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Getting lesson on sports safety
By Jackie Drake
Tuesday, April 24, 2012

WINTERVILLE — Students got a lesson Monday in sports safety and the game of life from East Carolina University athletes past and present.

Former Pirate linebacker James “Junior” Johnson and sophomore softball player Jill Jelnick shared stories and advice at an assembly for sixth-graders at A.G. Cox Middle School, given by Vidant Health.

“The game of life is more important than any sport,” said Johnson, who played for ECU from 1984-88 and is now the manager of medical affairs technology at Vidant Medical Center in Greenville. “There’s a lot of pressure on athletes. But you want to be able to perform in life. I’m not a professional athlete, but I’m a professional today.”

J.H. Rose High School athletics trainer and ECU graduate student Becky Grant shared head injury prevention and hydration safety tips.

“Whether you’re a serious athlete or just playing outdoors, it’s important to be safe,” said Vidant Health’s Jordan Williams, who led a bean bag tossing game that incorporated questions quizzing students on what they learned during the assembly.

Jelnick told a story of how she put off seeing a doctor despite pain after she unknowingly broke her hand while sliding into base during a game in 2010. Though she missed most of her senior season in high school, her hand healed in time for her to play for ECU the next year.
“If I had come in to see the doctor right away, it would not have been as bad,” she said.

Middle school students are eligible to participate in athletics starting in the seventh grade.

“Please bear all of this information in mind,” Principal Tracy Cole told students. “We want you to be safe and healthy.”

The district hopes to expand the program to more schools, according to Pitt County Athletics Director Ron Butler.

“We’re trying to educate the kids early, before they start playing,” Butler said.

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East Carolina football coach Ruffin McNeill, left, spoke at the National Football Foundation and College Hall of Fame banquet at the Murphy Center on Monday.

McNeill helps honor award winners
“It’s cool to be a nerd, it really is.”

By Ronnie Woodward
Tuesday, April 24, 2012

East Carolina head football coach Ruffin McNeill told the award winners at the Murphy Center on Monday night to be proud of who they are and what they are.

The winners, comprised mostly of high school football players, already have plenty to boast about, and not only for their accomplishments on the gridiron. The 22 prep student-athletes were recognized for their athletic and academic success at an awards banquet held by the Triangle/East chapter of the National Football Foundation and College Hall of Fame.

McNeill, the keynote speaker, kept things simple in his message to the players.

“You can call them all nerds. I’m a nerd (too),” McNeill said. “It’s cool to be a nerd, it really is. Keep doing that.”

The high school scholarship recipients included representatives from each of Pitt County’s six public schools — Ayden-Grifton’s Marshall Edwards, D.H. Conley’s Tim Woodward, Farmville Central’s Jacob Davis, North Pitt’s Kyle Bennett Roebuck, J.H. Rose’s Musa Jose and South Central’s Emontre McNeil.

McNeill, Duke head coach David Cutcliffe and representatives from the North Carolina Central, N.C. State and North Carolina football teams were on hand for the collegiate portion of the ceremony. The college winners were Michael Barbour (ECU), Matt Daniels (Duke), Brandon Outlaw (NCCU), Mikel Overgaard (NCSU) and Curtis Boyd (UNC).
McNeill said one of the main keys to being a successful student-athlete at any level is creating positive situations.

“Surround yourself with good company,” he said. “The group you are with tonight exemplifies what I’m talking about with good company. This is a group that worked hard, a group that paid the price and excelled in the athletic field and the academic arena.”

ECU was hosting the event for the first time.

After the high school award winners were recognized individually and their athletic and academic accomplishments were read to the crowd, Jose took the microphone on behalf of the 22 athletes.

The Rose defensive standout thanked teammates, along with the football coaches and families in attendance.

“We have to thank our parents because it’s not easy to maintain good grades and also excel on the football field,” he said. “On behalf of all the recipients, I want to thank this foundation for providing us with this opportunity.”

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Vidant CEO to address graduates
Monday, April 23, 2012

Vidant Health’s chief executive officer will deliver the keynote address at East Carolina University’s spring commencement, the university announced Monday.

Dave McRae, an ECU graduate, will speak during the May 4 ceremony, which begins with a processional at 9 a.m. in Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium, a news release said.

Close to 3,800 students are expected to graduate, including 73 from the Brody School of Medicine. Roughly 2,860 bachelor degrees and approximately 1,200 graduate degrees and certificates will be awarded. Some students will receive more than one degree or certificate.

McRae joined Pitt County Hospital in 1975, when the organization was just beginning to develop into a teaching hospital for ECU’s school of medicine. He maintained a leadership role as the hospital grew from a 200-bed facility to a regional health system made up of 10 hospitals and medical centers that serve 1.4 million people in a 29-county region.

Vidant Medical Center in Greenville is the primary teaching facility for ECU’s Brody School of Medicine.
“As the CEO of ECU’s most long-standing and deliberate collaborative partner, Dave McRae’s support and collaboration has been instrumental in forging a nationally recognized academic health center,” ECU Chancellor Steve Ballard said.

“He has been with this partnership since the first days of the school of medicine and his leadership and contributions have been critical to the health care of the citizens of eastern North Carolina.”

McRae is a North Carolina native and a 1968 graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, with a degree in physical therapy. He holds masters degrees from the UNC School of Public Health and the School of Education at ECU.

He is a fellow with the American College of Healthcare Executives and a member of the Phi Kappa Phi honor society and the Chancellor’s Society of ECU.

McRae has chaired the Pitt-Greenville Chamber of Commerce and the North Carolina Hospital Association and served on the board for numerous health care-related organizations including the North Carolina Blue Cross/Blue Shield Association, the University Hospital Consortium, the Institute of Medicine, the Association of American Medical Colleges and the American Hospital Association.

For additional information on the commencement ceremony, visit http://www.ecu.edu/commencement/.

ECU colleges, schools and departments may hold unit recognition ceremonies in addition to the main ceremony.

For a schedule of unit ceremonies, visit http://www.ecu.edu/commencement/college_school.cfm
Former NCCU chancellor, USOC head LeRoy Walker, dies at 93

By Ned Barnett - nbarnett@newsobserver.com

Dr. LeRoy Walker, a historic leader in the U.S. Olympic movement and a hugely accomplished coach and educator in North Carolina, died Monday in Durham, his home for more than 60 years. He was 93.

Walker was the first African-American to head the U.S. Olympic Committee and was instrumental in bringing the Olympic Games to his native Atlanta in 1996.

In his long life, he overcame poverty and discrimination to earn honors as an athlete and coach, but he also was an academic. He was the first African-American...
to earn a doctorate in biomechanics, and he went on to become chancellor of N.C. Central University.

“LeRoy Walker was truly a remarkable human being, a great teacher, a great leader as chancellor, and a great international figure in competitive sport, especially the Olympics,” said William Friday, president emeritus of the UNC system and a friend of Walker for 40 years. “I don’t know of a man who has had a greater impact in his world than did LeRoy. He will be greatly missed.”

Walker as an inspiration

Walker was a member of more than a dozen halls of fame, but his admirers said his most impressive legacy may be not in what he accomplished, but in what he inspired and enabled others to achieve.

George Williams, who followed in Walker’s path to become coach of the U.S. Olympic track and field team, met Walker in 1976 when he sought him out for advice. Williams had just been hired as track coach at St. Augustine’s College in Raleigh, and Walker, then coach at N.C. Central, gave him guidance on coaching and his book on biomechanics. Williams’ teams went on to win 32 national titles and produced 36 Olympians.

“Every championship I won was Dr. Walker’s championship,” said Williams, who learned of Walker’s death while at track practice at St. Aug’s. “With all the lives he touched, Dr. Walker’s life will go on and on. He taught us, and we’ll teach others.”

During his track coaching career at N.C. Central from 1945 to 1983, Walker coached athletes to 11 Olympic medals and coached athletes to every Olympic Games from 1956 to 1976.

Williams said Walker died in hospice care after a brief illness, but had been alert and engaged until recently, smiling regularly with Williams and others during lunches.

“It’s a sad day,” Williams said. “We lost an ambassador and a great track coach. I lost a dad and a friend. But the legend will continue.”

Building character

A product of an earlier era in sport, long before the taint of steroids and college players routinely leaving school early for the pros, Walker saw athletics not as an exclusive activity, but as part of developing a strong overall character.

At Benedict College in South Carolina, Walker earned 11 letters in athletics and All-America honors in football as a quarterback and still graduated in 1940 magna cum laude.
“It’s probably shaped my attitude toward athletics and academics,” Walker told The News & Observer in 1996. “Don’t tell me because you are an athlete you can’t …”

Can’t wasn’t a word that Walker paid much attention to, even in a time when African-Americans faced open discrimination.

“I have lived through some terrible pains of segregation,” he told The N&O, “but I never talk about them. I just tried to overcome whatever pains were there.”

Walker said at the time of his being named president of the U.S. Olympic Committee, “There are a lot of disenfranchised blacks, women and Hispanics in our country who feel they will never get their just due no matter what they accomplish. I think I serve as a model of the idea that if you constantly pursue excellence, in spite of everything you have suffered, there are enough fair-minded people out there who will eventually recognize your talents.”

Atlanta and Harlem

LeRoy Tashreau Walker was born in a poor area of Atlanta as the youngest of 13 children. He grew up in Harlem after the death of his father when he was about 9 years old. He was the only one in his family to go to college. He would later earn advanced degrees, lead the Olympic movement and shape thousands of lives as an N.C. Central track coach and chancellor from 1983 to 1986.

