Student Body President Tremayne Smith discusses his thoughts on the Greenville Police Department, during a crime and safety forum with a GPD Consultant, held in the Mendenhall Great Room, Monday, Feb. 28, 2011. (Aileen Devlin/The Daily Reflector)

Reflector.com

Forum looks at police, ECU relations
The Daily Reflector
Sunday, March 6, 2011

The Greenville Police Department hosted an evaluation session Feb. 28 at Mendenhall Student Center on the East Carolina University campus to examine police-community issues and partnerships.

Stephen K. Kraus, co-owner of Developmental Associates, moderated the discussion, the second of two designed to solicit input from ECU students, Greenville residents, residential and business owners and other interested community stakeholders.

The forums were part of a larger process initiated by Chief William Anderson that includes input from members of the police department and the community.

The information gathered from the evaluation sessions will go into development of a training program for all police employees that will identify issues presented at each of the forums, a police spokesman said.
McSack Attack bags $1,500 for Ronald McDonald House
Monday, March 7, 2011

Families throughout eastern receiving medical treatment for their ill or injured children at Greenville medical facilities have benefited through a new partnership with the East Carolina University football team, McDonald's and the Ronald McDonald House of Eastern North Carolina.

Coach Ruffin McNeill's concept for a McSack Attack fundraiser supplied the Ronald McDonald House in Greenville with a $100 donation from McDonald's each time the ECU defense sacked the opposing quarterback. The result for the 2010 season was 15 sacks and a $1,500 donation to the House by Dixon Foods Group, the local McDonald's owner and operator.

The Ronald McDonald House provides a “home away from home” for families of seriously ill children being treated at University Health Systems of Eastern Carolina's Children's Hospital.

Located on Moye Boulevard across from the hospital, the 21-bedroom home serves a 39-county area of eastern North Carolina.

Families staying there are provided a place to eat, sleep, relax and seek comfort from other families in a similar situation.

Last year, almost 500 families from throughout eastern North Carolina received lodging at the Ronald McDonald House.

Supporters can follow the activities of the house at www.rmhenc.org or on the house's Facebook page.
Significant contributors to nursing education, administration, research and practice were honored Feb. 25 as 40 nurses were inducted to the inaugural Hall of Fame in the East Carolina University College of Nursing.

More than $40,000 raised through the creation of the Hall of Fame will support a new fund to provide merit-based scholarships for nursing students.

“Our legacy of excellence will continue with the scholarships,” Dr. Sylvia Brown, dean of the College of Nursing, said.

The launching of the Hall of Fame program coincides with the 50th anniversary of nursing education at ECU.

Each inductee received a flame-shaped award, which Brown said reminded her of the nursing pin designed by the first nursing class 50 years ago.

“Each of our inductees is a bright light,” said Brown, who was inducted by Dr. Phyllis Horns, vice chancellor of health sciences. Brown, in turn, inducted Horns. Horns served as dean of nursing for 19 years.

Horns described the college as a jewel in the health sciences division and commended Brown's leadership and the creation of the Hall of Fame. “I am reminded daily of the accomplishments of everyone in this room and those who couldn't be here tonight,” she said. “I take great pride in this college.”
Inductees were: Gale Adcock, Dr. Alta W. Andrews, Helen Merrill Brinson, Dr. Sylvia T. Brown, Marshall Dewayne Byrd, Mary Sue Cummings Collier, Cindy Matthews Duber, Dr. Frances R. Eason, Dr. Martha Kehner Engelke, Dr. Lou W. Everett, Selba Morris Harris, Dr. Linda Dunnam Hofler, Dr. Phyllis N. Horns, Jacqueline Hutcherson, Dr. Mary K. Kirkpatrick, Dr. Dixie Koldjeski, Cynthia Sturdivant Kotrady, Karen C. Krupa, Dr. Judith Kuykendall, Dr. Therese G. Lawler, Belinda Temple Lee, Dr. Deitra Lowdermilk, Bobby Lowery, Kimberly Glover McDaniel, Richard E. McDaniel, Dr. Dianne M. Marshburn, Hazel Browning Moore, Brenda Darden Myrick, Evelyn Perry, Eldean Pierce, Diane A. Poole, Dr. Donna Roberson, Dr. Mary Ann Rose, Louise Haigwood Sammons, Dr. Elaine S. Scott, Sylvene Spickerman, Dr. Debra C. Wallace, Dr. Sandra M. Walsh, Patricia Perry Womble, and Dr. Annette B. Wysocki.

“As you can see, we have a wonderful first class in our nursing hall of fame,” said Brown, who also thanked the college's development advisory council and the 50th anniversary committee members.

Dr. Frances Eason, chair of the 50th anniversary committee and inductee, has been at the college since the 1960s, first as a student and then as a teacher.

“I have seen over the years our College of Nursing grow and grow and grow, and it's because of these people and many others that have helped us get there,” Eason said.

Dr. Donna Roberson, assistant professor, said the evening was a highlight of the 50th anniversary celebration and “to see all these wonderful contributors, not only to the College of Nursing, but to the profession of nursing” was outstanding.

