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Arima Claypool, left, studies with teammate Caitlin Williams. "At this point, I really can't go to grad school," she said. "I'm not in a place financially that I can do that."

**UNC board takes up tuition hikes today**

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BY JANE STANCILL - jstancill@newsobserver.com

Long a model of quality and affordability, the UNC system will grapple today with fears that both may be at risk.

The UNC system's Board of Governors will take action today and Friday on tuition for the 2012-13 academic year. The deliberations take on heightened scrutiny this year as national debate surrounds the issue of the rising cost of higher education. Last month, President Barack Obama proposed a new system that would distribute federal financial aid dollars to colleges that keep prices down.

UNC President Tom Ross has recommended in-state undergraduate tuition and fee increases that average 8.8 percent. He aims to keep any campus hike under 10 percent, though leaders from N.C. State, UNC-Chapel Hill and several other universities say they need higher tuition to maintain academic quality after a significant state budget cut.

Meanwhile, there is simmering anger among students, who say the tuition escalation is extreme for North Carolina, a state with a constitutional provision guaranteeing a free education "as far as practicable." Students plan to march to the board meeting Friday morning in Chapel Hill.

Juan Miranda, a UNC Greensboro senior from Charlotte, is helping to organize carpools of students from Greensboro to Chapel Hill.
"It's getting to the point where everybody's been hit by it," Miranda said. "I believe education should be a right, not a privilege. Now it seems like that's what it's becoming."

A college degree has traditionally been a ticket to the middle class, but as prices rise and student debt grows, the promise seems to be getting beyond the reach of some. Higher education costs are rising faster than inflation and health care in the United States, where student loan debt now surpasses credit card debt.

Students at North Carolina's public campuses saw a steep rise in price in the past decade.

In 2000, UNC campuses were given the latitude to ask for tuition increases from the UNC system board. Since then, tuition and fees for in-state students have jumped 150 percent at NCSU and UNC-CH. During the 12-year period, campus-initiated tuition increases generated a total of $1.1 billion in revenue for all 16 universities.

A chunk of that revenue was set aside for financial aid for needy students. At the same time, a state need-based grant program that was started in 1999 helped keep prices down for many students. That program, which gave grants to low- to middle-income students, cost $6 million in 2000 and $162 million in 2010.

So even though tuition has grown dramatically here, North Carolina's public campuses still rate highly on national "best buy" rankings.

Last year, though, need-based grant money from the state dropped off by $35 million. If that trend continues, North Carolina students could rack up more debt.

Steve Brooks, executive director of the State Education Assistance Authority, said UNC's tuition increases have traditionally been accompanied by adequate financial aid. But the state can't keep losing ground on financial aid dollars as it did this year, he added.

"If we get to an era where we don't have any increases in aid and tuition keeps going up, we've got a real problem coming," he said. "That's when students are going to have to turn to loans that never have before. That's worrisome."

According to the Project on Student Debt, a national organization that tracks borrowing, North Carolina's debt levels are below the national average. In 2010, 53 percent of North Carolina students graduating from college had
debt, and the average indebtedness was $20,959, compared with $25,250 nationally.

**Working to avoid debt**

Arima Claypool, a UNC-CH senior from Sacramento, Calif., has worked during her college years to avoid big debt.

Her parents, who were in the real estate business in California, help her with her tuition. But she works two jobs on campus - about 40 hours a week - for living expenses and to pay off student loans she incurred for study abroad programs in Spain and Africa. In addition to her regular jobs, she sometimes picks up work babysitting, gardening or delivering food for an Asian restaurant.

She is down to $700 in unsubsidized loans from the federal government, and $5,000 in subsidized loans. She plans to pay off the $700 by the time she graduates, then join the Peace Corps for four years. That may qualify her for a waiver of the other loan.

Claypool would like to pursue graduate school, because she wants to develop sustainable agriculture in Africa someday. But she can't consider it right now.

"I'm not in a place financially that I can do that," she said.

Many of her friends have amassed more debt than she has, Arima said, as tuition has climbed.

