THE DAILY CLIPS

February 16, 2012

News, commentary, and opinion
compiled by East Carolina University News Services:

The Greenville Daily Reflector
The Raleigh News & Observer
    The New York Times
    The Wall Street Journal
    USA Today
The Charlotte Observer
The Fayetteville Observer
The Greensboro News & Record
Newsweek
U.S. News & World Report
Business Week
Time

East Carolina University News Services
Web site at http://www.ecu.edu/news
252-328-6481
ECU releases options for reorganization
By Jackie Drake
The Daily Reflector
Thursday, February 16, 2012

East Carolina University will solicit feedback on a list of options it released Wednesday to streamline its academic structure.

A “white paper” developed by the Program Prioritization Committee contains 56 possible changes to the university’s three divisions, 13 colleges and free-standing schools, and 72 departments.

The paper builds on an earlier study analyzing 277 academic programs for potential elimination, reduction, maintenance or investment, the university said.

The potential changes are meant to increase efficiency and save money on administration, committee chairman and professor Ron Mitchelson said. The document does not contain figures relating to money or jobs saved or lost.

“It’s too early to tell yet,” Mitchelson said. “It will depend on the exact moves made. But we have a good set of policies in place to deal with reductions. We’re talking about administrative savings, a reduction in force is probably likely. We anticipate a gradual set of changes implemented in a deliberate fashion.”

Feedback will be used to develop potential scenarios to be released in late March before the committee will make a final recommendation in April. Colleges and schools will be holding discussion forums and an online survey will be conducted at the end of this month.

The chosen plan would not be final until approved by the chancellor and the Board of Trustees.

“The intent of the current PPC effort is to recommend a structural configuration that best meets the needs of tomorrow and does not simply sustain the results of the past,” the paper states. “With reorganization, we could witness improved efficiency (decreased costs) and effectiveness (improved environments for collaborative behavior).”

Chancellor Steve Ballard formed the committee in May and tasked its 13 members with identifying opportunities for long-term reallocation of university resources, prompted in part by continuing fiscal challenges. ECU
took a 16.1 percent budget cut in state funding for the 2011-12 fiscal year following four consecutive years of state budget cuts.

It is important to note that implementation of any recommended structural change will take time and requires careful deliberation, the paper says. Moving or consolidating academic units is subject to provisions in the ECU faculty manual.

“The harder work still lies ahead,” Mitchelson said. “We’ll probably get some strong reactions, but we’ll be listening carefully.”

**Streamlining Options**

Following is a list of possible changes to academic programs provided by ECU:

**DIVISIONAL LEVEL**

Move the Graduate School to Academic Affairs and/or Health Sciences
Move all centers and institutes into Academic Affairs and Health Sciences
Reduce the number of academic divisions to two: Academic Affairs and Health Sciences
Reduce the number of academic divisions to one: University Affairs
No modifications

**COLLEGIATE LEVEL**

Merge College of Human Ecology and Health and Human Performance
Redistribute College of Human Ecology Units
Redistribute College of Health and Human Performance units
Redistribute College of Technology and Computer Science units
Redistribute Harriot College of Arts and Sciences units
Create STEM College (sciences, technology, engineering, computer science and mathematics)
Merge humanities units in Harriot College with Fine Arts and Communication
Maintain Fine Arts and Communication with school directors acting as dean on a rotating basis
Merge Institute for Coastal Science and Policy, Center for Sustainable Tourism, and Renaissance Computing Institute at ECU into a new school with two existing graduate degrees

Create College of Social and Behavioral Sciences
Move Health and Human Performance to Health Sciences
Create College of Health Sciences and Professions: Create School of Public Health, create School of Health and Human Performance, create School of Allied Health
No modifications

