THE DAILY CLIPS

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University anticipates over 3,000 graduating

By the ECU News Bureau
Special to The Daily Reflector

East Carolina University will hold its annual commencement exercises at 10 a.m. Saturday at Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium.

Thomas J. Spaulding Jr., head of the nonprofit organization Up With People, and an East Carolina alum, will deliver the keynote address following a 9:30 a.m. concert by the ECU Wind Ensemble.

Almost 3,400 students have applied for spring graduation, according to the ECU registrar’s office. Approximately 2,400 are undergraduates, 910 are graduate/professional students, and 73 are medical students.

ECU will also hold departmental recognition ceremonies at various times Friday and Saturday. Keynote speakers include ECU alumna Vicki Cox, a vice president for the Federal Aviation Administration at the physics department at 3 p.m.; Friday in Howell Science Auditorium B103.

The Brody School of Medicine will hold its convocation at 3 p.m. Friday featuring Harry Adams, a clinical professor of internal medicine at Brody. College of Nursing is 9 a.m. Friday in Wright Auditorium. Guest speaker is Diane Poole, executive vice president of Pitt-County Memorial Hospital and ECU alumna.

Also at convocation, five students will receive military commissions. Nursing will graduate its largest bachelor’s degree class ever - 153 students.

The College of Allied Health Sciences will hold its convocation at noon, Friday at Minges Coliseum. Guest speaker is Dr. Phyllis N. Horns, interim vice chancellor for

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ECU
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the Division of Health Sciences and interim dean of the Brody School of Medicine.
Other departmental gradu-
ations can be found at: http://www.ecu.edu/commence-
ment/college_school.cfm.

Teachers honored
for excellence

The university honored 11
faculty members last week
for excellence in teaching, in-
cluding recognizing the
university's recipient of the
annual UNC Board of Gover-
nors Award for Excellence
in Teaching.
At the award ceremony,
Chancellor Steve Ballard
congratulated all of the
nominees. "You bring enthu-
iasm, scholarship, caring and
love of learning to your classes
ev-
eryday. You balance your
research, service and teaching
so that all that you do informs
your teaching," he said.
Louis Warren is this year's
recipient of the UNC Board of
Governors Award for Excel-
ence in Teaching, the highest
teaching award given at the
university. During a recogni-
tion luncheon to be held at the
UNC Board of Governors' Fri-
day meeting, Warren and the
other 16 UNC-system faculty
members will receive a com-
memorative bronze medallion
and a $7,500 cash prize.
Warren, who teaches cur-
riculum and instruction in
the College of Education, cred-
its his first-grade teacher with
inspiring him to become a
teacher.
Other ECU faculty members
were recognized as follows
along with their award:
East Carolina Alumni Asso-
ciation Awards for Outstanding
Teaching: Fred Schader,
Dept. of Finance; Heather
Vance-Chalcraft, Dept. of Bio-
logy; and John Howard, School
of Communication.
Max Ray Joyner Award for
Faculty Service through Con-
tinuing Education: Greg He-
imovich, Dept. of English.
Board of Governors Distingui-
shed Professor for Teach-
ing Awards: Daniel J. Bara,
School of Music; Carol Good-
willie, Dept. of Biology; Carl
Haish, Dept. of Surgery at the
Brody School of Medicine;
Andrew Morehead, Dept. of
Chemistry; Laura Prividera,
School of Communication;
and Karen Vail-Smith, Dept.
of Health Education and Pro-
motion.

Grant develops
driving tips

Anne Dickerson, professor
in the Department of Occupa-
tional Therapy in the Col-
lege of Allied Health Sciences,
has been awarded a $15,000
grant from the State Farm Good
Neighbor Citizen program for
ECU's Older Adult Driver Ini-
tiative.
She will develop a series
of online distance education
courses designed for occupa-
tional therapists who must
consider driving safety as
part of discharge planning for
older adults. The courses will
help address the acute need
in North Carolina and nation-
wide, to train more occupa-
tional therapists as driving
evaluators.