"To me it seems like every year, we're raising it the maximum that we can," she said. "It's really going to start pricing people out of school."

Anxiety has risen along with tuition increases.

Before the recession, Brooks said, most people used to count on handling student loans with their future paychecks. Now, with jobs scarce, students fear they will have a hard time coping with the debt. "I think students borrowing in 2012 probably think about it differently than people who borrowed in 2007," Brooks said.

UNC-CH leaders advocated an 11.4 percent increase in tuition and fees next year, the first year in a multiyear plan for hikes. Holden Thorp, UNC-CH chancellor, said the campus needs an infusion of revenue to cope with a state budget cut of 18 percent that has led to crowded classes and fewer course offerings.
"We've done a wonderful job of keeping the tuition down at a time when Virginia and the (University of California) are charging twice what we're charging," he said.

Debt levels of UNC-CH students are actually lower, in real dollars, than 12 years ago, Thorp said. The average debt load of UNC-CH graduates is $15,500, compared to $18,000 in inflation-adjusted dollars in 2000. "That's something to be proud of," Thorp said.

But students at UNC-CH are generally more affluent than those at other UNC system campuses, and the Chapel Hill campus has more scholarships from private donors.

**Growing resistance**

Today, as the UNC Board of Governors discusses tuition, pressure is mounting not only from students but from parents, former board members and outside observers.

Former board members wrote letters asking the board to reject the proposed increases. Another group, the American Council of Trustees and Alumni, weighed in with letters asking the board to stick to a 6.5 percent cap on tuition increases that had been in effect in recent years.

Anne Neal, president of the organization, said North Carolina is in a position to set an example for other states in an environment when higher education spending is out of control. "There is a growing sense that this current path of ever-rising tuitions and ever-rising costs is just unsustainable," she said.

Neal's group recommends structural changes in universities and academic program reviews.

"They trim, but what really is necessary here is thinking about doing things differently," she said. "It's as if the universities don't care about what's going on around them, as if they think they should somehow be immune from the same economic consequences that are affecting the students and families that want to go to the colleges in North Carolina."

In a memo to UNC board members this week, Ross pledged that he will focus on three areas of cost containment in the year ahead: greater operational and academic efficiencies, making effective use of technologies and a review of financial aid.

"The issues are difficult, but it is my responsibility to recommend to you what I believe is right for the University," Ross wrote.
Hannah Gage, chairwoman of the Board of Governors, said it will consider Ross' recommendations carefully.

"Public university spending is under assault right now, and we've got to act in a way that shows everybody that we're really trying to contain costs," she said.

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In his Feb. 5 Point of View article ("A vital increase in UNC's tuition"), UNC-Chapel Hill Board of Trustees chair Wade H. Hargrove makes a compelling case as to the need for reinstating the funding cuts that have ravaged the UNC system, particularly the UNC-CH campus, in the past several years. I have kids enrolled at UNC-CH and see the shortcomings first hand. I had better access to full time faculty and more offerings to choose from when I was a student in the early '70s.

However, it is just downright disingenuous to argue for more tuition. Our state constitution provides for the establishment of a higher education system, and the means to fund it and protect it. The benchmark is not now, nor has it ever been, how UNC's costs compare to other universities, but how they compare to "as free as practicable."

When the legislature lopped the 0.75-cent sales tax levy from the revenue stream, they are directly responsible for the diminished capacity of the university. Is there a reason why Hargrove and UNC system President Tom Ross will not publicly call for or even lead the charge for reinstatement of the debilitating cuts? Are they afraid the meanies in the legislature will cut more next year if they are called to constitutional account?

If there were leadership on this issue, maybe it would be handled differently.

John Delafield
Apex
The never-ending hysteria (an 8 percent increase in tuition is labeled a "skyrocketing" cost) over education funding in this state obscures the two main issues. One, a general funding issue (the general public expects free government services), and second, a specific funding issue.

Increasing education spending has been a theme of every political campaign in this state for the last 100 years, and yet when compared to the rest of the world, our system does not produce the success it should. We produce social science grads, but the engineers, math and bio-tech grads are increasingly coming from what we used to call Third World countries. Money is not our problem, what we teach is our problem. If you want quality education, you have to pay for it, and the public has to raise expectations for the results.

