Budget won’t allow for growth
By K.j. Williams
The Daily Reflector
Friday, April 15, 2011

Student enrollment has grown steadily at East Carolina University's College of Allied Health Services but state budget woes could put the brakes on that trend.

Steve Thomas, dean of the college, told the ECU's board of trustees' health sciences committee on Thursday that a hiring freeze on vacant professor positions likely will make it difficult to add classes to accommodate more students.

“If the budget is going to be tough on us, our enrollment will peak,” he said. “The people that have left, we're not going to be able to replace.”

Between the fall semester of 2005 and 2010, the number of students enrolled at the college grew from 565 to 803. The college trains health care professionals, offering programs for bachelor's, master's and doctorate degrees.

“We do have the ability to deal with target growth but because of the frozen positions. … we're pretty much frozen where we are,” Thomas said. “However we can maintain the level of enrollment that we currently have.”

Thomas said it's unclear how the college will handle upcoming semesters with teaching positions left vacant. Six faculty positions have been frozen due to the budget shortfall. Adjunct professors may be hired.

The state House of Representatives has proposed a $2.4 billion budget for the university system. That would mean a 15.5 percent cut to UNC's current budget. House leaders expect to vote on the budget in early May. It then will move to the Senate, where it likely will be revised before it receives final approval.

In other matters, the committee heard a presentation on the financial picture of ECU Physicians, the clinical practice for ECU’s Brody School of Medicine. The presentation reflected an improved outlook.

Brian Jowers, executive director of ECU Physicians, said that while there may be a deficit of about $400,000 — it could be less — it is an improvement over the previous fiscal year's $1.5 million deficit.

“So, I think we're on track,” he said. The fiscal year ends June 30.
ECU Physicians saw more patients in February and March, the reason for its improved financial picture, he said.

One reason that ECU Physicians has a deficit is its treatment of indigent and Medicaid patients.

However, the financial picture could get a boost if the federal government approves a joint request by ECU’s Brody School of Medicine and University of North Carolina Health Care to increase Medicaid reimbursements.

The change would allow doctors in those clinical practices to receive the upper payment limits for Medicaid. The option only is available for doctors at the medical practices of state-supported medical schools. UNC Health Care is affiliated with the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Medicine.

If the request wins approval, it would be retroactive to July 1, 2010, which Jowers said would put more money in the coffers of ECU Physicians.

In a separate meeting Thursday, the full ECU Board of Trustees reviewed the preliminary campus master plan. Released last month, the plan outlines potential expansions to the campus through 2025, including a new student center, a new biosciences building, parking decks and increased pedestrian pathways.

Chairman David Brody said there is an intent to preserve the green spaces at the core of campus while still allowing for growth.

The plan is not final and feedback is still being sought. Visit the website at www.ecu.edu/masterplan.

Jackie Drake contributed to this report.
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April tends to be an anxious time for those concerned about the safety of students in America's school buildings. It is an unexplained coincidence that several of the most deadly events in the nation's history — tragedies on a massive scale — have unfolded during this month, as the cold depths of winter are replaced with the warm promise of spring.

Yet, like the changing seasons, the push for action in the wake of the murders committed at schoolhouses and college campuses has been fleeting as urgency is replaced by complacency. It is important to remember the lives of those lost in these horrific events and to resolve a renewed effort to improve communication, preparation and legislation in the interest of public safety.

Saturday marks the fourth anniversary of the shooting at Virginia Tech, an act that still defies comprehension. On a blustery Monday morning on the campus in southwest Virginia, a senior English student killed 32 students and instructors and wounded 17 more before turning the gun on himself. His actions had raised the concerns of faculty and administrators, but he was still able to carry out his deadly plans.

Next week, on Wednesday, the town of Columbine, Colo., marks the 12th anniversary of a high school shooting that shocked the nation. Two seniors, armed to the teeth, gunned down 12 students and one teacher before killing themselves. The troubled teens had hoped bombs set in the cafeteria would kill hundreds.

Those represent two of the most extreme cases of school violence in American history and are the worst-case scenarios for officials attempting to prevent such tragedy. Though distinctly different, there are common strategies that may have made a difference.