Studies grant
awarded

Xiaoming Zeng and Paul
Bell, professors in the Depart-
ment of Health Services and
Information Management in
the College of Allied Health
Sciences have been awarded
a $50,000 grant from the UNC
General Administration to
develop a new online gradu-
ate-level certificate program
in health informatics.
The online certificate pro-
gram will be one of the first

of its kind in this rapidly ex-
anding field.

Department hosts
poetry project

Throughout April, profes-
sors from ECU's Department of Curriculum and Instruction
brought poetry into local
elementary schools in honor of National Poetry Month. ECU
professor Elizabeth Swag-
gert and student Kelley Bunn
introduced the next collection
of poems that will be collected
for the second edition of A Jar
of Tiny Stars; a book of poems
for children.
Teachers and students from
Elmhurst and South Greenville
elementary schools read
each poem and voted for their
favorites. Their votes will be
tallied with others across the
nation.
The book will acknowledge
each participating school and
teacher.

ECU professor
awarded funding

Timothy Reistetter, professor
in the Department of Occupa-
tional Therapy in the Col-
lege of Allied Health Sciences,
has been appointed a K-12
Scholar in the Rehabilitation
Research Career Development
Program, sponsored by the
National Institutes of Health.
The K12 Scholar Award is
structured as a subcontract
from the Rehabilitation Re-
search Career Development
Program, which is adminis-
tered jointly through the
University of Texas Medical
Branch at Galveston and the
University of Florida.
Public Forum

Thanks for ECU Challenger League game

My family wants to say a big thank you to the East Carolina University baseball team for its spectacular performance on April 27 for the Challenger League game.

This is our daughter's second year playing Challenger baseball and she sure does love those cute, older boys! But, most of all, we are truly impressed with the ECU baseball team because of their honest enthusiasm and genuine open hearts.

For the second year in a row, I am so grateful for their willingness to share in their love of the game with our children in a manner that openly celebrates their differences, not ignores them.

These young men are wonderful role models who many could learn from. Next year, I hope to see all Pirate baseball fans out there supporting this team in one of the most important games they play all season.

ANN & GLENN PERRY
Grimesland
Volunteers brace for Clinton visit

By Kathryn Kennedy
The Daily Reflector

Presidential candidate Sen. Hillary Clinton's Greenville office has become a non-stop flurry of activity. Staffers print fliers, grab yard signs and send e-mails. And you can't take a step in any direction without hearing a familiar refrain spoken into cell phones: "I'm a volunteer for Hillary Clinton's campaign... Can we count on your support?"

"The goal is to have everybody in Pitt County called today," said Amanda Hodges, who just recently began volunteering.

With the Democrat scheduled to visit Pitt Community College this morning, supporters snapped into action, alerting the community of her impending arrival — not that they weren't busy to begin with.

"All of my free time I'm plugging in here," said Hodges, an East Carolina University employee and alum. "I'm at work during the daytime, but from five to nine, I'll be here in the office. Tonight, probably later."

The office stilled for a short break Sunday afternoon to hear from former President of Rock the Vote Jehmu Greene, and Rodney Slater, former U.S.

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CLINTON

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Secretary of Transportation under President Bill Clinton. Each lauded the group's hard work and willingness to sacrifice their time.

"You must be doing something right because they're sending the big dogs now," Greene said.

Slater offered his congratulations but also urged them to push on.

"We're going to have to go up to that last moment," he said. "It's going to take that kind of effort... All that you're doing today, the last final details, are very, very, very critical."

Today will be another full day for campaigns, but they're all looking forward to hearing Sen. Clinton speak.

"We had been hoping she'd come but by this point didn't think it was going to happen," said ECU graduate student Lemuel Stanley, whose been volunteering for a month. "We heard [Saturday] and were jittery until 2 or 3 a.m. I'm not sure what time we went to bed."

Kathryn Kennedy can be reached at kkenney@coxnc.com or 329-9566.
Our Views

College timber

Community college students tend to be motivated and mature—excellent candidates for transfer to the state’s universities.

North Carolina Central University in Durham has discovered the value in accepting students from the state’s community colleges who are seeking four-year university degrees. Said Bernice Johnson, the university’s vice chancellor for academic affairs, “We find they tend to be a lot more mature and a lot more serious about learning.”