DEPARTMENTAL LEVEL
Move Interior Design to School of Art and Design
Move Nutrition to College of Health and Human Performance
Move Nutrition to College of Nursing
Move Nutrition to College of Allied Health Sciences
Move Merchandising to College of Business
Move Hospitality Management to College of Business
Move School of Social Work to Allied Health Sciences
Move School of Social Work to College of Nursing
Move School of Social Work to College of Health and Human Performance
Move Child Development and Family Relations to Harriot College of Arts and Sciences
Merge Hospitality Management with Recreation and Leisure Studies
Move Health Education and Promotion to College of Nursing
Move B-K Education in Child Development and Family Relations to College of Education
Move Health Education to College of Education
Move Physical Education to College of Education
Move Kinesiology to College of Allied Health Sciences
Move Recreational Therapy to College of Allied Health Sciences
Move Environmental Health to College of Allied Health Sciences
Merge Environmental Health and Biostatistics
Move Department of Public Health to College of Health and Human Performance
Move Department of Public Health to College of Nursing
Merge Physician Assistant Studies and Clinical Lab Sciences
Move Physician Assistant Studies and Clinical Lab Sciences to Brody School of Medicine
Merge Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapy
Merge Criminal Justice with Sociology or Political Science
Move English (or portions thereof) to College of Fine Arts and Communication
Move Foreign Languages and Literatures to College of Fine Arts and Communication
Move Philosophy to College of Fine Arts and Communication
Move History to College of Fine Arts and Communication
Merge Department of Business and Information Technology Education with Technology Systems
Merge Department of Business and Information Technology Education with Library Sciences
Merge Higher, Adult, and Counselor Education with Educational Leadership
Redistribute Curriculum and Instruction within the College of Education
Move Construction Management to College of Business
Move School of Communication to Harriot College of Arts and Sciences
Merge undergraduate junior and senior nursing programs within College of Nursing
Merge five Brody School of Medicine Basic Life Science departments into one Life Science Department
No modifications

For more information, visit www.ecu.edu/ppc. Contact Jackie Drake at jdrake@reflector.com or 252-329-9567 or follow her on Twitter @jackiedrakegdrr.
Appalachian, ECU could join CUSA/MWC

BY DAVID SCOTT - dscott@charlotteobserver.com

Charlotte's name is coming up as a possibility when and if a potential new league formed by a merger of Conference USA and the Mountain West expands.

ESPN.com reported Tuesday that sources indicate the 49ers are a candidate to join the new 16-team league if it expands. And East Carolina chancellor Steve Ballard said Tuesday that Charlotte and Appalachian State would be a good fits for the league.

"We'd love to consider Appalachian State and Charlotte down the road in a few years," Ballard said at a news conference in Greenville, N.C., on Tuesday. "Charlotte has to get (football) up and running. But Charlotte as a university has all kinds of advantages and would add basketball talent to the conference."

The new CUSA/MWC league would be tilted decidedly to the west, with East Carolina, Marshall and Alabama-Birmingham the only eastern schools. Ballard said the league could expand and divide into four regionally based divisions - making the additions of schools such as Charlotte and Appalachian a logical option.

The 49ers, who begin playing football in 2013 and are now in the Atlantic 10 in other sports, will start as an FCS independent, but hope to move up to FBS at an undetermined time. Appalachian State recently announced it wants to move from FCS to FBS when the timing is right.

49ers athletics director Judy Rose was unavailable for comment. Appalachian State athletics director Charlie Cobb said through a spokesman that the Mountaineers are looking at all available options.

Scott: 704-358-5889
The student newspaper at East Carolina University recently won a regional journalism award.

The East Carolinian placed second in the best college newspaper category in the Southeast Journalism Conference’s “Best of the South” contest.

“We were all really shocked. It’s a pretty big honor,” student editor in chief Caitlin Hale said.

The paper’s website also was ranked 10th, and some awards were given to individual writers.

Staff members did not attend the convention last weekend since it was held in Tennessee but were notified of their placement through a news release Tuesday.

Though The East Carolinian has participated in the contest for several years, this is the first time it has placed in the top 10.

“We’ve had writers honored individually, but for the newspaper as a whole to be awarded is really nice,” Hale said. “It’s a team effort, so it reflects well on everybody. It’s a nice morale boost.”

More than 40 schools across eight states competed in the contest. The best college newspaper category called for three papers from certain time frames to be submitted. The East Carolinian chose issues covering a 9/11 commemoration, Hurricane Irene and the raising of Blackbeard’s cannon from the shipwreck in Beaufort Inlet.

The paper was criticized last year for running unedited photos of a streaker at a football game in November. The adviser at the time, Paul Isom, was fired in January for what university officials said were unrelated personnel issues. Isom had been advising The East Carolinian since 2008.

The East Carolinian participates in a number of annual contests, and is headed to the North Carolina College Media Association competition this weekend.

