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Editorial: ECU needs investment, not cuts
Sunday, April 15, 2012

East Carolina University Chancellor Steve Ballard sounded a determined tone this week in his annual State of the University address, pledging that the school’s core mission would thrive despite the threat of further shrinking budgets. Uncertainty over the state budget continues to complicate East Carolina’s work and its ability to plan for the future.

While Ballard’s confidence is reassuring, North Carolina cannot continue to reduce spending on higher education without severely harming a university system that is one of the state’s most critical resources. East Carolina will persevere through any hardship, but the General Assembly must recognize the severe setbacks they are handing to UNC schools and the communities they serve.

Never before had Ballard addressed a community so concerned about its future as he did on Tuesday. For instance, the ongoing work of the Program Prioritization Committee has created tension among faculty and administrators, with some programs facing smaller budgets or elimination. However, it is a matter of annual appropriations from Raleigh that have cultivated particular uncertainty on campus and the main thrust of the chancellor’s speech.

East Carolina has seen its funding cut by $120 million in the past four years, including a $49 million cut this year. Republicans in control of the General Assembly see the University of North Carolina system as a prime target for cost savings, regardless of the real-time impact of those decisions.

That, in turn, leaves member campuses to use higher tuition as a way to recoup state funding losses and continue the academic programs and research initiatives that serve the whole of North Carolina. As the cost of
attending college rises, more qualified, capable students find a university education moving further from their reach. Alternatively, those students who can assume debt thus leave Greenville with a diploma in hand and a mountain of financial obligations on their backs. Neither is acceptable.

Nor can the school retain some of its best and brightest faculty without competitive compensation. Private institutions and other state schools are stealing away some of the strongest instructors, talented and promising individuals likely to grow into leadership roles were they to stay. It is another cost of budget cuts.

North Carolina is right to focus on greater efficiency and lower spending in state government, but not at the expense of a tremendous resource. Education remains the best investment for public money and lawmakers must not forget that when they return to Raleigh later this year.
Pitt salaries lower than state’s average
By Bobby Burns and K.J. Williams
Monday, April 16, 2012

The average weekly wage workers in Pitt County earn is lower than North Carolina’s average but higher than the wage in most surrounding counties, state data show.

As the Tuesday deadline to pay state and federal income taxes nears, the average weekly wage local workers earn was $733, according to the most recent data available from the N.C. Division of Employment Security. That translates into an annual salary of $38,116.

That wage is $76 a week less than the state’s average of $809, and $161 less than the average weekly salary of $894 in Wake County, home to the state capital and one of the state’s most vibrant economies.

Local wage earners who agreed to discuss their salaries with The Daily Reflector said they were satisfied with their jobs but did not think their pay reflected the level of responsibility their positions required.

Michael Vann, 40, co-owner of InTone Fitness, makes about $30,000 annually.

“You don’t make a lot of money owning your own business,” he said, adding, “I enjoy what I do very, very much.”

Vann and his wife, who also works, have two young daughters.
“The goal in five to six years is to make $40,000 to $45,000, but with the economy the way it is, it’s going to be tough,” Vann said. “Our kind of business is up-and-down, up-and-down; it’s never really constant. And that’s the challenge.”

At the Pitt County Register of Deeds office, Deborah Barrington, 59, who has held the office of register of deeds since 2009, also hopes that her paycheck will get a boost when the economy rebounds. She makes $58,368 annually.

“If the economy were good, I would go to the (county) commissioners and I would ask for a salary increase,” she said. “With the experience and the responsibility I have on my shoulders, it’s not enough.”

Still Barrington, who is single, enjoys her job overseeing a staff of eight who are the custodians for public records in the county.

The county’s average weekly wage, compiled from employer reports in all public and private sector fields except agriculture, is higher than weekly averages in all but one of the counties that border Pitt.

Of those, Greene County had the lowest average weekly wage at $560, followed by Martin at $605, Lenoir at $632, Beaufort at $642, Edgecombe at $661 and Wilson at $722. Workers in Craven County earned an average weekly salary of $770.

The numbers are compiled from reports employers must provide for the state’s unemployment insurance program, said James Kleckley, director of the Bureau of Business Research at East Carolina University’s College of Business.

Kleckley, an economist, said the numbers only are averages. They do not show the highs and lows in each field and do not include employee benefits or employer profits.

A public employee database compiled by The Daily Reflector and figures compiled by Pitt Community College offer more insight into local salaries and how they vary from the county mean of $38,116.

The database of more than 12,000 workers shows that annual salaries range from about $15,000 for a teaching assistant job and $25,000 for a refuse collector, to $35,000 for a police officer or firefighter, to more than $300,000 for ECU’s chancellor and athletic director and more than $1 million for a medical school surgeon.
The database includes employees from ECU, PCC, the City of Greenville, GUC, Pitt Greenville Airport, Pitt County and Pitt County Schools and is available at reflector.com/salaries.

PCC compiled a breakdown of starting salary ranges in the career fields for which it offers training.

Careers at the lower end of the scale include administrative support positions where starting salaries range from $18,500 to $30,500, child care from $15,485 to $22,685 and emergency medical technicians from $18,910 to $25,760.

Medical fields comprise many of the higher-paying careers, like nuclear medicine technology where starting salaries range from $36,629 to $45,000, medical sonography from $38,260 to $52,830 and occupational therapy from $36,300 to $54,140.

The salary ranges were based on PCC instructor interviews and websites with salary information for North Carolina.

The newspaper asked for salary information from the county’s largest private employers and many smaller operations, but most declined to participate in the survey.

The 2010 U.S. Census also reports that Pitt County salaries lag behind the state. Per capita income here from all sources was $21,935 versus $24,745 for the state. The median household income in 2010 was $38,592 compared to $45,570 for the state.

Persons living below poverty level was 23.9 percent, versus 15.5 in the state. Poverty level annual income for a family of four is $22,000, according to the federal standards.

Educators are among workers who say their salary range is at odds with the scope of their jobs.

Cathy Kirkland, 45, has worked in education for 22 years.

This year, she became principal of Eastern Elementary School in Greenville, after years of teaching and working as an assistant principal. Kirkland, who is married, makes $55,784 annually.

