THE DAILY CLIPS

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Halting the opening of East Carolina University's School of Dental Medicine is one of 32 options to cut the budget in the university system presented to legislators this week.

Legislative staff presented the options to members of the General Assembly's Joint Appropriations Subcommittee on Education earlier this week. Legislators are trying to resolve a $2.4 billion budget deficit and committees made up of state senators and representatives have been meeting to review budget-cutting options during the next two years.

“They have this type of meeting every year to process possible cuts and reductions to educational agencies,” Philip Rogers, East Carolina University's chief of staff, said “It's my understanding they are now in the process of looking at each of these options on a very specific level over the next two weeks and will ultimately identify which of those options are viable for inclusion in the first (budget) draft option.”

Staff presented two options involving the dental school — continuing it with no additional operating funds and eliminating the satellite dental clinics that are planned across the state, or halting the school's opening and re-purposing the building that is under construction as the life sciences building the university wants.

According to staff, either option would save the state $11.5 million dollars.

“I don't know where the idea is coming from. I know there is a challenge coming from General Assembly to cut a great deal and everyone knows we are going to have cuts,” state Rep. Marian McLawhorn, D-Pitt, said. “But I was surprised to see this.”

The dental school has long had bipartisan support because legislators want to increase the number of dentists serving the state, McLawhorn said. The 10 satellite dental clinics will be located across the state, McLawhorn said, bringing valuable indigent care to the state.

Fifty North Carolina students have been accepted in the program which starts classes this fall.

The Legislature has spent about $101 million in the last five years to open the dental school. That includes the $90 million being spent on the dental school building.
“If it is stopped at this point, not only will the money have been wasted in setting it up, (stopping) will have a grave impact on the oral health care in North Carolina,” McLawhorn said.

The budget reduction proposals came on the same day that Pitt County's five-member delegation filed a bill seeking $5 million in the next two years to finish the accreditation process for the dental school and to hire remaining faculty, she said.

“My opposition has been voiced. I have met with several of the committee chairmen and committee members about this and so have others,” she said.

State Sen. Louis Pate Jr., R-Wayne, said he had not been alerted to the closing option, but opposes the idea.

“The east, I believe, is underserved with dental providers and I think this is a good way to ensure the rural areas in the east get dental providers,” Pate said. “That's why I voted for the dental school to start off with when I was in the (state) House a couple of years ago.”

Dental school supporters said they will continue to campaign for its completion.

“We are continuing to work with our friends and supporters to make sure ECU is a visible presence in the Legislature and make sure members of the General Assembly understand this is not just a critical investment for ECU but an important investment for the State of North Carolina,” Rogers said.

Contact Ginger Livingston at glivingston@reflector.com or (252) 329-9570.
A national computer matchmaker created unions between medical students and hospital residency programs across the country Thursday and about 70 students at East Carolina University's Brody School of Medicine were among them.

Match Day for the graduating class of 2011 was held in Brody's auditorium and attended by family, faculty and friends.

“This event culminates a long and challenging process that takes four years for most,” the medical school's dean, Dr. Paul Cunningham, said.

Each student walked across the stage — one jumped onto it and one tripped on it — but all made it across to claim the envelope with their residency assignments.

Back in their auditorium seats, the students opened their envelopes, receiving hugs from family and friends after the contents were revealed.

Oussama Saleh opened his envelope on stage, pumping his fist and donning a Duke University cap in jubilation after finding out his obstetrics/gynecology residency will be spent at Duke University Medical Center.

“Medical school was amazing because of y'all,” read a message from Saleh to his fellow students on a projected slide. Students designed the slides with photographs and quotes to reflect their personalities, which were displayed as snippets of music were played.
The computer matches are made based on rankings of student interviews by program heads at hospitals and the rankings given by students of those programs. “Medical schools across the country have their students open their envelopes at the same time regardless of the time zone,” Nicholas Benson, Brody's vice-dean said.

Noah Kahn, whose residency will be in dermatology, carried his 3-month-old daughter on stage. “She's my little girl. I love her. It's a big thing for us,” he said later, adding he wouldn't open his envelope until he was with his wife.

James Smith Jr., whose slide jokingly read “neurosurgery for dummies” said he was headed to the University of Kentucky Medical Center. “It's the biggest excitement I've ever had in my life,” he said. “It's the best feeling ever.”

Kristin Dickson opened her envelope and found her first pick. “I'll be going here — Brody School of Medicine — my No. 1 choice,” she said of her residency in pediatrics.

Others had assignments in farther flung places. Sam Hayes' residency in internal medicine and pediatrics will be at two University of Utah hospitals. “It reminds me of here because we take care of the underserved,” he said, comparing Brody to Utah. “They take a lot of pride in taking care of a large number of people in mostly rural settings.”