The community college system has evolved since the days when its students mainly were looking for vocational training that normally wouldn’t fit into a college curriculum, with the aim of proceeding straightaway into the job market. Many students now seek courses that will enable them to move on to a university, with credits.

And that means an attractive stream of students for the universities to tap into, Johnson touched on the reasons. But there are other, important ones as well. High-tech industries, and “green” businesses—the kind the state wants to attract—require workforces with college degrees, and often post-graduate education. For four-year schools to recruit those motivated community college students gives them a chance to graduate more of them into either the workplace or programs of even higher learning.

And while the traditional model of university student, coming out of high school to work toward a four-year degree, is a fine and challenging endeavor for the state’s universities, it might be said that the community college transfer is—no offense to all those 1st- and 2nd-year university students out there—a lower-maintenance student. Typically, community college students have some life experience, either working or in military service or perhaps raising children, that makes them no-nonsense, get-the-degree sorts of college students.

At N.C. Central, that’s valuable because the university’s six-year graduation rate for freshmen who entered in 2000 was 49 percent (from the UNC system data)—below where it should be. Community college transfer students are good candidates to improve that figure.

With baby-boomers’ children and grandchildren coming along, the state of North Carolina knows it will have to handle more students aspiring for higher education. Officials of the university system have, in fact, already told individual campuses to plan to cope with increased demand. Community colleges have a role in answering that need, too, and it just makes sense that in enrolling students who are aiming toward four-year degrees, those colleges can mine a rich vein of talent that might not otherwise be tapped by universities.

Coping with the growth takes creativity. It’s the right thing to do. Getting more of those community college students into four-year schools, public and private, that can help bring their dreams to fruition is the smart thing to do.
Many could be denied disaster care

BY LINDSEY TANNER
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CHICAGO - Doctors know some patients needing lifesaving care won't get it in a flu pandemic or other disaster. The gut-wrenching dilemma will be deciding whom to let die.

Now, an influential group of physicians has drafted a grimly specific list of recommendations regarding which patients wouldn't be treated. They include the very old, seriously hurt trauma victims, severely burned patients and those with severe dementia.

The suggested list was compiled by a task force whose members come from prestigious universities, medical groups, the military and government agencies. They include the Department of Homeland Security, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Department of Health and Human Services.

The proposed guidelines are designed to be a blueprint for hospitals "so that everybody will be thinking in the same way" when pand
Diluting NCSA brand

Regarding the April 11 article "Arts school wants new name":

The N.C. School of the Arts Board of Trustees will vote May 9 to change the school's name to the University of North Carolina School of the Arts. This change dilutes the NCSA brand, dulling the name of the nationally recognized performing and visual arts conservatory.

School of the Arts has neglected to reach out to alumni about this significant change. I sympathize with the need to clarify the school's identity from local arts magnet schools. Instead of rushing through this drastic amendment, the NCSA staff and board should work with key stakeholders, especially students and alumni, to clarify its nationally recognized identity in North Carolina communities.

North Carolina School of the Arts is not just part of the people's university. It is a separate and venerable institution whose cultural significance to the state should be respected by honoring its original name.

I am proud to be a Tar Heel and an NCSA Pickle.

Sara Henley
N.C. School of the Arts '02
UNC-Chapel Hill '06
Charlotte
5 arrested at UNC-CH sit-in

Panel rejects suppliers program Moeser calls ‘idealistic’

BY JAMES TAYLOR
CORRESPONDENT

CHAPEL HILL — Hours before five students were arrested in his office, Chancellor James Moeser said the university needs more time to figure out the best way to improve conditions for workers making clothing bearing its name.

Moeser has reservations about the Designated Suppliers Program, which the students say would guarantee workers a living wage and collective bargaining.

“It’s idealistic,” he said. “It’s equivalent to trying to bail out the Pacific Ocean with a teaspoon.”

On Friday, the UNC-CH Labor Code Advisory Committee voted 7-5 not to join the DSP. Opponents said it had not been adequately discussed and remained skeptical of its usefulness.

