Sierra Plato, of AMEXCAN, leads a group of peaceful protesters in a march to the ECU campus from St. Paul's Episcopal Church in downtown Greenville. The group, comprised of AMEXCAN, the Episcopal Peace Fellowship, the Greenville Human Relations Commission, Witness for Peace Southeast, and parishioners from St. Pauls, opposes more restrictive immigration reform and immigrant detentions. (Rob Taylor/The Daily Reflector)

**Events focus on immigrants' rights**

By Michael Abramowitz  
The Daily Reflector  
Tuesday, April 3, 2012

Moral justice and human decency require changes in U.S. immigration policy, said participants in a Holy Week march and rally Monday at East Carolina University to raise awareness of the plight of Latino immigrants. About a dozen marchers participated in the Greenville leg of the 100-mile “Pilgrimage for Justice and Peace” organized by Witness for Peace Southeast. They addressed about 40 people who joined the rally near Wright Annex on the ECU campus.

“We have to send a strong message that immigration affects us all in important ways,” said Sierra Plato, a sociology and Hispanic studies major at ECU and intern working for the Association of Mexicans in North Carolina, one of the event’s local sponsors, along with St. Paul’s Episcopal Church.

“This message is about human rights and justice. Hispanics in North Carolina are racially profiled and stopped by law enforcement officers here. Next thing, (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement) officers take over, and they’re deported,” Plato said.

The majority of Latino immigrants want to follow U.S. laws and prescribed procedures and come to America to live and work, Plato said, but are faced with unrealistic barriers that other generations of immigrants did not have to follow.
The process can require up to 10 years of waiting before a person or family is allowed to enter the United States. The desire to come here is so strong, though, that people tend to take matters into their own hands, she said.

“The question we are faced with is legal right and wrong versus moral right and wrong,” she said. “I try to stay objective about the law, but morally, people should be able to seek a better way of life when their intentions are good. Yes, there is a system in place for doing things, but there are lots of gray areas there.”

The immigration advocate pointed out many of the hazards that illegal immigrants face and tolerate just for the opportunity to live and work in America, including exploitation by employers, human trafficking and even the threat of death at the hands of drug dealers and illicit border transporters.

Once established in American jobs, whether farming, agricultural processing, hospitality or construction, illegal immigrants must work for much lower wages than Americans and receive no health or other benefits for themselves and their families, she said.

All too often, students are unsympathetic about the immigrant cause because they are too involved in other things and then just move on, Plato said.

“Of course the laws won’t just change just because of this rally, but we can make young people aware and get them involved in thinking about it. You have to plant the seeds in order for something to grow. We are the future leaders and the ones who will make the laws change, so we have to understand what’s going on,” the student leader said.

The organizations participating in the rally and march also tied the immigrant cause to the Feb. 26 shooting death of 17-year-old Trayvon Martin in Sanford, Fla. by local neighborhood watch volunteer George Zimmerman, identified by law enforcement authorities as Hispanic.

“Just as Hispanic immigrants are all too often the victims of racial profiling, we believe Trayvon Martin also was a profiling victim because of his race and the way he was dressed,” Plato said.

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Employee downsizing at North Carolina logging operations tied to the depressed housing market should see a reversal based on emerging markets, the impetus for a new job training partnership between Pitt Community College and a logging association, officials said.

The 16-week continuing education forestry equipment operator course is a pilot project that could be expanded to other community colleges.

“The hope is if we can get it off the ground here that it will be taken to other community colleges in North Carolina,” Ashley Sierant, PCC’s occupation extension coordinator, said.

Students will train in a mobile classroom and receive hands-on training on-site at smaller logging operations in the area. The registration deadline is Friday. Classes start April 16.

A maximum of 25 students can be enrolled. Those students are guaranteed a job interview near where they live and job placement assistance, said Doug Duncan, executive director of the Cary-based N.C. Association of Professional Loggers.

Bobby Goodson, an association board member who has become well-known as a star of the Discovery Channel’s “Swamp Logger,” will make a guest teaching appearance.

Entry-level logging jobs have an annual salary range statewide between $28,000 and $34,000, depending on skill level, he said. More skilled, seasoned workers can reach an annual salary of up to $70,000.

And he said jobs are headed to Pitt County.

“We’re seeing that as new wood markets open up, we’re going to have loggers that are interested in increasing their production,” he said. “And historically they downsized their crews because of the depressed housing market (as) one factor, but we’re anticipating a turn in the economy, particularly with new biomass markets.

“We’ve actually got wood chips being exported to Turkey. We have wood pellets that are now being exported from North Carolina to the United States.
Kingdom (Great Britain and Northern Ireland). And also logs are being transported to China and Southeast Asia.”