Paul Winborne
Raleigh
Regarding the plea for higher tuition by the chair of the Board of Trustees at UNC-Chapel Hill ("A vital increase in UNC's tuition," Feb. 5 Point of View), there seems to be an automatic assumption that increased revenues are the primary, and possibly only, means by which UNC-CH can maintain its quality.

We do know that the university has made continual cuts in expenses in recent years and has been using the two most likely approaches: increase revenues and decrease costs. However, there is a third approach that rarely gets a hearing: increase the productivity of the labor force.

I realize that faculty will hate the idea of being called the "labor force" and will hate the next proposal even more: increase the teaching load from four courses per year to five or six. This step would probably eliminate the need for any tuition increase, given that faculty salaries and benefits make up such a large portion of the university's expenses.

While an increase in teaching load would cause some of the high-priced "stars" to switch to a university that can pay a high salary with a low teaching load, the faculty who choose to stay will likely have a higher level of dedication to the university and the state. It's also possible that more of the research would provide a direct benefit to the state.

In that regard, if professors demonstrate such benefits (and that doesn't mean just getting published by journals that have proliferated) then the teaching load of these select professors could be reduced.

Stephen S. Jenks, Ph.D.
Carrboro
An organization promoting science and technology in Greenville and eastern North Carolina edged closer this week to moving from its temporary headquarters to a permanent facility housing exhibits and hands-on projects. The Greenville Redevelopment Commission on Tuesday approved a Community Development Department recommendation to authorize a city lease with GO-Science for the 900-square-foot showroom area of the former Pugh’s Tire Center at 729 Dickinson Ave. The nonprofit organization will pay $1 per year for the space, senior planner Carl Rees said.

Final approval for the lease of the property to GO-Science will rest with the Greenville City Council, Rees said.

GO-Science has operated for about 10 years in several different forms, program director Roger Conner said. GO-Science has had no permanent physical structure for its attractions until now.

Instead, 800 volunteers — including science and medicine professionals and East Carolina University students and faculty — have brought its model educational programs, exhibits and demonstrations to schools, senior centers and other community sites in the 29-county eastern N.C. region. GO-Science focuses on what it calls “STEM2” — science, technology, engineering, medicine and mathematics, Conner said.
The group has a portable planetarium that it brings to schools and other locations for star gazing and astronomy lectures, an online mentoring program and a regional “Edunet” outreach program, he said.

Now, the 21-member GO-Science board of directors has the help of The East Group architectural firm to help redesign the center at no cost, Conner said.

The Greenville Police Department uses the former tire retailer’s service bays to house some of its vehicles, but has agreed to phase out this use to allow the science center to grow, Conner said. An environmental issue caused by the use of hydraulic fluid in the bay lifts eventually was rectified, and the new design will take shape during the course of the next year.

“The community has been very receptive to our programs,” Conner said. “People have realized that our future is in science, technology and mathematics. They also realize that for our economy to move forward, we have to have students involved in science education and be a pipeline to the industries that demand these skills.”

That realization has made it possible for GO-Science to gain a lot of attention as Greenville refocuses its sights on economic development and expansion of its place as the region’s scientific, medical, industrial and tourism hub, Conner said.

Conner said his organization has partnered with the city to find ways to advance their mutual goals.

“We’re a mechanism through which science education flows,” Conner said. “Our new site also will be a tourist destination that will benefit Greenville’s Center City revitalization efforts.”

The first goal of the new GO-Science location will be to serve the nearest population — those within walking distance, Conner said. That will connect the education pipeline to many portions of the city that have been underserved and most in need of attention.

GO-Science operates through public and private donations but also has volunteers who search for government grants aimed at supporting science center growth, Conner said.

The most important influence on the growth of the organization will be the realization by all sectors of the community of the role that science and technology plays in the city and region’s economic goals, he said.
“As a hub, Greenville has a responsibility to lead and provide opportunities for the region,” Conner said. “A science and technology center is evidence to businesses and industries that specialize in those things of what this community’s values are.”

