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The overwhelming depth of need for dentists is a well publicized and pressing concern across North Carolina, and specifically in the East. While many counties lack a sufficient number of dental professionals to care for residents, at least four counties lack a single practicing dentist. Considering the long-term detrimental health effects of neglecting dental care, the need to address this shortage is immediate.

It was that urgency that prompted East Carolina officials to make a strong push for founding a dental school. The university is already a center for medical education, thanks to the Brody School of Medicine, and the addition of a School of Dentistry would allow East Carolina to broaden its reach while meeting its mission of service to the region and the state.

That dream will come to fruition next year, when the school opens its doors to its first class of 50 students. Once filled, the program will boast 65 faculty members, 100 staff and 200 students, operating in a 100,000-square-foot building here as well as 10 community centers in rural areas of North Carolina. That design should allow the dental school to have a reach that is both expansive and located in communities of need.

On Friday, the school announced that the main facility would be named for Ross, a retired Greenville orthodontist who generously donated $4 million to East Carolina. Not only does that represent one of the largest gifts in school history, it exemplifies the type of spirit the school hopes to instill in its students.
Author promotes peace through education

By Kim Grizzard
The Daily Reflector
Monday, March 1, 2010

A best-selling author who talks to school children, military leaders, politicians, journalists and audiences throughout the country said Monday that Americans need to learn to listen. Before an audience of about 5,000 in East Carolina University’s Minges Coliseum, Greg Mortenson, co-author of the New York Times bestseller “Three Cups of Tea,” poured out his hopes for promoting peace through education. Mortenson, 52, a featured speaker as part of the Cunanan Leadership Speaker Series, has dedicated nearly two decades of his life to establishing schools in remote and often turbulent areas of Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Mortenson was trying to honor his sister’s memory by climbing a mountain known as K2 in Pakistan in 1993 when he became lost near the village of Korphe. The people of the village came to his rescue, offering him food and shelter while he regained his strength. As his eyes opened to the needs around him, Mortenson began to wonder if a different memorial to his sister might be more fitting.

“There were 84 children sitting in the dirt doing their school lessons,” Mortenson remembered. “A young girl came up to me. She asked me for help to build a school, so I made a promise. That pretty much is what changed my life forever.”

Since that time, Mortenson, co-founder of the Central Asia Institute, has established more than 130 schools for nearly 60,000 children, many of them girls with little or no educational opportunities. His work, which has helped the number of children in school in Afghanistan increase from 800,000 to more than 8 million in the last decade, has attracted the attention of government and military leaders seeking solutions for fighting terrorism.

Mortenson’s book, released in 2006, originally carried the subtitle “One Man’s Mission to Fight Terrorism One School at a Time,” though he told his audience that those words were the publisher’s choice and not his. It was not until the subtitle of the paperback edition was changed to “One Man’s Mission to Promote Peace One School at a Time” that the book went on to sell more than 3.5 million copies. Some of those copies went to the armed forces. Mortenson said. “Three Cups of Tea” is now mandatory reading for senior U.S. military commanders.

In his speech, he was at times critical and at other times congratulatory of the military’s effort to achieve peace in Afghanistan. Mortenson, a U.S. Army veteran, was complimentary of the appreciation that Gen. David Petraeus, who oversees the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, has for building relationships. But he said a recent decision for a troop surge in Afghanistan was made with little input from people in America and none from those in Afghanistan.
“The elders in Afghanistan were never consulted,” he said. “If we’re trying to determine the outcome of a country, we should probably talk to people there and say, ‘Hey, how can we help you out?’

Mortenson, who titled the first chapter of his book “Failure,” said one of the best lessons his successes and struggles have taught him is that the best way to help people is to empower them.

“I always thought I knew what the answer was,” he said. “You have to listen to people, and you have to get them involved.”

The title “Three Cups of Tea” comes from an encounter Mortenson had with his mentor in Korphe. Haji Ali, the village chief, taught him about respecting the ways of the people.

“I learned from my father (Irvin Mortenson, who started the first teaching hospital in Tanzania), Haji Ali and General Petraeus,” Mortenson said. “They all said that word ‘listen’ more. We need to listen.”

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Greg Mortenson speaks to a crowd gathered at Minges Coliseum at ECU on Monday evening.
Greenville through an open lens

RALEIGH

The image, nearly half a century old now, shows a clear delineation in North Carolina politics. On the front row stood the younger generation – Greensboro businessman "Skipper" Bowles and the state's new governor, Terry Sanford, flanking President John F. Kennedy, who had won a big victory in the Tar Heel state the year before. In the second row stood the older generation: U.S. Sen. B. Everett Jordan, former Gov. Luther Hodges, by then Kennedy's secretary of commerce, and U.S. Sen. Sam Ervin.