The first, of course, is the need for open communication, especially between parents and children, since it identifies warning signs long before trouble. Emergency planning is key, and Pitt County has been fortunate to see both the public schools and East Carolina University give greater emphasis to preparation in recent years. Finally, lawmakers are right to see legislative remedies that protect the Second Amendment rights of responsible gun owners while ensuring that deadly weapons are kept away from those who lack the capacity for rational judgment.

There is no certain way to prevent a tragedy, but progressive action can help provide greater protection to students. The events of this month should not be forgotten, but should instead serve as a powerful reminder of what's at stake.
Edward Douglas Crotts
Obit

Edward Douglas Crotts, 59, died Wednesday, April 13, 2011 at the East Carolina Heart Institute at Pitt County Memorial Hospital. The funeral service will be conducted Saturday at 2 p.m. in the Wilkerson Funeral Chapel. Burial will follow in Pinewood Memorial Park. The family will receive friends Saturday from 1 p.m. until the funeral hour at the funeral home.

Ed was born on Oct. 5, 1951 in Siler City. He grew up in Charlotte and moved to Greenville in 1969 to attend East Carolina University. He received a BS in Environmental Health in 1974 and an MS in Environmental Health in 1981. Ed was a member of Sigma Phi Epsilon Fraternity. He was an instructor in the Department of Health Education and Promotion at ECU.

Ed was preceded in death by his father, Douglas Crotts. He is survived by his wife of 29 years, Debra Crotts; two sons, Samuel Lewis Crotts and Maxwell Farrell Crotts, all of Greenville; mother, Eugenia Crotts; sister, Suzanne Crotts, of Charlotte; a number of nieces and nephews; and his beloved dog, Bella.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to ECU's ECO – Pirates, c/o College Health and Human Performance, Minges Coliseum, Greenville, NC 27858.


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In the mid 1970s, ECU ventured to Chapel Hill to play its arch rival in football. Only this time it was different. We had never beaten North Carolina. Dr. Leo Jenkins had to send someone in to talk to the team before the game. Dr. Clinton Pruitt, chairman of the Department of Psychology, told the players the news that Coach Clarence Stasavich, ECU's athletic director, had died that morning of a heart attack.

Jenkins and Stasavich shared the dream of someday beating Carolina. Pruitt said afterward, “Our men, though out weighed by this massive ACC team, walked out of the locker room grinding glass with their teeth.”

Their hearts pumping on pure adrenaline, those players felt no pain that day making history and beating Carolina 38-17. But wait, the drama didn't end there. After the game Jenkins, who was sitting in the chancellor's box, got up and started removing his coat and tie. To the amazement of everyone there, he had on a gold T-shirt under his dress shirt with the purple words, “Now do you believe,” printed on it.

At that instant, “Leo the Lion” became a folk legend. It was nothing more, nothing less than an academy award performance by Greenville's folk hero Dr. Leo W. Jenkins, chancellor of East Carolina University.

VAN BROWN
Greenville
Lefty’s all right: Driesell speaks to GGSC
By Jim Gentry
The Daily Reflector
Friday, April 15, 2011

As a high school senior, Terry Holland knew where he wanted to play collegiate basketball.

Despite the protests of his mother, who wanted him to go to Davidson, Holland, now the director of athletics at East Carolina, was determined to play for Wake Forest.

Then Davidson coach Charles “Lefty” Driesell knew how to change his mind. Driesell made a recruiting trip to the Holland household on prom night and offered the youngster the use of his car.

It wasn’t until he got to the dance that Holland figured out Driesell’s plan.

“I grabbed those keys and took off, I was so glad to be getting away from him,” said Holland as he introduced Driesell during a meeting of the Greater Greenville Sports Club on Thursday. “We get to the prom and we’re dancing. And then it hits me that I’ve left Lefty at home with my mother.”

By the time he got home that night, Holland was well on his way to becoming a Davidson Wildcat.

Driesell, who compiled a 786-394 record in a 41-year career that included runs at Maryland, James Madison and Georgia State, told several stories about Holland and other former pupils as he addressed the crowd of about 100 at the Greenville Hilton.
He shared a story about his time at Maryland when his team was playing on the road against a Holland-coached Virginia team. The Cavalier fans donned masks of Driesell which had an empty fuel gauge printed on his head.

