THE DAILY CLIPS

March 15, 2012

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

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

East Carolina University News Services
Web site at http://www.ecu.edu/news
252-328-6481
Board discusses new league
By Nathan Summers
Thursday, March 15, 2012

The next step for budding members of the planned merger between Conference USA and the Mountain West is one East Carolina is not taking lightly.

ECU, like other potential merger members, must sign a formation agreement in order to be included in what is expected to be months of detailed planning for the new league, which the two existing conferences have been piecing together since announcing their plans last November.

On Wednesday at a meeting of the ECU Board of Trustees, chancellor Steve Ballard called signing the formation agreement — which effectively throws ECU and its television rights headlong into the merger’s planning stage — a “chicken-and-egg problem.”

“We really can’t go forward with TV contracts and new members and various other details unless you have a base for forming this new conference,” Ballard said. “The idea for this formation agreement, even though it has lots of elements to it, is to get an agreement among 16 universities as the founding members of this new conference.”

Ballard said if ECU expects to have a voice in the plans, signing the formation agreement is a must. Ballard and ECU director of athletics Terry Holland updated the board on the merger’s progress and also offered some personal insight on the matter before the board went into a closed session to discuss the details of the agreement.

While Holland reiterated his support for the merger, he echoed Ballard’s sentiment as well.

“We should be anxious about signing this agreement,” Holland said. “I don’t think there’s any question about that. We have zero details about what it will look like in the final stage, but we need to be in the room when the details are determined or we’re going to be on the outside looking in with no input.”

Ballard said he expected three to four months of “more important discussions” about laying the groundwork for the new conference after the agreements are signed by members, and the all-important discussions about TV revenue would follow.
“I think the real key details will depend upon what will happen with the TV contracts,” Ballard said, adding that he believes the league is committed to 24 total members in the long term. “There are certainly some areas of concern there, but the biggest single event is if and when we were to sign over our TV rights to a new conference because that would be more binding and probably much harder to exit from than the situation that we’re currently in.”

Holland largely put to rest the notion of ECU returning to independent status if the merger does not work for the university. He detailed the painful football scheduling process in the school’s previous run as an independent, and said he didn’t think it was possible to devise a 12-game schedule in today’s environment without conference affiliation.

Ballard and Holland stand in agreement that if the merger plans don’t suit ECU, the school can still opt out of the deal.

“If at any time this looks like it’s not for us or we have a better option or if some of the worst-case scenarios unfold, I’m very confident that we can extract ourself from this new conference with a fairly minimal cost to East Carolina University,” Ballard said.

Contact Nathan Summers at nsummers@reflector.com or 252-329-9595.
Responses are in from an online survey on academic reorganization at East Carolina University, but the results are not public yet.

The Program Prioritization Committee is analyzing the results of the campuswide survey that sought faculty response to the “white paper” that it released in February containing 56 possible organizational changes to the structure of the university to increase efficiency in the face of budget cuts.

The committee is not ready to release the results but plans to do so after a special faculty meeting, according to committee chairman and geography professor Ron Mitchelson. The survey closed March 9, just before spring break, so the committee began its analysis this week.

The called meeting of the Faculty Senate on Tuesday will allow for more discussion on the proposed changes to the university’s three divisions, 13 colleges and free-standing schools, and 72 departments. Some changes would have a broad impact, such as merging or dissolving colleges, while others are more focused, like moving individual departments.

After taking in all the feedback, the committee plans to combine some of the options into four to five initial scenarios for release on March 30, according to Mitchelson.

“Then we’ll get another round of feedback on those before presenting our final recommendation to the chancellor on April 30,” he said.
In addition to the online survey, a series of 13 forums were held at each college from the end of February through the beginning of March. Faculty discussed concerns specific to their school or department, but several common questions emerged: will this really save money and what will happen with jobs?

The white paper did not include numbers for money saved or jobs lost, which several faculty members said they wanted to see before deciding. Those numbers are expected in upcoming proposals.

Mitchelson said there could be administrative savings but the main goal is to increase efficiency and improve quality.

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

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

Contact Jackie Drake at jdrake@reflector.com or 252-329-9567 or follow her on Twitter @jackiedrakegdr.
East Carolina's Career Center held an Employment Panel to help students learn what hiring managers look for in an applicant at Mendenhall Student Center on Wednesday, March 14, 2012. (Aileen Devlin/The Daily Reflector)

Experts explain how to get hired
By K.J. Williams
Thursday, March 15, 2012

Homework doesn’t end with a college degree, experts on job hiring said at an East Carolina University panel presentation on Wednesday.

