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Dorm-room sexual assault reported

Tuesday, March 31, 2009

An East Carolina University student told police a sexual assault took place in her dorm room in Clement Hall, according to a posting on the ECU Alert Web site.

The student told authorities that three men between 17-19 had stolen personal items from her room, according to the alert. After further investigation, it was reported a sexual assault took place while the suspects were in the room.

The incident occurred sometime prior to the initial report, which was made at 10 a.m. on Saturday, the alert said. The men were described as white males.

The victim told police she met the men the previous night at Charles Boulevard and 11th Street when they stopped to ask for directions to the Tar River area.

The suspects then offered to provide her a ride home, the alert said.

After riding around for a while, they went with the victim to her room where the assault took place, the alert said.

The men left the building prior to the victim waking up, taking several personal items of the victim with them.

The suspect vehicle was reported to be a green early 1990s model Chevrolet Camaro.

Anyone with any information is asked to contact the ECU Police Department at 328-6787 or the ECU Police Crime Tip Line at 737-8477.

Police reminded students to walk in groups and let others know where they are going and who they will be going with and what time they will return whenever possible.

The also asked students to be careful when meeting new people.

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Health workforce reform also vital to quality of care

Reforming the way we pay for and deliver health care is a top priority in Washington and will be the topic of discussion Tuesday in Greensboro at the White House regional health care forum.

While we look for ways to reduce costs, improve quality and provide insurance coverage, we also need to take a close look at how our nation makes and implements health workforce policies, or the promise of health care reform will be undermined.

As a member of the Association of Academic Health Centers, East Carolina University supports the AAHC recommendations presented March 11 to the Senate Finance Committee.

In short, a reformed health system must have sufficient numbers and types of health professionals who can provide the quality care needed to improve the health of patients and the public. Our nation needs a collaborative, multi-stakeholder planning body to develop and implement a comprehensive and coordinated national health workforce policy.

In many areas of the country and across North Carolina, we lack access to primary care and have shortages in many health professions. With a health workforce policy, we will be better able to rectify the maldistribution and outright shortages of health care professionals.

Here are some examples of the need for a comprehensive policy:

According to the N.C. Institute of Medicine, to keep the same ratio of physicians to population we have now for the next 20 years, we will need to increase the output of doctors from our state’s medical schools by 20 percent.

In rural areas of the state, we have only three dentists for every 10,000 people, half the national ratio. Four counties, all in the northeast, have no dentists: Gates, Tyrrell, Hyde and Camden.

Allied health professions are projected to add 28,600 jobs in North Carolina between 2000 and 2010 — a 36 percent increase. Eight of the 10 fastest-growing occupations across all industries are allied health occupations.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that jobs for registered nurses nationwide will grow by 23 percent, or 587,000 positions, through 2016.

With plans for a new dental school and a small increase in our medical school enrollment, along with increasing access to our allied health and nursing programs through distance education, ECU and our sister state universities are working to address the growing need for health professionals.

But due to the state budget crisis, major expansion of the medical schools in Greenville and Chapel Hill has been put on hold indefinitely while the state searches to fill budget gaps, and faculty recruitment gets harder as salary dollars grow scarcer.

Other efforts could help. For example, streamlining physician and dentist credentialing could make it easier for them to move from states that have an oversupply to states where they are needed. Having national scope-of-practice standards for nurse practitioners, physician assistants and pharmacists could help add primary care services in underserved areas.

As employment in many occupations falls in the economic downturn, health care is still one industry where employment is strong. The challenge facing us is to ensure that the optimal mix of health care providers is available to meet this growing demand.

ECU is doing its part to provide the state with a strong health care workforce. Now, to help these health care professionals do their jobs where we need them, all states and our nation must recognize the inadequacy of piecemeal responses and the inability of fragmented, inconsistent, uncoordinated federal, state and private policy making to address the enormous and growing challenges we face in providing a health care workforce.