Sue Collier, vice president of the patient/family experience office for University Health Systems of Eastern Carolina, said the induction “really represents the legacy of all the faculty and nurses who were my teachers and mentors. Throughout my career, none of this would be possible without the support of the teachers and really of all the patients we serve. That's really what's it all about. We are in a profession that serves.”

The event was sponsored by Pitt County Memorial Hospital, CarolinaEast Medical Center, Wayne Memorial Hospital and J& H Insurance Services.
To see photos from the event, go to http://www.ecu.edu/cs-admin/news/
For more information on the Hall of Fame, go to http://nursing.ecu.edu/hof_guidelines.htm.

Young scientists to compete on Feb. 26
Budding young science and engineering talent showcased projects in a competition at ECU on Feb. 26.

Organizers expected as many as 1,000 students representing 15 counties on campus for the Northeast Regional Science and Engineering Fair. Students in grades 3 through 12 competed during the day for top awards in the annual event. The winners will go on to the state event this month.
The following students won regional awards during the event with the majority also earning the opportunity to compete at the state level:

**Elementary Student Division:**
Parker Betts of JC Sawyer Elementary, first place, "Hey Blockhead: How Dense is that Wood?"

**Junior Student Division:**
Anne Davis of Lake Comfort School, first place biology, "How does ambient water temperature affect winter-calling aquatic anurans?"
Bryson Groccia and Brantley Williams of Chicod Elementary, first place chemistry, "Flickering flames."
Finley Pendergraft of River Road Middle, first place Earth/environmental, "Can plants of green help keep the ocean clean? The effect of plants pH on water."
Coleman Bailey III of Hope Middle, first place physics, "Does diluting floor cleaner with vinegar increase friction and make floors safer?"
Jimmy Brincefield of Camden Middle, first place engineering/tech, "Golf in its measure."

**Senior Student Division (High School):**
Trey Johnson of John A. Holmes, first place biology B, "Allelopathic properties of Fagus grandiflora."
Kathryn Braswell of D.H. Conley, first place chemistry, "Burning calories."
Sam Christensen of Stone Circle Academy, first place Earth/environmental, "How does impervious surface runoff affect stream chemistry and microbiological load?"
Jordan Lancaster of D.H. Conley, first place physical science, "Testing and designing effective heat shields made out of recycled materials."
Parker Garris of D.H. Conley, first place engineer/tech, "Bus aerodynamics."

In addition, the participants heard from a keynote speaker who won top honors at the 2004 International Intel Science & Engineering Fair.

Jenna Dionisio, 23, is a fourth-year biomedical sciences student at the University of South Florida who has participated in nationally recognized research and published in medical journals. She attributes her success to a passion for science, her involvement in science fairs and her science mentors throughout school.

Funding from ECU N.C. Space Grant Collaborative helped pay for the regional science fair and Dionisio's visit.

A Youth Art Expressions Project took place at the same time as the science and engineering competition.

Students from Hertford, Gates, Perquimans, Pasquotank, Currituck, Camden, Bertie, Pitt, Gates, Beaufort, Hyde, Washington, Dare, Tyrrell and Chowan counties participated.
**Study: Video games reduce depression**

A study conducted at ECU shows casual video games help reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety in people with clinical depression.

ECU's Psychophysiology Lab and Biofeedback Clinic released the findings of the one-year, randomized, controlled clinical study in mid-February.

Nearly 60 subjects, half of whom served as controls, all meeting the criteria of clinical depression, participated in the study, which involved three family-friendly, non-violent puzzle games: Bejeweled 2, Peggle and Bookworm Adventures. All of the games are made by PopCap Games, underwriter of the study.

“The results of this study clearly demonstrate the intrinsic value of certain casual games in terms of significant, positive effects on the moods and anxiety levels of people suffering from any level of depression,” said Dr. Carmen Russoniello, director of the ECU Psychophysiology Lab and Biofeedback Clinic, who oversaw the study along with previous studies involving the games' effects on stress levels.

“In my opinion the findings support the possibility of using prescribed casual video games for treating depression and anxiety as an adjunct to, or perhaps even a replacement for, standard therapies including medication,” he said.

Researchers used state-of-the-art technologies including psychophysiology, biochemical and psychological measurements. The experimental group experienced an average reduction in depression symptoms of 57 percent. The study, the first such research ever to measure the efficacy of video games in reducing depression and anxiety, also found significant reduction in anxiety, as well as improvements in all aspects of mood, among study subjects who played the casual video games.

Russoniello said research indicated games had both short term (after 30 minutes of game play) and long-term (after one month) effects when compared to the control group. He said the results offer convincing evidence casual video games should be widely available to those who suffer depression.

“Given that only 25 percent of people who suffer from depression are receiving treatment, it seems prudent to make these low-cost, readily accessible casual games video games available to those who need them,” he said. “They should be made available at health clinics, community centers, online ‘medical sites' and given out by therapists as a means of intervention.”