Walker was proud of helping to bring the Olympics to Atlanta, but he also insisted that the Olympic torch be carried through Durham. When it got to N.C. Central, he carried it himself and lit a gold cauldron in front of 500 cheering people before the gymnasium that bears his name.

“I wanted to share this with you, wanted to make sure you got to witness and be part of this,” he told the crowd. “I knew you’d be as overwhelmed by this as I am.”
Students huddle Tuesday morning outside Carmichael Auditorium at UNC-Chapel Hill where they have been in line since 5 a.m. to see President Obama this afternoon.

**Why loans will change**
In 2006, Democrats in Congress promised to cut student loan rates in half. Subsequent legislation lowered interest rates on subsidized Stafford Loans for undergraduates, gradually reducing the rate over a four-year period. But unless Congress acts to extend the lower rate, it will revert to 6.8 percent July 1. Both President Obama and Republican front-runner Mitt Romney have called for extending the lower rate.

**Student loans are hot issue for Obama’s Chapel Hill trip**

By Jane Stancill - jstancill@newsobserver.com

President Barack Obama arrives at UNC-Chapel Hill on Tuesday with a message that may resonate with young voters worried about their economic future.

Obama kicks off a tour of three university campuses in three states – North Carolina, Colorado and Iowa – to urge Congress to prevent interest rates on many student loans from doubling this summer. If Congress does not act, the rates will rise from 3.4 percent to 6.8 percent July 1 for an estimated 7.4 million U.S. undergraduates who have federal loans.

That would be “a tremendous blow,” Obama said in his weekly address over the weekend.
In North Carolina, the higher interest rate would affect 160,000 students, adding $980 over the life of the average student loan, according to the White House.

Student debt now surpasses credit card debt in the United States, with the average senior owing $25,000 upon graduation.

“And for many working families, the idea of owing that much money means that higher education is simply out of reach for their children,” Obama said in his address. “In America, higher education cannot be a luxury. It’s an economic imperative that every family must be able to afford.”

April Brown, a sophomore education major at N.C. Central University, borrows about $8,000 a year, and she intends to go on to graduate school. Her sister will start college in the fall, squeezing her parents’ savings further.

As an aspiring high school history teacher, Brown expects to find a job, but many of her friends are worried about employment prospects. The rising tab for college may turn more young people away from higher education, she said.

“In the end, people will not go to school because they know they won’t be able to pay back all this money they’d owe,” she said Monday. “We’ll have a society that’s just not educated.”

Obama has made college affordability a campaign issue and has suggested that universities need to do more to control costs. Keeping the student loan interest rate at 3.4 percent for another year would cost the government an estimated $6 billion.

Mitt Romney, the Republican presidential frontrunner, said Monday he supports the effort to extend the low interest rate on student loans. He made the comment at a campaign stop in Pennsylvania, according to media reports.

‘Bad policy’

But Republicans in Congress aren’t necessarily behind the idea. Last week, U.S. Rep. John Kline, a Minnesota Republican who chairs the House committee on Education and the Workforce, said he had concerns about the president’s proposal.

“Bad policy based on lofty campaign promises has put us in an untenable situation,” Kline said in a statement last week. “We must now choose between allowing interest rates to rise or piling billions of dollars on the backs of taxpayers. I have serious concerns about any proposal that simply kicks the can down the road and creates more uncertainty in the long run – which is what put us in this situation in the first place.”

In 2006, Democrats in Congress promised to cut student loan rates in half. Subsequent legislation lowered interest rates on subsidized Stafford Loans for
undergraduates, gradually reducing the rate over a four-year period. But the rate will revert to 6.8 percent July 1.

Interest rates have been a political issue for at least a decade, said Steve Brooks, executive director of the N.C. State Education Assistance Authority. “I wish we’d talk about something a little more substantive than a one-year fix,” Brooks said, adding that 6.8 percent is too high a rate for students.

Borrowing in North Carolina has been lower than the national average. Here, 53 percent of 2010 graduates of four-year public and private colleges finished with debt, according to the national Project on Student Debt, and the average indebtedness of North Carolina students was about $21,000.

That figure may be on the rise.

**Tuition in N.C. going up**

In the 2012-13 academic year, tuition and fees will jump an average of 8.8 percent for in-state undergraduates across the UNC system as the universities deal with state budget cuts. In the Triangle, the increases will be 8.5 percent at N.C. Central University, 9.8 percent at N.C. State University and 9.9 percent at UNC-CH. In February, when the increases were approved, angry student protesters stormed the UNC system’s administrative building.

At the same time, state financial aid dollars have declined; the UNC system suffered a 15.6 percent cut in state funding last year. A state need-based grant program was reduced by $35 million last year. On Monday, Gov. Bev Perdue, a Democrat, said she would restore that $35 million for financial aid in her budget.

On Tuesday, Domonique Garland, a UNC-CH senior from Greensboro, will introduce Obama at Carmichael Arena on campus. She feels comfortable paying back her loans under the current low rate, but she worries that future students won’t be able to take full advantage of their undergraduate years. Garland was a museum volunteer, an adviser to incoming students and a singer in the campus gospel choir.

“If you’re worrying about the interest rate of your loan, then you’ll be more inclined to go and do part-time work or something else,” she said, “and not have that full experience, which is what gets you to the next level.”
Assessing higher education

By David Brooks

There’s an atmosphere of grand fragility hanging over America’s colleges. The grandeur comes from the surging application rates, the international renown, the fancy new dining and athletic facilities. The fragility comes from the fact that colleges are charging more money, but it’s not clear how much actual benefit they are providing.

Colleges are supposed to produce learning. But, in their landmark study, “Academically Adrift,” Richard Arum and Josipa Roksa found that, on average, students experienced a pathetic 7 percentage point gain in skills during their first two years in college and a marginal gain in the two years after that. The exact numbers are disputed, but the study suggests that nearly half the students showed no measurable gain in critical thinking, complex reasoning and writing skills during their first two years in college.

This research followed the Wabash Study, which found that student motivation actually declines over the first year in college. Meanwhile, according to surveys of employers, only a quarter of college graduates have the writing and thinking skills necessary to do their jobs.

In their book, “We’re Losing Our Minds,” Richard P. Keeling and Richard H. Hersh argue that many colleges and universities see themselves passively as “a kind of bank with intellectual assets that are available to the students.” It is up to students – 19- and 20-year-olds – to provide the motivation, to identify which assets are most important and to figure out how to use them.

Colleges today are certainly less demanding. In 1961, students spent an average of 24 hours a week studying. Today’s students spend a little more than half that time – a trend not explained by changing demographics.
This is an unstable situation. At some point, parents are going to decide that $160,000 is too high a price if all you get is an empty credential and a fancy car-window sticker.

One part of the solution is found in three little words: value-added assessments. Colleges have to test more to find out how they’re doing.

It’s not enough to just measure inputs, the way the U.S. News-style rankings mostly do. Colleges and universities have to be able to provide prospective parents with data that will give them some sense of how much their students learn.

There has to be some way to reward schools that actually do provide learning and punish schools that don’t. There has to be a better way to get data so schools themselves can figure out how they’re doing in comparison with their peers.

In 2006, the Spellings commission, led by then-Education Secretary Margaret Spellings, recommended a serious accountability regime. Specifically, the commission recommended using a standardized test called the Collegiate Learning Assessment to provide accountability data. Colleges and grad schools use standardized achievement tests to measure students on the way in; why shouldn’t they use them to measure students on the way out?

Many people in higher ed are understandably anxious about importing the No Child Left Behind accountability model onto college campuses. But the good news is that colleges and universities are not reacting to the idea of testing and accountability with blanket hostility, the way some of the members of the K-12 establishment did.

If you go to the Web page of the Association of American Colleges and Universities and click on “assessment,” you will find a dazzling array of experiments that institutions are running to figure out how to measure learning.

Some schools like Bowling Green and Portland State are doing portfolio assessments – which measure the quality of student papers and improvement over time. Some, like Worcester Polytechnic Institute and Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville, use capstone assessment, creating a culminating project in which the students display their skills in a way that can be compared and measured.

The challenge is not getting educators to embrace the idea of assessment. It’s mobilizing them to actually enact it in a way that’s real and transparent to outsiders.

The second challenge is deciding whether testing should be tied to federal dollars or more voluntary. Should we impose a coercive testing regime that would reward
and punish schools based on results? Or should we let schools adopt their own preferred systems?

Given how little we know about how to test college students, the voluntary approach is probably best for now. Foundations, academic conferences or even magazines could come up with assessment methods. Each assessment could represent a different vision of what college is for. Groups of similar schools could congregate around the assessment model that suits their vision. Then they could broadcast the results to prospective parents, saying, “We may not be prestigious or as expensive as X, but here students actually learn.”

This is the beginning of college reform. If you’ve got a student at or applying to college, ask the administrators these questions: “How much do students here learn? How do you know?”

David Brooks is a columnist for The New York Times.
Chapel Hill Town Council pans proposed hotel, student housing

Published April 24, 2012
By Katelyn Ferral - kferral@newsobserver.com

CHAPEL HILL - Town Council members sharply criticized a proposed hotel and student housing across from UNC-Chapel Hill’s future satellite campus Monday night.

“Your timing’s lousy,” council member Gene Pease told the developers.

Developers should delay the plan until the town finishes its 2020 Comprehensive Plan process, in which residents and the town are figuring out what should be built in this part of town, he said.

