirements, a sequence of 15 college-prep courses required for admission to the Cal States and UCs. More recently, Cal State decided to do away with non-credit remedial classes, after finding that they cost students more money and time, without being particularly effective.

“We think, by systematically raising the bar, we’re asking all of our students, regardless of what school district they go to, regardless of what neighborhood they live in, to arrive with more similar levels of preparation,” Minor said.

He also said that racial disparities in STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) fields can be traced directly back to high school, and the proposed requirement would help lessen those.

Cal State data show that students who enter their first year of college having taken an additional quantitative reasoning course are more likely to complete their general education math requirement, return for their second year and graduate. The data do not show a causal link, but Minor said the correlations are strong enough, across ethnic and income groups and over time, to guide policy making.

Overall, research shows that academic preparation in high school, including in math, is the strongest predictor of college success, said Michal Kurlaender, a professor of education at the University of California, Davis who researches educational pathways and access to college.

But it can be difficult to parse out how much of that success is a result of purely academic achievement, or of a host of other factors that enabled students’ preparation, such as a better school or home environment or stronger teachers.

Kurlaender said there is some evidence that when higher standards are put in place, schools can and do rise to the occasion. She said, however, there can also be unintended consequences in a statewide K-12 system, in which there are deep disparities in college readiness.

“The implications of a policy like this will not be evenly felt,”



At Roybal Learning Center in Los Angeles, Robert Montgomery, far right, teaches a “transition to college math and statistics” class to 12th graders. Taking an evaluation test are Willie Martinez, 17, left, and Bryan Lopez, 18, right. The course, developed in partnership with the CSU, includes review of essential math skills. PN Photo/Carolyn Cole

Kurlaender said. “They will be disproportionately targeting students who are less likely to be found in this pathway already.”

Those are Latinx students, black students, low-income students and students who attend schools where seniors don’t currently take math, according to a paper Kurlaender and her colleagues published last week.

Critics of the proposal argue that such findings are precisely the reason to reject such a requirement or, at least, slow down before adopting it.

Arrillaga, of Education Trust-West, pointed to state data showing that 8 out of 10 black and Latinx students in California do not meet math standards.

“For us to add a whole extra requirement that specifically focuses on math and quantitative reasoning ... means that there really needs to be a deep and serious plan in place,” Arrillaga said.

She said that plan should include identification of the districts that would be most impacted, a strategy for directing high-quality teachers to those schools, and metrics for evaluating progress in increasing course offerings at underresourced schools.

Across the region and state, educators are divided on the proposal.

At Roybal Learning Center downtown, Robert Montgomery teaches “Transition to College Mathematics and Statistics,” a course developed by the Los Angeles Unified School District in partnership with California State, Northridge as an alternative math class for 12th graders. The course includes review of essential math skills and hands-on, group-based problem solving.

One recent morning, Montgomery walked his 23 students through a lesson on

comparing risk. He put up a table on the slide projector that showed the frequency of lung cancer among smokers and non-smokers and asked his students, working in groups, to answer a series of questions about the data.

“You just need some very simple math ... It all has to do with that data table,” he told them.

Montgomery, who has taught math for 30 years, has long been a proponent of a fourth year of high school math. But, he said, “I got tired of the kids asking, ‘Are we ever going to use this?’”

One of his students, Kenia Zelaya, struggled in Algebra I, Geometry and, especially, Algebra II honors, in which she said she received a D grade.

“I used to love math, but when I got to high school I thought math was so hard,” the 17-year-old said.

That day in Montgomery’s class, though, Zelaya was the first to solve a math riddle involving a group of people crossing a bridge under a particular set of constraints.

“This is one of my favorites classes to come to,” she said.

The Los Angeles school board opposes the Cal State proposal, writing in a motion this summer that the requirement would further exacerbate access barriers for students of color and low-income students, who make up the majority of the district. The district currently only requires three years of high school math to graduate. Leaders in the Anaheim, Sacramento and San Francisco public school districts have also opposed the proposal.