She said her job carries a lot of responsibility.

“It’s not what I should earn, I can honestly say that,” Kirkland said, adding that her husband’s salary is higher than hers.
“I think if I had to live on my own, I would be concerned about what I make.”

Kirkland said the profession fulfills her in other ways. “It’s what I was meant to do,” she said. “I do it more for the children than the money.”

Maria Hammack, 28, a deputy register of deeds in Pitt County, said her $28,719 annual salary is fair, considering that she doesn’t have her bachelor’s degree. And, she enjoys her work.

“It has given me a lot of experience and I have learned a lot about how to handle vital records that are very important to the public,” she said.

Hammack, who is married, said she will graduate from ECU in May, and that could lead to higher pay.

No matter the salary, today’s workers generally are glad to be employed. Seasonally adjusted unemployment figures of data released on April 5 show that 9.6 percent of the county’s workforce was out of a job in February, down from 10 percent in January and 10.5 percent in February 2011.

Statistics show that 8,140 of the county’s 84,784 potential workers were unemployed. And that is just the ones who were actively looking for a job, Kleckley said. It doesn’t take into account the number of able-bodied people who have stopped searching for work.

Kleckley said Pitt County benefits from a mix of industry. Having a major medical facility, a university and several industrial employers helps maintain the local salary base, he said.

In general, some positions at a major medical facility or university, are going to be higher-paid. In many ways, these jobs provide the core of employment for Pitt County, he said.

And this can be a double-edged sword.

“From that standpoint, look at the university. It really draws employees from the national market,” Kleckley said. “What faculty members are paid here at ECU, you really have to pay the national price to get somebody, so it’s not a local wage, it’s a national wage.”

Kleckley said that due to state budget cuts, salaries for many ECU faculty positions no longer are keeping pace with the national market.

“And that’s why you’re probably going to see the university losing faculty, too, because they can go somewhere else and get a raise for the first time in four years,” he said.
Wage numbers alone don’t quantify the financial state or health of a community, the economist said.

“When you look at a local area, it’s really impossible to look at one set of data to really understand what’s going on ... you really have to put things together. Some of the variables like employment, unemployment, sales activity, building activity, really help define what’s going on in one county or another.”

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ECU hosts open house Saturday
By Jackie Drake
Friday, April 13, 2012

Students planning on attending East Carolina University can learn about their future home at the annual spring open house on Saturday.

Prospective students and families can tour the campus, eat in the dining halls, view the residence halls, meet faculty and staff, learn about academic programs and get more information on admissions and financial aid.

“We love seeing the excitement in our prospective students’ faces the first time they come to campus,” Jenny Roberts, assistant director of admissions, said. “We look forward to seeing everyone on Saturday.”

Around 4,500 people usually attend the spring event, Roberts said. A fall open house also is held with about 3,500 participants.

This year, two special sessions will be held in the afternoon in Mendenhall Student Center. “Transitioning into tomorrow” at 1-2:30 p.m. will offer information to transfer students coming from community college. “Treasures of Diversity” from 1:30-3 p.m. will showcase the diversity of pirate nation with a multicultural event.

“Our policy has always been to offer numerous sessions and events over the course of the day as we can,” Roberts said. “We make it relatively easy for our guests to pick and choose what they really want to get out of their visit.”

The open house on campus coincides with the sixth annual PirateFest in downtown Greenville and the Purple/Gold Pigskin Pigout in Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium.

“This weekend we have such a variety of things happening in town that we are very excited to be able to offer our guests the option of attending our open house and see what our community has to offer as well,” Roberts said.

The day will start with an opening session at 9 a.m. at Wright Auditorium. Campus tours are available through noon.

A fair will be held between 9:30 a.m. and noon in the Student Recreation Center that will feature all academic departments, majors and programs as well as numerous student affairs departments.
Special sessions on admissions, financial aid and campus living will be held throughout the morning.

A panel of ECU students will be available to discuss their experiences and answer questions in three different sessions in Mendenhall.

Lunch will run from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Todd and West End dining halls will serve a lunch buffet for $6.50.

Residence halls will be open for visitation from noon to 2 p.m. Some academic departments will be open for tours from 1-3 p.m.

Students are asked to register online, but walk-ins are welcome. There is no cost to attend.

Attendants should park in the gold lot at Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium. A shuttle to main campus will be provided.

For more information, call the admissions office at 328-6640 or visit http://www.ecu.edu/admissions/events.cfm

Contact Jackie Drake at jdrake@reflector.com or 252 329-9567 or follow her on Twitter @JackieDrakeGDR.
A Raleigh man arrested last fall for streaking at an East Carolina University football game is back in jail after campus police arrested him on Friday in connection with a vandalism incident on campus, according to a news release.

John D. Sieglinger, 22, of Raleigh, was charged with injury to personal property and resist, delay or obstructing an officer for the 2:30 a.m. incident, officials said.

ECU officers heard the sound of breaking glass in the university-owned lot at the corner of Fifth and Reade streets, an official said. As the officers went to investigate, they saw a man and ordered him to stop. He ran a short distance before ECU officers arrested him. Officers located a Toyota Camry with a broken back window.

Sieglinger also is charged with trespassing.

Sieglinger was arrested by ECU Police in November and charged with indecent exposure and first-degree misdemeanor trespass after he ran naked onto the football field during halftime. ECU Police issued a lifetime trespass warning against him following that incident.

According to arrest reports, Sieglinger has been ordered to appear May 29 at the Pitt County Courthouse.
Sieglinger still was being held under a $5,500 secured bond in the Pitt County Detention Center at noon Friday.
Colleges and universities deliberately strive to maintain an open accessibility in order to cultivate an atmosphere that inspires both comfort and the free exchange of ideas. Most campuses aspire to be inclusive rather than exclusive to develop a community welcome to all, though it is an approach that must be balanced with the need for security to assure safety for all.

That was never clearer than five years ago, when a senior English major at Virginia Tech began a rampage that killed 32 students and facility and injured more than 30 others. That tragedy forever altered the security landscape of higher education in this country and, for administrators at schools like East Carolina University, demanded the constant reassessment of the balance between openness and safety.

