We would like to thank The Daily Reflector for drawing attention to the national County Health Rankings (“Ranking shows work remains,” April 9 Our Views) that show Pitt County has made a lot of progress but still has a long way to go. The same is true for our region.

We at East Carolina University, Vidant Health and the Pitt County Health Department are working to address issues such as obesity, diabetes, heart disease, sexually transmitted diseases and teen pregnancies that continue to plague eastern North Carolina. The farther one travels from Greenville — to Bertie, Edgecombe, Columbus and similar counties — the more work there is to do.

ECU and Vidant provide many of the safety net services for the region: trauma, critical care, surgery, transplantation, high risk obstetrics and neonatal care, to name but a few. The Health Department provides care for people who might not otherwise be able to afford it and ensures our community is a safe place to eat, drink, work and go to school.

We are working with local agencies, clinics, health care providers and hospitals to help them solve local health problems in a way that best suits them and their communities.

Next month, more than 500 health sciences students will complete their studies at ECU. About 60 percent of our medical graduates and 80 percent of allied health, nursing and public health graduates go to work in North Carolina, many in the east.

Whether it’s through research, education, patient care, public health or other avenues, we are committed to improving the health of Pitt County, our region and our state.

PAUL CUNNINGHAM, M.D.
Dean, Brody School of Medicine
East Carolina University
A Reidsville double homicide that claimed the lives of an East Carolina University student’s parents in February remains unsolved but continues to be a priority for the investigative team, an official said on Friday.

Douglas Troy French, 48, and LaDonna Moseley French, 45, were shot to death on Feb. 4 at their home at 791 Pinewood Road in Reidsville.

Whitley Morgan French, 19, an ECU freshman, suffered a knife wound in the incident.

Whitley French called 911 about 2 a.m. to report a home invasion, authorities said. When deputies arrived, they found the husband and wife had been shot to death.

The ECU student suffered a knife wound to her arm and was treated and released from Annie Penn Hospital.

The French’s 14-year-old son was out of town on a school trip during the incident, Rockingham County Sheriff’s Office officials said.

A news release issued Friday by Deputy Kevin Suthard said the sheriff’s office has worked tirelessly alongside the State Bureau of Investigation, Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Rockingham County District Attorneys office and the Greensboro Police Department.

“Since the morning of February 4, this investigation has been and will remain at the forefront for Sheriff Sam Page and each member of the investigative team working this case,” the release stated. “The investigative team continues to work diligently towards bringing closure for the French and Moseley families.”

The sheriff’s office is asking anyone with information pertaining to the investigation to contact Rockingham County CrimeStoppers at 336-349-9683 or sheriff’s Detective Ben Strader at 336-634-3238, Ext. 4106.

Rockingham County Crimestoppers is offering a cash reward of up to $1,000 for information leading to an arrest.
Shaw University student Terashia Chestnutt poses for a photo on a red carpet in front of the student center, which was officially reopened Monday, April 16, 2012. Shaw University commemorated the one year anniversary of the tornado, which severely damaged facilities, including the Willie E. Gary Student Center.

**Shaw University marks one-year anniversary of tornado that damaged campus**

By Thomasi McDonald - tmcdonald@newsobserver.com

RALEIGH Days after a tornado tore through the Shaw University campus and damaged 27 buildings, admissions officers from other colleges started calling Jeffrey Smith, the school’s vice president of administration and student affairs.

“No one thought the school would reopen in the fall,” Smith said. “Schools all over the country we’re telling me, ‘We will take your students.’”

But the historically black campus in downtown Raleigh defied those expectations. Despite damage to virtually every building on campus, the school opened to new and returning students in the fall.

On Monday, exactly one year after the tornado, the private college’s students, faculty and administrators commemorated its reopening with a day of music, speeches and a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the reopened Willie E. Gary Student Center, the building that suffered the worst damage.
“We worked very hard to get to this day,” university President Dorothy C. Yancy said just before the ribbon-cutting, as a band struck up the rhythm and blues classic “Ain’t No Stopping Us Now.”

“Isn’t this beautiful?” Dr. George Debnam, the school’s retired physician, said to no one in particular during a tour of the student center. Debnam, who arrived on campus as a 15-year-old freshman in 1944, echoed the sentiments of administrators and students when he said the campus is in better condition now than before the storm.

Debnam, who served as Shaw’s campus physician from 1962 until 2001, said many of the buildings were built in the mid-1960s and in need of restoration. “Your car, your house, yourself – everything changes after 50 years,” he said.

