



Two more universities may join North Carolina Research Campus

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KANNAPOLIS - More universities could be partnering with the North Carolina Research Campus.

Six institutions out of the 16-campus University of North Carolina system and Duke University have a presence on the campus, but other universities have expressed interest in partnering with the campus.

Lorin Baumhover, chief of staff of Appalachian State University in Boone, said campus leaders have had "very preliminary discussions" with Dole Food Co. owner David Murdock and Castle & Cooke North Carolina president Lynne Scott Safrit and that both have been invited to Boone for further discussions.

"We have no concrete plans, but we are in the discussion," Baumhover said. "We haven't done an evaluation, don't have a work plan, don't have plans for a center at this time."

Appalachian has strong health promotions and disease prevention programs in the department of nutrition, Baumhover said.

"It's really quite impressive," Baumhover said about the research campus, adding "the ones that are already there are certainly appropriate."

Davidson College in Davidson is also talking to Murdock about a presence at the campus. President Tom Ross said he actually met with Murdock before Ross took office in Aug. 2007.

"We are trying to see what is the right fit for us to be there," Ross said. "We don't have graduate-level research programs, but we do have high-quality undergraduate research programs that we can offer."

Ross said the discussions have centered around linking Davidson graduates with the research programs and companies that will do business at the campus.

"Many of the graduate programs that will be on the campus will have internship opportunities," Ross said. "I think we produce high-quality graduates. And if we can link up our graduates, it would be mutually beneficial, I think."

Ross said there isn't a timeline for when Davidson might join the campus.

"We are eager to be participants as soon as we can make the right fit," Ross said. "We're making progress, so I think it will be months, not years."

Six UNC campuses - UNC-Chapel Hill, N.C. State University, N.C. Central University, N.C. A&T University, UNC Charlotte and UNC Greensboro - all have research centers at the campus. All are planning projects based around human nutrition research and Castle & Cooke is constructing lab buildings to house the six UNC research centers. The UNC Chapel Hill and N.C. State buildings are expected to be completed by August.

If Davidson does join the campus, it will be the second private university at the research campus. In Sept. 2007, Murdock announced a \$35 million gift to Duke University to jump-start the MURDOCK Study,

a longitudinal study that plans on tackling the genetic causes and links to human disease.

The UNC system has been involved with the research campus from its inception. Murdock pitched the idea to then-UNC President Molly Corbett Broad in 2005. Current UNC President Erskine Bowles has been involved and said in April that he would like to see all 16 campuses in the system have a presence at the research campus.

Murdock is very interested in nutrition and medical research and has made it the mission of the campus to advance the science of human nutrition. Safrit said in December that Murdock is personally involved in learning about the research projects at the campus and the science behind them.

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