Five years ago this morning, students and faculty filed into several classes — intermediate French, elementary German and hydrology engineering among them — set to begin at 9 a.m. in Norris Hall on the Virginia Tech campus. At the same time, Seung Hui-Cho strode across campus, armed with two handguns and hundreds of ammunition rounds. In a nine-minute rampage that followed, he shot 60 people in that academic building, killing 30, only hours after killing two other students in an on-campus residence hall.

To say it was a shocking, horrific tragedy is to diminish the very definition of those words. Here were young men and women, many of whom were teenagers, cut down in the infancy of their adulthood, in a place known for its safety and quiet rural landscape in southwest Virginia. Even as colleges and universities across the country and around the world offered messages of condolence, they also began internal security assessments.

East Carolina was among those schools which conducted a thorough review of emergency measures and was found wanting. In the months that followed, the school installed external speakers around campus, created an instant communication network and developed a plan should such an event unfold here. Several drills have since seen those efforts tweaked in order to improve the school’s response.
The unfortunate fact is that in order to have the openness and access that higher education demands, some security measures must be relaxed. Clear, though, is that schools cannot afford to relax their posture or end the continuous reassessment of campus safety, not when the threat is known and not when the memory of what happened at Virginia Tech remains so clear.
The Library of Congress announced in July of 2011 that Philip Levine would be the 18th United States Poet Laureate. Levine is pictured here in New York City, circa 2001.

**U.S. poet laureate Philip Levine coming to ECU**

ECU Notes  
Sunday, April 15, 2012

The great American “working man’s poet” will visit East Carolina University in late April for a public reading of his work.

Philip Levine, named U.S. Poet Laureate by the Library of Congress last August, will be on campus for the Contemporary Writers Series, sponsored by the ECU Division of Research and Graduate Studies and the Department of English. The series aims to expose students and other readers to award-winning fiction and nonfiction writers, translators and poets.

Levine will read from his work at 8 p.m. on April 25 at the Greenville Museum of Art on Evans Street. An avid fan of John Coltrane and other jazz greats, the poet and arriving guests will be welcomed by the music of a jazz trio.

The event is free and open to the university community and public.

Levine was born and raised in Detroit, a city that figures prominently in his poetry. He worked several industrial jobs before leaving Michigan in 1953 for the University of Iowa, where he studied at the Writer’s Workshop under influential poets Robert Lowell and John Berryman. He later moved to
California and taught for many years at California State University, Fresno and New York University. Now retired, Levine resides in Fresno, Calif., and Brooklyn, N.Y., with his wife.

The author of more than 20 books of poetry, essays and translations, Levine won the National Book Award in 1991 for his collection “What Work Is” and the Pulitzer Prize in 1995 for “The Simple Truth.” He also has received numerous other awards, including the first American Book Award for Poetry and, on two occasions, the National Critics Circle Book Award. His most recent collection, “News of the World,” was published in 2010.

Librarian of Congress James Billington, who selected Levine as poet laureate, describes him as a poet of “the industrial heartland.” Known for his urban landscapes and working-class themes, Levine has been seen as an American poet in the tradition of Walt Whitman.

Tom Douglass, a literature professor in ECU’s Department of English and one of the organizers of the Contemporary Writers Series, said he believes there is no better time to hear the poetry of Levine firsthand, given the nation’s weak economic state and fading industrial landscape.

“The working life of our country is on its knees, and Levine is often read as an activist for the working class, a voice for those whose voices are increasingly not being heard,” Douglass said.

“Our young people seem to understand that what they need is meaningful work that leads to dignity and a sense of self-worth,” said poet John Hoppenthaler, Contemporary Writers Series committee member and ECU professor.

“They seem to know, as Levine’s wonderful poem ‘What Work Is’ suggests, that compassion and love are byproducts of the solidity and possibility that good jobs provide,” Hoppenthaler said.

“With so little meaningful work currently available, all that remains is for the outraged and disenfranchised to occupy public areas across America to express their discontent. No one other than Phil Levine ought to be poet laureate in times such as these.”

Now in its second year, the Contemporary Writers Series will bring poet and Pulitzer Prize winner Natasha Tretheway to ECU in the fall.

For more information, email Tom Douglass at douglasst@ecu.edu or Liza Wieland at wielandl@ecu.edu.
Brass players to be featured at jazz fest

Trumpeter Jon Faddis and trombonist Wycliffe Gordon will headline the 2012 Billy Taylor Jazz Festival, taking place this week.

The pair will play in concert April 21 at Wright Auditorium on the campus of ECU. Tickets are $15 for the public and $10 for students.

The Wall Street Journal called Faddis “a trumpet player of prodigious lyrical force.” Gordon is a six-time trombonist of the year as selected by the Jazz Journalists Association.

Other performances this week include shows by the ECU Jazz Vocal Ensemble and a concert and jam session with ECU jazz alumni and faculty.

For more information or to buy tickets, call 800-ECU-ARTS or visit http://www.ecuarts.com.

Nutrition students unveil pizza sauces

ECU nutrition science students shared samples of the pizza sauces they developed with representatives of Crabtree Foods and Spartan Foods of America. The result could be sauces that find their way to servicemembers.

The sauce sampling was Wednesday in the Golden Corral Culinary Center inside the Rivers Building at ECU.

Dr. Melani Duffrin said the students have developed several good recipes. The “winning” sauce or sauces could undergo further testing for commercial development.

Each spring, students in the food science class take on a food development project, often in conjunction with major food companies. Previously, food science students partnered with Duplin Winery to develop products with high antioxidant potential using grape hull. Students also created innovative high-fiber products using resistant starches provided by the National Starch Company.

“Such active learning projects promote teamwork and enhance critical-thinking and problem-solving skills,” Duffrin said.
“It has always been a goal of ours to work with East Carolina University, and we are thrilled about potential success in the marketplace,” said Eddie Crabtree, co-owner of Crabtree Foods and an ECU graduate.

His company distributes food to all branches of the military in the United States and throughout Middle East, with offices in Greenville, Raleigh and Dubai, UAE.

