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Ordinary life often makes for extraordinary literature.

And many ordinary local residents were drawn to the honest and relatable poetry of nationally known writer Philip Levine when he shared his vision of hard-working America during a visit to Pitt County.

The U.S. Poet Laureate spoke to a standing-room-only crowd that filled the Greenville Museum of Art on Wednesday night.

Levine’s reading of his work was a part of the Contemporary Writers Series organized by the East Carolina University Department of English and the Division of Research and Graduate Studies. The event coincided with April as National Poetry Month.

“I think we had a great turnout. People were very enthusiastic, and that was wonderful to see,” Tom Douglass, a literature professor in the English department, said.

Known as “the working man’s poet,” Levine often writes about Detroit, where he grew up, and the various industrial jobs he worked before turning to writing.

Levine has won every major award in American literature and has authored more than 20 collections of poetry. He won the National Book Award in

Now retired, he lives in both Fresno, Calif., and New York.

This was Levine’s second visit to Greenville. The first was in the 1990s before he became Poet Laureate.

Levine was invited to the series by ECU English professor and author Liza Wieland, who had worked with him previously.

The goal of the Contemporary Writers Series is to bring the best writers to Greenville and ECU to expose the students and community to the world of literature, according to Douglass.

“People are really hungry for this,” Douglass said. “We’re really happy about the series expanding. The university is growing; we need to do more of this.”

Contact Jackie Drake at jdrake@reflector.com or 252-329-9567 or follow her on Twitter @JackieDrakeGDR.
Storied Hatteras Island is threatened with depopulation the modern way.

Special Report

The Road to Surfdom

By Scott Hogenson on 4.26.12 @ 6:08AM

America's roads connect us with our lives. They carry us on mundane trips to work and school, adventurous treks to parts unknown, visits to friends and family. Roads are the arteries of the American Body, providing the lifeblood of commerce and recreation. But one road in particular has become the target of environmental tyranny, posing a grave threat to the people who rely on it for their livelihood and safety.

It is called Highway 12, a simple two-lane affair that serves as the lifeline for the villagers who live on Hatteras Island, situated among North Carolina's fabled Outer Banks. A narrow barrier island anchored many miles in the North Atlantic Ocean -- some refer to it as a giant sandbar -- Hatteras has but one main road which is the only way on or off the island other than boat or private aircraft. It is a necessity of life for the sturdy fishermen, shopkeepers, and tradesmen whose families have lived on Hatteras for generations.

No one is more aware of the delicate balance between nature and humanity than Hatteras islanders. They know their stewardship of the environment is both practical and necessary. They also understand that the Atlantic isn't
always content to respect the province of dry land and, as such, Hatteras is subject to occasional ocean washovers when hurricanes or Nor'easters come too close for comfort.

The island and Highway 12 were most recently breached by Hurricane Irene in August, 2011. The storm washed away five sections of road; four were filled in and one required a bridge spanning more than 650 feet. It also sparked renewed interest in a radical idea, noted in passing in a September 28 Fox News article: "Depopulate Hatteras Island, stop the repair and rebuilding, and simply turn it back over to nature." But the preferred means of modern depopulation is not physical force. It is economic force, leveraged on the fulcrum of militant environmentalism.

A Media Narrative Emerges

The cost of rebuilding Highway 12 after Hurricane Irene amounted to roughly $11 million, a price that had activists howling before the repairs were even complete. As early as October 8, 2011, the Los Angeles Times quoted East Carolina University geologist Dorothea Ames saying the state was, "just filling those holes in the road with money."

The LA Times article, provocatively titled "Ready to stick a fork in Hatteras Island road," also noted the Southern Environmental Law Center (SELC) lawsuit to block construction of a new bridge that would replace the half-century old Bonner Bridge over which Highway 12 passes between Hatteras Island and Bodie Island to the north.

A few months later, critics were in high dungeon, hectoring readers of the New York Times in a March 5, 2012 article about the folly of, "our own little bridge to nowhere," unsubstantiated claims that Highway 12 will "bankrupt the state," and road maintenance as "totally a lost cause."

Stanley Riggs is a particularly vocal critic of keeping Highway 12 open. The East Carolina University geology professor has crunched the numbers and estimates that between $90 million and $100 million has been spent on the road since 1983. He further reckons that keeping Highway 12 open for the next 100 years will cost $930 million.

But economic arguments like these neglect the other half of the equation, that being the value of commerce owing to Highway 12. Hatteras Island and most of the Outer Banks are part of Dare County, which relies primarily on tourism for revenue. It is not an insignificant sum. County officials estimate that tourism generated $834 million in economic impact in 2010 (the most
recent year for which full data are available), supporting more than 11,000 jobs and a payroll exceeding $172 million.

Hatteras Island isn't responsible for all of this economic activity, but it contributes more than its fair share. In terms of occupancy receipts for 2011, the revenue from motel, campground and cottage rentals by visitors to the seven villages of Hatteras exceeded $99.5 million, according to county records. That's slightly more than one fourth of all occupancy receipts county-wide even though the island's 4,300 residents represent just one-eighth of Dare County's population. Claims that Hatteras doesn't pay its share of the freight don't withstand scrutiny.

The economy is so robust Dare County is classified as a "donor" county, a designation conferred to municipalities that provide more revenue to the state treasury than they receive in annual appropriations from the capital in Raleigh. But these facts are absent from arguments promoting an agenda that is strangling the economy and are echoed by some of the nation's largest, most notoriously liberal newspapers.

**An Underlying Agenda**

Riggs, Ames, and a number of their East Carolina University colleagues produced in 2009 a research paper entitled "Eye of a human hurricane: Pea Island, Oregon Inlet, and Bodie Island, northern Outer Banks, North Carolina" noting, among other things:

… the constructed dune ridges prevent the natural, overwash and inlet-driven evolution of habitats that constitute a major component of the "mission and purpose" of both Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge and Cape Hatteras National Seashore. Piping plovers, oyster catchers, black skimmers, and numerous species of terns and turtles are critically dependent upon overwash and inlet habitats." (Page 65)

The concern for turtles and plovers is admirable but what of the human habitat protected by those dune ridges? People have lived on Hatteras Island for centuries, long before the Cape Hatteras National Seashore Recreational Area (its proper name) was established, yet people seem immaterial. As for the ribbon of asphalt that brings life and commerce to island residents, the authors dismiss portions of Hatteras as, "little more than a conveyance for Highway 12."

Professor Riggs and his colleagues have also prepared a science curriculum for middle and high school students exploring the geology of barrier islands. For students contemplating a life on the Outer Banks, the curriculum bleakly
instructs them that, "large island segments will totally disappear within the next few decades." (Part 1, Lesson 8)

Elsewhere in the curriculum, students are given reading assignments that include a pair of news articles from 2003. One describes a local state senator as "one of the state's most powerful politicians," with the audacity to work on behalf of his constituents. The second features a Duke University geologist explaining to children that, "Very powerful and very wealthy people live along the beaches. The politically correct thing to do is rush in and help these people who have suffered from an act of God." (Pages 111-113)

It is true that many houses on the Outer Banks are owned by families who live out of the immediate area. It is also true that these beach homes generate roughly half of the $49.3 million in real estate taxes listed in the 2011 Dare County budget. Providing better schools and services to Hatteras islanders through taxes on people who don't utilize them on a day-to-day basis constitutes a win-win for all concerned. As for repairs to Highway 12, villagers and contractors need it for work, school, emergency trips to the hospital and clearing the aftereffects of storms; not exactly the "very powerful" people described to middle school kids.

**Placing Environmentalism Above Humans**

Geologists aren't alone in targeting Highway 12. The SELC, the Audubon Society, Defenders of Wildlife, and other environmentalists have waged a lengthy campaign to close or restrict access to the island's beaches, prized attractions for islanders and visiting tourists. So far, they have enjoyed remarkable success in preventing people from using many of the beaches on Hatteras. In some cases, strolling along the water's edge or reading a novel in a beach chair are now illegal. Frustration with environmental activism is so acute, Dare County Commissioner Jack Shea penned a 2010 opinion piece lamenting "a forgotten and ignored endangered species," in the region: people.

