THE DAILY CLIPS

April 27, 2009

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Toler named 2009 Student Employee of the Year

A student autopsy assistant from the Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University has been named the 2009 Student Employee of the Year.

Maxx Toler of Williamston was nominated by his supervisor, Lisa Leone, for the award, which was given by the ECU Student Employment Office during a banquet on April 15. Toler received a plaque and a $150 cash award.

The Student Employee of the Year award recognizes the outstanding contributions and achievements of students who work while attending college. Student evaluations are based on the following factors: reliability, quality of work, initiative, attitude, professionalism and uniqueness of contribution.

"Maxx is always reliable, and I know I can trust him to work independently because he knows the policies and procedures so well," Leone said. "In quality assurance reviews, Maxx has consistently scored 100 percent proficiency and compliance with policy."

Thirty-one students were nominated for the award. Each nominee received a certificate and gift bag filled with donations from local sponsors. Runner-ups were Michelle Beracha, Douglas Flowers and Sara McLeod. They received an engraved paperweight along with a $50 cash award.

The Student Employment Office also presented a Supervisor of the Year award. Supervisors, who must be permanent employees of ECU, were nominated by student employees and evaluated by the following criteria: building skills and technical knowledge, providing proper training, modeling professionalism, serving as a role model, and influencing student life, academics and career aspirations.

Dr. Abdel Abdel-Rahman, nominated by Marie McGee and Badr Ibrahim from the Brody School of Medicine Department of Pharmacology, was named the 2009 Supervisor of the Year.

"He is not only an inspiration to me but a visionary, paving the way for a young investigator like myself to think beyond my current environment and touch millions of lives," McGee said.

Abdel-Rahman received a plaque, a weekend stay at Baymont Inn and Suites of Greenville, and a $50 gift card to Dowdy Student Stores.

Twenty-three supervisors were nominated for the award. Runner-ups were Laura Anderson of the Department of Psychology and Janet Pierce of the Brody Outpatient Center. They received an engraved paperweight and a gift from a local sponsor.

Horns is named to vice chancellor post

Dr. Phyllis N. Horns has been named vice chancellor for health sciences at East Carolina University on a permanent basis after serving more than two years in an interim role.

The ECU board of trustees approved Chancellor Steve Ballard's appointment of Horns as vice chancellor at its April 17 meeting.

Horns has been at ECU as a faculty member since 1990, when she returned to her alma mater to become dean of nursing. She also served as interim dean of the Brody School of Medicine at ECU from 2006-08 and as interim vice chancellor for health sciences from 2001-02.

Horns, who had served in her second stint as interim vice chancellor since November 2006, will continue to oversee the Division of Health Sciences, which comprises the Brody School of Medicine, the College of Nursing, the College of Allied Health Sciences, the new School of Dentistry and Laupus Library.
Horns graduated from ECU in 1969 with a bachelor's degree in nursing. She also has a master's of public health degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, a nurse practitioner certificate from the University of Rochester in New York, and a doctorate in nursing from the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

The ECU board of trustees recommended in February that Horns be named to the position permanently, Ballard said that he had sought comments on her performance from a number of groups and that the reviews had been “extraordinarily positive.” She leads “by example and integrity,” Ballard said.

**ECU among top primary care medical schools**

The Brody School of Medicine at ECU is ranked among the top medical schools in the country that emphasize primary care, according to the annual listing of the top graduate schools by U.S. News & World Report magazine.

ECU is 28th overall among primary care schools this year. In the rural medicine subcategory, the school ranks seventh. ECU also sent the seventh-highest percentage of its graduates, 53.3 percent, into primary care residencies from 2006 and 2008. U.S. News defines primary care as family medicine, pediatrics and internal medicine.

The U.S. News rankings of U.S. professional and graduate schools will be available on newsstands Tuesday. In medicine, the magazine considered the 126 accredited U.S. medical schools and 20 schools of osteopathic medicine.

This year, the University of Washington again was rated the top primary care school. Harvard University ranked first among medical schools that emphasize research.

Rankings for primary care schools are based on a weighted average of seven indicators, four of them common for research- and primary care-focused schools. The primary care model also considered the number of graduates entering primary care residencies.

**ECU students, faculty celebrate Earth Day**

Small gestures can lead to big changes, at least that's the hope of East Carolina University faculty members, staff and students who participated in Earth Day activities April 22.

Both Joyner Library and the International Affairs program sponsored tree plantings on campus in honor of the nation's 39th annual Earth Day celebration.

Larry Boyer, dean of Academic Library and Learning Resources, called the effort a "great way" for Joyner Library to get involved. "This library is about more than books. It's about community," he said, before cutting the ribbon on a live oak tree planted near the Langford-Joyner clock tower.

The tree planting was organized by Joyner Library's Green Task Force, a group of employees dedicated to researching and implementing sustainable environmental practices in the university library environment.

Matt Reynolds, public services librarian at Joyner, said the group, which formed in July 2008, has published newsletters, hosted speakers and is conducting a "green audit" of library services.

They also started a "green weeding" program to divest the library of books no longer of use in an environmentally friendly way. "When we have to get rid of books, we try to find an alternative home for them or recycle them," Reynolds said.

A group of Joyner Library employees continued Earth Day activities by picking up trash along Cotanche Street between 5th and 10th streets. The Support Staff Assembly at Joyner Library has adopted the roadway, and volunteers clean it of debris once a semester.

The International Affairs program planted two live oaks donated by ECU faculty members and students who wanted to offset their carbon footprints from international travels.

Four individuals donated to the program, which is new this year and unique among universities.

"We're trying to educate our study abroad students more about the environment and the effects of their travels," Brandi Dudley, assistant director for Education Abroad, said.
Voyages of Discovery lectures presented

ECU-TV will begin showing the entire 2008-09 Voyages of Discovery lecture series starting Monday at 8 p.m. on Greenville cable Channel 99. Lectures will air each Monday through June 1.

Monday’s show will feature a lecture on medical innovations by Dr. W. Randolph Chitwood Jr., a heart surgeon and senior vice chancellor for health sciences at ECU. Other lecturers include Walter Isaacson, chief executive of the Aspen Institute; Marcus Borg, a professor emeritus of religion and culture at Oregon State University; and Eugenie Scott, executive director of the National Center for Science Education.

The Voyages of Discovery Lectures were taped in 2008 and 2009. More information about the lectures is available at http://www.ecu.edu/cs-cas/voyages.

Upcoming events:

■ Tuesday: Senior candlelight ceremony, 7 p.m., the Cupola on the university mall. Members of the ECU Class of 2009 and their families will meet to remember their years on campus and to dedicate their senior class gift, a time capsule that will be opened in 2059. Sponsored by the East Carolina Alumni Association.