The National Institute of Mental Health estimates 20.9 million American adults, or 9.5 percent of the U.S. population age 18 or older, suffer from a mood disorder. More than two-thirds of those suffer major depression, according to NIMH. Depression is the leading cause of disability in the U.S. for people aged 15 to 44.
Details about the study, along with findings of previous studies, are available at www.edu.ecu/biofeedback.

**Upcoming Events:**
**Saturday:** N.C. Free File public briefing and tax training workshop, 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., Joyner Library first floor. Free. This event will highlight free online federal and state tax prep and e-filing available through the IRS and N.C. Free File programs. U.S. Rep. G.K. Butterfield is scheduled to attend.

See [www.ecu.edu/cs-ecu/calendar.cfm](http://www.ecu.edu/cs-ecu/calendar.cfm) for times, places and more information on these events and other ECU upcoming activities.
Out-of-state fees still low at UNC
BY ERIC FERRERI - Staff Writer
CHAPEL HILL–As they've approved much-needed tuition increases recently, trustees at UNC-Chapel Hill have resisted the urge to treat out-of-state students like a bank machine. But in doing so, the trustees are leaving millions of dollars on the table.

At a time when campuses have little new revenue to counter cuts to staff, class sections and teaching resources, some states are instituting disproportionately high tuition increases for out-of-state college students. It is a strategy that might work at UNC-CH, an extraordinarily competitive institution that gets its pick of top nonresident applicants.

UNC-CH officials fear they may lose top student talent if out-of-state tuition creeps too high. But others say that tuition is so low that there's plenty of room to grow.

This year, UNC-CH nonresidents pay about $25,000 in tuition and fees. That's about $8,500 less than the University of Virginia, one of its primary competitors, charges for nonresidents, and more than $10,000 less per year than two others - the universities of Michigan and California, Berkeley. Duke University charges about $40,500 in tuition and fees.

"We are such a giveaway for out-of-state students," said Ellen Martin, a Charlotte career counselor who works with high school students in other states who are interested in UNC-CH and other top Southern schools. "I just don't know why we're giving them this great bargain."

Tuition hiked last month
Last month, the UNC system's Board of Governors approved tuition increases of 6.5 percent for both in-state and out-of-state students at the Chapel Hill campus. While equal in percentage, they're far apart in true dollars. The increases amounted to an extra $313 for resident students but $1,523 more for out-of-state students. North Carolinian undergrads outnumber out-of-statsters on campus by more than 4-to-1.
Trustees considered larger out-of-state increases but were reluctant to widen the gap, said Robert Winston, the board's chairman. In 2011-12, nonresidents will pay nearly $20,000 more in tuition and fees for the same education.

"We've pushed out-of-state tuition pretty aggressively in the last four or five years, but we were starting with a reasonably low base," Winston said. "Could we drive it more? Probably. But I don't want a $32,000 out-of-state tuition and a $6,000 in-state. It would be two classes of citizen, almost."

From 2005-06 to 2009-10, out-of-state tuition at UNC-CH rose more than 27 percent, according to data from the American Council on Education. But it has risen far higher in some states. At the University of California, Berkeley, for example, it rose more than 30 percent; at the University of Georgia, it went up 53 percent; and at the University of Arizona, it rose 70 percent.

Generally, the UNC system board's vote ends the annual tuition process. But last year, with a massive budget gap hanging over the state, legislators approved a second series of tuition increases for public universities, creating a late-summer double whammy for students and their parents.

Legislators hope not to repeat that scenario this year, said Senate leader Phil Berger. But legislative leaders may push university officials to examine the broader issue, he added.

"If one of our folks goes to the University of Michigan, they'll pay a lot more than someone from Michigan going to Chapel Hill," Berger said. "I think there's an argument for truing up those numbers a bit more."

**The view on higher fees**

The UNC system has indicated that higher out-of-state tuition requests would be viewed favorably, said Hannah Gage, the board's chairwoman. The board's 6.5 percent tuition increase ceiling applies only to in-state rates.

"We have opened that door, clearly, but we have not mandated it," Gage said. "We'd like more of the burden to be on students from out of state."

Of course, this is not an issue for public campuses that can't recruit enough out-of-state students to make a rate increase viable. Even N.C. State University, which charges roughly the same in-state and out-of-state rates as
UNC-CH, doesn't come close to the state's 18 percent ceiling on out-of-state freshmen. This year, just about 10 percent of NCSU undergrads are from other states.

**Crunch the numbers**
Here's how the math of a larger out-of-state tuition increase might work out. Last year, UNC-CH enrolled 3,143 out-of-state undergrads. An extra $2,000 on each out-of-state tuition bill would net about $3.9 million once you take 38 percent off the top to add to the financial aid coffers - which the university routinely does with revenue from tuition increases.

That's not enough money to solve all the problems on a campus that could see budget cuts of $50 million or more next year. But the university has historically funneled tuition revenue to academic uses such as faculty pay and other teaching resources currently in jeopardy. So the extra money could make some difference.

And given that the university gets far more out-of-state applicants than it can admit, the quality of the students admitted probably wouldn't take a hit, said state Sen. Richard Stevens, a Wake County Republican and former chairman of the UNC-CH trustee board. Last year, 13,802 out-of-state students applied, and just 807 got in.