Contact Michael Abramowitz at mabramowitz@reflector.com or 252-329-9571.
East Carolina has been left out of the latest round of Big East Conference expansion after Memphis accepted a bid to the league on Wednesday. Memphis is the seventh school, and fourth from Conference USA, to sign up since December for future membership in the Big East. The Tigers will compete in the Big East in all sports.

The Pirates, who applied for Big East membership last September, join Marshall, Rice, Southern Miss, Tulsa, Tulane, UAB and UTEP as the remaining teams in Conference USA.

Houston, SMU and UCF had already agreed to leave C-USA for the Big East.

According to an ESPN report, a source has said that Conference USA’s board of directors are expected to meet later this week to discuss a full-scale merger with the Mountain West Conference.

The Mountain West, which is losing Boise State, San Diego State and TCU, would have Air Force, Colorado State, Fresno State, Nevada, New Mexico, UNLV and Wyoming in all sports in 2013-14, and Hawaii in football only.

According to the report, the C-USA-MWC merger could consist of 15 schools in all sports and 16 in football.

“Based on my conversations with Commissioner (John) Marinatto, the Big East has now completed its future membership plan,” C-USA Commissioner Britton Banowsky said in a statement Wednesday. “If this is true, it is very helpful as we can now move forward with our plans in a more stable national environment.”

ECU Director of Athletics Terry Holland is ready to go forward with a C-USA-MWC merger.

“The merger is definitely still on,” Holland said Wednesday. “While losing a long-time colleague like Memphis is disappointing, it was not unexpected. “That does not change the goal of the merger — to create a football conference as strong or stronger than the Big East and other conferences that
currently have BCS automatic qualification. It remains to be seen whether Memphis will make Big East football stronger or whether losing them will weaken the merged conference football image. Everyone here is dedicated to controlling our destiny by building the strongest possible new conference over the next few years.”

Marinatto called Memphis a “perfect fit.”

“There were a number of contributing factors for our membership in making the decision to invite Memphis, including among other reasons its geography in the heart of our future membership makeup, its Central time zone presence, its top-50 media market, as well as its outstanding corporate and community support, quality athletic facilities and the overall brand and competitiveness of its athletic programs,” Marinatto said.

The Big East pitched Air Force and BYU on joining, but couldn’t work out a deal with either. Temple was also being considered, but the Philadelphia school and former Big East member was passed over for Memphis because the conference wanted to bolster its new west wing.

Memphis gives the Big East 11 football teams committed for the 2013 season, still one short of the 12 needed under NCAA rules to hold a conference championship game. The league could ask the NCAA for a waiver to play a title game with less than 12, though Marinatto said there are no plans for that and the Big East championship football game will debut after Navy joins in 2015.

There’s also no guarantee some of the holdovers, such as Louisville, Rutgers and Connecticut, won’t jump at the chance to join another league if the opportunity comes up. But for now, Marinatto said Memphis is the final piece of the puzzle.

“It was our goal to get to 12 football-playing members and we’ve done that, so we’re obviously pleased that we’ve filled our primary objective,” Marinatto said. “We’re always going to be vigilant and we’re going to continue to do what’s in the best interest of the conference. So you never, never say never, I guess.”

It is still unclear when West Virginia, Pitt and Syracuse will leave. Big East bylaws require a 27-month notification period for schools that want out. West Virginia has filed a lawsuit to begin competing in the Big 12 in the fall.
The Big East has countersued and Pitt and Syracuse are watching the cases closely as it could determine when they start playing in the Atlantic Coast Conference.

Marinatto declined to answer questions related to the legal issues or when the Big East’s 2012 schedule might be released. The Big 12 has also been waiting to release a 2012 schedule, but has made it clear that it expects that schedule to include West Virginia.

Marinatto reiterated he expects all three of the departing schools to remain in the Big East for two more seasons. So it’s possible the Big East could have 14 football teams and 20 basketball teams for the 2013-14 seasons.
East Carolina University senior Harold Varner was one of 28 collegiate men's golfers named to the watch list for the 2012 Ben Hogan Award. Varner is the only Conference USA golfer to make the list as well as the only player from any North Carolina-based institution.