■ Thursday: Reception for Michael A. Dorsey, artist and ECU professor, for his painting exhibition, “a perception of events,” 7 p.m., Joyner Library, second floor. Exhibit continues through June 30.

See www.ecu.edu/cs-ecu/calendar.cfm for times, places and more information on these events and other ECU upcoming activities.
Three players with Greenville ties get drafted

The Daily Reflector

Monday, April 27, 2009

Three players with Pitt County ties were selected during the second day of the NFL draft Sunday — former J.H. Rose standouts Derek Cox and Andre Brown and East Carolina tight end Davon Drew.

Cox, who played cornerback at William and Mary, was picked by the Jacksonville Jaguars in the third round with the 73rd overall pick.

Brown, who was N.C. State’s top running back last season, was selected by the N.Y. Giants in the fourth round (129th overall).

Drew, a New Bern native, was drafted by the Baltimore Ravens in the fifth round (149th overall).

Cox improved his stock immensely with a strong performance during his Pro Day. He was clocked at 4.39 and 4.42 in the 40-yard dash, turned in an 11-foot, 8-inch leap in the broad jump and had a vertical leap up 36.5 inches.

Cox, 6-0, 180 pounds, won state championships in football and baseball while at Rose.

Cox finished his William and Mary career with 172 tackles and nine interceptions. He is the second-highest drafted player in school history behind only Darren Sharper (second round, 1997).

Brown rushed for 767 yards and seven touchdowns in his final season with the Wolfpack.

The 6-foot, 224-pounder started 30 games in his N.C. State career and rushed for 2,539 yards and 22 touchdowns. He also caught 70 passes for 631 yards.

Brown rushed for 270 yards and three touchdowns in Rose’s 51-7 win over Winston-Salem Mount Tabor in the 2003 state championship game.

Drew finished his ECU career with 78 catches for 1,078 yards and eight touchdowns.

He enjoyed a breakout season as a senior, pulling in 43 catches and setting a school record for receiving yards by a tight end in a single season with 695.

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East Carolina hosts inaugural film festival

By Kristin Day
The Daily Reflector

Sunday, April 26, 2009

Escaping the dry heat of the long day, students, filmmakers and picture show enthusiasts lounged in the blue and red seats of Hendrix Theater on Saturday evening to share laughter and maybe a few tears at the East Carolina Film Festival’s awards show. The final film showings ended the first two-day event of its kind at the university.

Michael Tierno, festival director and assistant professor at the school of communication, spoke briefly before the first film of the night about how the films were chosen. For weeks, students in the School of Fine Arts and Communication, with the help of professors with film backgrounds, weeded through submissions and chose about 40 finalists from ECU students, high school students and filmmakers from local areas and nationwide.

“The screening process, I’m very proud of because the students picked the films,” Tierno said, “and that’s been the goal all along.”

Films were judged on criteria such as plot, character, dialogue and production value. Students also hosted and helped plan the entire festival.

The festival began at 4 p.m. Friday when they began playing films and continued until midnight. Mendenhall Student Center’s theater reopened at 1 p.m. Saturday for another day of viewing before the 8 p.m. awards show.

Winners in each category — short documentaries, short dramas, short comedies, short animations, experimental, television and feature films — received certificates and their film presented during the awards show. Grand prize winners from the best ECU and non-ECU film also received $500.

For more information, visit www.eastcarolinafilmfestival.com.

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Winners

Best ECU short drama: “Missing Peace,” directed by Aaron Michael Bevill

Best ECU short experimental: “Rising Son,” by Ben Hunt

Best ECU short comedy: “The Case of the Missing Face,” directed by Zac Karamalegos

Best ECU news package: “Smoking Package,” reported by Kelsey Lamb.


Best ECU Film: “Missing Peace,” directed by Aaron Michael Bevill

Best short film: (general submission) “Robert 39,” directed by Daniel McCabe

Special award for achievement in animation: “The Magistical”

Best Feature Film: “Lightning Salad Moving Picture,” by Kenneth Price

Headline
Editorial: Bad medicine - Health plan law will not solve problems

Sunday, April 26, 2009

With the state health plan in critical condition and in need of urgent care, lawmakers in Raleigh applied little more than a Band-Aid this week with legislation that will reduce coverage and increase costs. It is a short-term solution that will demand further action from Raleigh.

Given the importance of this program and the threat of insolvency it faces, comprehensive reform of the state health plan should have been a higher priority this legislative session. Instead, the General Assembly will be forced to revisit the issue, having set aside important decisions in favor of a quick fix.

Long before the Legislature convened in January — even before the November election — problems with the state health plan were well known. Projections showed a $260 million revenue shortfall, a gap created by poor cost estimation and leadership, as well as rising health care costs. With 667,000 people relying on that plan for coverage, the need to ensure solvency should have been a top priority for lawmakers.

This week, the N.C. House and Senate voted their approval of a patch that may accomplish the modest goal of closing the funding gap but does not provide long-term sustainability. The House voted 60-56 on the conference bill that emerged after the chambers approved competing legislation, and the Senate nodded its approval with a 29-18 vote.

In the Senate debate, however, many members made clear that the final bill did not inspire significant enthusiasm.

"What we are doing is temporary at best," said Randolph County Republican N.C. Sen. Jerry Tillman, offering a view reflected by many senators. Senate Majority Leader Tony Rand also expressed hope for a long-term solution, and Gov. Beverly Perdue, in signing the bill, called on the General Assembly to look toward comprehensive reform.

It is a common theme in Raleigh. Instead of tackling the problem head on, lawmakers opt for a short-term solution that will not serve the state's future interests. The state health plan has been pushed along, making it another debate for another year. It is like the issue of tax reform, the pot on the stove that gets attention when it threatens to boil over.

The citizens of North Carolina deserve better from their elected officials. They need leadership that intends to take the broad view and craft lasting remedies to North Carolina's problems. The state may have a part-time Legislature, but it has little use for half-way solutions.

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Saturday, April 25, 2009

Laurels — To East Carolina University senior Kristen Dalton, who was named Miss USA during the annual pageant on Sunday night. Dalton, who studies honors psychology and Spanish, is a native of Wilmington and the first Miss North Carolina to win the title since Chelsea Cooley in 2005. She will next represent her country in the Miss Universe pageant in August.

Laurels — To the commemoration of Earth Day, that reminds us to recognize and respect the natural environment in which we live. The April 22 day aims to promote habits that reduce human impact on the globe, like a commitment to recycle, limiting energy usage and reducing the amount of trash generated. Collective action can have a tremendous impact.

Darts — To a rash of deadly motorcycle accidents that claimed three lives in Pitt County over a four-day span. An accident one week ago killed two men and injured several others, and a collision claimed the life of another rider on Tuesday. The two men who died in the April 18 crash will be honored with a memorial ride today.