"You'd still have a high-quality applicant pool," said Stevens, co-chairman of the Senate appropriations committee. "As long as the quality of the education is maintained, it would still remain a bargain."

Out-of-state tuition covers the full cost of a student's education, so North Carolina taxpayers don't subsidize nonresidents.

Those out-of-state students often make a splash. Many are athletes and student leaders. Several in recent years have been student body president, as were 10 of the university's last 12 Rhodes Scholars.

While an undergrad at UNC-CH, Ryan Morgan headed the Out of State Student Association and was a consistent voice urging moderation in tuition increases.

**Student says it's a deal**
But Morgan, from Alabama, also acknowledges the bargain he got at UNC-CH. He applied to 10 schools, including two in the Ivy League, and cost factored in his decision to come to Chapel Hill. One comparable private school he considered, the University of Southern California, was about twice the price.

He thinks UNC-CH's tuition could climb higher, as long as financial aid follows. Between merit and need-based aid, Morgan paid just $4,000 a year for his Tar Heel education.

"As much as I dislike tuition increases, it is still a good deal," said Morgan, who graduated last year and now works as an economic consultant in Washington. "The aid keeps UNC affordable."

In 2009-10, about 38 percent of out-of-state undergrads received financial aid, said Shirley Ort, the university's director of scholarships and student aid. Higher tuition would mean more debt for those students because loans and work study obligations compose about 35 percent of an aid package. (The balance is grants, which don't have to be paid back.)

Martin, the Charlotte career counselor, thinks there are plenty of high-achieving applicants willing to pay full price for a UNC-CH education. For them, the 18 percent cap on out-of-state freshmen is the deterrent, not the price. To compare: About 30 percent of University of Virginia undergrads are nonresidents.

"It's so hard to get into Chapel Hill," she said. "The money has nothing to do with it."

Cost mattered to Holly Boardman when she came to UNC-CH four years ago. Now a senior, the Nashville, Tenn., native is pleased with her college experience, even though tuition has risen $4,000 while she's been enrolled.

"For me, it was worth it," said Boardman, the student body vice president. "UNC could have pushed it a little more and I probably still would have come."

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More changes ahead?
Last year, legislators altered a law that allowed public universities to count out-of-state students on scholarships as in-state students for tuition purposes. With the change, out-of-state athletes on scholarship could no longer be considered in-state students, a blow to booster clubs that fund athletic scholarships. However, the law still applies to out-of-state students receiving academic scholarships through initiatives like the Morehead-Cain program at UNC-Chapel Hill and the Park Scholarship program at N.C. State.

It isn't yet clear whether legislators will tweak that law further this year, said Senate leader Phil Berger: "I wouldn't rule it out, but it's not something that has been talked about," he said.

**What they charge**
UNC-CH compares favorably to its peers on out-of-state tuition. These are tuition-and-fee rates for 2010-11.

**UNC-CH:** $25,282  
**Virginia:** $33,582  
**California, Berkeley:** $35,340  
**Michigan:** $36,001*  
**Duke:** $40,575

*Michigan charges juniors and seniors about $2,500 more
Dr. Jason Foltz has joined the faculty of the Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University and its group medical practice, ECU Physicians.

Foltz joined ECU as an assistant clinical professor of family medicine. He comes to ECU from South Carolina, where he was a major and family physician at Shaw Air Force Base. He has a medical degree from the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine and completed residency training at Eglin Air Force Base in Florida. He is certified by the American Board of Family Medicine.

Foltz's clinical and research interests are chronic care management, preventive medicine, promotion of healthy lifestyles and practicing a whole patient perspective by focusing on the interplay among body, mind, and spirit.

Foltz sees patients at the ECU Family Medicine Center. Appointments are available by calling 744-4611.
Aetna's fee fight adds to cancer patient's stress

BY SARAH AVERY - Staff Writer

The last thing Jean Holstein needed as she faced eye surgery and ongoing chemotherapy for breast cancer was a battle with her insurance company.

But Holstein, along with thousands of others in the Triangle and beyond, was covered by Aetna, which UNC Health Care and its physicians stopped accepting last month because of a fee dispute.

Hurt most are patients like Holstein who have long-term needs for cancer, transplants and other complicated care. This group - an estimated 200 patients at UNC Hospitals in Chapel Hill and Rex Healthcare in Raleigh, which is owned by UNC - has been scrambling to get temporary reprieves to keep from switching their care.

But if the hospital and insurer don't resolve their differences, even these long-term patients are faced with finding new treatment teams at hospitals where Aetna still is accepted, or paying higher out-of-pocket expenses to stay in the UNC fold.

"People talk about the free market taking care of things, well, this is the free market," said Holstein, 54, who drives from her home in Jacksonville to see her doctors in Chapel Hill.
She said she is ticked off at the insurance company, which posted a 34 percent rise in earnings last year, reaping $1.6 billion. The company credited its fortunes to "management actions to appropriately price the business."