The patina of ecological altruism dissolves as human consequences surface. Hatteras Island residents and business owners marked the first day of spring this year by staging a rally and protest march to the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse, drawing attention to the economic hardships they face as a result of environmental restrictions.

Among the newest restrictions is the requirement that anybody wishing to drive an off-road vehicle on Hatteras beaches -- a decades-old pastime for
picnickers, surfers and fishermen -- must undergo a National Park Service (NPS) instructional program and pay a permit fee. The program is designed to protect bird habitat but the new restrictions have already proved frighteningly inflexible.

On April 4, 19 families found themselves trapped by a lunar tide along Cape Point. Caught between the rising ocean and a protected bird area with no place to drive, the NPS denied permission for the families to maneuver their off-road vehicles five feet inside a bird area. One father relayed the story of his harrowing escape from the tide while his two young children wept and vomited in fear.

The economic implications are no less fearful. Bob Eakes, owner of Red Drum Tackle in the village of Buxton, told the Norfolk Virginian-Pilot newspaper in January, "We have had a tremendously huge loss from the (National) Park Service rules." How bleak is the future for Eakes' and his tackle shop? "I just don't know if I can stay in business."

Unlike the questionable economic pronouncements of geologists, the plight of these villagers does not merit the attention of newspapers in New York or Los Angeles.

**Life on a Sandbar; Not All It's Cracked-Up to Be**

Hatteras Island rose from the sea thousands of years ago and the Atlantic will likely reclaim it, and Highway 12, at some point. Whether this reclamation occurs over the next couple of decades or the next couple of millennia is anyone's guess. Professor Riggs and others are convinced that the island's geological clock is about to strike midnight, and their certitude rivals that of a Time magazine cover from April, 1977 which informed us on how we may forestall the coming Ice Age. (Whatever it was they wrote, it must have worked.)

But this belief in the imminent doom of Hatteras Island, whether by accident or design, gives aid and comfort to environmentalists promoting policies that are killing the island's economy. The apparent target is Highway 12 but that is conveyance for a broader goal of forcing people from their homes without optics akin to those of Japanese-Americans sent to internment camps during World War II.

Those who live on Hatteras understand the sometimes tenuous nature of living on a barrier island, as well as the joy of being in one of America's most unique and storied places, a joy reflected in part by the popular "Life on a Sandbar" memorabilia sold to tourists. Hatteras islanders also possess a
deep knowledge of the sea and the skies and the shifting sand, which holds them in good stead when the winds stiffen and shift to the northeast. But it does them little good in confronting the array of political forces that are now bearing down on them and the road that takes them home.

**About the Author**

*Scott Hogenson is a senior vice president at Dezenhall Resources in Washington, D.C.*

LeRoy T. Walker, a Pioneer of U.S. Olympics, Dies at 93

Associated Press

At North Carolina Central, LeRoy T. Walker coached Olympic medalists, including Robert Ouko, left, and Julius Sang.

By RICHARD GOLDSTEIN
Published: April 24, 2012

LeRoy T. Walker, a leading American track and field coach who was the first African-American to coach a United States men’s Olympic track team and to serve as the president of the United States Olympic Committee, died Monday in Durham, N.C. He was 93.

His death was announced by North Carolina Central University, where he gained coaching renown and was later the chancellor.

When he marched into Atlanta’s Olympic Stadium as U.S.O.C. president at the head of the 645-member American delegation to the 1996 Summer Games, Mr. Walker achieved a celebrated homecoming in an America far removed from his boyhood.
He was born in a segregated Atlanta, the youngest of 13 children. He was the only member of his family to attend college, receiving a bachelor’s degree from a historically black college, Benedict College of Columbia, S.C. He was thwarted in his hopes of becoming a physician because medical school spots for blacks were severely limited and his family was poor. Nonetheless, he received a master’s degree from Columbia University and a doctorate from New York University in physical education and allied fields.

As the head track and field coach at the historically black North Carolina Central in Durham, known as North Carolina College when he arrived there in 1945, Mr. Walker developed Olympic medalists and numerous national champions and all-Americans. (He was the chancellor of the college from 1983 to 1986.)

The best known of those athletes, Lee Calhoun, won gold medals in the 110-meter hurdles at the 1956 Melbourne and 1960 Rome Games, and Larry Black, Julius Sang and Robert Ouko won gold in relay events at the 1972 Munich Games.

When Mr. Walker was named the Olympic men’s track and field coach in 1974, in anticipation of the 1976 Montreal Games, he looked back on an era in which black coaches received limited exposure.

“We didn’t get to the major track meets and we were living in a separate world,” he said. “In 1956, when Lee Calhoun won a gold medal, they thought of Calhoun as a great athlete but not necessarily of LeRoy Walker helping to produce a Calhoun.”

Mr. Walker coached his 1976 American squad, featuring the hurdler Edwin Moses and the decathlete Bruce Jenner, to gold medals in six events at Montreal.

He was treasurer of the United States Olympic Committee from 1988 to 1992 and a senior executive who helped lead preparations for the 1996 Atlanta Games, with a six-figure salary, a post he gave up when he was named the unpaid president of the U.S.O.C. in October 1992.

Beyond his technical knowledge of track, Mr. Walker was respected for his insistence on discipline and his motivational skills. He was known as Doc or Dr. Walker.

“Not that other coaches didn’t have Ph.D.’s, but Dr. Walker’s title had become a handle over the years,” Vince Matthews, the 1972 Olympic 400-
meter champion, once said. “He looked more like a business executive than a track coach, with glasses and distinguished streaks of gray in his dark hair.”

“I like to think of the Doc tag as something in terms of closeness,” Mr. Walker said, “not something different from everybody else.”

LeRoy Tashreau Walker was born on June 14, 1918, the son of a railroad firefighter. When his father died, his mother, Mary, sent him to live in Harlem with a brother who owned a window-cleaning business and restaurants, and who became his surrogate father. Returning to the South, he played football and basketball and sprinted at Benedict College, graduating in 1940. He received his master’s degree from Columbia the next year.

Mr. Walker was named the football and basketball coach at North Carolina College in 1945 and developed a track team as a means of conditioning his athletes. He received a doctorate in biomechanics from N.Y.U. in 1957 while continuing to coach.

He was president of the Athletics Congress (now USA Track & Field), the national governing body, from 1984 to 1988. He advised or coached Olympic teams from Ethiopia, Kenya, Israel, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago; helped organize an American-Pan African meet; and took an American track squad to China.

Mr. Walker is survived by his son, LeRoy Jr.; his daughter, Carolyn Walker Hoppe; three grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren. His wife, Katherine, died in 1978.

Before he drew national attention, Mr. Walker often faced dispiriting times in the South, especially when he took his teams on the road. “We would go down into rural Alabama, and I’d have to drive 200 miles before I could find somebody who would serve us,” he told Ebony magazine.

When he was named the president of the U.S.O.C., he told The New York Times that he marveled at the road he had taken as “a guy born in Atlanta, where segregation was rampant.”

He added, “It sounds Hollywoodish, yet there it is.”
I am so very disappointed in the fact that the Reflector made available the very private business of teachers, Pitt County employees, East Carolina University employees and city employees. It’s no one’s business how much I make as a teacher, nor should it be less common knowledge to all the people in Pitt County or anywhere else.

In fact, isn’t it illegal? That is private information! We don’t know how much a certain doctor or lawyer or McDonald’s employee makes, so why is it everyone else’s business how poorly teachers and public employees are paid. I am really flabbergasted and outraged by this and you haven’t heard the last on this subject.

