THE DAILY CLIPS

March 19, 2012

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Davis Blanton smiles as he accepts his Match Day letter from Dr. Paul Cunningham, dean of the Brody School of Medicine on Friday. (Rhett Butler/The Daily Reflector)

‘Match Day’ sets course
By K.j. Williams
The Daily Reflector
Saturday, March 17, 2012

At medical schools nationally, Match Day is a rite of passage. At East Carolina University’s Brody School of Medicine, 71 matches were made Friday between graduates and the medical facilities where they will complete their residencies.

It’s nail-biting suspense for the graduates, who walked across the stage to receive a sealed white envelope. Inside is a national computer system’s “match” that places the student at a residency site that they rated highly and which also gave them a high rating.

As a backdrop for their walk, students created a screen with photo collages and quotes, illustrating their personalities.

Parents took small children with them on stage, a newlywed couple followed each other, and one student wore beach attire since today marks the start of his beach vacation.

One student’s visual display used her nickname, “Dr. J” with the numeral 2 above it since she’s now a doctor twice over.

Sarah James, 33, from Kinston, already had her doctorate in anatomy and cell biology from ECU. She said her friends call her “Dr. J” squared since she’s now graduated from medical school.
Her photo collage included a text thank you: “Brought to you by the love and support of this amazing family.”

James said she’s excited to be heading to the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota. “It’s a world-class institution, and I am honored to have the opportunity to train there,” she said.

Many students stepped outside the Brody auditorium to open their envelopes in search of a moment of privacy. Others opened it among loved ones.

Negin Misaghian, 27, of Charlotte is headed to Wake Forest Medical Center. When she opened her envelope she gave a friend two seats down a high-five and kissed her boyfriend.

“I wanted to be with everybody to open it,” she said.

Balram Sharma, 25, of Greensboro had a friend open his envelope in the lobby. His residency will be at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville. Afterward, he sat inside the auditorium with friends, saying over and over: “I can’t believe it.”

When he ranked his residency choices, the university was his top pick.

Stephen Ryan, 29, of Pfatt, outside Winston-Salem, wore his preference on his chest when he went on stage. His green T-shirt proclaimed his love for Maine, and that’s where he’s headed for his residency, Maine Medical Center, as is his girlfriend, Lindsey Waugh for her residency. Decked out in plaid shorts and red sneakers, Ryan said he was ready for his vacation to start.

“After this, we’re going to the beach to relax after four years of busting it in medical school,” he said.

Family members were among the cheering and clapping audience watching students receive their envelopes.

Durham parents Michael and Jacqueline Foushee said their daughter was the family’s first medical school graduate.

Her father, a police officer, said he used to be an emergency medical technician and would show his daughter how to perform CPR on her dolls.

At the ceremony, watching his daughter receive her match, he said his feelings were “excitement, joy and relief.”

Her mother said, “Ever since she was in elementary school, she wanted to be a doctor.”
Jacqueline Foushee, who will be a resident at University of Virginia, said medicine was her only choice.

“I always knew,” she said. “I never thought of anything different. So if I ever got stressed out, I’d say ‘Well, this is the only thing you want to do, got to get through it.’”

At the start of the ceremony, Dr. Paul Cunningham, Brody’s dean, told the graduates that it was the most successful Match Day he’s presided over at Brody. “All of you have matched in 17 states across the nation.”

The class had 72 graduates, but one wasn’t headed to a residency immediately, said Dr. Kathleen Previll, interim senior associate dean for academic affairs, after the Match Day ceremony.

She said that the data isn’t available yet for this class, but in recent years, between 95 percent to 97 percent of students are matched with one of their three top picks.

Out of the 71 graduates at Match Day, 29 of them matched to residencies in North Carolina, she said. And this is good news for the state, since doctors tend to open practices in the area where they had their residencies.

Among North Carolina’s medical schools, Brody has a higher than average percentage of graduates in the underserved field of primary care, and that’s part of the school’s mission, to produce primary care doctors, Previll said. “Because that’s what we need in eastern North Carolina.”

In this class, about 63 percent chose primary care as their field, and if obstetrics-gynecology is included, that percentage reaches nearly 69 percent. “That fulfills our mission very well,” Previll said.
Prosecutor offered guiding hand
By Kristin Zachary
Monday, March 19, 2012

Pitt County lost a guiding hand with the untimely death of a longtime assistant district attorney, according to colleagues and an ex-felon whose life he helped turn around.

Reginald Stancil, a 39-year-old Greenville native, said he was “in and out of the court system” until he met Darth Akins, who served as an assistant district attorney in Pitt County for 15 years.

Friends and family of Akins, who died March 4 at age 50 after a battle with cancer, said he was influential in changing many lives.

“I felt like I wasn’t supposed to be in the court system, but I always ended up there,” Stancil said. “I prayed to God that he would send somebody to just help me out. And I met Mr. Darth.”

Stancil, whose criminal history includes a handful of drug offenses, said he couldn’t allow himself to continue on the same path after meeting Akins.

