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Students from East Carolina University spent part of their spring break to help preserve artifacts from a Civil War shipwreck at the state's Underwater Archaeology Branch conservation lab in Kure Beach. (Contributed photo)

**Students help preserve artifacts**
By Jackie Drake
The Daily Reflector
Monday, March 12, 2012

Spring break is usually spent lying on a beach, but some students at East Carolina University decided to get their feet wet in their future careers instead.

Eleven graduate students from the ECU Maritime Studies program spent March 5-7 at Kure Beach — knee-deep in muck instead of wading in the surf. They and four undergraduate interns from UNC Wilmington were bringing up shipwreck artifacts from muddy outdoor storage tanks at the state’s Underwater Archaeology Branch.

The artifacts came from the wreck of the “Modern Greece,” a Civil War blockade runner that ran aground in 1862 near Fort Fisher. This year marks the 150th anniversary of the ship’s sinking and the 50th anniversary of the original excavation.

“It was a very action-packed trip,” said Shanna Daniel, a professor of conservation at ECU who is working with the students this semester. “It was a very muddy situation; we were knee-deep in the tanks. They got dirty, and they enjoyed it.”

When the wreck was first excavated in 1962, more than 11,500 artifacts were recovered, according to Mark Wilde-Ramsing, deputy state archaeologist with UAB. The Modern Greece was an English ship bearing
arms and ammunition from Europe to the aid of the Confederacy, so it was full of rifles, bayonets, lead bullets, knives, chisels and other weaponry and supplies. Many items went to museums, but over more than were left in large outdoor water storage tanks.

Underwater archaeology was in its early days then, and initial excavators found that artifacts have to be kept wet, or they dry out improperly and crack. To handle all the artifacts from the Modern Greece, the UAB was set up under the Department of Cultural Resources.

“Our program really started in 1962-63,” Wilde-Ramsing said. “There was no textbook written on how to take care of these artifacts. The Modern Greece had so many duplicates that we could test different techniques for conservation.”

The remaining artifacts sat in the tanks so long because “there was a huge amount of them,” Wilde-Ramsing said. There are more than 30 wreck sites on North Carolina’s Outer Banks, known as the “Graveyard of the Atlantic,” and after 1963 the fledgling UAB turned its sights on other projects.

“With the anniversaries, we felt strongly that it would be good to find out what’s in those tanks,” he said. “And it’s an ideal situation for students because we can let them practice.”

With funding from the Friends of Fort Fisher, the UAB lab invited students from ECU to clear out the old tanks and get the remaining artifacts catalogued and stowed in more stable indoor wet storage.

“This gave students a chance to look at and assess the artifacts and learn what to do next in preservation,” Daniel said.

While diving and raising artifacts from the depths of the sea may be more exciting, the hard work lies ahead in the painstaking removal of silt and brine to make the metal safe for display on land, and the meticulous documentation of each piece.

“Conservation is a slow process, it will take a long time,” Daniel said. “It was quite an experience.”

The UAB plans an open house in June for an initial presentation of some of the conserved artifacts.

Contact Jackie Drake at jdrake@reflector.com or 252-329-9567 or follow her on Twitter @jackiedrakegdr.
Economic growth is focus of meeting
Saturday, March 10, 2012

The fifth annual State of the Region event in New Bern on Wednesday will gather business, community and government leaders to hear about efforts to encourage economic development in the east.

Panels will discuss the life sciences field that’s fostering job growth in biotechnology throughout the state, as well as strategies to better educate workers for mid-level skilled jobs.

The four-member life sciences panel includes Phil Hodges, co-founder and president of Metrics in Greenville. The panel will be moderated by Mark Phillips, the eastern office executive director of the nonprofit North Carolina Biotechnology Center.

A four-man education panel will discuss methods to align education to meet the needs of regional employers. It includes Ted Morris, associate vice chancellor of East Carolina University’s Engagement, Innovation and Economic Development; Randy Collier, a health career consultant for Vidant Health and Steve Hill, executive director of STEM East, a NCER workforce development program. The panel will be moderated by Samuel Houston Jr., president and chief executive officer of the North Carolina Science, Mathematics and Technology Education Center.

Ted Abernathy, executive director of the Southern Growth Policies Board, a public policy think tank based at the Research Triangle Park, will deliver the keynote address on “Competing in the Changing South.”

As part of the program, regional industries and partnerships will be spotlighted. An update on the military presence in the east also will be given by Mark Sutherland, the NCER’s executive director of the Military Growth Task Force.

John Chaffee, NCER’s president and chief executive officer, will deliver his yearly report on the State of the Region.

