THE DAILY CLIPS

April 13, 2010

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Alpha Omicron Pi sorority sisters, from left, Emily Fox, Danielle Lograsso and Sigourney McDonald ask Elm Street resident Clell Moore whether she has returned her census form. Greeks gathered Monday to help census officials remind local residents to return their forms — if they have not already.

Justin Falls/The Daily Reflector

Fraternity brothers crowd around Keith Tinsley, middle left, ECU’s assistant director of Greek Life, as he shows them which part of Greenville they will canvass during a census roundup Monday.

Justin Falls/The Daily Reflector

Sorority and fraternity students gather near the copula on campus as they wait to begin their canvassing of Greenville neighborhoods to help census officials remind local residents to return their census forms quickly if they have not already Monday, April 12, 2010. (Justin Falls/The Daily Reflector)
Greeks get out to urge return of census forms

BY JOSH HUMPHRIES
The Daily Reflector
Monday, April 12, 2010
East Carolina University students spent Monday afternoon spreading the word on the importance of the 2010 U.S. Census.
The ECU Interfraternity Council organized the community service event with each fraternity and sorority on campus, along with local census workers, to visit homes in neighborhoods near campus and encourage residents to return their census forms. The event served as the large service event sponsored each year by the council during Greek Week.
More than 100 students visited homes Monday.
“It is hard to send our people just to remind people to return their forms,” John McEwen, director of the Greenville census office, said. “These young men and women are volunteers, and they have been trained on the importance of the census in terms of money coming back to the city, county and state. Their interest tends to generate further interest from the people they contact.”
Vincent Woods, president of the ECU Interfraternity Council, said the group came up with the idea in January when discussing this year’s service project for Greek Week. He said the low-response rate for Pitt County inspired the group to spread awareness about the census.
“We began looking for groups to go out into the community to encourage them about the importance of sending in the census and what it can provide for them in the future,” Woods said.
Pitt County’s mail form return rate is 60 percent. The county had a 62 percent mail return rate at the same time during the 2000 census.
The state average for returns is 67 percent, and the national average is 65 percent.
The U.S. Census is conducted every 10 years to count the actual number of people living in the United States. The numbers are used to allocate U.S. Congressional seats, electoral votes and many government funding programs.
Census workers will begin going door to door to the homes of those who have not returned the mail forms in the coming weeks to ensure an accurate count, McEwen said.

Contact Josh Humphries at jhumphries@reflector.com or (252) 329-9565.
Huffman named director of football operations at ECU

The Daily Reflector
Monday, April 12, 2010

Antonio Huffman has been named director of football operations at East Carolina, head coach Ruffin McNeill announced Monday.

Prior to his appointment at ECU, Huffman, 27, served as director of player personnel for two seasons at alma mater Texas Tech where he was the chief liaison officer between the football program and the athletics department’s NCAA compliance division. He also held the title of Tech’s assistant recruiting coordinator, setting up and executing official and unofficial prospect visits, campus tours and summer camps.

“I can say that while Antonio was a stellar player on the field, he far exceeded that level off the field,” McNeill said. “He was heavily courted by corporations and businesses after graduation and we were fortunate that we were able to bring his enthusiasm, organizational skills and meticulous approach back into college football.

“He’s simply a great addition to the Pirate family.”

A three-year starter as a defensive back for the Red Raiders, Huffman completed his career with 189 tackles, four interceptions and 25 pass breakups. In his final collegiate contest, he was named Defensive MVP of the 2006 Insight Bowl after a game-changing interception helped Texas Tech to a 44-41 overtime victory over Minnesota.

Huffman played one season for the Lubbock Renegades (AFL2) in 2007 before accepting a sales position at Chrysler Motors LLC and then re-joining the Big 12 Conference member a year later. During his academic tenure at Tech, Huffman earned selection to prestigious honors such as the John Wooden Leadership Cup (2007), NCAA Leadership Conference (2006), Draddy Award (semi-finalist in 2006), President and Dean’s List (2005-06). He graduated in 2006 with a bachelor’s degree in human development and family studies and is currently working on completing a master’s degree in sociology.

Huffman is married to the former Shelley Bartley of Lubbock, Texas, and they are the parents of a son, Aeson Deon, 1.

— ECU Media Relations
Beating of University of Maryland student by police probed by county prosecutors

By Ruben Castaneda
Washington Post Staff Writer
Tuesday, April 13, 2010; A01

Prince George's prosecutors have begun a criminal investigation of three county police officers who beat an unarmed University of Maryland student with their batons after a basketball game last month in an incident that was caught on video and surfaced publicly Monday, authorities said.