The wood chips are used in the manufacture of medium-grade particleboard for furniture. The wood pellets are manufactured from wood limbs that aren’t otherwise usable and used as a biomass product in the United Kingdom, providing a renewable energy source to replace coal. Pine logs provide timber for building construction.

Duncan said statistics show that rural North Carolina has high unemployment. The program could put some of the unemployed back to work.

Sierant said each student who completes the class will be reimbursed for the $181.25 tuition cost from a one-year $50,000 N.C. Rural Economic Development Center grant, with priority given to unemployed and underemployed students.

The grant was leveraged by PCC and its partners in the program. The North Carolina Agromedicine Institute, of which East Carolina University is a partner, contributed $75,000 in Golden LEAF Foundation funds.

Robin Tutor, interim director of the institute, said that 40 percent of the injuries and fatalities in the logging industry occur during a worker’s first three months on the job.

“Our interest is in health and safety,” she said. “So we want to decrease the number of injuries and fatalities.”

Tutor said the Biofuels Center of North Carolina is providing $10,000 for curriculum development.

On the PCC side, Sierant said the community college will pay instruction costs for two PCC classes.

In addition, equipment manufacturer Caterpillar Inc. has donated $1.5 million in equipment for the training.

Sierant said safety will be emphasized in the course. Students will be CPR-certified and receive OSHA training cards.

“They’ll do a week of first-responder training,” she said.

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Almost half of N.C. State applicants - and Scotty McCreery - get in

By Jessica Halpern - jhalpern@newsobserver.com

After being accepted by four schools, 18-year-old country music star Scotty McCreery has told N.C. State University, “I love you this big.”

He’ll be a Wolfpacker in the fall.

The deep-voiced Garner High School senior broke the news before picking up New Artist of The Year honors over the weekend at the Academy of Country Music Awards in Las Vegas.

In an interview with Cody Allen on CMT Radio, McCreery said, “There were a lot of good schools in Nashville, but I’ve decided to head down to Raleigh where my dad went to college at N.C. State, at least for two years, and maybe transfer to Nashville then. I’m excited. I’ve got some boys going there and some friends. We’ll have a good time.”

On Monday, reaction to McCreery’s school choice among some N.C. State students varied from enthused to Simon Cowell sour.
N.C. State University’s student newspaper, Technician, gave the news front-page play with a headline above the fold. Laura Wilkinson, Technician’s editor in chief, said she was excited by the prospect of a local celebrity joining State’s red ranks.

But Ian Peterson, an Apex junior and president of the all-male acapella group, Grains of Time, said the singer – who wowed audiences with his hit “I Love You This Big” and whose first album, “Clear as Day,” went platinum – is “just another bass.”

“We’ll give him the same treatment as everyone else,” Peterson said. “We don’t plan on recruiting him.”

Some students thought McCreery will fit in just as Wolfpack sports stars do.

“I guess it’s really exciting because he’s so cute and talented, but it would basically be the same as having a class with an athlete – it’s just another person,” said Kate Howie, a Monroe sophomore.

Some were impressed that that McCreery has chosen to stay down home despite his success.

“It’s nice to know a local person can [win] ‘American Idol’ and still stay true to what he wants,” said Amber Wallace, a junior from Beulaville. “I respect that he’s an upcoming star and he’s choosing school right now instead of pursuing fame.”

Erin Mooneyham, a Raleigh sophomore, joked (maybe) that she plans to schedule her classes in hopes of sharing one with McCreery.

“I need to find out his major so I can try and get into some of his classes,” she said, adding, “Creepy, I know.”

Others were untouched by “Scotty” fever.

“I love country music,” said Wesley King, a sophomore from Charlotte, “but I don’t know who the [heck] Scotty McCreery is.”

MaryBeth Hunnicutt, a junior from Garner, grew up with McCreery and his family. They attended the same high school and still go to church together.

Hunnicutt said McCreery isn’t only a singer. He’s also a local guy, a longtime State fan and, in some ways, will be just another freshman.

“Some of his best friends go to State, so he will have people here who knew him before he was famous,” Hunnicutt said. “It is still a little weird hearing him on the radio or seeing him on TV, but then when I see him at church or just hanging out in Garner, he’s just Scotty.”
Scotty among 48 percent of NCSU applicants to get in

Scotty McCreery will be in good company in the first-year class at N.C. State University in the fall.

The Garner native and budding country music star was among the 48 percent of NCSU applicants who scored an offer of admission in a competitive process, said Thomas Griffin, admissions director.

For the first time, more than 20,000 students applied for about 4,250 spots in the freshman class, Griffin said.

The average SAT reading and math score of those admitted was 1247 – 24 points higher than last year. The average high school class rank of admitted students was in the top 12 percent.