“I always look forward to our State of the Region meetings,” he said in a news release. “They provide a platform for us to share information on many of the great things taking place in eastern North Carolina; give us a chance
to thank our wonderful partners; and allow us to take a little time to network with people from around the region and the state.”

Last year’s State of the Region was held in Greenville. It was sponsored by East Carolina University and Pitt Community College. This year, Craven Community College is its sponsor.

Tuesday is the last day to register for the free event put on by North Carolina’s Eastern Region at the NCER’s website: www.nceast.org. It begins at 8:40 a.m. at the New Bern Riverfront Convention Center, 203 Front St., following a continental breakfast. It concludes at noon.
Students and teachers from Pitt County Schools enjoy an electrifying performance by ArcAttack, an educational performing science troupe, Friday morning at ECU's Wright Auditorium. ArcAttack's dazzling show features two hand-built Tesla coils and an array of spectacular lights and music, all geared to educate students about science, electricity, and electro-magnetism. (Rob Taylor/The Daily Reflector)

**Students learn powerful lesson**

“The goal is to bring students to events where they can make connections to the real world.”

Jane Austen Behan  
district arts coordinator

By Jackie Drake  
The Daily Reflector  
Saturday, March 10, 2012

What do you get when you combine electricity, light, vibration and sound? You get one shockingly entertaining and educational show put on for Pitt County Schools students on Friday at East Carolina University.

In conjunction with their science studies, seventh graders from across the district came to Wright Auditorium for a concert by ArcAttack, a Texas-based group that uses popular music to display technology and engineering in action.

“The musical performance is related to the science curriculum, so there’s a high degree of relevancy,” District Arts Coordinator Jane Austen Behan said.
Part science fair and part rock concert, the show features devices that throw arcs of electricity across the stage and produce their own varied sounds that can be channeled into a music and light show.

“I thought it was really cool,” said Jordan Paldino of Farmville Middle School.

The group runs electric current at certain voltages through a special kind of transformer called a Tesla Coil that sparks and vibrates at rates equal to the frequencies of musical notes. Group members also hook up drum machines and play along on special instruments. Song selections included familiar melodies like the Darth Vader theme from Star Wars, Bach’s Toccata and Fugue in D minor and “Iron Man” by British heavy metal group Black Sabbath.

“It was very fun, bright and creative,” said Shianne Haight of Ayden Middle School.

The climax came when one performer took a “lightning-proof guitar” to connect the arcs of energy between the two Tesla coils. His protective suit conducted the electricity over his body instead of through it.

“It looked dangerous but it really wasn’t,” Paldino said.

All that started from a basic introduction explaining that electricity is the movement of charged electrons across atoms.

Ayden Middle School student Xavier Moore said it was cool to see the same static electricity he learned about in class on display.

“ArcAttack is all about putting on a show that is not just a concert, but an otherworldly experience,” the group states on its website. “In doing so with the technology that we’ve created, we hope to inspire minds, the young and the old, to take up an interest in science, the arts and their applications, to examine where they intersect, where they are going and to re-examine the works of past researchers and performers such as Nikola Tesla.”

Tesla, an engineer, invented his namesake coils in the 1890s as way to transfer power without wires. Today they mostly are used for demonstrations like the one by ArcAttack, who perfected the musical technique.

“They’re incorporating science and technology principles through music,” Behan said. “The exciting part is that all seventh graders will have this art/science experience, and what they learned in school will have greater depth and understanding.”
The concert was part of the Family Fare series, a collaboration between the ECU College of Fine Arts and Communication and Pitt County Schools, according to Behan.

“The goal is to bring students to events where they can make connections to the real world,” she said.
ECU Notes: Study eyes vision, muscle ties
Sunday, March 11, 2012
News Services

One out of every three adults aged 65 and older will fall this year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Of those who fall, 20 to 30 percent will suffer injuries that will shorten their life span or negatively affect their quality of life.

East Carolina University researchers are working to improve those statistics through a study under way in the College of Health and Human Performance.

Senior ECU exercise physiology majors Luke Spangler and Katie Reynolds are investigating the relationship between muscle coordination and visual steadiness, thanks to funding through ECU Undergraduate Research and Creativity Activity Award.

“Understanding the relationship between the steadiness of our vision and the steadiness of our muscles can lead to an improved quality of life as we age,” said ECU kinesiology professor Dr. Paul DeVita, one of two faculty mentors overseeing the research. Dr. Nick Murray also serves as a faculty mentor; Becky Krupenevich is a graduate student assisting with the project.

