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Jenkins’ art illustrates his devotion to region

By Jackie Drake
Wednesday, April 18, 2012

Sometimes history is written in ink, sometimes in paint.

The name Leo W. Jenkins is a well-known one at East Carolina University. The former chancellor is most remembered for expanding the university, a legacy engraved on the Leo W. Jenkins Cancer Center and the Jenkins Fine Arts Center.

But he also left his name on a collection of personal paintings illustrating his love for eastern North Carolina.

More than 20 of Jenkins’ oil paintings are on display at Joyner Library in an exhibit that opened with a reception on Tuesday afternoon.

“While Leo was not a great artist, he typically gave his paintings away to friends, supporters of the university and charitable groups,” history professor and university historian John Tucker, who organized the exhibit, said.

When Jenkins wasn’t working to advance East Carolina from a college to a university, establish a medical school or promote arts and culture, he liked to paint rural landscapes from the area that became his home.
“The other half of Leo is in these paintings,” Tucker said. “He was originally from New Jersey, but he came to embrace eastern North Carolina. He became one of us, and you can see it in these paintings.”

Jenkins (1913-89) served as president of East Carolina College from 1960-67 and as chancellor of East Carolina University from then until his retirement in 1978.

In addition to championing a medical school despite stiff opposition from those who thought the one at Chapel Hill was all the state needed, he facilitated the arts by inviting Francis Speight to become the university’s first artist in residence.

“I have to give Leo credit, he was a leader,” said former U.S. Senator Robert Morgan, a past ECU trustee and alumnus from the class of 1947. “He helped East Carolina become a university.”

Morgan and his wife Katie contributed one painting, a depiction of a red barn in the snow at night, that Jenkins gave them as a gift.

“Rob and I were going to dinner at his home and he was putting up a new painting and he asked if I liked it,” Katie Morgan said. “I said yes, I thought it was gorgeous ... and he offered it to me as a gift right then. I’ve had it ever since. We treasure it.”

Jenkins did most of his work while living in the current chancellor’s home on Fifth Street.

“Daddy wasn’t an artist, but he loved to paint; it was his way of relaxing,” said his daughter, Sallie Jenkins, the fifth of his six children. “He painted in the basement. We were free to go in and out. We loved to watch. One of my favorite memories is the smell of oil and turpentine wafting up in the house.”

Seeing her father’s paintings brought together on display was “wonderful,” Sallie Jenkins said. “There are so many I haven’t seen before.”

Tucker hopes that the exhibit will prompt other recipients of Jenkins’ paintings to come lend their piece to the display. An effort is under way to digitize the paintings for online archiving and viewing.

The exhibit is open to the public and will be available through the end of May.

Contact Jackie Drake at jdrake@reflector.com or 252-329-9567 or follow her on Twitter @JackieDrakeGDR.
Two people have been charged in burglaries and thefts at 16 homes and a department store, the Greenville Police Department reported Tuesday.

Joshua Tyrell Worsley and Takenya Natale Neal were arrested last week after being identified as suspects by detectives in the Property Crimes Unit during a weeks-long investigation, a news release said.

Worsley, 20, was charged with 34 crimes in 17 incidents that occurred between February and April of this year, as well as a December case. Neal, a 22-year-old ECU student, was charged with 24 crimes, the release said.

The crimes occurred largely in residential areas along Arlington Boulevard and Fire Tower Road and on Cedar Creek Road, the release said. The Sears department store on Memorial Drive also was targeted.

Detectives worked with witnesses and informants and developed leads based on suspect and vehicle descriptions from various reports to locate Worsley, the release said.

He was arrested on April 11 and jailed under a $235,000 secured bond. Neal was arrested April 13 and jailed under a $10,000 secured bond.

Worsley was charged with 16 counts breaking and entering, 15 counts larceny after breaking and entering, two counts larceny of a firearm and one count larceny by anti-inventory device.

Neal was charged with 11 counts breaking and entering, 11 counts larceny after breaking and entering, and two counts larceny of a firearm.

Worsley is scheduled to appear in court on April 26 and May 3 for the charges. Neal appeared in court on Monday for the charges.