County police also ordered an internal affairs investigation of the three officers, Maj. Andy Ellis said. Ellis said the inquiry would also focus on a county officer who filed official charging documents that are contradicted by the video.

"The video shows the charging documents were nothing more than a cover, a fairy tale they made up to cover for the officers' misconduct," said Christopher A. Griffiths, a lawyer for the student. "The video shows gratuitous violence against a defenseless individual."

Police Chief Roberto L. Hylton said that one of the three officers had been identified and that his police powers have been suspended during the investigation. The other two officers will also be suspended as soon as they are identified, Hylton said.

"I'm outraged and disappointed after viewing the video," Hylton said. "That's not the type of professional conduct we promote. Any employee who uses excessive force will be held accountable."

Griffiths released the video Monday after county prosecutors dropped charges against John J. McKenna, 21. McKenna and a co-defendant, Benjamin C. Donat, 19, had been charged with felonies on suspicion of assaulting officers on horseback and their mounts. On Friday, a prosecutor dropped charges against Donat, also a U-Md. student. Griffiths is also representing Donat.

The incident occurred March 3 near the university's College Park campus after the Maryland men's basketball team defeated Duke. After the game, students took to the streets to celebrate. Twenty-eight people were arrested or cited, sparking a debate between police and students over how and when it is appropriate to break up a group of revelers.

At least part of the incident with McKenna was videotaped by another student. The video, which lasts about one minute, is a continuous shot. It was discovered by Sharon Weidenfeld, a private investigator who worked on behalf of McKenna and Donat. The video does not show Donat, although Officer Sean McAleavey's charging documents say the two men acted together.

The video shows about two dozen students milling about on Knox Road near Route 1. About a
half-dozen of them are pointing their cellphone cameras at riot police who are gathered between the students and Route 1.

The video shows McKenna on the sidewalk as he skips and throws his arms in the air. He stops about five feet from an officer on horseback, the video shows. In the video, McKenna's arms appear to be in front of him, but he does not appear to touch the officer or the horse. His hands are empty.

McKenna backs up, then two county police riot officers rush toward him from the street, the video shows. The officers slam McKenna against a wall and beat him with their batons. McKenna crumples to the ground.

As McKenna falls, a third county police riot officer strikes his legs and torso with his baton. The video shows the officers striking an unresting McKenna about the head, torso and legs -- more than a dozen blows in all.

Because they are wearing riot gear, the officers who hit McKenna are not easily identifiable.

In the video, county police officers and officers on horseback from the Maryland-National Capital Park Police are seen nearby. They do not intervene in the incident with McKenna. The officers form a line and move toward the students who had been milling about, the video shows, and the students move back.

Charging documents say McKenna and Donat provoked the beating by attacking officers on horseback. The video clearly shows the officers rushing McKenna and beating him, although the teenager had not touched any of the mounted units.

The charging documents also say that the horses injured McKenna and Donat and make no mention of the beating by the officers. The video shows no aggression by the horses.

The documents sworn by McAleavey allege that McKenna and Donat were running and screaming in the middle of Route 1, prompting an unruly crowd to form.

As two officers on horseback from the Maryland-National Capital Park Police tried to regain order, McKenna and Donat "struck those officers and their horses causing minor injuries," McAleavey wrote.

McKenna and Donat "were both kicked by the horses and sustained minor injuries," the charging documents say. Griffiths said Donat was beaten by county police with batons about a block away from where McKenna was beaten. The lawyer said the two do not know each other. Griffiths said both men suffered concussions from police baton blows.

McAleavey did not return calls for comment.

Lt. Stanley Johnson, a spokesman for the Maryland-National Capital Park Police, said that McKenna and Donat did not attack any of his officers or horses and that none of the department's horses kicked or struck McKenna or Donat. The charges against McKenna were dropped Monday without comment, Griffiths said.
April 13, 2010

OP-ED CONTRIBUTOR

What We Learned From H1N1's First Year

By RICHARD P. WENZEL

Richmond, Va.

ONE year ago today, a government worker in Oaxaca, Mexico, became the first person to die of swine flu. At the bedsides of other men and women struggling to stay alive in Mexican critical care units, we clinicians noticed early on that this novel H1N1 flu virus diverged from influenza's usual pattern of activity in striking ways. It began in the Northern Hemisphere, not in Asia, and in mid-spring, not late fall or winter. It also had a worrying predilection for children and young adults, not the elderly and newborns.

In the months after those first deaths, the virus ignited a global pandemic. While the epidemic never became as deadly as we initially feared, it was not as mild as some experts now believe. What's more, it exposed some serious shortcomings in the world's public health response.