“I was unemployed, and I chose the wrong life and the wrong path for money,” Stancil said. “Some individuals need certain people in their life to help them catch on, and Mr. Darth played a big part in my life.”

Stancil said that although Akins was on the other side of the courtroom, he still was in his corner.
“A lot of times, Darth was the biggest advocate for the person in drug court, giving them another chance when others were maybe ready to give up on them,” said Brent Johnson, jail inmate coordinator for the District Attorneys Office.

“He was the prosecutor, and he was the holdout,” Johnson said. “There are people who are drug-free today because of that.”

District Attorney Clark Everett said drug court has a social atmosphere and works because the offenders do not want to disappoint the judge, prosecutors or others in the courtroom.

He said Akins could be inflexible at times and believed people should be held responsible for their actions.

“But then he had a soft spot that would just come out of nowhere,” Everett said. “For the right situation, he would show a lot of compassion.”

“He fought just as hard for victims of crime as he did for the defendants in drug court,” Assistant District Attorney Kimberly Robb said.

At times, Akins’ passion nearly landed him in jail with those he was prosecuting, Robb said.

“He wanted to help people,” said Virginia Hardy, his wife of two and a half years. “Even if that meant going to jail for contempt.”

Hardy, a vice chancellor for student affairs at East Carolina University, said Akins was a “stickler for getting it right.”

“He was the most thorough person in district court Pitt County will ever see,” Assistant District Attorney Jeffrey Cannon said. “It’s always about an attorney trying to paint a picture. He wasn’t painting a picture; he was painting a masterpiece.”

Akins’ attention to detail carried into his personal life as well.

“It wouldn’t make a difference if he was given the wrong food, but if they charged him that penny extra, that would have sent him over the edge,” Johnson said. “That’s the stuff he’d sweat. Cancer he never sweated.”

Akins was diagnosed with chondrosarcoma, a type of bone cancer, in November 2008, Hardy said.

“Darth was very determined that cancer was not going to define him and was not going to beat him,” she said.

“And it didn’t. He lived life to the fullest.”
Hardy said part of Akins’ scapula was removed in December 2008, and he underwent intense chemotherapy before the cancer reoccurred in his lungs in March 2009.

Despite the prognosis, Akins continued to work, she said.

“He was sick, and he was still here every day in court,” Cannon said. “One day I even took him to the hospital, and he got his treatment and came back and tried cases that afternoon until 5 o’clock.”

Cannon said Akins, a mentor and friend, shaped him into the person and assistant district attorney he is today.

Akins also acted as a role model for many on the other side of the courtroom, according to Stancil.

“My life would be very different if I hadn’t known that man,” Stancil said. He now details vehicles at a local dealership and steers clear of negative activity, he said.

Stancil said he always saw a scary image when he pictured prosecutors, but Akins didn’t portray that image.

“I thought, ‘How can a prosecutor be loving and caring?’ It just seemed like the two didn’t go together,” he said.

Friends and family said Akins’ body had been weakened by cancer, but his heart was strong and full of love.

“He loved to fish,” Hardy said. “He would go down to the Town Common and fish, and he was out fishing with and having conversations with some of the same people he had prosecuted and sent to jail.”

Hardy said it was typical for ex-offenders to approach while they were out to speak with Akins about how their lives had changed and thank him for how they were treated.

“He treated everybody with such respect,” Cannon said. “Everybody was equal. Eight, 80, black, white — it didn’t matter.”

“He was for what was right, no matter what side it meant to be on,” Robb said.

Contact Kristin Zachary at kzachary@reflector.com and 252-329-9566 and follow her on Twitter @kzacharygdr.
Editorial: ECU reorganization a challenge
Monday, March 19, 2012

When East Carolina University’s Program Prioritization Committee released its preliminary list of recommendations last month, many in the campus community responded with resentment. There were misconceptions about the original document that helped fuel the uproar, but most simply feared that the document would move toward approval regardless of the dissent it generated.

The recently completed campuswide survey about the recommendations should go some way toward alleviating those fears as the committee stated its attention to incorporate the input into its final proposal. That is the proper approach to what promises to be the most profound changes to the university’s degree programs and emphasis since its founding.

Last year, with the likelihood of significant spending cuts to higher education expenditures looming in Raleigh, East Carolina Chancellor Steve Ballard formed the Program Prioritization Committee to take full measure of the university’s academic offerings. Its mission was to help streamline East Carolina’s colleges and degree programs to reduce spending and meet the state’s imposition of a 16.1 percent budget cut.

The proactive response to the economic climate showed a realistic view of the future. The university system is a common target of state Republicans, lampooned for its extravagance and waste. With the GOP in control of the General Assembly — an advantage cemented by the legislative redistricting that sought to solidify Republican majorities in both houses — schools like East Carolina must find ways to achieve its academic mission with fewer resources.

While that expectation may be widely known across the campus community, seeing its implications can still shock, and the initial proposal of the committee did just that. Across East Carolina, faculty and students share concern about the future of some degree programs, or enjoyed the relief of having their areas of focus on the list of favored degrees. Most feared any input they offered on the process would be ignored.

