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GREENVILLE
Brody grads pick family medicine

The Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University is the top medical school in the country for sending graduates into family medicine, according to the American Academy of Family Physicians.

Based on a three-year average for the period ending last October, 20.9 percent of the school’s graduates have entered an accredited family medicine residency program. That ranked ECU first in the country and marked the sixth consecutive year ECU has been ranked in the top 10.

Representatives of the Brody School of Medicine and the other schools were recognized at the Society of Teachers of Family Medicine meeting this week in Seattle.

On March 16, 22 percent of Brody’s graduating students matched with family medicine residency programs during the school’s annual Match Day.
Edenton

Urology practice joins Vidant

As of May 1, Edenton Urology will be affiliated with Vidant Medical Group operating under the name Vidant Urology — Edenton.

Vidant Medical Group is a multi-specialty physician and provider group that is part of Vidant Health. Vidant Health is a network of interconnected physician practices, more than 11,000 employees, 10 hospitals, home health and hospice programs and wellness facilities.

Dr. Cris Reynolds has been serving the Edenton community since 1999. Reynolds specializes in adult and pediatric urology, urinary stone disease, male and female incontinence, male infertility, vasectomy, vasectomy reversal, urologic oncology, medical and surgical management of erectile dysfunction, and medical and surgical management of prostate disease.
ECU student earns national honor
Credit: East Carolina University News Services

By: Phillip Sayblack | WNCT-On Your Side
Published: May 02, 2012

GREENVILLE, N.C. - East Carolina University junior Sara Graves has been named 2012 Outstanding Undergraduate Student Member of the Year by the Council for Exceptional Children.

Graves, who plans to teach high school after graduating, studies adapted special education. Adapted special education puts emphasis on creating a program of study for students who are profoundly and severely disabled. When asked of her reaction to the honor, Graves said, “I knew I was going to be nominated, but then I got an email with an official letter in it.” She added, “I kind of freaked out. I didn’t realize what a big deal it was.”

Graves' interest in special education started when she became a student assistant in a special education classroom at Independence High School in Charlotte. She said of the experience, “They kind of stuck me into the special ed classrooms…to help out if needed.” She went on to say, “So I went in there and just really loved it, really enjoyed hanging out with (the students).”

Graves' love for exceptional students shows through everything she does. She is president of the ECU Student Council for Exceptional Children, and represents North Carolina on the national council. She is also an Apple Ambassador at ECU, meaning she recruits students for the college of education at ECU. Her work outside of ECU is quite extensive, too. She has previously worked at the YMCA and Metro School for disabled students in Charlotte. She has also worked in Pitt County with the Pitt County Special Olympics and A Small Miracle. She is hoping to find work in Greenville after she graduates next year.
Shoring up research

The future of research in North Carolina and across the country remains uncertain in this tight fiscal climate. Congressional action to reduce the deficit could result in multi-billion dollar cuts in medical research targeting cancer, Alzheimer's, diabetes, heart disease and other major health threats.

Medical research is a powerful economic driver. In North Carolina, the National Institutes of Health provided more than $1 billion for research at colleges, universities, medical centers and small businesses in FY2011. These funds supported more than 20,000 direct and indirect jobs.

Unfortunately, research and the enormous potential it holds have been largely overlooked this election season. Do our elected officials and candidates support boosting investment in medical research as a job creation strategy? Do they think the federal government should place more emphasis on increasing the number of young Americans who pursue careers in science, technology, engineering or mathematics? Will they maintain America's global competitive edge in science, technology and innovation and make it a high priority?

North Carolinians deserve to know where candidates stand on research to improve health and save lives. Please join me in calling on North Carolina congressional candidates to recognize the importance of health research. Our health and our economic prosperity depend on it.

Suzanne W. Wilkison
President, N.C. Association for Biomedical Research
Raleigh
10 Things Your Commencement Speaker Won't Tell You

By CHARLES WHEELAN

Class of 2012,

I became sick of commencement speeches at about your age. My first job out of college was writing speeches for the governor of Maine. Every spring, I would offer extraordinary tidbits of wisdom to 22-year-olds—which was quite a feat given that I was 23 at the time. In the decades since, I've spent most of my career teaching economics and public policy. In particular, I've studied happiness and well-being, about which we now know a great deal. And I've found that the saccharine and over-optimistic words of the typical commencement address hold few of the lessons young people really need to hear about what lies ahead. Here, then, is what I wish someone had told the Class of 1988:

1. Your time in fraternity basements was well spent.

The same goes for the time you spent playing intramural sports, working on the school newspaper or just hanging with friends. Research tells us that one of the most important causal factors associated with happiness and well-being is your meaningful connections with other human beings. Look around today. Certainly one benchmark of your postgraduation success should be how many of these people are still your close friends in 10 or 20 years.

2. Some of your worst days lie ahead. Graduation is a happy day. But my job is to tell you that if you are going to do anything worthwhile, you will face periods of grinding self-doubt and failure. Be prepared to work through them. I'll spare you my personal details, other than to say that one year after college graduation I had no job, less than $500 in assets, and I was living with an elderly retired couple. The only difference between when I graduated and today is that now no one can afford to retire.