Darts — To the closing of North Carolina Asahi, a decision that will put about 100 people out of work. Located inside the ASMO Greenville of North Carolina facility, the company will be integrated into ASMO, with the hope of preserving some positions. Manufacturing jobs are at a premium in this community, with Greenville losing nearly 1,000 in the past year.

Laurels — To an event at Martin Community College in Williamston next week that will provide a video link for citizens to express their view on the state budget directly to lawmakers in Raleigh. The Tuesday public hearing begins at 6 p.m., and lawmakers in Raleigh will be listening to comments through video hookups located in 10 community colleges across the state.

Darts — To the cases of canine parvovirus that forced the Pitt County Animal Shelter to halt dog adoptions for the next week or more. The disease infects a dog's intestinal tract and can be deadly, forcing the shelter to either euthanize every canine or halt adoptions for 7-10 days. Vaccinating dogs can prevent the disease, but the shelter was forced to put several dogs down as a result of the virus.

Laurels — To the 22nd annual Dogwood Festival in Farmville, which is always one of the highlights of the county's "festival season." The festival is always well attended because of the musical acts, particularly the Saturday night show, as well as the food, games and other events. The weather looks to be beautiful so why not spend a few hours outside enjoying the festivities?
RBC funds help ECU College of Business create endowment

By Tom Marine
The Daily Reflector

Friday, April 24, 2009

East Carolina University students enrolled in a new business course will pay nothing for textbooks or course materials.

With the help of RBC Bank, the ECU College of Business announced the creation of a $500,000 endowment to support students enrolled in Strategy First, a freshman-level class designed to introduce business strategies.

The class, a key component of the college's revamped curriculum, focuses on current events and uses the Business Week magazine as its textbook.

Rick Niswander, dean of ECU's College of Business, said the endowment will help nearly 800 students each year by purchasing their subscriptions to the magazine, which costs about $40 each.

"It will make a difference to hundreds of students each year," he said. "It shows (RBC Bank's) long-term commitment to education. The important thing to know is they have taken a longer view and realized supporting higher education benefits them, the state, and is the right thing to do at this time."

As economic conditions improve, Niswander said the intent is for the endowment to continue forever with the help of an interest rate that covers the subscription costs and inflation. He said RBC Bank's gift will expose business students to timely and relevant issues while also eliminating the cost of textbooks.

"(The endowment) allows us the opportunity, in a turbulent market, to give back to the community," Steven Jones, RBC Bank market president for the Carolinas and Virginia, said. "Education is the foundation of our economy, so our support for ECU is important to us."

Jones said the mission of the Strategy First program aligns with the bank's commitment to higher education.

The endowment is the next step of an effort by ECU officials to reduce textbook costs for students, Niswander said. To his knowledge, he said there was not another endowment like this in the country.

"The first thing we did was reduce textbook costs using Business Week," Niswander said. "We asked, can we take that even further? How do we make that lower?"

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Fraternity working to replace annex by August

By Michael Abramowitz
The Daily Reflector

Friday, April 24, 2009

A fraternity that lost its Summit Street annex building to a fire in January is working with the city to build a replacement in time for classes in August, a city planner said.

The Sigma Phi Epsilon “back house” at 406 Summit St. burned about 6 a.m. on Jan. 30, forcing a quick exit for more than a dozen students sleeping inside. The burned structure was later razed.

The fraternity would like to have a new residence ready for student members in time for fall semester classes, said planner Seth Laughlin, who has attended meetings with the fraternity’s alumni sponsors and their architects and members of the Greenville Historic Preservation Commission.

The first step toward the goal was to acquire commission approval on March 24 to demolish a small garage building that stood between the main fraternity house on Fifth Street and the former annex, Laughlin said.

The fraternity’s application for a reconstruction permit will be reviewed by the commission on Tuesday. The fraternity must proceed through both the commissions and Greenville’s site plan approval process, but both are being conducted simultaneously to expedite the rebuilding, Laughlin said.

“They are certainly on an aggressive timeline to have a place for students to live by the beginning of August, and they’ve been model applicants,” he said.

Because the fraternity sits in a historic district, it must build the new structure as an addition to the main building at 505 E. Fifth St. to meet the stringent guidelines of the city’s existing non-conforming structures ordinance, Laughlin said.

Representatives of the fraternity’s alumni association and their architectural consultant, Richard King of Dunn and Dalton of Kinston, have met with the historic preservation and design review committee at least twice, and with the State Historic Preservation Office at least once in an effort to develop a plan that is compliant with both state and local historic preservation guidelines, Laughlin said.

They amended drawings several times following the meetings to retain the flavor of the original annex and match the historical look of neighboring houses, Laughlin said.

The fraternity originally proposed a new wing to come directly off the main house. Plans now call for a free-standing structure tied to the main house with a connector.

The connector will be set back from the street and built with materials different in appearance from the main house, Laughlin said. That will maintain the look of two individual houses with a cleaner, more finished look, while affording the students more privacy for their social events and activities, Laughlin said.

“This will be the first in-fill project with totally new construction since the HPC came into being a decade ago,” Laughlin said. “Ensuring that they satisfy the regulatory agencies’ requirements before putting too much money into designs that might require changes is the best way to save time and the expense of costly alterations at the last minute,” Laughlin said.

“The fraternity’s forward thinking in the construction process is not common in most developments. Often, people try to push what they want, but this organization has stressed its desire to be sure it is in continuous communication about compliance before they get to the building part of the process,” he said. “All they’ve said thus far is ‘yes’ and ‘thank you.’”

The fraternity’s alumni also will make sure it is in compliance with building and fire safety codes during the
construction process, including a sprinkler system, Laughlin said.

The original structure burned to the ground on the morning of Jan. 30. A smoke alarm woke the nine students and their four guests, who crawled out of windows and jumped off porch roofs through billowing smoke to safety.

Fire marshals determined the fire was caused by misuse of electrical equipment at the front corner of the first floor, where tangled electrical cords were connected to lights and appliances, including a space heater.

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Obama touts plan to change college loan system

The Associated Press

Friday, April 24, 2009

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama on Friday renewed his call for the government to stop backing private loans to college students and replace them with direct government loans to young people, a challenge to a decades-old program with strong congressional support.

Obama's plan to eliminate the Federal Family Education Loan program could save $48 billion for taxpayers over the next decade, but critics warn it could turn the Education Department into a national bank. Lenders and some college officials oppose the proposal, which Obama backed as a U.S. senator and pushed during the presidential campaign.

"In a paradox of American life, at the very moment it's never been more important to have a quality higher education, the cost of that kind of education has never been higher. ... Yet, we have a student loan system where we're giving lenders billions of dollars in wasteful subsidies that could be used to make college more affordable for all Americans," Obama said at the White House.