There is ample reason to believe that will not be the case. The university recently completed a campuswide survey inviting comment on the
recommendations. The committee intends to incorporate that information into its proposal and then discuss a revised plan with the faculty senate before delivering it to the chancellor for his consideration next month.

This has not been an easy process, nor will the implementation be harmless. But the school is doing well to listen as it proceeds, and that is critical to reaching conclusions that, while not desired, will serve the university’s long-term needs.
ECU Notes: Exhibits focus on Civil War
Monday, March 19, 2012

To mark the sesquicentennial of the Civil War, Joyner Library at East Carolina University is presenting two exhibits focusing on the war in, and its effects upon, North Carolina.

“The Civil War in North Carolina, 1861-1865” is on exhibit in Joyner’s Special Collections department, located on the fourth floor, opening Monday and running until Aug. 10. The exhibit explores multiple facets of this divisive and devastating war in the state. Major themes include campaigns and battles in North Carolina, life as a N.C. soldier, the home front, slavery, economy and politics.

Maury York, assistant director for Special Collections Division, said the exhibit offers an opportunity to see items not usually on display.

“Joyner Library’s East Carolina Manuscript Collection has rich holdings pertaining to many aspects of the Civil War in North Carolina, collected over a period of more than 40 years,” York said. “This exhibit is a rare opportunity for students, faculty members and the public to see important letters, diaries and photographs firsthand.”

The second exhibit, “The Civil War in Eastern North Carolina: The 1862 Burnside Expedition,” is in the Verona Joyner Langford North Carolina Collection, located on the third floor of Joyner Library. It explores the history of coastal battles fought between February and June of 1862.

“The Union soldiers stationed in New Bern and little Washington provided some of the best documentation of the war in eastern North Carolina,” said
John Lawrence, head of service for the Verona Joyner Langford North Carolina Collection. “This exhibit is drawn largely from our collection of Northern newspapers, regimental histories and memoirs of soldiers stationed in this area.”

Both exhibits are open to the public. Visit the library’s website www.ecu.edu/lib/ for operating hours for the North Carolina Collection and Special Collections.

Professor recognized by art association

Alice Arnold, professor of art education at ECU, has been named the 2012 Southeastern Region Higher Education Art Educator of the Year by the National Art Education Association.

The award recognizes exemplary contributions, services and achievements by an NAEA member. Arnold’s award was presented during the NAEA national convention in New York, March 1-4. The Southeastern Region is comprised of 10 U.S. states and two territories.

“This award is being given to recognize excellence in professional accomplishment and service by a dedicated art educator,” said F. Robert Sabol, NAEA president. “She exemplifies the highly qualified individuals active in the field of art education today: leaders, teachers, students, scholars and advocates who give their best to the profession.”

Arnold was traveling in China with the Pitt County Chamber of Commerce group and unable to attend the convention.

Even though the trip was more personal than professional, Arnold said seeing the Great Wall of China, the Forbidden City and some of the country’s treasured artifacts would aid her teaching.

“I have been trained in Western art and thinking. I’m trying to expand my understanding of Asian thinking, philosophy and art,” she said.

Before joining the ECU faculty in 1992, Arnold taught art in public schools and art education at Appalachian State University and UNC-Pembroke.

NAEA is the professional association for art educators. Members include elementary, secondary, middle level and high school art teachers; university and college professors; education directors who oversee education in our nation’s fine art museums, administrators and supervisors who oversee art education in school districts, state departments of education, arts councils and artists throughout the United States and other countries.
Kolasa appointed to international group

Kathryn Kolasa, an ECU professor and dietitian, has been appointed to the Institute of Medicine’s Global Forum on Innovation in Health Professional Education. Kolasa will be representing the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics.

The forum has 45 members from around the world. A planning meeting was held this month, and the first forum session will be in August. The goal of the forum is to generate discussion of the education of health professionals and evaluate innovative approaches to education.

Kolasa’s appointment began March 1 and continues through February 2015. An internationally known dietitian, Kolasa is a professor of family medicine at the Brody School of Medicine at ECU.

The IOM is part of the National Academy of Sciences.

Four Seasons concerts this week

The Four Seasons Chamber Music Festival will present the Children’s Residency V, featuring 11 concerts for Pitt County Schools students, Monday through Wednesday on the campus of ECU. The festival collaborates with New York Philharmonic teaching artist Rachel Shapiro to create this program.

The Four Seasons Family Night concert will be Tuesday at 6:30 p.m. in the Fletcher Music Building, Room 110. This is an interactive concert for children and their families and is open to the public. Seating is limited. Contact Mary Jane Gaddis, 328-1268, or gaddism@ecu.edu, to reserve seating.

Children’s Residency and Family Night performers will be Ara Gregorian, violin; Emanuel Gruber, cello; Hye-Jin Kim, violin; and Melissa Reardon, viola — all ECU School of Music faculty members.