JENNIFER H. ABRAMS
Ayden
Tony Collins, a former East Carolina and NFL running back, speaks during Wednesday's Greater Greenville Sports Club meeting. (Rhett Butler/The Daily Reflector)

‘A mess into a message’
By Ronnie Woodward
Thursday, April 26, 2012

As a high school football standout from New York, Tony Collins left a visit to Gainesville, Fla., in 1976 pretty set on becoming a Florida Gator. But the speedy running back still had one visit left to take, and he spent it in Greenville despite his father telling him prior to the trip that he, “had heard of North Carolina and heard of South Carolina, but didn’t know where the heck East Carolina was.”

The visit went very well, as did Collins’ ECU career, and Collins was inducted into the East Carolina Athletics Hall of Fame last year, the same year he completed his degree.

“It was all very exciting for me,” Collins told the Greater Greenville Sports Club at the Hilton Greenville on Wednesday. “(The Hall of Fame) was something I didn’t even think about until it actually came before me.”

Collins said he stopped going to class during his senior year because he was training for the NFL draft, which prompted him to return to school a couple of years ago to finish his studies.

On Wednesday, Collins shared the story of his football journey, including highlights such as a Pro Bowl appearance in 1983 and a Super Bowl victory two years later, but also his battle with drugs and having to deal with a one-year suspension from the league for a failed drug test.
Collins, who now helps prep athletes with the recruiting process through the National Collegiate Scouting Association, said he shares his story of “turning a mess into a message” because he wants to help people learn from their mistakes.

“I think mistakes are only bad if you don’t learn from them,” he said. “So learning from your mistakes is a big key in the whole process.”

Collins said then-head coach Pat Dye was a major reason why he chose ECU. As the main weapon in the Pirates’ wishbone offense, Collins had a standout junior season in 1979. He rushed for 1,130 yards, which led to plenty of attention from NFL clubs.

He was selected by the New England Patriots in the second round of the ’81 draft, and still ranks third on the Patriots’ career rushing list with 4,647 yards.

He said one of his favorite NFL memories was rushing for 212 yards against the New York Jets, and one of his top ECU moments was recording a 100-yard kickoff return for a touchdown against Florida State.

But he also said one of his most proud football moments came as a 9-year-old, when he scored five TDs in his first Pop Warner game, which led to his passion for the sport.

“I remember being out in the backyard as a 9-year-old with a football making moves on the air and pretending that I was in the NFL,” he said. “I truly believe that everything begins with a thought, and I thought about football every single day and I really believe that the things you think about the most will come to you.”

Contact Ronnie Woodward at rwoodward@reflector.com or 252-329-9592.
A自驾丁 - Mrs. Judy Evans Beacham, 67, passed away Tuesday, April 24, 2012. A graveside service will be conducted Friday at 11 a.m. in Pinewood Memorial Park, officiated by the Rev. Franklin Baggett.

Mrs. Beacham, a native of Pitt County, lived in Ayden for the past 30 years and was a member of Elm Grove Original Free Will Baptist Church. She retired from ECU-Psychiatric Medicine in 1998, but returned to work in 2001 for Regional Acceptance Corporation where she retired in December of 2011. An avid fan of her daughter during all of her school/sport activities, Judy especially enjoyed her pitching/playing years of softball. She was extremely proud of Jayme's achievements.

Mrs. Beacham was preceded in death by her parents, James "Jimmie" Canady and Annie Ruth Edwards Evans; and a brother, Dallas Mason Evans. She is survived by her husband of 30 years, Marshall Beacham, of Ayden; daughter, Jayme Evvan Beacham Perry and son-in-law, Jeremy Perry, of Wilson; beloved dog, Riley; aunt, Thelma Flye, of Greenville; cousins, Dawn Flye, of Greenville, Ginger Gabele and husband, Peter, of Cary, and Kay Warren and husband, Rudy, of Wrightsville Beach; nephew, Mason Evans of Raleigh; and niece, Stacy Robinson of Charlotte.

The family will receive friends tonight from 6 to 8 at Wilkerson Funeral Home and other times at her home.


Published in The Daily Reflector on April 26, 2012
Campbell medical school gets go ahead, hopes to address physician shortfall

By Kyle Jahner - kjahner@newsobserver.com

Campbell University’s medical school took an important step toward becoming the fifth medical school in the state. The Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation awarded Campbell’s School of Osteopathic Medicine provisional accreditation status, which allows the school to begin recruiting applicants for its inaugural class for August 2013. The status was awarded Friday and is effective July 1, according to a Campbell University press release. The school aims to eventually produce 150 primary care physicians each year, addressing an often-noted nationwide shortage. In particular, the school will look to aid rural and poor areas that experience the biggest shortfalls in medical care. After two years at the new facility, third- and fourth-year medical students will train in community hospitals across the state, according to the school’s dean, Dr. John Kauffman. “This is an exciting moment,” said Dr. Jerry Wallace, president of Campbell University. “This medical school will train primary care physicians to address a critical shortage of healthcare professionals throughout our state.”

Campbell joins established medical schools Duke, Wake Forest, UNC-Chapel Hill and East Carolina University as accredited med schools in the state. According to data from the American Association of Medical Colleges, those four schools currently enroll roughly 2,000 students, meaning that with an eventual goal of 600 students, the state’s capacity to produce doctors could rise nearly 30 percent.

That goal would give Campbell University the second-highest enrollment in the state after UNC. The primary care physicians that Campbell intends to recruit will address a pressing need. The AAMC estimated in 2010 that the already-strapped field could face a nationwide shortage of 63,000 physicians in 2015 as millions of Americans acquire health care under the Affordable Care Act. Specialists also face a shortage, even while earning substantially more than primary care doctors. Rural areas face the greatest shortages, and Kauffman said he hopes doctors will continue to live and work in such communities after they finish their two years earning their medical degrees there.
BOONE - An Appalachian State University professor who was suspended last month says she will submit a petition to university officials, signed by more than 300 of her colleagues, asking for her reinstatement.

Jammie Price, a tenured sociology professor who has been at the university for eight years, says she was placed on administrative leave in March, after showing an anti-pornography movie in her class and speaking out against what she says is “institutionalized racism” in sports.

According to several reports, four students in one of her classes complained about the movie, “The Price of Pleasure,” and her comments on athletes.

The Chronicle of Higher Education reports Price has hired a lawyer and filed a sex-discrimination complaint against Appalachian State through the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Price says she been told not to enter any classrooms or offices in the College of Arts and Sciences, and not to discuss the matter with students or colleagues.

University officials told the Observer they cannot comment on personnel issues. However, they said the university has a thorough process for reviewing cases of alleged discrimination and handles several such cases every year.

According to at least two reports, Price gave a lecture on racism and athletics during an Introductory Sociology class in March. In a subsequent class, she showed the movie.

Price has told reporters she received a letter from Anthony Gene Carey, vice provost for faculty affairs at ASU, saying she had failed to warn students that material in the movie might be considered “objectionable or upsetting,” and that several students said the content was “really inappropriate.” In the letter, Price
said, Carey also said the professor has made “disparaging, inaccurate remarks about student athletes.”

Price says she has challenged the power structure at Appalachian State, saying it is male-dominated.

“My feminist critique of institutional patriarchy has challenged many folks on campus, and this was an opportunity to try and silence me,” she said.

Price said she has gained the support of groups such as the American Association of University Professors, the American Sociological Association and other organizations. She says former presidents of two groups recruited fellow educators to support Price in a letter, and gathered more than 300 names.

Price is popular, according to a website that uses student input to rank college professors. She received a 4.2 rating on a scale of 1 to 5 from Rate My Professors. Most of the comments made about her by students were favorable, although several noted that Price is strongly opinionated.
UNCW selects provost finalists

WILMINGTON - University of North Carolina Wilmington officials this week announced three finalists for the university's provost and vice president of academic affairs position.

The finalists are: Timothy Chandler, senior associate provost at Kent State University; Cameron Hackney, special assistant to the provost at West Virginia University; and Denise Battles, geology professor at the University of Northern Colorado.