Los Angeles board member Jackie Goldberg said that it would be fine to require the additional year of math for students who intend to major in a math-heavy field. But a universal requirement would deny access

to students who “really should be there and will do well there,” she said.

Board member Monica Garcia expressed concern that the policy change was an effort by Cal State to contain enrollment.

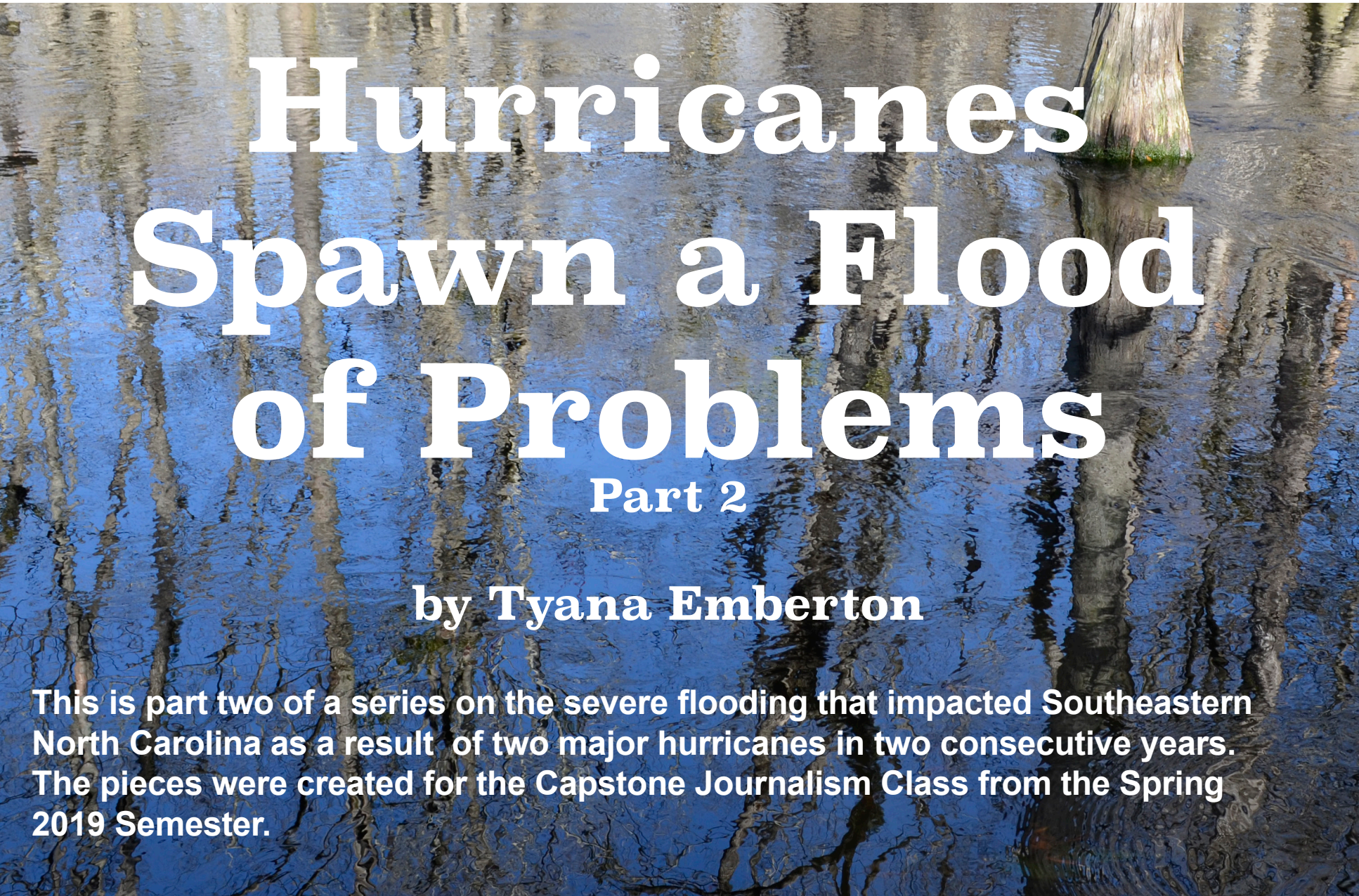
Cal State officials say they remain committed to ensuring equitable access and that the proposal is by no means an effort to curb enrollment. They note that more than 90% of students already meet the proposed requirement. They also point out that Cal State turns out the majority of the state’s teachers and has recently committed \$10 million to train a new crop of math and science teachers.