“We’re continuously trying to make it better,” Hale said.
A senior, Hale has been involved at the paper since her freshman year. She plans to go to law school in the fall.

“This was a nice way to end things,” she said.

Contact Jackie Drake at jdrake@reflector.com or 252-329-9567 or follow her on Twitter @jackiedrakegd.
The Board of Elections discussed cost-saving measures related to the elections on Wednesday, Feb. 15, 2012. (Aileen Devlin/The Daily Reflector)

**Board approves early-voting site at ECU**  
By Ginger Livingston  
Thursday, February 16, 2012

The Pitt County Board of Elections approved a plan to locate a one-stop, early-voting location on East Carolina University’s campus if the school agrees to certain conditions.

The elections board on Wednesday gave tentative approval to locate an early-voting site in classroom space at Minges Coliseum. The deal will be finalized if the university agrees to make 25 parking spaces available to the public and makes the classroom available during the early-voting period prior to the November general election.

“I am intrigued by Minges,” David Conradt, the elections board chairman, said.

Almost everyone in Pitt County knows where Minges Coliseum is located, and it is centrally located in the city, he said.

The elections board wants to use the space this fall because it’s trying to create consistency for voters, Conradt said. A parking guarantee is needed so Pitt County citizens using the voting location will not be ticketed.

The plan for early voting will have to be revised if the university doesn’t agree to the two conditions.

Along with the Minges site, the elections board also agreed to open early-voting locations at the Pitt County Agricultural Center on Old Creek Road, the Community Schools and Recreation facility on County Home Road, the
Winterville Fire Station on Railroad Street and the county office building on West Fifth Street.

It will cost $23,949 to operate the five sites, just below the $25,000 staff budgeted for early voting.

If the ECU site doesn’t work out, Elections Director Dave Davis said the board has the option of locating an early-voting site at the Teen Center off East 14th Street.

The board rejected the proposal because entering and exiting the site creates traffic problems.

Conradt asked why the city wouldn’t make Jaycee Park available. Davis said recreation and parks officials say too many events are scheduled there, and they can’t make space available for the two-week early-voting period leading up to the elections.

Conradt said he was disappointed the city couldn’t plan ahead during the presidential election years to make space available.

“The election, quite frankly, is more important that the arts and crafts of that week,” he said. “We don’t do this every week.”

Marie Reed, a Pitt County resident, asked the board if it would make Sunday voting available. Davis said it would be difficult to fund a Sunday voting period. Conradt said the county hasn’t held Sunday voting before the primaries but typically has before the general election.

The board also discussed whether it would send out voter information cards but made no decision.

Davis said it would cost $36,399 to send out the cards. The department must meet a 2.33 percent budget cut sought by the Pitt County Board of Commissioners.

Betsy Leech, chairwoman of the Pitt County Democratic Party, urged the board to send out the voter cards.

“I don’t know when we have had a more significant change (in voting districts),” Leech said. It’s especially important that during a presidential election year that people know what districts they are voting in and who are the candidates, she said.

Local, state legislative and congressional voting districts were redrawn last year to balance population changes that have occurred the last decade.
Leech said the changes have moved her out of every district she previously voted in. Leech said she knows that because she is politically active and carefully studies voter maps. It’s unlikely the typical voter would know about the changes unless they are notified.

“I don’t know what is a better (notification) choice than a mailer,” Leech said.

Patrick Nelson, an election board member, said it’s likely most people will toss the cards and still be unaware when they go to the polls.

Staff is recommending a multi-media advertising campaign to explain how people can learn which voting districts they are in if the cards aren’t sent out, Davis said.

Contact Ginger Livingston at glivingston@reflector.com or 252-329-9570.
UNC Charlotte investigates potential online security breach

By Meghan Cooke

The University of North Carolina at Charlotte is investigating how private information might have leaked onto the Internet in an apparent online security breach.

Officials said they're not sure any university data was compromised but have launched an investigation to assess the situation, which may have been the result of human error.

Officials didn't specify what kinds of information might have been leaked but said they are working with a computer forensics firm to determine whether any personally identifiable information or health information was accessed by unauthorized people.

The university became aware of the potential problem on Jan. 31, according to a message posted on the UNCC Information and Technology Services website. Students were alerted to the issue Wednesday.

Officials said they first worked to ensure there was no unauthorized information available on the Internet and then reached out to a forensics firm for help. The investigation could take several weeks, officials said.