Chairman Don Horanstein, who led the meeting, said the DSP is not the only option for improving labor conditions.

“The DSP has been elevated to a principle, but it is not,” member Dwayne Pinkney said. “It is a mechanism.”

Trademark licensing revenue generated $2.83 million in fiscal 2007 to support need- and merit-based scholarships, according to the university.

ONLINE

The students have set up a Web site about the South Building protest at dsp4unc.wordpress.com


Both UNC-CH and the student protesters say the university has been a leader in the sales of products bearing its name. UNC-CH belongs to two national labor monitoring organizations: the Fair Labor Association and the Worker Rights Consortium.

But students have pushed for the DSP because, among other provisions, it would require license holders to buy goods from certified factories that pay a living wage and allow workers to unionize. As of Thursday, students said, 44 colleges and universities, including Duke, have adopted the program.

For the past three weeks, a small group of students has staged a sit-in outside Moeser’s office in South Building. After Friday’s vote, 10 students moved the protest into chancellor’s office.

Linda Khaled Gomaa, Thomas Robert Matters, Tim Stallmann, Sarah Hirsch and Salma Mirza were arrested and charged with failure to disperse.

Mirza, the only undergraduate member of the advisory committee, also was charged with resisting an officer when she “went limp” in a chair following the arrest. Campus police slowly wheeled the chair out of Moeser’s office and carried it down the outside stairs to a campus police van.

“I was prepared to be surprised either way,” student Charles Soeder said about the committee’s decision. “It’s sad that it had to come to this.”

According to Mirza and other members of UNC-CH’s Student Action with Workers, the issue came to a protest only after Moeser did not respond to letters and e-mail messages and steered away from discussing the DSP in meetings.

“It’s no accident that the [advisory committee] meeting was put off until finals week,” Mirza said.

Students were warned during the sit-in not to disrupt university business or occupy any offices, and Moeser defended the arrests.

“We showed tremendous forbearance in a 16-day sit-in that was, until today, peaceful,” he said in a statement Friday night.
Student charged in Campbell blasts

FROM STAFF REPORTS

BUIES CREEK — A Campbell University student from Fuquay-Varina has been charged after chemical explosions forced the evacuation of a dorm early Friday at the Buies Creek campus.

No one was injured, and authorities described the episode as a prank.

Thomas Nathan Minor, 19, was charged with possession of weapons on school grounds, the Harnett Sheriff’s Office said in a news release.

A second student also was taken into custody, said John Roberson, vice president of marketing and planning at Campbell. The sheriff’s office said additional charges are possible but did not mention a second suspect.

Roberson said three homemade devices “that were little more than big firecrackers” went off about 4:30 a.m. He said the devices were meant to make noise and not do physical harm.

“We just believe it was an ill-thought prank that went awry,” Roberson said.
NCCU begins the wave of graduates
927 degrees and lots of happy dancing

THE CEREMONY: 8 a.m. Saturday, O'Kelly-Riddick Stadium
NUMBER OF DEGREES AWARDED: 927 total; 589 bachelor's degrees, 338 professional and master's degrees

COMMENCEMENT SPEAKER: Vernon Jones, a U.S. Senate candidate in Georgia and chief executive officer of DeKalb County, Ga. — the first African-American to hold the job and youngest person to be elected to the post. A native of Laurel Hill, N.C., Jones received a bachelor's degree in business administration from NCCU.

WHAT HE SAID: After reminiscing about arriving at NCCU in the late 1970s as a small-town teenager with a big Afro and polyester-blend pants, Jones talked about how much had changed in the 25 years since his graduation.

BlackBerries, cell phones, call-waiting, e-mail, answering machines, voice mail, iPods, PlayStation, the Internet, Web sites and bloggers were not part of his world. His high school graduation speaker in 1979 had predicted gas would rise "to a whopping $1 a gallon."

"No black man or woman was a viable candidate for the presidency," Jones said.

In a speech that elicited many laughs, Jones encouraged the students — particularly the C students for whom he had a special affinity — to free their minds, to think big, to become entrepreneurs, to provide jobs.