Upcoming Events


Thursday: “The Threepenny Opera.” The predatory outlaw Mack the Knife secretly marries the daughter of London’s underworld boss, but is soon betrayed and is sent to prison. More betrayals and a final irony follow. 8 p.m., McGinnis Theater. Tickets are $15 for the public and $10 for ECU students. Information and tickets available at http://www.ECUARTS.com or by calling 252-328-6829.
Dr. Glenn Harvin

**Gastroenterologist joins medical school staff**
Monday, April 16, 2012

Dr. Glenn Harvin, a gastroenterologist, has joined the Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University and its group medical practice, ECU Physicians.

Harvin comes to ECU from Atlantic Gastroenterology in Greenville. He has a medical degree from the Brody School of Medicine and completed residency training in internal medicine at the Medical University of South Carolina in Charleston. He also completed a fellowship in gastroenterology, which is the study of the digestive system and its disorders, at MUSC.

Harvin is board-certified in internal medicine and gastroenterology. His clinical and research interests are general gastroenterology, colon cancer screening, swallowing difficulties, liver disease and acid reflux.

He sees patients at the East Carolina Endoscopy Center at 521 Moye Blvd. Appointments and referrals are available by calling 744-4652.
Pirate QB battle continues
By Ronnie Woodward
Sunday, April 15, 2012

Ruffin McNeill walked over to the contingent of media after Saturday’s Purple-Gold game inside Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium, seemingly waiting for the question to be asked.

The question — any update on the quarterback situation? — was quickly tossed his way, and McNeill calmly declared that East Carolina’s QB battle is still ongoing.

“It will go into fall camp,” said McNeill, 11-14 at ECU as he enters his third season as head coach.

Three signal-callers — junior Rio Johnson, senior Brad Wornick and redshirt freshman Cody Keith — spent the latter portion of spring practice hoping to emerge as the guy to replace Dominique Davis, the backbone of the Pirate offense in 2010 and ’11. A fourth candidate, sophomore Shane Carden, has been sidelined since breaking the index finger on his throwing hand earlier this month.

McNeill said Carden is still in the mix, and he’s expected to re-join the competition at some point this summer.

The other three quarterbacks mainly alternated series on Saturday, with Johnson leading the only drive that resulted in an offensive touchdown. He hit top receiver Justin Hardy on a wheel route down the sideline for a 43-yard gain on his first play from scrimmage, and connected on all four of his pass attempts for 56 yards on his initial drive.

Reggie Bullock capped the drive with a short TD rush.
“All four of us are pretty talented quarterbacks, so (the coaches) will decide,” said Johnson, who completed 17 of his 23 attempts for 153 yards. “You just have to show up and be ready to play and do your job.”

Keith was 9-of-18 for 69 yards with an interception, and Wornick went 4-of-6 for 26 yards.

Johnson and Wornick are the only two with game experience, with Johnson serving as Davis’ main backup last season.

“I love the competition and I love that the guys have a sense of urgency,” offensive coordinator Lincoln Riley said. “This group just kind of continues to impress. You wouldn’t expect Cody to be in it, but everybody can see the ability he has and Rio probably has the best overall grasp of it right now, but those guys are breathing down his neck.”

The Pirates averaged 3.2 yards per rush, with redshirt freshman Chris Hairston leading the way with 52 yards on six attempts.

Both McNeill and Riley praised the offensive line for its performance.

“I thought the offensive line did a very good job today against a defense that does a lot of movement and a lot of blitzes,” McNeill said. “They did a good job of working as one, and that’s a group that we’ve focused on.”

Defensively, linebackers Montese Overton and Zeek Bigger made their fair share of standout plays. Bigger had a game-high eight tackles and Overton, a South Central graduate, made a pair of stops for loss.

Sophomore defensive back Desi Brown scored a touchdown, scooping a fumble and returning it 32 yards to paydirt on the second possession of the contest.

Matt Millisor, Shawn Williams and Warren Harvey all made field goals. Harvey, a sophomore who is vying for the starting placekicker position, went 1-for-2, connecting on a 48-yarder in the second half.

“I think he’s really been a standout all spring, and he’s been consistent,” McNeill said of Harvey, a J.H. Rose product.

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QB Rio Johnson shows well at ECU spring football game

By Brian Haines - Correspondent

GREENVILLE—The battle to win the starting quarterback job at East Carolina took center stage during the school’s annual Purple and Gold game on Saturday and for now it looks as if Rio Johnson will hold the No. 1 spot heading into the summer.

Johnson, last year’s No. 2 quarterback behind the departed Dominique Davis, took snaps with the first unit on Saturday and led his squad on the only touchdown-scoring drive of the day. The junior passer finished the scrimmage completing 17-of-23 pass attempts for 153 yards. He also guided his team on a field goal-scoring drive.

Freshman Cody Keith ran with the second unit and hit on 9-of-18 attempts for 69 yards and one interception. He led two drives that resulted in field goals. Senior Brad Wornick finished the contest 4-for-6 for 26 yards. He had a botched screen pass returned 32 yards for a score by safety Desi Brown.

The Pirates were missing a big piece of the QB puzzle as sophomore Shane Carden sat out with a broken right index finger and won’t get back in the race until August.

“(The competition) will continue when we go back into fall camp,” East Carolina’s third-year coach Ruffin McNeill said. “We’ll get Shane back in the mix and let him get some reps under his belt too. I thought Shane was practicing well.

“I think Rio has done a great job and Brad is still Brad. I thought Cody, for a young puppy, has done a great job, so the battle will go into fall camp.”

Sophomore wide receiver Justin Hardy caught two passes for a game-high 48 yards, and junior Reese Wiggins had a six receptions for 47 yards.

The Pirates also have a hotly contested battle going on at the running back spot. Freshman Chris Hairston had six carries for 52 yards to lead all rushers. Senior Reggie Bullock scored the only touchdown of the game on a six-yard scamper and carried the ball 11 times for 25 yards. Junior transfer Hunter Furr and senior Michael Dobson each ran for 15 yards. Junior Torrance Hunt had 11.
Defensively, the Pirates looked strong in their second year running a 3-4 scheme and stymied several drives by the offense. Freshman inside linebacker Zeek Bigger had a game-high eight tackles, including one tackle for a loss. Cornerback Adonis Armstrong, a junior college transfer, had three tackles, a pass breakup and an interception.
UNC-Chapel Hill senior Ana Maria Reichenbach continues to read aloud her protest from her smartphone as she is removed from the UNC Board of Governors meeting Friday, April 14, 2012 in the Spangler Center, Chapel Hill.