The students point to the newly tiled bathrooms, new walls and the refurbished kitchen in the student center. But Smith, who oversaw the restoration, pointed out the things casual observers cannot see, such as the electrical wiring and plumbing.

“It’s better than it was. Every wall you see in here is new,” Smith said, standing on the second floor of the student center. “But we still have some quirks. The air conditioning isn’t on yet, but we expect it to be by the end of the week.”

The tornado that hit Shaw on April 16, 2011, touched down just southwest of downtown and damaged or destroyed hundreds of homes and businesses as it cut its way to Northeast Raleigh, where it killed three children at a mobile home park.

Shaw students escaped injury, but six buildings on campus, including the student center, three dormitories and the gymnasium had roofs partially or completely destroyed by the storm.

Students’ memories

Shaunta-mae Alexander, a sophomore mass communications major, was asleep in her ninth-floor dorm room at the Dimple Newsome Residence Hall when she was awakened by a noise. Alexander got out of bed and was about to look outside when she realized her bedroom window was shaking. Alexander, now 22, ran out of the room.

“As soon as I got out of my room I heard the glass shatter,” she said.

The hall was dark, with people running back and forth throughout the building. Alexander, a native of Sacramento, Calif., helped another student
who had collapsed on the floor make it out of the building. When she got outside, shattered glass from windows littered the ground and trees were toppled over. The roof on the student center was gone.

“It was my first time seeing anything like that. We don’t get tornadoes in California, we get earthquakes,” Alexander said. “It was horrific.”

Campus officials said the costs for repairs totaled $3.7 million. The dorm where Alexander lived and the Fleming-Kee Residence Hall both needed about $1.5 million in repairs.

Shaw closed for the remainder of the semester and opted not to hold summer sessions. Smith said the repair work did not begin in earnest until mid-summer, but there was never a time when he thought the school would not reopen in the fall.

Yancy said Smith “worked like a Trojan” to help restore the damaged buildings.

Smith on Monday said his father died March 28, 2011, less three weeks before the tornado.

“I put every moment I would have spent grieving into restoring this place,” he said. “It didn’t matter what anyone said. I knew we were going to be ready.”

McDonald: 919-829-4533
Wingate University sees record applicants

By Adam Bell

Wingate University’s mailbox is overflowing with a record number of applications for a sixth consecutive year.

The Union County institution has received 8,924 applications so far, an 8.8 percent increase over last year’s total of 8,199. Total applications more than doubled since 2008.

University President Jerry McGee said he was very encouraged by the trend. “It’s almost like in recent years, Wingate University has been discovered by a lot of new people and families,” McGee said. “A lot of things are going our way now.”

McGee attributed the rise in applications to a number of factors, including the recent addition of majors in nursing, physician’s assistant and criminal justice. The university is trying to stay current, McGee said, and meet the community’s needs.

Another reason for the increase is the university marketing itself more in the Charlotte region, Wingate spokesman Jeff Atkinson said.

He said the university is using the slogan “Major in a great life” to highlight what Wingate has to offer, ranging from educational opportunities and studying abroad to its small class sizes and affordability.

The university touts that it was ranked eighth among “best-value colleges and universities” in the South by U.S. News and World Report, based on quality and net cost.

Wingate enrolled 607 new students this academic year, and Atkinson said the university expects to enroll between 600 and 625 students for the 2012-13 year.

McGee said he would like to see Wingate’s student population climb from its current level of 2,500 to 3,500 in the next six to eight years.

“It’s helped that we’ve built some beautiful student apartments, and we’re constructing a 300-bed dormitory,” McGee added. “We are certainly very encouraged about the future and the quality of young people we are seeing.”
Wingate is a residential campus with 87 percent of students living on the school’s grounds.

The new dormitory, at a cost of nearly $8 million, should be available for students in January, Atkinson said. It is on North Camden Road, the main road into the campus.

Wingate was founded in 1896 by local Baptist associations, but is no longer affiliated with those groups.

Tuition and fees at the private university are $22,181, plus room and board of $8,770, for a total of $30,951. But Atkinson said the average out-of-pocket net price is $15,151, when scholarships, grants and other aid are factored in.

The university also has branch campuses in Matthews and Hendersonville.