Since the offers went out, the admissions office has fielded calls and emails from disappointed students and parents who received a rejection or a slot on the waiting list.

“There are a lot of really good students we didn’t admit,” Griffin said.

McCreery was treated the same as any other applicant in the process, Griffin stressed.

Granted, most NCSU hopefuls didn’t win a national talent contest or record a platinum-selling album.

Staff writer Jane Stancill
N.C. State's Bell Tower finally gets its bells

By Alex Vaughn - avaughn@newsobserver.com

RALEIGH—Though it will be some time before the sound of real bells echo from N.C. State University’s Bell Tower, the campus landmark took a step closer to that reality Monday.

The first three bells in a plan to complete the original 1920 design for the structure were unveiled in the campus Brickyard – nearly a century after construction began on the tower.

Matthew Robbins – whose interest in the tower began when he was an undergraduate in 2004 and culminated when he founded the fundraising group Finish the [Bell] Tower as a graduate student in 2009 – presented the bells with 2010 class president Jay Dawkins and Chancellor Randy Woodson.

The largest bell, kept under a curtain until the end of the ceremony, elicited gasps and cheers from the audience of about 100. The 2,100-pound bronze bell was donated by the class of 2010, which raised $56,000 for it.
The class used the slogan “leave your mark,” and some of them took that literally. Their names are etched on the bell’s surface.

William F. Morris Jr., a 1941 graduate, posed proudly with a photo of his father, a 1909 graduate, in front of a second bell donated by his family. The third bell was donated in the memory of Helena H. Gardner by her family.

Two more bells, which will cost about $55,000, will be needed to complete a “Westminster Chimes” set that could then be used inside the tower, Robbins said. Renovations to the tower, which have been delayed because of budget cuts, will need to be completed before that can happen.

So for now, the bells will be on display at the D.H. Hill Library.
Students ran, hid behind doors after gunman opened fire at small Christian college in Calif.

By Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. — One wounded woman cowered in the bushes after the gunman opened fire on the campus of a small Christian university. One student hid in a locked classroom as the shooter banged on the door. Another heard the shots and ran to safety.

All within an hour Monday, police said, a 43-year-old former student named One L. Goh walked into Oikos University, and began a rampage that left seven people dead and three people wounded, trapped some in the building and forced others to flee for their lives.

It was an “extremely chaotic scene,” police Chief Howard Jordan said.

Soon after the shooting, heavily armed officers swarmed the tiny college of fewer than 100 students in a large industrial park near the Oakland airport. For a time, police believed the gunman could still be inside. But he wasn’t.
Instead, officers said he apparently drove about three miles from campus before surrendering to officers inside a supermarket.

“It’s going to take us a few days to put the pieces together,” Jordan said. “We do not have a motive.”

Those connected to the school, including the founder and several students, described the gunman as a former nursing student. The chief said Goh is a South Korean national who’s a former student of the university.

Police first received a 911 call at 10:33 a.m. reporting a woman on the ground bleeding. As more calls came in from the school, the first arriving officer found a victim suffering from a life-threatening gunshot wound, he said.

More officers arrived and formed a perimeter around the school on the belief that the suspect was still inside, he said.

“ Potential victims remained inside the building either trapped by a locked door which officers were unable to open,” Jordan said. Others were unable to flee because they were injured, he said.

Jordan said there were about 35 people in or near the building when gunfire broke out. Of the seven fatalities, five died at the scene and another two at the hospital. The wounded victims are in stable condition, and at least one person has been released from the hospital.

“This unprecedented tragedy was shocking and senseless,” Jordan said.

Art Richards said he was driving by the university on his way to pick up a friend when he spotted a woman hiding in the bushes. He pulled over, and when he approached her, she said, “I’m shot” and showed him her arm.

“She had a piece of her arm hanging out,” Richards said, noting that she was wounded near the elbow.

As police arrived, Richards said he heard 10 gunshots coming from inside the building. The female victim told him that she saw the gunman shoot one person point-blank in the chest and one in the head.

Tashi Wangchuk, whose wife attended the school and witnessed the shooting, said he was told by police that the gunman first shot a woman at the front desk, then continued shooting randomly in classrooms.

Wangchuk said his wife, Dechen Wangzom, was in her vocational nursing class when she heard gunshots. She locked the door and turned off the lights,
Wangchuk said he was told by his wife, who was still being questioned by police Monday afternoon.

The gunman “banged on the door several times and started shooting outside and left,” he said. Wangchuk said no one was hurt inside his wife’s classroom, but that the gunman shot out the glass in the door. He said she did not know the man.

“She’s a hero,” he said of his wife.

Television footage showed bloodied victims on stretchers being loaded into ambulances. Several bodies covered in sheets were laid out on a patch of grass at the school. One body could be seen being loaded into a van.