Police are continuing to follow leads in an attempt to connect other crimes to the suspects, according to the release.

Anyone with information is asked to call 329-4315 or Pitt-Greenville CrimeStoppers at 758-7777.
Questions remain in Charlotte teenager’s death in eastern North Carolina

By Fred Clasen-Kelly

CHADBOURN - Four months after a mysterious shooting killed a Charlotte teenager in Eastern North Carolina, the FBI’s civil rights unit has joined an investigation into whether the incident was a tragic accident or a crime.

Jasmine Thar, 16, an outgoing Ardrey Kell High School sophomore, was shot Dec. 23 as she stood in the front yard of a Columbus County home with a friend and her godmother, whom she was visiting.

About 11 a.m., as they were walking toward a vehicle for a Myrtle Beach shopping trip, a single bullet fired from across the street struck all three of them, killing Thar and wounding the others.

The bullet came from inside a bungalow across East Third Avenue in a quiet neighborhood in this town of 2,200 people about 140 miles east of Charlotte.

One witness said James Anthony Blackwell, 23, burst from the bungalow about 100 feet away and began shouting “No! No! No!” as he fell to his knees.

When Chadbourn Police Officer Scott Rockwell arrived minutes later, Blackwell told the officer he had taken a Remington Model 700 rifle from a case, and it fired without him pulling the trigger. The officer found the rifle 4 feet from a window with a broken pane, the report said.

No charges

Rockwell handcuffed Blackwell and took him to the police station, but he was not arrested and was later released.

On Feb. 14, Columbus County District Attorney Jon David met with Thar’s family, who had grown concerned that Blackwell had not been charged.

Two family members who attended said David, Assistant District Attorney Chris Gentry and two representatives from the State Bureau of Investigation indicated they were leaning toward ruling the shooting accidental and not filing criminal charges.
Questions lingered about the rifle. Roughly 75 lawsuits have been filed against the Madison, N.C.-based Remington Arms Co. claiming its 700-series rifles have fired without a trigger pull. The company disputes those claims.

The family members recall that David said he had asked the FBI to join the probe because investigators were concerned about evidence they had found in the home of Blackwell, who is white.

Thar and the other victims, her godmother Treka McMillian, 42, an assistant basketball coach at Western Carolina University, and Jah-mesha McMillian, 17, are African-American.

Noelle Talley, a spokeswoman for the State Bureau of Investigation, confirmed this week that the FBI’s civil rights unit is aiding the investigation.

**Frantic scene**

It was two days before Christmas when Thar and her family prepared to leave for Myrtle Beach.

Six family members had just walked out of a small ranch house where they were visiting Treka McMillian’s family. Thar’s mother had driven from Charlotte to Chadbourn to take them shopping.

Thar’s mother and younger brother Jay, along with a 7-year-old girl, were already in the vehicle waiting for the others.

As Thar, Jah-mesha McMillian and Treka McMillian were walking in a line to the SUV, two witnesses said, a loud bang rang out. The bullet struck all three.

Frantic family members and neighbors rushed to them.

Jay, 15, used towels to put pressure on his sister’s chest wound until help arrived. His mother said he begged Thar “not to leave him.”

Neighbor Billie Bright heard the gunshot and ran to Thar, held her hand and told her, “Everything’s going to be OK.”

Bright also saw Blackwell crying out in front of his house. “I’ve never seen anyone’s face so twisted with anguish,” she said.

When Rockwell entered Blackwell’s house, he saw the rifle on the floor and a pistol on a nightstand beside the bed, his police report said.

Rockwell questioned Blackwell’s father, who was at the house. The father, according to the report, told the officer that he ran into Blackwell’s room when heard the gunshot. He said he found Blackwell standing in the room and the rifle was on the floor in front of his son.
The officer wrote in his report that when he asked Blackwell what happened, Blackwell said “that he had went to his closet to take his rifle out, and when he pulled it out of the case, the rifle went off. Anthony said that he did not know that the gun was loaded.”

**Investigation questioned**

Family members knew Thar as outgoing and ambitious. A basketball player, a track and field sprinter and cheerleader, she was once voted most popular by her classmates at Smith Language Academy.