"At this time, we believe the potential exposure was the result of configuration errors," the university said.

"As with any potential security incident, people are encouraged to be diligent in reviewing their personal information."

Officials said that people determined to be at risk of identity theft or other fraud will be notified in writing.

Visit securityincident.uncc.edu for more information.
UNC-CHAPEL HILL DEPARTMENT OF GENETICS

This mouse was specially bred in the Collaborative Cross project led by researchers at UNC-Chapel Hill and NCSU. All together, about 1,600 strains of mice were developed for the DNA database.

UNC, NCSU researchers lead effort to breed special lab mice

BY JAY PRICE - jprice@newsobserver.com

CHAPEL HILL—Scientists in the exploding world of genetic research needed not just one better kind of mouse, but hundreds.

Now they have a whole living library of mice that offers 10 times the genetic diversity of typical lab mice and forms the heart of a powerful new research tool that can be used for free anywhere in the world.

Researchers at UNC-Chapel Hill and N.C. State University are leading the international project, which has developed hundreds of new strains of mice and is meticulously mapping and indexing digital information about their DNA.

The Collaborative Cross project - which included breeding operations here and in Australia and Israel - was formally unveiled today in a series of papers in journals of the Genetics Society of America.

The idea is to offer researchers more diverse alternatives to common lab mice, which are so closely related to each other that they have only a fraction of the genetic diversity that researchers now need for most projects, said Fernando Pardo-Manuel de Villena, a professor in the genetics department at UNC-CH and a member of UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center. Pardo-Manuel de Villena, NCSU geneticist David Threadgill,
and Gary Churchill of the Jackson Laboratory in Maine led the project, but it involved more than 125 researchers and technicians all over the world. The project is centered in Chapel Hill, but the sheer number of mice - about 16,000 cages of them - dictated that the breeding be done elsewhere, too. "No facility in the world could handle it alone," Pardo-Manuel de Villena said.

**Mice with the right stuff**

The library of mice and data is expected to form a crucial part of the underpinning of an entire new discipline, called systems genetics. The project and its potential are so large that it took 15 papers today with more than 100 authors in two journals - Genetics and G3: Genes|Genomes|Genetics - to explain them.

The Collaborative Cross is expected to eventually comprise between 300 and 500 new strains of mice that will offer two things that today's inbred lab mice can't: a vastly more diverse base of genes and an online index detailing those genes.

That database will allow researchers to use the Internet to select the genetic qualities they need for a specific kind of research, then order the mice they need. The database can also help them understand their research results. Its breadth and power is expected to vastly speed some kinds of research, make other types possible for the first time and make some of the results more pertinent to human health and human biology.

Mouse studies are often a crucial step in research, in part because mice and humans share a surprising amount of genetic material: about 95 percent.

Mice have other good attributes for research into human disease and biology, including that they breed and mature quickly.

But typical lab mice have such limited diversity that it reduces their usefulness for some research looking at DNA.

**Extraordinary collection**

Dr. Norman E. Sharpless, UNC Lineberger's associate director for translational research, said he used to wonder why it was worth the trouble for researchers interested in human disease to study large collections of mouse DNA, when they could go straight to humans.
But for some diseases, potential genetic causes can only be tracked to a broad region in humans. Mice, meanwhile, can be genetically manipulated to make it possible to identify the exact gene associated with a disease.

"This Collaborative Cross is so useful for mapping genetic traits. ... I expect labs all over the world to begin working with these strains, and I can envision a need to expand the number of mice strains," Sharpless said. "There's really no other way to do some of these experiments."

All told, about 1,600 strains of mice were bred via an elaborate plan that among other things brought in genes from wild mice. Some weren't suitable for various reasons, and the team is still working to make the maximum number of strains available to researchers, said Pardo-Manuel de Villena.

About 450 strains are now housed at a UNC facility, with 10 cages per strain and typically at least two mice per cage.

Some of these strains will become extinct, others added. A handful of strains still haven't arrived from overseas. All the DNA indexing is being done here, and the scientists want to have representatives of all the different lines.

'Curating' genetic traits

The researchers working with the project refer to the work of overseeing the mice as "curating" because it's such responsibility to care for and accurately track the various strains. Even a small mistake could have disastrous results for researchers using the mice.