Those who now describe the pandemic as mild base their conclusion primarily on what, at first, seems like a mortality rate in the United States similar to those seen after seasonal influenza. But my colleagues in developing countries would strongly object.

Though we lack reliable death rates from country to country, certainly no one who helped care for the large number of critically ill patients in Mexico could conclude that the flu in the United States was as severe as in developing countries that lacked our resources.

Here, the vaccine arrived later than estimated, and only about 80 million Americans received it — not nearly enough, but a far higher proportion of the population than in many developing countries. In fact, only 26 of 94 poor countries in need of the protective H1N1 vaccine have even received it so far.

We also cannot count as mild any virus that was so devastating for young adults, along with pregnant women, obese patients and minorities.

Worse yet, this virus made itself particularly hard for clinicians to identify. Whereas doctors associate fever and cough with outbreaks of influenza, one-third of patients admitted to hospitals and up to half of infected outpatients in this pandemic had no fever, yet they were infectious.

And because it is likely that only patients with fever were tested for the presence of the virus, we greatly underestimated the number of people infected. A telling report from Britain showed that when children were tested in cross sectional surveys after the first wave of infection, one in three had antibodies to the virus, meaning that they had been infected — this was 10 times more people than estimated from clinical surveillance.
H1N1 posed huge infection-control problems, especially in hospitals. This was because it was found not only on hard surfaces in the environment, which is common to all influenza strains, but in the stool of patients, a feature of avian influenza.

Public health groups emphasized the necessity of frequent hand-washing, which surely helped reduce transmission. But those groups also disagreed on other preventatives: for instance, the World Health Organization and Society for Health Care Epidemiologists of America recommended the relatively inexpensive surgical mask, whereas the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention argued for the N-95 respirator mask.

In our own country, the virus struck at a time when Americans seemed particularly skeptical about our government and large institutions. The C.D.C. faced an uphill battle to characterize the trajectory of the pandemic, to define its impact, to offer suggestions and to convince a wary public to get vaccinated.

At times, health officials erred in their recommendations. C.D.C. authorities often said that ill children and adults could go back to school or work 24 hours after their fever disappeared — even though young children are contagious for up to three weeks and adults for 5 to 7 days.

It is not an easy task, but our public health authorities need to become clearer about the lexicon of uncertainty — what they know and don’t know about a pandemic. They also need to be transparent about how they devise their recommendations, which often have to balance between infection control and the daily activities of offices and schools. And we need to identify which social distancing techniques truly help control pandemics — for example, does the closing of schools and malls minimize the spread of viruses from infected children to adults?

One year after its appearance, we continue to have many unanswered questions about the virus. Will the novel H1N1 agent become a persistent seasonal virus? Can we produce vaccine more quickly by moving to a cell-based rather than egg-based method? Can we possibly identify the Holy Grail of influenza vaccination, finding a virus target common to all influenza A strains so that we can administer a single vaccination at 10-year intervals?

Even as we work to solve these enigmas, we can try to prepare better for future pandemics. First, we need to approach disease control not as individual nations, but as a global community. In this, Mexico has already set an excellent example. Only 10 days passed between Mexican health authorities’ recognition of a possible new epidemic and their announcement of it, a sharp contrast to the many months in 2003 between the outbreak of SARS in China and its public declaration.

Mexico’s transparency was a policy decision made with full recognition of the unfavorable economic consequences from H1N1, now estimated to have cost almost 1 percent of the gross domestic product. Thanks to that decision, we had an edge in fighting this virus. We should find ways to financially reward early reporting of novel infectious agents, while doing a better job of sharing resources and agreeing on common containment strategies.

Second, we should rely not just on governments for reporting but on the cooperative efforts of international health organizations as well. These groups should set up better sentinel reporting systems in places where new swine or avian variants are most likely to occur — wherever people and pigs or birds live closely
together — so that they can identify new virus progeny quickly.

Eventually, we'll also need to encourage farmers in developing countries to follow agricultural and safety practices that make it less likely that viruses will jump species.

One predicts influenza at his own peril, but it is likely that H1N1 will continue to cause sporadic cases. In some highly susceptible, unvaccinated populations it may even produce local outbreaks.

But the struggle between people and pathogens is a part of life itself. We cannot continue to be surprised every time a new virus emerges. Instead, we must use the lessons we've learned during the year since H1N1 arrived to develop more effective public health responses.

Richard P. Wenzel is a professor of internal medicine and a specialist in infectious diseases at Virginia Commonwealth University.
Why Top Colleges Squeeze You Dry

And what they really spend your tuition money on.