In Long Beach Unified School District, an experiment to require more math is already underway.

Six years ago, Long Beach Unified Superintendent Christopher Steinhauser, who is also a member of the Cal State Board of Trustees, met with the presidents of Cal State Long Beach and Long Beach City College to discuss adding a fourth year of math in high school, since so many graduates went on to need remedial coursework in college.

Long Beach schools, where the majority of students are non-white and come from households below the federal poverty level, phased in the graduation requirement over four years. Over that time period, the district’s graduation rate went up, as did the percentage of students meeting the A-G requirements and becoming eligible for Cal State admission.

“When you raise the bar and you provide the right support for everybody — for kids, for teachers, for parents — kids meet that standard and exceed it,” Steinhauser said.



Hurricanes Spawn a Flood of Problems

Part 2

by Tyana Emberton

This is part two of a series on the severe flooding that impacted Southeastern North Carolina as a result of two major hurricanes in two consecutive years. The pieces were created for the Capstone Journalism Class from the Spring 2019 Semester.

In October 2016, Hurricane Matthew unexpectedly hit Southeastern and Eastern North Carolina, and in its wake, left unprecedented amounts of flooding and damage to the area. Less than two years later, Hurricane Florence struck and wreaked havoc on residents who were still recovering. The second disaster left residents of Robeson and surrounding counties in poor living conditions.

“Hurricane Matthew was much more difficult for us because in addition to having to do all this stuff at the last minute with very little warning, we also spent seven months of being essentially homeless,” said James Bass, “We had nowhere to go.”

Bass, the executive director of the Givens Performing Arts Center at UNC Pembroke, suffered tremendous damage to his home when Hurricane Matthew hit. Bass, who lived in Lumberton at the time, said he had nearly three feet of water in his yard which entered below his house and soaked his floorboards and everything underneath. “You couldn’t visibly see it at first,” he said. “But on further inspection, I mean, it was totaled. Everything underneath the house was destroyed.”

Mold quickly began to grow in his flooring, causing him and his family to hastily move their belongings out of their home and into storage. After months of being relocated, Bass and his family were able to move in and live in their newly renovated home, only to have Hurricane Florence force them to start the process all over again 16 months later.

This region of the state is recognized as a hundred-year floodplain, meaning it has a 1% chance of flooding in any given year. However, Martin Farley, chair of the geology and geography department of UNC Pembroke, describes the area as one of the lowest points of the state, making it considerably prone to flooding and its residents susceptible to danger and damage.

Though survivors of the storm have reached out to FEMA for help, many of them have either received limited assistance, or found themselves ineligible for assistance, and are stuck in unlivable conditions with little to no resources or funds to fix them. Pembroke resident, Lynn Jacobs has lived on the same plot of land for over 70 years and said he has never experienced a catastrophe like what Matthew and Florence caused.

Jacobs suffered damages underneath his trailer due to flooding, and to the insulation of his home due to the heavy rain. The moisture caused by the unending rain resulted in mold growing inside Jacobs’s home, and his prolonged exposure to it landed him in the hospital for a total of 11 days. “[The hospital] didn’t know what it was, come to find out it was the mold,” Jacobs said. “It was in the house and I didn’t know it.”