Three experts involved with various aspects of screening job applicants told ECU students to research potential employers before interviewing and gave other tips to students at an event sponsored by The Career Center on campus held at Mendenhall Student Center. Patrick Roberts, a career counselor at the center, asked the panel a series of open-ended questions to mine their expertise.

“I think it goes back to being well-read,” said Michelle Morris, an ECU employment analyst on the panel, comparing interview preparation to studying for a test.

The panelists, alumni of East Carolina University, shared how their impressions of applicants are formed, either positively or negatively.

Thorough preparation for the job interview, dressing appropriately, and showing a sincere interest in the position were key factors in making a good impression, they agreed.

Other suggestions gave the students more in-depth insight into the process so they may find their names plucked from the stacks of resumes.
“I probably get to spend 30 seconds glancing over” each resume, said Melanie Holden of Raleigh, the human resources director at UNC-TV, the University of North Carolina’s public broadcasting service.

Certain buzz words capture her interest when they relate to the job. And each resume needs to be tailored to a specific job. Holden cautioned against taking a “one size fits all” approach to resume submittals.

Morris said that grade point averages don’t have to eliminate an applicant. “If it’s not such a great asset I would probably leave the GPA off and point to my positives,” Morris said.

Phil Houston, chief executive officer of a Greenville-based virtual company that provides employee screening services, referenced his years screening applicants at the Central Intelligence Agency.

He advised the students to work on keeping their speech smooth through practice if nerves are a factor. “You have control over both the content and the delivery of what you impart to that hiring authority.”

Houston advised staying honest, and not embellishing on the facts, to demonstrate integrity.

After a job interview, evaluate your success and failure so that you can improve next time, and tweak your resume in the same manner. “And eventually you’ll get there,” he said.

Houston said that students should be aware that job interviews are about more than what looks good on paper. It’s also about preparation. “So much of the job process is subjective,” he said. “They need an asset and they’re trying to figure out from the pool they have who are the assets and who are the liabilities.”

In a tough market, Morris said you need to set yourself apart. Student jobs are job experience, she said. “You’ve already got a developed foundation there that could lead to something more.”

Holden said if no jobs are available, volunteering builds skills and impresses potential employers. “You’ve got to do something in the interim to keep moving forward,” she said. “It’s tough out there, but it’s not going to stay tough out there.”
Houston agreed that when the economy rebounds, students should be ready so they can “catch that wave.”

Roberts said this is the first time The Career Center has scheduled a panelist event about jobs. It’s expected to be repeated in the fall and spring semesters.

Afterward, T.J. Viverette, 21, a junior, said he found out some useful information about properly following up on job interviews.

Peter Larrimore, 23, a senior studying exercise physiology and psychology, said he learned about the importance of relating life experiences to a job’s qualifications.

And he said that he learned about “the importance of preparedness when going into a job interview, knowing the company and what they’re looking for, really knowing the company’s needs.”

Contact K.J. Williams at kwilliams@reflector.com or 252-329-9588.
Two popular lecture series at East Carolina University reached a landmark in one speech Tuesday night.

An address from Duke theologian J. Kameron Carter on race and religion marked the 20th annual Jarvis lecture on Christianity and culture as well as the 25th installment in the Voyages of Discovery lecture series.

“To probe questions of race is at the same time to probe questions of religion and vice versa,” said Carter, a professor of theology and black church studies at Duke Divinity School.

The Jarvis lecture, funded by Jarvis Memorial United Methodist Church of Greenville, is a key part of the religious studies program at ECU, which chooses the theme and speaker. While the speaker’s views may not necessarily reflect the views of the church, the lecture provides a link between the university, the religious community and the region in general.

“This has been a positive and mutually beneficial relationship, and a visible testimony to a positive ‘town-gown’ partnership,” Derek Maher, religious studies program director, said Tuesday night.

For 20 years, the Jarvis lecture has featured experts from Wake Forest, Duke, Columbia, Notre Dame and other universities to explain religious issues in an accessible way, according to Maher.

The Jarvis lecture became part of the Voyages of Discovery lecture series in 2008. The College of Arts and Sciences’ banner series started in 2007 in the spirit of exploration of ideas that marks the liberal arts, according to Dean Alan White.
In its five-year existence, the series has showcased speakers like Salman Rushdie, Gloria Steinem, Henry Louis Gates and Walter Isaacson who provide insight into major issues of the world today.

“Our series has achieved a significant milestone in its development as the premier intellectual event of eastern North Carolina,” White said. The partnership with the Jarvis lecture “has added profound depth to the spiritual and intellectual culture of our campus and the region.”

Contact Jackie Drake at jdrake@reflector.com or 252-329-9567 or follow her on Twitter @jackiedrakegdr.
Former UNC-CH tutor ‘had horrible lies written about her,’ attorney says

By Anne Blythe - ablythe@newsobserver.com

The former UNC-Chapel Hill tutor who figured prominently in NCAA infractions found within the Tar Heel football program never talked with investigators, but she has been much talked about for the past 20 months.