**Aetna cites costs**
Walt Cherniak, a spokesman for Aetna, said the company is duty-bound to hold down costs, and could not meet UNC Health Care's demand for a double-digit increase in the rates the insurer pays on behalf of its customers.

"As a health insurer, we have dual obligations," Cherniak said. "One is to provide broad access to quality hospitals and doctors for our customers. We also have an obligation to try to contain rising health care costs, which have been a major problem to employers and patients."

Cherniak said the money to pay UNC Hospitals, Rex and their affiliated doctors comes directly from the businesses that have signed up with Aetna to manage their health plans. As a result, Cherniak said, an increase in hospital and doctor fees "directly hits consumers of the Raleigh-Durham area in the pocketbook."

Holstein isn't convinced. In an open letter to Ronald A. Williams, chairman of Aetna, she calculated the cost of her care over the next 12 years as a fraction of his pay, which Forbes tabbed at $7.3 million last year.

"Yet it would destroy all our carefully put away retirement savings," she wrote.

**Aetna grants reprieve**
In an interview, Holstein said she was able to get a short reprieve for some of her care, with Aetna agreeing to pay UNC Hospitals and her doctors for the eye surgery she had this past week, plus the chemotherapy she needs monthly.

The stopgap coverage will continue only until May, however, when she'll be required to find other solutions if Aetna and UNC Health Care don't come to terms.

Karen McCall, a spokeswoman for the hospital system, said talks are continuing, but the impasse has not been broken.
"Nobody's changed their position," McCall said.

There is precedence for the stalemate to be resolved. Aetna agreed to a new deal with a Winston-Salem hospital chain last summer after a three-month battle, and UnitedHealthcare signed a new contract with WakeMed more than four months after dropping the hospital from its network four years ago.

For Holstein, the ordeal of haggling with the insurer in the days leading up to her surgery took a toll.

"I was so angry dealing with insurance," she said. "There were other things I wanted to be doing, and I spent all my time worrying about that. It's infuriating. They're playing with people - playing with people's lives and money."

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Laid-off music profs sue Peace College
BY JANE STANCILL - Staff Writer
RALEIGH Three tenured music professors are suing Peace College after being told their jobs would be eliminated in May.

The lawsuit, filed Wednesday in Wake County, argues that Peace broke employment contracts guaranteeing the professors tenure. It further claims that the college wrongfully terminated the professors; the suit cites age discrimination in two cases and racial discrimination in the third.

Virginia L. Vance, 63, has taught at Peace 37 years, and James S. Smith, 59, has taught there 33 years; they claim age discrimination. Milton L. Laufer, who is Hispanic, has taught at Peace for 10 years; he claims racial discrimination.

In January, the professors were told by the administration that the music program would be eliminated and their jobs terminated May 31 because of financial problems, the suit said. All three are still teaching; all three have tenure.

Tenure is considered a lifetime guarantee of employment, but many institutions have policies with exceptions for specific reasons, such as financial duress.

The case will be widely watched in North Carolina, where private colleges have struggled and public universities brace for what could be significant budget cuts.

Justin Roy, a spokesman at Peace, said officials at the college had not seen the lawsuit and could not comment on it. Peace President Debra Townsley was traveling and could not be reached, Roy said.

The three professors were unavailable for comment, but their attorney, Stewart Fisher of Durham, said that under the professors' tenure agreement, Peace cannot terminate them unless the college is in "a financial emergency."
The college is creating new academic programs and has a $40 million pool of investments, the suit said. Donors to the music department gave an estate gift five years ago to establish a professorship in memory of Smith's father, who was a Presbyterian minister in New Bern. Fisher questioned whether the college is in financial trouble.

"Balderdash. That's just not true," Fisher said. "The music program was actually bringing money into the college. They were enrolling students; they had new students enrolled for the following year. It's a program that Peace had had since its founding in 1857."

Roy said the college is establishing a new program in musical theater. "That's the new, exciting direction that we're taking the program here," he said. New faculty will be hired, he said, and the program starts in the fall.

The suit comes at a time of stress for the 650-student women's college near downtown.

**Big changes at Peace**
Since Townsley arrived as president last year, firings and buyouts of faculty have come in waves as the college reorganizes its academic programs. Peace expanded its night school, which is open to male students and offers online programs. Townsley has said the college needs to keep up with the times and offer new programs that students want.

But all the changes have angered alumnae and some students, who fear the school's character will be forever changed. Hundreds joined a Facebook page, where alumnae complained about the changes.

The lawsuit itself airs grievances against Townsley that have nothing to do with the music department. Townsley installed soundproofing and deadbolts on her office door, the suit said, and stays in her office rather than mixing with students and faculty. She attended a basketball game on campus, the suit said, "but instead of sitting in the bleachers with the students and the rest of the fans, she sat in the Athletic Director's office and watched the game through a window."

'All were loved'
The suit also points out that the college's Spanish major has been dropped and claims an unidentified trustee told two minority students that they "do not belong at Peace College."

In the lawsuit, the professors seek reinstatement to their jobs, back pay, benefits and money.