Relatives said she planned to enroll at East Carolina University, where her sister graduated, and then attend law school.

She was especially close to her younger brother, Jay. Both went to Ardrey Kell High School and rode the school bus together.

Relatives said they are upset because they do not believe Chadbourn police and the SBI thoroughly investigated the case.

They ask why Chadbourn police did not arrest Blackwell the day of the shooting.

Rockwell handcuffed Blackwell and took him to the police station, but wrote in his report he was simply “letting him calm down away from the scene.”

“He said it was an accident, and that’s what they believed,” said Carletta McNeil, Thar’s mother. “They’re sending the message that you can shoot someone and walk away and say it’s an accident. That can’t be the world we live in.”

The family plans to meet with the district attorney April 26 in Chadbourn for an update on the case.

They have also launched an online petition at SignOn.org, which has garnered nearly 9,000 signatures.

“We want to make sure the case isn’t swept under the rug,” Treka McMillian said. “It’s time for people to stand up and say people should be held accountable.”

Chadbourn Police Chief Steven Shaw defended his department’s decision not to arrest Blackwell on the day of the shooting, saying prosecutors “felt like there needed to be more investigation.”

David did not return phone calls from the Observer. He released a statement Friday that said he could not comment about “specific facts and details at this juncture.”

“The public should have every confidence that our final determination will be based on the facts and the law,” the statement said.

**Rifle at issue**
Three criminal justice experts who testify in court about law enforcement practices said investigators need time to sort out the facts. Ballistics testing can take as long as eight months since many states have backlogged cases.

They said police and prosecutors would need evidence showing that criminal intent or recklessness led to the shooting to bring charges.

“It seems quite unusual a gun would discharge as he takes it out of a case,” said Robert Pusins, a former police major with the Fort Lauderdale, Fla., police department. “Certainly he bears some responsibility because you have a responsibility to handle it properly.”

But Richard Hough, a criminal justice professor at the University of West Florida and a former police officer, disagreed.

“I’m surprised they didn’t just discharge it as accidental,” Hough said.

Experts said the history of the rifle model involved in the shooting would make it more difficult to win a conviction.

The gun that killed Thar was a .308 Remington Model 700, one of the most popular bolt-action rifles.

The rifle has been linked to previous deaths, including the 2000 killing of Gus Barber, 9, of Montana. His family says his mother’s Remington 700 discharged while she was unloading it. She said her hand did not touch the trigger.

Remington Arms Co. did not return phone calls seeking comment. The company has previously denied the rifles have a defect.

**Emotional toll**

Little is known about Blackwell in Chadbourn. One neighbor said he had lived in his house for two to three months before the shooting. Treka McMillian’s family had never met him despite living across the street. He moved away a few days later, she said.

Shaw, who has served as police chief since 2004, said he knows most of the town’s residents by name. He said he went to high school with one of the shooting victims, Treka McMillian.

Shaw said he did not know Blackwell, who has no criminal record. Shaw said Blackwell is a military veteran, but he did not know in what branch he served.

Blackwell could not be reached for comment. Relatives did not return phone calls. A woman in front of the house where Blackwell lived said the family refuses to speak publicly on the advice of an attorney.

Thar’s family said they only recently gained the strength to talk about the shooting.
McMillian said bullet fragments struck her in her back. She still has nightmares. Jah-mesha McMillian, who was shot in the chest and critically injured, still has physical scars from the shooting and remains “emotionally traumatized,” Treka McMillian said.

Thar’s mother, Carletta McNeil, said the shooting has devastated her family. She and her son are both getting counseling.

McNeil recalled how she kissed her daughter and told her “I love you” just prior to the shooting.

“No one will ever understand the pain I feel,” she said as she started to cry.

McNeil said she is speaking out because she feels her daughter would want her to take a stand.

“One thing I promise you is that I will get justice for her,” she said, “if I have to march the streets of Chadbourn by myself. She didn’t deserve that.”

Fred Clasen-Kelly: 704-358-5027
Online Education Venture Lures Cash Infusion and Deals With 5 Top Universities

By JOHN MARKOFF

SAN FRANCISCO — An interactive online learning system created by two Stanford computer scientists plans to announce Wednesday that it has secured $16 million in venture capital and partnerships with five major universities.