**UNC board adopts worker guidelines**

By Katelyn Ferral - kferral@newsobserver.com

CHAPEL HILL The UNC system Board of Governors approved guidelines Friday it says will protect university workers if they are shifted into a new university personnel system this year.

Amid protesters’ interruptions, the board passed “guiding principles” that bill sponsor Sen. Richard Stevens, a Wake County Republican, says would be inserted into any legislation that might be approved.

UNC President Tom Ross and the board have said the guidelines would allow employees to help build a new system that ultimately would serve them better than the State Personnel Act, under which the estimated 22,000 affected workers now fall.

The legislation creating the new personnel system, Senate Bill 575, missed a deadline to be considered during the upcoming session, but its personnel provisions could be added to a final budget bill.

UNC system officials say they need a personnel system tailored to the higher education environment to give them flexibility during tough economic times.
They say any new system would contain a grievance process, protect whistleblowers, and preserve health and other benefits.

Opponents say UNC system leaders are asking workers to take a chance on a new system before it’s been created. Some workers have expressed concern they could become “at will” employees able to be fired at any time without cause.

According to the guiding principles, current SPA employees would not be required to become “at will” employees in their current jobs but could choose to accept transfers for promotions to “at will” positions, which means they would serve at the will of the chancellor.

‘Manipulated’ out

Five coalition members tried to listen to discussion on the bill during a Board of Governors committee meeting Thursday, said Laurel Ashton, a senior at UNC-Chapel Hill. They were told an earlier meeting had run over and that they would be brought back in when the bill was being discussed. But the group was invited back only after the committee had finished talking about SB 575, she said.

“They pretty much manipulated us out of being at the meeting,” she said. “Nothing is legally binding, so we don’t know what the future will hold. Once again the message is, ‘Trust us and our good will.’”

As public safety officers removed her from Friday’s full board meeting, Zaina Alsous, 21, another UNC-CH student, said the group was forced to interrupt the meeting because it had been ignored.

“We have been left with no other option to get voices heard,” she said. “This is a major policy change that will give power to all future board members that might be less inclined to protect the rights of workers.”

But Phillip Dixon, a Greenville attorney, and chairman of the Personnel and Tenure Committee said he made sure the group’s comments were submitted to the rest of the board and stayed after the committee meeting Thursday to answer questions from students for about an hour.

The committee did not discuss SB 575 during its meeting and only voted on the updated guiding principles, he said. The students were not in the room during the vote, but he’s not sure what delayed them. After they entered the room, he reintroduced the item to give the committee the opportunity to reconsider, which it declined, he said.

‘We bend over backwards’
Dixon said he was surprised that students interrupted Friday’s full board meeting but said he admired their concern.

“I think everybody wants to make sure our employees are treated fairly, and if anything I think we bend over backwards,” he said. “How do you make (the provisions) specific when you don’t know what the (final) legislation is going to say?”

Opponents of the legislation say that as the makeup of the Board of Governors changes, so can the policies, but Dixon said the State Personnel Commission, which oversees the SPA, is appointed by the General Assembly, like the UNC Board of Governors.

Charles Thomas Brink, an SPA electrician and chairman for the Staff Assembly, the body that represents employees at the UNC system’s 17 campuses, said the Board of Governors included all the changes the assembly wanted and has consulted with employees from the beginning.

A unified personnel system could help employees get raises and make sure their concerns get heard by a body focused on university employees, Brink said. Ross has assured him that the collaboration would continue if the legislation is passed this year, he said.

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N.C. State/ Dr. Fred Gould, N.C. State entomologist.

**NCSU entomologist Fred Gould wins UNC system award**

By Jay Price - jprice@newsobserver.com

CHAPEL HILL N.C. State University insect researcher Fred Gould has won the UNC system’s award for the faculty member who has “made the greatest contributions to the welfare of the human race.”

Gould, the William Neal Reynolds Distinguished Professor of Entomology, received the 2012 O. Max Gardner Award on Friday from the UNC Board of Governors.

It’s the only award for which faculty at all 17 system campuses can compete, and Gould said that’s what made it special.

“It was pretty amazing, sitting in the audience and realizing that I had been picked from such a large and distinguished group of colleagues,” he said.

Gould is an international leader in the fast-emerging field of genetically engineering insects to prevent transmission of diseases such as malaria and dengue fever and to reduce the pest damage to crops. Those insect-linked problems cost billions of dollars in health care costs and farmers’ income, and affect millions of lives.

He came to NCSU in 1977 and was named Reynolds professor in 1993. Since 2002, he also has served as an adjunct professor in the genetics department.
Gould did some of the important early work in engineering the genes of plants to make them more resistant to insects, then began working on the genes of the insects themselves. Now he and his team are focusing on a species of mosquito that is known to carry diseases such of dengue fever and malaria. They are developing genetically modified strains that can’t transmit the dengue virus, and which can spread that trait among wild mosquitoes.

His work led to the recent development of an interdisciplinary graduate program in genetic pest management at NCSU, the first in the world designed to train students in both the science and the social issues associated with human intervention, biology and genetics.

That program is supported by a five-year, $3 million grant from the National Science Foundation.

Gould was elected last year into the National Academy of Sciences, and won the 2010-11 Alexander Quarles Holladay Medal for Excellence, which is NCSU’s highest award for faculty achievement. In 2004, he received the Alexander Von Humboldt Foundation Award, presented annually to the person judged to have made the most significant contribution to American agriculture during the previous five years.

His newest honor, which has been given annually since 1949, was established by the will of Gov. O. Max Gardner and includes a $20,000 cash prize. Recipients are nominated by their chancellors and selected by the Board of Governors.

It’s the fifth time since 2003 that a member of the NCSU faculty has won the award.