"You, too, can become the commencement speaker," Jones said.
"Or to borrow a page from George Bush, you too, can become president of the United States."

NOT THAT VERNON: When introducing the keynote speaker, Chancellor Charlie Nelms made a slip of the tongue and referred to Jones as NCCU alum Vernon Jordan, the lawyer and Washington power-broker who served as a close adviser to former President Clinton.

Jones, 25 years younger than the other Vernon, took the podium with a sense of humor.
"When they start to call Vernon Jordan Vernon Jones, I will..."
A teacher until the end
Imparting the simple things he'd learned guided his life

CHAPEL HILL - For someone who stumbled into teaching accidentally, it was a lucky fall. After he served in World War II, after a stint in graduate school, Tim Heninger went home to tiny Monroe, La. A chance encounter led to his becoming a professor of English and comparative literature. He thrived on the teacher-student relationship, regularly inviting students for dinner and displaying photos of their children along the top of his bookcase.

Such was the connection he forged that a student from 40 years ago and her husband dropped by to visit shortly before his death. Simeon Kahn, "Tim" Heninger Jr., died a couple of months ago of a heart attack in his garden as he scanned his plantings for signs of spring. He was 85.

Heninger was born in Monroe, the youngest of three children. The local school system didn't have enough money to finance 12th grade, so he graduated as a junior and enrolled at Tulane University.

During his college years, he enlisted in the Army Air Force and became a meteorologist. He was scheduled to go to Japan to prepare for the U.S. invasion, doing single-station weather forecasting. He would be out there alone with a weather balloon.

Tim Heninger lectures at the University of British Columbia in the early 1970s. Heninger died at age 85.
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Tim Heninger lectures at the University of British Columbia in the early 1970s. Heninger died at age 85.
Then Hiroshima was bombed, and he no longer had to go.

Every day during his military service, Heninger kept a journal. On the day the bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, he wrote that he wanted to learn more about this new atom technology in hopes it could be used for peaceful means.

In keeping with that, he enrolled at Columbia University to study physical chemistry after the war. It wasn't for him. "I turned off my Bunsen burner and went home," he liked to say.

He went to work for his father, a middleman selling hides, pecans and scrap metal.

On a business trip to New Orleans, wandering his old Tulane campus, he ran into a former English professor. The professor urged him to enroll in graduate school as the campus was flooded with returning vets seeking an education. The teacher promised Heninger a teaching assistantship in exchange. Heninger agreed.

**Stints at Duke, UNC-CH**

After a Fulbright scholarship, Heninger taught at Duke University. He lived in a dormitory apartment and served as a resident fellow, a title that carried no real job description. But Heninger took the role seriously, counseling students and getting to know them.

When visiting lecturers came to campus, Heninger would invite them over to share dinner with half a dozen students.

Rees Shearer was a junior who remembers breaking bread with Heninger and Joseph Heller, author of "Catch-22."

Heninger connected with students as equals, Shearer said. "When you're in his presence, you get the feeling that you're the most important person in the whole world," he said.

From Duke, Heninger moved to Wisconsin, then to California, where he met his second wife, Dottie.

She was 25, he nearly double that at 48. Four months later, they married.

Together, they continued to Vancouver and then back to the Triangle, where he taught English at UNC-Chapel Hill until the early 1990s.

After officially giving up teaching, he continued outside the classroom.

Second graders and older adults learned about art from him as he led tours through Chapel Hill's Ackland Art Museum and the N.C. Museum of Art in Raleigh. At Orange Correctional Center in Hillsborough, he mentored prison guards, taking several out on day passes, teaching them how to better navigate the outside world.

**Ill and still inspiring**

At Carol Woods Retirement Community where he and his wife lived, Heninger was part of a group that agreed to meet with UNC-CH students. It was a deliberate decision on Heninger's part, another opportunity to impart to others what he had learned.

In 2001, Heninger was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. He volunteered to share with occupational therapy students how his life had changed since then. He and other Carolina Woods residents served as a sounding board for the students, who had been dispersed into the community to meet with patients. The Carol Woods group was a safe place for the students to ask questions, to find out what it really felt like to live with a debilitating disease.