“This plan doesn’t even come close to what I’d like to see in this part of Chapel Hill,” Pease said.
Carolina Flats would put a four-story, 125- to 145-room hotel and about 190 apartments designed for upperclassmen and graduate students on the northeast corner of Estes Drive and Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard.

The apartments would house about 588 residents in three- or four-story buildings with 532 parking spaces, according to the concept plan submitted by Orlando, Fla.-based Progressive Capital Group and consultant Scott Radway.

The 16-acre site is currently zoned for single-family housing and would require rezoning. The town’s demand for student housing, a hotel on the north side of town and the property’s access to the Chapel Hill Transit bus system make it a good place for development, Radway said.

**Construction of Carolina North**

The project would correspond with the construction of Carolina North, which will be built over the next 50 years off Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard between Estes Drive and Homestead Road.

But residents who spoke Monday said it does not fit with the surrounding area.

Carolina North followed specific guidelines, but there’s no similar set of guidelines for the surrounding area, said Priscilla Murphy. “The town owes it to its residents … to apply our expectations to our own surrounding neighborhoods.”

The development would add significant traffic to Estes Drive and harm the environment, said Jill Blackburn, who represented residents in Coker Hills and Coker Woods.

“We do not believe that Carolina Flats proposal is the right design for this property,” she said. “This proposed project would bring substantial and detrimental changes to our neighborhood.”

The concept plan is meant to provide an early glimpse at how a project might look and to give developers an opportunity to get the council’s feedback before submitting a formal application.

And the council offered plenty.

Member Penny Rich said the developers’ number of proposed parking spaces is unacceptable.

“For every student to have a car with them and there’s two spaces for each apartment, I just have a problem with that,” she said.

Member Laurin Easthom agreed.

When trees are removed from an architect’s sketch, “what we’re really looking at is a huge parking lot,” she said.
RALEIGH -- N.C. State University will retool two colleges, shifting degree programs, faculty, and students from one to the other to create a new College of Sciences.

The change is one of the largest announced so far in a campus-wide reorganization started last year by Chancellor Randy Woodson aimed at protecting the university’s core teaching and research missions while absorbing state budget cuts.

Woodson announced the latest change today during a meeting of the university board of trustees. It is expected to take effect in July 2013 after a host of details are worked out, including the internal structure of each college and the degree programs and professors to be moved.

The restructuring is an attempt to adapt to the fast-changing world of science, where traditional disciplines are collaborating, merging and remaking themselves and where the ability to manipulate vast amounts of data has become pivotal, Provost Warwick Arden said in an interview.

The basic change is moving biological sciences from the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences to the new college, which will replace the College of Physical and Mathematical Sciences. That will put the biological sciences under the same roof as chemistry, math and statistics, physics and marine, Earth and atmospheric sciences.

“As a leading science and technology university, we need a very strong comprehensive College of Sciences to underpin pretty much everything we do in the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) areas throughout the university,” Arden said. “Having biological sciences in the same administrative unit as math and statistics and chemistry and so forth makes a lot of sense, and it
will also give us the opportunity to really explore to an even greater degree the interface between the quantitative sciences and the biological sciences, such as quantitative genomics.”

The university remains committed to the agriculture school, Arden said. The changes are likely to pull away only about 30 to 40 faculty members from that college, some of whom may be replaced by new hires as part of an initiative to increase the number of tenured and tenure-track professors.

A steering team will help work out the details of how the newly-named college will be structured, which may include redesigning entire departments, and figuring out which faculty would move. University officials said that departments such as math and statistics would remain, but that others might be changed.

One program certain to move, said Arden, is undergraduate biology, among the university’s largest with more than 2,000 students.

It’s likely that some smaller graduate and undergraduate programs also will move, but it will take some time to determine which moves make sense, he said.

The dean of the newly-named college will be Daniel Solomon, now dean of the College of Physical and Mathematical Sciences.

“The sciences have converged to address really important problems we face, like energy, health sustainability and so on, and that takes an interdisciplinary effort,” Solomon said in an interview.

Pulling the pertinent disciplines together can allow them to avoid duplicating equipment and facilities, he said, but more importantly it will make it easier to create and maintain needed collaboration.

The plan is based on nine months of work by a faculty task force Arden created last year. It parallels changes that universities around the country have made to keep pace with the shifts in science, many of them created by the rapid rise in
importance of work with massive amounts of data, a basic part of fields such as genetic research.

“This whole issue of big data science, big data analysis, is huge,” Arden said. “It doesn’t matter what field you’re in, but if you’re in the biological sciences, geneticists are producing massive quantities of data that need to be analyzed. So quantitative genomics is a huge area where we already have a strong position, but we would like to become even stronger.”
New UNCW chancellor installed

By Pressley Baird

It was a ceremony akin to graduation: standing ovations, academics in robes, a crowd squinting in the sunlight.

But unlike the finality of commencement, audience members at Gary Miller's installation as chancellor of the University of North Carolina Wilmington left Friday's event with homework.

Following formal rituals in a ceremony on the lawn of Hoggard Hall officially marking Miller as UNCW's fourth chancellor, he gave the crowd of more than 1,500 students, faculty and alumni a handful of challenges for a future that he said would highlight three key values of "a university with a soul, a university on the move."

Miller, who took the college's top job in July after former Chancellor Rosemary DePaolo retired, asked the audience to help him nurture students and improve programs, all while thinking about the next big way to do each one.

Miller told the audience his first goal was to make a commitment to students' journeys. He used the incoming freshmen class as an example, noting that the more than 2,000 students would come from almost every North Carolina county and multiple states and countries.

To Hannah Roggemann, a sophomore accounting major, that emphasis on students was one of the most important parts of Miller's speech.
"Every other professor who spoke said it, too," she said, referring to other speakers throughout the morning. "He cares about students."

Miller asked UNCW faculty and staff to take into account how students would change their career choices because of a digital and global economy.

That global focus should start, Miller said, with a connection to the Cape Fear region. He told the crowd to cultivate a love of place, taking the university's coastal location as a metaphor for how they could improve the world.

"There is no complete understanding of human history in the absence of the sea," he said.

Miller promised to develop marine science research, health and human sciences partnerships and academic engagement programs to "highlight our region in a way that translates to coastal regions everywhere."

Miller's spotlight on UNCW's community role reminded Susan Wilder, an administrative associate in the university's theater department, of the importance of higher education.

"In spite of being expensive, difficult and costly, it's a really important commodity," she said.

Wilder watched the speech through a live stream on the university's website, an example of the technology Miller wants to use to achieve his local and global goals. He said new ideas and innovations would come by taking chances, calling UNCW a "perfect garden of invention."

He committed to growing graduate and research programs, as well as finding new ways to help students learn. He said he wanted to lead the way in partnering with other UNC-system campuses.

As Miller gave the crowd their challenges, he acknowledged the challenges facing him.

"We will test virtually every assumption of higher education in the coming decades," he said. "Let me say with great confidence to our critics there is no enterprise in the world better able to prepare students for the future than American higher education."

The sweeping statement fell in line with the pomp and circumstance of the day. But Roggemann thought he meant it.

"He wasn't just like, ‘I want to bring change,'" she said. "He had extreme depth."
For colleges, rape cases a legal minefield

By Justin Pope, Associated Press education writer

A closed-door encounter between two college acquaintances. Both have been drinking. One says she was raped; the other insists it was consensual. There are no other witnesses.

It's a common scenario in college sexual assault cases, and a potential nightmare to resolve. But under the 40-year-old federal gender equity law Title IX - and guidance handed down last year by the Obama administration on how to apply it - colleges can't just turn such cases over to criminal prosecutors, who often won't touch them anyway. Instead, they must investigate, and in campus proceedings do their best to balance the accused's due process rights with the civil right of the victim to a safe education.

Lately, though, the legal ramifications of such cases are spilling off campus, with schools caught in the middle.

Colleges that do too little about sexual assault could lose federal funds. The Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights is currently investigating a dozen colleges and universities over their response to sexual violence (documents obtained under the Freedom of Information Act show schools that have recently agreed to take steps to resolve OCR complaints over Title IX policies include universities such as Notre Dame, Northwestern and George Washington).

Meanwhile, judgments in Title IX lawsuits against colleges, usually brought by accusers, are soaring. Compounding the fear: In some such cases, college administrators may be found personally liable.

But when colleges do take action against accused students, those students are increasingly lawyering up themselves, suing for breach of contract and negligence. And in at least two recent cases, in Tennessee and Massachusetts, male students have tread novel legal ground by alleging violations of their own Title IX protections against gender discrimination, arguing a college's sexual assault policies or procedures were unfairly stacked against men.

Whether or not such Title IX arguments hold up, they underscore a new fact of life: For better or for worse, the days when colleges could count on handling such matters quietly behind closed doors are over.
A 1999 U.S. Supreme Court decision established potential liability under Title IX for schools that fail to address sexual harassment and, in its extreme form, sexual assault.

Now, Title IX cases represent "the most expensive lawsuits in history" against colleges, said Brett Sokolow, managing partner of the National Center for Higher Education Risk Management.

Among them: The University of Colorado faced a $2.85 million verdict under Title IX after two students were allegedly raped by football recruits and players at an off-campus recruiting event in 2001. An appeals court essentially held that Colorado had an official policy to show recruits "a good time," which created a dangerous culture for sexual assaults. The jury verdict in a sports-related Title IX discrimination case at California State University-Fresno ran to $19.1 million, though that was later reduced to $6.6 million.

Such verdicts have cast a cloud of fear over college attorneys and administrators. Some advocates welcome that. They hope it will prompt long-overdue measures to ensure sexual assaults don't deny women access to education.