By ANDREW MANSHEL

As high-school seniors around the country open their mailboxes looking for thick envelopes from colleges and universities, their parents are undoubtedly thinking, "Why does college cost so damn much?"—particularly if those children are headed to elite private institutions. Based on my experience as the vice president for finance and administration at a prominent college in the early 2000s, I suggest that the answer is simple: Top private institutions charge what they do because a substantial number of people will pay it.

With a selective private college perceived by upper-middle-class and wealthy parents to be the critical gateway to assured economic status, these parents will pay what it takes (up to a point) to make sure that their kids are able to maintain their families' economic position. The number of such families exceeds the number of places in elite schools, providing significant pricing power to those institutions. The top institutions therefore have the ability to charge a premium for those seats. Prestige isn't easily created and so by its nature is in limited supply.

To be sure, this system has produced colleges and universities that are equal, and arguably superior, to any in the world in terms of their scholarly output and the training of individuals with highly specialized knowledge. It is generally believed that the elite institutions uniquely prepare their undergraduates with a broad education in the liberal arts, enabling them to think critically and to lead culturally enriched lives.

But at the beginning of my tenure as an elite school's chief financial officer, I was surprised to learn from my colleagues that tuition and fees were not set by analyzing budget projections. Instead they were set by looking at a chart of the prior year's tuition charges at comparable schools and then trying to predict their increases for the next year. The goal was to maintain the college's position in the pecking order of total charges. I learned that the most prestigious and desirable institutions have a good deal of information about the shape of the demand curve for the families seeking to obtain elite higher education for their offspring. These schools have the capacity to estimate with some precision how many applicants will go elsewhere for each additional dollar they charge in tuition and fees. Each sets its tuition so as to produce a targeted "yield"—the percentage of accepted students who actually enroll there. If in any year we over- or under-estimated the price changes made by the other schools, and we had moved up or down in rank, we corrected the following year by raising or lowering tuition by more or less to compensate. We essentially followed the price leadership of the wealthiest, most prestigious institutions.

Yes, all of the elite colleges and universities discount their rates. My alma mater, Oberlin College, provides financial aid for as many as 70% of its students. But this pricing system enables elite institutions to charge a premium to those families able to afford it. (By the way, research by members of the Williams College economics department several years ago showed that a trivial amount of that school's financial-aid expenditures went to educate low-income students; most financial aid went to middle- and working-class families. The structure of
Williams's financial-aid program is similar in its essentials to those at other elite schools.)

The results of this market pricing power are straightforward. First, and most significantly—given that 60% to 75% of college costs go to salary and benefits—is handsome compensation for senior faculty and administrators. In the not-so-distant past, the stereotypical scholar was a tweedy professor in a worn sports coat who did underpaid but satisfying work. Today, most junior faculty continue to receive relatively low pay. But senior, tenured faculty at elite schools are firmly entrenched in the well-compensated professional class (top salaries at elite schools often exceed $150,000; and for scholars in economics, business and law schools, earnings can be substantially in excess of that) with superior benefits, such as university-subsidized housing, lifetime heath care and seven-figure retirement accounts. Once tenure has been achieved, generally after less than ten years of work, top college teachers face no professional risk and, by and large, teach three or fewer courses a semester. Also, college faculty members usually receive free or highly subsidized higher education for their children—making them even less sensitive to the burden that college tuition and fees impose on other families.

Another significant result of colleges' ability to dictate pricing is what is referred to by higher-ed administrators as the "arms race," the constant effort to refurbish and build new physical facilities. Most elite universities have provided essentially the same program to the same number of students for decades—so why the constant perceived need to expand and upgrade buildings? Because the institutions have the spending capacity (which also comes from generous alumni), and construction provides an outlet for their competitive impulses.

Significantly, in my judgment endowments are under-spent. While the prevailing wisdom in higher education (purveyed principally by endowment investment managers and advisers) is that even the 5% endowment payout rate targeted by most schools threatens the preservation of capital, well-designed financial research shows that, particularly given that colleges are constantly fund raising for new endowment resources, higher spending rates are sound. It could be argued that the richest institutions—such as Harvard, Williams, Wellesley, Amherst, Yale and Princeton—might be free and operate from only endowment funds, if they chose to. Why don’t they? Because they don’t have to. There are qualified paying customers lined up at the door.