It was the last decade of Democratic dominance of all those offices, a historic image representing the Old South politics of Ervin and Jordan and the New South reformers Bowles and Sanford, whose legacy still influences North Carolina and national politics. UNC President Erskine Bowles, son of Skipper Bowles, was recently asked by President Barack Obama to share the job of finding ways to straighten out the nation's finances. And former Gov. Jim Hunt, heir to the Sanford wing of the state Democratic Party, has been a key player in national education policy and a driver of public policy initiatives statewide.

It's just the sort of photo that academic researchers, newspaper editors and writers of history are always looking for, hoping to gain permission or pay a fee to reprint the image or make copies for their personal collections.

That job just got a little easier in North Carolina with the donation of some 7,500 photographic images to East Carolina University's Joyner Library by the Whichard family of Greenville, longtime publishers of the Daily Reflector. The images – many of them in large-format 4x5 negatives taken by Reflector photographers – were donated years earlier to the university, before the family sold its business to Cox Newspapers in 1996. Until recent years, says Jordy Whichard, a former publisher whose family started the business in 1882, no one had figured out how best to use the collection or make it available to the public.

At one conference, he said the other day, it was probably someone from the university who suggested making a gift of the copyright as well. It was an unusual suggestion. Most major collections of such images require a fee and permission for publication purposes. What ECU officials were suggesting was audacious: Give the images to the library – to the public, really – without strings attached so anyone could not only view the images, but use them without cost for non-commercial purposes.

"From a family and company point of view," Whichard said, "we had given it to the university and we were not thinking about how to digitize it or monetize it." The point was to make the images accessible, and imposing the copyright "would defeat that purpose."

The result is a first-rate collection of images taken over a period of about two decades, when Greenville was in the process of changing rapidly from a small postwar town with an economy based on tobacco to the late 1950s civil rights era. The Daily Reflector Image Collection is online at digital.lib.ecu.edu/reflector in a fairly easy to use format, part of a Seeds of Change exhibit created in the library with history professor Christopher Oakley and manuscript curator Dale Sauter.

It's remarkable to be able to search, download and reprint images without the usual signed permission forms and exchanges of cash. Some of the pictures are gems – such as the 1950s era Hoover Cart that Demo-crats paraded around town in hopes of drumming up votes for Adlai Stevenson. There were also photos reflecting the stresses of life in unhappy times for black citizens. A photographic image of a chilling note warned a woman that the KKK would be watching to make sure she stayed at home.

Whichard said the family's stewardship of the newspaper for more than a century had always involved addressing the interests of the region. "Any success that our family has is because of the support we received from the community and the growth of the city and the region," he said. "Donating these images was one way to give back to the community."

Jack Betts is a Raleigh-based columnist and associate editor for The Charlotte Observer.
Regional tourney may leave town
By Ronnie Woodward
The Daily Reflector
Monday, March 1, 2010
Monday’s news conference at East Carolina University’s Murphy Center was a prelude to the week full of high school basketball to be held in Greenville this week.
But it also could be the last.
Greenville is entering its 20th year as the host of the North Carolina High School Athletic Association’s Eastern Regional basketball tournament, but the two sides are in the last year of a four-year contract, and the chance of that contract being extended appears unlikely.
Tournament Director Jimmie Grimsley called the tournament remaining in Greenville “doubtful” in Monday’s opening statement.
“I am not overly optimistic, even though I’m not totally pessimistic,” Grimsley said.
“Because of the economy, it’s a tough sell to get money from corporations that are experiencing layoffs and things of that sort.”
The boys’ tournament will be held at ECU’s Minges Coliseum, J.H. Rose High School will host the girls’ tournament. Both start today and end Saturday with the winners advancing to the state championships.
The NCHSAA has given Greenville a deadline of May 1 to come up with sufficient money and sponsorship to renew its contract. Grimsley said it takes about $65,000 to run the tournament.
If Greenville and the NCHSAA cannot agree on terms, the athletic association will then entertain bids from other cities. Wilson and Fayetteville hosted the tournament before it moved to Greenville.
“We have to know (by May 1), because if it doesn’t work out here, there are other (cities) that are interested,” NCHSAA representative Carolyne Shannonhouse said. “You have to look at all the different options, but of course, we don’t want to leave this area.”
Debbie Vargas, chief executive officer and executive director of the Greenville-Pitt County Convention & Visitors Bureau, said this week’s prep basketball action will bring about $125,000 to the local economy — with lodging being the main beneficiary.
But Grimsley said sponsorship is the obstacle preventing Greenville from continuing to host. University Health Systems of Eastern Carolina has been the tourney’s main sponsor.
since 2000, Grimsley said he will start looking at sponsorship possibilities after this week's tournament.
“We would love to get sponsors and keep it here for the next 10 years,” Grimsley said.
“We have no problem getting help from East Carolina University and Pitt County Schools. ... It's just a matter of sponsorship.”
Even if the NCHSAA and Greenville decide to part ways, Grimsley said the tournament could return.
“Let's say it goes to Raleigh for the next four years,” He said. “I would hope that people around here would miss it enough that we could bid on it again. I think by that time there could be some renewed spirit and maybe the economy has turned around.”