The diversity of the new mice is often expressed in ways that are hidden, but some characteristics, such as being unusually lean or chubby, are obvious, Pardo-Manuel de Villena said.

Research technicians who work with mice daily will have to be aware of another trait: Collaborative Cross mice are not typically docile, like traditional lab mice. When someone opens a cage door, they may leap out, and often they are not happy about being handled.

"Our mice are much more like real mice than pets," he said.

The plan is to create distribution facilities around the world, Pardo-Manuel de Villena said. For now, the North American one will be at Chapel Hill. Whether it stays there or has to be relocated could depend on how popular the mice become among researchers.

"At this point, we don't know exactly how it will go," Pardo-Manuel de Villena said. "If we are very successful, they could fire me because the mice would take over the whole university."
**Breast cancer and mice**

Some of the new supermice are already being used in research, including work done by Dr. Norman E. Sharpless, UNC Lineberger's associate director for translational research, and Charles Perou, co-director of the center's breast cancer research program.

They are crossing an existing strain in which the females always get breast cancer with several dozen of the new strains, one at a time, and watching to see how the cancer behaves, Sharpless said.

After determining which strains develop breast cancer more or less rapidly, they expect to be able to match their results with data from the Collaborative Cross online database to determine which regions of the mouse genome determine breast cancer susceptibility. That should allow them to pinpoint genetic causes of breast cancer in mice and, they hope, in humans as well.

It's then possible to check the results by picking another strain of mouse that hasn't been tested, but that in the database shows the same genetics, and see if it also develops cancer as predicted.
Davidson College says plans to build a pipeline across its campus would damage the college's 200-acre nature preserve. John D. Simmons - 2009 Charlotte Observer File photo.

**Davidson College protests plans for gas pipeline**

By Bruce Henderson

Davidson College says a pipeline Piedmont Natural Gas plans to build across its campus would damage the college's 200-acre nature preserve, the site of years of research.

In a strongly worded letter last week to state and federal regulators, the college accuses Charlotte-based Piedmont of withholding information about the pipeline's route until January. Construction, the college says, would start in March.

"The obvious goal was to corner Davidson College by refusing to share information," wrote an attorney for the school. "This refusal to deal openly and honestly with Davidson yielded a siting decision that devastates the Davidson College Ecological Preserve."

The college says Piedmont's contractors trespassed on its land to survey the pipeline route and cut down trees inside the ecological preserve, which covers about a third of Davidson's 600-acre campus.

Piedmont said it regrets "communication challenges" with the college. But it says the proposed route best meets siting factors including public safety, environmental impacts, disruption to neighbors and cost.

"We strongly disagree ... with the college's characterization of our actions and intent on this project," Piedmont said in a statement. The company said...
it will respond in detail to Davidson's charges in a letter to the regulatory agencies.

Both sides said Wednesday they're talking and hope to amicably resolve the dispute.

"At the end of the day, we want a productive relationship with Davidson College," said Piedmont spokesman David Trusty.

The eight-mile line would be part of a 133-mile pipeline by which Piedmont would serve Progress Energy's Sutton power plant near Wilmington. Sutton will be converted from a coal-fired plant to one fueled by natural gas.

Piedmont has applied for permits from the N.C. Division of Water Quality and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Last week it asked for permission from the N.C. Utilities Commission.

State law gives utilities authority to condemn land for pipelines. But "our goal is to work some sort of agreement out," Trusty said. "We certainly do not like to go there, so our goal is to work with property owners."

Trusty said the company held public meetings that showed a corridor for the pipeline, with alternative routes inside the corridor, in the summer of 2010.

Davidson says it started asking Piedmont for information on the project in July 2010, but learned the specifics only in January. It claims Piedmont delayed disclosing its plans until after approaching smaller landowners along the route.

The college says Piedmont has proposed a permanent easement 70 feet wide and temporary work space 20 feet wide on each side of the easement. Easements must be cleared of trees, so the project would cut a wide gash across the preserve.

Covered mostly by pine forest, the preserve includes a stream, wetlands and a hardwood stand the town has identified as of high ecological value. The dwarf-flowered heartleaf, a threatened plant found only in the Carolina Piedmont, grows there.

Davidson says the multiple gas and electric utility easements that cross its campus shows that it cooperates with utilities. Piedmont could avoid harm to its nature preserve, it said in the letter to regulators, by building the new line beside two existing pipeline easements that cross its property.