Bell: 704-358-5696

**Wingate applications**

2007: 3,603
2008: 4,096
2009: 5,064
2010: 6,661
2011: 8,199
2012*: 8,924

*To date

Source: Wingate University
A Virginia Tech student places a flower at one of the 32 stones at the April 16 memorial at Virginia Tech. (CHRIS KEANE - REUTERS)

Virginia Tech marks 5 years since massacre

By Jenna Johnson

BLACKSBURG, Va. — Virginia Tech held its 9:05 a.m. classes as usual on Monday. Professors collected homework, passed out quizzes and launched into lectures. Students discussed the role of entertainment in society, took notes on the emancipation of slaves and solved polynomials.

The quest for normalcy on this morning, on this campus, was especially striking. It was the first time since 2007 that Virginia Tech held classes on April 16.

During the same class period five years ago, a senior English major with a history of mental health problems went on a shooting rampage in Norris Hall. Seung Hui Cho walked from classroom to classroom, firing more than 170 shots in about 10 minutes. He killed 32 people on April 16, 2007, counting two victims shot earlier that morning in a dormitory. Then he killed himself.
Virginia Tech Provost Mark G. McNamee said the resumption of academic routine Monday was a tribute to the 27 students and five faculty members killed five years ago. Each had a deep love for learning that led to grand dreams for the future and a desire to make a difference in the world, he said. “One way to remember them is to go to class,” McNamee said. “That’s what they were doing, and that’s what we live for.”

Each professor was allowed to mark the day however he or she felt comfortable. Some observed a moment of silence at the beginning of class, while others went ahead with lessons as planned. A few canceled class. Others devoted the period to discussing what they had experienced five years before.

Classics instructor Trudy Harrington Becker moved her morning class outside, beneath a century-old oak tree a few yards from a memorial to the victims of the massacre. Instead of discussing the role of ancient Greek and Roman women, Becker asked the students to get to know one another by sharing odd facts about themselves or stories that reflect their personalities outside of class.

The 2007 massacre pushed many faculty members to take a more active role in the lives of students and encourage students to look out for each other, Becker said after class. Cho was described after his death as a quiet, friendless outsider.

As the class wrapped up, Becker told her students: “Have a good day. Take care of each other.”

It was 9:52 a.m., close to the time that Cho killed himself in 2007.

Community-building was a key goal of those organizing memorial events for the fifth anniversary. There was a 3.2-mile run Saturday in honor of the 32 victims, along with a picnic for local rescue and public safety workers. There were also open houses and art shows. At lunchtime Monday, thousands of students came to the Drillfield, a grassy quad in the heart of campus, for free pizza.

“It’s a great way for people to sit there for a moment and reflect,” said Emily Schaefer, 21, a student government representative who planned the picnic.

The gathering had a lighthearted feel, as students sat on picnic blankets, listened to upbeat music and played lawn games. At the nearby memorial, the vibe was quieter and emotions stronger.
Early Monday, just after midnight, a few hundred students and others gathered at the same site to watch cadets light a ceremonial candle. The candle continued to burn throughout the day, as a line of people stopped by the memorial to read the names of victims or leave flowers.

Just as Virginia Tech has done since 2007, the community also planned a candlelight vigil on Monday evening. While the glow of candles looks the same from year to year, change is as constant on this campus as on any other.

Faculty and top administration have stayed mostly the same over the past five years, but the undergraduate student body has completely turned over. Today’s students were in high school when the shootings occurred.

“I think we are beyond the point where there are a lot of students here who were here then,” said Brian Datri, 20, a sophomore math major from New Jersey. He attended four classes Monday — “kind of like any other day,” he said.

Some of the most painful reminders of the 2007 massacre are gone. The dorm where the first two victims were killed, West Ambler Johnston Hall, is being renovated and will reopen this fall as a “residential college” with an emphasis on building a community of students who choose to live in the same hall for several years.

The second floor of Norris Hall was closed off for many months, then dramatically remodeled. Nondescript tile and white walls have been replaced with light wood, soft glass and warm lighting. The hall is now home to the Center for Peace Studies and Violence Prevention.

Still, thousands of students attended remembrance events Monday, connecting them to the school’s not-so-distant history. Some said they had older siblings or relatives on campus in 2007. Others said they could simply identify with being a student sitting in a classroom that’s assumed to be safe.

“It was a big day for everyone, whether you were here or not,” said Katie Caruthers, 19, a freshman nutrition major from Caroline County, Va. “We’re all like a big family.”
Christopher Thomas finished the Community College of Philadelphia with a 3.91 G.P.A. and is headed to the University of Pennsylvania this fall.