Phyllis Horns, R.N., DSN, is interim vice chancellor for health sciences at East Carolina University.
Duke picks Diaz novel for summer reading

Comment on this story

DURHAM - "The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao" by Junot Diaz has been selected as the summer reading for Duke University's incoming class of 2013.

Diaz spent more than a decade writing this Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, which tells the story of Oscar Wao, his unusual family and his epic journey across international and cultural boundaries.

"There are certain qualities in the characters and experiences in this book that almost any Duke student can relate to," said Meg Foran, a student member of the selection committee. "You might be struggling with weight, or feel unpopular, or have love troubles, or you might be from a foreign country. Oscar's experiences are the experiences we all go through."

Carol Apollonio, associate professor of the practice of Russian and co-leader of the selection committee, loves the book for its artistry and its readability.

"I think it's the best fictional work we've chosen. Diaz is a master of words," Apollonio said. "At the same time, the story is engaging and very accessible. It's good food for the mind."

Summer reading for incoming students is intended to create a common touch-point for introductions, social and intellectual interactions, and community-building.

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Cuts hurt education quality

Opposing view: Don't blame faculty salaries for the rising cost of college.

By Gary Rhodeas

Budget-cutting measures being pursued in higher education are often based on faulty premises and insufficient information. These measures too quickly cut to institutions' educational core, unnecessarily compromising quality and productivity.

To many people, it makes sense that faculty should be major targets for savings. They share the widespread belief that higher education has high labor costs and faculty are the principal labor cost driver. They reason that to achieve major savings, you address the major costs.

But the reasoning is faulty, based on an inaccurate view of higher education costs and faculty.Tenure-track faculty often represent less than a quarter of institutional employees (and much less in community colleges) and of total institutional costs. Moreover, faculty costs have not been rising significantly. What has been rising is the use of less costly contingent faculty. Finally, faculty salary increases have been well below tuition increases and salary increases for senior administrators. The growing costs in the academy lie outside the academic core.

Current choices are frequently being made without careful analysis and deliberation. Faculty and other campus community members often have insufficient access to information about finances, even when administrators call for extraordinary measures given financial duress. Often, there is insufficient consultation with faculty or other constituencies, and insufficient consideration of savings options provided by the very professionals who understand best how the institution works and who can identify strategies for achieving efficiencies without undercutting quality and productivity.

Finally, current measures too often cut to the core not of institutional costs, but of educational quality and productivity. Faculty are not just labor costs; they are intellectual capital. They generate value for the organization and society. They do not just cost money, they produce revenue.

The common aims of trimming waste or unneeded academic programs ignore the realities: We are hitting vital organs while spending on matters peripheral to the core educational function. Our objective should be to pursue measures that reduce costs and protect our core, not unduly compromising the quality, production and revenue generation to which faculty are central.

Gary Rhodeas is general secretary of the American Association of University Professors.
Today's debate: Cost of education

Colleges duck tough cuts, keep hiking pay and tuition

Our view:
In hard times, administrators and professors need to share the pain.

Talk about stepping up to the plate at a time of crisis. Faced with a $10.6 million state funding cut, the president of the University of Northern Iowa has, among other cuts, proposed axing its 103-year-old Division I baseball team. The move has drawn criticism, but it would save $400,000 a year that could otherwise have come out of parents' and students' pockets.

In another unpopular move, the Louisiana State University system might deal with a $101 million state funding shortfall in part by raising professors' teaching hours and class sizes, and by furloughing staff. And Clemson University, which has seen $40 million in South Carolina budget cuts this year, has halted a variety of construction projects, saving $15 million.

Such reductions to athletics, academics and construction constitute acts of uncommon bravery in higher education. Too many other schools are responding to the economic crisis with a business-as-usual approach that combines half-hearted belt-tightening with over-reliance on tuition increases.

