Registered dietitian Melani Duffrin, an associate professor of Nutrition Science at East Carolina University, was part of a panel of food experts Saturday during Food Network's South Beach Wine and Food Show in Miami, Fla.

The panel was brought together to celebrate the launch of a new traveling exhibit called “Cooking: the Exhibition.” Duffrin was invited to join the panel by Doug Duda, creator and host of the A&E International television series “The Well-Seasoned Traveler” and development manager for the new exhibition.

“I asked Melani to join the panel because of her work with FoodMASTER,” said Duda. “FoodMASTER is demonstrating the direction that food education is taking science education today, and I wanted Melani to help us bring the message to a wider audience.”

Duffrin, director of special projects at ECU's Center for Science, Mathematics, and Technology Education, has worked for more than 10 years to put her cooking and food-handling curriculum in the hands of elementary school teachers across the country.

FoodMASTER is a hands-on way to learn biology, chemistry, basic math, algebra, geometry, measurement, nutrition, health and problem solving. It's funded by the National Institutes for Health Science Education Partnership Award and the USDA Higher Education Challenge Award.
Other panelists were Harvard Science and Cooking Class teaching fellow Naveen Sinha; chef Chris Young, co-author of the forthcoming book “Modernists Cooking”; and Wayne LaBarr, the exhibition's designer. The panel was moderated by chef/author/television personality Art Smith, chef, two-time winner of the James Beard Award.

Duffrin and the other panelists discussed how this generation's interest in food is leading to increased interest in science and why understanding food science is so important today.

“The experience was fantastic,” said Duffrin. “We had a great conversation attended by food industry guests about how cooking and science can help the next generation be healthier. If we want a healthier population, we have to help children and families learn to make good food decisions. This was one of the many points we all agreed on.”

The wine and food show attracted more than 52,000 foodies from around the world and showcased Food Network personalities such as Bobby Flay, Paula Deen, Rachael Ray, Giada De Laurentiis and Guy Fieri.

“Cooking: the Exhibition” is an exploration of cooking as the everyday science experiment that defines our cultures, our bodies and our planet. The exhibition will open at the Liberty Science Museum in 2011 and then travel throughout the country.
NCSU wants to add climate change master's

BY JAY PRICE - Staff Writer
RALEIGH N.C.–State University is seeking permission to start a new graduate program in the rapidly emerging field of planning for the effects of climate change.

If NCSU gets UNC-system approval for the new Masters in Climate Change and Society, it will enroll students this fall.

It's not clear what the multidisciplinary program's chances are, given that universities across the UNC system have been cutting a host of degree programs to deal with repeated state budget cuts. University leaders also are trying to build relationships with the new Republican majorities in the legislature, which include a number of climate change skeptics.

It should help, though, that the one-year program is expected to pay its own way via tuition of about $13,500 and that there's a growing demand for the expertise it would teach.

The idea is to prepare students for roles in handling the effects from changes such as rising sea levels and shifts in growing areas for crops, said John Fountain, head of NCSU's Marine, Earth and Atmospheric Sciences Department.

Because climate change has the potential to affect virtually every aspect of society, demand is growing for people who can anticipate the effects, develop policies to counter them and effectively communicate such policies to the public, Fountain said.

The proposed program is aimed at students and professionals not from science fields and will help them become, in a sense, liaisons between the public and climate scientists.
Fountain said government, businesses and nonprofits need more workers with expertise in climate change. In particular, recent guidelines by the Securities and Exchange Commission mean publicly held companies will need more experts to keep stockholders informed about the effects of climate change on their business plans.

**A broad range**
The proposed program includes courses in a broad range of subjects, such as environmental communications, economics, climate risk analysis, agriculture health and trade and hydrology.

Students will get a good grounding in the basic science of climate change, and lessons won't shy from its most controversial aspect - the scientific evidence that it's caused by human activity, Fountain said. However, he added, the focus will be on practical solutions to deal with the effects.

"It isn't really very important to these policymakers if the sea is rising because of CO\(_2\) generated by humans or from natural causes," he said. "They need to be able to understand the probable effects and what to do about them."

What's thought to be the first such program in the nation started in 2004 at Columbia University in New York. Its graduates mainly have gotten jobs in government, nonprofits or international organizations concerned with climate change, said Arezou Paksima, assistant director of the program. Columbia expects demand from businesses to grow.

Those who enroll, she said, are often idealistic and do so because they think that the federal government isn't properly addressing climate change.