Among the research in the preserve is a 12-year study of reptiles and amphibians at a stream in the pipeline's path, the college said. Biology
professor Michael Dorcas, who leads the research, referred a request for comment to a college spokesman.

"It is a unique, long-term ecological project that would be devastated by the proposed siting of this pipeline," Davidson's letter said. Piedmont's "covert approach" to planning the route, it charged, prevented discussions with the college about alternatives.

Henderson: 704-358-5051
Colleges looking beyond the lecture

By Daniel de Vise

The lecture hall is under attack.

Science, math and engineering departments at many universities are abandoning or retooling the lecture as a style of teaching, worried that it’s driving students away.

The faculty at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore has dedicated this academic year to finding alternatives to the lecture in those subjects. Johns Hopkins, Harvard University and even the White House have hosted events in which scholars have assailed the lecture.

Lecture classrooms are the big-box retailers of academia, paragons of efficiency. One professor can teach hundreds of students in a single room, trailed by a retinue of teaching assistants.

But higher-education leaders increasingly blame the format for high attrition in science and math classes. They say the lecture is a turn-off, higher education at its most passive, leading to frustration and bad grades in highly challenging disciplines.

“Just because teachers say something at the front of the room doesn’t mean that students learn,” said Diane Bunce, a chemistry professor at Catholic University known for signature lessons on the chemistry of Thanksgiving dinners and hangovers. “Learning doesn’t happen in the physical space
between the instructor and the student. Learning happens in the student’s mind.”

One goal of the reform movement is to break up vast classrooms. Initiatives at American, Catholic and George Washington universities and across the University System of Maryland are dividing 200-student lectures into 50-student “studios” and 20-student seminars.

But just as important, experts say, is to rethink the way large classes are taught: to improve, if not replace, the lecture model. Faculty are learning to make courses more active by seeding them with questions, ask-your-neighbor discussions and instant surveys.

This ferment is also rippling through lecture halls in the humanities. But policymakers and university leaders are giving the question extra attention in science, technology, engineering and math, the fields collectively known as STEM.

About one-third of students enter college aspiring to STEM majors. Of that group, less than half complete a degree in a STEM field. Some migrate to the humanities. Others drop out.

There are myriad reasons for the mass exodus. The material is demanding. Math-science professors tend to be tough graders. Not everyone can go to a top-flight medical school.

**An evolving vision**

But college leaders are turning a critical eye to the lecture itself.

“We need to think about what happens when students have a bad experience with the course work,” Freeman Hrabowski, president of the University of Maryland Baltimore County, said last month in a speech at Johns Hopkins.

The lecture backlash signals an evolving vision of college as participatory exercise. Gone are the days when the professor could recite a textbook in class. The watchword of today is “active learning.” Students are working experiments, solving problems, answering questions — or at least registering an opinion on an interactive “smartboard” with an electronic clicker.

Since the 1990s, research on pedagogy has shifted from what instructors teach to what students learn. And studies have shown students in traditional lecture courses learn comparatively little.

“You have a professor reading a book to you. It should be insulting,” said Harvard physicist Eric Mazur. “But this model is so ingrained.” Mazur has developed an interactive teaching technique called peer instruction, in which
the lecture is broken into chunks. Between topics, Mazur poses questions and students work together to answer them.

The anti-lecture movement is fueled, too, by the proliferation of online lectures, which threaten the monopoly on learning long held by bricks-and-mortar campuses.

To stage a lecture today, it is no longer necessary for either professor or student to enter a classroom. Instead, they can connect via YouTube or iTunes.

General education lecture courses vary little from one university to the next. Students know they can log on to their laptops and watch the very same lecture — or a better one by a celebrity professor at a rival university.

The spread of online courses has raised the currency of top faculty at Harvard, Yale and MIT, who now lecture to the world. But this transformation also has reduced the lecture to a commodity that can be bought or shared. University leaders view the format with rising unease.

“It’s not as satisfying an experience as we would like the students to have,” said Scott Zeger, vice provost for research at Johns Hopkins in Baltimore.

**A dominant method**

For all the talk of change, the lecture remains the dominant teaching method across a broad range of first- and second-year math and science courses. The current generation of faculty grew up with the lecture. For them, it is comfortable and familiar. Some students, too, favor a format that doesn’t require them to speak.