“I coached two Rhodes Scholars,” Driesell said. “Dean (Smith) never coached two Rhodes Scholars. Terry never coached two Rhodes Scholars. “But I coached two Rhodes Scholars, and I have an empty sign on my head.”

While with the Terrapins, Driesell started the tradition of Midnight Madness practices. “I always made the players run a mile the first day at practice,” Driesell said. “So it screwed up our practice. So I said, ‘Let's run a mile tonight at one minute after midnight so we'll have a good practice the next day.’

“So we did and we had 500 to 1,000 students watching us run a mile.” Driesell said the number of spectators grew to 8,000 the following year and 14,000 the next.

Among the other topics Driesell discussed:
Legends: “Recruiting Moses Malone, who instead turned pro: “He visited 16 or 20 schools. In fact, he sent me a pineapple from Hawaii.”
Coaching salaries: “My salary my first year at Davidson was $6,200. When I went to Maryland nine years later, it was $14,000. Now (current Maryland coach) Gary Williams makes $2 million.
People ask me, ‘Would you go back to coaching?’ I say, ‘Absolutely.’”

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"Merry Wives of Windsor" starts today

By Kelley Kirk
The Daily Reflector
Friday, April 15, 2011

A play that uses sarcasm, stereotypes and innuendo to tell a story sounds like a contemporary production. No surprise, however, that such a story was told by William Shakespeare in “The Merry Wives of Windsor.”

The 400-year-old play is a discourse on marriage, love, jealousy, revenge, class and wealth.

East Carolina University's School of Theatre and Dance will present “The Merry Wives of Windsor” at 8 p.m. today-Tuesday, except Sunday when the show will be at 2 p.m. When the curtain draws on closing night, set designer Bob Alpers will have completed his final show as ECU's resident set designer. Alpers will retire officially on June 22.

“His level of scene design is a notch above what you see in college productions,” said Jeff Woodruff, managing director of the School of Theater and Dance. “We've been very fortunate to have him and people actually notice his work.”

What Woodruff means is that Alpers' set designs are memorable. He explained that a designer needs to be in sync with the production's director to interpret and design according to the director's vision.

Alpers holds a master's degree in directing and set design. “I originally wanted to be a director,” Alpers said. “I got interested in scenic design in grad school.”
In his design role, Alpers works closely with a production's director to assist in creating the right stage presence. For “The Merry Wives of Windsor,” Alpers worked alongside Director John Shearin.

“I kind of have a sense for what the director is wanting to with a particular scene,” he said. “I think most of my designs are actor-friendly. They are blockable and you can move around easily.”

While he's never created a set for “The Merry Wives of Windsor,” he's done 18 or 19 Shakespeare plays in the past. “I've repeated some and I've had the opportunity to design some of the great ones,” Alpers said.

His professional design credits include Wolf Trap Farm Park, Stage West, Villanova Shakespeare Summer Repertory, Fulton Summer Repertory and WCTB-TV in Boston. In his role as resident designer for the ECU/Loessin Playhouse he creates five to nine sets a year.

In 1990, Alpers received a Fulbright Grant to tour educational institutions and theater companies in China, Hong Kong and Taiwan. “I was there for most of the summer,” he said. “It really energized me for several years, seeing the type of detail work that their designers achieve.” He added that the trip reinforced that designing is finding the specific thread that the play needs.

After his retirement from ECU, Alpers said he'll continue to live in the area with hopes of doing some freelance work in Raleigh and possibly Wilmington. You may even see his designs on stage again at ECU.

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Why call it a hate crime, anyhow?
Submitted by Eric Ferreri on 04/14/2011 - 16:45

It wasn't a hate crime. In fact, it wasn't a crime after all.

That's the takeaway from the false police report filed by UNC-Chapel Hill freshman Quinn Matney, whose claim that he was assaulted apparently due to his sexual orientation sent the campus into a brief frenzy.

But here's a question I haven't yet answered: why even use the "hate crime" classification? To what end?

Here's the deal: North Carolina has no specific law dealing with hate crimes. That means had Matney's claim been true and police had made an arrest, that person could not be charged with a hate crime under state law.