DeVita explained the project’s focus with the example of walking up a flight of stairs, which requires clear vision to see how high each step is, along with adequate muscle force to actually make the step. When vision fails, a person may not perceive the step’s height accurately and may therefore trip and fall.
“We use our vision to tell our muscles what to do,” Spangler said. Walking up the stairs, stepping off a curb and pouring a glass of water are daily activities that require precise movements, he said.

Muscle force control is very often mediated through our visual information, Spangler said.

Twenty healthy senior adults and 20 young adults were solicited to help with the research, which takes place in the biomechanics lab in ECU’s Department of Kinesiology.

Retired U.S. Army Lt. Col. John Hart, who graduated from ECU in 1962, is one of the participants. In 35 years, he has jogged 23,000 miles. At the age of 72, he still is running a two-mile run six days a week.

Now he’s added to his regimen by applying his muscles and his vision for research. To provide data for the study, Hart is seated and secured into an isokinetic dynamometer, an instrument connected to his leg that measures muscle force. He is fitted with a pair of glasses with a camera that tracks the position and movement of his pupils.

Hart begins the test with three vision-only tasks that measure his vision steadiness. With his eyes, he follows a moving target along three templates on a computer screen. The camera tracks the position of Hart’s pupils as his eyes follow the target.

In the next test, Hart completes muscle-related tasks. He applies force in his thigh muscles against a stationary bar to control a visual target along the same three computer screen templates.

Data collected from both tests will help link the interaction of vision and muscle force steadiness as people age. The researchers expect that people with better visual control will also have better muscle force control. If this is the case, the next step would be to determine whether training to improve visual function could lead to improved muscle function.

Data from the two different age groups will show how age affects vision and muscle force steadiness.

Spangler and Reynolds competed to obtain the award that funds their research. ECU’s University Research and Creative Activity Awards support faculty-mentored research or creative projects undertaken by undergraduate students.

“The increased support for undergraduate research has been a great help in offering the opportunity for more undergraduate students to become
involved in research,” said Dr. Glen Gilbert, dean of the College of Health and Human Performance.

Reynolds of Raleigh is a double major in exercise physiology and Hispanic studies. She hopes to pursue a career as a physician in family or internal medicine.

Spangler, who is from Winston-Salem, will graduate in May. He also plans to attend medical school.

**New Music Festival**

The 12th Annual New Music Festival begins Wednesday on the ECU campus and runs through March 18. Sponsored by the ECU School of Music and the Hilton Greenville, the festival features music by contemporary composers.

The New Music Festival brings new musical ideas into the classroom, performance spaces and the community. This year’s event brings together composers from ECU and throughout the world to have compositions performed by acclaimed guest artists and hundreds of School of Music students.

The festival provides unique opportunities for ECU music students to work closely with world-class performers and composers.

Another aspect of the festival is the ECU New Music Festival composition competition, which is open to composers internationally. Each year, competition winners have a work rehearsed and recorded by an ensemble of ECU School of Music performers. The 2012 winner is “Seasonal Affective Disorder” by Jessica Rudman of New York City, and her winning composition will be performed by the ECU symphony orchestra.

Here is a schedule of the New Music Festival concerts; all will be in A.J. Fletcher Recital Hall unless otherwise noted:

- Bugallo-Williams Duo, piano, 7:30 p.m., Wednesday, free.
- Tom McCaslin, tuba, and Catherine Garner, piano, 7:30 p.m., Thursday, free.
- JACK Quartet, 7:30 p.m., Friday, ticketed event. Call 800-ECU-ARTS.
- ECU NewMusic Camerata: Britt Theurer, trumpet; Chris Nappi, percussion; Melissa Reardon, viola; ECU Wind Ensemble Chamber
Players, Scott Carter, Director; Ara Gregorian, violin, 3 p.m., Saturday, free.

- ECU Symphony Orchestra and combined choirs: Jorge Richter, conductor; Elliot Frank, guitar; John Kramar, baritone, 7:30 p.m., Saturday, Wright Auditorium, free.
- Premiere Performances, 7:30 p.m., Sunday, March 18, free.

For more information, visit www.ecu.edu/music/newmusicfest.

**Historic restoration**

Roxane Gatling Gilmore, former First Lady of Virginia, will present “Restoring the Virginia Governor’s House: Preserving a Historic Home for a New Century” at 5:30 p.m. Tuesday in the Science & Technology Building Room C207, as part of the Construction Management Leadership Lecture Series.

Gilmore will speak on project management issues, including project definition and controls, while adhering to preservation standards. She wrote a book about the process of the restoration.

This free lecture is presented by ECU Departments of Construction Management, History and Geography along with the North Carolina Eastern State Historic Preservation Office.