Myung Soon Ma, the school’s secretary, said she could not provide any details about what happened at the private school, which serves the Korean community with courses from theology to Asian medicine.

“I feel really sad, so I cannot talk right now,” she said, speaking from her home.

At Highland Hospital, Dawinder Kaur’s family told the Oakland Tribune that she was being treated for a gunshot to her elbow.

The 19-year-old U.S. Army Reservist told her family that that the gunman was a student in her nursing class who had been absent for months before returning Monday. The gunman entered the classroom and ordered students to line up against the wall.

When he showed his gun, students began running and he opened fire, her family said.

“She told me that a guy went crazy and she got shot,” brother Paul Singh told the newspaper. “She was running. She was crying; she was bleeding, it was wrong.”

Pastor Jong Kim, who founded the school about 10 years ago, told the newspaper that he did not know if the shooter was expelled or dropped out. Kim said he heard about 30 rapid-fire gunshots in the building.

“I stayed in my office,” he said.

Deborah Lee, who was in an English language class, said she heard five to six gunshots at first. “The teacher said, ‘Run,’ and we run,” she said. “I was OK, because I know God protects me. I’m not afraid of him.”

Goh fled from the school in a Honda Accord that belonged to one of the victims, Jordan told the San Francisco Chronicle. The suspect was detained
at a Safeway supermarket about three miles from the university, about an hour after the shooting.

A security guard at the supermarket approached the man because he was acting suspiciously, KGO-TV reported. The man told the guard that he needed to talk to police because he shot people, and the guard called authorities.

“He didn’t look like he had a sign of relief on him. He didn’t look like he had much of any emotion on his face,” said Lisa Resler, who was buying fruit at Safeway with her 4-year-old daughter when she saw the man.

Goh also called his father soon after the shooting and told him what happened, the police chief said. The father also called authorities, Jordan said.

Police went to the Westlake Christian Terrace senior housing complex on Monday afternoon to speak with a relative of Goh, Nam Ko Young, who’s believed to be the man’s father, said Young’s neighbor, Barbara Ferguson. Young was seen leaving with police Monday afternoon. A staff member was sent to shut the television blaring news in the empty apartment, Ferguson said.

Ferguson said she’s seen Goh and Young in the lobby and exchanged hellos in the past but that she doesn’t know them well.

The suspect’s brother was killed in a car accident last year in Virginia while on active duty in the U.S. Army, according to Stars and Stripes newspaper. The suspect attended the funeral of Sgt. Su Wan Ko in Centreville, Va., after the March 8, 2011, accident.

Jerry Sung, the university’s accountant, said the school offers courses in both Korean and English to less than 100 students. He said the campus consists of one building. Sung said many of its students go on to work in nursing and ministry.

“The founder felt there was a need for theology and nursing courses for Korean-Americans who were newer to the community,” Sung said. “He felt they would feel more comfortable if they had Korean-American professors.”

Associated Press writers Louise Chu, Garance Burke and Marcus Wohlsen in San Francisco contributed to this report.
If you wear a white coat that you believe belongs to a doctor, your ability to pay attention increases sharply. But if you wear the same white coat believing it belongs to a painter, you will show no such improvement.

So scientists report after studying a phenomenon they call enclothed cognition: the effects of clothing on cognitive processes.

It is not enough to see a doctor’s coat hanging in your doorway, said Adam D. Galinsky, a professor at the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University, who led the study. The effect occurs only if you actually wear the coat and know its symbolic meaning — that physicians tend to be careful, rigorous and good at paying attention.

The findings, on the Web site of The Journal of Experimental Social Cognition, are a twist on a growing scientific field called embodied cognition. We think not just with our brains but with our bodies, Dr. Galinsky said, and our thought processes are based on physical experiences.
that set off associated abstract concepts. Now it appears that those experiences include the clothes we wear.

“I love the idea of trying to figure out why, when we put on certain clothes, we might more readily take on a role and how that might affect our basic abilities,” said Joshua I. Davis, an assistant professor of psychology at Barnard College and expert on embodied cognition who was not involved with the study. This study does not fully explain how this comes about, he said, but it does suggest that it will be worth exploring various ideas.

There is a huge body of work on embodied cognition, Dr. Galinsky said. The experience of washing your hands is associated with moral purity and ethical judgments. People are rated personally warmer if they hold a hot drink in their hand, and colder if they hold an iced drink. If you carry a heavy clipboard, you will feel more important.

It has long been known that “clothing affects how other people perceive us as well as how we think about ourselves,” Dr. Galinsky said. Other experiments have shown that women who dress in a masculine fashion during a job interview are more likely to be hired, and a teaching assistant who wears formal clothes is perceived as more intelligent than one who dresses more casually.