But universities that receive federal Title IV student financial assistance money must conform to the Higher Education Opportunity Act, one requirement of which being an annual report of crimes identified in the Clery act, which requires universities to report crime statistics.

A hate crime on the UNC-CH campus would have met the Clery crime definition of a hate crime and as such would have been included in the university's annual report, said Jeff McCracken, the campus police chief.

Reporting it as such doesn't automatically trigger any action, McCracken said, but would allow local police to request FBI assistance in investigating the situation, and federal charges could be filed.

Of course, it's all moot now.

McCracken said Thursday his agency will likely charge Matney with filing a false report. It isn't clear when Matney will be charged, though. For now, the student has returned home to Asheville to be with his family.
NAP TIME Anxiety is pervasive about apathy among business majors. Above, a management class at Radford University in Virginia.

The Default Major: Skating Through B-School
By DAVID GLENN
This article is a collaboration between The New York Times and The Chronicle of Higher Education, a daily source of news, opinion and commentary for professors, administrators and others interested in academe. David Glenn is a senior writer at The Chronicle covering teaching and curriculum.

PAUL M. MASON does not give his business students the same exams he gave 10 or 15 years ago. “Not many of them would pass,” he says. Dr. Mason, who teaches economics at the University of North Florida, believes his students are just as intelligent as they’ve always been. But many of them don’t read their textbooks, or do much of anything else that their parents would have called studying. “We used to complain that K-12 schools didn’t hold students to high standards,” he says with a sigh. “And here we are doing the same thing ourselves.”

That might sound like a kids-these-days lament, but all evidence suggests that student disengagement is at its worst in Dr. Mason’s domain: undergraduate business education.
Business majors spend less time preparing for class than do students in any other broad field, according to the most recent National Survey of Student Engagement: nearly half of seniors majoring in business say they spend fewer than 11 hours a week studying outside class. In their new book “Academically Adrift: Limited Learning on College Campuses,” the sociologists Richard Arum and Josipa Roksa report that business majors had the weakest gains during the first two years of college on a national test of writing and reasoning skills. And when business students take the GMAT, the entry examination for M.B.A. programs, they score lower than students in every other major.

This is not a small corner of academe. The family of majors under the business umbrella — including finance, accounting, marketing, management and “general business” — accounts for just over 20 percent, or more than 325,000, of all bachelor’s degrees awarded annually in the United States, making it the most popular field of study.

Brand-name programs — the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, the University of Notre Dame Mendoza College of Business, and a few dozen others — are full of students pulling 70-hour weeks, if only to impress the elite finance and consulting firms they aspire to join. But get much below BusinessWeek’s top 50, and you’ll hear pervasive anxiety about student apathy, especially in “soft” fields like management and marketing, which account for the majority of business majors.

Scholars in the field point to three sources of trouble. First, as long ago as 1959, a Ford Foundation report warned that too many undergraduate business students chose their majors “by default.” Business programs also attract more than their share of students who approach college in purely instrumental terms, as a plausible path to a job, not out of curiosity about, say, Ronald Coase’s theory of the firm.

“Business education has come to be defined in the minds of students as a place for developing elite social networks and getting access to corporate recruiters,” says Rakesh Khurana, a professor at Harvard Business School who is a prominent critic of the field. It’s an attitude that Dr. Khurana first saw in M.B.A. programs but has migrated, he says, to the undergraduate level.

Second, in management and marketing, no strong consensus has emerged about what students ought to learn or how they ought to learn it. And finally, with large student-faculty ratios and no lab equipment, business has historically been cheaper to operate than most departments. Cynics say many colleges are content.

“At the big public universities, the administrations need us to be credible, but I’m not sure that they need us to be very good,” says J. David Hunger, a scholar-in-
residence in the management program at the College of St. Benedict and St. John’s University, in Collegeville, Minn. “They need us to be cash cows.”

IN “Academically Adrift,” Dr. Arum and Dr. Roksa looked at the performance of students at 24 colleges and universities. At the beginning of freshman year and end of sophomore year, students in the study took the Collegiate Learning Assessment, a national essay test that assesses students’ writing and reasoning skills. During those first two years of college, business students’ scores improved less than any other group’s. Communication, education and social-work majors had slightly better gains; humanities, social science, and science and engineering students saw much stronger improvement.