The most prestigious award in men's college golf, The Ben Hogan Award is presented annually to the top men's NCAA Division I, II or III, NAIA or NJCAA college golfer taking into account all collegiate and amateur competitions during the past 12-month period. The Ben Hogan Award Selection Committee represents leaders in professional, amateur and collegiate golf.

Varner continues to lead the Pirates in his final season. In five events this year, Varner has compiled four top-five finishes, including individual medalist honors at the AutoTrader.com Collegiate Classic. He has shot under par in 12 of 15 rounds this year and is threatening to break his own school record for lowest single-season scoring average. This past summer, Varner won the North Carolina Amateur Stroke and Match Play championships, becoming the first player to hold both titles. He is ranked 21st in the World Amateur Golf Rankings, 11th among U.S. players.

A list of 10 semifinalists will be unveiled on Wednesday, April 11, and then will be pared down to three finalists on Thursday, May 10. The winner will be crowned at a banquet at Colonial Country Club on Monday, May 21, prior to the start of the PGA TOUR’s Crowne Plaza Invitational.

The 2012 The Ben Hogan Award Watch List includes: Blayne Barber (Auburn, Jr.), Zac Blair (BYU, Jr.), Julien Brun (TCU, Fr.), Patrick Cantlay (UCLA, So.), Sean Dale (North Florida, Jr.), Derek Ernst (UNLV, Sr.), Dylan Frittelli (Texas, Sr.), Luke Guthrie (Illinois, Sr.), Stephan Jaeger (Chattanooga, Sr.), Brooks Koepka (Florida State, Sr.), Jace Long (Missouri, Jr.), Bryden Macpherson (Georgia, Jr.), Daniel Miernicki (Oregon, Sr.), Corbin Mills (Clemson, Jr.), Cheng-Tsung Pan (Washington, Fr.), Thomas Pieters (Illinois, So.), Patrick Rodgers (Stanford, Fr.), Kyle Souza (Chico State, Sr.), Jordan Spieth (Texas, Fr.), Justin Thomas (Alabama, Fr.), Ethan
Tracy (Arkansas, Sr.), Harold Varner (East Carolina, Sr.), T.J. Vogel (Florida, Jr.), James White (Georgia Tech, Sr.), Cory Whitsett (Alabama, So.), Chris Williams (Washington, Jr.), Eugene Wong (Oregon, Sr.) and Andrew Yun (Stanford, Jr.).

The award, which was first issued in 1990 and also included academic achievement in its original list of standards, revised its criteria for the 2001-02 collegiate season to its current standard of honoring the outstanding amateur collegiate golfer.
Bill Carson earned many major distinctions in his 40 years as East Carolina’s track and field coach, but very likely at or near the top is the fact he did it his way, even when it landed him on the highway.

Carson summarized at Wednesday’s Greater Greenville Sports Club luncheon a career characterized and driven by an insatiable desire to train world class sprinters for the world stage, but also to create chances for eastern North Carolina kids to succeed athletically and academically at ECU.

The first story he told, detailing his coaching trek to the world junior championships in Italy, was the perfect illustration of Carson’s relentless pursuit.

“I went there for a purpose. I went there to win the meet, but I also went there to set world records in the relays,” said Carson, who retired from ECU in 2007, and who also coached at Furman and Florida. “When we ran the trials, I knew we weren’t good enough.”

It’s that keen eye that not only made ECU track an unsung power in the sport, according to Carson, but also drove him to create more and better chances for black athletes in the region.
“I had seen a kid that ran for a junior college there from Indiana, and I wanted that kid but he couldn’t get his passport, just couldn’t get it done and didn’t have the money,” Carson said of his time coaching the world juniors in 2004. “I called the kid, worked it all out, paid for his passport, flew him over there and we set two world records over there.”

In his time with the Pirates, Carson oversaw 18 national championship appearances by his athletes and coached 70 All-Americans. His ECU teams won three consecutive Southern Conference titles in the 1970s, and he coached four Colonial Athletic Conference rookies of the year and two CAA athletes of the year.

