UNCP offers benefits to veteran students

By Christopher Kimball
Staff Writer

UNCP is pursuing an ef- fort to establish a Veterans Education and Transition Office on campus to more efficiently address the growing veteran population on campus, according to Aubrey Swett, veteran's campus coordinator.

"We began an initiative to work with veterans in 2009," Swett said. "The school recognized there were changes how veterans received benefits in 2009, and how it made achieving a higher education more af- fordable and attractive."

As of June 2009, ac- cording to the U.S. Depart- ment of Veterans Affairs, the website, the Post-9/11 GI Bill will pay veterans' tu- ition and a $1,000 stipend annually for books. The benefits can also be transferred to veterans' de- pendents.

Currently, veterans can receive assistance with reg- istering for classes, counsel- ing, financial aid and military disability services through the Veterans' Assist- ance Team (VETA) located in Lumbee Hall Suite 242.

"VETA is a service cre- ated to assist veterans to achieve their education but also recognizes that there is a transition from military life and life on a college campus," Swett said. "Some of the challenges veterans may have are adjusting from the rigid structure of the military to a liberal arts environment which is more open and accepting."

He said VETA holds two sessions annually to communicate with veterans on campus.

One session is during welcome week where VETA can introduce them- selves to incoming veterans. The other session, a Veterans Benefits Forum held in January, allows veterans to meet with VETA and other departments on campus to include financial and stu- dent counseling.

There is currently a Stu- dent Veterans Association chapter on campus, al- though the chapter is going through a transition period. Many of the chapter's offi- cers either graduated or have been stationed oversea- seas. The current president of the chapter is Rebecca Howell.

For the past two years, UNCP has held a veterans' appreciation dinner Nov. 10 in coordination with Pembroke Pointe apartments, Swett said. He hopes that the school can continue to hold Vet Ranch annually.

UNCP currently has over 500 veterans registered receiving benefits attending this semester. Typically the veteran population in the UNCP system is 2 percent of the total student population, but at UNCP veterans are double that number at a lit- tle over 4 percent.

People who need infor- mation about veteran serv- ices on campus can refer to the UNCP website or call the Veteran Campus Represent- ative, Lee Townsend, at 910-775-4438.

The A.D. Gallery has worked cooperatively with the Taipei Cultural Center in New York City to allow the exhibit "Going Green: New Environmental Art from Taiwan" to make its way to Locklear Hall. This exhibi- tion brings together art- works in all media by contemporary Taiwanese artists who are concerned about environmental issues.

Two of the contributing artists, Chin Chih Yang and Chiu Chuan Lin as well as curator Jane Ingram were in residence at UNCP from Oct. 2 to Oct. 14 to create site specific environmental art installations as part of the chapter on campus.

Art Department Gallery Director Carla Rokes worked to help install the event which will be on dis- play inside the gallery until November 3.

"Both artists worked with local members of the community to obtain mate- rials. Lycurous Lowry was a local farmer who helped collect branches for Chin Chih Yang's work and the large hay bales for Chuan- Chu Lin's work," Rokes said. "The artists wanted to work with local materials because it is something that the community, students, faculty and staff could relate to and be familiar with."

Rokes said the resi- dency of the two artists and curator Ingram was a good experience for the A.D. Gallery and gave an opportu- nity for cultures to be in- terwoven.

"The most impressive aspect of this exhibition and artist residency is that it af- fected a personal connection and one-on-one opportunity for cross cultural exchange and discussion of global concerns and particular is- sues about the environment and art between our stu- dents and the Taiwanese artists in residence," Rokes said.

Also, the artists spoke with a range of students during their visit such as en- vironmental science, art, Asian studies and students in the Multicultural Center. Students also participated in the installation process by working side by side with the artists to prepare the work.

The "Going Green: New Environmental Art from Taiwan" exhibition has been on display in many parts, of the country includ- ing New York, Philadelphia and California.

The A.D. Gallery, lo- cated inside Locklear Hall, is open Monday - Thursday 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. and Wednes- day evening 5 - 8 p.m. It is open on Friday from 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. It is closed on week- ends or when classes are not in session.

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President's Volunteer Service Awards

By Jon Baez
Staff Writer

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