What accounts for those gaps? Dr. Arum and Dr. Roksa point to sheer time on task. Gains on the C.L.A. closely parallel the amount of time students reported spending on homework. Another explanation is the heavy prevalence of group assignments in business courses: the more time students spent studying in groups, the weaker their gains in the kinds of skills the C.L.A. measures.

Group assignments are a staple of management and marketing education. In dorm lounges and library basements around the country, small cells of 20-year-olds are analyzing why a company has succeeded or failed (Drexel University); team-writing 15-page digital marketing plans (James Madison University); or preparing 45-minute PowerPoint presentations on one of the three primary functions of management (Tulane University).

You can see the typical model in Angela D. Stanton’s marketing research course at Radford University, a small public institution in southwestern Virginia. Radford students’ SAT scores are close to the national median, and its proportion of business majors (19 percent) is also close to the national average. For the most part, the business program does not aspire to send anyone to Wall Street. Its graduates tend to find jobs at banks, insurance companies and government agencies in Virginia.

The charismatic Dr. Stanton peppers her lectures with anecdotes about her past work in the corporate world. In her marketing research class, she has parceled her students into teams of four or five, and over the semester those teams are expected to write a series of reports on college students’ perceptions of online marketing. Students don’t compose a complete paper of their own.

The project’s first “deliverable” is to conduct and analyze a survey of nonbusiness students on campus, asking them questions like this: “What does it say about a company or brand if they are not involved with social networking sites like Facebook or Twitter?”
The pedagogical theory is that managers need to function in groups, so a management education without such experiences would be like medical training without a residency. While some group projects are genuinely challenging, the consensus among students and professors is that they are one of the elements of business that make it easy to skate through college.

Donald R. Bacon, a business professor at the University of Denver, studied group projects at his institution and found a perverse dynamic: the groups that functioned most smoothly were often the ones where the least learning occurred. That’s because students divided up the tasks in ways they felt comfortable with. The math whiz would do the statistical work, the English minor drafted the analysis. And then there’s the most common complaint about groups: some shoulder all the work, the rest do nothing.

“I understand that teamwork is important, but in my opinion they need to do more to deal with the problem of slackers,” says Justin Triplett, a 2010 Radford graduate who is completing his first year in Radford’s M.B.A. program. From his perch as a teaching assistant, he estimates that a third of students in the business school don’t engage with their schoolwork. At Radford, seniors in business invest on average 3.64 hours a week preparing for class, according to the National Survey of Student Engagement.

Jerry M. Kopf, a management professor at Radford, was a first-generation college student like many of his students. He grew up poor in Arkansas and dropped out of college before returning and completing school at age 30. So he has a tolerance, even an affinity, for students who have trouble finding their way.

And yet, when he talks about students who don’t invest energy in his classes — not a majority, he stresses, but a persistent minority — Dr. Kopf’s eyes go distant. “We’ve got students who don’t read, and grow up not reading,” he says. “There are too many other things competing for their time. The frequency and quantity of drinking keeps getting higher. We have issues with depression. Getting students alert and motivated — even getting them to class, to be honest with you — it’s a challenge.”

One senior accounting major at Radford, who asked not to be named so as not to damage his job prospects, says he goes to class only to take tests or give presentations. “A lot of classes I’ve been exposed to, you just go to class and they do the PowerPoint from the book,” he says. “It just seems kind of pointless to go when (a) you’re probably not going to be paying much attention anyway and (b) it would probably be worth more of your time just to sit with your book and read it.”
How much time does he spend reading textbooks?

“Well, this week I don’t have any tests, so probably zero,” he says. “Next week I’ll have a test, so maybe 10 hours then.”

He adds: “It seems like now, every take-home test you get, you can just go and Google. If the question is from a test bank, you can just type the text in, and somebody out there will have it and you can just use that.”

This is not senioritis, he says: this is the way all four years have been. In a typical day, “I just play sports, maybe go to the gym. Eat. Probably drink a little bit. Just kind of goof around all day.” He says his grade-point average is 3.3.