The scientists, Andrew Ng and Daphne Koller, taught free Web-based courses through Stanford last year that reached more than 100,000 students. Now they have formed a company, Coursera, as a Web portal to distribute a broad array of interactive courses in the humanities, social sciences, physical sciences and engineering.

Besides Stanford and the University of California, Berkeley, where the venture has already been offering courses, the university partners include the University of Michigan, the University of Pennsylvania and Princeton.

Although computer-assisted learning was pioneered at Stanford during the 1960s, and for-profit online schools like the University of Phoenix have been around for several decades, a new wave of interest in online education is taking shape.

“When we offer a professor the opportunity to reach 100,000 students, they find it remarkably appealing,” Dr. Koller said.

Last fall a course in artificial intelligence taught by Sebastian Thrun, then at Stanford, and Google’s director of research, Peter Norvig, attracted more than 160,000 students from 190 countries.

The free course touched off an intense debate behind the scenes at Stanford, where annual tuition is $40,050. Ultimately, the 22,000 students who finished the course received “certificates of completion” rather than Stanford credit. And Dr. Thrun, who also directs Google’s X research lab, left his tenured position at Stanford and founded a private online school, Udacity.

Coursera (pronounced COR-sayr-uh), based in Mountain View, Calif., intends to announce that it has received financial backing from two of Silicon Valley’s premier venture capital firms, Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers and New Enterprise Associates. The founders said they were not ready to announce a
strategy for profitability, but noted that the investment gave them time to develop new ways to generate revenue.

One of their main backers, the venture capitalist John Doerr, a Kleiner investment partner, said via e-mail that he saw a clear business model: “Yes. Even with free courses. From a community of millions of learners some should ‘opt in’ for valuable, premium services. Those revenues should fund investment in tools, technology and royalties to faculty and universities.”

Both founders said they were motivated by the potential of Internet technologies to reach hundreds of thousands of students rather than hundreds.

“We decided the best way to change education was to use the technology we have developed during the past three years,” said Dr. Ng, who is an expert in machine learning. Previously he said he had been involved with Stanford’s effort to put academic lectures online for viewing. But he noted that there was evidence that the newer interactive systems provided much more effective learning experiences.

He and Dr. Koller dismissed the idea that companies would “disintermediate” universities by spotting the brightest talents among students and hiring them directly.

Coursera and Udacity are not alone in the rush to offer mostly free online educational alternatives. Start-up companies like Minerva and Udemy, and, separately, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, have recently announced similar platforms.

In December, M.I.T. said it was forming MITx under the leadership of L. Rafael Reif, the university’s provost, and the computer scientist Anant Agarwal. The program began offering its first course, on circuits and electronics, in March. As at Stanford, students receive a certificate of completion but not university credit.

Unlike previous video lectures, which offered a “static” learning model, the Coursera system breaks lectures into segments as short as 10 minutes and offers quick online quizzes as part of each segment.

Where essays are required, especially in the humanities and social sciences, the system relies on the students themselves to grade their fellow students’ work, in effect turning them into teaching assistants. Dr. Koller said that this would actually improve the learning experience.

The Coursera system also offers an online feature that allows students to get support from a global student community. Dr. Ng said an early test of the system found that questions were typically answered within 22 minutes.
He acknowledged that there was still no technological fix for cheating, and said the courses relied on an honor system.

Dr. Koller said the educational approach was similar to that of the “flipped classroom,” pioneered by the Khan Academy, a creation of the educator Salman Khan. Students watch lectures at home and then work on problem-solving or “homework” in the classroom, either one-on-one with the teacher or in small groups.

Dr. Ng said he had already vastly extended his reach by using the Internet as a teaching platform. He cited one student who had been in danger of losing his job at a large telecommunications firm; after he took the online course, he improved so much he was given responsibility for a significant development project. And a programmer at the Fukushima nuclear power plant in Japan was able to immediately apply machine-learning algorithms to the crisis that followed the earthquake and tsunami last year.
Hawaii News Now
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Mountain West-Conference USA merger now "unlikely"

HONOLULU (HawaiiNewsNow) - An agreed-upon merger between the Mountain West Conference and Conference USA, which was set to take place at the start of the 2013-2014 season, "probably will not happen," according to a source, as reported by CBSSports.com

The two conferences agreed in principle to the merger many months ago, but have now found deficiencies in revenue sharing, marketing and television deals, which could end up costing the conference millions, the report said.