Upcoming Events:

Wednesday: Cunanan Leadership Speaker Series: Peter Post, director of the Emily Post Institute, 3:30 p.m., Wright Auditorium. Free and open to the public. Sponsored by the College of Business.

See www.ecu.edu/cs-ecu/calendar.cfm for times, places and more information on these events and other ECU upcoming activities.
Obituary

Johnnie E. Umphlet Jr.

Johnnie E. Umphlet Jr., 45, died Wednesday, March 7, 2012, in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. A memorial service will be conducted at 2 p.m. Tuesday at First Presbyterian Church.

Johnnie was raised in Rocky Mount and graduated from Rocky Mount Senior High in 1985. After graduating from East Carolina University in 1989 with a criminal justice degree, he was employed with the Greenville Police Department, the N.C. Department of Probation/Parole and the ECU Police Department.

In 1998, Johnnie became a special agent with the N.C. State Bureau of Investigation, having served in the northwestern and northeastern districts. While with the SBI, Johnnie became a Certified K-9 handler and was assigned his K-9 partner "Earl." They were part of the national ATF response team of arson investigators. He served on the statewide Special Response Tactical Team and assisted with instruction of law enforcement officers. In 2007, he advanced to assistant special agent in charge, assigned to the Special Investigations Unit/Professional Standards Division.

In March 2009, Johnnie left the SBI to work as a police mentor assigned to the National Police Command Center with DynCorp International in Afghanistan. He became a senior compliance investigator with DynCorp International, representing its compliance organization throughout the Middle East, Asia and Africa. He resided in Dubai and traveled into Afghanistan, Jordan, Kuwait and Israel. During his career with DynCorp International, he was greatly affected by his experiences, and they impacted his life and love of his family.

He was an active member of First Presbyterian Church, having served as youth adviser, and became an ordained elder. In Dubai, he became an active member of the Fellowship of the Emirates Church. His faith remained strong and helped him face his life overseas during extended time away from family and friends. Johnnie was known for his instant friendship, kind heart, never-ending smile, laughter and for the tales of his adventures in law.
enforcement, touching the lives of many people at home and abroad. He is survived by his wife of 24 years, Chris Sessoms Umphlet; and daughter, Kaitlyn, of Greenville; parents, Johnnie and Nancy Umphlet, of Rocky Mount; sisters, Debbie Bone and Rena Sherrod, and their families of Rocky Mount; parents-in-law, Ron and Peggy Sessoms, of Greenville; brother-in-law, Ron Sessoms Jr., of Greenville. He also leaves behind Earl and Sampson, canine family members.

The family will receive friends from 5-8 p.m. today at Wilkerson Funeral Home.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the American Heart Association by going online to http://honor.americanheart.org/goto/johnnieumphletjr; the National K-9 Working Dog Inc. online at http://www.nationalk-9workingdog.org/donate; or to First Presbyterian Church, Attn: Sacred Garden Columbarium, 1400 S. Elm St., Greenville, N.C. 27858. Online condolences at www.wilkersonfuneralhome.com.

Published in The Daily Reflector from March 11 to March 19, 2012
Charles Franklin Gilbert

Dr. Charles Franklin Gilbert of Greenville died unexpectedly Saturday, March 17, 2012, at Vidant Medical Center (formerly Pitt County Memorial Hospital) following a trip to China.

Dr. Gilbert was born on March 5, 1933, in Benson to Charlie Gilbert and Mozelle Johnson Gilbert. Dr. Gilbert married his childhood sweetheart, Myra Lee Benson, in 1951. She was by his side in every undertaking throughout their 50 years together. Their married life was spent sharing responsibilities, raising a family and, in their later years, with extensive traveling, which Charles had continued to enjoy in his retirement.

He was blessed with many talents and was especially proud to share his woodworking projects with doting friends. He and Myra participated in various folk arts during their marriage. Monday nights were a special time for his meeting with the Rotarians. He never missed a meeting. He was adept at creating ornate knives and unusual, one-of-a-kind ballpoint pens. He was energetic and always planning new projects and was an avid quail hunter in his younger years. Charles often said that his greatest accomplishments in life were his marriage, family, (especially those dear grandchildren) and his career. He was dedicated and gave his best to his work as a pathologist.

Charles received his formal education at Campbell University and his medical degree at the University of North Carolina. Dr. Gilbert completed his internship and two-year residency in pathology at N.C. Memorial Hospital. He was chief resident in pathology and instructor in pathology and microbiology from 1959-64. He served as co-director, Department of Laboratory Medicine, at Pitt County Memorial Hospital from 1966-80 and associate clinical professor of pathology at the East Carolina School of Medicine from 1975-86. Dr. Gilbert and Dr. Robert West became acquainted while studying botany at UNC. They went through medical school together and continued through pathology. They came together in Greenville, where they began Pitt Pathologists and were instrumental to bringing the specialties of pathology to Greenville and North Carolina areas in 1966 and continued in this capacity until 1983 by serving as pathologist consultants to local hospitals in the region. Dr. Gilbert served two years as a captain in the U.S.
Army Medical Corps, Walter Reid Army Medical Center, Fort Detrick, Md., from 1964-66. He was the author of a variety of publications related to his profession and continued his association with Pitt Memorial for a few a years of semi-retirement until his final retirement in 2011.