Until recently, heavy competition among applicants, and plentiful loans and home equity money, gave colleges little incentive to control spending. Why make tough choices if you can pass costs along to parents and students? That game is over, but some schools appear slow to realize it.

The University of Massachusetts, for example, plans to raise tuition and fees 15%, all the while upping next fall's salaries for unionized professors and staff. The State University of New York is hiking tuition 14% and plans to raise union salaries.

Private-college tuitions are rising as well, and from a much higher base: Princeton's tuition is going up 3.1%, to $35,340; Northwestern's is rising 3.6% to $38,079. Both schools plan to continue raising salaries.

The tuition hikes, even when leavened with promised increases in financial aid for needy students, wouldn't be so galling if tuition hadn't already soared in the past decade — up 99% at private schools and 72% at public ones, according to the College Board. The money feeds salaries: The average admissions director earns $93,953 today, or 57% more than a decade ago, and faculty pay has risen almost 35%, to $90,055. Average household incomes rose 31% during the same period.

So where to cut? Administrative payrolls are an obvious target. Sports programs and lavish fitness centers are another. Nor should faculty workloads be sacrosanct, yet when the University of Florida proposed requiring that some professors teach two classes per semester instead of one, the school got taken to arbitration.

That's bellyaching. Full-time professors' classroom time has declined nationwide. Social scientists spent only 8.9 hours per week in class, 42 fewer minutes than in 1998, according to a Department of Education survey that ended in 2003. The extra time didn't necessarily go to thinking big thoughts, either: On average, professors wrote a quarter of a book and 1.6 articles per year in 2003, making their speed back in 1998 — half a book and 3.1 articles — look hypersonic.

A layoff-stressed society isn't going to tolerate professors and administrators who resist pay freezes and greater workloads. Times are tough all around. Fairness dictates that the ivory tower dwellers sweat as much as those toiling on the ground to pay their freight.
Florida Programs Submit 10% Budget Cut Plans
March 27, 2009 05:44 PM ET | Alison Go | Permanent Link |

The various schools within the University of Florida have begun submitting their worst-case scenario proposals for across-the-board 10 percent budget cuts, the Florida Alligator reports. These proposals will be reviewed by the public and decided upon by the Board or Regents. The school is not planning a universitywide 10 percent cut, but it will use the proposals to determine which schools and departments will be cut to what extent. A rundown of some of the potential damage:

**Nursing:** The undergraduate program will likely be spared and there are no planned layoffs so far, but nursing could see reduced enrollment if the school does not bring back the same number of temporary faculty. The program would cut $813,000 from its budget, $609,000 of which would come by not filling eight vacant positions (seven professorships and one staff position). The program also would cut five temporary faculty members and an unknown number of student assistant positions.

**Business:** To help achieve a $2.3 million cut, the business program would lay off five faculty members, saving around $407,000. The school also plans to recoup $1.4 million via donations and revenue from online degree programs.

**Medicine:** The College of Medicine might be forced to cut $3.8 million, forcing it to lay off seven people and leave 28 positions vacant. The latter move would save about $2 million.

**Design, Construction, and Planning:** Its proposal would cut about $985,000 and would eliminate two vacant positions and involve layoffs of about six temporary faculty members and four faculty members who would not be eligible for tenure. Cuts would be concentrated mostly in the dean’s office.

**Journalism:** To help cut $909,000, the proposal suggests eight layoffs and would leave
empty two vacant positions. The college's Documentary Institute and the master's degree program in documentary film would be eliminated.

**Dentistry:** The program would have to cut $1.7 million, although a spokeswoman says much of that could be made up via clinical revenues and by attracting more donations and grants. The school does not plan to reduce enrollment and has no layoff plans.

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March 31, 2009

Paying in Full as the Ticket Into Colleges

By KATE ZERNIKE

In the bid for a fat envelope this year, it may help, more than usual, to have a fat wallet.

Facing fallen endowments and needier students, many colleges are looking more favorably on wealthier applicants as they make their admissions decisions this year.