The two options laid on the table by both sides have been to either merge both conferences into one super-conference, or dissolve both conferences completely and reform a new league set to begin in 2013-2014. While the former is now unlikely, both conference presidents said they will make a formal decision in early June.

Universities involved in the discussions were the United States Air Force Academy, University of Alabama at Birmingham, Colorado State University, East Carolina University, Fresno State, University of Hawaii, Marshall University, University of Nevada, Reno, University of New Mexico, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Rice University, University of Southern Mississippi, University of Texas at El Paso, Tulane University, The University of Tulsa and University of Wyoming. With the exception of Hawaii as a football-only member, the participation would involve all sports.

Chris Tanaka will have more on this story tonight on Hawaii News Now.
I have written a number of very in-depth articles on Big East expansion over the past two years, and as I was working on a Bleacher Report editorial on the current impending shifts in the FBS world, it became apparent it was time for another. When I started looking at the potential impact of the Big East adding East Carolina University, I was floored by what jumped out to me. As I wrote, the subject quickly demanded its own editorial.

I think you will find after reading this article that it is shockingly obvious at this point that East Carolina should be admitted to the Big East immediately. In fact, in this changing landscape it is just foolish to keep them out.

I'll make my case.

The are far more reasons to add ECU at this point than to keep them out. Here are ten of them.

1.) The Big East has a perception problem among eastern fans. Adding western schools SDSU and Boise State opened the Big East up to a lot of ridicule in their footprint, and weakened one of the Big East's best arguments for continued BCS Automatic Qualifier status—having an identity as the conference of the northeast.

Adding Temple and Memphis helped a little. Adding ECU helps recast the Big East as just what the name implies—a conference with a massive geographic footprint that covers most of the eastern US, encompassing the best of the rest of the non-power conference schools. ECU is the best football draw in the East that is not in a BCS conference. Adding ECU clarifies the BE's new argument for BCS AQ inclusion to fans and the BCS elite and helps the conference reclaim its eastern identity.

2.) ECU basketball is a slumbering giant which could spring to life in the Big East. ECU is smack dab in the middle of basketball country. Given that North Carolina is within the Big East footprint and that many of the basketball programs in the Big East are as good or better than those in the ACC, it is effectively stupid to not have an outpost in that state for basketball recruiting purposes.
If ECU had a Big East TV payout, they could easily pay a hot local name who coaches a fun style of play—like VCU's Shaka Smart—$2-3 million a year to join ECU in this great basketball conference. That could be the condition of their admission. In that environment, and under those circumstances, ECU could easily become an annual tourney team.

3.) The member count. By my count, Philadelphia-based Temple will be football member No.12 and Navy will be No.13. Now as part of what appears to be a deal for OKing the addition of Temple, there is a pending, time-sensitive, conditional offer for Philadelphia-based Villanova to upgrade, effectively becoming member No.14.

Adding ECU immediately would not necessarily impact Villanova getting in. If nothing else, that would help matters by helping create a perception of scarcity of slots and maybe making Villanova boosters and Philadelphia lawmakers feel they might be getting squeezed out of their side-deal for admitting Temple. It could light a fire under Villanova to take that 15th spot. That could in turn light a fire under the Big East's preferred choice, Air Force, to take the 16th slot or lose out to the emerging FBS program at UMASS. Slot scarcity is a great motivator.

4.) TV loves proven, measured fans, not just appealing big markets. While it was very smart to add top 10 markets like Dallas, Houston, and Philadelphia, looking at attendance numbers, it is a fair comment to say that SMU, Houston and Temple have underdeveloped fan bases. At a point, that becomes a bigger issue in TV negotiations.