Dr. Gilbert is survived by his son, Charles "Chuck" Gilbert Jr., of Washington; grandsons, Matthew Gilbert of Charlotte and Marshall Gilbert of Boone; daughter, Amy Gilbert Gerard, of Charlotte; granddaughters, Lee "Curly" Gerard of Greenville and Anna "Sticky" Gerard, of Charlotte; grandson, Hodges "Scooby" Gerard, of Charlotte.

Dr. Gilbert was predeceased by his parents, Charlie and Mozelle Gilbert; a brother, Dan Gilbert; and a sister, Julia Lee Gilbert Honey.

The family will receive friends from 7-8:30 p.m. Tuesday at Dr. Gilbert's home. A funeral service will be conducted at 11 a.m. Wednesday at The Memorial Baptist Church, 1510 S.E. Greenville Blvd., Greenville. A graveside service will follow at 3 p.m. at Roselawn Cemetery in Benson. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be directed to the Leukemia and Lymphoma Cancer Society, P.O. Box 4072, Pittsfield, Mass. 01202

The family wishes to thank the dedicated hospital staff members who attended to Dr. Gilbert's needs during his brief stay at Vidant Medical Center. Arrangements by Wilkerson Funeral Home & Crematory, Greenville.

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Leo E. Waivers, MD, 59, passed away on Thursday, March 15, 2012 after a four month illness. A Funeral Mass will be held Monday at 10:30 am at St. Peter's Catholic Church.

Dr. Waivers, a native of Kearny, N.J., was a 1974 graduate of Stevens Institute of Technology in Hoboken, N.J., where he received a degree in engineering. In 1980, he graduated with a medical degree from New Jersey Medical School, Newark, N.J. He moved to Greenville in 1987, where he practiced at East Carolina University School of Medicine until 1990 when he formed his own private practice, Greenville Internal Medicine, where he practiced until 2008. He most recently practiced at the ECU Student Health Center.

He was very active in Community Theater in Farmville and Greenville. He was a member of St. Peters Catholic Church. His most cherished activity was spending time with his children and watching them play sports. He is survived by his sons, Christopher Waivers, Michael Waivers and Patrick Waivers; and a daughter, Katie Waivers, all of Greenville. The family will receive friends Sunday from 6 to 8 p.m. at Wilkerson Funeral Home.


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ECU’s spring season kicks off today
By Nathan Summers
Monday, March 19, 2012

An offseason’s worth of anticipation and preparation was built around today for the East Carolina football team.

Coming off the team’s first bowl absence in five seasons, the Pirates have gone through the annual additions, subtractions and tweaks that make the dawn of another spring practice worth the wait for players, coaches and fans.

Third-year head coach Ruffin McNeill will lead his team through its first official workout of the 2012 season today at 3:25 p.m., but the unofficial work began right after ECU’s season-ending loss at Marshall last Nov. 26.

“This is a really special time for football coaches because you get a chance to develop your team,” said McNeill, a one-time Pirate defensive back who is 11-14 after two seasons at the helm. “You see who has developed from last year, whether he was a player who started or played a lot of plays, or he’s a young player who either redshirted or did not play as much that’s trying to prove himself.

“I’m anxious to see that development.”

After a frustrating senior season for quarterback Dominique Davis in 2011, all eyes will be on the four men vying to become his replacement.

The Pirates have one QB in each class from which to pick, but none of them have extensive playing experience. Senior Brad Wornick saw limited action
as Davis’ backup in 2010, junior Rio Johnson took on the same role last season, sophomore Shane Carden has spent two seasons learning the offense and should be ready to complete for repetitions and redshirt freshman Cody Keith could put some pressure on the trio ahead of him.

“I think all four of them have chances to become special quarterbacks, and that’s not a generalization,” McNeill said. “They all have the understanding of the offense, they all understand the distribution and delivery in the passing game, but they also understand the mental approach that’s needed to be able to audible us into the right play. I’m looking forward to that battle.”

One of the biggest assets in the growth of his passers, according to McNeill, is that they all took cues from Davis in terms of work ethic.

**Subtractions**

There were three unplanned offseason departures, as senior linebacker Marke Powell, senior defensive back Rahkeem Morgan and junior wide receiver Mike Price decided to part company with the Pirates.

“Sometimes kids choose other avenues,” McNeill said. “You never want to lose kids, but you wish them well and the thing that helps now is that we’ve tried to make sure we’ve recruited well, and we have guys sitting and ready on go.”

Additionally, it was unclear as of Sunday night whether receiver/fullback Zico Pasut would begin camp today with the Pirates in the wake of a DUI arrest early last week. No disciplinary measures have been announced.