Each candidate will make a presentation and answer questions during upcoming receptions at the university. All presentations and receptions are open to the public. Chandler's presentation is April 30; Hackney's is May 3; and Battles' is May 7.

Provost Cathy Barlow announced in January that she would retire in June. She came to UNCW in 2000 as the dean of the Watson School of Education and served as interim provost in 2009, a position that became permanent in 2010.

For more information on the search, visit uncw.edu/provostsearch.

– Pressley Baird
Mellow Mushroom Pizza Bakers to Open in Greenville, N.C., on Monday, April 30th

Open 7 days a week Monday-Sunday, 11 a.m. to 12 a.m.

Greenville, NC (PRWEB) April 25, 2012

Mellow Mushroom Pizza Bakers is proud to announce their newest opening in Greenville, N.C., on Monday, April 30th. This Mellow is located at 2020 Charles Blvd., adjacent to the Colonial Mall.

Owners Reid Fogleman, David Bond, Jim Ward III, Steve Jones, Bob Grezczyn and Burney Warren III, all graduates of East Carolina University are thrilled to open their second Mellow Franchise. “We could not be more excited to bring our passion for Mellow to the local community and University. We wanted to provide an exciting experience for guests of all ages, and this Mellow will do just that,” states Fogleman.

The menu features a variety of unique pizzas, hoagies, salads, calzones and appetizers, made with only the highest quality ingredients. Other options offered to guests also includes vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free and kid-friendly selections.

Each Mellow Mushroom offers unique, one-of-a-kind interior artwork that reflects the owner’s passion, giving them the creative freedom to express their vision. Some of the art elements found in this location include:

12’ by 3’ fire pit on the large outdoor patio. Slithering in and out of the fire pit is an original Sea Serpent Monster made of steel that will extend 10’ tall.

Hanging behind the bar, is an artist’s rendition of a BlackBeard’s Flag created from wood.

Mock port-holes and a ship wheel for kids to interact with as they sail the Mellow Seas.

This location features a full service bar with a wide array of liquor, craft beer and wine options. Guests will also be able to enjoy live music on the giant patio that seats over 100 people. When they join the Mellow Mushroom Beer Club they’ll get member-only rewards as they work their
way through enjoying 100 beers offered at this location.

The Mellow Mushroom will operate 7 days a week Monday-Sunday, 11 a.m. to 12 a.m. For more information on Mellow Mushroom Greenville, N.C., visit http://www.mellowmushroom.com and follow us on Facebook at http://www.facebook.com/#!/MellowMushroomGreenvilleNC

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Colleges visited by Obama have varying records on student loan debt
By Jenna Johnson

This week, President Obama booked appearances at three flagship public universities to talk about college affordability and urge Congress to keep federal student loan interest rates at 3.4 percent instead of the usual 6.8 percent for another year.

Obama’s first visits were to University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and the University of Colorado in Boulder, campuses where students take on less debt than the average college student, according to a Project on Student Debt report.

On Wednesday, Obama plans to visit the University of Iowa, which has the opposite problem. The average University of Iowa senior in 2010 had loans totalling $27,391, higher than the national average of $25,250. The state of Iowa has one of the highest rates of student loan debt in the country ($29,598), just behind Maine ($29,983) and New Hampshire ($31,048).
Student loan debt is an issue that affects millions of people, even more so than credit card debt. For the Class of 2010, at least two-thirds of seniors took on some form of student loan debt. This debt is generally higher at private institutions than at public ones. Last year, the amount of outstanding student loans hit more than $1 trillion.

Already, Obama and Mitt Romney are both using the issue to reach young voters ahead of the presidential election this fall.

Here’s a little more about the student loan track records of the three schools Obama picked to visit this week:

**University of North Carolina**

When it comes to student loan debt, UNC is a school that bucks the trend. For the Class of 2011, just 35 percent of students borrowed money to pay for school. Their average debt was $15,472, lower than the national average of more than $25,000, according to the university. When you adjust that average for inflation, UNC says its 2011 graduates are taking on less debt than students who graduated a decade ago.

UNC’s tuition is on the lower end for major public research universities. For this academic year, the tuition-alone sticker price for North Carolina residents was just over $7,000, while out-of-state students have a rate of $26,834. The university has a robust transfer program set up for students to transfer into UNC from local community colleges, and 80 percent of undergraduates graduate within four years.

UNC also offers the Carolina Covenant, a debt-free education for qualified low-income students using Pell grants, work study funding, state aid and university funds. Since it started in 2003, the program has become a national model and has been replicated at more than 90 schools.

Statewide, more than half of seniors at four-year public and private universities in 2010 had student loan debt averaging $20,959, according to the report.

Even some of the state’s big-name private universities had student loan debt rates that were below the national average for the Class of 2010. The average at Duke University was $21,884, and at Davidson College it was $23,233.

Some of the universities with the highest rates in the state include Elon University at $27,163, Meredith College at $33,691, Methodist University at
$30,786, Mid-Atlantic Christian University at $32,413, and Wake Forest University at $32,237.

**University of Colorado at Boulder**

For the Class of 2010, less than half of students took out student loans and they had an average debt of $19,758, according to the report. Tuition for most full-time undergraduates this school year is $9,152 for in-state students and $30,330 for out-of-state students.

For all college students in Colorado, more than half of the Class of 2010 had education debt and the average amount is $22,017, according to the report. All of the state’s public institutions have averages that are less than the national average, except for Colorado School of Mines, where the average is $28,126. Other schools with high rates include Nazarene Bible College at $31,211 and Regis University at $29,590.

**University of Iowa**

The Project on Student Loan Debt found that Iowa had one of the highest rates of student loan debt, despite its relatively low cost of living and reputation for Midwestern thriftiness.

In 2010, nearly three-fourths of Iowa seniors had some sort of student loan debt. Their average bill: $29,598. All four of its major public universities in the state had an average debt load that was higher than the national average.

Obama plans to meet Wednesday with five Iowa students — two sophomores, two juniors and one senior — who receive Stafford federal student loans. All five students attended high school in Iowa and at least three of them work part-time jobs, according to biographies released by the White House.

One is the oldest of four and would be the first in her family to receive a college degree. Another is the son of a single mother who is unemployed. One of the other students in the group plans to graduate a semester early to save money.

For the Class of 2010, more than half of University of Iowa graduates took out student loans, and they had an average of $27,391 in debt. At Iowa State University, the average graduate had $30,062 in debt, one of the highest rates in the country for a public university. At the University of Northern Iowa, the average was $25,735.

The averages were even higher at many private universities in Iowa: Buena Vista University at $37,502, Central College at $34,237, Clarke College at
$38,847, Coe College at $33,260, Drake University at $35,027, Graceland University at $31,404, Grand View University at $33,222, Loras College at $30,790, Luther College at $33,492, Morningside College at $38,411, Saint Ambrose University at $32,530, Simpson College at $34,214, and University of Dubuque at $41,399.

What is going on in Iowa? Here’s what the Associated Press reports is happening: “Policymakers point to a variety of reasons for the problem, including a shortage of state grants and scholarships, household income that is below the national average and has not kept up with tuition increases, more students attending costlier private schools, and policies that have encouraged borrowing from private lenders.”
Capella, Sophia.org release 25,000 free academic tutorials

By Daniel de Vise

Capella Education Co., one of the nation’s largest for-profit higher education providers, ventured into unaccustomed territory Wednesday by putting 25,000 free academic tutorials online through an education site it owns, Sophia.org.

Capella, which operates the 37,000-student Capella University, completed its acquisition of Sophia this month. Sophia is a new site that offers educators free access to lessons on thousands of topics. The lessons are reviewed by Sophia staff and rated by users.

“It’s good stuff that’s been vetted for academic veracity,” said Steve Anastasi, interim CEO of Sophia. He notes that educators and parents routinely log millions of Google searches for “help with math.” On Sophia, the search becomes a bit more orderly and fruitful.