Faye Gilbert, dean of Radford’s College of Business and Economics, has no doubt that most students in her program work hard, but she acknowledges that professors are concerned. A faculty committee recently established several dozen learning goals in each major — and if classes need to be made tougher to make sure students meet those goals, that is what will happen, Dr. Gilbert says. “Can they use a financial statement to make a decision? Can they use statistics to inform a decision? Can they — which sounds deceptively simple — define a problem? Can they look at an ethical dilemma from many perspectives and define the ethical and legal components of that problem? It’s not easy to measure these things, but we’re going to try.”

If one measures success by income, Radford’s graduates fare decently. In a typical year, 65 percent had jobs three months after graduation, with a mean starting salary just above $40,000. On average nationally, business students enter the work force with higher starting salaries than humanities and social science majors. By mid-career, however, some of those liberal arts majors, including political science and philosophy majors, have closed the gap.

IN a dimly lighted classroom at Ohio University, a public institution of 17,245 undergraduates, 20 students are spending a long evening preparing for final exams. They’ve gravitated to this room because this is where they’ve spent the entire winter quarter, in what Ohio calls its “cluster” program — one term of integrated courses that give fledgling business students an introduction to accounting, finance, management and marketing. Tomorrow’s final is in finance, and the students, mostly sophomores, are sweating over practice questions. (“If you invested some money in a fund seven years ago that offered a fixed 5.99 percent nominal interest rate with quarterly compounding . . .”)
“I know this is going to be tricky, but I think I’ve learned from the mistakes I made on the last finance test,” says Adrianna Berry, a junior who started out in marketing but added a second, more challenging major — management information systems — after an injury forced her from the swim team. In contrast to finance, she says, the marketing final she took earlier in the week consisted mostly of multiple-choice questions that had already appeared on previous tests this quarter. For the management final, students could bring a cheat sheet. Ms. Berry’s sheet, in tiny multicolored script, is a thing of beauty: the five-factor model of personality. Bounded rationality. Anchoring bias. Distributive versus procedural theories of fairness.

It is near-universal student folklore that accounting and finance are where the hard work happens. Accounting majors write cash-flow statements and conduct audits. Finance majors learn how to design investment portfolios and (one hopes) how not to destroy the global economy with collateralized debt obligations.

For a career-oriented major, management strikes many business educators as too theoretical and amorphous — a potpourri of psychology, economics, game theory, ethics and international relations. Walk down the hall from Ms. Berry’s classroom to Ohio’s equity-management club, which is dominated by finance majors, and you’ll hear complaints that management courses are irrelevant to the real world. One recent class asked groups to write short papers on the theories of leadership exemplified in the movie “Apollo 13.”

Ohio’s business dean, Hugh Sherman, says that some of the most important learning in his program happens outside the classroom. The equity-management club oversees more than a million dollars of university investments. The business school’s best marketing students are invited to join a sales team that competes nationally. Both clubs engage students for many hours each week, with no course credit involved. Dr. Sherman concedes, however, that some students go through his business school without such experiences. In particular, it has been hard to devise projects for management majors. Partly for that reason, Ohio’s business school has begun to strongly encourage management students to double-major in a field with more currency in the job market, like finance or information systems.

Some believe it is a mistake to fetishize job preparation and the “rigor” of fields like accounting and finance. Those departments might demand more hours from their students, but they don’t necessarily provide well-rounded educations, says Henry Mintzberg, a professor at McGill University in Montreal who is a dogged critic of traditional business programs. He says it is a “travesty” to offer vocational fields like finance or marketing to 18-year-olds. Instead, he supports a humanistic,
multidisciplinary model of management education. The diversity of topics reflected on Adrianna Berry’s cheat sheet is a feature, not a bug, he says.

“The object of undergraduate business education is to educate people, not to give them a lot of functional business stuff.”

A coming report from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching praises 10 American colleges of business as models for integrating the liberal arts and practical training.

One of the institutions praised is Babson College, a business school in Massachusetts. Its president, Leonard A. Schlesinger, says that concrete business skills tend to expire in five years or so as technology and organizations change. History and philosophy, on the other hand, provide the kind of contextual knowledge and reasoning skills that are indispensable for business students.