"These people all were loved by their students, had been awarded the equivalent of teacher of the year at Peace, had good employment evaluations," Fisher said. "None of them had ever gotten a dissatisfactory employment evaluation. I think that's going to be important in this case. ... I think the college's entire defense, as I know it right now, is going to be, 'Well, we just didn't have the money,' and I don't think that's true."

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Computer science programs use mobile apps to make coursework relevant

By Jenna Johnson
Washington Post Staff Writer
Sunday, March 6, 2011; 10:34 PM
BLACKSBURG, VA. - A Virginia Tech software engineering class in 2009 was discussing world problems and how computer science might offer solutions when a student piped up with a personal gripe.

"You know what I hate?" the student said, according to assistant professor Eli Tilevich, who was teaching the class. "I never know when the bus is coming."

As Virginia Tech and other universities train a new generation of computer scientists, professors are asking students to create programs that address real-life problems, often through handy, smartphone-ready apps. It's a break from traditional coursework such as sorting lists of numbers or re-creating programs that already exist.

The shift comes as the demand for computer engineers outpaces the number of computer science graduates. Today's students grew up with computers,
yet many view computer science and code writing as dull and unglamorous, professors say.

The Virginia Tech student's concern about buses, Tilevich said, offered a chance to show students that coding can be relevant. By the end of the semester, the advanced software engineering class had partnered with the city transit system to obtain data from Global Positioning System devices on dozens of city buses. An algorithm soon was predicting arrival times and beaming the information to a prototype mobile application.

"Sometimes as faculty members, we have to step back. We have to let them run wild," said Tilevich, a former professional clarinet player who blogs about his teaching experiments.

Computer and math fields are expected to add 785,700 jobs between 2008 and 2018, a growth rate twice the average for all occupations, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Computer science majors also will earn higher-than-average salaries.

Yet at Virginia Tech's computer science job fair last year, there were more open jobs than graduating students, said Barbara G. Ryder, head of the computer science department. "And I don't think that we're unusual," she said.

It wasn't always like this. In the late 1990s, computer science and computer engineering saw an explosion in enrollment nationwide. Between 1995 and 1997, the number of new computer science students doubled, then continued to grow.

During the 1997-98 school year, there were about 10,000 computer science graduates. By 2003-04, that number was up to nearly 21,000, according to the Computing Research Association's annual survey of computer science and engineering programs. But then came the dot-com bubble burst and news of technology jobs being sent overseas. By 2006-07, the number of graduates was down to about 12,500. Numbers have ticked up since then, but not by much.

Despite the celebrity of Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg, computer science is sometimes associated with the boring, humorless programmers in the cartoon strip "Dilbert" or the forgettable ones in the Facebook movie
"The Social Network," who wire themselves into computers while ignoring the world around them.

The problems start in high school. In many districts, computer science is taught through vocational departments, often along with shop class. The NCAA doesn't recognize computer science as a core course when determining the academic eligibility of student athletes. Computer science also was among the least-taken Advanced Placement tests, with fewer than 19,400 students taking it in 2010. (Chemistry, biology and calculus had test takers in the six digits.)

"The sky is falling in a sense that we're not engaging kids that we could be engaging," said Jan Cuny of the National Science Foundation, who is helping to formulate a new AP course. While the current program focuses mostly on Java programming, a new class being piloted at several colleges would focus on problem-solving and creating technology instead of just using it.

"We'll have no problem interesting kids in doing these things," Cuny said. "The tough part is getting into the schools."

For the past few years at Virginia Tech, the computer science department has sent faculty members and undergraduates on high school recruiting trips across the state and hosted workshops for local teachers. The university also organizes engineering summer camps aimed at girls and underrepresented minority students.

The bus project grew out of an advanced undergraduate class in which Tilevich gave this goal for the semester: Create something incredible. Either everyone was going to get an A, or everyone would fail.

The bus tracker app received an A, although it was a prototype when the semester ended, prone to crashing when more than two people tried to use it at the same time.

But then one of the students went to the student government to ask for funding to turn it into a user-friendly program. A candidate for the 2009-10 student presidency, Brandon Carroll, made the bus tracker one of his campaign promises. Carroll won, and the student government voted to give the project $34,800 from a T-shirt fundraiser.
Tilevich and Webb recruited two undergraduates to develop what became the user-friendly VT Bus Tracker. It was released at the beginning of this school year as a text-messaging service, a Web site and apps for three types of smartphones. (An included trick: Text "Let's go," and the system replies, "Hokies!")

The bus tracker app receives about 40,000 hits a day, Tilevich said. It also won undergraduate research awards. The developers became campus heroes for saving fellow students from waiting in the elements for longer than necessary.

"The first couple months, when we showed it to people, their jaws dropped," said one of the developers, Alex Obenauer, a junior computer science major from Woodbridge. "This is such a great way to show what computer science can do."
Noe Flores of DePauw was among 475 fraternity and sorority members who gathered to learn about Christian recruiting.