He was joined by Stephanie Stevenson of Baltimore, Md., a University of Maryland student, and her mother, Yvonne Thomas.

Under that system, students at some colleges borrow directly from the government, while others get loans from banks, non-profits or state agencies who in turn receive subsidies from Washington.

The president's proposal would switch the federal student loan system entirely to direct lending from the government.

Obama acknowledged that the proposal was sure to find critics, given the financial stakes. He warned banks and lenders were "gearing up for battle. So am I."

Republicans are concerned about the costs and even some Democratic lawmakers oppose the switch.

Sen. Lamar Alexander, chairman of the Senate Republican Conference, said ending a successful lending program and giving more power to Washington and Education Secretary Arne Duncan would not help students.

"Arne Duncan, I think, is the president's best appointee. But as secretary of education, he should focus on paying teachers more for teaching well and creating more charter schools — that's his agenda," said Alexander, a former education secretary. "I don't think Secretary Duncan came to Washington to be named Banker of the Year. The Department of Education should not be a $500 billion national bank."

Higher education groups are divided, although a petition against the plan drew signatures from college loan officers around the country. Universities welcome more money for student aid, but about two-thirds of colleges use the subsidized lending program and some want to keep the program.

Lenders are also fiercely lobbying against the proposal, which would end a historically lucrative business.

"The president's proposal to eliminate the Federal Family Education Loan Program will do more harm than good," said Kevin Bruns, executive director of America's Student Loan Providers. "The proposal does nothing to make college more affordable for the vast majority of students who require loans to pay for college."

AP Education Writer Justin Pope contributed to this report from Raleigh, N.C.
Bowles: I'm not spread too thin

UNC chief says corporate board work affords helpful ties

BY JONATHAN B. COX AND ERIC FERRERI, Staff Writers

Comment on this story

Erskine Bowles, president of the University of North Carolina, met with chancellors of the 16-campus system Monday morning.

By the afternoon, he was on a plane to New York, where he sat in a corporate board meeting until 9 p.m. and all day Tuesday.

Midday Wednesday, he was back in North Carolina, in Pinehurst, for a speech to entrepreneurs and investors.

That's the whirlwind world of Bowles, the man tapped to steer UNC -- the crown jewel of North Carolina's public education system -- through one of the most challenging periods in its history. Amid the deepest recession since World War II, he must overcome a wide budget gap by cutting staff and courses while increasing innovation and getting students better prepared to compete globally.

It's a consuming job. But it's not Bowles' only one.

He also serves on the boards of three publicly traded companies -- General Motors, Morgan Stanley and Cousins Properties -- contending with their own tumults in these times: broad restructuring, a recalibration of risk and weakening product demand.

"It energizes me," Bowles, 63, said of his professional commitments. "I have a significant
capacity to work. ... That's what I like to do."

His obligations put him at the epicenter of much that is ailing in this economy -- the auto industry, the banking industry, real estate and government. Amid the maelstrom, North Carolina taxpayers demand a laser focus on the college system that will shape the future of this state. Millions of investors expect the same level of attention to their interests. And for all of them, whether Bowles enjoys the work is secondary.

"The question is how, can you do all of those things effectively?" said Charles Elson, director for the Weinberg Center for Corporate Governance at the University of Delaware. "You've got to wonder if someone is getting the short shrift there."

Too much board work?

UNC alone is a complex organization with a $2.8 billion budget, 42,000 employees and more than 215,000 students. Morgan Stanley, one of the world's largest investment banks, is trying to find its way through upheaval in the credit markets that has killed rivals and forced it to restructure. Cousins Properties, an Atlanta company with investments in commercial and residential buildings, is trying to keep occupancy high as demand for real estate slumps.

Then there's General Motors, which, in Bowles' own words, "faces every problem in spades that an American company can face today."

The board duties put Bowles -- who received $669,263 in compensation last year, mostly in stock, from the corporate work -- at odds with some good-governance guidance. The Council of Institutional Investors, which represents pension funds with more than $3 trillion in assets, advises that a CEO -- and serving as head of the UNC system is equivalent -- shouldn't serve on more than one corporate board.

"I don't fault them for that opinion, I really don't," Bowles said. "I feel like if you ask our directors, who is our Board of Governors, if I'm productive, if I work hard enough, if I'm effective, if you ask the chancellors if I'm accessible every minute as soon as they call ... if you ask the legislators, people of any political persuasion, I think they'd say we're doing a good job.

"I think I can balance these balls," he said. "And if I didn't, I'd be the first to say 'Uncle.'"

Bowles, whose UNC salary is $477,148 a year, took the reigns of the system in January 2006, an outsider to higher education but no stranger to this state.

His father's son

He's a multimillionaire from a storied North Carolina family, the son of Hargrove "Skipper" Bowles, a Greensboro businessman who served in the legislature and Cabinet of Gov. Terry Sanford before running unsuccessfully as the Democratic nominee for governor in 1972. The elder Bowles, who died in 1986, led the fundraising effort to build the Dean E. Smith Center at UNC-Chapel Hill and has a road named for him on campus.

The younger Bowles counts his father as a key influence but never appeared destined for public service. A graduate of UNC- Chapel Hill and Columbia University, he began his career at Morgan Stanley in New York before co-founding several financial firms in Charlotte.


Board memberships have been a prominent part of his professional life. In addition to GM, Morgan Stanley and Cousins, Bowles has served on the boards of N.C. Mutual Life Insurance,
which he left last year, Wachovia, Merck and VF Corp., a Greensboro apparel company that owns brands including Nautica, North Face and Wrangler.

Other leaders do the same

Members of UNC system's Board of Governors asked Bowles specifically about his many involvements with corporate boards during interviews in 2005. For the most part, they thought Bowles' corporate ties would serve the university well, providing connections through which he could tell the UNC story and, perhaps, aid in fundraising or program development.

They took comfort in Bowles' pledge that he would attend to responsibilities on his own time. The board did not place any limitations on those commitments, and the UNC system has no policy on the number of boards to which its president or chancellors can belong. The system does require employees who receive pay from other sources to disclose the work and specify that no conflicts of interest exist.

There's a history of North Carolina's university leaders doing corporate work. C.D. Spangler, one of Bowles' predecessors, served on the boards of phone company BellSouth and National Gypsum, a manufacturer of building materials that the Spangler family owns, while heading the UNC system. Marye Anne Fox, the former chancellor of N.C. State University, served on several corporate boards, including the Raleigh software developer Red Hat, while leading the school.

Across U.S. higher education, there is no consensus on whether the heads of public universities should serve as corporate directors. While some states have no limits, others have strict guidelines. In New Hampshire, university leaders may belong to only one board. Leaders within the California State University system may hold two memberships.