“If we didn’t provide that kind of timeless knowledge to our students, we would be providing a seriously inadequate education,” Dr. Schlesinger says. At the same time, Babson requires an ambitious practicum experience. In groups of 30, first-year Babson students plan and create actual small businesses, with real money at stake. Last spring’s businesses sold flip-flops, speakers and chocolates. Any profits at the end of the year are donated to charity.

“We take student teams through the entire cycle from idea creation to business creation to business dissolution,” Dr. Schlesinger says. “For some students, they confront all sorts of things about their interactions with others and about themselves. They learn things that shape the way they attack the world when they get out of here.”

In the University of Virginia’s business school, which is often ranked in the top five, students spend the entire junior year in integrated, team-taught courses with as many as three instructors in the classroom at once. On a recent morning, a strategy professor led 40 students through a case study of the missteps that led to Arthur Andersen’s debacles a decade ago with Enron and WorldCom. When it came time to discuss the details of the accounting fraud, she handed the baton to a colleague who is an accounting professor.

The students in the room know they’ll be grilled on each day’s case study. And when they hand in papers, they’re marked up twice: once for content by a professor with specialized expertise, and once for writing quality by a business-communication professor.
Most business schools can only look on with envy. Virginia’s integrated course system is possible because the business school is swimming in money, thanks in part to a series of corporate sponsorships (the first page of this course’s syllabus carries a Rolls-Royce logo). But even with abundant resources, it was a challenge to persuade faculty members to do team teaching, according to the dean, Carl P. Zeithaml. Few instructors wanted to lose control of their syllabuses or lectures. Only after a trial period did the full faculty approve the design.

Many schools are groping their way toward experiments like those at Virginia and Babson, prodded in part by new accreditation requirements. Since 2003, the more prestigious business accreditor, the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, has expected departments to set learning objectives and to adjust their curriculums to help students reach them. But the association has given colleges broad latitude to define and measure objectives, which are often vague (Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio, for one, has chosen this management-concept goal: “Students will be able to understand the complexities of decision making”).

To Dr. Mason of North Florida, such efforts are also fighting upstream against the tendency to dumb down courses. Along with two colleagues, he developed a game-theory model of the “market” for courses. The model predicts that, over time, courses will inexorably become easier as students (even the conscientious ones) choose courses where they can expect higher grades, and professors (even the most dedicated) turn to strategies that they expect will improve their student evaluations.

It’s a simplified model — it assumes students are motivated only by grades and instructors by evaluations. But Dr. Mason believes it offers a fair approximation of reality. In a 2003 paper in the Economics of Education Review, he buttressed that model with a national survey of 259 business professors who had been teaching for at least 10 years. On average, respondents said they had reduced the math and analytic-thinking requirements in their courses. In exchange, they had increased the number of requirements related to computer skills and group presentations.

Dr. Mason says that without some kind of hard constraint — like the licensure tests that accounting and finance students must face — courses inexorably become less rigorous.

And what about employers? What do they want?

According to national surveys, they want to hire 22-year-olds who can write coherently, think creatively and analyze quantitative data, and they’re perfectly happy to hire English or biology majors. Most Ivy League universities and elite liberal arts colleges, in fact, don’t even offer undergraduate business majors.
J. David Hunger, the St. John’s fellow, wrote a monograph about the travails of undergraduate business education back in 1978. He has never quite resolved his ambivalent feelings about the field. “At some times in my life, I’ve argued that we don’t really need a business major,” he says.

That’s not to suggest that Dr. Hunger isn’t gung-ho about business education. “We should have a business minor that would be offered to everybody, or even required,” he says. “But I realize now that that’s not going to happen. Students are demanding these majors, and we have to learn how to do them right.”
Colleges focus on fitness
By Vicky Hallett
“How many more do we have?” trainer Angel Mann shouted to a dozen students at Howard University. The correct answer was “Eight,” which the group panted back in unison while pumping their knees in the air. Twice a week, Mann takes over the common room at Tubman Quad, a freshman dorm, to lead an hour of aerobics, strength training, core work and dance.