His parents, Mark and Rosemary Hayes, who live in Greenville, were pleased that their son was headed to a place where he had spent some time on rotation.

“I think it's wonderful that he has the opportunity to experience something a little far away,” Rosemary Hayes said.

More than half of Brody's students, a total of 38, chose to go into primary care, a mission of the medical school.

U.S. News & World Report magazine's April 5 ranking of graduate schools lists ECU's Brody as 10th in the nation among medical schools that emphasize primary care. In the rural medicine subcategory, it ranked seventh, for the number of its graduates who pursued primary care residencies between 2008 and 2010, according to an ECU news release.
Attorneys in the murder trial of James Richardson spent 30 minutes Friday morning conferring at with Superior Court Judge W. Russell Duke over a motion submitted by Richardson's attorneys, Thomas Moore and Jeff Cutler.

The attorneys argued that information the prosecution plans to enter showing Richardson's previous use of the alleged murder weapon in May, 2009 should be withheld. Duke denied the motion.

East Carolina University student Edgar Landon Blackley and downtown restaurant manager Andrew Kirby were shot and killed June 30, 2009 during a drive-by shooting outside The Other Place nightclub.

The jury will arrive at the courthouse to be charged by Duke with instructions on how to hear the case and conduct themselves through the course of the trial.

Previous Story
Three alternate jurors were selected Thursday for the capital murder trial of James Richardson, and opening statements are possible today.

The three filled out the panel of 15 people who will hear the case in Pitt County Superior Court. Judge W. Russell Duke said he would charge the jury this morning and could ask for opening statements after lunch.
Richardson is accused in the June 30, 2009, drive-by shooting of East Carolina University student Edgar Landon Blackley and restaurant manager Andrew Kirby outside The Other Place nightclub in downtown Greenville. If convicted, he faces the possibility of the death penalty.

The alternates are two white men and one black man. They join 10 women and two men selected as the primary jurors Monday through Wednesday.

Two of the primary jurors, one man and one woman, are black. One is a woman of Pacific Islander race. The rest are white.

Prior to seating the jury, one of the members seated Wednesday asked to be excused due to hardships at work and home. Duke reminded the woman of her civic responsibility and asked her to be flexible. He said he would try to give adequate break time during the trial. “It is an inconvenience for all jurors,” Duke said. The woman reiterated that it would pose a great hardship for her, but agreed to abide by the judge's wish.

“I will do what you say, judge, and try to do the best job,” she said.

One of the seated alternates had completed service as jury foreman the day before for another Superior Court trial. As part of the same jury pool, he qualified to serve in the Richardson case as well, Duke said.

Fifteen prospective alternates were excused during questioning on Thursday. Three women were excused because they vehemently opposed the death penalty under all circumstances, they said. Two men were excused because they said they would only consider death and not life in prison.

State law requires jurors to consider a sentence of life imprisonment without parole in capital cases.

Richardson participated throughout the selection, discussing each decision with his attorneys.

When one woman told the court she was a 40-year employee in the Pitt County Clerk's Office, Richardson got his attorneys' attention and pointed out information in a legal reference book.

His attorneys, Thomas Moore and Jeff Cutler, requested a motion at the bench. After a lengthy bench conference with attorneys, Duke excused the woman.

An audience has gathered in court daily to view the proceedings. During a break on Thursday, Christopher Taylor, a west Greenville minister and community activist, criticized the “drama” some people have attached to the trial.
“There are other issues the black community must rally around instead, such as the high school dropout rate, underage drinking and gangs. The focus on this murder trial does not align the black community's priorities with success,” Taylor said.

Taylor said that while the court system might not be the best overall that it can be, the court officers and jury should be allowed to do their job in this case.

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Before his audition for public address announcer for the Chicago Cubs, Diamond pauses in front of the team logo at Wrigley Field.

DJ auditions for Chicago Cubs job

By Jane Welborn Hudson
The Daily Reflector
Friday, March 18, 2011

Greenville radio disc jockey Jeff Diamond auditioned for his dream job earlier this week: public address announcer for the Chicago Cubs.

He should find out March 25 if he gets called up to the big leagues.

Diamond, a Chicago native whose given name is Jeff Blumberg, seems to have been working toward this opportunity for all of his 53 years.

“I used to turn down the volume of the Cubs games on TV and do the play-by-play into a fake mic when I was a kid,” said the lifelong Cubs fan, who also does a great impression of the late Cubs broadcaster Harry Caray.

Diamond, who played youth and high school baseball, came to Greenville to study English and broadcasting at East Carolina University. He worked for local radio stations WOOW-AM, WRQR-FM and WNCT-FM, where he continues to host his “Mid-Day Office Party” radio show from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. weekdays.

His on-air name is an homage to the diamond-shaped field on which the game of baseball is played, he said.