But there are concerns of overreach.

In March, 2011, in a response to student protesters who had occupied a campus building and were calling for stronger policies to combat sexual assault, the president of Dickinson College in Pennsylvania announced that expulsion would be the only available sanction for rape.

Numerous experts and administrators at other campuses called such a policy unusual and troubling. They say it deprives educators of flexibility in handling cases that often aren't black and white. And like any sentencing minimum, it may have the unintended effect of making conduct boards less likely to convict at all. (Dickinson dropped the policy in guidelines published last December, which refer more broadly to sexual assault, and standardize punishments ranging from one-year suspension to expulsion).

"It drives -not hysteria, that's not the right word - but nearly that," Sokolow said. "It's such a fear-based reaction that a lot of colleges now are expelling and suspending people they shouldn't, for fear they'll get nailed on Title IX."

Hans Bader, a former attorney with the Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights, says campus conduct boards, fearing Title IX lawsuits, will inevitably err on the side of punishment.

"Innocent people get found guilty of harassment because the school realizes the only way it can avoid liability is to punish everybody in sight," he said.
But that's a legal danger, too. Students accused of sexual violence don't buy the argument that such proceedings are merely "educational," affecting nothing more than their academic standing.

"Fifteen years ago, 20 years ago, if a student got into trouble he would just drop out and go elsewhere," Sokolow said. "Now colleges are starting to share information, they're starting to put notations on transcripts." With more at stake, "We're seeing more students who want to stand and fight."

Typically, such suits allege breach of contract or negligence, like a recently resolved high-profile case involving Brown University, brought by a former student who contended Brown rushed an investigation and caved to pressure from the accuser's father, a prominent donor.

But recently, at least two have made an apparently novel argument citing the Title IX rights of accused male students. Their argument: Title IX, while requiring numerous protections for sexual assault victims, fundamentally concerns gender equity, and men can be victimized, too.

A federal judge threw out the Title IX claim brought by a male student punished for sexual assault at the University of the South, Sewanee, in Tennessee. But a jury sided with the student on other grounds, agreeing the college failed to provide basic fairness. Sewanee, the jury agreed, allowed a charge to proceed without adequate evidence and gave the accused little more than 24 hours to prepare for a hearing. Also, administrators failed to interview key witnesses, disclose exculpatory evidence, and have adequately trained employees running the process.

Sokolow, who testified on behalf of the accused student (he usually testifies for colleges), called the ruling important because it established that even private colleges can be found negligent if they don't meet basic standards.

Then there's the case of Edwin Bleiler, who was expelled from Holy Cross in Massachusetts on the day he was supposed to graduate last spring, for allegedly sexually assaulting another student. The accuser maintained she'd been intoxicated and unable to give consent to a sexual encounter. Bleiler contends she wasn't incapacitated and acted willingly.

Now, Bleiler is suing Holy Cross, arguing the college's consent and sexual misconduct policies discriminate against male students - violating his Title IX rights. An attorney for Bleiler, Emily Smith-Lee, contends his Title IX claim is stronger than the one dismissed in the Sewanee case: Bleiler's case goes beyond the argument that Holy Cross implemented its sexual assault policy in a discriminatorily shoddy fashion. Rather, it claims the policies are inherently tilted against men, by creating different standards for male and female students.
Holy Cross declined to comment.

Russlynn Ali, the assistant secretary who oversees the Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights, declined to comment on specific cases, and said she did not believe the department had ever received a complaint alleging a male student's Title IX rights were violated in a sexual assault proceeding. But, if it ever did, the complaint would be looked into.

"Title IX protects all students, male and female, against sex discrimination," she said.

Wendy Murphy, a Boston attorney and victims' advocate who has filed numerous Title IX complaints on behalf of victims, says colleges cave too easily to the threat of lawsuits from students accused of sexual violence. Most victims don't have the resources to sue, which is precisely why they depend on campus Title IX procedures to ensure they are protected. That requires putting a thumb on the scale in favor of victims - such as the "preponderance of the evidence" standard the Obama administration has said schools must use in adjudicating such cases.

Colleges must protect victims, she says. That means abandoning the fantasy they can make everybody happy by also offering accused students the full due process rights they'd enjoy in a criminal trial.

"You can't run a school that way," Murphy said. "If every once in a while a school has to be sued at the cost of being fair to all students, so be it."
College Graduates, You Need to Start Saving Now
April 21, 2012, 8:17 p.m. ET

The majority of this spring's college graduates aren't ready to take on the world financially. Two-thirds of students will graduate with debt that averages $25,250 in student loans and more than $4,000 in credit-card debt, according to the Project on Student Debt.

With a job or not, all these young people will strike out on their own. My question is, how many will have the personal-finance savvy to avoid the same mistakes their parents made?

Graduates, your parents did not save and their retirement nest is filled with cracked eggs.

If you can rid yourself of the notion that it's way too early to think about retirement, you can avoid the financial headaches Mom and Dad are dealing with. Here are some things you should do as soon as you start working in your first job—before you think about that car or condo:

• Your youth is a giant investing advantage that your parents no longer have—don't waste it. Start saving for retirement. Now.
• Here's how interest compounds over time: If you save $10 a day at age 25, you'll have more than $1 million by age 65, assuming an 8% annual rate of return. If you start at age 35, you'll have $445,000. At age 45, you'll only have $180,000.
• If your company matches your contribution to a retirement-savings account, such as a 401(k), put in at least enough to get the full employer match. A $1 for $1 match is a 100% return on your investment.
• Consider putting money into mutual funds that will automatically give you investment diversification, such as balanced, target-date and global asset-allocation funds. These products are simple solutions for those who don't want to spend time managing their investments.
• When you get a raise, put half of it into your retirement fund, and you'll never miss it.
• When you switch jobs, roll your retirement fund into a new one; don't ever cash out.

But there's more to being financially literate than setting up a solid retirement plan. The chances are good you didn't have a personal-finance
course in college or before. So look around your community for one to enroll in. Your company might offer one, or your local community college. Such courses teach you a lot—from setting up a monthly budget, to investing wisely, to buying a house or a car and more. If no courses are available, get a personal-finance book from the bookstore or library.

—John Pelletier
MarketWatch.com

A Win for Generics
Patients who take brand-name drugs could reap big savings on their prescriptions, thanks to a landmark Supreme Court ruling in favor of a generic-drug company.

The justices ruled last week that generic-drug companies can challenge the way brand-name manufacturers describe their patents to the Food and Drug Administration.

Experts say the complex patent system has long enabled pharmaceutical firms to hold onto patents longer by adding additional patents as the original expiration date draws near.

"During this time the patent holder has a monopoly on the drug and can set pricing as they desire," says Kevin Flynn, president of Healthcare Advocates. "This ruling will allow people to have access to medication that they otherwise might not be able to afford."

The National Pharmaceutical Association didn't respond to a request for comment.

Drugs that lose their patents could save patients thousands of dollars a year on prescriptions, analysts say. "A patient can often save 90% or more if they can get a generic drug," says Jeffrey Rice, chief executive officer of the Healthcare Bluebook.

Hastening the entry of more generic drugs into the market would help cut insurance costs and save tax dollars, according to several recent studies. For example, a U.S. Government Accountability Office study said the U.S. health-care system saved $1 trillion from 1999 to 2010 by using generic drugs instead of brand-name drugs.

-Quentin Fottrell
Real-Time Advice Blog
SmartMoney.com
Majors That Pay Off

We know that a college diploma boosts earnings, but a student's choice of major also plays a big part.

The gap in wage rates between electrical-engineering and general-education majors is nearly as large as the difference between college graduates and high-school graduates, according to a study by Joseph G. Altonji, Erica Blom and Costas Meghir of Yale University.

The economists examined the large differences in labor-market outcomes across college majors in several ways. They found that among other things, math skills are correlated to higher earnings. "Wages tend to be high for engineers and low for elementary education majors, suggesting that perhaps much of the wage differences between majors are due to differences in mathematical ability and high school course work," the authors wrote.

Their numbers also show the range of wages in each major, and the value of an advanced degree. Majors in which a large share of graduates move on to get professional degrees have a higher premium for postgraduate study. (For instance, about one in five biological-science majors become doctors, and nearly the same ratio of political-science majors get law degrees.)

Better Rates

Savers may want to take the Goldilocks approach to shopping for a bank savings account.

Midsize banks—those with between $5 billion and $25 billion in deposits—offered better interest rates in the first quarter than their smaller and larger counterparts, according to a survey by MoneyRates.com.

Savings rates in those institutions averaged 0.26%, compared to 0.20% for banks overall. Money-market rates at midsize banks averaged 0.28%, compared to 0.24% overall.

Regional banks tend to offer better rates in order to compete with bigger banks that have name recognition, says Greg McBride, senior financial analyst for Bankrate.com.

As lending picks up in parts of the country, midsize regional banks could be working to build up deposits in order to issue more loans, he says.

To be sure, even better rates can be found elsewhere. Online banks offered an average 0.59% on savings accounts and 0.69% on money-market accounts, according to MoneyRates.com.
—Jonnelle Marte
Real-Time Advice Blog
SmartMoney.com

The Aggregator, edited by Cristina Lourosa-Ricardo, features news and commentary from The Wall Street Journal and other publications. Email: cristina.lourosa@wsj.com
NORTH CAROLINA — A $31,200 settlement has been reached between East Carolina University and its former student media director, who was fired in January in the wake of a full-frontal streaker photo in the student newspaper he advised.