Now her attorney is speaking out, saying Jennifer Wiley, known in the NCAA infractions report only as “the former tutor,” is a “deeply religious” and “big-hearted” young woman who has been much vilified on Internet chat boards, and wrongly so.

“She had horrible lies written about her,” said Joseph B. Cheshire V, the Raleigh lawyer who represented the 24-year-old teacher.

Wiley, who declined to speak with NCAA investigators and to talk with UNC-CH administrators, assisted several players with their school work, Cheshire said, in ways that placed her “sometimes out of bounds without even knowing she was, but yes, occasionally just out of bounds.”

Since then, she has been a teacher, but her ties to the Tar Heel football program’s NCAA problems have posed employment challenges, Cheshire said. In September 2011, she resigned from Jeffreys Grove Elementary School in Raleigh after a little more than a month on the job. Cheshire said she quit because parents complained she was “the UNC tutor.”

Cheshire, afflicted with a bad case of laryngitis, responded by email to questions this week about Wiley. After her father sought his counsel, Cheshire agreed to advise Wiley at no charge, he said, because he believed in her and was sickened by “the extent people would go to destroy her life for their own sales, amusement, or simple irrational hatred for one university."

‘Misled and used’

He batted back any contentions that Butch Davis, the Tar Heel football coach fired amid the investigation, had any idea Wiley helped players with homework outside the tutoring center. She worked as a tutor for Davis’ son, Cheshire said, but has not worked for them since the questions arose.
Cheshire also knocked down Internet rumors about the extent of Wiley’s relationship with one player, saying she was “misled and used by one student-athlete who became her friend,” but there was nothing sexual or physical between the two.

Wiley broke convoluted and arcane NCAA rules, Cheshire said, but her efforts to help were no different from what “thousands of friends, family fraternity members, suite mates, girl or boyfriends of students” routinely do for students not affiliated with an athletic program. “(D)oes anyone really think that no students except athletes ask for help in how to cite Internet sources? Or in redrafting papers?”

Though Wiley was not an employee of the university when she helped the 11 players with homework, her actions, according to the report, “must be seen as those of a booster.” Under NCAA bylaws, the fact that she worked at the academic support center makes her, the report said, “an individual … who is known (or should have been known) by a member of the institution’s executive or athletics administration to … be assisting or have assisted in providing benefits to enrolled student-athletes or their families.”

**NCAA infractions**

According to the NCAA infractions report, Wiley broke rules by helping players write summary paragraphs for papers, correcting their grammar and composing pages that cited research sources for writing assignments and inserting citations. She also paid a $150 airline ticket change fee so a player could return from spring break early. She also made a one-time payment of $1,789 to settle a player’s overdue campus parking tickets. It was unclear whether she was reimbursed.

The NCAA infractions report raises questions about UNC’s training of tutors who work with athletes and the lack of follow-up when questions arose.

Wiley began working in the academic support center in August 2007, the beginning of her junior year at UNC-CH.

According to the NCAA report, she was supplied with a tutoring handbook, which contained rules about unethical conduct, including academic fraud and NCAA extra benefits. The book also listed institutional rules about the assistance that can be given when helping student-athletes with writing assignments.

“She was told to never make changes to electronic versions of the student-athletes’ written assignments, instructed not to provide academic assistance
anywhere but the institution’s academic center, and trained on the concept of plagiarism,” the report states. Each year, she was required to sign a statement saying she had not engaged in academic dishonesty.

After rumors circulated in the summer of 2009, that Wiley was becoming “too friendly” with student-athletes, her employment contract was not renewed, according to the report.

“Had even a cursory review of her institutional emails been performed, the administration would likely have learned of the existence of academic fraud, recognized the need to do more than just terminate the employment of the former tutor, and addressed the problem by admonishing student-athletes not to have further contact with her,” the report states.

Cheshire said Wiley’s motivation was simple: She wanted to help people who needed help.

“In her eyes, she was not trying to help athletes be eligible to play, but was helping young people who needed help towards their dream of graduation understand how to do things they could not do,” Cheshire wrote. “As she would say: ‘Most of these young men were really nice, tried hard and would never play pro football, but they needed help to be able to graduate and have a life after football.’”

‘The real difficulty’

Lissa Broome, a UNC-Chapel Hill law professor and faculty athletics representative to the ACC and NCAA, said she wished Wiley would have talked with investigators.

“It would have been nice to hear what she had to say,” Broome said. “I’m sorry we didn’t.”