For 12 years, he was the P.A. announcer of the minor league Kinston Indians at Grainger Stadium and he currently mans the microphone for the East Carolina Lady Pirates basketball team and is the internal press box announcer for ECU football.
Preparing for his radio show a couple of weeks ago, he happened to stumble upon an online blurb about the Cubs looking for a replacement for their longtime stadium announcer.

“I read it 10 times to make sure I was reading it right,” he said.

According to a Cubs’ news release, the job candidates should possess “strong vocal talent” and “a deep knowledge of baseball,” and “be comfortable announcing to sold-out crowds and proficient at enunciating complex player names.”

“I looked at the application and said, ‘I just have to do this,’” Diamond said.

That very afternoon, with encouragement from his bosses at Beasley Broadcasting, he enlisted co-worker John Cannon to shoot the required short video and submitted his application.

So did nearly 3,000 other hopefuls.

Last Friday, the Cubs sent Diamond an e-mail informing him that he was among the 24 men and one woman selected as finalists for the job. He was summoned to Chicago for a live audition on Monday at Wrigley Field.

Diamond flew from Greenville to the Windy City on Sunday and visited with his mother and two sisters, who live in the Chicago area. Then, at 4:30 p.m. Monday, he reported to “the friendly confines” of Wrigley Field for his tryout.

“When we pulled up to Wrigley Field, you could hear the others auditioning,” he said in a telephone interview Thursday. He posed for photos outside the stadium before joining the nine other applicants in his group.

“The marketing people came in and talked to us for a few minutes, and we were escorted through Wrigley Field — upstairs, downstairs, up the ramps, down a ramp to the press box facility. Then the marketing people came in and told us what we would be doing: We all had the same four-page script with promotional announcements, contests, starting lineups for the San Francisco Giants and the Cubs, and other pregame and in-game announcements,” he said. “We had 10 minutes to look over it before we each auditioned.”

Following his turn at the mic, Diamond said, the staff asked him a few questions about himself and his baseball knowledge.

Then he flew back to Greenville.

“As Tom Petty sang, ‘The waiting is the hardest part,’” he said.
If he gets the job, he would have to get to Chicago quickly to assume his duties. The P.A. announcer must be available for all Chicago Cubs 81 regular season home games, makeup games, tiebreaker games, playoff games and non-game day events. Opening day at Wrigley Field is April 1.

“That's a quick turnaround,” Diamond said.
“I wouldn't be disappointed if I didn't get the job,” he said. “I've got obligations here for the spring and summer. I'm torn.
“But I had a great time, and it was fun meeting the Cubs' staff and other P.A. candidates. The whole experience was great, no matter the outcome.
“I would be kicking myself if I didn't at least get up there and give it the old Cubs try.”

As he said in a Facebook message just after his audition: “To get this far has been a blast ... just to set foot in the Cubs' press box where announcers from he past stood in front of the mic ... looking down on the field where Santo, Banks, The Hawk and Sandberg all played, taking in the rich history of Wrigley Field and appreciating the chance for this Cubs fan to turn on the mic.”

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Violinist Midori performs at 7:30 p.m. Monday in Wright Auditorium.

**Midori perfoms on Monday at ECU**
The Daily Reflector
Friday, March 18, 2011

Violinist Midori's debut concert was with the New York Philharmonic. She was just 11 years old.

She's since established a 28-year record of achievement as a master musician and an innovator.

In her current season, Midori will have performed more than 100 concerts in 19 countries. She will perform in East Carolina University's Wright Auditorium at 7:30 p.m. Monday. The concert is part of the S. Rudolph Alexander Performing Arts Series and will conclude the 11th annual NewMusic Festival.

Midori will perform some of her favorite contemporary pieces and will be accompanied by pianist Charles Abramovic.

The program will include Huw Watkins' “Coruscation and Reflections,” Brett Dean's “Berlin Music,” Toshio Hosokawa “Vertical Time Study III,” James MacMillan's “After the Tryst” and John Adams' “Road Movies.”

“Coruscation and Reflection” by Watkins are polar opposites, a Yin and Yang, but also complementary in enhancing both tranquility and excitement. Each piece can be performed separately but they are usually presented as a pair.
“Berlin Music” is written in five short movements. The first four create a suite of characters that are concluded in a lengthier final movement. Dean's intention was that “Berlin Music” pays homage to the duo of piano and violin.

“The Vertical Time Study” is a three-part series that challenges the conventions of the performers and listeners by not focusing on the chronological sequence of sounds. Hosokawa describes the work in terms of calligraphy, the violin is the brush and the piano is the canvas.

MacMillan's “After the Tryst” was inspired by William Soutar's account of an intensely passionate yet expiring love. MacMillian set the poem to music in the style of a Scottish ballad.