Price: 919-829-4526
Teen arrested in shooting of UNCC student

By April Bethea

Charlotte-Mecklenburg police have arrested a 17-year-old high school student in the shooting of a UNC Charlotte student last weekend. Authorities said the shooting occurred after the pair met for an alleged drug deal.

Davahughn Lamar Johnson of Charlotte is charged with assault with a deadly weapon with intent to kill or inflict serious injury, possession with intent to sell and deliver marijuana, possession of drug paraphernalia and possession of a handgun by a minor, police said.

Johnson was arrested Friday morning as he got off a school bus at Mallard Creek High School in Charlotte’s University City area, according to NewsChannel 36, the Observer’s news partner. He remained in custody at the Mecklenburg County jail early Saturday.

Johnson is charged in the shooting of 20-year-old John Borek.

Police have said Borek was shot on the left side of his neck around 12:30 a.m. last Sunday in the parking lot of The Flats at Mallard Creek Apartments, near Mallard Creek Church Road. They said he was visiting friends at the time of the shooting.

On Saturday, Borek was listed in critical condition at Carolinas Medical Center-Main, the hospital said.

A police spokesman said last week that authorities believed the suspect was with another person at the time of the shooting, and they did not believe it was a “random act of violence.”

Then on Friday, police said their investigation showed that Borek and Johnson were meeting each other for an “illegal drug transaction” when Johnson allegedly shot Borek.

Police asked anyone with additional information about the case to call 704-432-TIPS to speak with a detective or Crime Stoppers at 704-334-1600.
Students and mourners form a circle in 2008 as they participate in a candlelight vigil marking the first anniversary of the April 16, 2007, shootings. (Steve Helber - Associated Press)

**Report: Virginia Tech massacre cost $48.2 million**

By Jenna Johnson

In the wake of the ghastly massacre at Virginia Tech nearly five years ago that left more than 30 people dead, colleges and universities across the country reviewed their own mental health, public safety and emergency alert systems. In many cases, schools spent hundreds of thousands of dollars, if not millions, to make changes.

These reviews are often referred to as “risk management,” a term from the corporate world that was virtually unknown on many campuses a decade or two ago but has become commonplace. And at the heart of risk management is the goal of protecting institutions from tragedy and costly lawsuits.

So, in that vein, what did the 2007 shooting cost Virginia Tech and taxpayers? It’s an uncomfortable question that was posed by the Center for American Progress, a liberal-leaning Washington think tank that advocates for stricter gun control.
The center’s calculation: $48.2 million.

That bill was picked up by the university ($38.77 million), the state of Virginia ($8.87 million), the local government ($3,581) and the federal government in the form of three grants ($3.66 million). (My colleague Petula Dvorak wrote about this financial toll, along with the human one, in her column today. You can read it here.)

The Center for American Progress came up with these estimates, which it says are conservative, by using public records and asking the university to compile information about any costs sustained as a direct result of the massacre.

This university-provided accounting includes one-time expenses, such as implementing an emergency alert system, and ongoing expenses, such as hiring more campus police officers. It does not include the time and salaries of staff members, including attorneys and those who helped distraught students, grieving families and the hundreds of journalists who descended on Blacksburg.

Here’s how the $48.2 million breaks down (although not perfectly, as the center does not consistently group expenses together throughout the report, resulting in totals that don’t always match up), according to the report released by the center this week:

**$11.4 million for safety and security upgrades.** This was one of the largest expenditures the center found. This includes the hiring of 11 new full-time campus police department employees, including seven sworn officers. Over the past five years, the salaries for those employees has totaled $2.87 million. The university also established an Office of Emergency Management, which has cost about $900,000 to run for five years. And Virginia Tech and local agencies are opening a joint dispatch office, which so far has cost about half a million dollars. The U.S. Department of Justice gave Virginia Tech a $2.65 million grant to assist victims of the shooting, along with other recovery costs.

**$6.4 million for cleanup, renovations and other facility changes.** The student gunman started his April 16, 2007, rampage in West Ambler Johnston Hall, a dorm where he killed two people. The university has since renovated and transformed the hall into a “residential college” with a strong emphasis on building community. Hours later the gunman barricaded himself in Norris Hall, an academic building, where he fired more than 170 rounds, killed 25 students and five faculty members, injured at least 17 others and then killed himself. The university spent $1.84 million renovating
the hall and turning classrooms into a Center for Peace Studies and Violence Prevention, which opened in 2009. Tech also spent about $2 million replacing the handles and locks on more than 1,000 doors so they could not again be barricaded.

**$2.5 million for public relations and communications.** As the national spotlight turned to Tech in 2007, the university paid about $600,000 to retain a public relations consulting firm for a year. The university also spent nearly $1 million on “VT Alerts,” an emergency notification system that reaches the school’s six locations in Virginia. This system was tested in December when a student from a nearby university came to Virginia Tech, shot a police officer and then killed himself. The university was locked down for four hours, and officials said the system worked as they had planned.

**$4.79 million for settlement payment and other legal costs.** The state government and university negotiated a $11.1 million settlement with the families of many of the victims. The university paid for $3.3 million of this settlement, and the state picked up the remainder. This category also includes the cost of compiling information and data for various investigations and lawsuits over the past five years. It does not take into account the time of university attorneys who do not track their “billable hours.”

A possible expense that is not yet included in this category: a $55,000 fine from Department of Education for not properly alerting students that a gunman was on campus. The university has appealed this fine, and last month a federal judge overturned it.

**$324,258 for archiving all documents related to the shooting.** As part of a $11.1 million settlement with many of the families of victims, the university agreed to collect, organize and make accessible the thousands of documents, e-mails, interviews and other materials related to the shooting. This was a one-time cost of $324,258.

**$2.7 million to support survivors and families of victims.** After the shooting, Tech established a “family center” at the Inn at Virginia Tech, a hotel near campus, where survivors and relatives of victims could gather, mourn and seek help. Tech also established the Office of Recovery and Support.

**$7.4 million for mental health services.** In the months following the shooting, university counselors provided more than 700 mental health triages, spoke to classes, visited survivors in the hospital, fielded 120 calls from parents and provided other services. Tech hired four full-time
employees to add to its counseling center staff of 27. This work was partially funded by a $960,685 grant from the Department of Education.