Paul Isom, who advised the East Carolinian newspaper and the Rebel literary magazine, will not return to his position at ECU, but will receive six months of his salary and health insurance costs. As of Friday, he is listed as having resigned so that a termination will not appear in his employment history.

“I’m glad we were able to come to some sort of settlement and move forward,” Isom said.

ECU spokeswoman Mary Schulken said the university pursued a termination because of a “difference in philosophy,” not because of the streaker photograph. She declined to explain the philosophical differences, referring the question to Isom.

When contacted, Isom said he felt uncomfortable answering the question due to the terms of the settlement, instead referring the question to his lawyer, John Hoomani, who then referred the question back to the university.

According to the agreement, parties of the settlement were advised to respond to media inquiries “by stating that the matter has been amicably resolved on terms agreeable to both sides.”

Schulken said Isom’s replacement, who has not yet been selected, will take student media in a “new direction.” She explained the university intended to hire someone to directly and solely advise the East Carolinian so as to give it
more attention, and the new adviser will be required to focus more on Web journalism.

Isom said he was already focusing heavily on Web initiatives, explaining that student media was behind the times when he first arrived in 2008. He said student media’s social media presence soared while he was director.

Isom declined to comment whether he thought the university was reacting directly to the streaker photo, though he said he believed he was fired for that reason in an earlier interview with the Student Press Law Center.

The East Carolinian published the photo Nov. 8 after a man streaked onto the football field during a home game. The decision to publish, which was made solely by the editorial staff, was met with outcry from university administrators.

Isom was terminated Jan. 4, and the university appointed Frank Barrows, an experienced newspaper editor, as interim student media director in late January.

When asked if Isom had performed unsatisfactorily prior to the photo’s publication, Schulken said, “This was about a difference in philosophy and a difference in our expectations.”
Displaying Value: The Case for the Liberal Arts Yet Again

By STANLEY FISH

Early on in his new book, “College: What It Was, Is, and Should Be,” Andrew Delbanco of Columbia University quotes the economist Richard Vedder and the former university president William Brody to the effect that little has changed in higher education despite enormous changes in technology, demographics, funding models, and student habits and attitudes. Vedder notes that “with the possible exception of prostitution, teaching is the only profession that has had absolutely no productivity advance in the 2,400 years since Socrates.” Brody is less wry, but the point is the same: “If you went to a [college] class circa 1900, and you went today, it would look exactly the same.”

In many of the books on higher education now flooding the market, statements like those would be preliminary either to a denial of the point (everything is not the same; here are the new things we’re doing), or to an affirmation of it followed by detailed recommendations (here’s what we should do to catch up). Delbanco, however, not only accepts the fact that little has changed in the classroom — “most of what we see in the past looks a lot like the present” — he celebrates it in the course of answering his title’s question. College, he tells us, “is a hedge against utilitarian values” that “slakes the human craving for contacts with works of art that somehow register one’s longings and yet exceed what one has been able to articulate by and for oneself.”

It is typical of Delbanco’s mode of presentation that he doesn’t hit you over the head with an argument, but leaves you to work it out: if humans do indeed crave such contact, that craving is the same in all ages, and the kind of experience that satisfies it will also be the same: “[T]he questions we face under the shadow of death are not new, and … no new technology will help us answer them.”

That includes the technology of science. Delbanco pays tribute to science’s “progressive power,” but its “principle of progress,” he says, does not “translate well” into other areas of human life: “Science tells us nothing about how to shape a life or how to face death … It not only fails to answer such questions; it cannot ask them.” Delbanco knows that some scientists
have predicted that in time “neuroscience will define and ensure happiness and … biochemistry will distinguish truth from falsity among what today are mere opinions about sex and gender,” but he doubts “it will happen”; even if it does, “none of us will be around … and it’s not clear that we would want to be.”

Notice that Delbanco doesn’t say that we surely wouldn’t want to be around. “It’s not clear” strikes just the right note of questioning; the point is made, but it is not pressed. Indeed, I have somewhat misrepresented the book by collecting some of its more polemical moments. The book does have a thesis, but it is not thesis-ridden. It seeks to persuade not by driving a stake into the opponent’s position or even paying much attention to it, but by offering us examples of the experience it celebrates. Delbanco’s is not an argument for, but a display of, the value of a liberal arts education.

The display comes in two forms. First there is the felicity of the author’s prose. Mirabile dictu, there are no charts and few statistics. But there are sentences worth reading. Reminding us that “professor” means someone professing a faith, Delbanco exhorts us to keep the etymology alive: “Surely this meaning is one to which we would still wish to lay claim, since the true teacher must always be a professor in the root sense of the word — a person undaunted by the incremental fatigue of repetitive work, who remains ardent, even fanatic, in the service of his calling.”

The ardency is not only reported; it is communicated, both by his words and the words of those he marshals in a parade of inspiring, even fanatic, exemplars (this is the second form of display): Henry James, Mark Twain, Edgar Allan Poe, Philip Roth, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Matthew Arnold, John Henry Newman, Walt Whitman, Jonathan Edwards, John Cotton, Seneca, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Max Weber, Henry Adams, William James, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Lionel Trilling, Emily Dickinson, Benjamin Franklin, John Witherspoon, Groucho Marx, Philip Larkin, Homer.

These worthies do double duty: They illustrate observations Delbanco is making, and they are themselves illustrations of why books like this are written in the first place. Humanism has always been about imitation and the belief that if the song of virtue is sung well, listeners will be moved to join in. In “An Apology for Poetry” (1595), Philip Sidney asks (rhetorically), “Who readeth Aeneas carrying old Anchises on his back that wisheth not it were his fortune to perform so excellent an act?” Delbanco recalls the effect the art historian Meyer Schapiro had on students “as he spoke about Cezanne”; they would say, “Whatever he’s smoking, I’ll have some.”
recall the Renaissance scholar Jackson Cope telling me the story of how, just out of the Navy, a street kid from Chicago, he wandered into a class on iconography and emblems taught by the great Don Cameron Allen at the University of Illinois. I didn’t know what he was talking about, Cope said, but, he added, I did know that I wanted some of that.

Delbanco writes as he does — by introducing you to the voices of those who embody the values he would preserve — in the hope that his readers will want some of that and may even be moved to do something about it.

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Malaysian Students Seek Full Political Rights

By LIZ GOOCH

KUALA LUMPUR — Moves to allow Malaysian university students to join political parties have failed to satisfy student activists, who say a legal amendment approved by Parliament last week will still infringe on their right to participate fully in politics.

Under a decades-old law, it is illegal for students to join political parties or take part in political campaigning and protests. Those who do risk expulsion from their university and other penalties, including fines. The law has dampened what was once a vibrant activist movement.

There have been cases where universities have issued fines and warnings to students for supporting political parties. Analysts say universities have mostly taken action against students who support the opposition.

That ban is likely to be lifted soon after lawmakers in the lower house of Parliament approved an amendment last Thursday to the Universities and University Colleges Act, or U.U.C.A. The law is expected to take effect after it has been approved by the upper house, which is dominated by the governing coalition.

But the new amendment will still impose restrictions on students, like giving universities the power to decide which organizations, with the exception of political parties, are suitable. Students, civil society groups and the political opposition say these conditions are repressive.

“There’s still a limited freedom there,” said Haziq Abdul Aziz, secretary of Students Solidarity Malaysia, a group that represents about 15 student organizations. “We want the government to give full freedom to the students to take part in politics, to join organizations.”

Since the act prohibiting students from expressing “support, sympathy or opposition” to any political party was enacted in 1971, Malaysian students have repeatedly demanded that the ban on political involvement be rescinded.

When Prime Minister Najib Razak announced last November that he planned to amend the law as part of a raft of reforms to improve civil liberties, student activists were hopeful that all restrictions would be lifted.
Many were disappointed when details of the amendment were released and have called for the law to be abolished.

“We don’t actually need such an act to control the students,” said Adam Ali, a student activist and member of Progressive Students Legacy, a student organization at Sultan Idris Education University. “Why must we control the students? They know their rights — they can practice their rights. With the current amendment of the U.U.C.A., what happens now is that they are again controlling the students.”

Under the amendment, students who hold any political post will be prohibited from conducting political party activities on campus. Students could also be prevented from joining any organization that the university’s board deemed “unsuitable to the interests and well-being of the students or the university.”

Mr. Haziq said he was concerned that universities could make arbitrary decisions about which organizations students could join.

The original amendment included a clause that would have banned students who held political posts from being elected to positions in student organizations, but lawmakers voted unanimously to remove this clause before the bill was passed. The clause had been widely criticized, including by members of the prime minister’s own party. Parliament rejected the opposition’s attempts to remove several other clauses, including the provision that prevents students from “expressing support or sympathy” to an unlawful society or organization the university deems unsuitable. Tian Chua, vice president of the opposition People’s Justice Party, described the reforms as “half-hearted” in a Twitter post: “Where is the promised freedom for the young people?”

Mr. Najib’s pledge that students would be permitted to participate in politics came after a court ruled last October that the National University of Malaysia had breached the Constitution by taking disciplinary action against four students who took part in political campaigning during a by-election in 2010.

Before the enactment of the act, Malaysian campuses used to be home to vibrant student activism, with many of today’s leaders, including opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim, cutting their political teeth on campus. Mr. Haziq said that since the law was introduced, the student movement had lost its momentum, with most students now afraid to take part in politics because they were worried that they could be expelled.
“Student activists are in the minority,” he said. “The majority of students are not interested in politics because they are afraid that the universities will take action against them. The U.U.C.A. has successfully made the students fearful to criticize the government.”