Adams refers to “Road Movies” as “travel music.” The first and third movements utilize a rocking, or swinging, rhythm, illustrating the beat of driving on the open road. Adams's distinctive Minimalist and Serialist techniques are in evidence throughout the work.
Some local young members of the theater company, during the Dr. Seuss Musical "Seussical" put on by ECU Theatre, during a rehearsal at Wright Auditorium on Wednesday, March 16, 2011.

Seussical! The Music at ECU
By Kim Grizzard
The Daily Reflector
Friday, March 18, 2011

Claire Crane won't be accompanying her second-grade class on a field trip today to see a production of “Seussical.” But it’s not because she forgot her permission form.

It is because she has been cast in the musical being staged this weekend in Greenville and Washington, N.C. Claire, 8, does not have a speaking role as one of the “Whos of Whoville,” but, after all, a part is a part, no matter how small.

A handful of young actors who have taken on supporting roles in the production — a blend of many of Dr. Seuss' famous books — as part of the Junior Storybook Theatre Company.

The senior company, ECU's Storybook Theatre, has been around since before these actors were born. The group has been bringing children's stories to the stage for nearly two decades and has played a role in ECU's Family Fare series for the last eight years.

Three years ago, Director Patricia Clark decided it was time to bring some younger performers on board. She cast a handful of schoolchildren as dancing penguins in “All Aboard South America,” and, in the process, launched a junior company.

Now eight elementary students from Pitt and Beaufort counties join college-age cast members on stage and on tour.

“The children add this wonderful element of energy and joy to any production,” said Clark, an associate professor in the School of Theatre and Dance and coordinator for
Theatre Education and Theatre for Youth. “I think the audience really enjoys the children, especially the children in the audience ... because they can relate to them.”

Claire's sister, Grace, 10, remembers friends from St. Peter's Catholic School smiling and waving at her as she portrayed a baby spider in “Charlotte's Web” last year. Since then, Grace, who spent time making up and performing her own plays at home before joining the junior company, has traveled with Storybook Theatre on weekends, appearing at festivals and other events.

At tonight's sold-out performance in Wright Auditorium, the Crane sisters, along with 10-year-old Aeryn Parker, will be among the Whos from the popular Dr. Seuss book “Horton Hears a Who.”

The show is Aeryn's first as a member of the junior company, but she is no stranger to the stage. Her parents, Reid and Jeni Parker, work in design and production at the ECU School of Theatre and Dance.

“I usually hang around with all the big college kids in the theater department,” Aeryn said.

Tonight, she will take the stage with them, appearing in one scene as a surfing Who and in another as a jungle creature.

“Seussical” brings to the stage a host of favorite characters, including “The Cat in the Hat,” Horton, “Yertle the Turtle,” the Wickersham Brothers, Gertrude McFuzz, Mayzie, Sour Kangaroo, the Mayor of Whoville and even “One Fish Two Fish Red Fish Blue Fish.”

Like their college-age counterparts, junior company members have been rehearsing for weeks to learn lines and songs and to get the blocking right. The younger cast members are expected to follow the same protocol and exhibit the same professional behavior as the older actors. The only exception is that junior company members can leave rehearsal early to get home in time for bed.

“They have curfews,” Clark said. “When we first start rehearsing, we rehearse just their sections, and then they have to go home to go to bed or do their homework.”

Junior company members have been staying out late all this week, attending dress rehearsals that may last an hour or more past their bedtimes. As they finally get to see the show in its entirety, junior cast members are able to offer advice to help other performers appeal to the target audience — elementary schoolchildren.

“They work as just an excellent audience reaction tool or audience reaction measurement in terms of what's working,” Clark said.
“It's wonderful to have an intergenerational company. We're actually building performers for tomorrow.”

They are also building relationships that they hope will last after the curtain closes on “Seussical.”

A year and a half after joining the junior company Grace sees some of her fellow Storybook Theatre actors regularly. “They actually get to know us and we get to know them,” she said. “A person from ‘Charlotte's Web' is actually now my baby sitter.”
Goodall center moving to Duke

GOODALL center moving to Duke

Legendary chimpanzee researcher Jane Goodall is coming to Durham on March 28 to formally announce that a research center that bears her name is relocating to Duke.

The Jane Goodall Institute Research Center contains more than 50 years of data on chimpanzees compiled by Goodall and researchers working with her.

The material arrived on campus about a year ago, along with Anne Pusey, a longtime collaborator with Goodall whom Duke recruited away from the University of Minnesota. Pusey, now head of Duke's Department of Evolutionary Anthropology and director of the new research center, has worked with the archive for more than 20 years, said Karl Bates, a spokesman for Duke.

Pusey will join Goodall for the announcement on campus, and then Goodall will give a public lecture about her work.