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Even in these days of partisan rancor, there is a bipartisan consensus on the high value of postsecondary education. That more people should go to college is usually taken as a given. In his State of the Union address last month, President Obama echoed the words of countless high school guidance counselors around the country: "In this economy, a high school diploma no longer guarantees a good job." Virginia Governor Bob McDonnell, who gave the Republican response, concurred: "All Americans agree that a young person needs a world-class education to compete in the global economy."

The statistics seem to bear him out. People with college degrees make a lot more than people without them, and that difference has been growing. But does that mean that we should help more kids go to college — or that we should make it easier for people who didn't go to college to make a living? (See the 10 best college presidents.)

We may be close to maxing out on the first strategy. Our high college drop-out rate — 40% of kids who enroll in college don't get a degree within six years — may be a sign that we're trying to push too many people who aren't suited for college to enroll. It has been estimated that, in 2007, most people in their 20s who had college degrees were not in jobs that required them: another sign that we are pushing kids into college who will not get much out of it but debt. (Comment on this story.)

The benefits of putting more people in college are also oversold. Part of the college wage premium is an illusion. People who go to college are, on average, smarter than people who don't. In an economy that increasingly rewards intelligence, you'd expect college grads to pull ahead of the pack even if their diplomas signified nothing but their smarts. College must make many students more productive workers. But at least some of the apparent value of a college degree, and maybe a lot of it, reflects the fact that employers can use it as a rough measure of job applicants' intelligence and willingness to work hard.

We could probably increase the number of high school seniors who are ready to go to college — and likely to make it to graduation — if we made the K-12 system more academically rigorous. But let's face it: college
isn't for everyone, especially if it takes the form of four years of going to classes on a campus. (See pictures of the college dorm's evolution.)

To talk about college this way may sound elitist. It may even sound philistine, since the purpose of a liberal-arts education is to produce well-rounded citizens rather than productive workers. But perhaps it is more foolishly elitist to think that going to school until age 22 is necessary to being well-rounded, or to tell millions of kids that their future depends on performing a task that only a minority of them can actually accomplish.

The good news is that there have never been more alternatives to the traditional college. Some of these will no doubt be discussed by a panel of education experts on Feb. 26 at the National Press Club, a debate that will be aired on PBS. Online learning is more flexible and affordable than the brick-and-mortar model of higher education. Certification tests could be developed so that in many occupations employers could get more useful knowledge about a job applicant than whether he has a degree. Career and technical education could be expanded at a fraction of the cost of college subsidies. Occupational licensure rules could be relaxed to create opportunities for people without formal education.

It is absurd that people have to get college degrees to be considered for good jobs in hotel management or accounting — or journalism. It is inefficient, both because it wastes a lot of money and because it locks people who would have done good work out of some jobs. The tight connection between college degrees and economic success may be a nearly unquestioned part of our social order. Future generations may look back and shudder at the cruelty of it.

See TIME's special report on paying for college.

See pictures of college mascots.

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March 2, 2010

At Brown, Spotlight on the President’s Role at a Bank

By GRAHAM BOWLEY

PROVIDENCE, R.I. — Across this quiet quadrangle, behind the wrought iron gates and beyond University Hall, lurks a bogeyman of Wall Street.

It has come to this: Goldman Sachs, whose place at the center of so many concentric circles of power has thrust it into the grassy knoll realm of conspiracy theories, is the talk of Brown University.

To be precise, it is Goldman’s ties to Ruth J. Simmons, Brown’s beloved president, that has some students and alumni buzzing.

The trouble began in December, when Ms. Simmons’s long tenure on Goldman’s board — which, until then, it seems, had gone virtually unnoticed at Brown — suddenly came to the fore. Dr. Simmons, it turned out, was among the 10 people who decided how big those Goldman bonuses would be — including the $9 million payout for the bank’s chairman and chief executive, Lloyd C. Blankfein.