I think the Big East should not want to enter their TV negotiations without ECU on board. ECU is very underrated in this regard. They draw very large turnouts (and given sell through rates likely could draw better numbers with a stadium expansion). Their fans may be the most passionate college football fans in North Carolina and may be significantly larger than even their attendance suggests. Their university is in a smaller city, so a large portion of their graduates and local fans relocate to other North Carolina metro areas. This is a school with a legitimate argument to a state-wide following.

TV networks know that schools will bring attention in local DMAs. They like to see schools who can bring attention in additional DMAs. The Big East doesn't have a lot of that. ECU has done that with regularity in the past. Add that to the fact that North Carolina is a very populous state with several very good DMAs and there are reasons in TV terms to add them. They would help sew the outlying Florida giants into the greater Big East TV offering. There is every reason for me to believe ECU would outperform the average existing BE members in terms of
audience delivered. It seems very unlikely that adding ECU is going to negatively impact the TV shares in the Big East.

5.) None of the North Carolina schools in the ACC have become dominant in football. There is a perception that they are all "basketball schools". ECU is perceived to be a "football school". It is entirely possible that at the BCS AQ level, ECU could start taking a far larger share of in-state talent than they are today. How good would they be then?

6.) What happens if the AQ designation goes away? If there are no status-based affiliations with elite bowls, it comes down to how many schools in your conference can sell enough bowl game tickets to appeal to the big money bowls. Those associations do a lot to make your argument of peer status to the BCS elites. How many of the teams of the new Big East can sell 25-45,000 seats to a bowl game? I count two to three at the most. ECU would be a much needed fourth.

7.) Where are the bowls? Bowls are a significant revenue stream. Most bowls are located in the sun belt. The Big East has two appealing bowl candidates in Florida who have bowl-level programs that would appeal to Florida bowls, but the rest of the conference is not that appealing to the southeastern bowls. (Boise State is an appealing curiosity to unaffiliated fans as long as they are winning 10-plus games a year, but there is no guarantee they will be able to maintain that standard.) There are a lot of bowls within a reasonable distance (1-3 states) of ECU who would likely pass on today's Big East, who would be more receptive to the Big East if it opened the possibility of ECU every other year (and maybe an occasional appearance by Memphis). Given that ECU, UCF, and USF are all annual bowl teams with large fan bases, the trio would probably guarantee an on-going annual association with three of the bigger money bowls in the region for the new Big East.

8.) It widens the gap between the Big East and the MWC/CUSA. ECU is one of the best draws remaining in the MWC/CUSA and one of their best football teams. Taking ECU out hurts the merged conference's ability to get into the better money of southeastern bowls and hurts the perception of the merged conference by the BCS decision makers. The merged conference joining the BCS AQ ranks could further diminish the Big East's stature.

9.) It protects the Big East from future raids, creating another appearance of instability at the conference level. The troubles of the last two years hurt the perception of the Big East as an AQ conference. The threat of raids will always be out there. Having the ability to lose up to two schools (Louisville? Rutgers? UConn?) and still be at 12 football playing members with likely associations with
three very good money bowl games is an optimal position for the Big East going forward.

10.) It could help the BCS elite control the potentially destructive emergence of the MWC/CUSA merger on the non-AQ conferences' status quo. Realignment is a series of domino drops. If you can take a domino off the floor, it can stop a whole bunch of them from falling. The Big East taking ECU could actually trigger a series of non-moves that could save the Western Athletic conference as an FBS conference. That would actually be a very good thing for the BCS elite. Helping out the guys who run the show never hurts your ability to stay in the show. This final point will be the subject of my next Bleacher Report editorial on realignment—"Should the BCS Elite save the Western Athletic Conference?"
**Becker’s Hospital Review**  
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**Gastroenterologist on the Move: Dr. Glenn Harvin Joins the Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University**

Written by Rob Kurtz |

East Carolina University in Greenville, N.C., has announced Glenn Harvin, MD, has joined its Brody School of Medicine and its group medical practice, ECU Physicians, according to a news release.

Dr. Harvin came to ECU from Atlantic Gastroenterology, also in Greenville. He is board certified in gastroenterology and internal medicine. His clinical and research interests include general gastroenterology, colon cancer screening and liver disease.