The material in the center archives is vast. It documents more than 18,000 days of field research with chimps in Tanzania beginning in 1960, and includes Goodall's handwritten field notes, maps, hand-completed paper data sheets, digital records and videotape. Pusey has been working for years to turn it into a digital database. So far, about 35 years' worth has been digitized.

The archive, which is immensely valuable to researchers, won't be open to the public, Bates said. In about a week, though, the university will start a website for the center that will offer a taste of its contents.

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To see Goodall

Jane Goodall will give a public lecture at Duke University at 4:30 p.m. March 28, but tickets are limited. They became available Thursday for Duke students, faculty and staff. Remaining tickets will be available to the general public beginning this morning. For more information, call the Duke box office at 684-4444, or visit tickets.duke.edu.
With Crises, Universities Worry About Students Abroad

By LISA W. FODERARO

In January, as protests turned chaotic in Cairo, New York University hastened to evacuate 50 students and staff members from three sites across Egypt. Less than a month later, when an earthquake hit New Zealand, Cornell University quickly relocated students whose heavily damaged campus there had suspended classes.

And on Thursday, Temple University offered to fly 200 students back to the United States from its large branch campus in Tokyo, in response to the deepening crisis in Japan.
American colleges have long trumpeted the benefits of studying abroad, as they have expanded programs on all seven continents and opened new campuses overseas. But as the world has erupted politically and physically in recent weeks, administrators and students have been fast discovering the downside.

College officials have had to stage evacuations on short notice while fielding calls from frantic parents. They have reassessed exchange programs in areas vulnerable to revolution and drug violence, from the Middle East to Mexico. And increasingly, they are engaging their own experts to help spot the next calamity.

“We haven’t had anything like this, in such rapid succession, and I’ve been doing this since 1997,” said Richard Gaulton, director of Cornell Abroad, the university office that oversees international study.

Cornell, which sends 500 undergraduates to 40 countries each year, has a committee that scrutinizes programs in countries flagged with a State Department travel warning. The university has also contracted for several years with a security firm that provides bulletins twice a day on existing and potential trouble spots, and helps with evacuations.

Much is at stake for colleges with footprints in other countries: not just students’ safety, but also the schools’ properties, liabilities and reputations. Many administrators agree that monitoring quickly shifting circumstances around the globe is crucial to making swift, smart decisions and avoiding knee-jerk reactions.

At Binghamton University, part of the State University of New York, officials are closely following politics in Morocco, in the shadow of the upheaval in the Middle East. Five of its students are studying at Al Akhawayn University, in a small town about an hour from Fez.

Binghamton’s vice provost for international affairs, Katharine C. Krebs, is in frequent contact with university and embassy officials in Morocco, as well as the students. “Our goal is to have multiple sources of information,” Dr. Krebs said. “There certainly is a protest movement afoot in Morocco. But it’s been very mild by comparison to some of the other countries.”
Still, the university has stepped up safety measures. Students there are instructed to steer clear of countries with travel warnings, like neighboring Algeria. They must also register their travel plans when leaving the campus.

Binghamton is also tracking crime in Mexico, where it is working to start an exchange program in the spring with a university in Monterrey. The everyday level of violence is not high, but two Mexican college students were killed in Monterrey last year, caught in crossfire between soldiers and drug traffickers.

“We want the project to work and we have no intention of backing off,” Dr. Krebs said. “I guess the only question is whether we feel that we have to delay sending our own students there.”

Less than 24 hours after the State Department discouraged travel to Egypt in late January, the University of Michigan directed nine of its students there to return to the United States. That month, Boston University decided to end its 20-year-old study program in Niger after two French citizens were kidnapped from a bar popular with its students, and then killed.

Attention has now turned to Japan. After the earthquake and tsunami, Princeton University quickly reached out to 14 students and employees in various programs, mostly in Kyoto, a distance from the crippled nuclear reactors. On Wednesday, Princeton officials said that some had decided to leave the country, and that the university was encouraging students living closer to Tokyo to relocate.

Temple University’s campus in Tokyo has 3,300 full-time and study-abroad students from all over the world. The university said Thursday that more than 100 of its American students had already left the country, and that it would arrange flights home for any of the remaining 200 who wished to go.

Because Japan uses a different academic calendar, many students in America are poised to leave for spring study programs. They are agonizing over what to do; if they cancel, they may forfeit a semester’s worth of academic credit, since their home campuses are already halfway through the spring term.

Celia Yu, of Queens, is one of four students at Hamilton College, in central New York, who are scheduled to depart for Japan on March 28. The
program’s sponsor, the Council on International Educational Exchange, a nonprofit group, said Wednesday that plans were still on track.

Ms. Yu, a junior who majors in psychology, said she was torn. She feels pressure from her parents and friends to stay home. But she wants to graduate with her class, and withdrawing from the program now would complicate that.