For Capella, the undertaking “generates goodwill,” said Mike Buttry, spokesman for the Minneapolis company. Capella leaders see it as a way to promote K-12 education, which ultimately creates more business for its university.

By Daniel de Vise | 01:09 PM ET, 04/25/2012
Do colleges court those least in need of education?

By Daniel de Vise

Here is a guest post from Mark Gordon, president of Defiance College.

((Courtesy of Defiance College.)) Several colleges recently announced triumphantly that their acceptance rates had set a new record – as low as, in some cases, 6 or 7 percent. I’m still waiting for someone to explain why that is a good thing. Why is it a victory that a college succeeds in seeking out applications from thousands of students, and then doesn’t accept almost 95 percent of those applicants? Whom exactly is that helping?

As president of Defiance College, I’m not naïve about how the admissions process works. And, if you spoke to many presidents, they would tell you that the admissions process at many colleges has been profoundly impacted by the national rankings issued by publications such as U.S. News & World Report, to name the best-known. A few months after I started as president at Defiance in 2009, the new rankings came out, and Defiance had done very well. I was urged to issue a press release touting our success. Instead, I wrote a column entitled, “Defiance College Just Shot Up in the Rankings: Here’s Why You Shouldn’t Care.”

Anyone who looks at what goes into the rankings knows that, on many levels, they are flawed. After all, what is the best college for one student is not necessarily the best for another. But there are many other problems with the rankings. To give just a few examples:

• The rankings measure how other college presidents rank the prestige of colleges in their geographic region. Why “prestige” matters to the quality of one’s education still puzzles me, but, even if it did, I can tell you honestly
that as a president who receives this ranking questionnaire, I am totally unqualified to complete it. In fact, I throw it away each year. College presidents know a lot about our individual colleges, and maybe about a handful of others. We are not at all qualified to rank dozens and dozens of colleges by any measure other than how they did in the rankings the previous year.

- The rankings look at the “quality” of students entering a college. I could dedicate an entire different post to disputing whether measures such as ACT or GPA actually measure quality. But even if they did, does it really make sense to judge a college by what the students are like before they even get there? What does that tell us about how a college adds value to the students’ education when they attend?

- As indicated above, the rankings look at selectivity in admissions. The argument seems to be that the best colleges are those that are only willing to accept the students who prove they need educational services the least. As someone once suggested to me, that is akin to a hospital gaining in prestige by announcing that it would only accept the healthiest of prospective patients.

I always thought that education was supposed to be about providing opportunity. We in higher education have somehow permitted the rankings and our broader culture to confuse excellence with exclusivity. As the hospital example shows, how exclusive you are should not prove anything about how excellent you are.

At Defiance College, we have experimented with what happens when you decide to ignore the rankings. What kind of education can you provide when you focus in admissions not on asking, “what can this student do to improve our prestige and ranking?” but rather, “what can we as a college do to positively impact this student’s future?” The result has been liberating. We have created a different model of undergraduate education geared toward giving students the best of all worlds: the benefits of the personalized attention that only a small liberal arts-based college (with a student/faculty ratio of 12:1) can bring, together with a world of opportunities. That translates into:

- Working with students to develop individualized Personal Success Plans for each student’s four years of academic, extracurricular, and other activities.

- Giving students in different majors hands-on distinctive experiences that link what goes on in the classroom with the realities of the world
beyond. So, criminal justice and forensic science majors investigate cold cases for the Wayne County Prosecutor’s Office in Detroit; business, marketing and accounting majors receive hands-on experience creating and running at least two different businesses; education majors obtain hands-on classroom experience as early as their freshman year; environmental majors manage a 250-acre wildlife preserve as a living laboratory; graphic design students can run their own graphic design studio; sport management majors actually attain experience by running a major sporting facility – the list goes on and on.

• Providing students, through a separate legally incorporated student-run nonprofit, the opportunity to create, develop, run and manage their own service projects, from doing micro-finance lending in Jamaica to jointly operating with two hospitals a free primary-care health clinic.

• Guaranteeing every full-time student in good standing an international opportunity in their junior and senior years. In this year alone, Defiance students are traveling (and, in many cases doing research or service projects) in Ghana, Cambodia, Belize, Costa Rica and Central Europe.

• Giving students opportunities to go to operas, ballets, concerts, art museums, historical sites, Broadway shows in places such as Chicago, New York, Washington and Nashville.

Isn’t it striking that not one of these opportunities or initiatives is reflected in any kind of ranking? When you list characteristics that make a college special, how far down the list do you have to get before coming to something that can be measured quantitatively in a ranking?

Jettisoning concern about rankings at Defiance College has enabled us to focus on providing an exceptional experience for our students. And it also enables us to give numerous students from around the country the opportunity they deserve to receive a high-quality education. About 45 percent of our students are the first generation in their family to attend college. And we now have the flexibility to admit students whose scores might hurt our rankings, but for whom a college education is that critical opportunity enabling them to transform their lives. Isn’t expanding, rather than selectively limiting, that opportunity supposed to be what education is all about?

By Daniel de Vise  |  11:03 AM ET, 04/25/2012
At Virginia Tech, computers help solve a math class problem

By Daniel de Vise, Published: April 22

BLACKSBURG, Va. — There are no professors in Virginia Tech’s largest classroom, only a sea of computers and red plastic cups.

In the Math Emporium, the computer is king, and instructors are reduced to roving guides. Lessons are self-paced, and help is delivered “on demand” in a vast, windowless lab that is open 24 hours a day because computers never tire. A student in need of human aid plants a red cup atop a monitor.

The Emporium is the Wal-Mart of higher education, a triumph in economy of scale and a glimpse at a possible future of computer-led learning. Eight thousand students a year take introductory math in a space that once housed a discount department store. Four math instructors, none of them professors, lead seven courses with enrollments of 200 to 2,000. Students walk to class through a shopping mall, past a health club and a tanning salon, as ambient Muzak plays.

It sounds like the antithesis of the collegiate ideal — a journey of learning shared by students and faculty. Parents sometimes ask why their children are not getting more professorial face time in math when they are spending $17,365 (in-state) or $31,336 (out-of-state) in tuition, fees and living expenses to attend the prestigious public university.

But Virginia Tech students pass introductory math courses at a higher rate now than 15 years ago, when the Emporium was built. And research has found the teaching model trims per-student expense by more than one-third, vital savings for public institutions with dwindling state support.

“When I first came here, I was like, ‘This is the dumbest thing ever,’ ” said Mike Bilynsky, a freshman from Epping, N.H., who is taking calculus. “But it works.”

No academic initiative has delivered more handsomely on the oft-stated promise of efficiency-via-technology in higher education, said Carol Twigg, president of the National Center for Academic Transformation, a nonprofit that studies technological innovations to improve learning and reduce cost. She calls the Emporium “a solution to the math problem” in colleges.
It may be an idea whose time has come. Since its creation in 1997, the Emporium model has spread to the universities of Alabama and Idaho (in 2000) and to Louisiana State University (in 2004). Interest has swelled as of late; Twigg says the Emporium has been adopted by about 100 schools. This academic year, Emporium-style math arrived at Montgomery College in Maryland and Northern Virginia Community College.

“How could computers not change mathematics?” said Peter Haskell, math department chairman at Virginia Tech. “How could they not change higher education? They’ve changed everything else.”

Emporium courses include pre-calculus, calculus, trigonometry and geometry, subjects taken mostly by freshmen to satisfy math requirements. The format seems to work best in subjects that stress skill development — such as solving problems over and over. Computer-led lessons show promise for remedial English instruction and perhaps foreign language, Twigg said. Machines will never replace humans in poetry seminars.

Computer-based problem sets and online lectures are now commonplace at Caltech, Georgia Tech, MIT and Purdue. Leaders in the math-science community applaud Virginia Tech for its innovation.