For more information, contact Rebecca McDonald at 328-1388.

**Jarvis lecture set**

Duke University theology and black church studies professor J. Kameron Carter will speak at ECU at 7 p.m. Tuesday in Wright Auditorium.

Carter will discuss “Religion and the post-racial condition,” in the final presentation of the 2011-12 Voyages of Discovery Lecture Series, sponsored by the Thomas Harriot College of Arts and Sciences.

Carter’s research addresses Christian thought, particularly the person and work of Jesus Christ, and theological anthropology, the human being in Christian perspective.

He is writing a book that examines ideological uses of Jesus in the modern invention of the human, or as he refers to the topic, “the cultural Jesus.”

His work addresses the identity of Jesus in light of shifting global realities in the 21st century.
The Jarvis Lecture is co-sponsored by the ECU Religious Studies Program and Jarvis Memorial United Methodist Church.

Complimentary tickets are available through the ECU Central Ticket Office at 328-4788 or 800-ECU-ARTS.

Tickets also will be available at the door.

For more information, contact John A. Tucker at 328-1028 or visit the series’ web site at https://www.ecu.edu/voyages.
The East Carolina Alumni Association received the Award of Excellence for Overall Alumni Relations Program during the recent Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) District III conference. The alumni association received the Grand Award in this category in 2008 and 2009, and the Award of Excellence in 2011.

“This just lets the world know what we already know, East Carolina and her alumni association are true to our mission of service,” Paul J. Clifford, president and chief executive officer of the East Carolina Alumni Association, said in a news release. “We do what we do because our alumni deserve the best. Awards just validate that others are watching and approve.”

Other finalists in the category were the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Western Kentucky and Miami (Ohio) University. The Grand Award went to Western Kentucky. UNC also received the Award of Excellence, and Miami received Special Merit recognition.

The East Carolina Alumni Association’s mission is to inform, involve and serve members of the ECU family throughout their lifelong relationship with the university.

A nonprofit organization, membership in the alumni association is open to all alumni and friends of East Carolina University. The alumni association provides alumni events, communications, career advancement and networking, and scholarships for ECU students, among other services.

Visit PirateAlumni.com for more information about the alumni association.
Kidney transplant specialist joins medical school
Monday, March 12, 2012

Dr. Claire Morgan, a kidney transplant specialist, has joined the Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University and its group medical practice, ECU Physicians.

Morgan joined ECU as an assistant professor in the Department of Surgery. She has a medical degree from State University of New York Stony Brook School of Medicine and completed residency training in general surgery and a fellowship in liver transplant and hepatobiliary surgery at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey.

Morgan also completed a kidney and pancreas transplant surgery fellowship at the University of Pittsburgh Starzl Transplantation Institute.

Before coming to Greenville, Morgan served on the faculty at the University of Pittsburgh and was a surgeon at St. Barnabas Medical Center and Newark Beth Israel Medical Center in New Jersey. She is certified by the American Board of Surgery.

Morgan’s clinical interests are kidney and pancreas transplantation, dialysis access and general surgery in the transplant patient.

Morgan sees patients at ECU Physicians at 517 Moye Blvd. in Greenville. Appointments are available by calling 744-2620.
Peace University, alumnae grapple with this fall's changes

BY JANE STANCILL - jstancill@newsobserver.com

RALEIGH–Men will move into the dorms at William Peace University this fall, but that's not the only change coming to the downtown Raleigh campus that has educated women for than 150 years.

The women's college is not only becoming coed, it's blurring the lines between high school, community college and university education.

Even as male students are blending into college classrooms, the former Peace College could become home to single-sex academies for Wake County high school students. Across town, Wake Technical Community College students can remain on their campus while earning a four-year degree from Peace professors through a new partnership. Closer to home, Peace has taken steps to improve its relationship with surrounding neighborhoods.

Leaders also hope to add graduate degrees several years down the road.

But as the university announces new initiatives nearly monthly, a battle still rages in the background as Peace alumnae seek answers and accountability from Peace leaders who signed off on the changes. Both sides have hired private attorneys and public relations firms in the skirmish.

Already, some changes are visible on the campus. Men can be spotted on prospective student tours, and renovation will start later this month on athletic facilities, where male locker rooms will be added. Part of an academic building will be vacated to make way for the high school academies, if the concept is approved by state education officials and the Wake County school board.

The new partnerships are key to thriving in a rapidly changing time for education, Peace President Debra Townsley said. "There's a lot of talk about that nationally," she said. "You just can't operate in a vacuum anymore."