Large lecture courses taught by star faculty remain coveted tickets at the nation’s top universities. Some material — psychology, history, Shakespeare — might even be suited to the format.

“If we want to get that whole human being out at the other end, we have to offer them a variety of experiences. And the lecture is part of it,” said Hartmut Doebel, a GWU biologist. “I don’t think we will ever get away from it completely.”

Doebel has redesigned an introductory lecture course as an interactive studio class, with 48 students working around tables in groups of six to nine, part of a Teaching & Learning Collaborative at the Foggy Bottom campus.

**Seeking improvement**

Other scholars are working to improve, rather than replace, the lecture model. Not surprisingly, college leaders are looking for initiatives that can be scaled up — cheaply — to large classrooms.
At Johns Hopkins, Zeger oversees the Gateway Sciences Initiative and monitors 10 redesigned courses that might hold the future of math-science instruction there.

In one new course, chemistry instructor Jane Greco records her lectures and posts them online as homework, a popular new use for the derided tool. Greco uses her time in the lecture hall as a sort of “office hours for everybody,” an interactive discussion of the lab experiment students completed in the previous session.

One goal, she said, is “to separate out what you’re getting in our classroom that you can’t get online.”

In another experimental course, engineer Michael Falk teaches computer programming to a class of 24. He, too, has put lectures online. Class time is devoted to writing programs and solving problems, with students working together and posting solutions on a projected screen.

A new biology course had 22 freshmen fan out across campus last fall for dirt samples, from which each student culled a new and heretofore unknown virus. Now, the class has picked one virus for genetic mapping.

One recent afternoon, instructor Emily Fisher led a discussion of genome sequencing while colleague Joel Schildbach sat among the students, questioning and cajoling, bridging the roles of teacher, pupil and coach.

“You can’t hang back,” he told the class, during a lull. “You’ve got to talk. You’ve got to argue. You’ve got to contribute.”

Active learning is hard work. Students say the interactive classes are more taxing than any lecture.

“It’s me doing it myself, so I have to know exactly what I’m doing,” said Jillian Tse, 18, a freshman from Burtonsville. Her virus, named Manatee, was chosen by the class for sequencing.

Tse contrasts the experience to the sleepy chemistry lecture she endured last fall: “You kind of just sat there and listened.”

Not all the ideas are new. At the University of Maryland College Park, engineering professors eliminated introductory lecture courses in 1991. Since then, students have spent the crucial first year engaged in actual engineering, building swing sets, helicopters and hovercrafts.

“What generally used to happen, almost across the country, was that the very first experience a student would have with engineering was a very large lecture hall,” said Kevin Calabro, an engineering instructor in College Park. “And I think a ton of students were turned off.”
A crowd at Kean University awaited the results of a trustees meeting Wednesday on the university president, Dawood Farahi.

**Split Board Backs Kean University’s Leader, Under Fire for Résumé**

By RICHARD PÉREZ-PEÑA

UNION, N.J. — Resisting mounting pressure from professors to fire the president of Kean University, Dawood Farahi, the deeply divided board of trustees voted on Wednesday night to keep him, dismissing allegations that he had falsified his academic credentials as no more than evidence of “carelessness.”

After hearing the results of an inquiry by an outside lawyer, grim-faced Kean trustees voted 7 to 4, with one abstention, in favor of a statement acknowledging errors in Dr. Farahi’s résumé, saying, “We deplore them,” but adding that “none of the investigator’s findings is material” to his ability to do his job. A spokesman said the board had not decided whether to release the lawyer’s report.

A standing-room crowd of some 300 students and faculty members repeatedly shouted down the board with chants of “shame on you” and “the board must go.” The board had deliberated for four hours, the second time in a week it had gone late into the night pondering a controversy that has consumed the university’s attention for months.
Afterward, Dr. Farahi released a statement saying, “I take full responsibility for the errors I have made, and I apologize for the negative attention that I have brought to the university.”

Dr. Farahi was a controversial figure long before questions were raised about his résumé, and Kean is just one of several New Jersey state institutions to face serious questions in the last few years about the way it operates and chooses its leaders. This month, the faculty at New Jersey Institute of Technology called for an outside investigation into the institution’s decision to call off a search for a new president and give the job to an insider.