An analysis by the Chronicle of Higher Education last year determined that the heads of 19 of the nation's largest research universities belonged to at least one corporate board. Patrick Callan, president of the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, said the key is that terms of corporate service be public and each university's governing board be clear about its expectations.

"It's really a matter of how much and how many, rather than whether it's a good thing," he said.

In 2008, Bowles spent 68.5 hours attending 12 GM board meetings in Michigan, Delaware and New York, according to information provided to The News & Observer by his office through a public records request. He spent 65.5 hours at 13 Morgan Stanley meetings in New York and 34.5 hours at nine meetings for Cousins Properties in Georgia.

Those numbers don't include a smattering of meetings he attended by telephone, the travel time necessary to reach board destinations or the time Bowles spent preparing for the corporate meetings.

The time commitment doesn't worry Brad Wilson, a member of the UNC system's governing board who headed the search committee that recommended Bowles.

"He's one of the hardest-working people I know," Wilson said. "He doesn't work an eight-hour day, and he doesn't work a five-day week."

A demanding routine

Bowles usually starts work early in the morning but, to avoid distractions, doesn't get to his Chapel Hill office until about 8 a.m. It's a short drive from the state-owned house where he lives on Franklin Street. He declines to have a state car, but has a Buick Lucerne provided by General Motors.
Because his family doesn’t live in Chapel Hill -- his wife, Crandall, stays at their home in Charlotte -- Bowles said he has little else to do but work during the week. He’s regularly in the office until 9:30 p.m. or later, often dining on a Chick-fil-A salad for dinner.

Bowles said he makes a point to return phone calls and e-mail messages every day.

"This guy is more available than CNN," said East Carolina Chancellor Steve Ballard. "I don’t know how he does it. I’ve never worked for or with anybody who is more accessible than Erskine Bowles."

People who know Bowles say he has always been able to quickly process voluminous information. And the demands on his time now pale in comparison to his work as chief of staff in the White House.

"You’d have the foreign policy team come in, you’d have the economic policy team come in, you’d have the domestic policy team come in, you’d have the White House staff come in. Then you’d meet with the president and update him on what’s going on," he said. "By then, it’s about 8:30 [a.m.]. And then you’d deal with things like Bosnia and Northern Ireland and the Middle East and the budget and health care and taxation.

"And then you’d have lunch."

Bowles, who said he’s likely to step down from the UNC post by age 65, said he works board obligations around his university schedule and five grandkids and makes a point to squeeze more university work in when he’s at board meetings. He takes leave without pay sufficient to offset his time away for board service.

Bowles was up at 5:30 a.m. April 18 to spend about four hours poring through Morgan Stanley materials in advance of the board meeting last week. He finished his prep work in another two hours early Sunday morning.

On the plane to New York, he plowed through a folder of university work. And he responded to e-mail and phone calls after getting to his hotel room Monday night. Bowles said the corporate work gives him a window into the world that makes him a better leader for UNC.

But make no mistake, he said, the UNC job is "not only my priority, it’s my love."

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Board duties

Board duties

Corporate board service has been a prominent part of Erskine Bowles’ professional life. The chart below details his service on three that he currently serves.

Bowles serves on the boards of three publicly traded companies, detailed below. The compensation figures primarily reflect stock that Bowles received for his work. The time commitment calculations are taken from his daily calendar and exclude meetings held by phone, travel to board destinations or preparatory work for meetings.

For the sake of comparison, his annual salary as president of the University of North Carolina is $477,148.

General Motors
Joined: 2005

2008 compensation: $231,790

2008 time commitment: Bowles spent 68.5 hours attending 12 board meetings in Michigan, Delaware and New York.

What Bowles said: "I went on General Motors' board because it faces every problem in spades that an American company can face today."

He planned to step down from the board, but Kent Kresa, who took over as interim chairman last month, has asked him to stay. That's significant because the automaker plans a slate of board nominees predominantly made up of new faces.

"I've got to kind of think about it," Bowles said. "I don't like leaving a sinking ship, you know. I really don't. I think if General Motors goes through a reorganization either in or out of bankruptcy that drastically reduces the number of brands, reduces the number of dealers, turns the balance sheet right side up from upside down and gets the wage rates competitive ... it can be a very viable company and good for America."

Morgan Stanley

Joined: 2005

2008 compensation: $335,000

2008 time commitment: Bowles spent 65.5 hours at 13 meetings in New York.

What Bowles said: "Morgan Stanley is where I started my career, and I'm interested in finance," he said. "To me, what goes on in the financial world has a direct bearing on the university, especially a North Carolina university because we have such a financial center here."

Cousins Properties

Joined: 2003

2008 compensation: $102,473

2008 time commitment: Bowles spent 34.5 hours at nine meetings in Georgia.

What Bowles said: "I went on because Tom Bell, who was a partner of mine at Forstmann Little [a New York private equity firm] became the CEO, and I was interested in real estate," Bowles said. "He asked me if I would serve on the board."

**Carolina royalty**

Erskine Bowles is one-half of a North Carolina power couple.

His wife, Crandall Bowles, is the heiress to a textiles fortune and is still chairman of the company, Springs Industries, that her great-great-grandfather founded. She also serves on the boards of John Deere, JP Morgan and Sara Lee.

The couple, who have three children and five grandchildren, have an estate in Charlotte with a tax value of almost $1.5 million, plus partial ownership of beach homes in North Carolina and South Carolina.

**Related Content**

- Read transcript of Erskine Bowles' remarks
UNC center leads fight against genetic disease

BY SABINE VOLLMER, Staff writer
Comment on this story

RALEIGH - Cameron Williams was 15 months old when his pediatrician, worried that the toddler wasn’t gaining weight, ordered blood tests.

The diagnosis that came back was heartbreaking: Duchenne muscular dystrophy, a genetic disease that affects mostly boys and slowly wastes their muscles. It is the most common type of muscular dystrophy and one of the world’s leading genetic killers -- with most boys dying in their 20s.

Now 12, Cameron struggles to walk with leg braces. But as a player for the Carolina Fury, a
power chair hockey team, he dreams of playing ice hockey like Eric Staal, his favorite Hurricanes player.

His parents pray for a treatment, or even better, a cure.

At every six-month checkup, his mother, Christy Williams, has this question: how long before research leads to a treatment that can be tested in patients?

Right now, her hopes are focused on the UNC Wellstone Center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The center, named for the late Sen. Paul D. Wellstone of Minnesota, who championed muscular dystrophy research in Congress, was established in March with a $7 million grant from the National Institutes of Health.