'Answers from Peace'

The latest changes have provided fodder for a fresh round of questions about what's going on at Peace.
On Tuesday, Miriam Dorsey of Raleigh, a well-known Peace alumna, warned the Wake County school board about forging a relationship with Peace and cited concerns about the university's financial viability. "I come here today to urge this board to exercise due diligence," she said. "Be very careful before you choose this partner. Get answers from Peace before spending the taxpayers' money."

Townsley maintains that Peace's future is solid. In an unusual and bold move, the university announced that it would lower tuition by nearly 8 percent for the fall. That may have sparked an increase in interest.

Applications are running ahead of last year, as are inquiries by prospective students, said Justin Roy, vice president for communications and marketing. As of Thursday, WPU had received 1,138 applications, compared with 998 by the same date last year, Roy said. With five months to go before fall semester, the number is likely to surpass last year's 1,219 applications.

Townsley said about 30 percent of applicants are men, which is higher than she anticipated. A new major in simulation and video game design is also expected to draw male students.

"We think we have great programs in a great location and amazing outcomes," she said. "When you put that combination together, I think it will be a smooth transition."

**Tiff over a letter**

So far, though, the coed switch has been met with a bitter and loud outcry from alumnae, who organized on Facebook and led protests on the campus. They say they have been shut out of the process. The change was announced last July, about six months after college leaders said going coed was not on the table.

"We the alumnae and donors deserve transparency and openness, not to mention involvement, in these very significant changes in our 150-year-old institution," Dorsey said. "Instead of being trusted and respected, we feel betrayed by this small group who apparently decided that only they know what is best for the college community."

Dorsey is a member of a group of alumnae who formed to preserve Peace's legacy. They hired John McMillan, a Raleigh attorney, along with public relations consultant Joyce Fitzpatrick and political consultant Gary Pearce.
The women decided to seek legal help after another group of alumnae had a run-in with attorneys hired by the university.

Last fall, a group of mostly young alumnae composed a four-page letter raising questions about the changes, which they described as "cataclysmic" and "shrouded in secrecy." Signed by some 45 people, the letter cited concerns about the dismissal and buyout of faculty, elimination of academic majors, dropped agreements with the Presbyterian church, and the name change, among other issues. The letter was addressed to Peace supporters.

A law firm hired by Peace later sent cease-and-desist letters to the signers, charging that they had made "statements which are not only false but individually and collectively damage the reputation of the University and the President." The letter, signed by Catharine B. Arrowood of the Parker Poe law firm, instructed the signers to stop distributing the document and retract their claims.

The cease-and-desist letter prompted criticism of Peace by a national free expression watchdog group. Peter Bonilla of the Philadelphia-based Foundation for Individual Rights in Education wrote on the FIRE website that criticism by the alumnae is free speech protected by the First Amendment.

"Such disrespect by the college for the basic exercise of the group's free speech rights, in fact, smacks precisely of one of the charges leveled against the college by the group: that it is unaccountable to the public and that "(c)oncerned alumni of Peace College are treated as adversaries when they pose legitimate questions to the new guard," Bonilla wrote.

**For-profit rumor**

Arrowood could not be reached for comment, but Townsley said the university has no problem with outspoken critics as long as they don't spread falsehoods.

Alumnae, for example, wrongly said that Peace's student numbers were down, Townsley said. She also dismissed rumors spread by alumnae that Peace would become a for-profit institution.

"There are private schools that look to sell, and often it's desperation, ... the way that they survive is to sell to a for-profit. We are nowhere near that. Depending on the day of the market, we have $35 (million) to $40 million in the bank," she said. "The board has no intention of looking at a for-profit. We haven't even had that discussion."
Townsley said she had welcomed the discussion about Peace's future. She pointed out that she held webinars and open houses for alumnae in the fall. Some dined at her home to discuss the changes.

One of those was Dorsey, who said she learned to challenge authority during her days at Peace in the early 1960s.

Dorsey described herself as "a wallflower" while at Broughton High School. She blossomed when she arrived at Peace, where she became editor of the school newspaper.

"Peace College gave me my voice. It taught me critical thinking," she said, adding that many of the current trustees have no real tie to Peace. "For these people, this small group of less than 25 people, to come along and just change all that and wipe it off the slate and then not tell us what's going on, it's very, very discouraging. I can't tell you how hurtful that is."

Students, meanwhile, are watching the changes unfold. While many cheered the decrease in tuition, others say they don't like some of the other proposals.

Laura Murray, a junior from Wake Forest, said her major, graphic design, will be dropped after she graduates. As for the single-sex academies, she said, "I'm paying $32,000 a year to get away from high school students."