**JUCO gems?**

Junior college transfers have been very good to McNeill so far at ECU, and some new JUCO faces will be in the crowd today, including defensive backs Godfrey Thompson and Adonis Armstrong.

Also, UNC transfer running back Hunter Furr will get his first official reps with the team.

“We try to specialize when it comes to the junior college ranks, and we’ve been fortunate to have good kids,” McNeill said.

**The breakdown**
The following players, by position, are expected in camp today:

Quarterbacks: Carden, Johnson, Keith and Wornick. Walk on: Jonathan Weymann.


Wide Receivers: Dayon Arrington, Andrew Bodenheimer, Antonio Cannon, Justin Hardy, Derrick Harris, Justin Jones, Gray Mazzone, Pasut, Torian Richardson, Donte Sumpter, Brandon Weymann and Reese Wiggins.
Injured: Danny Webster. Walk ons: Calvin Easter, Kevin Parks and Cedric Thompson.


Defensive Tackles: Michael Brooks, Will Foxx, Terrell Stanley, Leroy Vick and Terry Williams.


Contact Nathan Summers at nsummers@reflector.com or 252-329-9595.
By Richard Vedder

ATHENS, Ohio Besides climbing walls and fancy housing, any college or university wanting to compete in the academic arms race for students must offer attractive study abroad programs.

Originally a province of foreign language students or a modest number of affluent young people, study abroad is viewed as a necessity, and a number of schools require some education abroad.

For example, the business school at my midquality state university (Ohio University) pressures all its students to have some foreign exposure, although some programs are short – a few weeks in length.

Falling transportation and communication costs have greatly expanded international economic and cultural interchanges, and it’s hard to be against young Americans’ exposure to non-U.S. culture. My wife and I have led student educational tours or study programs in Europe frequently over the last 44 years.

Yet some reasons for student foreign travel are questionable on both educational and economic grounds. Study abroad is a marketing tool and in some cases a cash cow for universities. Educationally, the programs have
long had a reputation for offering little intellectual content or academic rigor, and minimal language or cultural immersion.

American schools occasionally make arrangements with an institution in a foreign country, collect the American tuition fee, and sometimes additional state government subsidies. For all the talk about promoting global awareness and cultural diversity, these programs are arguably a financial racket. They free up space in dorms and classrooms on the home campus for other “customers” and are a marketing tool to convince parents (sometimes incorrectly) that their children are getting a superior education.

Unfortunately, the pressures to study abroad are only increasing. Employers are starting to expect that experience to appear on resumes of college graduates. It’s part of the same credential creep that saw employers put “college degree preferred” on postings for low-skill positions – bartenders, janitors and the like – to help winnow down the applicant pool to manageable size. Jobs that might have required a basic degree – as in occupational therapy, or elementary school teaching – prefer or may demand a master’s degree, or even doctorates.

On the whole, we are raising the cost of becoming eligible for managerial, technical and professional jobs that historically have gone to college graduates. Even within the spectrum of college graduates, relatively poor or middle income graduates of state schools increasingly compete for mediocre jobs, while those attending elite private schools or who augment their education with expensive overseas programs are given an advantage that on objective grounds based on the student’s inherent talents and past performance are not truly justified.

In cases where language proficiency plays a big role, and where foreign study is a serious exercise in cultural and language immersion, the study abroad experience has some justification, and a number of colleges are trying to improve their programs. Yet government data show that fewer than 6 percent of study abroad students major in foreign languages, and that slightly over 20 percent of them come from each of three areas: business, social sciences, or non-foreign-language humanities or fine arts majors.

But I think the major reason for the boom in study abroad enrollments is simple: College today is as much a socialization experience as a learning one, and relatively affluent students, and even less affluent ones who pile up big student debts, spend six months or a year in cool foreign locales, away from prying parents or university officials, having lots of fun. If it’s possible to judge from the drinking habits of many students I’ve seen on short
overseas tours, this entertainment dimension of higher education can trump learning.

Surveys show the average college student spends less than 30 hours weekly on academic pursuits, often for 30 weeks a year. My observation is that this problem is magnified when relatively lightly worked students are put in a foreign country with limited pressures to perform academically.

Should students be able to borrow money from the U.S. government, when the government in turn borrows some of the funds from Chinese and other investors to finance these junkets overseas? Federal student debt now exceeds a trillion dollars, so the padding of these numbers by foreign study programs may have broader macroeconomic implications on already stressed federal finances.

At a time when we are straining to meet our entitlement and other obligations, we should scrutinize the efficacy of these programs. Where are the accrediting agencies – are they certifying these programs achieve true academic goals?

If accreditation boards will not assume responsibility, how about having an organization like the Educational Testing Service or ACT give standardized country-specific examinations to returning students, measuring their knowledge of the country visited, with significant financial consequences to the school if students show little or no learning?

The time has come to analyze this use of educational resources dispassionately, using honest assessments of the costs and benefits.

Bloomberg News

Richard Vedder directs the Center for College Affordability and Productivity and teaches economics at Ohio University. The opinions expressed are his own.
Rutgers Verdict Repudiates Notion of Youth as Defense

By WILLIAM GLABERSON

He was just a jerky kid.