Lee Hock Guan, a senior fellow at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies in Singapore, said the law had been a “damper” on student activism. He said although the government had changed the proposed amendment, students would still not be able to campaign for their political parties on campus during national elections.

“To open up the political space in the universities,” he said, “they need to also remove the clause banning students from political party activities on campus.”

Saifuddin Abdullah, the deputy minister of higher education, said that he was personally an advocate of allowing student political participation but that the government’s position was that political party activities would not be allowed on campus, “the reason being to maintain neutrality” of the universities.

The Malaysian Bar Council had also called for several provisions to be removed from the amendment, saying that they violated the Constitution.

“These provisions are unnecessarily restrictive, unreasonable and disproportionate barriers to a student’s freedom of association” under the Constitution, Lim Chee Wee, the council’s president, said in a statement.

He said existing laws had long prevented university students from being actively involved in a “significant aspect of the democratic process.”

“Universities, as with all institutions of higher learning, must, as one of their primary duties, embrace and espouse the development of critical thinking by their students and the encouragement of robust debate,” Mr. Lim said. “This is vital to ensure a continuous stream of thinking Malaysians who are able to advance and build our nation.”

In Kuala Lumpur last week, student activists camped out at Independence Square and marched against a government loan program that they said charged students high interest rates and left them with debt. They have not yet decided whether to hold another demonstration to protest the amendment, but they have vowed to keep fighting for their right to fully participate in political life.
“We have the right to take part in politics,” said Mr. Haziq, the Students Solidarity Malaysia secretary. “Students are just like other citizens who have the right to participate in politics, to give opinions. This is our country and we have the right to say whatever we want.”
Seo-Yong Hong, pastor at Oikos University, added messages Monday to a memorial to the seven people who died in the shooting.

April 23, 2012

Classes Resume at Scene of Shootings in Oakland

By NORIMITSU ONISHI

OAKLAND, Calif. — In the makeshift memorial in front of Oikos University, around a table on which seven framed portraits were lined up, most of the flowers had withered and many of the handwritten notes had curled. But as classes began to resume on Monday morning after a gunman fatally shot six students and an administrator three weeks ago, the shooting’s effects remained raw among the students, teachers and even passers-by.

The future of Oikos, a vocational school of about 150 students founded and run by Korean Christians, remained uncertain. Several students have already left the English as a second language program, and classes in other programs do not resume until later this week. Nursing students — many of whom were in the classroom targeted by the suspect, One L. Goh, a former nursing student — will not be taking classes at Oikos’s building but will use another college’s facilities instead, school officials said.
“It’s really hard to be in the same building,” said Lucas Garcia, 33, who has taught English as a second language at Oikos for three years. “It’s different. But I think the students are O.K.”

During a break, Mr. Garcia and some of his students milled around a back entrance here in a light-industrial area near Oakland International Airport. The students, most of whom were Korean, said only that they were “O.K.” Of the 25 students in the English as a second language program, 18 showed up on Monday, officials said. Mr. Garcia said he had spoken to several who had decided to leave.

One of them, a middle-aged Korean woman who was present at the time of the shooting, arrived with relatives on Monday to complete her transfer paperwork. The woman’s sister, Jenny Kim, said she had been studying English here for one semester but was now looking for another college. “She’s too afraid to come back here,” Ms. Kim said, adding that she had chosen Oikos for her sister. “I thought it was a Korean school so it would be better. I think I chose wrong. Her English didn’t improve.”

Mr. Goh, 43, dropped out late last year after experiencing problems with other students, police and school officials have said. Apparently angry that Oikos refused to refund his tuition, officials said, he bought a semiautomatic handgun in Oakland in February and returned to the campus on April 2. He has yet to enter a plea.

Sgt. J. D. Nelson of the Alameda County sheriff’s office said on Monday that Mr. Goh had not eaten since his arrival at the Santa Rita Jail in Dublin on April 3, The Associated Press reported. He said Mr. Goh had lost about 20 pounds and was moved to the jail infirmary on Friday.

The shootings are the latest problem for the university’s two-year-old vocational nursing program. It risks losing its state accreditation because its graduates have passed state exams at far lower rates than the 75 percent average among all schools, said Russ Heimerich, a spokesman for the Department of Consumer Affairs.

Jong-in Kim, an evangelical Christian minister who founded Oikos a decade ago, promised that the passing rate would improve this year. “Most of our students are minorities or immigrants, so it is difficult for them,” he said. Mr. Kim said his school had always operated at a loss because it put its students ahead of finances. “We never closed a class because the number of
students was too small,” he said. “Sometimes we lost $20,000 per class. We are sure that what we are doing is part of God’s calling.”

A red Mercury carrying passers-by pulled up in front of the school. “It’s on Edgewater by the Walmart,” the driver, John Conner, said of the campus into his cellphone. “We didn’t know it was so close.”

The passenger, Christian Conely, 31, looked at the seven portraits. “It can’t be easy going back to the same classroom, looking at the empty seats, you know, walking up the hallway,” she said. “We watched it on the news all day. At least the people are in a better place. They don’t feel it.”
CHICAGO — It was an unusual day in social studies class at Frederick Von Steuben Metropolitan Science Center, a public high school on the North Side of this city. Monday’s class was taught by a substitute teacher: Mikhail S. Gorbachev, the former president of the Soviet Union.

Mr. Gorbachev, 81, appeared before a roomful of teenage students and recalled his negotiations with President Ronald Reagan in the late 1980s — years before any of them were born — to reduce the world’s nuclear stockpiles.

“The world could have exploded at any moment,” he said through an interpreter. “It would have taken a few hours to destroy civilization.”

Mr. Gorbachev was among a who’s who of historic figures fanning out at Chicago’s public high schools, here for a gathering of Nobel Peace Prize winners. It was the first time the annual event was being held in the United States, and in anticipation, high school students around Chicago had been
studying the laureates’ accomplishments as part of a “special human rights curriculum,” developed by the Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights and Chicago public school teachers.

“We’re not starting with some large opening ceremony at some large hall,” said Terry Mazany, who was the interim head of Chicago Public Schools when the planning began last year for the 12th World Summit of Nobel Peace Laureates, which opened here on Monday. “We’re starting at the public schools with serious dialogue between the peace laureates and students. We’re bringing a student voice to the conversation.”

At schools nearby, F. W. de Klerk, the former president of South Africa who shared the Nobel Peace Prize with Nelson Mandela in 1993 for their work to end apartheid, and Muhammad Yunus, a microfinance pioneer from Bangladesh who won the honor in 2006, were among others visiting 17 classrooms throughout the city.

The Dalai Lama and former President Jimmy Carter did not go to any schools on Monday, but the two, both of them laureates, were scheduled to speak during the three-day conference.

Organizers of the World Summit said that unlike past gatherings, this year’s event was focused on panel discussions devised to engage a younger audience, which is to include more than 3,000 students from Chicago area schools and universities.

“We wanted to take this opportunity with the summit being in North America for the first time to really educate American students,” said Maureen Meehan, a spokeswoman for the summit meeting.

Shortly after the third-period bell rang at Von Steuben, more than 50 of those students, many dressed in their Sunday best, crowded into a small classroom. They gave Mr. Gorbachev a standing ovation as he entered, but were quickly told they were blocking the news cameras at the back of the room.

Also there were the mayor, Rahm Emanuel, and the actor Sean Penn. Photographers clogged the classroom aisles, and some students pulled out their own cameras and cellphones, snapping pictures as Mr. Gorbachev spoke.

Some had prepared questions for Mr. Gorbachev. But his lengthy responses, and the extra time it took the interpreter to translate them, allowed students to ask only a few questions, primarily about how he continued to push for
reforms decades ago in the face of criticism from other Soviet leaders. Aside from expressing his support for President Obama, whose 2008 election he praised as bringing “a new spirit to America,” current events were generally absent from Mr. Gorbachev’s remarks.

There was no mention of American plans for a missile defense system based in Europe, which has been criticized in Russia. Nor was anything said about accusations of election fraud in Russia, or about the Syrian president, Bashar al-Assad, whom Russia has supported despite his violent crackdown on opposition activists.

Mr. Gorbachev described his childhood in rural Russia and his education at Moscow State University. In broader terms, he discussed the need for better partnerships between nations, a theme that he said is central to the summit meeting, which ends on Wednesday.

“Today we often see a failure of responsibility — moral responsibility, political responsibly,” Mr. Gorbachev said, adding that he and the other laureates planned to conclude the meeting with a formal appeal for more cooperation.

“We need to learn to live in this global world, to manage the events of the global world,” he said. “So far, we have not yet learned how to do it well.”
Fewer people are giving more money to American colleges, and the industry may be staging a modest rebound from the slowdown in higher-education fundraising that accompanied the 2008 economic downturn, according to a new report.

But young alumni aren’t giving at the same rate as their parents, and the typical school’s alumni giving rate may never recover, the report found.

Median revenue per donor rose from $450 to $474 between the 2010 and 2011 fiscal years, according to the Blackbaud Index of Higher Education, released last week. The median school in the index saw revenue rise 6 percent in 2011 and 6 percent in 2010, after a 13 percent drop in fiscal 2009. But the number of donors was down 1 percent at the median school, following a similarly modest drop in 2010 and a larger drop in 2009.
The index summarizes giving at a cross section of more than 100 public and private colleges, including Johns Hopkins and James Madison universities and the universities of Maryland and Richmond.