3. Don't make the world worse. I know that I'm supposed to tell you to aspire to great things. But I'm going to lower the bar here: Just don't use your prodigious talents to mess things up. Too many smart people are doing that already. And if you really want to cause social mayhem, it helps to have an Ivy League degree. You are smart and motivated and creative. Everyone will tell you that you can change the world. They are right, but remember that "changing the world" also can include things like skirting financial regulations and selling unhealthy foods to increasingly obese children. I am not asking you to cure cancer. I am just asking you not to spread it.
4. Marry someone smarter than you are. When I was getting a Ph.D., my wife Leah had a steady income. When she wanted to start a software company, I had a job with health benefits. (To clarify, having a "spouse with benefits" is different from having a "friend with benefits.") You will do better in life if you have a second economic oar in the water. I also want to alert you to the fact that commencement is like shooting smart fish in a barrel. The Phi Beta Kappa members will have pink-and-blue ribbons on their gowns. The summa cum laude graduates have their names printed in the program. Seize the opportunity!

6. Read obituaries. They are just like biographies, only shorter. They remind us that interesting, successful people rarely lead orderly, linear lives.

7. Your parents don't want what is best for you. They want what is good for you, which isn't always the same thing. There is a natural instinct to protect our children from risk and discomfort, and therefore to urge safe choices. Theodore Roosevelt—soldier, explorer, president—once remarked, "It is hard to fail, but it is worse never to have tried to succeed." Great quote, but I am willing to bet that Teddy's mother wanted him to be a doctor or a lawyer.

8. Don't model your life after a circus animal. Performing animals do tricks because their trainers throw them peanuts or small fish for doing so. You should aspire to do better. You will be a friend, a parent, a coach, an employee—and so on. But only in your job will you be explicitly evaluated and rewarded for your performance. Don't let your life decisions be distorted by the fact that your boss is the only one tossing you peanuts. If you leave a work task undone in order to meet a friend for dinner, then you are "shirking" your work. But it's also true that if you cancel dinner to finish your work, then you are shirking your friendship. That's just not how we usually think of it.

9. It's all borrowed time. You shouldn't take anything for granted, not even tomorrow. I offer you the "hit by a bus" rule. Would I regret spending my life this way if I were to get hit by a bus next week or next year? And the important corollary: Does this path lead to a life I will be happy with and proud of in 10 or 20 years if I don't get hit by a bus.

10. Don't try to be great. Being great involves luck and other circumstances beyond your control. The less you think about being great, the more likely it is to happen. And if it doesn't, there is absolutely nothing wrong with being solid.

Good luck and congratulations.

— Adapted from "10½ Things No Commencement Speaker Has Ever Said," by Charles Wheelan. To be published May 7 by W.W. Norton & Co. A version of this
article appeared April 28, 2012, on page C3 in some U.S. editions of The Wall Street Journal, with the headline: 10 Things Your Commencement Speaker Won't Tell You.
Despite Criticism, State Says Driver Ed Program A Driving Force

7:27 PM, May 2, 2012

Greensboro, NC -- It costs North Carolinians $27 million a year in taxpayer money to put high school students through driver education programs. And AAA Carolinas says the curriculum all that money funds isn't doing a good enough job teaching teenagers how to drive.

Tom Crosby, the president of AAA Carolinas Foundation for Traffic Safety told a state legislative committee last week that more emphasis should be placed on the curriculum.

It's 62 pages long and comprehensively covers topics such as basic car control, controlling your emotions behind the wheel and handling emergencies.

It also includes details about how car colors can influence insurance rates, and how there's more to being a successful driver than just sitting behind a wheel.

But Crosby says it isn't good enough.

"Teaching proper behavior [and] emphasizing what to do on the road is a lot more important than figuring out the first think people pick when they go to buy a car is the color of it," he said.

He believes the curriculum is too broad and that instructors have too much leeway in what they teach.

But Joe Shrader, an East Carolina University professor who helped write the curriculum, says North Carolina is a national leader in driver safety -- and that other states look to the Tar Heel State to craft their driver education programs.

It's worth pointing out that AAA Carolinas offers its own driving school.

The state funds $27 million of taxpayer money each year to fund driver education in North Carolina high schools. Some school systems tack as much as $45 more that comes out of students' pockets to cover the courses, due to a decrease in state funding in recent years.
All together, it costs $289 per student to put them through driver ed. That all raises a question about whether taxpayers should be paying for kids to learn to drive.

The state Department of Public Instruction says the answer is an easy "yes," because we all share the road with those students. Learning to drive is also part of their educational experience.

An overwhelming majority of more than 45 commenters on WFMY News 2's Facebook page said they think funding driver education with taxpayer money is a good idea.

Diane Purcell wrote "[It's a] good use of my money! They definitely need as much instruction as they can get and if student drivers will be on our roads, I want them trained as much as possible."

According to a 2011 study by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 22 states do not require any driver education courses.

WFMY News 2
Explosion In Free Online Classes May Change Course Of Higher Education

05:15 pm
May 2, 2012

It's become much cheaper and easier to offer classes online.

Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology are teaming up in a $60 million venture to provide classes online for free. The move is the latest by top universities to expand their intellectual reach through the Internet — a trend that is changing higher education.

Last month, Stanford, Princeton, Berkeley, the University of Pennsylvania and the University of Michigan announced that they were working with Coursera, a Silicon Valley startup, to put more than a dozen classes online this year in subjects ranging from computer science to public health to poetry.

Earlier this year, Stanford professor Sebastian Thrun, one of the inventors of Google's self-driving car, announced he was leaving the school to start a company called Udacity, which would hire world-class professors from leading universities to create free online classes.

Coursera and Udacity, which are set up as for-profits, said they are committed to keeping their classes free and have each raised millions from venture capitalists.

NPR's Steve Henn tells All Things Considered host Robert Siegel that the companies grew out of an experiment at Stanford last year that allowed anyone to take computer science classes online — and get graded — for free. The classes attracted hundreds of thousands of students from all over the world.