Heninger and the others told their stories, shared what they were proud of in their lives and what had disappointed them. Heninger spoke of his career and the pleasure he took in his garden.

He spoke of the physical limitations — how he couldn't walk as far or comfortably swim, how the disease made him a confident and self-assured man, anxious.

After the meeting, the students were astounded at how open Heninger had been.

"So many of our students come in and say they want to work with children," said Sue Coppola, an associate professor in occupational science at UNC-CH. "That group came out of that afternoon with Tim and said they want to work with older adults."

They were so inspired that they sent a card to Heninger thanking him.

He never saw it.

Heninger died several days after a teacher until the end.

Tim Heninger is survived by his wife, Dottie, four children and four grandchildren.

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How can education be improved?

NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND IS LEAVING A SOUR TASTE FOR SOME.
CANDIDATES OFFER THEIR OWN PROPOSALS.

The family

For now, Heidi Cleveland, 41, a mother of a kindergartner at Fuller Elementary in Raleigh, is shielded from her biggest worry—the emphasis placed on testing under the mandate of No Child Left Behind.

Her daughter, Taylor, 5, doesn't yet have to take the annual end-of-grade tests that will start in third grade and are used to determine how well students have grasped concepts.

A preschool teacher herself, Cleveland said students have to blossom at their own pace. That's why Cleveland held back from correcting her daughter when she wrote her As backward. Then, at school, Taylor learned how to write music notes. Music, Cleveland said, provided the bridge that help improve her daughter's writing skills.

Cleveland said the pressure placed on students to perform well on tests often stifles learning and teachers' creativity. Undecided in the presidential race, Cleveland said she's looking for candidates to focus on creating tests that are fair for all students and to relax the emphasis placed on tests so teachers aren't punished if their students don't perform well.

For voters like Heidi Cleveland of Cary, few issues rank as high as education when it comes time to decide how to vote.

Cleveland, who is mom to a 1-year-old and is a preschool teacher herself, worries that schools are so concerned about meeting test goals that they are putting too much pressure on teachers and students to perform well.

Today's Citizen outlines candidate's proposals and track records. We've focused on presidential, gubernatorial and superintendents in competitive races. But first, take a look at education issues facing North Carolina and the nation.

1.4 million
The number of students enrolled in school districts across the state. Since 2000, North Carolina enrollment has increased by more than 160,000 students.

63.9 percent
Students in elementary and middle schools in North Carolina who passed both math and reading tests during the 2006-07 school year.

North Carolina saw the number of students passing end-of-grade tests slightly increase last year, up from 61.2 percent in 2005-06. The annual tests are also used to determine whether schools have met No Child Left Behind goals.

23,550
Students who dropped out of high school during the 2006-07 school year.

The dropout rate is one of the major issues candidates pledge to address. The number of students who left classrooms before graduation in North Carolina increased last year.

10,000
Average number of teachers needed each year in North Carolina.

North Carolina recruiters travel thousands of miles each year to hire teachers. N.C. colleges only produce about 3,300 teachers annually. Several initiatives are in place to attract more to teaching careers.

Source: N.C. Department of Public Instruction, Wake County Public School System, News archives.
Schools teach hands-on investing

When it comes to investing, many people defer to the expertise of financial advisers and fund managers. But another group might be worth considering: college students.

Students at several universities are receiving investing practice through student-managed funds.

Like mutual funds, these portfolios invest a pool of money in stocks, bonds or cash. Students call the shots, and the money being managed is generally a slice of the school's endowment or a donation from alumni.

Of course, the aim is to churn out positive returns. But more important, say professors, the funds are a teaching tool.

Students learn to manage real money without the lure of positive returns. And how these matters of wisdom could apply to you.

- Use checks and balances.
- Most student-managed funds operate in a democratic framework. Although each student may track a particular stock, a majority vote decides whether to buy, sell or hold an asset.

If a student can't defend a proposal for a stock, the group is unlikely to vote favorably.