“Most measures were in positive territory compared to 2010 results, and there is evidence that the worst of the economic decline is behind us,” said Shaun Keister, co-author of the report, and vice chancellor of development and alumni relations at the University of California-Davis. “Programs are beginning to grow again, despite challenges with reactivating lapsed donors and acquiring new ones.”

It was a bounce-back year, particularly in terms of total donated revenue. But universities have struggled since the start of the slowdown to “reactivate” lapsed donors and to expand the donor base generally, which points to a possible new reality for fundraisers in academia.

The typical university struggled to reclaim lost donors in 2009 and struggled again in 2011, after a flat 2010. Young alumni appear less inclined to give, which drives down overall alumni participation rates — the median participation rate dipped in each of the last three years.

“The opportunity to bolster participation rates has all but disappeared in an era where younger alumni are not inclined to support higher education at the same rates as their parents and grandparents,” the study states.

By Daniel de Vise  |  03:57 PM ET, 04/23/2012
Anacostia school is among those in pilot program stressing the arts

By Lyndsey Layton, Published: April 22

In its effort to transform the nation’s worst-performing schools, the Obama administration is launching an unusual experiment to pump up arts education in eight struggling schools, including one in the District.

The President’s Committee on the Arts and Humanities, working with the Education Department, will announce a plan Monday to infuse art, music, dance, theater and other forms of creative expression into the schools over a two-year period.

Officials involved in the project want to prove a theory: Robust art, music, dance and theater can set failing schools on a path to academic success.

“These schools are ground zero for educational reform efforts in many ways,” said Rachel Goslins, executive director of the committee. “Arts could be really helpful in moving the needle. . . . Historically, the arts have been marginalized as ‘enrichment.’ We’re trying to show that arts education is not only a flower; it can also be a wrench.”

Education Secretary Arne Duncan said the arts have been wrongly pushed out of elementary and secondary schools because of budget cuts and an emphasis on reading and math that resulted from the federal No Child Left Behind law.

As a boy, Duncan played drums in music class, although “not very successfully,” he said. His own children attend a science-focused elementary school in Arlington County, where Joe Puzzo, the music teacher, “has the kids singing and dancing about the planets. He’s got them doing extraordinary things.”

The eight schools in the pilot program also are receiving $14.7 million in federal school improvement grants over three years as part of a program to help chronically failing schools. The arts initiative will bring an additional $1 million in the first year, including several foundation grants, as well as $10,000 for each school in arts supplies from Crayola and $10,000 per school in musical instruments from the NAMM Foundation, as well as teacher training. Booz Allen, the consulting firm, is donating its services to
perform an independent study of the program’s impact. And some famous artists, including musician Yo-Yo Ma, actress Alfre Woodard and painter Chuck Close, have each agreed to “adopt” a school, working with the students and teachers.

Children in high-poverty schools have less access to the arts than those in more affluent schools, a recent survey by the Education Department shows. A decade ago, 100 percent of high-poverty secondary schools offered music instruction; today, that figure is about 80 percent, according to a recent federal survey. And when high-poverty secondary schools teach music, they offer fewer courses than middle-class and affluent schools. A similar pattern holds for the visual arts.

More than 1.3 million students in elementary school and 800,000 secondary students receive no music education. About 4 million elementary school students do not get any visual arts instruction. The numbers are worse when it comes to dance and theater, the survey found. A decade ago, about 20 percent of elementary schools taught dance or theater, according to the report. Now 3 percent offer dance, while 4 percent teach theater, according to the survey.

And yet, in many ways, arts education is even more important for poor children because they have fewer opportunities to experience the arts outside school, Duncan said.

“The ugly truth is, in disadvantaged communities, these resources have been disproportionately cut,” he said. “That’s just a fact. And these are kids who don’t have access to private ballet lessons or piano lessons.”

New research indicates that students from low-income families who attend arts-rich schools are three times more likely to earn a college degree, and those who earn arts credits in high school are five times more likely to graduate than those who took few or no arts classes.

“It takes one opportunity for a child to perform and to really be recognized for having done something out of the ordinary — they begin to see themselves in a different light,” said Patrick Pope, principal at Savoy Elementary School in Anacostia, one of the eight schools in the pilot, has made the arts central to the school’s turnaround plan: He’s adding summer school for the first time, and it, too, will focus on the arts.

All of Savoy’s 372 students are African American, and 89 percent meet the federal definition of poor. Just 15 percent of Savoy’s students tested as
proficient in math on the most recent standardized tests; 21 percent were proficient in reading.

The other schools selected for the pilot program are Batiste Cultural Arts Academy at Live Oak School in New Orleans (K-8); Findley Elementary School in Des Moines; Lame Deer Jr. High School in Lame Deer, Mont.; Noel Community Arts School in Denver; Orchard Gardens School in Boston (K-8); Martin Luther King Jr. School in Portland, Ore.; and Roosevelt School in Bridgeport, Conn.
‘Mr. President, public education in the U.S. is on the wrong track’

By Valerie Strauss

This is the text of an open letter written to President Obama by Mary Broderick, president of the Arlington, Va.,-based National Schools Boards Association, a not-for-profit organization representing state associations of school boards and their member districts. The letter, sent earlier this month to the president, asks for a national dialogue about the direction of public education reform.

Here’s the text of the letter:

April 17, 2012

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Obama:

The night of your election, in Grant Park, you said, “I will listen to you especially when we disagree.” We are all committed to the best educational future for the children of America. Yet, as the nation prepares for the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), school board members and top educational thinkers overwhelming urge abandoning the current “command-and-control” federal educational oversight. America’s treasure lies in unleashing the creativity of our youth. Though well-intentioned, the current federal direction is ignoring and working against much of what we know about student motivation and achievement. Instead, the federal government should support local efforts to ignite curiosity, creative potential, and a drive for excellence among students and staff.

Throughout my presidency of the National School Boards Association, I have travelled to many states and written for our national journal and asked for input to this letter. School board members and educators across the
country have contributed their thinking here. We share your sense of urgency: We must give every child, no matter their circumstances, the opportunity to excel. We must ensure high quality experiences so each child develops fully. Our major disagreement comes from how we go about this task.

We want for each American child the same things that you and Michelle want for Sasha and Malia — inspiration, aspiration, creativity. I know you don’t want an overemphasis on testing. I have heard you say it. Experience in schools and communities, supported by research, tells us that relentlessly focusing on standardized tests erodes our national competitiveness and deadens curiosity and drive. Clearly, we need some testing to gauge student learning, and we have no problem with appropriate accountability. But we have swung to a far extreme that is significantly hurting children. “Students are numbing over testing for testing’s sake…. We can’t test this country into excellence.” (Sonny Savoie, LA)

Other countries that traditionally focus on testing recognize the shortcomings of their systems and come to our shores to learn how we inspire a spirit of innovation. And decades of work by motivation theorists, such as Daniel Pink, help us understand why a focus on testing and standards may not cultivate the learners we want. Others have found that such narrow focus restricts our views of what is possible, and even causes unethical behavior, such as the rash of testing scandals here and abroad.

By contrast, Finnish schools are now “exemplars of many of the success indicators we … want to see in American schools. Achievement is consistently high. Students are self-motivated and engaged in their learning. Schools have wide latitude to decide on their own programs, and there are no intrusive sanctions.” (Jill Wynns, CA)

The focus on strict quantitative accountability has never worked for any organization, and it has not worked with No Child Left Behind and Race to the Top. Teachers are trying to meet the mandates of those programs and consequently “our children suffer and are not getting educated to their individual potential.” (Carolyne Brooks, IL) Teachers’ focus on tests is undermining their potential and initiative, making it more difficult to share a love of learning with their students.

Our students will never be first in the world on standardized tests. We never have come close. Nor is that something toward which we should aspire! We simply are not a compliant people willing to absorb facts without challenge. But we have had the most innovative workforce in the world (and now vie
with Finland for that top position). Though intended to encourage equity, our current policy is, in fact, driving us toward mediocrity. Our students may be becoming better regurgitators, but what we need is excellent thinkers.

We have significant challenges in many of our communities, especially those that are underserved, yet we continue to boast some of the best schools in the world. We have models of excellence from which we should all be learning. Our vision should be to empower excellence — to draw out the best in each and every individual in our schools. We should recognize that our children’s brains are our most important resource. We should aspire to having children take responsibility for their own learning. We can have a common curriculum as a guide, but leave it to our local “civic labs,” as Thomas Jefferson envisioned them, to find optimal ways to inspire learning.

That said, we won’t achieve any vision without significant teamwork. Finland’s process may offer a model: They spent years developing national consensus about the essentials for successful education and, hence, the nation. Collaboration can promote independent thinking and action.

As a nation, rather than inspiring people toward a vision of excellence, we have been blaming some for blocking student achievement. It is time to inspire all toward a pursuit of excellence for each of our children.

The work world our children inherit will be significantly different from the one we have known. Jobs in the 20th century were mostly algorithmic or routine. According to McKinsey & Co., most such jobs have already evaporated because of automation and outsourcing. Future work will be more complex, so we had better prepare students differently than through standardized tests.

As the nature of work changes, so too must motivators. Carrots and sticks, which worked with routine jobs, actually impede efforts when the work is more complex, Daniel Pink says. Instead, the rewards of learning and challenges of the work itself must now be the primary motivators. Adults learn best, experts say, if they feel competent, autonomous, and a sense of belonging.