Cheshire said he advised her not to talk for fear that she would be the subject of a constant video stream on Internet and news outlet sites.

“(N)o one was interested in her truth or the poignancy of her story, in the real difficulty that students who have to give 40 hours to a job or sport in order to try and stay in school and who may come from poor and disadvantaged school districts and have a brief chance at success under tremendous pressure educationally and otherwise,” Cheshire wrote.
**Accusations against ‘the former tutor’**

Here’s what the NCAA infractions report said “the former tutor” did after she left the tutoring program:

- On April 21, 2008, she wrote conclusion paragraphs for five writing assignments in an education course for a player.
- On April 15, 2009, she emailed a player an outline for a writing assignment in a communications course that included a thesis statement and “other substantive material.” The player “used the material to write the paper and submitted it for course credit.”
- On June 11, 2009, the same player sent her an email asking for help again with a communications writing assignment. He attached a draft of his work. The next day, she returned an email with a revised version of his draft that included “various grammatical corrections.” She added approximately four sentences to the assignment, which was about 2-1/2 pages long.

Those incidents were discovered after the players graduated.

The player who received grammatical help talked with investigators and said he did not realize the assistance he had received was impermissible by NCAA rules.

- During the fall of 2008 and summer of 2009, according to the report, she typed citations and composed “works-cited pages,” or pages citing research references, on three writing assignments for a player.
- In November 2008, she composed a works-cited page and inserted citations into the body of the paper and added words to a writing assignment.
- In June 2009, she composed a works-cited page, composed and inserted citations into the body of a paper, and added and edited content to a writing assignment.
- In July 2009, she composed a works-cited page, composed and inserted citations into the body of a paper and conducted research for a writing assignment in a cultural-evolution course.

The NCAA infractions committee calculated the help as extra benefits for players, 194 hours of free tutoring. The work Jennifer Wiley did with the players was calculated by NCAA investigators as a benefit valued at $2,134 – 194 hours of tutoring at the $11-an-hour rate she received while employed at the academic support center.

- In May 2010, she paid $150 so one player could change an airline ticket and return from a spring-break trip earlier than planned.
- In August 2010, she paid $1,789 to cover outstanding parking tickets for that player.
UNC faculty working to engage athletes more in class

The NCAA investigation of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill football team has galvanized faculty efforts to engage the school's athletes more in classes and on campus, officials said Tuesday.

On Monday, the NCAA's Committee on Infractions put UNC on probation for three years, took away 15 football scholarships in that period and banned the team from postseason play next fall. The penalties resulted from a lengthy investigation into players' and a former assistant coach's dealings with agents and academic misconduct by players.

"The penalties are what they are," said Jan Boxill, chairwoman of the UNC Faculty Council and a professor of philosophy who has researched and written extensively about ethics in sports.

Rather than focusing on the impact of the penalties, Boxill said, she and other faculty members are more concerned about better incorporating student-athletes in UNC's academic culture.

She said she has been working directly with Director of Athletics Bubba Cunningham and head football coach Larry Fedora in recent weeks. Both men want to make sure athletes succeed off the field as well as on, she said.

"If we want our students to be successful, faculty, staff, students and everybody is really involved," she said. "I think that it actually is bringing us together to see that we can make a difference for each other."

"I think the thing that is really impressive with this current staff is they are really focused on college students, and they have worked directly with college students," said Steve Reznick, a UNC professor of psychology and chairman of the faculty athletic committee.

Reznick said he was disappointed by the NCAA sanctions, which went beyond the punishment UNC imposed on itself, because the university has improved its academic efforts for student-athletes.
"I feel like the additional sanctions are punishing people who didn't do wrong and who are actually moving forward," he said. "The only positive I can see in the sanctions is it is sending to the broader world of athletics a message – do it right."

Boxill said the investigation put a spotlight on everybody's role in balancing academics and athletics at the school.

"I don't think that the (university's) reputation has been sullied to point that we can't recover. I do think that we are recovering," she said.

Reporter: Erin Hartness
Photographer: Pete James
Web Editor: Matthew Burns
Jury in wrongful death trial: Virginia Tech negligent for delayed response to ‘07 shootings

By Associated Press

CHRISTIANSBURG, Va. — The parents of two Virginia Tech students killed in a 2007 campus massacre worked for years to prove university officials were negligent for waiting to warn students of a gunman on campus, and a jury agreed with them on Wednesday.

After the verdict, the parents said their persistence is what their daughters would have wanted. They were the only eligible families to reject their share of an $11 million dollar settlement in 2008, instead taking the state to court in a wrongful death lawsuit. The move all but guaranteed less money and more of a legal struggle, but the families said that getting answers mattered the most.