(Think of it in terms of a pitch you might hear from say, Uncle Ned. Could he persuade you—and all your friends or colleagues—that Company XYZ is the next big thing? Could you persuade him?)

That type of scrutiny makes it more difficult for emotions or other biases to drive investment decisions.

“Majority voting forces some pretty heated debate among the students,” said Andrew Karol, a professor of finance and faculty administrator of the Student Investment Management Program at Ohio State University's Fisher College of Business. "It keeps them from getting carried away.

Getting Started

Case in point: Though energy stocks have been on a tear and recently made up 13.3 percent of the Standard & Poor's 500 index, the stocks add up to only 9.9 percent in Ohio State's student fund. (The program uses the S&P 500 as a benchmark.)

"We haven't been willing to place a huge bet on energy now that it's hot," said Matthew Falk, the program's graduate assistant, referring to record-high oil prices.

Focus on fundamentals.

When a student makes a proposal to buy, sell or hold an asset, the argument must be rooted in analysis of the company. Is the stock price a good value, for example, compared with a company's potential for growth?

At Stetson University in Florida, finance professor James Mallett has been cautioning students in the Roland George Investments Program against letting general pessimism about the market sway investment decisions.

His advice: "The only way to sell a stock is if you think it's overvalued.

You also need an action plan for reinvesting," he said. "If you leave it in cash, then you're trying to time the market," he said.

Keeping that focus and sticking to a long-term perspective can pay off.

Last year, Stetson's stock fund, which invests in small-cap companies, returned 32.6 percent. Meanwhile, the Russell 2000 index, a comparable benchmark, was down 1.6 percent.

This year, Stetson's fund trails the index.

- Forget the past.

Many students stay disciplined by setting automatic controls.

At New York University's Stern School of Business, stock holdings are assigned price caps. So one stock would be allowed to climb only 20 percent or drop 10 percent before it has to be studied again.

Once a target is hit, "we evaluate whether the original thesis for the stock still holds," said Raymond Li, a second-year MBA student.

The students also focus on the future.

"One thing that has really impressed me is that when a stock comes up, very rarely does anyone ask, 'How have we done?'" said Anthony Marciano, a corporate finance professor at NYU and faculty advisor to the school's Michael Price Student Investment Fund.

Marciano said that attitude is critical. "If you think a company is overpriced, maybe it's time to sell," he said. "But that's different from asking how much money we've made."

In the six months through March 1, the NYU portfolio — made up of three equity funds and one bond fund — is down 5.2 percent. Its benchmark, a blend of Russell stock indexes and the Vanguard Total Bond Market Index, is down 6.6 percent.

yourmoney@tribune.com.

COLUMN ROTATION

MAY 18: Getting Started | MAY 25: The Color of Money
The new work study

Companies invite degree programs, employees benefit

BY ANNE KRISHNAN
CORRESPONDENT

When Gary Stutts moved to Durham 25 years ago to work for Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina, he thought the Triangle’s broad array of colleges and universities would make it easy to earn a college degree.

But the demands of working full time and raising two sons made him put aside going back to school for nearly two decades.

Then in 2001, Blue Cross started Blue University, which allows employees to earn associate, bachelor’s or master’s degrees without leaving the health insurer’s campus. The benefit gives workers a convenient way to earn degrees and provides the company with a pool of employees it can promote to more senior positions.

“I never in my life thought I’d have an MBA,” said Stutts, who had two associate degrees when he joined Blue Cross’ IT staff. “I’ve personally gotten a lot out of it, and I wanted to make myself more valuable to the company so if the right opportunity came up, I could go for it.”

Degree-granting programs have become increasingly common on corporate campuses as employers invest in higher education to improve productivity and help staffers balance their work and home lives.

Many companies have tried to accomplish the same goals through tuition reimbursements alone but providing on-site degree programs encourage more employees to participate, said Jeane C. Meister, an author, management consultant and editor of the “New Learning Playbook” blog.

About 20 percent of the 3,000-plus companies with formal training programs — known as corporate universities — work

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with brick-and-mortar universities to offer on-site degree programs, she said.