But the deeper question, the researchers said, is whether the clothing you wear affects your psychological processes. Does your outfit alter how you approach and interact with the world? So Dr. Galinsky and his colleague Hajo Adam conducted three experiments in which the clothes did not vary but their symbolic meaning was manipulated.

In the first, 58 undergraduates were randomly assigned to wear a white lab coat or street clothes. Then they were given a test for selective attention based on their ability to notice incongruities, as when the word “red” appears in the color green. Those who wore the white lab coats made about half as many errors on incongruent trials as those who wore regular clothes.

In the second experiment, 74 students were randomly assigned to one of three options: wearing a doctor’s coat, wearing a painter’s coat or seeing a doctor’s coat. Then they were given a test for sustained attention. They had to look at two very similar pictures side by side on a screen and spot four minor differences, writing them down as quickly as possible.

Those who wore the doctor’s coat, which was identical to the painter’s coat, found more differences. They had acquired heightened attention. Those who
wore the painter’s coat or were primed with merely seeing the doctor’s coat found fewer differences between the images.

The third experiment explored this priming effect more thoroughly. Does simply seeing a physical item, like the coat, affect behavior? Students either wore a doctor’s coat or a painter’s coat, or were told to notice a doctor’s lab coat displayed on the desk in front of them for a long period of time. All three groups wrote essays about their thoughts on the coats. Then they were tested for sustained attention.

Again, the group that wore the doctor’s coat showed the greatest improvement in attention. You have to wear the coat, see it on your body and feel it on your skin for it to influence your psychological processes, Dr. Galinsky said.

Clothes invade the body and brain, putting the wearer into a different psychological state, he said. He described his own experience from last Halloween (or maybe it should be called National Enclothed Cognition Day).

He had decided to dress as a pimp, with a fedora, long coat and cane. “When I entered the room, I glided in,” he said. “I felt a very different presence.”

But what happens, he mused, if you wear pimp clothes every day? Or a priest’s robes? Or a police officer’s uniform? Do you become habituated so that cognitive changes do not occur? Do the effects wear off?

More studies are needed, he said.
The business plan of Varsity Monitor is simple. Major universities like North Carolina, Nebraska and Oklahoma pay $7,000 to $10,000 a year and Varsity Monitor keeps an online eye on their athletes.

Among the services the company and others like it provide is a computer application that searches social media sites that athletes frequent, looking for obscenities, offensive commentary or words like “free,” which could indicate that a player has accepted a gift in violation of N.C.A.A. rules.

“Every school, we work to customize their keyword list,” said Sam Carnahan, the chief executive of Varsity Monitor, which has offices in Seattle and New York and also provides educational programs to universities. “We look for things that could damage the school’s brand and anything related to their eligibility.”

Yet what may look to some like a business opportunity, and to universities and their athletic departments like due diligence, appears to others to be an invasion of privacy.
“I think it’s violating the Constitution to have someone give up their password or user name,” said Ronald N. Young, a Maryland state senator who has sponsored a bill that would make it harder for universities to monitor their athletes online. “It’s like reading their mail or listening to their phone calls.”

The debate on college campuses mirrors the larger conversation throughout the country over how much access to personal online activities private individuals can be compelled to give to employers. University administrators face a tricky situation when it comes to their players’ activity on social media, balancing issues of privacy while trying to guard against the possibility that an errant posting on Twitter or Facebook could result in trouble for an athlete or the athletic department. On March 12, North Carolina’s football program received a one-year bowl ban and lost 15 scholarships after an N.C.A.A. investigation that was prompted by a Twitter message sent by a player.

In the N.C.A.A.’s statement about North Carolina’s punishment, it hinted that institutions should be tracking public information made available by student-athletes if there is a “reasonable suspicion of rules violations.” That has caused an increase in business for Varsity Monitor and companies like UDiligence and Centrix Social. Some colleges require athletes to give them access to their Facebook or Twitter accounts, either by downloading software to monitor them or simply requiring that they let a coach, an administrator or a third-party company “friend” them on Facebook or follow them on Twitter.

“There’s this big gray area that we’re all going into right now,” said Bill Voth, the co-founder of Spiracle Media, a company that advises colleges about social media. “Schools like North Carolina need to protect themselves. But I can see the legal side with privacy issues.”

The men’s basketball teams participating in this weekend’s Final Four in New Orleans — Ohio State, Kentucky, Louisville and Kansas — represent the many ways that athletic departments are handling the newest forms of mass communication. Kentucky Coach John Calipari has more than a million Twitter followers, while Louisville Coach Rick Pitino bars his players from using Twitter during the season. Ohio State’s star player, Jared Sullinger, stopped sending Twitter messages in January to eliminate distractions.