“When you know that something is right you’re not deterred from your course,” said Celeste Peters on, whose daughter Erin died in the mass shooting that was the deadliest in modern U.S. history. “We wanted the truth from the very beginning and we got it. All I know is today we got what we wanted.”

The civil lawsuit that Peterson and her husband filed along with the parents of Julia Pryde was the last pending litigation over the mass shootings. The state is expected to appeal the verdict, as it did a separate fine handed down by federal education officials. No criminal charges were brought in the shootings. It’s not clear if any more civil lawsuits will be filed.

It took jurors 3 ½ hours on Wednesday to find that university officials botched their response to the massacre on April 16, 2007, that left 33 people including the gunman dead. The jury determined that the Prydes and Petersons each deserved $4 million, but the award is likely to be sharply reduced. State law requires it to be capped at $100,000.

Still, the amount of the award mattered little to the two families.

“We were looking for truth for a long time,” Harry Pryde said outside the courthouse that’s less than 10 miles from Tech’s Blacksburg campus. “We persevered and we got some truth today.”
The parents’ lawsuit argued that lives could have been spared if school officials had moved more quickly to alert the campus after the first two victims were shot in a dorm. The massacre ended later in the morning with the deaths of 31 more people, including the gunman, at a classroom building.

The state was the lone defendant in the case and argued that the university did all that it could with the information available at the time. President Charles W. Steger and other university officials have said they initially believed the first two shootings were isolated instances of domestic violence, based on what police investigators told them.

“The university’s contention has been all along, to quote president Steger, ‘We did everything we could do,’” said Robert T. Hall, an attorney for the parents. “Obviously the jury didn’t buy that.”

The verdict was met by sobs from Celeste Peterson, while her husband Grafton appeared to quietly weep at the plaintiff’s table. They later embraced each other. The Prydes were stoic, as they were most of the eight-day trial.

Circuit Judge William Alexander said it was the hardest case he had been a part of.

“My heart goes out to all of you,” he said to the families of victims.

Virginia Tech spokesman Mark Owczarski said after the verdict that the school would review the case with the attorney general before deciding on any further options.

“We are disappointed with today’s decision and stand by our long-held position that the administration and law enforcement at Virginia Tech did their absolute best with the information available on April 16, 2007,” Owczarski said in a statement.

The attorney general’s office said it was discussing “our options” with the Tech administration on an appeal and maintained trial evidence “established that it was the unanimous decision of three law enforcement agencies that the mass shooting was simply not foreseeable.”

One of the state’s attorneys, Peter R. Messitt, said before the verdict that Tech officials could not be expected to anticipate the killing spree, calling the slaughter unprecedented “in the history of higher education” and “one of the most horrible days in America.”

“What happened at Norris Hall was not reasonably foreseeable,” he told jurors during closing arguments.
Outside of court, Hall disagreed: “It’s so clear that a warning should have been given. The amount of the verdict speaks to that end.”

During the trial, the attorneys for the Prydes and Petersons portrayed campus police as leaping to the conclusion that the first two victims were shot by a jealous boyfriend, and that the gunman was not a threat to others.

They presented evidence that campus leaders, including Steger, heeded the police conclusion without question, then waited 2-1/2 hours before sending a campus-wide warning that a “shooting incident” had occurred. It did not say a gunman was still at large.

Police were pursuing the boyfriend of one of the dorm shooting victims as a “person of interest” at the expense of a campus-wide alert, the plaintiffs’ attorneys said.

Police stopped the boyfriend as he approached the Blacksburg campus and were questioning him as shots rang out at Norris Hall, where student Seung-Hui Cho chained shut the doors to the building and killed the students and faculty. He then killed himself.

Tech officials issued a specific warning that a “gunman is loose on campus” through emails to 37,000 at 9:50 a.m., nearly 10 minutes after Cho began the Norris slaughter.

The parents’ attorneys also accused Steger and other administrators of trying to cover up their missteps by building official timelines that suggested they reacted more aggressively to the first shootings. Tech administrators said mistakes in the timelines were made in the fog of a horrific tragedy.

The state presented witnesses, including experts in campus security, who said Tech police and administrators acted properly when they concluded the dorm shootings were domestic. The shootings occurred in an isolated area of the dorm, and the victims were a man and a woman clad in their undergarments and sleepwear.

Steger testified that he delayed sending a specific warning to avoid a panic and to allow the university to notify the victims’ parents. He said the advice to delay a specific warning came from a member of his Policy Group who has since died.

S. Daniel Carter, a campus safety advocate, called the verdict a “vindication for all of us who have said more should have been done to protect the Virginia Tech campus.” The trial, he added, was also “a vital opportunity to set the record straight about exactly what happened, and when.”
A state panel that investigated the shootings concluded that officials erred in not sending an alert earlier. The lag in issuing a campus warning also brought Virginia Tech a $55,000 fine from the U.S. Education Department, which the school is appealing.