It’s probably not the class most high school seniors envision when thinking about their collegiate careers. But it’s a vital resource for members of the Howard community, including 18-year-old freshman Neena Speer. “If I’m on my own, I don’t work out as hard,” says Speer, who credits regular attendance with helping her drop from a size 18 to 14 over the past few months.

In a society that’s heavier than ever, students remain as busy as ever, so it’s up to colleges to figure out how to make physical activity an integral part of campus life. A few decades ago, most recreation programs consisted of intramural sports teams, a pool and a weight room. But from a survey of area schools, it’s clear they’ve graduated to gleaming fitness facilities, group exercise schedules and even climbing walls.

There’s a 55-foot-tall one standing outside the University of Maryland’s Eppley Recreation Center. “It’s another option that’s valuable and a different experience,”
says Mike Phaneuf, assistant director of the challenge course program. Students looking for outdoor education can take trips across the region to go kayaking and hiking, or they can ride to the student-staffed bike shop, which will fix their wheels (and teach them how to do it themselves) for free.

Or they can always go inside the 230,000-square-foot facility packed with every traditional kind of cardio and weight machine, multiple pools, racquetball and squash courts and a table tennis room.

At George Mason University, there has also been a push to expand offerings in recent years. That now includes a martial arts program with classes in Krav Maga, an Israeli self-defense system, and Brazilian jiu-jitsu, as well as Walking Wednesday, a group stroll around campus that meets at the clock tower at noon.

“We have a number of people we have to serve,” says Ethan Carter, the school’s director of fitness. “This is a buffet that’s good for everyone.”

‘This is a recruiting tool’
Offering facilities and services costs money, but for the most part, students use them for free (not counting tuition, of course). The exceptions are specialized group exercise classes and personal training, which usually come with a nominal fee. “If you pay for something, you’ll do it,” says Kelly Oddy, assistant director for recreational sports and fitness at American University, which charges $65 per semester for a group exercise class pass.

And when they do it, they see results, school fitness directors say. The goal isn’t to force the entire student body to become jocks, but to get the benefits of healthier living. “They feel good,” Carter says. “They bring a better attitude to the classroom.”

Student satisfaction numbers have soared at Johns Hopkins University since the O’Connor Recreation Center opened in 2002, vastly increasing activity outlets for students.

“This is a recruiting tool,” says William Harrington, senior associate director of the department of athletics and recreation. Right then, a tour group marches in to marvel at the cardio room with floor-to-ceiling windows, the indoor track and, of course, the climbing wall. (“I’d totally do that,” says 17-year-old Patrick Mullins, a New Yorker who was visiting schools with his dad.)

How much he’d be working out or where never occurred to 18-year-old Abdul Alimi, a U-Md. freshman, when he was applying to schools. But he’s hooked on playing pickup basketball and lifting between classes at the recreation center
between classes. “I’m here almost every day. It’s a relaxing environment,” he says. “It’s helping me stay here.”

‘I don’t have time’
No matter what schools offer, they’re competing against students’ hectic schedules. Haley Crock, a 20-year-old sophomore at U-Md., said the spectacular natatorium was one of the reasons she came to College Park. But laps are rarely in the cards. “I’m a mechanical engineer, so I don’t have time,” says Crock, even though her dorm is “right there.”

That’s why schools have also begun to take fitness to students. In addition to those free classes at Tubman Quad, Howard puts some pieces of exercise equipment in dorms. Hopkins does the the same thing. “As open as we are, from 6 a.m. to midnight, students want more convenience,” says Anne Irwin Tillinghast, assistant director of fitness.

Even though Catholic University’s student fitness center is smack in the middle of student housing — “They can roll out of bed and take 50 steps,” says director Marie Kennedy — she still visits dorms to teach students to exercise wherever they are. “I try to encourage them to take study breaks by doing walking lunges down the hallway and doing arm curls with a chemistry book,” she says.

While all of these new facilities and programs may be inspiring students to work up a sweat, sometimes what’s really needed is an old-school approach to exercise. When Catholic President John Garvey arrived on campus this fall, he noticed one thing conspicuously missing: a basketball hoop. “I thought, ‘What’s up with this?’ So I walked around campus and said I want a hoop right there,” he says.

Catholic is planning to add volleyball courts this spring. After all, even if they’re growing up, kids still like to play.

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