Dr. Harvin earned his MD from the Brody School of Medicine. He completed residency training in internal medicine and a fellowship in gastroenterology at the Medical University of South Carolina in Charleston.
Meetings Focus
April 2012

N.C. Goes Green

RALEIGH, N.C. - The N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach, in partnership with the Center for Sustainable Tourism at East Carolina University, have launched the NC GreenTravel Initiative, a program that recognizes state travel-related businesses that employ healthy environmental practices.

While many other states have created programs to certify “green” hotels, North Carolina’s NC GreenTravel Initiative goes a step beyond by awarding special recognition to hotels, restaurants, museums, parks, attractions and other tourism-related businesses for their environmental sustainability accomplishments.

Applicants that are recognized by the NC GreenTravel Initiative will receive a wall certificate and door decal identifying them as members of the NC GreenTravel community. They will also be listed as a sustainable travel business on the NC GreenTravel website at www.ncgreentravel.org.
Rankings Did Not Motivate College Official Who Falsified SAT Scores, Report Finds

By TANYA CALDWELL

Reed Saxon/Associated PressA former admissions officer at Claremont McKenna College exaggerated the school’s SAT scores for several years, university officials said.

The former admissions dean at Claremont McKenna College, who recently admitted to exaggerating SAT scores for several years, was not trying to improve the school’s standing in the closely watched U.S. News & World Report rankings but instead attempting to conceal bad news from his boss, the school’s president, who had established goals for higher SAT statistics, according to a report released Tuesday.

Richard C. Vos, the former vice president and dean of admissions at Claremont McKenna, felt that Pamela Gann, the college president, “had too many goals and that some must give way,” according to the report. “When the VP’s admission decisions did not produce the targeted SAT statistics,” the report added, “he chose to falsify the SAT statistics to conceal this outcome from the president.” The investigation was conducted by the law firm O’Melveny & Myers and paid for by the college’s board of trustees.

Investigators concluded that Mr. Vos was solely responsible for misreporting SAT, ACT, class rank and application statistics for incoming first-year students since at least 2004, which is as far back as the investigation scaled.

“We found that no one in the college’s leadership directed or encouraged the VP’s actions; the VP does not contend otherwise,” the investigators said. For his part, Mr. Vos reportedly does not fault leadership, or himself, for misreporting ACT scores, class rank and admissions data.

Mr. Vos did not alter the information in the college database to skew SAT scores, investigators reported. In fact, they said, he didn’t have the technological expertise to falsify numbers in the school’s database.

Mr. Vos used “paper, a pencil, and a calculator” to compile inaccurate statistics and submit handwritten reports to U.S. News & World Report. The trusted vice president handled reports to U.S. News & World Report personally; the other false
data was picked up by colleagues who didn’t verify the numbers before releasing them to other rankings organizations, investigators said.

Here is how investigators said Mr. Vos’s misinformation spread unchecked:

The VP first asked an admission staff member to generate from the CMC database a report of SAT scores for the incoming class. The staff member printed a report containing accurate SAT data. Upon receiving it, the VP chose an SAT median he wished to publicly report. The VP then worked backward to determine the means, ranges, and 25th/75th percentile statistics that would be consistent with the false median. Although he manipulated these statistics, the VP did not change any individual student scores in the college’s database or student files. The VP then asked a different admission office staff member, who had not seen the original accurate data, for a report template called the “Five-Year Report,” on which the VP handwrote the false SAT statistics. That staff member typed and finalized the Five-Year Report, and the VP submitted it to IR.

IR internally reported the VP’s false statistics through a CMC publication called Factbook. Factbook is a compilation of institutional statistics assembled by IR. Since at least 2004, Factbook incorporated the VP’s falsified SAT statistics. It was published on or about October 31st each year and circulated to certain members of the CMC faculty and staff.

Once Factbook was published, the admission office relied upon it in responding to most external surveys throughout the year. One admission officer is designated as the “survey person.” That person was responsible for responding to all admission-related external surveys — except U.S. News & World Report. Although the “survey person” has access to accurate admission data through the college’s database, the admission staff’s limited proficiency in generating data reports created a disincentive for doing so. Instead, the survey person typically asked the VP for the statistics or relied upon Factbook.