The $11 million settlement was split among the families of 24 victims.

As far as Wednesday’s jury award, Hall said that only actions by the governor, attorney general or General Assembly could raise it above $100,000.

Some parents have questioned why no one at Tech was held accountable for their actions, and Hall said the verdict sends a message to the university’s board.

“The board of visitors will not be able to ignore the verdict,” he said. “How they react to it is up to them.”
March 14, 2012

Travis Dove for The New York Times / Alison Doernberg, a graduate student at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, with Milton Avery's "Landscape," at the Ackland Art Museum.

Art Museums Giving It the Old College Try

By KEITH SCHNEIDER

EAST LANSING, Mich. — WHEN it opens this fall, the Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum at Michigan State University will be the latest in a series of new university art museums that have opened around the country.

But here and at other campuses, striking buildings are just a part of the new profile of university art museums. With the help of departments as varied as nursing, law, meteorology and engineering, the museums’ directors are deploying their extensive collections, and sometimes the artists themselves, to enhance curriculums.

In one project under development at the Broad, Amy Franceschini, an artist and urban garden advocate from San Francisco, would serve as an artist-in-residence working with students and faculty in the university’s sustainable agriculture program to develop a local foods program in Detroit. Ms. Franceschini attracted attention by using visual design references and received financing for San Francisco community gardens. She also designed
a pogo stick that also served as a shovel and a bicycle that converted into a wheelbarrow.

In another planned project, Tim Hyde, a photographer and video artist from New York, would work with Michigan State’s forestry and natural resources students and faculty, drawing on his 10 years of photographing the deadfall and shadowed canopy of an 80-year-old red pine plantation in western Michigan.

“The students in M.S.U.’s programs in sustainable forests would have the opportunity to see their world through the eyes of an artist who brings a sensitivity and new vision to something they study every day,” Michael Rush, the Broad Museum’s director, said in describing his interest in Mr. Hyde’s work. “He would open their eyes to an entirely new perception of what a forest is and can be.”

University art museums, of course, have been a mainstay of American campuses since 1832, when the Yale University Art Gallery was established, the first university museum devoted exclusively to art, according to a paper by Kimerly Rorschach, the director of the Nasher Museum of Art at Duke.

Harvard, Oberlin, the University of Oregon, the University of Michigan, the University of North Carolina and dozens of other colleges and universities have built art museums, too, according to Ms. Rorschach, and more are being built. For example, DePaul University opened its Art Museum in Chicago in September 2011. The Art Museum of West Virginia University is scheduled to open next year.

All have attracted extensive collections and operated under the general mandate, Ms. Rorschach writes, “to give students an opportunity to develop into more cultivated, well-rounded and well-educated adults through contact with original works of art.”

In the 21st century, university art museums have become more aggressive in extending their missions and collections to reach deeper into classrooms and curriculums not ordinarily associated with art. At Duke’s seven-year-old Nasher Museum, two members of its 30-person staff are devoted exclusively to finding uses for pieces from the collection to enhance course work in various academic departments. Medical students, for instance, spend a day studying visual art in an exercise intended to hone observation and description skills that Nasher staff member developed with professors.

A Duke professor of geology uses the museum’s collection of art carved from stone for lessons on the influence of time, oceans and weather.
In both instances, Nasher’s academic coordinators helped their colleagues in medicine and geology use art to interest students heavily influenced by the visual immediacy of the Internet, and to be aware that their careers were likely to include colleagues and alliances outside the United States.

“Students need to learn things and to be innovative and entrepreneurial in this new global world,” said Ms. Rorschach. “Art is about communicating effectively, about communicating visually, about understanding.”

At the University of North Carolina, Mimi V. Chapman, an associate professor of social work, worked with the academic coordinators at the university’s Ackland Art Museum to train graduate students to more carefully evaluate how their impressions were formed in working with clients. “Art is a way that helps uncover how students see things through a personal lens, and become aware of biases they may not be aware they have,” she said.

This semester, Professor Chapman and eight graduate students spent a day in January and another in February studying an assortment of 20th century portraits and landscapes, among them Milton Avery’s “Landscape,” painted in 1948. The dominant images in Avery’s impressionistic scene are a blue hammock swinging from two dark tree trunks along a pathway flanked by blue and gold trees. Professor Chapman assigned students to describe what they saw in the picture — its images, colors, and emotions — and where they would hang it in their own homes.