Murray said the male students are likely to be a distraction in the classroom. But she's also upset about the way the changes were implemented - hastily, and without input from students.

"If they had asked for people's opinions instead of bulldozing over them, they might have had a better outcome," she said.

One thing Murray is glad about: The administration has promised that, through 2013, graduates will receive diplomas that say "Peace College."

"I'm never going to graduate from William Peace University," Murray said. "Never."

Stancill: 919-829-4559
Fraternity rush sobering up at University of Maryland and elsewhere

By Jenna Johnson

The Phi Gamma Delta fraternity at the University of Maryland threw a rush party at the beginning of the semester, and dozens of potential recruits showed up. The guys threw a football in the front yard, ate pizza in the packed living room and talked at length about sports.

Throughout the event, they refilled their plastic Solo cups with soda.

“You ask them: ‘What do you look for in a fraternity?’ And they might try to impress us and say, ‘Oh, I like girls and partying.’ And I say: ‘Yeah, every house does that. What else?’ ” said Jon Oks, a member who is a junior. “I tell them: Look at our trophies. Talk to these guys. . . . Come to our house, eat some pizza.”

Fraternity rush is sobering up at a number of universities, including Maryland, where administrators ordered the student organizations to overhaul their recruiting — or risk having the university do it for them.
Following incidents at the University of South Carolina and Yale and Cornell universities over the past two years, debate has arisen about the role of fraternities in higher education and whether they should continue to exist. Much of what fraternities offer — a small community at a large school, a network of alumni, community service and leadership opportunities — is now offered by universities themselves.

To survive, fraternities have to change, said Peter Smithhisler, president of the North-American Interfraternity Conference, which represents 75 fraternities with chapters on more than 800 campuses.

“Those chapters that can articulate what it means to be a fraternity man — beyond a drinking culture — are the ones making it,” he said. “Those who rely on the crutch of alcohol won’t make it.”

Often, that change starts with recruiting. If fraternities pick their next class of brothers based on interests, life goals and leadership experiences — instead of their hilarity when plastered — they are more likely to get along when sober, bond without hazing and view their organization as something other than a drinking club. That may mean fewer problems with alcohol abuse down the line.

Most schools prohibited the use of alcohol in recruiting decades ago, and most freshmen and sophomores who rush are younger than the legal drinking age of 21. But school rules and drinking laws often are ignored — and not just by fraternity members.

U-Md. officials say alcohol over the years has played a role in recruiting for many student groups. But fraternities have come under particular scrutiny.

Not long ago, fraternity rush at U-Md. mirrored some of the stereotypes in movies such as “Animal House” and “Old School.” Hordes of intoxicated students wandered the neighborhoods near campus, jumping from one kegger to the next, sometimes giving their cellphone numbers to fraternities they liked.

Spring rush often meant house parties that raged out of control, an increased number of students taken to emergency rooms for alcohol-related problems and the university investigating suspected cases of hazing.

In 2002, U-Md. student Daniel F. Reardon fell into a coma and died after a night of heavy drinking while joining the Phi Sigma Kappa fraternity. His parents sued the fraternity and some of its members for not getting Reardon help quickly enough. The case was settled out of court for an undisclosed sum.
Phi Sigma Kappa, which says it is U-Md.’s oldest fraternity, still has a house on Fraternity Row, a loop lined with Greek houses. Its recruitment brochure this year says it has “no pledging and no hazing. None. Never. Ever. Pledging and hazing has no place in a brotherhood.”

Following rush, most fraternities require students to “pledge,” an often weeks- or months-long process during which aspiring members get to know the chapter, its membership and its traditions. It is also when students are most likely to be exposed to hazing.

Historically, pledging takes place during the first semester of freshman year, although U-Md. and other universities have bumped their rush season to second semester. When fraternities get into trouble, it is often while recruiting or pledging new members.

A high-profile incident occurred at Yale in October 2010 when Delta Kappa Epsilon fraternity pledges marched through campus chanting things that seemed to promote sexual assault, such as “No means yes!” Yale suspended recognition of Delta Kappa Epsilon, which counts both presidents Bush among its alumni.

In February 2011, a Cornell sophomore died after Sigma Alpha Epsilon members bound his hands and feet, forced him to drink alcohol and deserted him, according to a lawsuit his mother filed against the fraternity. Cornell suspended recognition of the fraternity and forbade any form of pledging — along with hazing, which already was illegal — for the entire system.

In August, administrators halted fraternity rush at the University of South Carolina after two students were arrested, one was hospitalized and six fraternities were caught serving alcohol to recruits.