Mr. Vos, who joined Claremont McKenna as an admissions dean in 1987 and who was promoted to vice president of admission and financial aid in 1989, resigned on Jan. 29.

In an interview, Ms. Gann emphasized the university’s efforts to act “quickly, thoroughly, and with candidness” to resolve the matter. She said the college was taking action to ensure that no data from any part of the school is released without verification. It will also promote transparency and accountability by publishing its data on its Web site, she said.
Five steps to a prudent student loan
Published April 17, 2012
By Daniel de Vise

Here is a guest post by Jonathan Burdick, dean of admission and financial aid at the University of Rochester.

(Butch Dill/Associated Press)

Seeking several thousand dollars in student loans can be a challenging task for a wide-eyed 18-year-old who is about to graduate high school. In most cases, funding a college education is by far the most expensive purchase they will have made to date. But while it may seem like a daunting task, following these steps will arm students with additional knowledge to protect their financial future.

1. Find a financial role model.

Before getting a loan on your own, you’ll want to talk to someone whose financial counsel you trust. Your parents will probably be very useful directing you to such a person, given both their collective financial experience and their concern for your best interests. Have a frank conversation with your parents about money management, and then politely ask them whose financial advice they trust the most — that’s the person you’ll want to talk to.

Shop around for someone who demonstrates to you that they are smart about saving, borrowing and investing, and then keep that person as a mentor during
college and beyond. Check yourself against the example of your financial role model — seek out his or her advice, and more importantly, put it to use.

2. Don’t be afraid to borrow.

A good college experience — not to mention a good life — requires taking risks, and some of those risks are inevitably financial ones. For instance, even amidst the recent financial crisis, purchasing a house with a mortgage is still a smarter move than renting for twenty years. Likewise, borrowing a moderate amount to help finance your college education is both commendable and wise.

It’s a wise investment for you, because you’re increasing your long-term earning power; it’s a wise investment for banks, because a student at a good college is a good long-term risk; and it’s a wise investment for the country, because securing a quality education for young, able students is foundational to a thriving society. Don’t feel you have to settle for the cheaper college you don’t much care for when your dream school is within reach, albeit with the aid of a student loan. Wise borrowing at a reasonable level in order to attend the college where you feel “most likely to succeed” is far better than avoiding all risk.

3. Don’t take more loans than you have to.

Loans are a wise choice only inasmuch as they can bring you greater returns in the future. Loans should be used for unavoidable expenses such as tuition and fees, room and board, and perhaps sometimes books. An amazing summer internship — the kind you can build a career or a fellowship on — might be a rarer, but still viable, reason. However, neither the proverbial pleasure cruise, nor the latest electronic gizmo, nor a car should ever be the outcome of an educational loan. The returns on those items do not justify the attendant financial risk.

4. Live within your means, even if you have a credit card.

If you’re looking to pay off a credit card, your first step should never be to take a student loan. Instead, hold off long enough to think the issue through clearly. Suze Orman might tell you that swapping credit card debt for a student loan to get a reduced interest rate is prudent financial management, and she’s not wrong. It’s logical. However, it’s also the sign of a much deeper problem.

If you find yourself contemplating a student loan to relieve credit card debt, first go to your financial role model. He or she will likely shred your credit cards and help you set up a new monthly budget in which you live within your means. Only after you’ve taken those steps should you consider whether it makes sense to take a low-interest student loan to pay off the leftover revolving debt.

5. Tread carefully around private student loans.
Student loans are offered by a variety of institutions, including both government-sponsored enterprises and private companies. A watchful comparison of the terms offered by various groups before taking a loan can save you from an imprudent arrangement. When you see a flashy television ad from a financial services company encouraging you to take a student loan from them, ask yourself: how is that company paying for that ad? The answer, too often, is by burdening young borrowers with penalties, fees, and unreasonable interest rates. If you take private loans at all, look for reliable, vetted companies that you’ve found through research with your financial aid office or via the recommendation of your financial role model.

The take-home is to be thoughtful about borrowing. Student loans when used properly can lead graduates to a huge payoff over the course of a professional career. But they are not free money without consequences.

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