The Bears — the ones at Brown, not on Wall Street — roared.

It is a remarkable reversal for Dr. Simmons, 64, and, indeed, for the stature of corporate directorships. A spot on a board, particularly at a moneymaker like Goldman, used to be considered a plum job. The demands were relatively modest compared with the rewards. Dr. Simmons, for instance, was paid $323,539 last year for her work on the board, and will soon leave her position at Goldman with stock that is currently worth about $4.3 million. That was on top of her salary at Brown, which was $576,000 this year.

An e-mail message sent among a group of alumni showed surprise that Dr. Simmons was deciding Mr. Blankfein’s bonus, saying, “Who knew Brown had this much power?”

Indeed, corporate America has a long history of stocking boards with people plucked from academia and elsewhere. Roger S. Berlind, the theatrical producer, sat on the board of Lehman Brothers. Gen. Tommy R. Franks sat on the board of Bank of America. And Beverly Sills, the operatic soprano, served on the board of American Express.

But now, in this postbailout world, would-be corporate directors are having second thoughts. Some worry they lack the business or financial savvy needed to watch over high-octane trading strategies, according to executive recruiters. Others, like Dr. Simmons, worry about the increasing demands on their time.

“There is a lot of work, and a lot of risks,” said Theodore L. Dysart, a managing partner with Heidrick & Struggles, the executive search firm. “Directors are looking in the mirror and thinking, this was a great gig a few years ago, but do I necessarily want to sign up for this again?”
Goldman, for its part, seems unbowed. While Mr. Blankfein’s payout for 2009 — a pittance next to his record $68 million in 2007 — was regarded as an unusual show of restraint on Wall Street, Goldman has refused to bend to more public demands to rein in its pay. In a filing on Monday, Goldman said it had rejected several letters from shareholders demanding that its board reform executive pay and recoup some pay awards.

For Dr. Simmons, the controversy is not going away as quietly. Even though she said last month that she had decided not to stand for re-election to the board at the annual shareholders meeting later this year, some of her critics say she never should have taken the job at Goldman to begin with — and that she certainly should not have accepted so much money.

The university newspaper, The Brown Daily Herald, has questioned why Dr. Simmons joined Goldman’s board. Others have been less generous, essentially accusing her of selling out to Wall Street.

Simon Liebling, a sophomore from Highland Park, N.J., got tongues wagging on College Hill when he criticized Dr. Simmons in The Daily Herald.

“Most people agreed with my basic point that this brought shame on the university,” Mr. Liebling, 19, said during an interview in a coffee shop at the center of campus. “It has been taken by most people to be outrageous.”

Dr. Simmons, whose ascension at Brown, part of the Ivy League, was seen as a triumph for African-Americans and women, defended her role at Goldman. In a telephone interview, she said she was used to lively debate around the university and that the public controversy surrounding Goldman had no influence on her decision to withdraw from the board. Instead, she said, she stepped down after 10 years because the job was taking up too much of her time, particularly in the wake of the financial collapse. Earlier, she stepped down from the board of Pfizer, but she remains on the board of Texas Instruments.

The role of directors, Dr. Simmons said, has been “redefined,” adding that the crisis “involved many more meetings, including telephonic meetings, and a lot of material to deal with.”

Thomas J. Tisch, the chancellor of Brown, said the university’s board saw no conflicts with Dr. Simmons’s role at Goldman.

The financial collapse that began on Wall Street hurt Brown and many other colleges and universities. As the markets fell, Brown’s endowment shrank to $2.04 billion as of mid-2009, from $2.78 billion in 2008. The university has had to scale down some of its plans but is still forging ahead with construction projects — these, shrouded in Building Brown logos, dot the streets and squares.

Dr. Simmons, a professor of French and a former president of Smith College, said history would judge Goldman and Wall Street. But she declined to comment on whether outsize pay on Wall Street contributed to the crisis, as some have suggested, by giving banks and traders the incentive to seek short-term rewards at the expense of long-term prosperity.

“There are going to be lots of books written. I think people will make their own decisions,” Dr. Simmons said. “It’s easy to look back and say, ‘Gee, that was a lot,’ but you have to look forward and see how people react.”
For all the chatter, Brown’s faculty seems to have taken the Goldman episode in stride.

In his small third-floor office of the Barus & Holley Building for physics and engineering, Barrett Hazeltine, emeritus professor of engineering, said the plunge in Brown’s endowment had dealt a blow to Dr. Simmons’s dreams for the university.