It is one of six such centers around the country, but patient advocates consider UNC-CH's the star. The center is building on research that has been done at UNC-CH for more than 10 years. Unlike the scientists and doctors at other Wellstone Centers who are simply trying to prolong the life expectancy and improve the quality of life of boys with Duchenne, The team at UNC-CH is aiming to cure Duchenne and other types of muscular dystrophy. UNC-CH also is the only center pursuing gene therapy, an experimental technique that treats disease by inserting genes into a patient's cells instead of using drugs or surgery.

"UNC is the ultimate," said Pat Furlong, president of Parent Project Muscular Dystrophy, the largest advocacy group funding Duchenne research.

Furlong said that the UNC center combines everything known about muscular dystrophy and Duchenne, and it has the expertise and the technology to put that knowledge into practice.

Duchenne's genetic roots

Every year, 400 to 600 boys in the United States are born with Duchenne or a milder version known as Becker muscular dystrophy.

Both versions are caused by genetic mutations that either happen spontaneously or are inherited from the mother. In either case, the result is the same: Muscle cells can't make normal amounts of dystrophin, a protein that acts like a shock absorber and prevents the cell membranes from rupturing. Chemicals released when a muscle cell breaks up initiate a chain reaction that causes more cells to die and eventually causes muscle to be replaced by fat and scar tissue.

Researchers identified the gene responsible for making dystrophin in 1986, and since then they have a far greater understanding of the damage the genetic mutations can cause.

But that understanding has not translated into better medicine. Doctors still rely mostly on Prednisone, a drug they have used for more than 30 years to treat symptoms of Duchenne. But it has drawbacks. Prednisone is a member of the steroid family -- anti-inflammatories that are prescribed for many different conditions, from arthritis to asthma. When taken regularly over a long time, steroids can weaken the immune system and cause weight gain and mood changes.

It's not fully understood how steroids work in Duchenne patients, said Dr. Robert T. Leshner, a neurologist at the Children's National Medical Center in Washington who has treated boys with Duchenne since the 1970s.

"We keep on looking for other things," Leshner said. "Every day that passes is a day we wish we could be far more aggressive than what we have to offer."

Painful childhood moments

For boys like Cameron, the search for a treatment or cure is a race for time.
Cameron was 16 months old when the blood tests his pediatrician ordered led to the Duchenne diagnosis. Additional blood tests determined he inherited the gene mutation from his mother, who had received it from her mother.

When Cameron was 2, Christy Williams, who takes care of the personnel records and benefits at a Raleigh engineering firm, tried to get her son into a gene therapy trial. But federal regulators overseeing the trial rejected the toddler because of his age and the risks involved. Gene therapy was a fairly unexplored new field of medicine in 1998. The following year, research efforts suffered a serious setback when a patient involved in another experimental gene therapy died.

By the time Cameron's sister, Callie, was born -- she was conceived in a special procedure that made sure Christy and Jay Williams wouldn't have another boy -- he was 6 and walking on tip-toes, a sign that Duchenne was taking its toll.

Cameron said he remembers those days. He fell a lot and had trouble climbing stairs, his mother said. Cameron, standing nearby, agreed.

But he didn't look sick or even feel all that different from his friends. Pictures of that time show a slender, fair child with blue eyes and blond hair.

It wasn't until an incident in first grade -- one that Cameron says still sticks in his mind -- that he realized how Duchenne was affecting his life.

He was on his way to the lunchroom, using the handicap ramp, he said. The school secretary asked him to get off and use the stairs like the other kids. As he struggled up the stairs on all fours, he remembers her telling him to "stop playing around."

Cameron was 9 when he had surgery to retain his ability to walk with leg braces. He graduated from a manual to a motorized wheelchair and Star, a trained black lab, joined him to pick up anything he would drop. At the time, his face and body had filled out from the steroids and he had begun attending a special summer camp for boys with Duchenne north of Greensboro.

An A student in most subjects, Cameron is now a sixth-grader at Leesville Road Middle School with a penchant for fiction that involves magic. He goes to physical therapy once a week and keeps up his strength by walking and shooting a hockey puck into a goal.

Cameron has known for a few years that he might not live beyond his 20s. He sometimes gets upset and cries.

A few weeks ago, he asked his father, "If you had married somebody else, would I not have the disease?"

"You wouldn't be you," Jay Williams answered.

Prospect for human trials

While boys such as Cameron and their families are waiting, researchers have been advancing in their battle against Duchenne. Several experimental treatments are being tested on a few Duchenne boys here and there in this country and in Europe.

The gene responsible for dystrophin production is gigantic, leaving room for an endless variation of mutations that cause Duchenne. Treatment approaches target different aspects of Duchenne. Some use a variety of stem cells to replace broken muscle cells or chemicals to disrupt the chain reaction that follows when muscle cells break apart.

UNC-CH's gene therapy focuses on a virus that is attracted to muscle cells. The virus is loaded with snippets of the dystrophin gene. Once injected, the loaded virus would become what R. Jude Samulski, the director of the UNC Wellstone Center, calls "a molecular FedEx
truck." If everything works perfectly, the virus should deliver its cargo to the muscle cell and repair mutations in a targeted manner.

The UNC-CH researchers still have to figure out how to best load the virus, how much virus to inject and how to avoid unwanted immune reactions.

But there is reason to believe that the therapy will be ready to be tested on Duchenne boys in about two years.

Christy Williams is determined to get her son enrolled this time.

"If I could just stop it and he would be like [he is] for the rest of his life," she said, "I would be happy."

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**The basic facts**

What is muscular dystrophy?: A group of more than 30 genetic diseases characterized by progressive weakness and degeneration of the skeletal muscles that control movement.

Who gets it? Every year, 400 to 600 boys in the United States are born with Duchenne or a milder version known as Becker muscular dystrophy.

Both versions are caused by genetic mutations.

What is gene therapy?: An experimental technique that uses genes to treat or prevent disease by inserting a gene into a patient's cells instead of using drugs or surgery. It is only being tested for the treatment of diseases that have no other cures.
His healing ways and voice calm young patients

Physician and lobbyist has studied and fought to end child abuse

BY MANDY LOCKE, Staff writer

CHAPEL HILL - Desmond Runyan has always liked children, their constant comedy and buoyancy.

But as a young man launching a medical career 30 years ago, it never occurred to him to study children. Particularly, the most fragile of them.

Tropical diseases and the tumult of health care in developing nations had drawn him to medical school after an internship working for the health department in Nigeria. Runyan decided to tackle a master's in public health, too.

As he was poised to write a thesis, his adviser dictated the topic: child abuse.

"I'll never know what he saw that I didn't," Runyan says.

Three decades later, Runyan is considered one of the nation's most renowned child-abuse experts, having published hundreds of papers on unspeakable topics. He has urged Congress and federal agencies to devote more resources to studying child abuse.