“The only problem is the radiation and how the wind is going to blow it,” she said. “I’m very worried, but I trust my program. I don’t think they would let us go if there’s anything that would put us in harm.”

International academic programs have soared in popularity. More than a quarter-million American college students study abroad each year, up from 62,000 in the late 1980s, according to the Institute of International Education, a nonprofit group with offices around the world. Educators say that given those numbers, troubles have been relatively rare.

Still, two episodes stand out. In 1997, four American college students enrolled in the Semester at Sea, a program run by the Institute for Shipboard Education, were killed in a bus crash during a side trip to India. In 2000, two Antioch College students were shot to death on a roadside in Costa Rica.

Allan E. Goodman, the institute’s president, said the recent turmoil should not tarnish the fundamental appeal of international study. “Past experience has shown that study-abroad programs can be reinstated relatively quickly, and student enrollments can resume or even surpass previous levels,” he said.

Indeed, even when the State Department warned against travel in Egypt, some students were reluctant to leave.

“It seemed like a big, exciting event, and they felt like they had a front seat on history,” said Sally Crimmins Villela, assistant vice chancellor for global affairs at the State University of New York, which runs 570 study-abroad programs.

For Jonathan Panter, a Cornell junior who is studying political science at the University of Aleppo, in Syria, that country’s relative calm — the result, he
said, of a ubiquitous police presence — allowed him to stay in the region at a momentous tid.”

But the experience is far from the laid-back atmosphere he left behind in Ithaca. “When someone says the word ‘government,’ they lower their voice and look over their shoulder,” he said of Syrians. “It’s possible that someone is listening to this phone call right now.”
Hugo Scheckter offers free donuts for a vote from students at George Washington University. Scheckter wants to become a Undergraduate Business Senator.

Samantha Free is running for executive vice president at George Washington University's student government. Two of the five vice president candidates are women (including Free).

On college campuses, a gender gap in student government
By Jenna Johnson, Wednesday, March 16, 1:33 PM
More than half of George Washington University’s 10,000 undergraduates are women. But the latest candidates for student body president were Kwasi, Joshua, Chris, Phil, Jason, Caleb and John.
All men.

Of the 57 candidates for other student offices in this month’s vote, 11 were women.

“It’s always that way,” said sophomore Amanda Galonek, one of two women who ran for executive vice president against three men. “There are not many of us to really rally together.”

For the past decade, women have outpaced men on key measures of college success. They attend college and graduate at higher rates, according to several studies, and they tend to earn higher grades. Yet on many campuses, student government is dominated by men, echoing gender gaps in state and national politics.

At the 50 colleges ranked highest by U.S. News & World Report, less than a third of student presidents are women. Three of 12 major colleges in the Washington area have female student presidents: the University of the District of Columbia, Marymount University and Trinity Washington University, where nearly all students are women.

The American Student Government Association estimates that 40 percent of student presidents nationwide are female, including those at community colleges. The share is believed to be lower at four-year colleges, though precise figures were unavailable.

Getting more women into campus politics in their teens and 20s, advocates say, could bolster their ranks in statehouses and on Capitol Hill. Twelve percent of governors and 17 percent of members of Congress are women. “All of the reasons why women don’t run in college are the same reasons we see nationally,” said Kate C. Farrar of the American Association of University Women. “Women still see themselves as outsiders. They don’t see themselves as already being at the table.”

Farrar organizes how-to-run workshops for college women in an effort, she said, to build a “new culture of who runs and who gets a voice and who gets to make decisions.”

People who track student government say the gender gap is often reinforced by fraternities that vote en masse for male candidates. Sometimes, they add,
women gravitate to leadership of clubs or causes more in line with their career goals instead of jumping into what they might view as a boys club. The gender gap is especially notable at Washington area colleges because they play up their location in the nation’s capital to attract politically minded students.

At American University, leaders of the Women & Politics Institute discovered in 2006 that 72 percent of the student government was male even though 62 percent of students were female. The institute launched a campaign to boost the numbers, with modest success. The share of women in the undergraduate senate has been around 40 percent in recent years, the institute said.

At GWU, just a few blocks from the White House, students elected female presidents in 1998, 2007 and 2009. Women at the school have plenty of leadership ambitions — at the Hatchet student newspaper, for example, about 70 percent of editors and managers are women, including the editor in chief. But women seem less enthusiastic about a student government that some critics say is too preoccupied with minutiae of bylaws and election rules.

Student Association elections, which were held March 9 and 10, are a campus spectator sport. Students are allowed to campaign for a week and sprinted to the student center at 7 a.m. on Day 1 to claim prime spots for glossy posters. There are Web sites, social media strategies and campaign staffs. There is a Joint Elections Commission with a 24-page charter that regulates posters and limits spending to $1,000 per candidate.