“She has a grand vision for Brown, but the drop in the stock market and therefore the endowment has curtailed some of her dream, and she wants to make it back,” Mr. Hazeltine said.

Still, many students and teachers at Brown would rather see their president on the board of a major company like Goldman than the president of, say, Harvard or Yale, Mr. Hazeltine said.

“We would rather have one of ours up there,” he said.
msnbc.com

Underage drinking? Colleges may tell mom, dad

Some schools tell parents of even minor violations in effort to curb problem

The Associated Press
updated 3:29 p.m. ET, Sun., Feb. 28, 2010

At Virginia Tech, where tailgating and raucous apartment complex parties are time-honored rituals, university officials are turning increasingly to Mom and Dad to curb problem underage drinking.

This semester, the school in Blacksburg, Va., began notifying parents when their under-21 students are found guilty of even minor alcohol violations such as getting caught with a beer in a dorm room.

Although it's common for colleges to alert parents of major alcohol offenses — or when a student faces suspension — Virginia Tech is part of a small but growing number sending letters home on minor ones.

The debate about how much to involve parents in such cases is a balancing act for colleges and universities. Officials want to hold young adults accountable as they venture out on their own, are well aware that drinking is part of the college experience, and also recognize potential allies in a generation of hands-on parents who can help when things go too far.

"I think it helps students open up to parents," said Steven Clarke, director of Virginia Tech's College Alcohol Abuse Prevention Center. "And parents can be helpful in setting boundaries students might need."

The beefed-up parental notification policy is part of a broader strategy that includes alcohol-education classes and a "party positive" program that encourages responsible drinking.

Students not pleased
The student reaction to the policy change, not surprisingly, has been less than enthusiastic.

"If you have one beer in the dorm and you get caught, I don't feel like parents should be notified," said Erik Pryslak, a junior engineering major. "Now that we're all in college, we're all adults. It's kind of your responsibility to take care of yourself. If you want to make your parents aware you're about to be kicked out of school, then it's on you."

Studies show that students who say their parents would disapprove of them drinking are less likely to drink heavily once they get to college, said Toben Nelson, an assistant professor at the University of Minnesota School of Public Health who has studied campus drinking.

At Virginia Tech, the school has operated on a "three strikes" system for years: Students get one strike for a minor alcohol violation and two for a major one — things like getting a DUI or vomiting all over a residence hall bathroom. Three strikes and a student is suspended for at least one semester.
After a spate of alcohol-related deaths on college campuses, Congress in the late 1990s changed student privacy laws to lower barriers to parental notification in cases involving students under 21.

Schools took a wide array of approaches in response. Virginia Tech started notifying parents of under-21 students after major alcohol offenses or when a student had accumulated two strikes with two minor ones.

But some parents complained that because they had not been notified of minor offenses, they were in the dark until a student was suddenly facing suspension, said Edward Spencer, Virginia Tech’s vice president for student affairs. Hence the change this semester — a move Spencer says also reflects changing times.

Millenial's parents in frequent contact
Parents of Generation X students were often reluctant to get involved when the school invoked an emergency clause in privacy laws and alerted them of alcohol problems, he said.

"The response would be, "You know, I’m leaving on a cruise. I’m going to a class reunion."

But today, parents of millennials tend to be tethered by cell phone to children who studies show often idolize their parents — so it makes sense to go a step further in parental involvement, he said.

"We'd like to strike a happy medium," Spencer said. "We're grateful for the positive involvement of parents. We find it difficult when their involvement is over-involvement."

Research has found more than 40 percent of college students reported at least one symptom of alcohol abuse or dependence. One recent study estimated that more than 500,000 full-time students at four-year colleges suffer injuries each year related to drinking, and about 1,700 die in such accidents.

"When it comes to safety, there really is a fine line," said Max DiSesa, a sophomore from Durham, N.H. "I completely understand Virginia Tech and they want to keep people safe. But I think this might be overall detrimental to the growth of students."

Some universities already have found success alerting parents earlier. The University at Albany, State University of New York has seen a decline in repeat offenders since it began notifying parents of under-21 students of minor alcohol violations four years ago, said Laurie Garafola, director of residential life.

"I don't send many second letters out to parents," she said.

At the University of North Carolina Wilmington, the philosophy is different. The school — which like many others stresses shared responsibility to parents and students during summer orientation — does not notify parents of minor offenses. Parents, however, are notified before any under-21 student is suspended.

"Part of students coming to college is to learn how to be a responsible adult — and hopefully learn from their mistakes," said Patricia Leonard, vice chancellor for student affairs.

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