**Why add now?**
Across the UNC system, budget-starved administrators have been dropping degree programs. Among graduate programs alone, NCSU has eliminated 10 degrees in the past four years.

But Duane Larick, dean of the graduate school, said it is also important to add programs in emerging fields when there is a clear value to the state and to employers.
In addition to the climate-change program, NCSU wants to add another graduate program in the hot field of nanoengineering. Via distance learning, that program will be available to students across the nation.

"In tough budget times, it's obviously important for us to be willing to create the programs that will produce the kind of students that employers need," Larick said.

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**What's next?**
Like all proposals for new master's degree programs, N.C. State University's new Masters in Climate Change and Society will be considered by a panel of faculty members from across the 16-campus system. The General Administration will take the panel's findings into account and decide on a recommendation, which it will present to a Board of Governors committee.

It's unclear when it could reach the board, but there may not be enough time for the proposal to work its way through the system for the next meeting, on April 8, said UNC system spokeswoman Joni Worthington.
Pfc. Lane Higson and Pfc. Casey Higson joined the Army together and have not separated since.

By Tom Sileo/Creators Syndicate

MYRTLE BEACH, SC - About two years after receiving their psychology degrees from East Carolina University, Pfc. Lane Higson and Pfc. Casey Higson, who are identical twins, signed up to serve their country.

The Myrtle Beach, S.C., natives are now Army communications specialists serving with the Enhanced Combat Aviation Brigade, 1st Infantry Division in Iraq. Spc. Roland Hale recently interviewed the twins at Camp Taji. "We do everything together, obviously, and we've done lots, but we never thought we'd be doing this," said Lane.

"We're very lucky to get to work here," said Casey. "We get to help people, sometimes if it's just by talking to them."
With shared dreams, college degrees, warm personalities and great smiles, the Higson twins could have done anything they wanted. They chose to put on identical uniforms and protect America. The 28-year-old sisters are scheduled to return home from Iraq -- together, of course – next month.

Sgt. John Williams III is serving in Iraq with Company B, 1st Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 25th Infantry Division. Luckily for the soldier, his dad has a job that allows the son to see his father in war zones. John Williams Jr. is band manager for country music star Trace Adkins, who supports the troops by performing on USO tours.

As Sgt. Shawn Miller explains, the father and son saw each other in Afghanistan during Adkins' 2008 USO concert series. Yet due to mission priorities and geography, they didn't expect to see each other during recent performances in Iraq. Unbeknownst to his father, Sgt. Williams reached out to his superiors and asked for some help.

"My chain of command was very supportive, and then I started working details on surprising my dad," he said.

On Nov. 1, the soldier's dad received an incredible welcome to Contingency Operating Base Speicher. With Adkins at their side, the father and son embraced, shared some laughs and treasured some unexpected bonus time. "This is just a thrill that is hard to describe," exclaimed the elder Williams. "These long deployments are hard on everyone, and just to get to see him here is unbelievable."

Cpl. Brandon Edgerton works hard as a supply warehouse clerk in Afghanistan. His dedication led the Medical Logistics Company, Combat Logistics Regiment 15 (Forward), 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward) to award a well-deserved Good Conduct Medal to the Marine. But Edgerton didn't initially expect to receive it from a very special guest.

On Nov. 23 at Camp Leatherneck, 1st Sgt. Evan Unstead, who serves with the Army's Distribution Company, Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, awarded the Good Conduct Medal to his son. Cpl. Shannon McMillan covered the Afghanistan ceremony. "It's the first time we both are in the same place on active duty in uniform," Edgerton said.
Unstead was thrilled to be able to make the ceremony, and the longtime soldier is also very proud that his son chose a career in the military.

"It keeps him on the straight and narrow," Unstead said. "So far I have heard nothing more than good things about him. It makes me proud."

The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have deeply impacted thousands of military families, and in some tragic cases, torn them apart. While war's harsh realities cannot be ignored, these inspiring stories shouldn't be cast aside either. These families have lent their names to a calling they feel is bigger than themselves, and serve with honor under tough conditions. As we spend time with our loved ones this holiday season, we thank Edgerton, Unstead, Williams, and the Higson twins for their sacrifices. You give America a reason to celebrate.

*Editors Note: To find out more about Tom Sileo, or to read features by other Creators Syndicate writers and cartoonists, visit the Creators Syndicate web site at www.creators.com.*
More College Graduates Take Public Service Jobs

By CATHERINE RAMPELL
If Alison Sadock had finished college before the financial crisis, she probably would have done something corporate. Maybe a job in retail, or finance, or brand management at a big company — the kind of work her oldest sister, who graduated in the economically effervescent year of 2005, does at PepsiCo.