He had many prized pupils along the way, but perhaps none more talented than Olympians Lee McNeill and LaShawn Merritt.

But Carson’s career was also characterized by his fearless approach, which made such career stops like his U.S. junior team assistant coach stint shorter but nonetheless memorable.

It was Carson’s insistence on standing up for his runners which ultimately ended the international gig.

“They had five-star hotels and Germany and those teams were there, and we were out in a little old place where they shut the water off at 10 o’clock every day and it was 90 degrees,” Carson said of the world championships in Italy. “I fought the administration the whole time and I got what I wanted. I got my points, I got my world records and of course, when I got back they called me from Indianapolis and told me that would be the end of my representing the U.S.A. Track and Field.”

Contact Nathan Summers at nsummers@reflector.com or 252-329-9595.
James Houston Tucker Sr.

Dr. James Houston Tucker Sr., 96, passed away Saturday, Feb. 4, 2012. The funeral service will be conducted Saturday at 1 p.m. in Jarvis Memorial United Methodist Church. Burial will follow in Greenwood Cemetery.

Dr. Tucker, born Oct. 3, 1915 in Mount Holly, was the son of the late Walter Lee Sr. and Mamie Shuford Tucker. He received a BS degree (1939) from Appalachian State Teachers College, Boone, graduating summa cum laude; a M. Ed. degree (1951); and a Ph.D. degree (1953) from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Dr. Tucker served on active duty during World War II, entering the United States Navy with the rank of Ensign in 1941. He was released in 1946 with the rank of Lieutenant Commander and remained in the United States Naval Reserves. He taught at Furman University, Greenville, S.C. before coming to East Carolina University in 1955 where he served as Dean of Student Affairs until his retirement. He was a member of Jarvis Memorial United Methodist Church.

He was preceded in death by a son, James Houston Tucker Jr.

On Oct. 28, 1944, he married Virginia D. Jackson of Ayden, who survives. Also surviving are sons, Richard Lee Tucker of Morehead City and Howard Jackson Tucker and wife, Frankie, of Raleigh; grandchildren, David Lee Tucker and wife, Heidi, Kelly Brooks Tucker, Bryan Jackson Tucker; great-grandson, Davis W. Tucker; and Julie H. Tucker, former daughter-in-law.

The family will receive friends Friday from 6 to 8 p.m. at Wilkerson Funeral Home.

In lieu of flowers memorials may be made to the James H. and Virginia J. Tucker Scholarship Fund, Greenville Centre Ste. 1100, 2200 S. Charles Blvd., Mail Stop 301, East Carolina University, Greenville, NC 27858, or to Jarvis Memorial United Methodist Church, 510 S. Washington Street, Greenville, NC 27834.

Arrangements by Wilkerson Funeral Home and Crematory.


Published in The Daily Reflector on February 9, 2012
KERNERSVILLE - Cameron Adrian Griffin, 21, a student at East Carolina University, died Sunday, Feb. 5, 2012, from injuries received in a motorcycle accident in Greenville. He was a resident of Kernersville, the son of Heidi Ann England of Kernersville and William Moore, Jr. of Columbus, Ohio.

Funeral service will be conducted Friday at 1 p.m. at Mt. Zion Baptist Church, 1301 Alamance Church Road, Greensboro, by Bishop George W. Brooks. Burial will be in Guilford Memorial Cemetery.

Other survivors include two sisters, April Cannon of McLeansville, and Ka'La England of Kernersville; brother, Christopher A. Moore, of Columbus, Ohio; maternal grandparents, Vincent Jones and Dira Porter Jones, Greensboro; and a paternal grandmother, Mary C. Moore, Oxford.

A viewing will be held today from 11 a.m. until 6 p.m. at Wright Funeral Home in Oxford. The family will receive visitors Friday, 30 minutes prior to services at the church. For further information contact Wright Funeral Home, 3724 Salem Road, Oxford, 919-693-8870, nc1emb@embarqmail.com.