That was the defense his lawyer made for Dharun Ravi, who used a webcam to spy on his gay freshman roommate before the roommate killed himself by jumping off the George Washington Bridge.

But the jerky-kid defense failed miserably on Friday with the conviction of Mr. Ravi in a New Jersey court on bias intimidation, invasion of privacy and other charges. Lawyers said the conviction gave new potential to hate-crime prosecutions for cyberbullying and digital spying largely because it seemed to repudiate the notion that youth was a defense.

“The debate in this case was, Was this a stupid college prank or criminal intimidation? And the jury gave a clear answer,” said Suzanne B. Goldberg, a gender law expert at Columbia Law School.

Lawyers said the verdict would encourage other hate-crime prosecutions involving young defendants. Reluctance by some prosecutors in the past had
suggested that there were few legal consequences to online prying or to social-media irreverence that became abusive.

The failure of the jerky-kid defense is likely to change the legal landscape by showing that jurors can conclude that young people who are sophisticated enough to spy on, insult and embarrass one another electronically are sophisticated enough to be held accountable.

The verdict showed that the notion of innocent youth as a shield to culpability might not hold as much sway as it once did in court, Marcellus A. McRae, a former federal prosecutor, said. “Jurors will say their kid or kids they know are more sophisticated than that,” Mr. McRae said. “For jurors, it doesn’t pass the common-sense test.”

Mr. Ravi had seemed so confident that his defense would work that he turned down a plea offer that would have required community service. He now faces a possible prison term and could be deported to India, where he was born.

Lawyers said the trial in New Brunswick had drawn such intense attention that it would shape future cases because youthful indiscretion had always been an appealing defense. “It had a shot of having enough jurors say, ‘This is a jerky kid, and, look, they’ve thrown the book at him,’ ” said Marc R. Poirier, a professor at Seton Hall University School of Law in Newark. “It was a roll of the dice, and it didn’t work.”

The facts of the case, which began in a Rutgers University dorm room in 2010, were never in much dispute. It was just the interpretation that each side saw differently.

Mr. Ravi spied by computer on his roommate, Tyler Clementi, and gossiped about him on Twitter, the jury heard. Mr. Clementi, an awkward violinist, had been “making out with a dude,” Mr. Ravi wrote on Twitter. Later, Mr. Ravi, an ultimate Frisbee player who seemed to thrive on attention, invited people to watch when Mr. Clementi again had a male visitor.

The prosecutor, Julia McClure, saw Mr. Ravi’s actions as far more than mischievous. She said they were “mean-spirited, they were malicious, they were criminal.”

But Steven Altman, Mr. Ravi’s lawyer, called him “an 18-year-old boy, a kid,” a college freshman who was not biased against his gay roommate but “didn’t know how to deal with it.”
Ms. Goldberg, the Columbia law professor, said the prosecution had posed an important challenge to the sense in many schools and colleges that youthfulness provided a kind of immunity for activities and speech in the online world. She said many students seemed to believe the ideas put forth by Mr. Ravi’s defense, that being a kid meant there were few limits to how offensive they might be when using digital devices.

“This reinforces that social media can cause great harm and that its misuse can be criminal,” Ms. Goldberg said. She said she expected that the lessons of the courtroom conviction would probably be studied broadly, including in discussions at college orientations across the country.

Defense lawyers said that once Mr. Ravi had decided to take his chances at a trial rather than pleading guilty, there were few options for the defense. The 15-count indictment and Mr. Ravi’s own videotaped acknowledgment of many of the facts gave the prosecutors a powerful arsenal.

The charges took note of the damaging fact that Mr. Ravi had tried to change electronic messages he had sent and seemed to encourage a witness to change her account.

A live witness in the courtroom, Mr. Clementi’s sexual partner, a 30-year-old man identified only as M. B., described the eerie feeling of being watched by the camera on Mr. Ravi’s computer.

And though Mr. Ravi was not charged with the death, there was the ever-present fact of Mr. Clementi’s suicide. The jury heard that a day before Mr. Clementi killed himself, Mr. Ravi sent a message to a friend: “Keep the gays away.”

Faced with that kind of case, it was logical to argue that there was a thin line between a bias crime and an immature college prank, Joseph Tacopina, a New York defense lawyer, said. “What other defense could it have been?” he said.

But after Friday’s conviction, some lawyers said, the risks of rejecting a plea bargain and arguing the jerky-kid defense were obvious. In a similar case in the future, said Ronald L. Kuby, a New York defense lawyer, he would remember what happened to Mr. Ravi.

His advice to a client, he said, would be: “‘Remember what happened to Ravi. Take the plea.’”
College accountability: a closer look

By Daniel de Vise

The accountability movement has arrived in higher education.

Hundreds of colleges are testing freshmen and seniors to measure learning from enrollment to graduation. More than 100 schools have voluntarily published results from new learning assessments, offering parents, prospective students and government regulators a gauge of the value they add to the acquisition of knowledge and critical thinking skills.