“You know, a normal job,” Ms. Sadock says.

But she graduated in a deep recession in the spring of 2009 when jobs were scarce. Instead of the merchandising career she had imagined, she landed in public service, working on behalf of America’s sickest children.

Ms. Sadock is part of a cohort of young college graduates who ended up doing good because the economy did them wrong.
As job hunts became tough after the crisis, anecdotal evidence suggested that more young people considered public service. Exactly how big that shift was is now becoming clear: In 2009 alone, 16 percent more young college graduates worked for the federal government than in the previous year and 11 percent more for nonprofit groups, according to an analysis by The New York Times of data from the American Community Survey of the United States Census Bureau. A smaller Labor Department survey showed that the share of educated young people in these jobs continued to rise last year.

“It’s not uncommon for me to hear of over 100 applications for a nonprofit position, sometimes many more than that, and many more Ivy League college graduates applying than before,” said Diana Aviv, chief executive of Independent Sector, a trade group for nonprofits. “Some of these people haven’t been employed for a while and are happy to have something. But once they’re there, they’ve recalibrated and reoriented themselves toward public service.”

It is not clear, though, whether a different starting point will truly “recalibrate” these workers’ long-term career aspirations — that is, whether their newfound paths will stick, or if they will jump to more lucrative careers when jobs are more plentiful.

Renewed interest in public service is visible across the country. Applications for AmeriCorps positions have nearly tripled to 258,829 in 2010 from 91,399 in 2008. The number of applicants for Teach for America climbed 32 percent last year, to a record 46,359. Organizations like Harvard’s Center for Public Interest Careers have been overwhelmed — and overjoyed — with the swelling demand from talented 20-somethings.

Several factors probably contributed to these phenomena. Perhaps President Obama indeed made public service “cool” as he had promised during his presidential campaign. Some experts say millennials — those who grew up in the 1990s or the 21st century — are unusually big-hearted, maybe because of the community service requirements they had in school.

“The millennial generation is a generation that is just more interested in making a difference than making a dollar,” said Max Stier, the president and chief executive of the Partnership for Public Service, a nonprofit group that advises government recruiting efforts.
And indeed, the numbers of educated young people working in public service jobs had been rising ever so slightly since the turn of the millennium. The sudden surge in 2009, though, suggests that the absence of traditional private sector jobs forced many of the country’s best and brightest into lower-paying, if psychically rewarding, work.

Since the recession began three years ago, the private sector has shed 7 percent of its jobs. The federal government, meanwhile, has expanded its payrolls 3 percent.

While many of those who graduated in 2008 got whisked off to high-paying jobs in consulting and finance, the graduates of the barren years of 2009 and 2010 were not courted in the same way. They were mostly left to scrounge about for their own job leads.

“We had to think deeper about our careers, and different kinds of careers,” Ms. Sadock says.

A consumer affairs and business major at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Ms. Sadock spent the summer before her senior year as an intern in the buying department at Kohl’s. She assumed she would exit school with a job in retail as a merchandising analyst.

“I wasn’t really sure what types of jobs existed,” she said. “Retail was what I knew, and nonprofit jobs didn’t really pop into my head as opportunities.”

She sent résumés all over the place, with no luck. The summer after graduation she moved home to Greenwich, Conn., where she and six high school friends commiserated over their dire employment prospects. They banded together to form Grads4Hire, a Babysitters-Club-esque group that did odd jobs like catering and secretarial work.

The members of Grads4Hire also advertised that they would do one hour of community service for every job they booked. They were all active volunteers in college — in the case of Ms. Sadock, through her sorority’s partnership with the Make-A-Wish Foundation, an organization devoted to children with life-threatening illnesses.
This was a way to “give back,” Ms. Sadock said, and also make themselves “a little more marketable.” It was her first clue that her interests in public service and in paying her bills were in any way related.

At the end of the summer, she moved to Los Angeles to work part time as a personal assistant. Meanwhile, she began searching for a full-time job. One acquaintance mentioned an opening at Starlight Children’s Foundation, an organization providing entertainment, education and other support to seriously ill children.

Ms. Sadock was an attractive candidate for Starlight. In addition to her volunteer work with the Make-A-Wish Foundation, she had a résumé item Starlight was not used to seeing: a business degree.

Ms. Sadock was hired almost immediately as a corporate accounts assistant, working with corporate donors like California Pizza Kitchen and Wyndham Hotels on marketing and sponsorship opportunities for Starlight’s programs. The job is, she says, a perfect application of everything she was trained to do, and had originally planned to do, for the private sector.