Wednesday's announcement was a bit different. Harvard and MIT are creating a nonprofit called edX; the universities are investing $30 million each — significantly more than what has been raised by their West Coast for-profit competitors.

Henn says Harvard and MIT also pledged to release their software for free when it's fully developed, as an open-source product for anyone to use.
"They're inviting other universities to use the platform and put their own classes online for free," he says.

For now, students can get a grade, but the schools won't count the class toward a degree if a student wants to matriculate.

"None of these universities are offering a degree program unless you pay," Henn says.

He says interest in online courses has exploded because it's become much cheaper and easier to put a class online. "That has combined with using technologies in new ways to make these online classes better."

Interactive quizzes and other tools have made it possible to deliver a class that really has value to hundreds of thousands of students, Henn says.

"In the early days of online education," he says, "basically you had a camera in the back of a lecture hall videotaping a lecture. This is really quite different."

The classes present an opportunity to students who wouldn't otherwise be able to take classes — for health, money or geography reasons.

"Perhaps some day there may be people who never leave their basement," Henn says. "I think at this point, there are many thousands more people around the world [for whom this provides] a window that opens and allows them to see a bigger, broader piece of the world than they could before."
Why the nation needs more female engineers

By Daniel de Vise

Here is a guest post from Stephanie Hill, president of Lockheed Martin’s Information Systems & Global Solutions-Civil division.

“Are you sure you want to be a software engineer? You are such a people person. Won’t you be stuck working alone, staring at a computer for hours on end?”

Those were the questions that my sister asked as I declared my intent to pursue a software engineering degree at the University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC). She was right – I am a people person. In fact, in high school I intended to pursue a career in psychiatry. But a college elective course – in COBOL programming – peaked my interest like nothing before. And with wonderful mentors who provided me a glimpse into various career opportunities, I shifted gears, full speed ahead into the world of engineering. I have not looked back since.

As an African-American, female engineer, I’m certainly in the minority. New statistics released this month by the Congressional Joint Economic Committee note that while women now comprise a growing share of the college-educated workforce, only 14 percent of engineers are women, as are just 27 percent of individuals working in computer science and math positions. There is a similar under-representation of Hispanic and black non-Hispanic workers in the STEM (science, technology, engineering math) workforce. Each of these groups accounts for only 6 percent of STEM workers. Overall, the share of bachelor’s degrees awarded in STEM fields peaked at 24 percent in 1985; by 2009, the share had fallen to 18 percent.

At the same time we are producing fewer engineers, the need for this profession has never been greater. Think of the many challenges facing our nation that engineers – yes, engineers – grapple with every day: from protecting our national security from cybersecurity threats to our energy utilities and financial markets, to finding new energy solutions to decrease our independence on fuel, to supporting the FBI and law enforcement in decreasing terrorist threats with cutting-edge identification tools. With the pending retirement of many of our hardest-working baby boomer engineers,
it’s up to the next generation workforce to step up and take on these exciting careers in engineering, and it’s up to the seasoned generation of engineers to drive excitement in this next generation workforce.

The Role of Industry

A recent Washington Post column by Kristin Tichenor of Worcester Polytechnic Institute discussed the many reasons why young women shy away from engineering as a career, including a lack of female engineering role models, having little knowledge of the solution-oriented work of engineers, and misconceptions about engineering being a “solitary” profession.

Many school systems across the nation are doing incredible work exposing students to engineering. For example, in D.C., Cardozo High School’s TransTech Academy now includes a pre-engineering curriculum.

But schools cannot go it alone. Industry must step up its role in attracting young women to this exciting career where they can truly make a difference in people’s daily lives.

Invest in Partnerships, not Publicity

Lockheed Martin has made a commitment to K-12 schools across our nation to help engineering and math “come alive.” In Baltimore County, we work directly with the superintendent to understand which schools need help in infusing exciting STEM curriculum into the classroom. In some instances, we bring teachers into our facilities for externships, giving them hands-on experiences that they take back to their classrooms. Our employees also partner with teachers, and visit classrooms periodically to discuss their current work and answer questions about career opportunities. This helps “put a face on engineering” and provides career role models that many students are seeking.

We have also partnered with the Alliance to Save Energy on a program that brings energy-efficiency engineers into public schools for hands-on demonstrations and mentoring. In Prince George’s County, volunteers work with two elementary schools and one middle school on projects such as measuring energy usage and creating awareness amongst the students and teachers of energy efficient practices, and students are given the opportunity to use the tools that engineers use every day.

The aforementioned TransTech Academy hosts a unique Industry Day, featuring 50 professionals from the private and public sector as panelists and
guest speakers. Students interact with speakers throughout the day learning about careers that may not be on their radar.

**Don’t Stop at K-12**

Once we’ve attracted more female students into college to pursue engineering, our work is done, right? Unfortunately, new data from the University of California at Los Angeles show that roughly 40 percent of all students planning engineering and science majors end up switching to other subjects or failing to get any degree. Many students are ill-prepared for the academic demands that await them. Others are frustrated by the “theory-based” nature (and lecture-taught method) of technical education.

While all future engineers need a robust understanding of math, science and other core curriculum, more universities must also adopt project-based work, allowing students to collaborate on “real-world” projects that will inspire them. Industry can and must play a role in partnering with universities to create exciting curriculum. We currently partner with the Missouri University of Science & Technology to shape curricula that adhere to the needs of our future workforce in information technology. And who said field trips are just for elementary schools? Industry should welcome university students into labs and work stations. We must also continue to support extracurricular activities such as Capitol College’s Cyber Battle Laboratory (CBL), where students simulate – and ultimately defeat - various hacker attack scenarios.