Where Raucous Is the Norm, Bible Study
By ERIK ECKHOLM
INDIANAPOLIS — Imagine 475 college students — all members of fraternities and sororities around the country — flooding a hotel for a weekend. Imagine, come Sunday, that not one noise complaint has been lodged, no chairs are broken, no beer stains the carpets and the hotel housekeeper says, “What a nice bunch of kids.”

Improbable, but that is exactly what happened recently when an evangelical Christian campus group, Greek InterVarsity, held a regional conference here to expand Bible studies and Christian recruiting in fraternities and sororities at mainstream universities.

Why would students who may not drink or believe in sex before marriage, and who read the Bible for recreation, want to join groups often known for hard partying, alcohol and hazing violations, and casual sex? Many said they enjoyed the companionship a house could provide and liked having friends of different or less ardent faiths. But many also said they relished the opportunity to spread the Gospel.
“Our goal is to help students lead a Christian life inside the Greek system, as contradictory as that may sound,” said Eric Holmer, the communications director for Greek InterVarsity.

The group is fighting a long-term decline in the share of students who say they are religious, as well as a tendency for church attendance to drop off during college. But it still sees fertile ground: in a 2007 national survey, 20 percent of college juniors identified themselves as evangelical Christians, according to Alexander W. Astin, professor emeritus at the University of California, Los Angeles.

The organization, a branch of a nondenominational campus ministry, has a foothold at 60 universities around the country, with 50 full-time staff members organizing on campuses. It counts about 2,800 active members from 367 Greek houses.

The conference here last month drew students from Purdue, Wisconsin and Michigan, among other institutions, and dozens of well-known campus houses like Alpha Tau Omega and Kappa Alpha Theta.

The students heard sermons from a pastor who easily segued from “U2 — I love that group” to “I love Jesus” and explored their feelings in small group discussions on challenges to faith and how to start a Bible group in a fraternity or sorority house.

The leaders urged members to stay in the thick of Greek social life, rubbing shoulders with the sinners.

Jesus turned water into wine “to get the party going,” said a young woman who traveled here from Willamette University in Oregon, adding that parties were an opportunity to show that Christianity could be fun. After intense discussions, punctuated by Christian rock singalongs and an emotional evening session in which dozens stood up to signal that their faith was reborn, the members had a dance.

Kurt Skaggs, a junior at Indiana University, sees himself as something of a missionary. “Some people go to Africa or South America,” he said, explaining his decision to join Sigma Phi Epsilon. “I can go to my frat house, where my single goal is to glorify God and share the Gospel.”
Ten of the house’s 110 members have joined Mr. Skaggs’s Bible group. He said that while a few of his fraternity brothers “don’t appreciate” his views, most had a respectful, live-and-let-live attitude; he has even been elected house president. He said that he tried not to be preachy, but that he was not shy about confronting other professed Christians if they started drinking too much or engaged in casual sex.

With other students, Mr. Skaggs hopes simply to start the Christian conversation. “People do open up to you when they’re drunk,” he said. “They ask, ‘Why are you so excited all the time?’ ”

Christians who join fraternities or sororities can feel like outcasts in traditional Christian fellowships, said Kaitlyn Boyce, a junior at the University of Cincinnati, explaining why she was attracted to Greek InterVarsity. “People have these stereotypes and make assumptions about you.”

Ms. Boyce had not yet taken the scary step of standing up before her sisters in Delta Delta Delta to declare herself and call for a Bible study group. “It will be nerve-wracking,” she said. “These people mean a lot to you, and you don’t want them to think you won’t be fun anymore.”

At parties, she said, she tries “to take care of friends as much as I can, trying to minimize the damage” by, for example, telling a sister she has drunk enough.

Joe Grotheer, a member of Phi Gamma Delta at DePauw University in Greencastle, Ind., said some Jewish brothers had objected to Bible study in the common area, so he and others moved the sessions to a bedroom.

Several students said they had to fight fears of rejection or ridicule when they first proposed an in-house Bible group. Perhaps no one felt more daunted than Todd Siegal, a junior at Northwestern and a member of Zeta Beta Tau, whose members around the country are largely Jewish.

Mr. Siegal, who was raised as a Christian, said that in his freshman year, after joining the fraternity, “he drank a lot and hooked up with girls, typical college stuff.” By his sophomore year, he said, he felt a spiritual gap and struggled to tame his behavior. Given the circumstances, he rose at a
fraternity meeting not to propose Bible study but rather a broader forum to discuss the role of faith.

Twenty people showed up for the first meeting. About 10, many of them Jewish, have continued to meet.

Of the Indianapolis conference, Mr. Siegal said, “It’s fun and it’s inspiring for me to see other people on fire for God.”

This article has been revised to reflect the following correction:
Correction: March 7, 2011
An earlier version of this article about an evangelical Christian campus group, Greek InterVarsity, that is trying to expand Bible studies and Christian recruiting in fraternities and sororities at mainstream universities misstated the location of DePauw University. It is in Greencastle, Ind., not Greenville, Ind.
Agreement Allows the R.O.T.C. to Return to Harvard After Decades Away

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BOSTON (AP) — Harvard officially welcomed the R.O.T.C. back on Friday as other elite campuses considered whether to lift their decades-old bans now that Congress has voted to allow openly gay men and lesbians to serve in the military.