Institutions that have pledged to admit students regardless of need are finding ways to increase the number of those who pay the full cost in ways that allow the colleges to maintain the claim of being need-blind — taking more students from the transfer or waiting lists, for instance, or admitting more foreign students who pay full tuition.

Private colleges that acknowledge taking financial status into account say they are even more aware of that factor this year.

“If you are a student of means or ability, or both, there has never been a better year,” said Robert A. Sevier, an enrollment consultant to colleges.

The trend does not mean colleges are cutting their financial aid budgets. In fact, most have increased those budgets this year, protecting that money even as they cut administrative salaries or require faculty members to take furloughs. But with more students applying for aid, and with those who need aid often needing more, institutions say they have to be mindful of how many scholarship students they can afford.

Colleges say they are not backing away from their desire to serve less affluent students; if anything, they say, taking more students who can afford to pay full price or close to it allows them to better afford those who cannot. But they say the inevitable result is that needier students will be shifted down to the less expensive and less prestigious institutions.

“There’s going to be a cascading of talented lower-income kids down the social hierarchy of American higher education, and some cascading up of affluent kids,” said Morton Owen Schapiro, the president of Williams College and an economist who studies higher education.

And colleges acknowledge that giving more seats to higher-paying students often means trading off their goals to be more socioeconomically diverse.

Some admissions officers and college advisers say richer parents are taking note of the climate, calculating that if they do not apply for aid, their children stand a better chance of getting in.

“They think their kids will have more options,” said Diane Geller, a college counselor in private practice in Los
Angeles and president of the Independent Educational Consultants Association, a nonprofit group that represents private academic counselors. "And anecdotally, it would seem that that's the case."

"I do think the colleges want to give aid where they can," Ms. Geller added. "But we all know the economic realities."

Only the wealthiest institutions traditionally have been need-blind, admitting students without regard to what they can pay. But the definition has often been fuzzy, and this year, it may be more so.

Bowdoin College announced plans to expand by 50 students over the next five years, which Scott Meiklejohn, the interim dean of admissions, said would allow it to accept more transfer and waiting-list students, whose applications are not considered on a need-blind basis.

Brandeis University, which is need-blind except for international, wait-listed and transfer students, accepted 10 percent more international students than usual this year, and Gil Villanueva, the dean of admissions, said he expected that the university would take more wait-listed and transfer students, as well.

Middlebury, which is need-blind and pledges to meet students' full financial needs, will require students on financial aid to contribute more of their work earnings. It has cut its financial aid budget for international students. It is not need-blind for those on the waiting list or for transfers, but the college has not yet determined how many of those students it will take.

"We consider being need-blind and meeting full demonstrated need one of our basic operating principles," said Patrick J. Norton, the college's treasurer. "That is one of the last things that we would consider going away from."

Those colleges that are need-aware typically admit part of the class without regard to ability to pay, but begin to consider it when the financial aid budget runs thin.

This year, many of these colleges say they are more inclined to accept students who do not apply for aid, or whom they judge to be less needy based on other factors, like ZIP code or parents' background.

"We're only human," said Steven Syverson, the dean of admissions and financial aid at Lawrence University in Wisconsin. "They shine a little brighter."

The advantage is not across the board; it goes to the students at the margins, the ones who would probably be "maybes" when the admissions committee considered applications. Those students are less likely to get in if they are financially needy and more likely to get in if they can afford to pay.

"This is not the majority of the class, or even the preponderance," said Rob Reddy, the director of financial aid at Oberlin College. "But it's a factor."

Even though there is more financial aid this year, more students are vying for it, so resources do not stretch as far.

"It's not unusual to see families earning $200,000 applying for aid, especially if they have a couple of kids going to college," said Rodney M. Oto, director of student financial services at Carleton College.

And some campuses are shifting more financial aid to merit aid, money that goes to highly qualified but not
necessarily needy students; if tuition is $50,000 and the college offers an award of $7,000, it still gets $43,000, where a needier student might net the college nothing.