Alison Doernberg, a 34-year-old student, was surprised by the range of responses to Avery’s painting. “Even though it was a simple image, people had very different perceptions,” said Ms. Doernberg. “Some of us felt the trees were dark and foreboding. Other people saw them as solid and providing shade. Their view was more positive. It seemed to me, at first glance, to be an image that wasn’t particularly provocative. But it turned out to be a lot to discuss.

“The lesson is that it’s not just what I am seeing in a piece of art or a client,” she said. “It’s also thinking about why I am perceiving things the way I do. Are they coming from things in front of me or from other sources in my life? It feels very transferable to me.”

In October, the University of Wisconsin opened a $47.2 million, 81,000-square-foot addition to the Chazen Museum of Art in Madison. The museum’s academic outreach program includes a project with Steven A. Ackerman, a professor of atmospheric and oceanic sciences, who teaches an introductory course on weather.
Among the Chazen’s collection of landscapes, Professor Ackerman chose to focus on “Our Good Earth,” painted by the American regionalist John Steuart Curry in 1942. Visiting the museum last fall with a group of students studying atmospheric optics and cloud formations, he drew their attention not to the central features of Curry’s painting — a young, muscular overall-clad farmer standing watch as two children play in maturing wheat — but to the range of blues in Curry’s sky and the shape and shading in Curry’s puffy clouds.

“We are particularly interested in how the artist represents clouds,” he said. “Today’s scientists deal with tons and tons of data. How do we represent the huge volume of data we receive? How do we visualize that data? How artists visualize the world is very valuable to us.”

In East Lansing, Lou Anna K. Simon, the president of Michigan State, said novel academic programs would be part of the university’s plan to establish the Broad as a “museum without walls.”

“It is a focal point of this campus,” said Ms. Simon. “Students from any department, any part of this campus, will find some place for themselves at the museum.”

Alison Gass, a new curator at the Broad, was busy recently scouting empty spaces on and off Michigan State’s campus to house an art and garden project. Ms. Gass came to Michigan from San Francisco, where she worked at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, became aware of Ms. Franceschini’s work and included several pieces of Ms. Franceschini’s art in an exhibition at the museum.

“I called Amy when I got here and I told her this place was fantastic,” said Ms. Gass. “There is land here. They study food systems and forests and have experimental farms. There is real potential to be a leader in land art.”

Ms. Franceschini said she was interested in the Michigan State opportunity. “Local food and gardens are critical agents of change,” she said. “The process of making that happen is as much part of the creative process as traditional art. The idea of applying art to knowledge production and the knowledge economy there is very attractive.”
University of Texas at Austin biology professor Ruth Buskirk lectures during her Introductory Biology II class using projected diagrams and photographs. To gauge how well students are retaining the material, she will occasionally ask a question, and they will mark their answers using an electronic clicker. This effort to keep students more engaged is a result of what academics have learned from students taking the Collegiate Learning Assessment test. Results show seniors have not improved much in their learning skills as compared to when they entered as freshmen.

**Trying to assess learning gives colleges their own test anxiety**

By Daniel de Vise

AUSTIN — Eight years ago, leaders of the University of Texas set out to measure something few in higher education had thought to question — how much their students learn before graduation.

An unsettling answer emerged: arguably, not very much.

That conclusion is based on results from a 90-minute essay test given to freshmen and seniors that aims to gauge gains in critical thinking and communication skills.

The Texas flagship and a few hundred other public universities have joined a growing accountability movement in higher education, embracing this test
and others like it that attempt, for the first time, to quantify collegiate learning on a large scale.

But the results have triggered a wave of rancor. Some college leaders are outraged that four years of learning might now be reduced to a single score. Lackluster results have seeded fresh doubts about the country’s vaunted system of higher education.

“Oh, it’s hit us in the gut,” said Andrew Hacker, a Queens College political scientist and authority on college teaching.

The Collegiate Learning Assessment, launched in 2000, has brought rare scrutiny to higher education. Until now, colleges have been largely exempt from the accountability movement sweeping through public elementary and secondary schools yielding the No Child Left Behind law and other initiatives.

In a landmark study published last year, sociologists Richard Arum and Josipa Roksa used the test to measure collegiate learning in the nation. Using data drawn from a sampling of public and private colleges, they shook the academic world with a finding that 36 percent of students made no significant learning gains from freshman to senior year.

“I think it’s extremely troubling,” said Margaret Spellings, the former U.S. education secretary and a longtime advocate of accountability in education. “And God bless Richard Arum for taking this on.”

But a chorus of college leaders reject that this test — or any other — can affirm or refute the essential value of college. They view the CLA as a rough gauge of student learning, grossly inadequate to measure an entire institution.

“I think it’s a very worthwhile attempt,” said William E. “Brit” Kirwan, chancellor of the Maryland state university system. “I don’t think it should be seen as the final answer.”