Much in our current school systems works against these, and our new national focus on teacher evaluation will continue that trend. As a result of ignoring innate needs, our schools too often are not innovative hubs. Yet to meet the challenges of our future, we must cultivate a spirit of innovation and inspiration. We will only succeed in preparing for our future if we empower all in our schools to think through complex problems and processes and generate solutions. Rather than laboring over bureaucratic
compliance problems, let’s engage students and teachers (even board members!) in solving problems of teaching and learning.

Our schools will never become great through threat or intimidation. Schools must be safe places to take risks, where staff members and students feel valued for their ideas and talents and empowered to fail so that they can grow. Students will learn what they see, experience, and enjoy.

We have the knowledge and experience to do this at the national, state, and local levels. However, the present narrow focus on accountability and trend of demonizing those in public education, arrogantly focusing on “failing schools,” is diametrically opposed to fostering excellence.

Again, we can learn from Finland: It holds teachers in high regard (appealing to competence). Teacher training includes a strong feedback loop; professional development is embedded in the work, through coaching and ongoing support (appealing to belonging). People are willing to try new approaches and ideas (appealing to autonomy).

Innovation requires investment. Retired school superintendent Jack Reynolds noted that under the original ESEA we had a national system for identifying, supporting, and sharing excellent, vetted educational ideas. We should return to such a system of research, development, and diffusion, using technology to share teaching and learning approaches. Further, Ohio school board member Charlie Wilson suggested we encourage and fund our universities to conduct empirical research on the considerable experimentation that does occur in our schools.

Some board members suggested that we benefit from broad, guiding curriculum principles. Wyoming’s David Fall encouraged you to continue your work with the National Governors’ Association to refine core standards. However, our children would be best served if the standards were guides, but decision-making remained local.

Across the nation, I have heard growing support for an emphasis on the early years. To close achievement gaps, we need to provide rich early learning environments for children born with the least. We need to teach their parents how to encourage their learning. Please continue to support states’ early childhood efforts.

Mr. President, public education in the U.S. is on the wrong track. As we have moved decision-making farther from teachers and children, we have jeopardized our competitive edge and keys to our national success: our ingenuity, our openness to innovation, and our creativity.
I urge you to convene a national dialogue, not made up of politicians, but including the breadth of educational opinion, to reconsider our educational direction. I would love to help you do this. Let’s ensure that each child has the tools to be successful. Let’s marshal the nation’s brain power and tap into the research, proven practice, and demonstrated evidence of excellence.

Please bring your parent hat to determining our new direction for public education. Your daughters, like all of our children and all of our teachers, don’t need more tests designed to identify weaknesses. They need excited, motivated, passionate teachers who feel challenged, supported, and encouraged to try new approaches, who share with their students a learning environment that is limitless. If we work collaboratively on a shared vision of excellence, if we foster team development, encourage innovation, and care for the growth of our teachers, our children will lead us into the future with confidence. And public education will remain the cornerstone of our vibrant democracy.

Thank you, Mr. President.

Sincerely,

Mary Broderick
NSBA President
Fitch Rates Pitt County, NC's COPs 'AA'; Outlook Revised to Negative

NEW YORK, Apr 23, 2012 (BUSINESS WIRE) -- Fitch Ratings assigns an 'AA' rating to the following Pitt County, North Carolina refunding certificates of participation (COPs):

--$20.215 million, series 2012 refunding COPs.

The bonds are scheduled for negotiated sale on May 2 COP proceeds will be used to refund a portion of each of the 2004B COPs maturing on April 1, 2015, April 1, 2016 and April 1, 2017 and all of the 2004B COPs maturing on and after April 1, 2018 for $1 million in net present value savings.

In addition, Fitch affirms the following ratings:

--$59.835 million limited obligation bonds (LOBs) at 'AA';

--$97.15 million COPs at 'AA';

--Implied general obligation (GO) at 'AA+'.

The Rating Outlook is revised to Negative from Stable.

SECURITY

The COPs and LOBs are secured by payments subject to appropriation and a deed of trust provides security interest in essential government assets.

KEY RATING DRIVERS

PRESSURED OPERATIONS & RESERVE DRAWS: The revision of the Outlook to Negative from Stable reflects three years of general fund draws on reserves. Reserves remain healthy but are moderately below the county's policy level.

REGIONAL HUB: Pitt County serves as the main economic center for northeastern North Carolina. Wealth indicators are below state and national averages, which is somewhat skewed by a large student population. Unemployment remains below the state average and above the national average.
LOW DEBT INDICATORS: Overall debt levels are low at 1.7% of taxable assessed value and $1,348 per capita. The debt service burden on the general fund is low and, given the absence of additional debt plans, should remain affordable.

APPROPRIATION LIEN ON ASSETS: The 'AA' rating on the COPs and LOBs reflects the appropriation risk inherent in the installment payments to be made by the county to the trustee, the essential nature of the respective leased assets, and the general creditworthiness of Pitt County.

WHAT COULD TRIGGER A RATING ACTION

FISCAL IMBALANCE: Existing reserves provide a healthy financial cushion, but inability to close the structural deficit over the short term could lead to rating pressure.

CREDIT PROFILE

SUSTAINED USE OF FUND BALANCE TO SUPPORT OPERATIONS

Reserve levels have declined over the past three fiscal years as the county has drawn on reserves to offset weakened revenues and maintain operations. Fiscal 2011 ended with an unrestricted fund balance (the sum of assigned, unassigned and committed under GASB 54) equal to $15.6 million or a still healthy 11.7% of spending (the sum of operating expenditures and transfers out). However, this is below the county policy of 18%-20% of expenditures. The county's reserve for state statute, which is primarily to offset accounts receivable, is a source of additional financial flexibility and somewhat offsets Fitch's concerns regarding the lower reserves. This reserve totaled $5.93 million at fiscal year end 2011, or an additional 4.5% of spending.

FISCAL YEAR 2012 AND 2013 ESTIMATES AND BUDGET

The county adopted its fiscal 2012 budget with the anticipation of further using $3.67 million (2.5% of budgeted spending) of fund balance for operations. Management reports that all departments are under a hiring freeze and expenditures are being reduced to eliminate the use of appropriated fund balance. Management is anticipating break-even operating results at year-end and maintenance of general fund balance at current levels or approximately 12% of spending.

The fiscal 2013 budget will be adopted in June and is expected to include a reduced fund balance appropriation of $1.5 million. Management's goal is to reverse the deficit trend of the past three fiscal years and achieve structural
balance by reducing expenditures through identifying opportunities for consolidation and synergy among departments.

PROPERTY TAX LARGEST SOURCE OF REVENUE

Property tax revenues are the county's largest revenue source at 73%. The county's taxable assessed value netted a zero change in fiscal 2010 and 2011, followed by a modest 2% decline for the current fiscal year. The county's rate is average at $0.6650 per $100 of assessed value (AV), and below the statutory cap of $1.50 per $100 of AV. It has remained unchanged since 2007. Total tax collections are considered weak by Fitch, having declined to 96.5% in fiscal 2011 due to staffing issues. According to management, the department is now fully staffed and fiscal 2012 total collections are projected to exceed 98%.

REGIONAL ECONOMY

Located 90 miles from Raleigh, Pitt County is a rapidly growing retail, commercial, healthcare, and education center for northeastern North Carolina. As one of the fastest growing centers in the state, the population increased by 25.7% between 2000 and 2010. Population is expected to further increase by 26.6% by 2020. The county attributes population growth to affordable land and a good transportation system in the southern part of the county and new schools.

The employment base is diversified with services, healthcare, wholesale/retail trade and education each accounting for at least 15% of total employment. Labor statistics show that both employment and the labor force in Pitt County declined by -0.6% between 2010 and 2011. The unemployment rate of 9.5% as of December 2011 remains below the state's average but above the national average. Major employers include: Vidant Medical Center (6,486 employees), East Carolina University (5,455 employees), DSM (1,350 employees) and NACCO (1,000 employees). Several of the county's largest employers continue to expand their operations with additional investment totaling $7.3 million and adding 49 new jobs.

FAVORABLE DEBT PROFILE

Debt levels are modest at 1.7% on an overall basis and $1,348 per capita. Debt service represents an average 11% of general fund and debt service spending. The 2012-2016 capital improvement plan totals just $17.15 million with $6.5 million for the narrowbanding radio project and solid waste compactor funded last fall through a bank loan. The remainder of the plan will be funded on a pay as you go basis. The county relies heavily on
COPs/LOBs as there is no GO debt outstanding. The county has no exposure to variable rate debt.

LONG-TERM LIABILITIES

Pension and OPEB benefits continue to be well managed. The county contributes to four retirement plans including the Local Government Employees' Retirement System (LGERS). The county's fiscal 2011 total contribution was an affordable $7.57 million or 5.7% of spending. For other post-employment benefits (OPEB), the county pays its obligation on a pay-go basis. For fiscal 2011 the annual contribution represented less than 1% of general fund spending.

Additional information is available at 'www.fitchratings.com'. The ratings above were solicited by, or on behalf of, the issuer, and therefore, Fitch has been compensated for the provision of the ratings.

In addition to the sources of information identified in Fitch's Tax-Supported Rating Criteria, this action was additionally informed by information from Creditscope, University Financial Associates, S&P/Case-Shiller Home Price Index, IHS Global Insight, National Association of Realtors.

Applicable Criteria and Related Research:
--'Tax-Supported Rating Criteria' (Aug. 15, 2011);

Applicable Criteria and Related Research:
Tax-Supported Rating Criteria

U.S. Local Government Tax-Supported Rating Criteria