With colleges worried about a situation similar to North Carolina’s occurring on their campuses, lingering questions remain: Where should the
line be drawn? Can colleges monitor athletes without being invasive? And is it legal for a university to require that a student make his private information available?

Carnahan says his company tailors its service to whatever the university requests, allowing it to determine to what extent social media activities are monitored. But some college officials are uncomfortable with the notion of monitoring their athletes on social media, be it public or private content.

“If the university is going to screen all students or all prospective students or everyone that’s applied, we’ll engage in that with the university,” Notre Dame’s athletic director, Jack Swarbrick, said. “I can’t foresee a time where they would.”

Bradley S. Shear, a lawyer based in Maryland who works in sports law and social media, supports the bill Young introduced in Maryland. He said that a key difference in monitoring a student’s online activities, as opposed to an issue like drug testing, was that the content being searched for was inappropriate as opposed to illegal.

“The Supreme Court has ruled over and over again that students do not leave their constitutional rights at the schoolhouse gate,” Shear said. He said that any policy that required students to give access to “password-protected electronic content” was “a clear violation of their student’s First and Fourth Amendment Constitutional rights.”

He added of companies that monitor athletes’ online activities: “These companies are selling snake oil that contains a major legal liability time bomb. To me, there’s no difference in having to Facebook-friend a coach than turning over user name and password.”

Oklahoma’s athletic director, Joe Castiglione, said the university required its athletes to friend coaches on Facebook. He said that when athletes were questioned about something that appeared on their Facebook pages, they often responded, “Hey, you’re not supposed to see that.” He said his answer was, “Well, everyone else in the world can.”

Jeremy Foley, the athletic director at Florida, said his department contracted with UDiligence to monitor only the Gators’ football players.

“I’m not a big believer that it’s our responsibility to monitor that 24-7,” Foley said. “If there’s an issue, we’ll deal with it. We’re trying to run a business here. We’re not trying to be Big Brother.”
Varsity Monitor’s Carnahan said that by allowing the universities to determine how much access his company gets, it leaves a “white space” for colleges to make their own decisions. But Kevin DeShazo, the founder of Fieldhouse Media, another company in the expanding online monitoring field, said that his company does not access private information and that he is opposed to monitoring Facebook and forcing athletes to download applications or give access to password-protected content.

“To be forced to give you access, passwords or let them be friends with you on Facebook — I get why coaches feel like it’s necessary, but there has to be some level of respect and trust with these kids,” DeShazo said, adding that his company has focused on educating athletes about the perils of social media.

At North Carolina, where a message on Twitter from the former football player Marvin Austin in 2010 revealed that he was receiving impermissible benefits and was a factor in his being suspended for the season, the social media policy is strict.

Steve Kirschner, a spokesman for North Carolina’s athletic department, said each of the university’s sports teams had a coach or a staff member assigned to monitor Twitter messages sent by its players.

Roy Williams, the men’s basketball coach, said he recognized that social media were simply a fact of life. His players are permitted to use social media sites, though not without a warning.

“I tell the guys, ‘It’s America, you have freedom of speech,’ ” Williams said. “If you say something and it embarrasses me or the basketball program or your family, I’m going to be disappointed.”

The legal questions are not as simple, however, and the answers may not come from campuses but from courtrooms and legislatures.

“These are murky waters,” Voth said, “and it’s a problem that’s not going to be answered today or in a few months or a year.”
Senior citizens continue to bear burden of student loans

By Ylan Q. Mui

The burden of paying for college is wreaking havoc on the finances of an unexpected demographic: senior citizens.

New research from the Federal Reserve Bank of New York shows that Americans 60 and older still owe about $36 billion in student loans, providing a rare window into the dynamics of student debt. More than 10 percent of those loans are delinquent. As a result, consumer advocates say, it is not uncommon for Social Security checks to be garnished or for debt collectors to harass borrowers in their 80s over student loans that are decades old.

That even seniors remain saddled with student loans highlights what a growing chorus of lawmakers, economists and financial experts say has
become a central conflict in the nation’s higher education system: The long-touted benefits of a college degree are being diluted by rising tuition rates and the longevity of debt.

Some of these older Americans are still grappling with their first wave of student loans, while others took on new debt when they returned to school later in life in hopes of becoming more competitive in the labor force. Many have co-signed for loans with their children or grandchildren to help them afford ballooning tuition.

The recent recession exacerbated this problem, making it harder for older Americans — or the youths they are supporting in school — to get good-paying jobs. And unlike other debts, student loans cannot be shed in bankruptcy. As a result, some older Americans have found that a college degree led not to a prosperous career but instead to a lifetime under the shadow of debt.