**$3.2 million in other operational expenses.** This includes the $1.68 million the university paid for lifetime health insurance for survivors who suffered serious injuries, $900,000 to operate the peace and violence prevention center for its first four years, and $266,000 to cancel meetings and reservations at the Inn at Virginia Tech.

**$9.47 million in state expenses, including settlements.** The state’s share of the $11.1 million settlement with the families was $7.8 million. Virginia also spent nearly half a million dollars assembling a review panel to investigate the shooting, compile a report and make recommendations for the future. It also cost nearly $70,000 to conduct 32 autopsies. Virginia State Police estimate that they spent more than half a million investigating and responding to the shooting.

**$590,042 in health-care costs.** Since health records are not public, the center does not know how much it cost to treat students who were injured by gunshots or while escaping from Norris Hall. This estimate was calculated by the center using national averages.

A copy of the full report — “Auditing the Cost of the Virginia Tech Massacre: How Much We Pay When Killers Kill” — is available on the Center for American Progress Web site.
Pre-Med’s New Priorities: Heart and Soul and Social Science

By ELISABETH ROSENTHAL

PROF. PIERS J. HALE knew something was up when his students at the University of Oklahoma were clamoring this spring to get into his medical ethics class, which was formerly populated largely by social science majors. What led to the sudden burst of popularity, he discovered, were plans by the Association of American Medical Colleges to revise the medical school admissions test to incorporate a hefty dose of social science.

In addition to the hard-science and math questions that have for decades defined this rite of passage into the medical profession, nearly half of the new MCAT will focus on squishier topics in two new sections: one covering social and behavioral sciences and another on critical analysis and reading that will require students to analyze passages covering areas like ethics and cross-cultural studies.

“Enrollment doubled and I had to turn 20 away,” said Professor Hale, a professor of the history of modern science. “But what’s really exciting is not that taking this class will get these kids into medical school, but that it will help them become better physicians.”

The Medical College Admission Test is, of course, much more than a test. A good score is crucial for entry into a profession that is perennially
oversubscribed. Last year, nearly 44,000 people applied for about 19,000 places at medical schools in the United States. So the overhaul of the test, which was announced last year and approved in February, could fundamentally change the kind of student who will succeed in that process. It alters the raw material that medical schools receive to mold into the nation’s future doctors.

Which is exactly what the A.A.M.C. has in mind. In surveys, “the public had great confidence in doctors’ knowledge but much less in their bedside manner,” said Darrell G. Kirch, president of the association, in announcing the change. “The goal is to improve the medical admissions process to find the people who you and I would want as our doctors. Being a good doctor isn’t just about understanding science, it’s about understanding people.”

The adoption of the new test, which will be first administered in 2015, is part of a decade-long effort by medical educators to restore a bit of good old-fashioned healing and bedside patient skills into a profession that has come to be dominated by technology and laboratory testing. More medical schools are requiring students to take classes on interviewing and communication techniques. To help create a more holistic admissions process, one that goes beyond scientific knowledge, admissions committees are presenting candidates with ethical dilemmas to see if their people skills match their A+ in organic chemistry.

The big question, of course, is how well a multiple-choice test can help screen for the ethereal mix of scientist and humanist and spiritualist that makes a good doctor. That is uncharted territory.

“Yes, we’ve fallen in love with technology, and patients are crying out, saying, ‘Sit down and listen to me,’ ” said Dr. Charles Hatem, a professor at Harvard Medical School and an expert in medical education. “So what the MCAT is doing has a laudable goal. But will recalibrating this instrument work? Do more courses in the humanities make you more humane? I think the best we can say is a qualified maybe.”

And then there are the more immediate concerns of pre-med students and their colleges, which are preparing for the seismic changes.

Where will students find time to take in the extra material? How to prepare pre-med students long primed to answer questions like “Where are the serotonin receptors 5-HT2A and 5-HT2B mostly likely to be located in hepatocytes” to tackle more ambiguous challenges, like: “Which of the following explanations describes why the Identity vs. Role Confusion stage likely affects views about voting and being a voter?”
The first class to experience the new test, which is traditionally taken junior year, will enter college this fall. Some current students could face it, too, as it has become increasingly popular to take a gap year or two before applying to medical school.

“I can definitely see students panicking about this,” said Dr. W. Alexander Escobar, director of the pre-medical mentoring office at Emory University, who is preparing new recommendations for coursework.

I should disclose that I have a history here: when I took the MCAT in the late 1970s, the test was all about basic science, which was not at all my interest; I had worked in labs and hated it. To make matters worse, the test was the day after my 21st birthday. That landmark celebration was lost to miserable cramming in physics formulas and biological pathways.

But I went to medical school in the 1980s — heady years for basic science, when new technologies like M.R.I.’s expanded diagnosis, fiber-optic instruments allowed for minimally invasive surgery and recombinant gene experiments paved the way for new tests and medicines that could cure hard-to-treat diseases. Medical schools saw their primary mission as churning out researchers, biomedical engineers and academics who could apply the latest research on gene splicing to the treatment of cancer.

“With the growth in scientific knowledge, we were focused on making sure doctors had a good foundation in hard science,” Dr. Kirch said. Indeed, from 1942 to 1976, the MCAT had included a broad-based knowledge section called “Understanding Modern Society.” Liberal arts questions were eliminated in 1977.

Over the next two decades, the pressure in medicine to maximize the technology and minimize the healing arts only increased, as efficiency-oriented health care systems gave doctors less time to talk to patients, and insurance reimbursements rewarded doctors with high-tech specialties like radiology or those who performed procedures.

“I’m not a Luddite,” Dr. Hatem said, noting that the tide appears to be turning. “I know the importance of technology and testing advances, but we’ve let this substitute for listening and examining.”

Some experts have long identified the MCAT as a stumbling block in the often-failed quest to produce more caring, attentive doctors. It is a test that selects more for calculation skills than empathy. “The definition of readiness for medical education clearly has an academic component that the MCAT has captured well,” Dr. William McGaghie, a professor at Northwestern
University, wrote a decade ago in the Journal of the American Medical Association. “But it also has professional and personal components, as yet unmeasured or measured poorly.”