“It’s basically just a giant playground for students who want to be in Congress someday,” said sophomore Phil Gardner, a presidential candidate who ran to reform the government and finished fifth.

Advocates of the student government counter that it is the first place administrators and trustees turn for student input. University President Steven Knapp regularly meets with the student president, Jason Lifton, to discuss policies and student concerns. The student leaders also oversee the distribution of $1 million in activity fees to hundreds of student groups.

Samantha Free, a junior, hesitated to seek a student government position because she was busy with clubs. But she said she ran for executive vice
president because “any governing body should be representative of the people it represents.” She finished third but still has a shot at being included in a runoff vote next week.

Several students said that if more women ran for the lower echelons of student government, they would gain confidence and allies to run for higher office.

“You would have girls pushing for other girls, just like you have guys pushing for guys,” said Aria Varasteh, a junior, one of the three men running for executive vice president.

On Thursday night, as returns were being tallied, another vice presidential candidate talked about his decision to run.

“Three weeks ago, I saw that there was not a real fighter in the race, so I went for it,” said Ted Costigan, a junior. “There’s nothing better to prepare for running in a real election than to run in one like this.”

Costigan’s campaign manager cut off the interview because the candidate needed to mingle in the crowd as winners were announced.

Just after 10 p.m., the results for the top two races came in. No candidate took more than 40 percent of the vote, so there will be a runoff next week. It’s unclear which candidates will end up on the ballot because of disputes about alleged campaign violations. (For president, it could be Chris vs. John. Or John vs. Kwasi.)

Friends hugged Free after learning that she came in third in the vice presidential contest. Galonek came in second, drawing cheers and claps. Before the announcer could reveal that Costigan placed first, the fist-pumping and bear-hugging began. Men started to chant: “Ted! Ted! Ted!”
U. of Delaware, Citing Computer Glitch, Rescinds 61 Acceptances
By ERIC PLATT
Sixty-one applicants to the University of Delaware mistakenly received congratulations on their acceptance to the university last week, only to be told that the notices had been sent in error. The students actually had been designated by the admissions office for the waiting list or outright rejected, according to school admissions officials.

When the applicants accessed the university’s admissions portal, My Blue Hen Home, which only recently went online, they were presented with a link to a page for admitted students that greeted them with personalized best wishes and invited them to visit the campus in Newark, Del.

The university blamed missing code for the glitch that allowed all 24,469 applicants to register for the campus information session and tour that had been scheduled exclusively for the 13,058 students receiving acceptance envelopes.

“We started seeing some sign-ups come through from kids who were not admitted,” said Louis Hirsh, the university’s director of undergraduate admission. “And we started backtracking, and once we discovered what it was we disabled the link.”

Before it was removed, 12 students who had not been admitted completed registration to attend the event. On Saturday, the link was reactivated solely for accepted applicants.

Over the weekend the office of undergraduate admission called in staff members to identify those students who had not been admitted but who had received congratulatory notices and had viewed the Web site. By midafternoon on Sunday, counselors began e-mailing students with their
actual application decisions and scheduled follow-up conference calls for Monday.

Mr. Hirsh said Delaware stood by its original decisions. However, if the university winds up drawing on its waiting list to fill any remaining slots this spring and summer, the admissions committee plans to first re-read applications from those students who received the false congratulatory messages.

“It’s kids in tears, kids who may have talked to their friends about this,” he said. “It is painful. It is the very real side of just how powerful the Web and technology are, and how powerful it is when they go awry.”

Mr. Hirsh said the university did not plan to dismiss any employees as a result of the error.

Over the last decade a handful of colleges and universities have mistakenly sent acceptance letters to rejected applicants, including Cornell University, the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, and the University of California, San Diego.

The apologies from Delaware did little to salve the hurt feelings of those high school seniors affected, who were suddenly cast back into decision purgatory.

Alexandra Brunetti, a senior at Our Lady of Mercy Academy in Syosset, N.Y., was at dinner when a friend told her that his decision had been posted online. After visiting the Web site, she too found the congratulatory message and registered to visit the university.

But later that night she noticed that her account did not have payment links to place a deposit at Delaware. For help, she turned to the Web.

“I went to College Confidential and started reading,” she said. “I waited until the next day on Saturday and nothing was up. I thought maybe it was just a glitch in their system.”

Compounding Ms. Brunetti’s confusion were conflicting reports on the College Confidential Web site. Hundreds of posts — that together have
garnered more than 7,000-page views in three days — parsed and postulated the change on the university’s admissions page.

“College application season is just so stressful,” she said. “On Monday I was just going crazy waiting for that phone call.”

Parents, too, were vexed by the situation.

Maria Breger, from Lincroft, N.J., opened her son’s application page and clicked to read the message. Quickly, she fired off a text message to her son before telling her husband that he was in. However later that night when she went to register for the campus visit, the link had disappeared.