“I’m a strong believer in the experimentation that’s going on now,” said Jean-Lou Chameau, president of Caltech. “More and more of our professors, all of the materials they are going to provide in class are available online.”

But none of those top tech schools has yet embraced a fully “computer-mediated” math course, nor has any other large public university around Washington.

“I don’t see it replacing the kind of high-level instruction that takes place here,” said Doug Ulmer, math chairman at Georgia Tech.

In the Emporium, the computer is teacher. Even after 15 years, that represents radical change.

University Mall in Blacksburg was a dying hulk when Virginia Tech swept in to renovate the old Roses department store, a $2 million transformation that yielded 60,000 square feet of teaching space and 537 computers arranged in six-person pods.

It was an experiment born of desperation. In the mid-1990s, Virginia Tech was growing and state subsidies were shrinking, forcing faculty cuts. Classes were being taught in a basketball arena, and labs were running past 11 p.m.
Emporium designers removed all the strictures of the conventional university class. Instead of attending three lectures a week, students could come to the lab when they pleased. Instead of 100 instructors leading hundreds of class sections, a rotating staff of about 12 would roam the lab, dispensing help as needed.

The lab now accommodates 5,000 students in fall and 3,000 in spring, freeing up dozens of Virginia Tech classrooms.

“You don’t have to have a big lab to do what we do,” said Terri Bourdon, the senior math instructor who runs the Emporium. “You don’t have to have the big staff that we have. You just have to have the philosophy that we have, which is that you learn math by doing math.”

Students click their way through courses that unfold in a series of modules. Each lesson typically starts with an online lecture or reading passage, then leads to a series of problems. Students receive instant feedback; hints are dispensed and wrong answers explained. The module ends in a quiz. Faculty design every course and have added modest improvements over the years, such as interactive animation and embedded links that hark back to previous lessons.

Students are free to do course work online from dorm rooms but must come to the lab, which is a 15-minute walk or short drive from campus, for quizzes and tests. These are entirely multiple-choice, to eliminate hand-grading, and tightly monitored: Backpacks go in lockers, iPhones are turned off.

The teaching method pioneered at the Emporium solves two problems that have long vexed general math instruction. One is that lecture classes give students little chance to do math. The other is that students in basic math classes often span a wide range of ability and experience. Some have forgotten the material, while others never knew it. The lock-step pace left some students behind and held others back.

One recent afternoon, nearly every Emporium seat is filled, every mall parking space taken. Students file into the Emporium past a red, orange and white statue of the Virginia Tech Hokie — a large, imposing turkey rendered in Legos — past potted plants and a fountain and a sign that forbids cups without lids.

The lab is painted a calm, robin-egg blue. It is filled with late-model Macs; 200 new machines sit in a storage room, awaiting deployment.
Nicholas Gratto, a freshman from Manorville, N.Y., plants a red cup atop his monitor. He is stuck on a problem in Math 1526, a calculus course for prospective business majors. A teaching assistant appears.

“Okay,” she says. “We know that revenue equals price times quantity.” She recites a formula. “That’s going to be our price times our quality. Are you with me so far?”

TAs are trained to guide students toward answers rather provide the answers. Interventions are supposed to take no more than a few minutes.

The TA writes some more formulas, then tells Gratto, “I’m going to let you go from here.”

Faculty remain neutral or vaguely displeased with the Emporium, Haskell said, partly because they were not allowed much say in its creation.

Students seem to appreciate and resent the freedom the Emporium affords.

“I don’t have to go to class, which is nice,” said Lauren Goff, a freshman from Faber, Va. “But I kind of wish for this subject we did have a class. I’m one of those people who can’t learn just by looking at a computer. I have to be shown something.”

Parents have their own questions. One section of the Emporium Web site speaks to parental concerns, such as: The Math Emporium seems so large and impersonal. Why would my daughter want to be there?

Some resent the financial motives behind the Emporium. The format offers an extreme example of the savings universities attain by holding 400-student lecture courses, in order to steer funding toward more costly academic offerings.

“It’s not the money to me so much as it is the teaching aspect. In a way, it shortchanges the students,” said Larry Goff, Lauren’s father. “Lord knows I had a hard time in math, and I had teachers.”
Two Parties Find a Way to Agree, and Disagree, on Student Loan Rates

By PETER BAKER and JENNIFER STEINHAUER
Published: April 25, 2012

IOWA CITY — As President Obama wrapped up a barnstorming tour of college campuses in swing states on Wednesday, Democrats and Republicans agreed that they wanted to avoid a steep increase in the student loan interest rate this summer. But the chief issue remained unsettled: how to pay the cost of doing so.

In a second day of campaign-style rallies, Mr. Obama pressed his attack on Republicans, depicting them as unsympathetic to college students in need. Republicans countered by accusing the president and his Democratic allies of playing politics with the issue and trying to raise taxes on small businesses to pay for the subsidized rate.

Caught in the middle were seven million college students who will see the interest rate on their federally subsidized loans double to 6.8 percent on July 1 unless Congress and the White House come together on a plan to prevent
that, at a cost of $6 billion. For a typical student, the White House said the higher rate could mean as much as $1,000 in additional debt per year at a time of high unemployment among recent graduates.

Mr. Obama has made the issue his top talking point in recent days as part of an effort to put Republicans on the defensive and duplicate the political success of the payroll tax cut extension last winter. Speaking at the University of Iowa here, he seized on a comment by an aide to Speaker John A. Boehner that the president should focus on fixing the economy.

“This is the economy,” Mr. Obama said with indignation in his voice. “What economy are they talking about? You are the economy.”

Republicans were equally indignant at what they saw as game-playing, saying that they, too, want to forestall the rate increase. They quickly tried to outmaneuver the president.

Late Wednesday afternoon, Mr. Boehner hastily called a news conference to announce that the House would vote Friday on a student loan bill that seemed to take shape just as suddenly. The proposal would extend the current interest rate for federal student loans for one year. The $6 billion cost would be offset by eliminating the remainder of the money from the Prevention and Public Health Fund, a portion of the health care law.

“You know, this week the president’s traveling the country on the taxpayers’ dime,” Mr. Boehner said, “campaigning and trying to invent a fight where there isn’t one and never has been one on this issue of student loans. We can and will fix the problem without a bunch of campaign-style theatrics. “

House Democrats quickly countered that they would offer a bill to maintain the rate by ending tax subsidies for oil and gas companies.

Congress first cut the interest rate on federally subsidized loans in 2007 when Democrats controlled both houses but allowed the cuts to expire after five years because of the cost. The rate moved down gradually each year to 3.4 percent last summer from a high of 6.8 percent. If no action is taken, the rate will jump back up to 6.8 percent this summer.

Mr. Obama included money in his budget to extend the cut, but just for one year. Republicans, in the budget advanced by Representative Paul D. Ryan of Wisconsin, did not finance an extension. But following the lead of Mitt Romney, the party’s presumptive presidential nominee, Republican leaders say they, too, favor extending the lower rate at least temporarily.
“It took me seven years to work my way through college, working every job I could get my hands on,” Mr. Boehner said. “And what Washington shouldn’t be doing is exploiting the challenges that young Americans face for political gain.”

White House officials said the only reason Republicans were speaking out in support was because the president had embarrassed them, and they pointed to a number of past comments by individual members of the opposition questioning the government role in student loans.

Senator Harry M. Reid of Nevada, the Democratic majority leader, introduced a bill to extend the cuts and pay for that extension by preventing some business owners from sheltering their income from Medicare and Social Security taxes.

He plans to hold a vote to try to overcome a potential filibuster, most likely after next week’s recess, giving Mr. Obama a chance to talk about the issue all next week, Democrats said.

Senator Lamar Alexander, Republican of Tennessee, responded with legislation introduced Wednesday to keep the low rate and pay for it by taking money from Mr. Obama’s health care program.

Each plan was devised in a way to make it unpalatable for the other party to vote for it, thus setting the stage for a potentially protracted fight over how to finance the student loan measure. It was a reflection of the fact that Republicans do not want to have the fight Mr. Obama seemed eager for.