Harvard’s president, Drew Gilpin Faust, and Ray Mabus, the Navy secretary, signed an agreement establishing the Naval R.O.T.C.’s formal presence at the nation’s oldest college for the first time since the Vietnam War era. Other schools, including Columbia, Yale and Brown, are discussing whether to follow suit.

“Both the American military and higher education have been engines of inclusion and wellsprings of service,” Dr. Faust said at the ceremony. “The relationship we renew today marks progress in that common pursuit.”

The Reserve Officers’ Training Corps first left Harvard and other prominent universities amid anti-Vietnam War sentiment, and colleges lately kept it off campus because of the military’s policy on gays, which they considered discriminatory. But Dr. Faust began working toward R.O.T.C.’s return after Congress repealed the so-called don’t ask, don’t tell policy in December.
The 17-year-old policy requires soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines to keep their homosexuality a secret or face dismissal.

The White House praised Harvard’s decision to reintroduce the R.O.T.C. “With our nation at war, this sends a powerful message that Americans stand united and that our colleges, society and armed forces are stronger when we honor the contributions of all our citizens,” the White House press secretary, Jay Carney, said in a statement.

Mr. Mabus commended Harvard after the ceremony for being “willing to step out and lead.” In his official remarks, he said that the military must strive to reflect the nation it protects.

“It does not serve our country well if any part of society does not share in the honor of its defense,” Mr. Mabus said.

About 30 students from the Trans Task Force, a student group that advocates for transgender students, chanted and held protest signs outside the ceremony, saying Harvard should not bring back the R.O.T.C. because the military still does not allow the transgender to serve. That is a violation of Harvard’s nondiscrimination policy, they said.

“There’s no way R.O.T.C. should be on the campus,” said group member Jia Hui Lee, 22, a junior. “It conflicts with Harvard values, or at least the values it claims to have.”

Under Harvard’s agreement with the Navy, a director of Naval R.O.T.C. at Harvard will be appointed, the university will resume financing it and the program will be given office space and access to athletic fields and classrooms.

Harvard cadets will still train as part of a consortium based at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, also located in Cambridge, near Boston. Currently, 20 Harvard students participate in the R.O.T.C., including 10 involved in the Naval R.O.T.C.

Harvard voted to withhold academic credit from the R.O.T.C. in 1969, and the program left the campus a few years later. Harvard then stopped financing the program in 1995 because of the don’t ask, don’t tell policy, but anonymous donors stepped up.
Harvard is the first elite school to agree to rescind its ban. Mr. Mabus said he hoped other schools would follow. “I really hope that they see it the same way Harvard has seen it — an opening up of opportunity,” he said. “It’s not a new thing. It’s simply re-establishing some very old ties.”

At Brown, a committee appointed last month by President Ruth Simmons began evaluating whether Brown’s on-campus ban of the R.O.T.C. should stand. But a coalition of students and professors opposes a return for various reasons, including concerns about the military, which the group’s Web site calls a “notoriously violent and sexist institution.”

An English professor William Keach, a member of group, The Brown Coalition Against Special Privileges for R.O.T.C., noted that don’t ask, don’t tell remains in effect for now and said it’s premature “to automatically assume that homophobia in the U.S. military has disappeared.” He added that the decision by a university as influential as Harvard signals a tough fight ahead. “We feel a kind of new sense of challenge, that we’ve really got to step up and take this on,” he said.

Columbia leaders have been meeting about the R.O.T.C. and are expected to vote by the end of the academic year, the university said Friday. Students there can participate in R.O.T.C. programs at nearby Fordham University and Manhattan College.

On Friday, Senator John Kerry of Massachusetts called on Yale to follow Harvard’s lead and welcome back the R.O.T.C.

Mr. Kerry, a Vietnam veteran, said in a letter to the president of his alma mater that Ivy League universities created a new injustice when they turned away the R.O.T.C. to protest the now-defunct ban on gays serving openly in the military.

A Yale spokeswoman, Suzanne Taylor Muzzin, said on Friday that officials are “actively involved” in discussions with the military about reviving the R.O.T.C. on campus.
Stanford barred the R.O.T.C. from campus in 1973, but it’s reconsidering, amid changing views of the military among some students since Sept. 11 and the repeal of don’t ask, don’t tell.

In recent months, a Stanford faculty committee has sponsored meetings about bringing back the program, and the committee is expected to make a recommendation in May. Some faculty members have complained that the military coursework undermines the university’s academic independence.

Under the agreement signed at Harvard, “full and formal” recognition of the R.O.T.C. comes once the repeal of don’t ask, don’t tell takes effect. That is expected later this year, shortly after commanders and officials certify the new policy will not hurt the military’s fighting ability.

The R.O.T.C. was founded in 1916 to ensure educated men were well-represented in the military. Students receive scholarship money in return for agreeing to military service after graduation.

In 1926, Harvard became one of the original six schools to partner with the Naval R.O.T.C. On Friday, the university also noted its graduates include 17 Medal of Honor winners.