At Kean, with 16,000 students, Mr. Farahi was lauded in his nine years for renovating the campus south of Newark. But he also spent most of that time at war with faculty members, who have described him as autocratic. “Tyrannical is an understatement,” said Bryan Lees, a chemistry professor and longtime faculty activist.

At the same time, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education has warned Kean that it could lose its accreditation for failure to measure student achievement adequately by March 1.

The controversy at Kean follows a series of serious blows to the state’s public institutions of higher education, including ones at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, where a series of scandals led to the ouster of top officials and the 2008 conviction of a state senator. Those scandals prompted an investigation by the State Commission of Investigation into four other institutions, which found shoddy accounting, rampant political meddling and minimal oversight.

New Jersey’s 12 public four-year colleges and universities, and 19 community colleges, were once overseen by a chancellor and a Department of Higher Education, but a 1994 law eliminated both, making the institutions largely independent. Experts say that most campuses have run well on their own, but at others, autonomy has fed abuses.

“There are pros and cons to having a university system with central authority, like California or New York,” said Jane V. Wellman, director of the National Association of System Heads, an organization of state colleges. “But when you’ve got a political environment in New Jersey that lends itself to cronyism, coupled with a lack of any central accountability, it’s a problem.”

New Jersey has imposed new accounting standards on state colleges and universities and created the post of secretary of higher education, though
with very limited authority. Almost a year after Gov. Chris Christie
nominated the first secretary, Rochelle Hendricks, the State Senate still has
not voted on confirming her. In January, Mr. Christie proposed some
consolidation, merging parts of the medical university into Rutgers
University, and the Camden campus of Rutgers into Rowan University.

But the basic structure remains an array of state colleges, with no college
system. Each campus is governed by a board of trustees, appointed by
governors. The disbanded Department of Higher Education once screened
trustee candidates, narrowing the field a governor could select from.

Now, there is no screening, with an important caveat: the state senator who
represents a school has unofficial veto power over appointments, giving
legislators significant sway over boards and administrators.

“In recent years, far more time and energy have been spent in Trenton
positioning political allies for appointment to such positions than on efforts
to scrutinize college and university operations,” the Commission of
Investigation wrote in 2007.

Where the Department of Higher Education once worked for all state
colleges and universities on budgets and programs, each campus now must
jockey on its own for money and legislation. That has further increased the
power of the schools’ legislative patrons, and persuaded colleges and
universities to hire lobbyists — that is, state entities paying politically
connected advocates to influence other state entities.

When it comes to choosing new presidents, there have been repeated
complaints that the process was stacked in favor of an insider with local
political connections.

In 2004, the University of Medicine and Dentistry, in Newark, named its
own board chairman, John J. Petillo, acting president, and then president.
Mr. Petillo had been a university administrator, but he had no background in
medicine or science, an unusual profile for a medical school chief. He did
have strong ties to Essex County political leaders. Overwhelmed by
scandals, he lasted less than two years.

In 2004 and 2005, two Democratic governors, James E. McGreevey and
Richard J. Codey, pressured Ramapo College — unsuccessfully, in the end
— to hire a Democratic legislator as president.

Similarly, when Dr. Farahi was named president of Kean in 2003, the faculty
Senate dismissed the search as a sham with a foreordained result. A
professor at Kean, Dr. Farahi had never held a high administrative post, but
he was friendly with local political powers.
Other New Jersey state colleges and universities, including Rutgers, are in the midst of rigorous and wide-ranging president searches.

Dr. Farahi has clashed with the Kean faculty over many issues, including increased reliance on part-time instructors, elimination of department chair positions elected by professors, dissolution of academic programs, and a requirement that professors fill out time cards. After Mr. McGreevey resigned in scandal, Kean gave him a job — teaching ethics. But the trustees stood by Dr. Farahi for years.

Last fall, the union for full-time faculty, the Kean Teachers Federation, began raising questions about résumés for Dr. Farahi, made public over the years. Peer-reviewed journals said they had never seen articles he claimed were accepted for publication. There were conflicting dates given for academic milestones, even different titles and topics for his doctoral dissertation.

Before Wednesday night, Dr. Farahi, who declined to be interviewed for this article, had offered no explanations for some discrepancies, while blaming others on university employees who typed up his biography.

“Any one of these deceptions would have led to the dismissal of a faculty member,” said James Castiglione, president of the professors’ union, “much less half a dozen of them.”