**This is Our Job as Leaders**

At Lockheed Martin, we recognize that our footprint is large and many of our STEM commitments would not be possible without our dedicated employee base across the country. But as a board member of Governor Martin O’Malley’s Maryland Business Roundtable for Education, I’ve seen firsthand how companies large and small can help excite our next generation workforce. We need more companies across divergent industries to help us promote engineering, create innovative K12 and university partnerships, and open their doors to interested students. Solving our nation’s critical challenges depends on it.

*By Daniel de Vise | 12:14 PM ET, 05/02/2012*
Thirteen people have been charged in the hazing death of a Florida A&M University band drum major last November, a prosecutor said on Wednesday. Eleven of the 13 face a third-degree felony charge of hazing resulting in death.

Robert Champion, 26, was found aboard a charter bus parked in Orlando after he was reportedly beaten so badly that he was left with internal bleeding, which caused him to go into shock and die, the county medical examiner’s office said at the time.

The case made national news, and the famed 375-member band was suspended. Earlier this year, Champion’s parents said he may have been targeted for hazing because he had taken a public stance against the practice, according to the Root.

In Florida, hazing involving bodily injury is a third-degree felony, which carries a maximum sentence of nearly six years in prison, the Associated Press reported. The AP quoted Champion’s mother, Pam, as saying that while she was glad people would be tried for her son’s killing, she wanted the charges to be tougher.

“I thought it should send a harsher message,” she told The Associated Press.

The other two people charged in the case were charged with misdemeanors, according to State Attorney Lawson Lamar.

After Champion’s death, university officials put the band on indefinite suspension and set up a task force to investigate the tradition of hazing in the band and to find ways to stem it. At the time some critics said that the school should have shut down the band.

The AP reported that within the FAMU marching band, students were hazed when they tried to enter social groups of band members to avoid being ostracized. Entry into those groups required agreeing to undergo hazing.
A lawsuit filed by Champion’s family against the company that owns the bus on which he allegedly was hazed contends that a driver hired by the company did not help him and stood outside while he was being attacked.

The AP quoted Ray Land, the owner of Fabulous Coach Lines, as denying that anybody working for the company knew about the hazing, and saying that if someone did know, “we would not have let it happen.”

The lawsuit alleges that two kinds of hazing took place on the bus. The AP said:

“In the first, pledges of a band clique known as "Bus C" ran from the front to the back of the bus while other band members slapped, kicked and hit them. A pledge who fell was stomped and dragged to the front of the bus to run again.

“In a ritual known as ‘the hot seat,’ a pillow case was placed over the pledge's nose and mouth while the pledge was forced to answer questions. If a pledge got a right answer, the pillow case was removed briefly; a pledge with a wrong answer was given another question without a chance to take a breath, the lawsuit said.”

In 1998, Tallahassee police opened a probe into a hazing incident in which a band member was hit with paddles more than 300 times as part of an initiation into the clarinet section, the Associated Press said. The investigation was later closed, with authorities saying that the band member who was assaulted had agreed to the hazing.

In 1989, the school disciplined eight band members who allegedly held a student against his will and beat his head with their elbows. The eight were charged with battery and jailed, but the charges were later dropped.

The Marching 100 has performed at several Super Bowls and represented the United States at the 200th anniversary of the French Revolution in Paris.

The band’s Web site says the Marching 100 has pioneered at least 30 techniques that high school and collegiate marching band programs across the country have adopted.
In Maryland, a rare reversal of suspensions for two lacrosse players

By Donna St. George, Published: May 2

The search was a surprise. The high school lacrosse team in Easton, Md., had boarded its bus when the principal and other administrators arrived, announcing that gear bags would be checked. A tip had come in about athletes carrying alcohol.

Near the front of the bus, Graham Dennis, then a 17-year-old junior, asked whether he should remove the pocketknife he always used to cut and tighten strings on his lacrosse stick. It was tucked inside his oversized duffel bag, along with cleats, pads, socks, duct tape and medical supplies.

That question — to which he says he gave little thought — set off a year-long odyssey in school discipline that ended this month with a rare outcome: The state stepped in and reversed a local school board’s decision on student punishment.

In a unanimous ruling, the Maryland State Board of Education expunged the disciplinary records of two lacrosse players suspended from school after the search in April 2011.

The state board also raised questions about a decision to call the police on Dennis, who was led away in handcuffs for having two small knives. His teammate Casey Edsall, also a 17-year-old junior, was suspended for having a lighter, used to seal the frayed ends of strings. School officials deemed it an explosive device, his family said.

“This case is about context and about the appropriate exercise of discretion,” the state board said in its ruling — stressing that knives and lighters do not belong on campus but that Talbot County school officials went beyond their own rules in punishing the students.

It was a blow to the get-tough culture of zero tolerance that has taken hold in U.S. schools in the past 20 years. And for Maryland, it is another moment in the discipline spotlight. In February, the state board drew wide notice for proposals to reduce suspensions and require districts to remedy racial disparities. A vote is expected within the next few months.
“What we’re seeing is that Maryland is stepping up in a leadership role and putting common sense back into discipline,” said Judith Browne Dianis, co-director of the Advancement Project, a civil rights group.

On Maryland’s Eastern Shore, the decision culminated an often-frustrating quest for the two families involved. Along the way, they received crucial support from the lacrosse team’s assistant coach, who is also commander of the homicide unit of the Maryland State Police.