Jacobs was diagnosed with atrial fibrillation, or a-fib, due to the long-term exposure to the mold in his house. A-fib is

an irregular heartbeat that can cause blood clots, stroke, or heart failure amongst other heart-related complications. He now stays in a camper he owns parked right in front of his house while he waits for FEMA to return with more assistance.

Jacobs and Bass among other homeowners found difficulty in receiving government assistance in their bouts with the hurricanes. As of March 8, 139,813 households have registered for disaster assistance, but only 103,724 FEMA inspections have been completed, according to the North Carolina Department of Public Safety. Additionally, 175 households (with 513 household members) are still in hotels through FEMA’s Transitional Sheltering Assistance program.

Jacobs said when FEMA visited to assess the damages to his home and saw he had nowhere to go, they gave him money for rental assistance and said they would come back to see what they could do about his house. Jacobs said he hasn’t heard from them since.

Bass said it wasn’t until three months after Matthew hit when he was informed of the amount of damage he suffered and the repair costs. In addition to that, Bass said he found multiple errors in his flood insurance company’s reports, prompting him to file a

companies in the Eastern North Carolina region, located where Florence hit the hardest, were unable to offer their own proposals. One of them was Steve Stone Mobile Home Transport in Lumberton.

“When there’s a natural disaster and the government gets involved, local contractors should have an opportunity to participate,” said owner, Steve Stone. “In my opinion, this was a violation of the Stafford Act.”

The Stafford Act requires government to prefer local companies for disaster recovery contracts. According to FEMA, a pre-approved contractor is needed for large disasters where locals would not be able to fully respond. Spokeswoman Yvonne Smith said the prime contract was awarded to MLU Services in accordance with the Post-Katrina Reform Act of 2006 and FEMA policies, which call for the hiring of a prime contractor in advance of disasters in order to speed the housing response. Despite this, Stone said that the damage caused by Florence was on a scale that local contractors could handle if they were given the chance.

Stone said he prides himself on being reliable in his work and providing temporary housing swiftly. “We were local people, we were on the ground, we knew how to get [people] in these houses in a week or two.” The average turnaround time for Stone and his crew to get residents in temporary housing was about 7-10 days. Meanwhile, MLU Services’s turnaround time ranged from 5-7 weeks.

In addition to getting the short end of the stick from the government, visiting contractors from nearby cities have encountered many homeowners who are wary of scams by crews who aren’t local to them and contractors who overcharge and provide scanty work. Their skepticism could slow recovery efforts because there are not enough local contractors to handle all the destruction.

Greyson Katz, a freelance contractor working in Eastern North Carolina, said that the clients he had attained were ripped off by storm chasers, contractors who travel to affected areas and do subpar work. “We had a roof that didn’t have felt paper, which is essential [for repair],” Katz said. “The ones who were time crunching just threw a roof on the old roof.”

Some unlicensed contractors have taken payments from customers but didn’t provide any service. Katz said his grandmother’s neighbor had someone offer them tree removal services then vanished with their money.

Seven months after Hurricane Florence hit, both homeowners and contractors are working with each other to mend their communities. Some residents have moved into newly renovated homes while others remain in temporary housing, awaiting assistance that may never come. “All we can do is wait,” said Jacobs. “I’m still hopeful.”

*“All we can do is wait,” said Jacobs.
“I’m still hopeful.”*

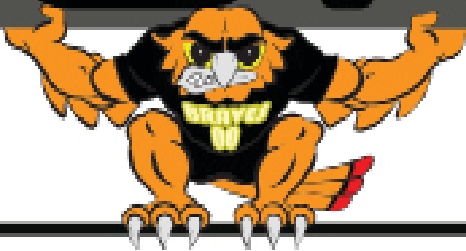
complaint to the NC Insurance Commission. FEMA also told the family that since they had flood insurance, they were only eligible for rental assistance. Bass said he applied for that assistance six times and was denied each time. On the seventh application, FEMA granted the family what they considered to be two months of rent payment, which only lasted the family one month.