An article in Thursday’s Washington Post recounted the experience of the University of Texas with the Collegiate Learning Assessment over the past eight years. UT students score well on the test, but seniors don’t perform much better than freshmen. University leaders have used the findings and other research data to drive improvements in classroom teaching.

The University of Texas system is one of a few higher-education entities that require member institutions to give such tests. Other colleges that give the CLA and two similar tests, the Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency and Proficiency Profile, do so on a mostly voluntary basis. Results are not generally public.

The assessment movement began as a means for institutions to measure the critical thinking and communication skills of their students, as a purely internal exercise.

But the conversation shifted dramatically last year, when sociologists Richard Arum and Josipa Roksa used CLA results to critique American higher education. After giving the test at 24 public and private colleges, they concluded that only 36 percent of students showed significant learning gains between freshman and senior years.

College leaders are divided on the merits of the assessments. Many schools have embraced the tests as one tool among several to measure student outcomes.
“I thought it was a revelation,” said Jeff Abernathy, president of Alma College, a liberal arts school in Michigan. “It’s hard data about student learning across all the disciplines of higher education.”

Several years ago, the Council of Independent Colleges organized a consortium of private schools to administer the CLA and share findings. At its peak, 57 institutions participated, said Richard Ekman, the council’s president. But the initiative is now concluded.

Few private colleges have revealed their assessment results to the public. But 144 public universities have posted scores on a site called College Portraits under the Voluntary System of Accountability, launched in 2007 by two public university associations.

The voluntary initiative came partly in response to heightened pressure from the federal government and the public to measure student progress at universities.

The College Portraits site has its flaws. Most colleges offer only minimal performance data, with little context on what the scores mean. Unease with the CLA has only heightened since publication of the “Adrift” book, and fewer than half of the 319 participants in the Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA) have made good on the pledge to post scores by year’s end.

Case in point: Frostburg State University is the only college in Maryland, Virginia or the District to publish test scores on the site.

William “Brit” Kirwan, Maryland state university chancellor, said he has doubts that the VSA-endorsed tests are the right ones to measure student learning. If the right test came along, he said, “I would be pretty insistent that everyone in the University of Maryland system use it.”

Here is a sampling of notable public universities that have posted learning assessment results for their students:

  - Auburn University
  - Binghamton University
  - California State University, Long Beach
  - Clemson University
  - Florida State University
  - Frostburg State University
  - Indiana University of Pennsylvania
Louisiana State University
Miami University (Ohio)
Michigan State University
Mississippi State University
Montana State University
State University of New York College at Buffalo
Temple University
University of Cincinnati
University of Colorado Boulder
University of Georgia
University of Kentucky
University of Louisville
University of Minnesota
University of Montana
University of Nebraska-Lincoln
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
University of North Dakota
University of Texas at Austin
University of Texas at Dallas
West Virginia University
Howard faculty questions administrator bonuses, budget cuts

By Jenna Johnson

When Howard University President Sidney A. Ribeau announced a series of budget cuts last month, the faculty senate fired back with a three-page letter that questioned the “outrageous bonuses” that a few administrators received in 2010 that totaled more than $1 million.

Faculty representatives wrote in a letter dated Feb. 16 to Ribeau and the board of trustees that the bonuses demonstrate “blatant disregard for the University when our students and their families are struggling to pay tuition increases.”

The one-time payments were made to three top administrators who agreed to stay at the historically black university for three years during a change of presidents, according to a statement from Howard. The retention agreements were signed in 2007 and matured on June 30, 2010. The financial incentives were needed “to ensure the continuity of senior leadership in critical areas and mitigate any potential risks for the University,” according to the statement.

The amount of the payments was reported in Howard’s 2010 tax filing, which is a public record: Senior vice president Artis G. Hampshire-Cowan, who was the interim president, received $302,820 on top of her salary of $213,552. Senior vice president for strategy and government affairs Hassan Minor received $522,184 on top of his salary of $264,255. Chief legal officer Norma Leftwich received $224,050 on top of her salary of $252,930.

Howard is a private university located in the District that has more than 10,000 undergraduate and graduate students. It is one of the most well-known historically black universities.

In recent years, Howard has scaled back or cut a number of academic programs that were graduating too few students, duplicated the offerings of other departments or did not fit the university’s mission.
Earlier this year, university officials announced that undergraduate tuition would increase by 12 percent or $2,300 for the 2012-12 academic year, bringing the total price to $21,450. Graduate tuition increased by 15 percent to a total of $29,090.

In mid-February, Ribeau announced that the university overspent during the first half of the fiscal year and needed to tighten its budget for the rest of the year by deferring some campus facilities projects, reviewing its business contracts and closing campus during spring break this week, among other things. Ribeau also warned faculty and staff that they might be furloughed.

“While these actions are necessary, I am aware that they will not be easy,” Ribeau wrote in a letter to the campus on Feb. 13. “The sacrifices that we are making are essential to our institutional renewal and continued success.