But the case came as both players were on the brink of college applications, which ask about disciplinary history. One teenager did not apply to certain universities, thinking the offense would take him out of the running. The other wrote detailed explanations and hoped for the best.

“It kind of destroys your reputation,” Dennis said. “People think there is more to the story than what you’re saying.”

Talbot school officials declined to comment last week on the state’s ruling. “We’ll follow the direction of the decision,” said an assistant to Superintendent Karen B. Salmon.

In written arguments, the school officials had agreed that the knives were meant for repairing lacrosse equipment but said their presence posed a danger to students and staff members. They said that no other Maryland school system allowed lacrosse players to possess knives or lighters and that Dennis’s volunteering of the knife suggested an awareness that it was contraband.

“We consider bringing a knife to school one of the most serious offenses that a student can commit,” the officials said.

The case reflects continuing tension about tough rules intended to keep students safe. Critics say they often go too far and don’t make schools safer. Supporters say that strong lines need to be drawn and that too much discretion can lead to preferential treatment.

The school system in Talbot County, with 4,500 students and a long stretch of Maryland shoreline, does not have policies that call for zero tolerance. Its rules give leeway to first offenders, allow for discretion by educators and see suspension as a last resort.

Both teenagers say the principal at first told them not to worry, that the issue would be addressed at school the next day. Bring home a win, Dennis recalled Principal David Stofa saying after the search.

Then, according to the families, a school system administrator intervened.
Dennis and Edsall were asked to step off the bus. Parents were summoned. Dennis was suspended 10 days, with a recommendation for expulsion, and Edsall was suspended one day. A police officer drove Dennis to the station, where he was fingerprinted and booked for possession of a deadly weapon.

A practice, not a policy

Laura Dennis arrived at Easton High on April 13, 2011, confused about why her son was in trouble. He always carried tools to fix his stick. It did not make sense, she thought.

“I’m sorry,” she recalled a school administrator telling her, as the administrator explained that Graham had to be suspended. There was no choice.

“I’m sorry,” she recalled a police officer telling her, as the officer explained that he had been asked by an administrator to make the arrest.

Laura Dennis spent the first of many nights reading everything she could find on the Internet about school discipline and the code of conduct in Talbot County. A few days later, she pressed the issue at her son’s hearing: Where was zero tolerance written into the code of conduct? Why couldn’t she find it?

The administrator left the room, she said, and returned to say that it was not a policy — only a practice — so it did not have to be written down.

Her son missed two weeks of school, three lacrosse games and a tournament. He grappled with uncertainty about whether he would be expelled or sent to an alternative learning center. He faced criminal charges, which his family said took a month, a lawyer and some strategizing to be dismissed.

“It affected his outlook on absolutely everything,” Laura Dennis said. He told his parents that he would drop out if he were moved from Easton High School.

“I questioned who I was,” Graham Dennis recalled. He felt labeled as a criminal, he said — and ripped away from his team and school. “That was my lowest point.”

Joe Gamble, the assistant lacrosse coach, had stepped up quickly to make the players’ case. Gamble, the state police homicide commander, was in the bus the day of the search, and his statement was quoted in the state school board’s 12-page opinion.

“I know the purpose of those items were to fix lacrosse sticks, not to cause harm to anyone,” Gamble wrote. “I know what the policy says, as since this
incident I have read it. Had I had instruction on this previously, I would have made known to the kids and made sure they did not possess these tools. As a coach, the thought never crossed my mind. . . . I’m not making excuses but want you to know that this issue has never been raised in the past nor could anyone argue that it was something that any of us should have foreseen.”

In written arguments, Talbot school officials said the knives and lighter led to “a serious disruption to the educational process for other students,” creating a basis for suspension of the first offenders. They also made a case that the students should have known such items were not permitted on campus.

The students’ families argued that the teens did not know and often used the items to work on their sticks in front of their coaches, so there had been tacit approval. They argued that the search was illegal and that officials had not followed suspension policies.

Salmon, the superintendent, opted not to expel Graham Dennis but denied an appeal of the suspensions by both families.

The Talbot school board upheld her decision on a 5 to 2 vote.

In August, the families took the case to the Maryland State Board of Education with the help of the Rutherford Institute, a civil liberties legal advocacy organization that began representing the families in May.

Rejection of a deal

Around Christmas, the families said, the county offered a settlement: The student records would be expunged if the families signed confidentiality agreements and waived their rights to civil suits.

The idea was too late to help with college applications — already turned in — and it seemed “a no-win for us,” said Doug Edsall, Casey’s father. “We were trying to clear our kids’ names, so why would we agree not to talk about it?”

They held out hope for action by the State Board of Education but were told reversals of this kind were virtually unheard of.

As word spread about the state board’s April 10 decision, teachers called with congratulations. Cards arrived by mail. Suddenly, every trip to the Wal-Mart or the pizza place took longer because people wanted to talk.

“This is very rare,” said lawyer John Whitehead, president of Rutherford, who has long experience with school discipline cases.
In its ruling, the state board said the Talbot school system had not shown the disruption of the educational process it claimed. “Discipline for such offenses is appropriate,” the board wrote, “but the discipline meted out here was not.” It suggested that Talbot get a tool kit for players and make clear that knives or lighters could lead to suspension.

Soon after the decision, Casey Edsall and Graham Dennis took to the lacrosse field with local news cameras filming. Both will move on in the fall to Shenandoah University, where they will play lacrosse. “I’m just glad the truth came out,” Dennis said.

Said Edsall: “We don’t want the next kid to be affected by zero tolerance.”