In the Washington area, the fraternity scene at College Park stands out. Some major local universities, such as Georgetown and Catholic, do not have any recognized fraternities or sororities. American and George Mason universities have unhoused fraternities.

At U-Md., the past two fraternity spring rushes have been more formal than in previous years. Among other changes, recruits are required to sign up for the process and can attend a series of no-alcohol events, including a “Meet the Greeks” information fair.

To be sure, several fraternity members hosted unofficial parties off campus where students drank, according to fraternity leaders. But they were fewer in number, less crowded and less promoted than in previous years. The late January rush passed without major incident, according to school officials.
The change hasn’t been easy. At a meeting in December, two fraternity presidents suggested putting everyone on “social probation” during rush — meaning no one could drink for two weeks, said Marc George, president of the Interfraternity Council. The proposal was quickly rejected.

While many agreed with the idea, George said it would be a difficult sell for members: “The average 20-year-old college guy is not going to be thrilled by it.”

Some fraternity members complain that their rush is becoming too much like sorority rush — a grandly orchestrated process in which recruits watch skits, listen to tear-filled testimonials about the power of sisterhood, and drink lemonade or iced tea.

Nationally, membership in sororities is growing at a faster rate than in fraternities. At Maryland this semester, about 350 men were invited to join 22 fraternities and 500 women joined 14 sororities. About 80 students joined 20 historically black or culturally based fraternities and sororities, which have separate governing boards.

During a January tour of several U-Md. fraternity houses, these words were heard over and over: Brotherhood. Community service. Alumni connections. No hazing. Founding values.

There also was some profanity, a couple of homophobic slurs and numerous references to meeting women at parties.

One of the first houses on the tour was Tau Kappa Epsilon, where members in athletic shorts, T-shirts and ball caps tried to explain their house to freshmen.

“We’re middle-of-the-road academically,” the rush chairman told the prospects. “We have a pretty tight brotherhood, in addition to partying.”

Another member added: “Your social life opens up drastically. You meet so many girls.”

At Sigma Phi Epsilon, members in suits and ties ushered visitors into their boardroom, handed out business cards printed with coming events and noted that a faculty member lives in the house.

“We’re different,” the rush chairman said. “And we’re better because of that.”
The education system is an increasingly powerful mechanism for the intergenerational reproduction of privilege.”

— Anthony Carnevale

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The Reproduction of Privilege

By THOMAS B. EDSALL

Instead of serving as a springboard to social mobility as it did for the first decades after World War II, college education today is reinforcing class stratification, with a huge majority of the 24 percent of Americans aged 25 to 29 currently holding a bachelor’s degree coming from families with earnings above the median income.

Seventy-four percent of those now attending colleges that are classified as “most competitive,” a group that includes schools like Harvard, Emory, Stanford and Notre Dame, come from families with earnings in the top income quartile, while only three percent come from families in the bottom quartile.

Anthony Carnevale, director of the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce and co-author of “How Increasing College Access Is Increasing Inequality, and What to Do about It,” puts it succinctly: “The education system is an increasingly powerful mechanism for the intergenerational reproduction of privilege.”

These anti-democratic trends are driven in part by a supposedly meritocratic selection process with high school students from the upper strata of the middle class performing better on SAT and ACT tests than those from poor and working class families.
Contrary to those who say that this is the meritocracy at work, differences in scores on standardized tests do not fully explain class disparity in educational outcomes. When high-scoring students from low-income families are compared to similarly high-scoring students from upper-income families, 80 percent of those in the top quarter of the income distribution go on to get college degrees, compared to just 44 percent of those in the bottom quarter.

Post-secondary education is not, in fact, functioning to dissolve long-standing class hierarchies. There are various ways of examining these trends, which I’ve outlined below. However you look at it, the cultural and political implications of the deepening of the income achievement gap are profound.

Beginning in the early 1980s, according to the Census, the college “premium” – the difference in annual earnings of a high school graduate and a college graduate – rose from 50 percent to approximately 80 percent. In 2007, workers with a high school degree made an average of $31,286 compared to $57,181, 82.8 percent more, for those with a bachelor’s degree. A college degree does not guarantee affluence, but it puts the recipient in a far better position to achieve or maintain upper-middle-class status than those without degrees.

Higher education itself has polarized: Competitive four-year colleges, as defined by Barron’s, have seen enrollments rise from 41 percent of all post-secondary students to 46 percent from 1994 to 2006; 2-year community colleges at the bottom have seen their share of enrollment grow from 46 to 49 percent. In the middle ground, the percent enrolled at the less competitive four-year colleges has been cut in half, from 13 to 6 percent, according to the Carnevale study mentioned above.
Student bodies in competitive colleges and in community colleges reflect two very different economic worlds. At the 1,044 competitive colleges, 76 percent of the freshman came from families in the upper half of the income distribution. In the nation’s 1,000-plus community colleges, almost 80 percent of the students came from low-income families.