At his home base, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, he has tended to hundreds of battered babies kept alive by machines and medicine in the neonatal intensive-care unit at UNC Hospitals.
Runyan, 58, came to Chapel Hill in 1979 for what he thought would be a brief detour. He and wife Carol both had jobs awaiting them at the University of Minnesota. The hospital in St. Paul agreed to wait while he completed a Robert Wood Johnson clinical scholars program at UNC Medical School, an endeavor so frenetic Runyan describes it as a "two-year scholarship for crazy people."

Two years became three. Chapel Hill became his home, where he and his wife, a professor in the public health school, would raise a son of their own. Alex is now grown, and Runyan says his son jokes that he was fortunate that at least his childhood abuse came at the hands of experts.

Runyan completed a doctorate in public health at UNC-CH and was tapped to teach students about epidemiological studies. He has headed the medical school's Department of Social Medicine and headed the state's system to evaluate abused and battered children. All the while, he treated the youngest patients shuttled into UNC-CH.

"It's such a privilege to be able to care for patients and their families," Runyan says. "Plus, I get to have stand-up comedians walk into my office. Kids have such charm and humor and spirit."

Runyan tries to match their humor, even in the most difficult circumstances.

"He approaches kids the way a good old-fashioned pediatrician does," says Adam Zolotor, a family physician at UNC-Ch's Department of Family Medicine who has worked with Runyan on several research projects. "He gets on their level. Somehow he's able to make abused kids feel comfortable with a really uncomfortable exam."

Runyan is a slight man, with a soft voice. He speaks quickly and frankly, a combination that captivates students and bemuses some in the halls of the state legislature, where he sometimes testifies about or lobbies for abused children.

"There's a melody to his voice. It kind of lures you in," says Tom Vitaglione, chairman of the N.C. Child Fatality Task Force, a legislative study commission on which Runyan served years ago. "He has this real talent for taking complex medical research and making it completely understandable to those of us on the outside of that."

Runyan also has a knack for calming parents facing their worst moment: the death of a child. He lets them digest the news, keeping quiet and giving them time. He also teaches young doctors how best to guide families down that dark path. As a young resident decades ago, Runyan found himself braving these conversations with families, his attending physician conspicuously absent.

"You cannot do anything worse to an adult than let their kid die," Runyan says. "It rips their heart out. As a doctor, you need to give them time, keep your mouth shut."

A decade ago, Runyan and some fellow pediatricians noticed an alarming number of babies devastated by violent shaking. Runyan launched a study and determined there was a startling prevalence of babies shaken in North Carolina each year: about 2,000 children under the age of 2.

'30 seconds of stupidity'

The problem weighed on Runyan, who thought most of the incidents arose from frustrated parents or caretakers who snapped while dealing with a fussy baby.

"There are clearly people who are just violent," Runyan says, "but there are a lot of 19-year-olds who don't know how to make a kid stop crying and they've run out of gas. It's 30 seconds of stupidity."
Early last year, Runyan helped spearhead a five-year campaign to address the tragedy of babies who are violently shaken. The prevention program teaches parents of every newborn in North Carolina maternity wards about a baby's crying patterns and how best to respond when nothing seems to pacify. Runyan and other researchers at UNC-CH and Duke will monitor the program to see whether there are fewer shaken-baby incidents in coming years.

Though Runyan has had a front-row seat for some heartbreaking dramas, Runyan has somehow maintained the faith that most people mean to do well by their children. He also thinks that things not only can but will get better.

"He has this enduring vision that there will be a time when children will be nurtured and cared for," Vitaglione says. "He's able to keep that vision when the rest of us are worn-out."

Runyan is casual about his optimism. He credits an appreciation for time and history. In antiquity, children were put to death for indiscretions such as talking back to a parent. During the industrial resolution, children worked in textile mills. That perspective keeps him from getting angry or frustrated every time he meets a child broken by senseless violence.

"You have to have a thousand-year perspective in this work," Runyan says. "Kids have it better than they ever have. It's not good yet, and we certainly can do better. We'll keep working."

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Today's MBA grads create their own jobs by launching firms
By Kim Thai and Laura Petrecca, USA TODAY

Faced with a bearish job market, many soon-to-graduate MBAs have dismissed the idea of making their marks — and big bucks — at Wall Street investment banks. Instead, a bevy of B-schoolers are launching fledgling firms.

Among the planned ventures: food companies, technology firms and real estate development.

"We have seen an increase in students wanting to take the entrepreneurial route," says Roxanne Hori, director of career management at Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University. "More students have come forward and said, 'I think I'm going to start my own thing.'"

Kellogg MBA student Tiffany Urrechaga, 36, had hoped to break into education management after graduation. She previously had worked as a preschool teacher and a consultant. Yet when her job search yielded no offers, she took some advice from her mom: "In times of dark despair, look within yourself to come up with creative ideas."

'Part of the journey'

Urrechaga, who graduates in spring, teamed with classmate Pavan Singh, 32, to start an English-teaching company named Gyan, specifically servicing rural India. The two are looking for funding and are trying to iron out other details.

"I was not envisioning myself as an entrepreneur when I started school, but this is part of the journey," Urrechaga says. "It's kind of a blessing that I didn't get a job because I was able to reshift my thinking."

Other students are embracing the entrepreneurial spirit.

Applications to Rice University's yearly business plan competition shot up to 344 this year, a 45% increase over 2008. This month, 42 finalists pitched ideas to win prizes such as venture capital. Contenders included MBAs as well as students from other graduate-level educational programs.

The event, by the Rice Alliance for Technology and Entrepreneurship and Rice's Jesse H. Jones Graduate School of Management, doled out more than $800,000 in prizes.

Despite the sour economy, Columbia University MBA student Thomas Campbell, 30, says it's a perfect time to pursue budding business ideas. "You want to ride the market back up to the top," he says. "We're just going to go up from here. The worst thing you can do is start a business when (the market) is at its peak. You're sure to fail."

Campbell, who graduates in May, has launched Diversities, a company that focuses on real estate development.

In past years, MBAs often had longer-term entrepreneurial plans — such as starting a company five to 10 years after graduating, says Michelle Antonio, director of Wharton MBA Career Management. But because of factors such as fewer job offers in the financial sector, many are acting now.

Yet the decision for a student to be his or her own boss comes with major financial risks, especially because those graduating with MBA degrees can have $100,000 in student loan debt.

Columbia MBA student Mark Trayling, 27, says the financial stress of starting a business weighs on his mind.
He wants to launch his business, which would improve medical tourism, six months from now. But he feels pressured to succeed because there is no backup source of income, such as a paycheck from a full-time job.

Campbell also is worried about making money after he graduates, but he's trying to remain optimistic.

"It's crazy," he says, but "we've just got to have faith."