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A state that just says ‘no’ to charters, other reforms

This was written by Melissa Westbrook, a public education activist and co-writer of the Seattle Schools Community Forum blog, based in Seattle.

By Melissa Westbrook

Quietly marching to its own drummer, Washington State has mostly turned its back on the education reform movement that is sweeping much of the rest of the country.

Washington is one of nine states that does not have a charter school law. Our state has defeated charter laws three times at the ballot box — two were citizen initiatives and one was a referendum to repeal a charter law passed by our legislature. In between those votes, five more bills were introduced and rejected in our Legislature.

In this year’s legislative session, a new charter bill was introduced. This bill included the ability to create charter schools, takeover of failing schools by the state and a parent/teacher trigger. Among those testifying against the bill was the head of the Washington State School Directors’ Association, Mary Fertakis, who said, “Let the people decide if this is the right time and the right tool to best serve our students.”

The bill never made to the floor for a vote and died at the end of the session. When the Legislature had to go into special session to finish the budget and a couple of legislators were pushing the charter bill, Gov. Christine Gregoire, a Democrat, said, “Get over charter schools,” and promised a veto if the bill passed.

Jay Inslee, the Democrat now running to succeed Gregoire as governor, has rejected the idea of charter schools for his education platform.

Another favorite of education reformers, Teach for America, came in just last fall to Seattle’s public schools (as they did to another smaller district, south of Seattle).

Seattle’s school board had negotiated a narrow contract with TFA that does not require Seattle Schools to hire any TFA members — a different arrangement from many other such contracts — and, if the district cannot
find an outside donor for the TFA fee (Seattle's is $4,000 per teacher per year), then Seattle Schools does not have to pay TFA its fee.

Seattle has site-based hiring teams and with a plethora of fully-qualified and unemployed teachers to choose from, Seattle schools only hired six TFA teachers.

The University of Washington's College of Education (whose dean is a former TFA corps member) created an entire alternative certification program only for TFA members but they have just 11 TFA students between the two districts. They needed at least 40 students to justify its costs and so it is running at a loss.

Why no charter schools and almost no Teach for America in Washington State? It seems to be that when Washingtonians are presented with data about outcomes for both charter schools and TFA, they just say ‘no.’

What do we have instead? Our Legislature has passed several bills over the last several years in support of innovation within our existing education structure. There have been 22 such schools recognized for providing programs for students that are “bold, creative, and innovative.”

Another law, Lighthouse Schools, designates schools with STEM programming that provide technical aid to other schools/communities that want to create a STEM focus. Our Legislature also just passed a bill that sets up a partnership with some of our state’s lowest performing schools and our public four-year universities to create “lab schools” to accelerate student achievement and increase teaching skills.

What makes this all especially interesting is that Seattle is home to two players in the ed reform movement.

One is the Center for Reinventing Public Education at the University of Washington (it is not part of the College of Education. ) The CRPE does policy research mainly around charter schools, urban district reform and teacher assessments, all hallmarks of ed reform. And again, this in a state that does not have charter schools or, another ed reform favorite, any mayoral control of school districts.

The second much more powerful player is the education arm of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. In Washington state it invests in STEM creation in schools, early education and support for low-income students. But there would seem to be a disconnect in what the Gates foundation does for Washington education and Bill Gates’ very public support of ed reform
issues like charter schools and TFA. Neither Gates nor the foundation have been involved in public discussions in Washington about charter schools. We don’t need under-trained teachers in our schools. We don’t need the costs of the infrastructure for charter schools for the low number of positive outcomes from them. We especially don’t need the for-profit charter management organizations to come into our state and help to make education into a profit center instead of the public service it is to the young citizens of Washington state.

My belief is that Washington’s hesitation in the ed reform game is Washington’s educational gain.
May 2, 2012

California: Faculty Agrees to Campus Strike in the Fall

By JENNIFER MEDINA

Faculty members in the California State University system said Wednesday that they had approved plans for a two-day rolling strike at campuses all over the state.

The California Faculty Association, which represents professors, lecturers and librarians at the system’s 23 universities, has been negotiating with administrators for new contract for nearly two years. Union officials said that the strike was endorsed by 95 percent of the 12,500 members who voted last month.

The rolling strike, which would not take place until the fall, would be the largest faculty strike in the state’s history and would take place over two days at each campus, ultimately affecting more than 400,000 students.

The state has cut roughly $970 million from the California State University system since 2008, and university officials have responded by lowering the number of students admitted and raising tuition 23 percent. The union has asked for a 1 percent raise and says that administrators have asked to freeze faculty salaries, which have not increased since 2008.
Federal prosecutors announced on Tuesday that they had filed a lawsuit against the test-preparation company the Princeton Review, accusing it of fraudulently claiming millions of dollars in reimbursement for tutoring services that they said it never delivered to hundreds of underprivileged schoolchildren in New York City.

In the suit, which was brought against the company and a former supervisor, Ana Azocar, the government said the company submitted false claims between 2006 and 2010 for reimbursement for providing tutoring services under a federally financed program. “The company and certain of its employees forged student signatures, falsified sign-in sheets and provided false certifications in order to deceitfully profit from a well-meaning program,” the United States attorney in Manhattan, Preet Bharara, said in a statement. A spokeswoman for Princeton Review, Denise DesChenes, said that Ms. Azocar no longer worked for the company and that the current management was “working closely with the U.S. attorney’s office to resolve this matter expeditiously.”