Some homeowners are facing difficulty with contractors, like Newport resident, Mary Madsen. “You pull in the driveway and all you can see is blue,” she said referring to the blue tarp covering the exposed parts of her roof. Madsen, a hair stylist who works out her own home, says she has been in contact with contractors to repair her water-damaged roof, but contractors were having trouble working with her schedule. “I still got a business to run so I can pay them,” she said. “All this time and we still haven’t figured it out.”

The devastation that Hurricane Florence caused provided an overwhelming amount of work for local contractors. In most areas, there was more damage than there were contractors to fix them, leaving residents on a waitlist for months to come. However, in the midst of the wreckage, some contractors are having trouble finding work in their own place of business.

Before Florence hit, FEMA had already awarded the prime contract for temporary housing services to MLU Services, a company based in Athens, Georgia. At least two

SPORTS



SECTION
B
The Pine Needle

Braves Win Opener Over WSSU, 27-21



Josh Sheridan (1), tries to split defenders on a play in the Braves 27-21 season-opening win over Winston Salem State University on Sept. 7. PN Photo/Trevon Knight

By: Mike McGuinness
Sports Editor

The Braves opened up their season over Winston Salem State University, 27-21 at Grace P. Johnson Stadium last Saturday.

In front of a packed crowd, the Braves racked up 320 yards of total offense, led by QB Josh Jones. Jones went 21-35 for 180 yards a touchdown, as well as adding 71 yards on the ground. Jones racked up chunk plays on multiple scrambles from the pocket as the Braves frontline struggled at times to provide Jones’ with protection from the Rams defensive line.

The Braves defense shut down the Rams’ offense when needed, especially in the 4th quarter where WSSU was held scoreless. Sean Hill snagged an interception and had another negated by a penalty. While the Braves gave up 368 yards of offense, the ability to force turnovers will be a positive base for them to build on in the coming season.

The Braves were on the road for their next game, as they went north to face off against Virginia State on Friday, losing 35-16.

Box Score

Team	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Total
Winston-Salem State	7	7	7	0	21
UNC Pembroke	7	3	3	14	27

Offense -

#	Player	Pos.
4	Marcus McDonald	WR
14	Shammond Hicks	WR
15	Tyshawn Carter	WR
7	Jalon Nixon	TE
78	Reuben Willis	RT
70	Josh King	RG
1	Josh Sheridan	RB
12	Josh Jones	QB
79	Daniel Butler	LT
75	Jonnie Varga	LG
72	Gage Baldwin	C

Defense -

38	Sean Hill	SS
20	David Salser	OLB
31	Cam Caldron	OLB
52	Cam Lowery	MLB
11	John Jones	FS
93	Domenique Davis	DT
97	Taye Vereen	DT
90	Adonai Aloma	DE
91	Devin Cowan	DE
19	Devin Jones	CB
27	Shawn Everett	CB

Soccer and Volleyball Open 2019 Season



Junior Ellie Hicks (20), spikes the ball over two defenders from Grand Valley State during the Luau/Summer Blast volleyball invitational held at Lumbee Guaranty Court on Sept. 7. PN Photo/Trevon Knight



Senior goalkeeper Gina Ryan (1), blocks a goal attempt while Sophmore defender Brianna De Coteau (14) looks on. Both Ryan and De Coteau earned Peach Belt Conference Weekly Awards. PN File Photo/Trevon Knight

do some- thing spe- cial

vote in the special election
tuesday, september 10.
early voting starts august 21

**We're the only district in the country
without representation.**

The special election on **Tuesday, September 10**, is our best shot to find good-paying jobs, secure better opportunities in our future, and finally earn the full benefits of federal programs.

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what it's missing.**

Visit mypollingplace.org to find your Election Day polling place or early-voting locations that work with your schedule, and make a plan to vote.



**visit mypollingplace.org today
and make a plan to vote.**