Given the nonprofit, tax-exempt status of colleges and universities, and the powerlessness of the market to control higher-education costs due to limited supply, it is incumbent upon the fiduciaries of the institutions with the largest endowments, their presidents and trustees, to focus on the higher social obligations of the schools that they lead. Our most prestigious colleges and universities are not simply corporations operated to exploit their pricing power for the financial benefit of their senior faculty and staff, and to build monuments to their alumni. Their leaders need to take a sharp pencil to their cost structures; raise their endowment payouts; end annual cost increases in excess of inflation; and rededicate themselves to providing opportunity to the talented regardless of means, enhancing social mobility and fostering the production of knowledge.

Mr. Manshel, an attorney who specializes in not-for-profit finance and governance, is executive vice president of Greater Jamaica Development Corp., a Jamaica, N.Y., nonprofit organization.
GWU students live up to first lady's volunteer challenge

By Jenna Johnson  
Washington Post Staff Writer  
Monday, April 5, 2010; B02

At the start of the school year, first lady Michelle Obama gave George Washington University a challenge: If the campus community logged 100,000 hours of volunteer service by May, she would speak at the school’s graduation ceremony on the Mall.

Time for FLOTUS to start drafting her speech. On Monday, the university will announce that it has met the goal, with nearly a month to spare.

More than 3,800 students, faculty, staff and even trustees took up the call. They dug their Foggy Bottom neighbors out of the snow after winter blizzards, spent spring break helping to rebuild New Orleans, gave a D.C. high school a makeover, led a Brownie troop, helped low-income families navigate government agencies to obtain critical services, taught Sudanese refugees in Nashville and organized a prom for the elderly in the District.

"We thought we could do it, and we did it," said Helen Cannaday Saulny, the school's vice president for student and academic support services. "It has been really inspiring to see our students, faculty and staff embrace this challenge."

Obama congratulated the university in a statement: "GW has demonstrated an amazing and ongoing commitment to public service. I look forward to addressing graduates on May 16. You've earned it!"

The first lady is also scheduled to give commencement addresses at the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff on May 8 and Anacostia Senior High School on June 11.

Obama issued the challenge while she and President Obama were participating in the first National Day of Service and Remembrance on Sept. 11. On that day, about half of GWU's freshman class volunteered around the District, painting a Habitat for Humanity house, collecting trash, weeding the Anacostia River watershed and assembling care packages for U.S. soldiers.

With the help of school officials, the first lady decided on a target of 100,000 hours. In the previous school year, undergraduate students had volunteered about 60,000 hours. The deadline: May 1.

The challenge was coordinated by GWU's Office of Community Service, but students, faculty and staff entered their hours on the Web site VolunteerMatch, which also helped them find projects in line with their interests. There were few limits on what types of service would qualify.

"Everyone is doing service," said student body president Julie Bindelglass. "There are so many service projects that are going on that it's hard to keep up with all of them."
In the past few years, the university has sought to make public service a key part of campus life. Some students spend their spring or winter breaks volunteering in other cities or countries. Such "alternative" breaks have become popular. This year, the school sent more than 300 students to 13 domestic and international locales, Saulny said. Fewer than 200 participated in seven trips last year.

Although the university trusts its students, Saulny said, officials double-checked the authenticity of about half of the hours before announcing victory. And although the school reached its goal, students and others on campus said they plan to continue volunteering this month. The final tally of hours and participants will be announced to the graduation audience, which is expected to exceed 25,000.

The community service is not a requirement, but each student was encouraged to pitch in about 10 hours. Many went way past that.

Bishara Addison, a senior in political science, logged more than 300 hours this school year. She took an alternative spring-break trip and volunteered at LIFT-DC, a student-run nonprofit organization that helps low-income families find work, secure housing and apply for public assistance, among other services.

"I love the one-on-one client service. I love that I can build relationships with my clients," she said. "I love the small achievements and wins" she helps clients make.

Divya Chalikonda, a sophomore, volunteered for more than 115 hours and led an alternative winter-break trip to New Orleans. She helped build a house in New Orleans during spring break. Corbb O'Connor, a senior, didn't realize until December that the hours he spent advocating for the blind and teaching at a camp for blind high school students could count toward the challenge. His total was 89.

"I never thought of it as public service. I do it because it's just something I do," said O'Connor, who is blind. "I haven't met anyone who went from zero to a hundred hours because of the challenge. A lot of people were already doing something."

What else happened during those 100,000 hours?

Money was raised for Haitian earthquake relief. Theodore Roosevelt High School in Northwest Washington was fixed up by painting hallways, cleaning stairwells and beautifying the grounds. Volunteers hung out with residents of the Vinson Hall Retirement Community.

"There has been a lot of talk about the 'Me Generation,'" Saulny said. "But I think we are seeing students say, 'It's not really all about me. It's part of their development.'"