

# Exploration & Discovery

News and Notes from the Division of Research and Graduate Studies

February 2008

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Volume III, Issue 2

## Student Researchers at ECU



**Elizabeth Hilliard** Photo by James Hilliard

### **Are School Wellness Policies Getting Results?**

Elizabeth Hilliard, a graduate student in ECU's College of Human Ecology, Department of Nutrition and Dietetics, is investigating the question of how effectively school wellness policies are improving nutrition education in three high schools in Catawba County, North Carolina. The policies came to exist because of the 2004 Child Nutrition and WIC [Special Nutrition Program for Women Infants and Children] Reauthorization Act, passed with the intent of improving the health of America's youth. The Act stipulated, in part, that any school district participating in the National School Lunch Program was required, by the first day of the school year beginning after June 30, 2006, to develop and implement a school wellness policy addressing nutrition and physical activity.

But are these policies working, and are they being followed?

By use of a survey designed to measure teacher awareness, Hilliard is attempting to determine whether Catawba County teachers are equipped to meet the nutrition education guidelines set forth in their district's policy.

Very little research has been done along these lines, and not enough is yet known about whether teachers possess the tools they need to teach good nutrition. Hilliard hopes that her research will lead to improved teacher effectiveness by identifying barriers that teachers face and any unanswered needs they may have; and also by identifying potential resources that can be brought to bear in helping teachers improve as nutrition educators and role models.

Hilliard is a Registered and Licensed Dietitian living and working in Catawba County. She received her B.S. in Dietetics from Indiana University in Bloomington, IN. During her professional career she has counseled many families with overweight children and is passionate about improving community programs to increase nutrition awareness and to combat our national epidemic of obesity.

View the entire February 2008 issue of *Exploration & Discovery* here:

[http://www.research2.ecu.edu/Newsletter/XD\\_Feb08.pdf](http://www.research2.ecu.edu/Newsletter/XD_Feb08.pdf)