“But now I’m serving a purpose,” she says, rather than just “helping some large corporation sell more widgets.”

Like Ms. Sadock, many of the dozen other young graduates interviewed for this story say that, in retrospect, they are grateful the private sector shut them out.

“I always thought that nonprofit work was something I’d do as charity, and then have an agency job for a paycheck,” said John Warren Hanawalt, 26, a graphic designer in Boston.

He applied at public relations firms after graduating from Stonehill College in Easton, Mass., in December 2009, but the contract work they offered was not enough to make ends meet.

Nearly a year later, he found a job at Fenway Health, a nonprofit group that works with Boston’s lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community. “It took me a while to see that graphic design could fit into my passion for social justice in a sort of integral way.”
Though happy to have found an energetic, educated, cheap group of workers to replace retiring baby boomers, some nonprofits worry that their popularity among today’s youth may not outlast this period of high unemployment.

Several studies have found, though, that economic conditions at the start of a worker’s career can affect their long-term goals. For most entry-level positions, the pay difference between jobs in nonprofits and those at profit-making companies is often negligible.

“I don’t get paid a million dollars, that’s for sure,” says Ms. Sadock, who is paid $35,000 annually. “But I am financially independent, and I make ends meet.”

But a few years into the job, the upside is generally much greater for private sector employees. Workers in management jobs at companies, for example, earn about 22 percent more than their nonprofit counterparts.

It is easier to be idealistic and relatively unconcerned about wages when workers are young, childless and mortgage-free; attitudes toward the importance of financial remuneration can change when responsibilities add up.

“I’m not opposed to working in the private sector, depending on what was available as I get older and need a more lucrative career to support family and so on,” Ms. Sadock says. “But I’d still like to be something more meaningful. Maybe something in corporate philanthropy would work.”
Our view: Guns on campus could harm more than protect
Editorial  Feb. 28, 2011

Could the answer to the problem of campus shootings be ... more guns? That's what legislators in Texas and several other states are arguing as they push ill-conceived laws to allow concealed handguns on public college campuses, even if college officials are adamantly opposed.

OPPOSING VIEW: Decriminalize self-defense
A proposal with a good chance of passage in gun-friendly Texas would allow professors and students 21 and older to carry handguns on campus as long as they have a state permit to carry a concealed weapon. The idea is to deter attackers such as the one who killed 32 people at Virginia Tech in 2007, and send a message to criminals that they can't expect students to be unarmed.

Of the dozen states considering campus-carry laws, Texas is considered the likeliest to enact one this year. Interestingly, states that are otherwise supportive of guns-everywhere policies have consistently said "no" to this awful idea, on the sensible grounds that students and guns are a risky combination. More than 40 such proposals have died in state legislatures, and even Texas rejected a similar bill in 2009.

Memo to Gov. Rick Perry, a guns-on-campus supporter: Your state had it right the first time.

To believe that armed students and professors might stop campus crime is an alluring idea. But the tiny chance that someone with a gun might be in the right place — and have the necessary skill and nerve — to deter a criminal or an insane shooter isn't worth risking the way everyday gun carrying could change the atmosphere in classes and dorms, or the unintended dangers it would bring.

Mass attacks such as the one at Virginia Tech, as horrible as they are, are rare. And of the incidents that do occur, many either last long enough for armed campus security to respond, or are over before anyone can react. For example, the mentally disturbed community college student who shot an Arizona congresswoman and killed six people in January fired 32 bullets in 15 seconds. After unarmed bystanders wrestled him down and took his gun, a man with a concealed weapon burst on the scene and almost shot one of the Good Samaritans by mistake.

Statistics show that students are safer on campus than off, and college students are far more likely to be crime victims when they're away from campus. One reason legislators in most states have rejected guns-on-campus laws is probably because most were once college students themselves and can remember the binge drinking, drug taking and the bad judgment common at an age when science says brains haven't yet fully developed
and the propensity for risky behavior is at its highest. The one state where college students are allowed to pack heat on public campuses statewide is Utah, where the influence of the Mormon church is strong and college drinking is lower than in other states.

The key to deterring campus massacres is to make it easier to identify individuals who pose a threat and harder for them to acquire rapid-fire weapons. The gunmen at Virginia Tech and in Arizona were both clearly disturbed, but both were able to get firearms and neither was in treatment. That has to change.

There are far smarter ways to keep students safe than arming them and asking them to shoot it out.