From time to time, accountability advocates have proposed requiring colleges to show the value they add to the quest for knowledge as a condition of receiving federal aid. But higher education lobbyists and their allies in Congress have “vigorously opposed” attempts to impose a No Child-style system on academia, Spellings said. Perhaps the biggest fear among college presidents is that published test scores might be put to ill use by the collegiate ranking industry.
Yet a voluntary system of accountability is underway. Two groups representing more than 500 public colleges have pledged to give the CLA or one of its rival tests — the Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency or Proficiency Profile — and to publish results by the end of this year. So far, 144 schools have posted test results, including Frostburg State University in western Maryland. Many schools have not participated in the testing, including the universities of Virginia and Maryland.

Teresa Sullivan, president of U-Va., said the University of Michigan gave the CLA when she was provost there. Freshmen scored so high, she said, there was no way for seniors to score higher. She believes U-Va. students would hit the same ceiling.

“If there is no way to improve, why would you invest your money in this?” she said.

The CLA is an essay exam that tests students on skills colleges avow to teach. Responses are judged on use of language, organizational structure and persuasive heft. Students might be asked, for example, to assail the logic in this proposition: Couples should not wed in June, because many failed marriages begin as June weddings.

The University of Texas, one of the nation’s top research universities, was among the first to give the CLA and is using the results to improve instruction. Testing began in 2004 in Austin, under a state mandate.

Last year, UT freshmen scored an average 1261 on the assessment, which is graded on a scale similar to that of the SAT. Seniors averaged 1303. Both groups scored very well, but seniors fared little better than freshmen, according to score reports The Washington Post obtained through a public records request.

“The seniors have spent four years there, and the scores have not gone up that much,” said Arum, a New York University sociologist and co-author of the 2011 book “Academically Adrift.” He reviewed UT’s results at the request of The Post. The school was not among the 24 unnamed colleges in Arum’s study.

With about 51,000 students and nearly 3,000 faculty, the University of Texas is a veritable learning factory. Critics of the CLA, and there are many in Austin, say it is absurd to judge an organization of this scale on the strength of one score. They note that the CLA is relatively brief and administered to a couple hundred freshmen and seniors who have no stake in the results.
University of Texas leaders share Sullivan’s concern that they look bad on the assessment because freshman scores are so high. That is why few highly selective institutions participate in the CLA, university officials say.

The test “is aimed a bit low for the kind of students we get,” said Paul Woodruff, dean of undergraduate studies at UT.

Thor Lund, 20, a senior, is dubious of the value of the CLA. Lund said he scored 34 out of 36 on the ACT college entrance exam. “How much better at critical thinking can you get?” he asked.

But the test’s authors contend smart students at some other colleges show plenty of growth on the CLA over time. For learning gains from freshman to senior year, UT ranked in the 23rd percentile among like institutions. In other words, 77 percent of universities with similar students performed better.

In recent years, UT officials have sought to bolster undergraduate instruction through classes that place a greater emphasis on writing.

Nicole Scallan, 19, is enrolled in one such course. “The Importance of Interest in Learning and Life,” an 18-student seminar, is part of a series of “signature courses” introduced in 2007 and required of freshmen.

One recent morning, instructor Mary Worthy told Scallan and her classmates that they would be sharing drafts of a protest song with each other.

“Did any of you participate in writing workshops when you were in high school or middle school?” Worthy asked, to a collective shaking of heads. “That’s kind of what the idea is.”

By semester’s end, each student will have penned about 75 pages, mostly in two- and three-page assignments. The topics are tailored to engage: the sources of human motivation, the quest for an optimal state of consciousness. Students sit around an oval table and talk, a marked change from sitting in an auditorium and listening.

A 2009 overhaul of the university’s basic education requirements stresses critical thinking and communication skills, qualities measured by the CLA. The UT curriculum lists those skills first among six overarching objectives. Administrators and faculty infuse courses with opportunities for writing and engagement. The university cannot afford to break up every 400-student lecture into tiny seminars. Instead, professors learn to teach large courses more effectively.
One breakthrough is the electronic “clicker,” which enables professors to pose a question to hundreds of students in real time. Such exercises force students to engage and provides the instructor with a gauge of whether they are learning.

Another innovation is “minimal marking,” an approach to grading that favors broad comments over line editing, a strategy for instructors who assign papers by the hundreds.

“Instead of fixing every comma, you tell the student, ‘You’ve got a comma problem,’ ” said Woodruff, who became UT’s first undergraduate studies dean in 2006.

Gretchen Ritter, vice provost for undergraduate education at UT, has reservations about the CLA. But she concedes the test has inspired the university to question whether students are learning to think.

And that, she said, “is a very good thing to care about.”