Opening Up a Path to Four-Year Degrees

By MICHAEL WINERIP

PHILADELPHIA — At the end of his first year at the Community College of Philadelphia, Christopher Thomas decided that his goal — to go back to school and get a degree — was no longer worth it. He was in debt from thousands of dollars in student loans. After class, he rode a bus an hour and a half to a suburban restaurant where he worked as a waiter. When the shift ended at midnight, it took him three buses to get home. He couldn’t afford a computer, so in the middle of the night, he walked to his aunt’s house and used hers to finish his class work.

He got seven A’s and a C, but the plan was for eight.

Mr. Thomas was 36, living in a spare bedroom at his grandmother’s house and doing much of his sleeping on the Route 124 bus. “I’m done,” he told friends.

But he wasn’t. A woman in the college’s Institutional Advancement department, Patricia Conroy, kept sending e-mails about a $2,000
scholarship. “WHY DON’T YOU APPLY FOR THIS,” she wrote. He won one. Professors spoke about his promise. Friends said it would be a crime.

“My dream of a 4.0 was gone,” he said. “I figured what it would take for a 3.9. If I aced out, I still might not make it, but a 3.89 was possible.”

Actually, he finished with a 3.91. This fall he will enter the University of Pennsylvania.

Increasingly, the students here are making that jump. Dawn-Stacy Joyner, a former hospital cook, will also attend the University of Pennsylvania. Nine women graduating this spring have been accepted to Bryn Mawr. Larry Thi, who hopes to become a teacher, transferred to the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

“There’s been a major acceleration the last few years,” said Rod Risley, executive director of Phi Theta Kappa, the community college honor society.

It’s partly the economic collapse. The Community College of Philadelphia costs $4,400 a year for city residents; the most expensive private colleges are $60,000. Getting an associate degree first can save $100,000.

“These students are choosing community colleges with the intention that this is their path to selective institutions,” Mr. Risley said.

He had no trouble providing names. Casey Maliszewski went from Raritan Valley Community College in New Jersey to Mount Holyoke, and she is now a graduate student at Columbia. Tamer Shabani also went to Raritan and is at Stanford. Mark Svensson transferred from Rockland Community College to Georgetown.

Indeed, one of my own sons graduated from our local community college and in January entered New York University as a junior.

For elite schools, community colleges offer racial and economic diversity; the college here is 55 percent black. “Colleges are looking for high completion levels, and the best community college students complete,” Mr. Risley said.

Since 2005, the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation has given 400 scholarships of up to $30,000 a year to outstanding community college students to continue their studies. Those students have gone on to average a 3.5 G.P.A. and a 90 percent completion rate, according to Emily Froimson, a spokeswoman.

The foundation also gives up to $1 million to four-year institutions to recruit community college graduates. Among the colleges and universities that have been chosen are the University of Michigan; Cornell; Amherst; the
University of California, Berkeley; the University of North Carolina; and Bryn Mawr.

Most of the nine here who have been accepted by Bryn Mawr have had their struggles. Taj Meyer had an eating disorder and did not make it through high school. Neither did Adrienne Baugher, who battled addiction. Remi Demarest left home as a girl and was raised by an aunt and uncle. Meg Booth is a single mother.

They range in age from Mary Chessen, 21, who transferred from the Art Institute of Chicago, to Kimberly Stuart, who is 38 and was working as a film grip when she started here in 2007.

Lija Geller flunked out of Temple and was embarrassed to be going here. “I’d get off the subway at Spring Garden,” she said. “The Temple kids stay on to the Cecil B. Moore stop. It felt like they knew I went to community college.”

Ms. Booth and Ms. Baugher have supported themselves by working as waitresses; Ms. Geller spent a year and a half as a dog walker; Ms. Demarest was a receptionist at a nail salon. “I wanted a second chance,” she said, “which is what a community college gives you.”

Bryn Mawr had not occurred to them. “Not even in my realm of thought,” said Ms. Baugher, who will major in biology.

In the two decades after graduating from Central High School in Philadelphia, Mr. Thomas worked a series of clerical and administrative jobs.

Starting college at 36, he was hungry for knowledge. He was always a big reader — Shakespeare, John Steinbeck, Richard N. Wright, Ralph W. Ellison. But not until he took an African-American studies course did he understand how little he knew of Frederick Douglass, Booker T. Washington, James Weldon Johnson. “I was ashamed when I realized,” he said.

People have told him that majoring in education would be a waste of an Ivy League degree, but his goal is to return to Central High and teach American history.

It was his developmental psychology professor, Vince Castronuovo, who first put the idea of the University of Pennsylvania in his head. “He told me it’s the place for a guy like you.”
Mr. Thomas was in one of the college’s computer centers on March 27 when he got the e-mail saying he had been accepted.