“A student loan can be a debt that’s kind of like a ball and chain that you can drag to the grave,” said William E. Brewer, president of the National Association of Consumer Bankruptcy Attorneys. “You can unhook it when they lay you in the coffin.”

Sandy Barnett, 58, of Illinois thought she was doing the right thing when she decided to pursue a master’s degree in clinical psychology in the late 1980s. She had worked her way through college but said she took out a loan of about $21,000 to pay for graduate school so she would have more time to focus on her studies.

But even after earning her master’s, Barnett struggled to find a job that paid more than $25,000 a year and soon fell behind on her payments. She suffered through a layoff, a stretch of unemployment and the death of her husband — while her student loan ballooned to roughly $54,000.

Barnett filed for bankruptcy in 2005, but she couldn’t get out from under her student loan debt. She said a collection agency began garnishing the wages from her full-time job as a customer service representative a year ago, and now money is so tight that she must choose between buying gas and buying food. An air conditioner for her mobile home is an unimaginable luxury.

“I shake my head every day at the thought that I’m working for nothing,” Barnett said. “It’s really a black hole because there’s no end in sight.”

A college degree has traditionally been viewed as a virtual guarantee of a better-paying job and a higher standard of living. And on the whole, that remains true. The unemployment rate for Americans with only a high school
education is 9.2 percent — more than double the rate for those with college degrees. The median weekly earnings for high school graduates last year was $638, according to government data, compared with $1,053 for college grads.

But with the recent recession prompting layoffs at white-collar law firms and investment banks as well as auto plants and construction companies, more Americans are finding themselves out of work and deep in debt. At a Senate subcommittee hearing last week, Treasury Secretary Timothy F. Geithner said the cost of higher learning should reflect the quality of education received.

Many students “haven’t been able to earn a return that justifies the expense,” he said.

Over the past decade, the cost of college rose between 2 and 6 percent per year, depending on the type of institution, according to the College Board.

Meanwhile, the New York Fed estimates that Americans owed $870 billion in student loans during the third quarter of last year, significantly outpacing credit card debt or auto loans. Borrowers age 60 and above accounted for 5 percent of that debt. The share for Americans age 50 and older is 17 percent.

In some cases, student debt has been a burden for even financially responsible older Americans.

Maxine Bass, 60, of Minnesota said her granddaughter dreamed of going to college since she was a child. But her mother could barely afford to provide her lunch money, much less pay for tuition. Bass had good credit and a steady job.

So when her granddaughter was accepted into St. Catherine University to study biology, Bass said she gladly co-signed for a $38,000 loan with her. But when the granddaughter fell behind on the payments as she hunted for a job with a decent salary, Bass’s own finances took a hit.

“I went into a panic, like, what was I gonna do?” Bass wondered.

Because of late fees and missed payments, Bass said she and her granddaughter owe about $69,000. They are now contributing monthly, but Bass is worried she won’t be able to catch up.

“Many parents who thought they were headed to retirement with a college-educated child end up continuing to work because of student debt that can’t be paid,” Sen. Richard J. Durbin (D-Ill.) said at last week’s hearing.
Durbin has introduced legislation that would allow private student loan debt to be discharged in bankruptcy, though borrowers would still have to pay off any federal loans. Sallie Mae, one of the nation’s largest private student lenders, as well as consumer groups support all types of student loans being forgiven during bankruptcy. Last year, President Obama addressed the issue by easing the repayment requirements for federal student loans. The new rules allow borrowers to pay 10 percent of their income for 20 years before the loan is forgiven.

Still, the bill would only address one aspect of what many believe is a more fundamental problem: the cost of college. Until that is solved, Suzanne Martin, an attorney with Consumers Union, said she anticipates older Americans’ share of student loans will only increase.

“This current generation of borrowers is going to be a generation of seniors who are burdened with debt,” she said.
With its decision to take up racial preferences in admissions at public colleges, the Supreme Court has touched off a national guessing game about how far it might move against affirmative action and how profoundly colleges might change as a result.

But no matter how the court acts, recent history shows that when courts or new laws restrict affirmative action, colleges try to find other ways to increase minority admissions.

The aggressiveness of those efforts, and the results, vary widely by state, but generally they increase minority enrollment — though not as much as overt affirmative action once did. And they have tended to help Hispanic applicants far more than blacks, at least partly because of the demographics of the states where they have been tried.

Texas and a few others, for instance, compare students with their high school classmates, rather than with all applicants, resulting in more enrollment from poor communities. Washington is among the states that
give added credit in the admissions process to students who come from poor families or excel at troubled schools.

Other colleges have spent more time recruiting in underrepresented communities. And the University of California system tries to weigh a student’s life beyond grades and test scores — which, critics say, sometimes amounts to giving racial preferences without acknowledging them.