And so the Association of American Medical Colleges began three years ago to redesign the MCAT, surveying thousands of medical school faculty members and students to come up with a test tailored to the needs and desires of the 21st century. In addition to more emphasis on humanistic skills, the new test had to take into account important new values in medicine like diversity, with greater focus on health care for the underserved, Dr. McGaghie said.

As a result, there will be questions about gender and cultural influences on expression, poverty and social mobility, as well as how people process emotion and stress. Such subjects are “the building blocks medical students need in order to learn about the ways in which cognitive and perceptual processes influence their understanding of health and illness,” explains the preview guide to the new MCAT.

While the guide avers that such material is generally covered in introductory psychology and sociology classes, surveys by Kaplan Test Prep have found that fewer than half of pre-med students currently take these courses, said Amjed Saffarini, executive director of Kaplan’s pre-health programs. The company estimates that the changes, including more advanced science questions on genetics and biochemistry, could effectively double the coursework for med school admission.

Getting pre-med preparation right is a high-stakes game for colleges, which attract applicants because of their medical school admissions rates. Virtually all are now scrambling to figure out how to revise pre-med programs. Will all students on the pre-med track be required to take psychology and sociology, for example?

Many colleges and universities say they are not ready to discuss plans. Columbia University, said Katherine Cutler, its director of communications and special projects, “has been evaluating its curriculum and, based on this review, will make recommendations for ways to prepare Columbia’s students for the new content.”

At Emory, Dr. Escobar has asked social science departments to advise him on which of their courses cover the topics outlined in the new MCAT preview guide, so as to advise pre-med students about what to take. “We don’t want to design a course specifically for pre-meds,” he said. “We want them to take what’s already there.”
Many colleges already require pre-med students to take distribution requirements in the social sciences, said Joy Kiefer, an assistant dean at Washington University in St. Louis. “Physicians need a solid foundation in not just science but behavioral science to get good patient outcomes,” she added.

But for pre-meds, such courses have long taken a distant back seat to core science courses. While pre-med students can choose any major, only 5 percent come from the humanities and 12 percent from social sciences. More than half of all applicants majored in biological science.

The mere fact that psychology, sociology and critical thinking will be on the MCAT is likely to change priorities, prompting science majors to think harder about topics like the perception of pain, informed consent, community awareness and the ethics of the Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment. “We wanted to send a strong signal at the undergraduate level that these are important elements,” Dr. Kirch said.

For students already juggling heavy course loads of organic chemistry, physics and laboratory research, that prospect is somewhat daunting. “From what I’ve understood, the test will be more difficult,” said Farrah Bui, 20, a sophomore pre-med student at Princeton who is considering taking time off before medical school and thus might have to take the new test. “It’s difficult enough with so many stresses already,” she said. “I’d say, it’s discouraging — another thing I have to do.”

Still, Ms. Bui is finding value in the medical anthropology course she is taking this semester, and believes such courses are useful for producing better doctors. “I used to think of medicine as very methodical: you get the symptoms, find the diagnoses and treat,” she said. “Now it has made me think beyond pathology and biochemistry to the person. It’s made me think, ‘How will I communicate with them?’ ”

Professor Hale at Oklahoma said that, with a far larger component of pre-meds in his class, he had fielded new types of questions. “When pre-meds approach an ethics class, at first it’s: just tell me what to do to be ethical,” he said. “They’ll come saying they’ve been put in the class by an adviser, but then discover it’s relevant.”

How admissions officers will use the new information remains to be seen. Though medical schools say they want a test that selects for more well-rounded students, their reputations derive far more from the number of Nobel Prize winners they spawn, not from producing good bedside doctors.
And, anyway, can a standardized test — even one six and a half hours long (current duration: four and a half hours) — really discern the students most capable of giving emotionally to their patients, or measure facility with profound concepts like discrimination and morality and the emotional underpinning of disease? After all, few ethics professors rely on multiple-choice tests. The writing section on the current MCAT is being dropped because admissions officers said it was unhelpful, and largely ignored it.

The 153-page MCAT preview guide lays out what students need to know in detailed outlines that read like formulas for a math test. To wit, a part of a section on emotion:

*Three components of emotion (cognitive, physiological, behavioral).*

*Universal emotions (fear, anger, happiness, surprise, joy, disgust and sadness).*

*Adaptive role of emotion.*

*Theories of emotion (James-Lange theory, Cannon-Bard theory, Schachter-Singer theory).*

The Association of American Medical Colleges will be field-testing new questions over the next two years by tacking an ungraded section onto the current MCAT. But Dr. Escobar of Emory said that sociology professors were concerned that some of the required topics in the outline seem dated. Liberal arts colleges do not want their intro to sociology class defined by what’s on the MCAT.

The A.A.M.C. says the goal of the new MCAT is not just to find out what students know, but also how they think and who they are. And that kind of test is harder to cram for. “We’re not in the business of changing personalities,” said Dr. Saffarini of Kaplan Test Prep. “But we can offer practice scenarios.”

Dr. Hatem had this to say: “I know what society needs and what patients want. They want a doctor who is technically competent but who also understands who they are. How to get there is more complicated.”

Elisabeth Rosenthal is a medical doctor and international environment correspondent for The Times.
### Med School Hopefuls By Age, Fall 2011

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Applicants</th>
<th>Accepted</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 20</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Mean G.P.A.</th>
<th>Mean MCAT Score (Max.: 45)</th>
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<td>20-22</td>
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<td>Over 28</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>26.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Source: Association of American Medical Colleges

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### By Race/Ethnicity

**Applicants**
- White: 27,373 (62%)
- Hispanic: 3,459 (8%)
- Other/Unknown: 1,892 (4%)
- Non-U.S.: 1,647 (4%)
- Asian: 9,980 (23%)
- Black: 3,640 (8%)

**Accepted**
- White: 13,290 (66%)
- Hispanic: 1,701 (8%)
- Other/Unknown: 909 (5%)
- Non-U.S.: 310 (2%)
- Asian: 4,542 (23%)
- Black: 1,437 (7%)

Some chose more than one category; percentages are rounded.