“It sounds to me that they know this is not someplace where they want to go,” said Representative George Miller, Democrat of California, who sponsored the original 2007 legislation. “So I think it really is down to how we will pay for it. In this economy at a time when families are struggling and people are concerned about the load of debt, it makes no sense to charge students 6.8 percent.”

Peter Baker reported from Iowa City, and Jennifer Steinhauer from Washington.

A version of this article appeared in print on April 26, 2012, on page A17 of the New York edition with the headline: Two Parties Find a Way to Agree, and Disagree, on Student Loan Rates.
Expand Minds, Not the N.Y.U. Campus

By ERNEST DAVIS, PATRICK DEER and MARK CRISPIN MILLER
Published: April 25, 2012

FOR much of the last decade, universities across the country have been spending many millions on construction projects, building grand new campuses to draw more students.

That national trend has a strong champion in New York University’s president, John Sexton, the driving force behind N.Y.U. 2031 — a plan for a huge expansion of the school’s Greenwich Village campus as well as additional buildings in other parts of the city, including downtown Brooklyn.

The project has roused fierce opposition in the Village, which has largely been belittled or ignored. In Mr. Sexton’s view, N.Y.U.’s angry neighbors just can’t see that “universities need to grow to maintain excellence,” as he said recently. Newspaper editorials have dismissed the plan’s opponents as a small but loud minority of “Luddites” and “anti-building zealots.”

Such mockery vastly understates the opposition. As was quite clear at the packed and raucous public hearings earlier this year, Village residents are overwhelmingly opposed to it — and so, in fact, is N.Y.U.’s own faculty.

We see this project as a clear and present danger to the neighborhood and a grave risk to the university itself.

As of April 25, 23 faculty departments — including economics, history, politics, mathematics, anthropology, art history, sociology and English — have passed resolutions strongly urging Mr. Sexton to drop the plan, all of them unanimous or nearly so.

Why do we oppose it? On one hand, we share the personal fears of the community at risk, since many of us live there. The plan targets the area bounded by West Third Street, Houston Street, Mercer Street and LaGuardia Place, where two apartment complexes, Silver Towers and Washington Square Village, house more than 2,000 families — including 40 percent of the faculty. The project would put all of us through 20 years (or more) of demolition and construction. Roughly two acres of green space would be destroyed, including the acclaimed Sasaki Garden, and in the end, four giant buildings would be crammed into the area, three placed smack against the older buildings, blocking most of the apartments from the sun. With the
whole area rezoned for commercial use, there will be lots of stores, and a hotel.

What about N.Y.U. itself? First, the plan is a financial risk. The administration won’t reveal its business plan, but according to N.Y.U.’s Web site, the plan will cost an estimated $6 billion. The debt service alone could strain N.Y.U.’s annual budget. A $2 billion loan, for instance, would mean more than $100 million a year in interest. How will we cover that new debt? Tuition increases? More students? Bigger classes? Unlike Yale or Harvard, we have no large endowment to cushion yearly drops in income. Most of N.Y.U.’s income comes from tuition — a dicey strategy today.

Nationwide, costs of tuition and fees have more than doubled since 2000. Most students take out loans to pay their way — and struggle more and more to pay them back. According to the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, more than a quarter of indebted students are in arrears. Now that outstanding United States student debt has topped $1 trillion — more than the entire population’s credit-card debt — that bubble could finally pop.

But it’s not just risky to finance this project with more student debt. It’s also wrong. Our graduates are among the most indebted in the nation. We’d rather see such misery ended than prolonged. This brings us to the academic impact. While Mr. Sexton has said often that his plan will make N.Y.U. strong, it will very likely have the opposite effect. This expansion of the university will eventually degrade our student body. Many of our best students have come from poor and middle-income families. If N.Y.U. must raise tuition to handle all that extra debt, applicants with money will be favored over those without. And if we need more students to defray our costs, we must be that much less selective.

The project will degrade our faculty at once. Like Columbia and Rockefeller, N.Y.U. has drawn top faculty members to this expensive city by offering affordable — and livable — housing. If this plan proceeds, many of our best will move to schools that would not house their employees on construction sites. We who are supposed to hire new talent either have to scare top candidates away by telling them the truth or get them here by keeping mum.

And as top faculty members depart, or stay away, fewer bright college seniors will be drawn to graduate school at N.Y.U.

What, then, does this project have to do with education? That N.Y.U. needs space is a reality. That universities must grow to maintain excellence is a delusion. As faculty members who care about our mission at this university, we are obliged to tell the difference.
Ernest Davis is a professor of computer science at New York University, where Patrick Deer is an associate professor of English and Mark Crispin Miller is a professor of media, culture and communication.

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Gail Collins: David, I feel that I missed so much while I was on vacation in Turkey. Newt Gingrich was attacked by a penguin! John Edwards went on trial and according to the polls, we have finally found somebody with a lower approval rating than Congress.

David Brooks: For the record, this trial has done the unexpected: Made me feel sympathetic to John Edwards. He behaved like a scoundrel toward his wife, but it feels like a different prosecutorial standard is being applied to him simply because everyone dislikes him. Let’s preserve the distinction between shaming and imprisonment.

Gail: But I’d like to talk today about higher education. I read your column about how students don’t seem to actually be learning all that much in college. It was a little dispiriting, although looking back, I’m not at all sure how much I learned in college, either. Definitely an experience not to be missed, but if I came out of it with my capacity for critical thinking improved, it was probably due to time spent in sit-ins and free speech protests. Maybe the real problem is that the students today don’t get enough opportunity to rebel? College administrations are so damned reasonable these days.

David: Not to be impolite, but if the Woodstock generation acquired an impressive education at sit-ins and protests, I would say many of them have kept it well hidden in the decades since. I was taken to Be-Ins and other festivities during the ’60s and I do not have a single memory of a group of people sitting around and studying Aristotle, Newton or Descartes. I recall mostly dope, dancing and, at best, Carlos Castaneda.

Gail: You raised – very gingerly – the idea of doing some kind of accountability testing. I’m sure you knew you’d hear howls from people who’ve been traumatized by the mega-testing that’s going on in K-12.

David: Here’s something else unpleasant to put on the record. Everybody in all parties dumps on it, but No Child Left Behind has been a qualified success. I understand the complaints about the way it distorts teaching so that everybody has an incentive to teach to the test, but the fact is that without those tests and the accountability that comes with them, education
reform would be far behind where it is now. NCLB needs to be fixed, but as the Obama administration and most reformers understand, it needs to be built on and not discarded.

**Gail:** I’m going to keep out of that fight and propose that colleges should be rated by how well they educate their students and prospective students about loans. The whole student loan thing drives me completely nuts. If it wasn’t possible for 18-year-olds to sign themselves up for tens of thousands of dollars in debt in order to pay their college bills, the state governments wouldn’t have found it so politically easy to cut taxpayer support for public colleges and universities. And the federal government probably couldn’t have let the Pell Grants for low-income students fall so far behind actual college costs. Back in the ’70s when my friends in California were at Berkeley, in state tuition was around $700 a year. Now it’s closer to $13,000.

**David:** O.K., I’m marching further down the road to unpopularity, but here goes. Tuition at Berkeley should be higher. Not long ago Berkeley could legitimately compete with Stanford. Now it is behind and falling further behind every year. Somehow that great elite university has to be saved. Of course most of the responsibility lies in Sacramento. Legislators should spend less on public employee pensions, they should raise taxes more, and they should spend more on the entire Cal system.

**Gail:** Totally with you on the last part, anyhow.

**David:** As for student debt in general, I have a few thoughts. One, we do need programs so that people who graduate with high debt can nonetheless pursue careers as teachers, public employees and other low income service professions. Second, and this is crucial, the people who enjoy the benefits of higher education should pay the costs of the system. The benefits are huge and we shouldn’t try to transfer the costs onto people who don’t have degrees. Third, I have a tingling sensation that tells me we are on the cusp of a revolution in higher ed. I have an inkling that low cost alternatives are about to become available in truly epic-shifting ways.