He has been chosen to deliver a speech at his graduation next month, and he recently finished a first draft. A lot of it will be about what determination and the right support can do for a person.

For weeks he has been looking for a part-time job, even for minimum wage. Last week he interviewed at an ice cream shop, but he has not heard anything yet.

He still doesn’t own a computer, but he thinks he’ll be getting one for graduation. It’s supposed to be a surprise, but his aunt let it slip that she didn’t know how anyone could make it through college without one.

E-mail: oneducation@nytimes.com
New Tech high school junior Kai Morgan in Napa, Calif., works on his trebuchet, a type of catapult. The school promotes 'independent learning.'

Educating the Next Steve Jobs

How can schools teach students to be more innovative? Offer hands-on classes and don't penalize failure

April 13, 2012, 6:18 p.m. ET
By TONY WAGNER

Most of our high schools and colleges are not preparing students to become innovators. To succeed in the 21st-century economy, students must learn to analyze and solve problems, collaborate, persevere, take calculated risks and learn from failure. To find out how to encourage these skills, I interviewed scores of innovators and their parents, teachers and employers. What I learned is that young Americans learn how to innovate most often despite their schooling—not because of it.

Though few young people will become brilliant innovators like Steve Jobs, most can be taught the skills needed to become more innovative in whatever they do. A handful of high schools, colleges and graduate schools are teaching young people these skills—places like High Tech High in San Diego, the New Tech high schools (a network of 86 schools in 16 states), Olin College in Massachusetts, the Institute of Design (d.school) at Stanford and the MIT Media Lab. The culture of learning in these programs is radically at odds with the culture of schooling in most classrooms.

In most high-school and college classes, failure is penalized. But without trial and error, there is no innovation. Amanda Alonzo, a 32-year-old teacher at Lynbrook High School in San Jose, Calif., who has mentored two Intel Science Prize finalists and 10 semifinalists in the last two years—more than any other public school science teacher in the U.S.—told me, "One of the most important things I have to teach my students is that when you fail, you are learning." Students gain lasting self-confidence not by being protected from failure but by learning that they can survive it.
The university system today demands and rewards specialization. Professors earn tenure based on research in narrow academic fields, and students are required to declare a major in a subject area. Though expertise is important, Google's director of talent, Judy Gilbert, told me that the most important thing educators can do to prepare students for work in companies like hers is to teach them that problems can never be understood or solved in the context of a single academic discipline. At Stanford's d.school and MIT's Media Lab, all courses are interdisciplinary and based on the exploration of a problem or new opportunity. At Olin College, half the students create interdisciplinary majors like "Design for Sustainable Development" or "Mathematical Biology."

Learning in most conventional education settings is a passive experience: The students listen. But at the most innovative schools, classes are "hands-on," and students are creators, not mere consumers. They acquire skills and knowledge while solving a problem, creating a product or generating a new understanding. At High Tech High, ninth graders must develop a new business concept—imagining a new product or service, writing a business and marketing plan, and developing a budget. The teams present their plans to a panel of business leaders who assess their work. At Olin College, seniors take part in a yearlong project in which students work in teams on a real engineering problem supplied by one of the college's corporate partners.

In conventional schools, students learn so that they can get good grades. My most important research finding is that young innovators are intrinsically motivated. The culture of learning in programs that excel at educating for innovation emphasize what I call the three P's—play, passion and purpose. The play is discovery-based learning that leads young people to find and pursue a passion, which evolves, over time, into a deeper sense of purpose.

Mandating that schools teach innovation as if it were just another course or funding more charter schools won't solve the problem. The solution requires a new way of evaluating student performance and investing in education. Students should have digital portfolios that demonstrate progressive mastery of the skills needed to innovate. Teachers need professional development to learn how to create hands-on, project-based, interdisciplinary courses. Larger school districts and states should establish new charter-like laboratory schools of choice that pioneer these new approaches.

Creating new lab schools around the country and training more teachers to innovate will take time. Meanwhile, what the parents of future innovators do matters enormously. My interviews with parents of today's innovators
revealed some fascinating patterns. They valued having their children pursue a genuine passion above their getting straight As, and they talked about the importance of "giving back." As their children matured, they also encouraged them to take risks and learn from mistakes. There is much that all of us stand to learn from them.

—Mr. Wagner, a former high-school teacher, is the Innovation Education Fellow at the Technology & Entrepreneurship Center at Harvard. His new book is "Creating Innovators: The Making of Young People Who Will Change the World."