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OP-CONTRIBUTOR

End the University as We Know It

By MARK C. TAYLOR

GRADUATE education is the Detroit of higher learning. Most graduate programs in American universities produce a product for which there is no market (candidates for teaching positions that do not exist) and develop skills for which there is diminishing demand (research in subfields within subfields and publication in journals read by no one other than a few like-minded colleagues), all at a rapidly rising cost (sometimes well over $100,000 in student loans).

Widespread hiring freezes and layoffs have brought these problems into sharp relief now. But our graduate system has been in crisis for decades, and the seeds of this crisis go as far back as the formation of modern universities. Kant, in his 1798 work “The Conflict of the Faculties,” wrote that universities should “handle the entire content of learning by mass production, so to speak, by a division of labor, so that for every branch of the sciences there would be a public teacher or professor appointed as its trustee.”

Unfortunately this mass-production university model has led to separation where there ought to be collaboration and to ever-increasing specialization. In my own religion department, for example, we have 10 faculty members, working in eight subfields, with little overlap. And as departments fragment, research and publication become more and more about less and less. Each academic becomes the trustee not of a branch of the sciences, but of limited knowledge that all too often is irrelevant for genuinely important problems. A colleague recently boasted to me that his best student was doing his dissertation on how the medieval theologian Duns Scotus used citations.

The emphasis on narrow scholarship also encourages an educational system that has become a process of cloning. Faculty members cultivate those students whose futures they envision as identical to their own pasts, even though their tenures will stand in the way of these students having futures as full professors.

The dirty secret of higher education is that without underpaid graduate students to help in laboratories and with teaching, universities couldn’t conduct research or even instruct their growing undergraduate populations. That’s one of the main reasons we still encourage people to enroll in doctoral programs. It is simply cheaper to provide graduate students with modest stipends and adjuncts with as little as $5,000 a course — with no benefits — than it is to hire full-time professors.

In other words, young people enroll in graduate programs, work hard for subsistence pay and assume huge debt burdens, all because of the illusory promise of faculty appointments. But their economical presence, coupled with the intransigence of tenure, ensures that there will always be too many candidates for too few openings.

The other obstacle to change is that colleges and universities are self-regulating or, in academic parlance, governed by peer review. While trustees and administrations theoretically have some oversight responsibility, in
practice, departments operate independently. To complicate matters further, once a faculty member has been granted tenure he is functionally autonomous. Many academics who cry out for the regulation of financial markets vehemently oppose it in their own departments.

If American higher education is to thrive in the 21st century, colleges and universities, like Wall Street and Detroit, must be rigorously regulated and completely restructured. The long process to make higher learning more agile, adaptive and imaginative can begin with six major steps:

1. Restructure the curriculum, beginning with graduate programs and proceeding as quickly as possible to undergraduate programs. The division-of-labor model of separate departments is obsolete and must be replaced with a curriculum structured like a web or complex adaptive network. Responsible teaching and scholarship must become cross-disciplinary and cross-cultural.

Just a few weeks ago, I attended a meeting of political scientists who had gathered to discuss why international relations theory had never considered the role of religion in society. Given the state of the world today, this is a significant oversight. There can be no adequate understanding of the most important issues we face when disciplines are cloistered from one another and operate on their own premises.

It would be far more effective to bring together people working on questions of religion, politics, history, economics, anthropology, sociology, literature, art, religion and philosophy to engage in comparative analysis of common problems. As the curriculum is restructured, fields of inquiry and methods of investigation will be transformed.

2. Abolish permanent departments, even for undergraduate education, and create problem-focused programs. These constantly evolving programs would have sunset clauses, and every seven years each one should be evaluated and either abolished, continued or significantly changed. It is possible to imagine a broad range of topics around which such zones of inquiry could be organized: Mind, Body, Law, Information, Networks, Language, Space, Time, Media, Money, Life and Water.

Consider, for example, a Water program. In the coming decades, water will become a more pressing problem than oil, and the quantity, quality and distribution of water will pose significant scientific, technological and ecological difficulties as well as serious political and economic challenges. These vexing practical problems cannot be adequately addressed without also considering important philosophical, religious and ethical issues. After all, beliefs shape practices as much as practices shape beliefs.

A Water program would bring together people in the humanities, arts, social and natural sciences with representatives from professional schools like medicine, law, business, engineering, social work, theology and architecture. Through the intersection of multiple perspectives and approaches, new theoretical insights will develop and unexpected practical solutions will emerge.

3. Increase collaboration among institutions. All institutions do not need to do all things and technology makes it possible for schools to form partnerships to share students and faculty. Institutions will be able to expand while contracting. Let one college have a strong department in French, for example, and the other a strong department in German; through teleconferencing and the Internet both subjects can be taught at both places with half the staff. With these tools, I have already team-taught semester-long seminars in real time at the Universities of
Helsinki and Melbourne.

4. Transform the traditional dissertation. In the arts and humanities, where looming cutbacks will be most devastating, there is no longer a market for books modeled on the medieval dissertation, with more footnotes than text. As financial pressures on university presses continue to mount, publication of dissertations, and with it scholarly certification, is almost impossible. (The average university press print run of a dissertation that has been converted into a book is less than 500, and sales are usually considerably lower.) For many years, I have taught undergraduate courses in which students do not write traditional papers but develop analytic treatments in formats from hypertext and Web sites to films and video games. Graduate students should likewise be encouraged to produce “theses” in alternative formats.

5. Expand the range of professional options for graduate students. Most graduate students will never hold the kind of job for which they are being trained. It is, therefore, necessary to help them prepare for work in fields other than higher education. The exposure to new approaches and different cultures and the consideration of real-life issues will prepare students for jobs at businesses and nonprofit organizations. Moreover, the knowledge and skills they will cultivate in the new universities will enable them to adapt to a constantly changing world.

6. Impose mandatory retirement and abolish tenure. Initially intended to protect academic freedom, tenure has resulted in institutions with little turnover and professors impervious to change. After all, once tenure has been granted, there is no leverage to encourage a professor to continue to develop professionally or to require him or her to assume responsibilities like administration and student advising. Tenure should be replaced with seven-year contracts, which, like the programs in which faculty teach, can be terminated or renewed. This policy would enable colleges and universities to reward researchers, scholars and teachers who continue to evolve and remain productive while also making room for young people with new ideas and skills.

For many years, I have told students, “Do not do what I do; rather, take whatever I have to offer and do with it what I could never imagine doing and then come back and tell me about it.” My hope is that colleges and universities will be shaken out of their complacency and will open academia to a future we cannot conceive.

Mark C. Taylor, the chairman of the religion department at Columbia, is the author of the forthcoming “Field Notes From Elsewhere: Reflections on Dying and Living.”