Low income students are heavily dependent on scholarship aid to go to college, and especially dependent on grants as opposed to loans. Need-based scholarships are one way to increase low-income enrollment, but over the past three decades, the value of Pell Grants – the basic form of federal scholarship aid to poor students – has steadily declined as tuition costs have grown at a much faster rate than inflation. In 1979-80, the maximum Pell Grant covered 99 percent of the cost of a community college, 77 percent at a public four-year college and 36 percent at a private four-year college. By 2010-11, these percentages had dropped to 62, 36 and 15 percent respectively, according to Education Week.
At the same time, colleges, both public and private, have shifted their own spending priorities, modestly increasing the investment in students from families in the lowest income quintile, while sharply boosting their investment in education of students from the top income quintile. The Education Trust has produced the charts showing the shift over a 12-year period, from 1995 to 2007.

SAT scores, in turn, correlate directly to students’ family income. The following charts show this linkage:

![Graph showing the correlation between SAT scores and family income.](source: College Board)

There is a substantial body of evidence that the system is failing to reward students with high test scores who come from low-income families. In a 2005 report, the College Board found that among those scoring highest in math tests in 1992, just under three-quarters of students from families in the highest quartile went on to get bachelor’s degrees by the year 2000. Among
those from families in the bottom quartile, less than half that number, 29 percent, went on to get degrees.

As the value of a college degree has nearly doubled, in terms of future earnings, the percentage of low income college students actually graduating by age 24 has grown by only 2.1 points, from 6.2 percent in 1970 to 8.3 percent in 2009. Among students from families in the highest income quartile, the graduation rate by age 24 has surged by 42.2 percentage points, doubling from 40.2 percent to 82.4 percent over the last four decades.

Source: Postsecondary Education Opportunity

“The income-achievement gap is now more than twice as large as the black-white achievement gap. Fifty years ago, in contrast, the black-white gap was twice as large as the income gap,” according to Sean Reardon, a professor of
education and sociology at Stanford, writing in “The Widening Academic Achievement Gap between the Rich and the Poor: New Evidence and Possible Explanations:”

At the same time that family income has become more predictive of children’s academic achievement, so have educational attainment and cognitive skills become more predictive of adults’ earnings. The combination of these trends creates a feedback mechanism that may decrease intergenerational mobility. As the children of the rich do better in school, and those who do better in school are more likely to become rich, we risk producing an even more unequal and economically polarized society.

The “income achievement gap” – differences in standard test scores and grade point averages – between children from families in the top 10 percent of the income distribution and those from families in the bottom ten percent has been growing. Reardon has found that the income achievement gap between children from the highest and lowest income deciles is roughly 30 to 40 percent larger among children born in 2001 than among those born in 1976.

“The children of the rich increasingly do better in school, relative to the children of the poor — that is, they score higher on standardized tests and they graduate from college at much higher rates. This has always been true, but is much more true now than 40 years ago,” Reardon told The Times in an email. “This means that social mobility has gotten rarer – the ‘American Dream’ is increasingly difficult to attain.”

Not only does a college degree significantly boost income, it also helps protect against downward mobility. The Pew Charitable Trusts found in a 2011 study that those with just a high school degree or less are 13 percent more likely to experience significant downward mobility – seeing their income fall substantially below what their parents made – than those with college degrees.

The class-reinforcing trends of higher education pose an acute dilemma for the American political system. “The built-in tension between postsecondary selectivity and upward mobility is particularly acute in the United States. Americans rely on education as an economic arbiter more than do other modern nations,” Carnevale wrote in “How Increasing College Access Is Increasing Inequality, and What to Do About It.” “Americans always have preferred education over the welfare state as a means for balancing the equality implicit in citizenship and the inequality implicit in markets.”
Politically, the lack of access to a four-year college education is a crucial problem for one of the key battleground constituencies of 2012: whites without college degrees. Several issues that can be mined by enterprising politicians cluster around this debilitating lack of access — in fact they help cause it — including the enormous debt loads carried by students and recent graduates, as well as the emergence of for-profit colleges saddling low-income students with loans for programs they cannot complete. The data show that a disproportionately large percentage of young adults from working-class families who, according to their test scores and grade point averages, are equipped to earn a B.A., are either not going to college, or failing to finish — relegating them to a life of stagnant or declining wages. There is a reservoir of resentment over this fate waiting to be tapped by either party.