“The activity allegedly occurred within the company’s former Supplemental Educational Services division, which the company discontinued in 2010,” Ms. DesChenes said. “No former S.E.S. employees or executives are with the company today, and current management — most of whom joined the company after the division was shuttered — had no involvement or role in the affairs of S.E.S.”

The suit charges that students participating in Princeton Review tutoring sessions under the Supplemental Educational Services division were required to fill out attendance sheets that were used as part of the record to apply for reimbursement for the federal money. In New York, site managers were instructed by Ms. Azocar to falsify attendance records, the suit claimed. For example, it said, an invoice was submitted for 74 students who were signed in for a class in the Bronx on New Year’s Day in 2008, when there was no class.

In exchange for the regularly recorded high attendance in classes, Ms. Azocar received bonuses. Efforts to reach her by phone were not successful. The lawsuit seeks both damages and penalties.
Criminal Charges for 13 in Florida A&M Hazing Death

By ROBBIE BROWN

ORLANDO, Fla. — Thirteen people were criminally charged on Wednesday with hazing in the death of a Florida A&M University marching band member who was beaten after a football game last fall.

Of those charged in the death of the band member, Robert Champion, 11 were charged with felonies and 2 with misdemeanors, said Lawson Lamar, the state attorney for the Ninth Judicial Circuit of Florida, in a news conference here. More than 20 people will also face misdemeanor charges in the hazing of other students at Florida A&M, he said.

The Champion case is one of the largest criminal cases ever built on a hazing death, legal experts say. Prosecutors would not say whether all of the suspects are fellow students.

“Hazing is something that will continue to happen out of sight until a student like Robert Champion pays the ultimate price,” Mr. Lamar said.

Police officers across the state are working to arrest the suspects, who have not been identified. A charge of felony hazing carries up to six years in prison.

The case, which turned a national spotlight on hazing within elite marching bands, grew out of a beating that Mr. Champion, 26, received in Orlando on Nov. 19 after a football game against a rival school, Bethune-Cookman University. Prosecutors said Mr. Champion was beaten, kicked and suffocated by fellow band members during a hazing ritual aboard a bus.

Under a tradition known as “Crossing Bus C,” students would walk down the aisle of the bus while classmates punched them. Mr. Champion was found lifeless on the bus and pronounced dead at a hospital.

Florida passed a strict antihazing law in 2005 after a college student drowned during a fraternity event. The law makes it easier for prosecutors to treat hazing as a felony.

The Champion family had hoped for the state to bring murder or manslaughter charges, said their lawyer, Christopher M. Chestnut. “This is bittersweet for them,” he said. “They were hoping for more severe charges.”
That would have been a legal challenge, said George R. Dekle, a law professor at the University of Florida. With so many students participating in the hazing, he said, it would be difficult to persuade jurors that one person’s actions caused Mr. Champion’s death, as a murder charge requires.

Mr. Chestnut said he planned to sue the university and possibly the band director. The family has already sued the company that owns the bus, saying the driver stood by while hazing took place.

The university said in a statement that it was working to prevent another tragedy. It has formed an antihazing committee and designated a $50,000 grant for faculty members to research the nature and extent of hazing on campus.

Mr. Champion, a clarinet player from Decatur, Ga., had dreamed since high school of attending Florida A&M, a 13,000-student historically black university in Tallahassee.

The school’s famed band, known as the Marching 100, has performed at Super Bowl halftime shows and President Obama’s inauguration. Mr. Champion tried out twice before being selected as one of six drum majors in 2010.

His death resulted from “blunt force trauma” that caused hemorrhaging and left deep bruises on his chest, arms, shoulders and back, according to a medical examiner’s report.

His parents say he was beaten so severely because he had voiced concerns about the band’s hazing culture. They also say he was bullied because he was gay.

Since Mr. Champion’s death, Florida A&M has faced a series of reports of abuse and hazing.

In December, three band members were arrested and charged with beating a female classmate so severely that her thigh was broken and she had blood clots in her legs. And last month, two music professors resigned after being accused of participating in hazing fraternity pledges in 2010.

The university has suspended the band and said it might not perform during this fall’s football season.

The band’s director, Julian White, was initially fired and then placed on paid administrative leave.
The case has raised awareness at universities across the country that hazing can bring criminal and legal repercussions, said Susan Lipkins, a psychologist who specializes in college hazing.

“It’s getting more common to see these issues handled in court,” she said. “Universities have turned a blind eye for a long time. But they can no longer afford to do that.”
Massage Spas, New Oases for the Harried Flier

By JOHN HANC

ABOUT five years ago, Richard Laermer, a public relations executive, found himself with time to kill during a layover at Logan Airport in Boston. “I was milling around the terminal, and I noticed a place that had massage,” recalled Mr. Laermer, whose firm has offices in New York and Los Angeles. “I thought, hmm, I can go to the food court, or I can get a massage.”

He opted for the massage. A young woman kneaded his back and then worked her fingers deep into the soles of his feet. “It was really expensive, but it felt really good,” Mr. Laermer recalled of his 30-minute massage, which cost $50. “Definitely a better choice than going to Burger King.”

Mr. Laermer, who travels about 175,000 miles a year on business, now gets massages regularly at airports. He swears by them. “After it’s been contorted for hours in those airplane seats, my body is so tight it sort of creaks.” Once he’s had a massage, he said, “I’m creak-free.”

Once considered something fringe and New Age, massage has gained respect. In 44 states and the District of Columbia, therapists must be licensed to practice; and there is a growing body of research showing its value.
“There’s definitely good evidence that massage reduces anxiety, depression and certain kinds of pain,” said Dr. Christopher Moyer, a research psychologist at the University of Wisconsin in Stout, who has been studying the benefits of massage for almost a decade. “There is also some evidence that it might reduce intensity and frequency of headaches.”