**Gail:** There’s more student debt than credit card debt! Everywhere I go, I run into young people trying to build careers while they keep shelling out money on their education loans. If the economy is looking for a new generation of home-buyers, I can’t imagine they’ll get it from these folks.

**David:** Let me go into a bit more detail about why I think college costs may be about to come down big time. Let me start with a question. Would you rather see your local community theater put on some production by your
local playwright or would you rather go to the movies and watch Laurence Olivier perform Shakespeare?

**Gail:** I think I know what’s coming here, and I am not really trying to defer you by saying that if the play was half-good, I would totally opt for the neighborhood writer.

**David:** Right now college is like community theater. It’s local. It’s in person. Its quality depends on the personalities of the people you have in your town. I suspect many people would prefer the Olivier/Shakespeare at the movies option. It’s not local. It’s not in person. But you get something from the best of the best.

In other words, I am beginning to think this talk of online learning is real, at least in some quarters of higher ed. The big lecture courses are distance learning anyway, so students might as well sit in their dorm rooms and take an online course from an academic superstar rather than some local adjunct. That would cut costs enormously. Local faculty members could then be used for discussion sections and tutoring.

Tuition could come down apace.

**Gail:** One very clear memory I have of college is that I never learned anything in the big lectures. I have a feeling I’d have done even worse if they’d been on a laptop screen. But maybe you’re right. Just indulge me in my anti-student-loan tirade. I also suspect they encourage high schoolers to feel like they have to search the continent for the perfect college experience, whatever the price, rather than a just-fine, halfway-reasonable school that offers the same basic programs. And that quality-of-life obsession has encouraged the schools to compete for students with expensive new dorms, new gyms, student unions that resemble the one at Hogwarts etc., etc.

**David:** I’ve spent a large part of the last few years accompanying my kids on college tours. By the way, if you ever want to know what it is like to not exist, try being a parent on a college tour. You are completely invisible and insignificant.

The quality of college dining facilities is a wonder to behold. That said, the college status system is one of the abominations of the age. The idea that Harvard necessarily provides a better education than the next 150 schools is a joke. It may be true for some students, but it is not a certainty.

**Gail:** End student loans and bring back cheap public colleges and universities! You may have noticed I’m venting.
David: I’m afraid that ain’t happening. We need high tuition to pay for the semioticians and the writing tutors and the provost.

Gail: I admit it’s not likely that the loans will go anywhere soon, so I’m glad to see that the Mitt Romney Express – now leaving the runway, banking hard to the left – has suddenly announced support for continuing the low-interest-rate federal loan program his party opposes in Congress.

David: What, should Barack Obama be the only person able to pander to the most privileged people in American society — the über-educated?

Gail: Since I’m so cheerful and rested from vacation, here’s my modest bottom line: Every college should be held accountable for how well it prepares students and would-be students to make these critical financial decisions. Right now kids often don’t even realize that the financial aid package they’re signing up for is actually just a stack of loans. Before they commit to anything, these kids should be tested to show they understand what their borrowing options were, how much the chosen loan package will cost them in monthly payments once they’ve graduated, what will happen if they can’t afford to pay and how long the whole process will continue.

David: Now that’s a good idea. I’ll join you on the financial literacy bandwagon. But one point should be kept in mind. No matter how high the loan burden, college is still an incredibly smart investment. The earnings for college grads are much higher than the earnings for non-grads. The unemployment rate is much lower. The people who are really hosed are those who go to college, take out the loans and then don’t finish. That’s where the tragedies are to be found.
WASHINGTON — The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff has ordered military schools to make sure they are not including anti-Islamic themes in training courses, the Defense Department said on Wednesday, after complaints surfaced about the curriculum in a course dealing with terrorism and radicalism.

The chairman, Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, ordered the review after students questioned some of the teachings in a class called Perspectives on Islam and Islamic Radicalism, which was being taught to midlevel officers at the Armed Forces Staff College in Norfolk, Va.

General Dempsey’s order was first reported by Danger Room, the national security blog of Wired magazine. It quoted his deputy for training, Lt. Gen. George Flynn, as calling the course “inflammatory” for including the message that Islam was at war with the United States.

“Our concern is there are some unprofessional things being taught to students in professional military educational curriculum,” Capt. John Kirby, a Pentagon spokesman, told reporters on Wednesday.

The review comes at a time of heightened sensitivity over the American military’s stance toward Islam, driven by events in Afghanistan like the inadvertent burning of Korans and the desecration of militants’ remains by troops.

The Pentagon asked for a curriculum review last year, in response to similar complaints about training by the Federal Bureau of Investigation on countering extremism, as well as related Defense Department lectures. General Dempsey’s new order seemed to reflect his irritation that the latest complaints “caused me to question whether all parties understood the spirit and intent” of the earlier effort.

He said that military instructors and guest lecturers appeared to be “advocating ideas, beliefs and actions that are contrary to our national policy, inconsistent with the values of our profession and disrespectful of the Islamic religion.”
Captain Kirby said that Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta “completely endorses the chairman’s intention to look at joint professional military education across the board to make sure we have done an adequate scrub on the content of this type of curriculum.”

Among the course materials was a slide that said that “the United States is at war with Islam, and we ought to just recognize that we are at war,” Captain Kirby said.

“That’s not at all what we believe to be the case,” Captain Kirby added. 
“We’re at war with terrorism, specifically Al Qaeda, who has a warped view of the Islamic faith. That’s just one example.

“These assertions are not in keeping with our principles or ideas,” he said. “We believe the right thing to do was to suspend the course due to some of the things that were presented in the course.”

A version of this article appeared in print on April 26, 2012, on page A13 of the New York edition with the headline: General Orders Review of Military Schools After Class Is Told U.S. Is at War With Islam.
More universities charging more tuition for harder majors
By Alicia McCarty, USA TODAY
Updated April 25, 2012

Having a hard major is getting more expensive.

A growing number of public universities are charging higher tuition for math, science and business programs, which they argue cost more to teach — and can earn grads higher-paying jobs.

More than 140 public universities now use "differential tuition" plans, up 19% since 2006, according to research from Cornell's Higher Education Research Institute. That number is increasing as states cut higher-education spending and schools try to pay for expensive technical programs.

"It's been a lifesaver," said Donde Plowman, College of Business Administration dean at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, which charges business and engineering majors $50 more a credit. "We can be excited for the future."

The money at Nebraska paid to create a career center, renovate a student lounge and hire an additional academic adviser. The college is also hiring new faculty.

Some worry that higher tuition will put off low-income students.

"The fear in all of this is will it lead to people being rationed out of classes?" said Ronald Ehrenberg, the Cornell researcher behind the tuition study.

Last month South Dakota's Board of Regents voted to bring back differential tuition for the first time in 15 years. Students at the state's research universities — South Dakota State University, University of South Dakota and South Dakota School of Mines and Technology — will pay $5 more per credit than they would at the other state schools.

In Florida, if Republican Gov. Rick Scott signs a bill approved by the Legislature, certain universities will get to charge tuition at their own rates rather than what's mandated by the state.

"The key is we want to have highly ranked universities ... you're going to have to have a way to fund" them, Florida State University President Eric
Barron said. "Would you decide not to follow what you're most interested in if it cost $500 more?"

**Differential Tuition**
Some schools that have proposed differential tuition:
- University of Florida
- Florida State University
- University of Maryland – College Park
- Santa Monica College
- University of Minnesota
- University of Buffalo
- Stony Brook University
- Binghamton University
- University at Albany
- University of California – Berkeley
- University of California – Los Angeles

**Some schools that have approved differential tuition:**
- South Dakota State University
- University of South Dakota
- South Dakota School of Mines and Technology
- University of Nebraska-Lincoln