A conversation with the admissions office on Monday revealed that her son had, in fact, been rejected.
Study Undercuts View of College as a Place of Same-Sex Experimentation
By TAMAR LEWIN
The popular stereotype of college campuses as a hive of same-sex experimentation for young women may be all wrong.

To the surprise of many researchers and sex experts, the National Survey on Family Growth found that women with bachelor’s degrees were actually less likely to have had a same-sex experience than those who did not finish high school.

“It’s definitely a ‘huh’ situation, because it goes counter to popular perceptions,” said Kaaren Williamsen, director of Carleton College’s gender and sexuality center.

For years, sex researchers, campus women’s centers and the media have viewed college as a place where young women explore their sexuality, test boundaries, and, often, have their first — in some cases, only — lesbian relationship.

That phenomenon gave rise to the term LUG (lesbian until graduation). In 2003, a New York magazine article, “Bi for Now,” suggested that women’s involvement in their college’s gay scene exposed them to a different culture, like junior year abroad in Gay World.

But according to the new study, conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, based on 13,500 responses, almost 10 percent of women ages 22 to 44 with a bachelor’s degree said they had had a same-sex experience, compared with 15 percent of those with no high school diploma.

Women with a high school diploma or some college, but no degree, fell in between.

Six percent of college-educated women reported oral sex with a same-sex partner, compared with 13 percent who did not complete high school.
Anjani Chandra was the lead author of the report, based on data from 2006 through 2008.

Although 13 percent of women over all reported same-sex sexual behavior only one percent identified themselves as gay, and another 4 percent as bisexual. To get accurate answers to intimate questions, the researchers asked those surveyed to enter their responses directly into a computer.

“It’s like a Rubik’s cube of sexuality, where you turn it a different way, and the factors don’t fit together,” said Rea Carey, executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. “It may be that the commonly held wisdom was wrong, that people just liked to imagine women in college having sex together, or it may be that society has changed, and as more people come out publicly, in politics or on television, we are getting a clearer view of the breadth of sexuality.”

The findings are especially striking — and puzzling — since the previous round of the survey, in 2002, found no pattern of educational differences in women’s sexual behavior. Most of the change came from higher levels of same-sex behavior reported by the women without diplomas.

“I always thought the LUG phenomenon was overblown, in the context of it being erotically titillating for young men,” said Barbara Risman, an officer of the Council on Contemporary Families and a University of Illinois at Chicago sociology professor. She added that the new findings may reflect class dynamics, with high school dropouts living in surroundings with few desirable and available male partners.

Amber Hollibaugh, interim executive director of Queers for Economic Justice, a New York-based advocacy group, said the results of the federal survey underscored how poor, minority and working-class lesbians had been overshadowed by the mainstream cultural image of lesbians as white professionals.

“Working with a gay-rights group is now something you’d put on your résumé,” said Ms. Hollibaugh, who did not attend college. “Lesbians who aren’t college-educated professionals are pretty much invisible.”

Dan Savage, a gay sex columnist in Seattle, said the LUG phenomenon may be overrepresented in the national imagination because so many students
sought attention for their sexual exploration: “A lot of them are out to prove something and want their effort to smash the patriarchy to be very visible,” he said.

Lisa Diamond, a professor of psychology and gender studies at the University of Utah, said that with gay relationships so much more common throughout society, college campuses may have lost their status as the “privileged site” for women’s exposure to different kinds of sexuality.

“Maybe our stereotypes are just behind the times,” Ms. Diamond said, adding that while lesbian and gay couples raising children were still assumed to be sophisticated white professionals, as in the movie, “The Kids Are All Right,” the latest parenting data showed that “holy-moly, it’s less likely to be upper-middle-class same-sex couples than ethnic minorities and working-class couples.”

Most headlines about the report, released earlier this month, focused on a finding that young people were waiting longer to have sex. Almost 29 percent of the females and 27 percent of the males, age 15 to 24, had had no sexual contact, an increase from 22 percent for both sexes in the 2002 survey.

The gender gap on homosexuality remains substantial: Twice as many women as men reported same-sex behavior. Three percent of the women — and 5 percent of the least-educated women — said they were attracted equally to men and women, compared with one percent of the men.

“A lot of data shows that women’s sexuality is more hetero-flexible, more influenced by what they see around them,” Professor Diamond said.

In the past, she said, a women with a single homosexual relationship would have been labeled gay, and urged to accept that identity. But now there is a growing sense that a lesbian relationship need not define a woman.

“It’s becoming more acceptable, at least in some parts of society, to see your gender identity as fluid,” said Joan Westreich, a Manhattan therapist. “I see women whose first loves were women, who then meet and fall in love with a guy, and for whom it seems to be relatively conflict-free.”