Considering that regular air travel might be summed up as one huge headache, Dr. Moyer says he’s not surprised at the growing availability of massage in airports. According to a 2010 survey by the American Massage Therapy Association, 18 percent of American adults said they received a massage in the previous year.

Although it is not known how many of those were massaged in airports, Massage Bar Inc. estimates that it gives 300 massages a day at its 18 airport locations throughout the United States. (The company, based in Seattle, is widely credited as being the first to offer airport massage. It started with a small location in Seattle-Tacoma International Airport in 1994.)

“Sometimes just taking a walk or going into a quiet place in an airport where you can relax will have a similar calming effect to massage,” said Dr. Lynn Millar, professor of physical therapy at Winston-Salem State University in North Carolina. “But I think it’s worth a try. There’s plenty of research showing its benefits.”

What kind of massage should business travelers consider? Alongside manicures and facials, the menu boards on the airport spas offering massage feature an almost Starbucks-like choice of options: Swedish, therapeutic, sport, deep tissue. While there are differences in the techniques, the basics of the treatment are the same: using the hands, fingers and sometimes the leverage of his or her body weight, the massage therapist manipulates the soft tissue of the body to reduce tension and free up movement.

For the harried traveler looking to try massage as an antidote to long hours standing in line or cramped into business-class seats, Ruth Werner, president of the Massage Therapy Foundation, recommends what some call the “entry level” form of hands-on treatment: chair massage.

Here a specially designed chair allows you to lean forward and supports the front of the body, allowing the therapist to work on the shoulders, back and neck, typically places where most of us feel tension. Chair massage clients remain clothed and no oil or lotion is used. It is done from 10 to 20 minutes.

“It’s a good way to start,” Ms. Werner said. “Because you’re clothed it’s a little easier and faster, and the intimacy issue is much less.”
Massages requiring the partial removal of clothing typically take place behind a curtain or in a private room.

Given massage’s long but often undeserved reputation as part of the sex trade, massage professionals for years have been trying to separate sex-for-hire from legitimate massage therapy. The new Lifetime TV show “The Client List,” which stars Jennifer Love Hewitt as a sort of call girl-massage therapist, may help to reinforce an old stereotype.

“I wish we could say we’re over it, but massage is still being used as a front for human trafficking,” Ms. Werner conceded. But “legitimate massage therapists have absolutely no expectation or tolerance for the suggestion of sexual activity.” As for airports, she said: “It is highly unlikely that this would ever be an issue in such a public setting. You’re six inches away from other people.”

Of course, anyone can give you a shoulder rub. To make sure you’re getting a professional-quality massage, Ms. Werner said, “look for someone who is pushing off with the back leg as they work, using all their body weight, and making firm contact. If their shoulders hike up, if they seem to be holding their breath, if they don’t look comfortable as they’re working, that might be someone to avoid.”

She adds that these days, massage at an airport can be as effective as the most exclusive spa. “The best massage I ever had was in the Portland airport,” said Ms. Werner, who is a licensed massage therapist and author of a widely used textbook.

Expect to pay about a dollar a minute for chair massage (plus a 20 percent tip, if you’re relaxed and “creak free” at the end). Rates can be much higher, especially for full-body, table massage, as Mr. Laermer discovered, and keeps rediscovering every chance he gets.

“It’s expensive,” he conceded. “Especially because they’ve managed to suck me into various add-ons.” The experienced flier acknowledges that while he doesn’t plan to get his wings clipped anytime soon, his massage sessions are now often followed by a pedicure.
Three on short list for W.Va. higher ed chancellor

By Amy Julia Harris

CHARLESTON, W.Va. -- Three finalists are on the short list to become chancellor of West Virginia's higher education system.

A search committee for the state Higher Education Policy Commission narrowed the candidates to Paul Hill, interim chancellor of the HEPC; John Hayek, senior vice president of budget, policy, and planning for the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education; and James D. Moran III, interim president of Edinboro University in Pennsylvania.

"Based on the committee's recommendation, I am confident that the commission will be in a position to select a dynamic leader to serve as chancellor," David Hendrickson, chairman of the HEPC, said Wednesday. "The selected individual will work collaboratively with state, institutional, and community leaders to advance our state by expanding the educational and service missions of our research universities and regional institutions."

Higher Education Policy Commission members will announce a new chancellor to oversee the state's public colleges and universities on May 18.

The commission launched a national search for a new chancellor in January after former chancellor Brian Noland accepted an offer to become president of East Tennessee State University.

Fifteen people applied for the West Virginia position.

Hill, the commission's vice chancellor for science and research and one of the final candidates, has been serving as chancellor on an interim basis since Noland left in January.

Hill manages a number of competitive research programs throughout the state. He spearheaded the state's effort to secure ownership of the West Virginia Regional Technology Park, formerly the South Charleston Technology Park and home to the Dow Chemical Company.

Before joining the state's higher education system in 2001, Hill was chairman and CEO of the U.S. Chemical Safety Board.
Hayek has worked on the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education since 2005, and has been senior vice president, budget, policy, and planning in 2009. He has also served as senior associate director at the Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research with the National Survey of Student Engagement.

Before becoming interim president at Edinboro University, Moran served as vice chancellor for academic and student affairs at the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education and assistance vice president for Academic Affairs and Associate Vice Provost for Accreditation and State Relations at the University of Tennessee System Office.

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