Some say it is time to reconsider the cachet that accompanies a boast of being need-blind.

“You can’t say someone should be need-blind unless they have the resources to fund it,” said Dr. Schapiro, at Williams. “It sounds immoral to replace really talented low-income kids with less talented richer kids, but unless you’re a Williams or an Amherst, the alternative is the quality of the education declines for everyone.”

At Carleton, which is need-aware, Mr. Oto said, “I do think we’d all be better off if we were honest with kids that you may not get in because you need assistance, or you need too much assistance.”

Mr. Oto’s fear — shared by many other admissions officers — is that being honest will scare off students who might, in fact, qualify for financial aid.

On the other end, Mr. Oto said: “I suspect it may be a strategy for some folks. We do get the sense that people are getting advice that if you can pay, then you should shoot for the highly selective school.”

Many admissions counselors ascribe the increase in early decision applicants this year to wealthier students’ seeking an advantage. Early decision requires students to attend if they are accepted, so those students give up the ability to negotiate financial aid, and tend to be wealthier.

Those families in a position to afford the cost of attendance capitalized on that,” said Mr. Villanueva, at Brandeis.

Many colleges, in turn, accepted more students early decision, as a way of securing students in December.

Some families have come back and tried to renegotiate aid after an offer of admission, but colleges caution that there is no guarantee: they have accommodated some requests, but told other students that their offers are firm, and in some cases, released students from early decision agreements rather than give a larger scholarship.

If endowments do not rebound, some colleges say that it will be harder to maintain commitments to the needier in coming years.

Tufts says it is reading applications on a need-blind basis this year, but may not be able to continue doing so.

William D. Adams, the president of Colby College, told students in a letter that the college would continue its new policy of replacing loans with grants this year, but that he could not guarantee that future budgets would be able to afford to do so. Grinnell College in Iowa also intends to meet a promise this year that no student graduates with more than $2,000 in loans, but officials say it may be hard to sustain that.

“These are things you’ll have to pry from our hands,” said Seth Allen, Grinnell’s dean of admission and financial aid. “At the same time, you have to be realistic.”
Colleges need to feel at home in the world

As our economy stuggles, most colleges and universities are considering streamlining or eliminating programs in order to manage fiscal realities.

One thing that must not be cut is the growing effort to globalize campuses. This needn't mean only study abroad, but also opportunities to integrate global studies into the curriculum by placing international content squarely into the context of basic classes. How?

The authors studied in English classes can include writers from Africa, Latin America and Asia. International affairs are more balanced when we consider them from the perspective of a developing country.

More than 240,000 U.S. students went abroad in the 2006-07 academic year. They were mostly juniors, mostly female and mostly white. Only 3.8% of those who traveled abroad were African American. Affordability is one of the reasons that so few blacks studied abroad, even though federal financial aid programs are available to pay for the reasonable costs of study abroad, including travel. Less than 10% of the students at my historically black college for women have studied abroad. Our goal is to have half of our student body gain some global experience by 2012, which would still lag far behind many private universities.

But students don't have to travel abroad to learn about other cultures. Local immigrant communities can provide learning experiences about the world outside the USA. In Greensboro, there are both Hmong and Mexican immigrant communities with rich cultures. Learning about the experiences of the people in these communities can enrich a curriculum and help students feel at home in the world.

Global studies are important for reminding us that we are not one of the world's nations. We often portray ourselves as a superpower, but our influence is waning. China's economic clout is growing, India's technological capability challenges our own, and other countries are gaining influence. Because commerce is global, it is important for students to enter the workforce with some global familiarity.

The economy may force us to cut budgets, but we will have to increase our creativity to carve a permanent place out for global studies in the college curriculum, whether that means flying halfway around the world, or looking for world experiences close to home.

Julianne Malveaux is the president of Bennett College for Women in Greensboro, N.C.