Even if the Supreme Court limits the options, college and universities will “be seeking diversity by any legal means possible,” said Ada Meloy, general counsel of the American Council on Education.

But a decision overturning affirmative action could produce a national pattern of more liberal states going further to mimic the current system than more conservative states. Defenders of affirmative action are most likely to see any new system as unfair to black and Hispanic students, while critics will still see it as unfair to whites and Asian-Americans.

The current nationwide standard is based on two decisions involving the University of Michigan in 2003, when the Supreme Court ruled that public universities could not give an applicant an automatic advantage based on race or ethnicity. But in a decision written by Justice Sandra Day O’Connor, the court also ruled, 5 to 4, that colleges could consider race and ethnicity as part of a case-by-case assessment of individuals.

Since 2003, the court has shifted rightward, with Justice Samuel A. Alito Jr., a critic of preferences, replacing Justice O’Connor.

In February, the court agreed to hear Fisher v. University of Texas, a challenge to the university’s admissions policy, fueling speculation that it could revisit the standards it set nine years ago. The Texas system admits the top students at every high school in the state, but also admits additional students with a system that takes race into account.

The court has many options, including leaving things as they stand, finding that universities are interpreting the Michigan case too loosely, altering it, or overturning it completely. And it remains unclear how any ruling would affect private colleges, which rely heavily on federal financing.

Perhaps the best glimpse of a future without the current version of affirmative action comes from the handful of states that have already outlawed the use of race in public college admissions.

After California voters approved such a law, black and Hispanic freshman enrollment at the University of California system dropped by about one-
In 1998, the first year the ban was in effect. At the system’s most competitive campuses, in Berkeley and Los Angeles, enrollment for those groups fell by almost half.

In the years since, the system has tried several approaches to increase diversity without directly taking race into account, and the numbers eventually rose.

Black students accounted for just over 4 percent of University of California freshmen in the mid-1990s. That fell to 3 percent after the law took effect, and remained there for several years, before climbing close to 4 percent in recent years.

Hispanic enrollment stood at 14 to 15 percent of the total before the ban, and fell to 12 percent in 1998, but quickly began to climb, driven by California’s fast-rising Latino population. By 2010, that group accounted for more than 22 percent of the system’s freshmen.

“If we had affirmative action as one of our tools, we’d do somewhat better for Hispanics, and we’d probably do significantly better for African-Americans,” said Mark G. Yudof, president of the University of California system.

A central part of California’s effort has been to compare applicants with other students in their communities, rather than with students statewide, much as Texas does. At each high school, the top 9 percent of students are guaranteed admission to the University of California — though not necessarily to the campuses of their choice — as long as they meet some other criteria.

Officials acknowledge that the aim is race-conscious but that the mechanism is race-neutral.

Florida uses a percentage-based system as well. There, as in California and Texas, the benefits go mostly to Hispanic students because of the large number of high schools that are predominantly Hispanic. Black students are spread among high schools with large numbers of other students.

In California, arguably the most liberal state to have banned affirmative action in admissions, the university system has gone further to increase minority enrollment. The system has expanded, adding a new campus and increasing enrollment at existing schools.

The Berkeley campus, and later U.C.L.A., also adopted an admissions approach called holistic review, reducing the emphasis on grades and test
scores while taking a broader look at students’ experiences and the challenges they have overcome.

“I do think you’re going to see a move toward a more holistic admissions system” in other states, Mr. Yudof said, especially if the Supreme Court rolls back consideration of race. His system is pushing all of its campuses in that direction.

Some of the public universities in Washington State, where voters banned affirmative action in 1998, use a holistic approach, as does the University of Michigan.

Richard H. Sander, a U.C.L.A. law school professor who studies the issue, says that the holistic approach is also loose enough to allow race to be an unacknowledged part of the equation, potentially violating state law. University officials insist that their systems are race-blind.

In Washington, Hispanic and black enrollment at state universities did not change much after the law went into effect, but at the state’s flagship, the University of Washington, it fell for a few years, before returning to its former level. At the University of Michigan, minority enrollment fell sharply after the law took effect in 2007, and has not rebounded. Black students made up more than 10 percent of the freshman class a decade ago, and 7 to 8 percent in the years just before the law, but that has dropped to a little over 5 percent in recent years.

As for the Fisher case, Professor Sander pointed to the crucial role of Justice Anthony M. Kennedy, widely seen as the swing vote. He predicted that rather than overturn the standards it set in 2003, the court would amend them or alter the way they are carried out, restricting the use of race without eliminating it. “This hinges on Kennedy,” Professor Sander said, “and Kennedy usually likes to do half a loaf.”