The program has helped Blue Cross, which modeled its program on Meister's theories, keep and attract employees while helping to build its leadership ranks from within, said Blue University's director, Terry Johnson.

"We see it as an incredibly worthwhile investment," he said. "In the long run, it's much more efficient for us to build talent internally versus buying it" by hiring new employees.

The company declined to comment on its investment in the program. However, Blue Cross likely has spent millions on tuition for its 374 on-site students since 2001. The company reimburses up to $3,000 per year for undergraduates and up to $4,000 for graduate students.

In turn, about 25 percent of the program's graduate students have shown lateral or upward job movement within a year of graduating, the company reports. Companywide, turnover was 16 percent in 2007, but turnover among 2007 Blue University graduates was about 9 percent.

Some companies require that employees remain with the firm for a certain period after receiving their degree — Blue Cross does not. The insurer works with graduates to help them assess their strengths and identify ways to advance in their careers at Blue Cross, Johnson said.

"It's a myth that employees are more likely to leave after getting an education on the company's dime," Meister said. "Actually, as employees engage in more training, they have a higher level of engagement in their job," she said. "They realize the organization really cares for them and is doing everything they can to help them."

A success story

Just ask Linda Delcid. The 42-year-old Blue Cross rating specialist earned an associate degree on-site through Durham Technical Community College in August and expects to complete a bachelor's degree in human resource management at Mount Olive College in December.

"Being back in school has given me a deeper respect for my company," she said. "I understand a lot of my company's purpose, that they want me to be the best that I can be."

Her enthusiasm about Blue University has prompted friends and family members to apply for jobs with Blue Cross.

"You can't beat the opportunity," Delcid said. "When I leave work, I go downstairs and go to class. Besides actually putting the piece of paper in your hand, it can't be any simpler than that."

Delcid, who was working in a customer service and data-entry position before starting the associate degree program, had always wanted to sign up groups for Blue Cross policies as a project manager. Before going back to school, she said, she never would have had the confidence or the qualifications to apply for such a job.

"It has allowed me to empower myself," she said.

It takes flexibility

Degree-granting programs, however, have their own challenges.

Companies must find universities that are able to adapt to off-site courses, keep program offerings up-to-date with corporate needs and harness teaching methods that work not only for younger employees, but for the next generation of tech-savvy workers.

Durham Tech holds classes at sites in Durham and Orange counties, so it was a natural process for the college to begin offering classes on Blue Cross' campus, said Maria Fraser-Molina, assistant vice president and head of Durham Tech's arts, sciences and university transfer department.

The university transfer curriculum is set by the UNC System, but the college has been creative in the way it structures the courses. Its challenge: to design mini-sessions that allow students to fit in two classes per semester while taking only one course at a time.

Students attend class one night a week for eight weeks and spend additional time working with classmates and professors online from home. For instance, a Spanish class would offer in-person lectures and online language lab sessions, Fraser-Molina said.

Adding online components to traditional classes will be increasingly important as the next generation of employees hits the workplace, Meister said.

“This is the generation that grew up with Google, that grew up doing their papers online, shopping online, banking online, and I think they're going to demand a whole new set of services from employers," she said.

Older employees might be intimidated by wikis and online discussions, but they will appreciate the ability to schedule class requirements around family time, Meister said.

Employers owe it to workers to make sure they're prepared to use the same kind of technology on the job, she said.

Incorporating new online components into its offering has been a challenge for Blue Cross, Johnson said, as has making sure the educational programs stay up-to-date and aligned with its business needs.

Some very large companies have gone so far as to design master's degree programs that supply the specialized skills their workers need, Meister said.

"That's not in the plans at Blue Cross, but Johnson's team is considering offering degrees in nursing, health promotion, computer science and information technology and business and risk management that closely fit its business and mission."

Even now, with professors teaching their regular syllabi on Blue Cross' campus, employees say they benefit from taking class with their colleagues.

Learning alongside colleagues who work in sales and claims helped Stutta, 54, learn about other departments at Blue Cross and allowed class discussions to incorporate real-life examples from the insurer's business.

"We're all dealing with the health-care change that's in the air," he said. "We were able to work through some interesting times together."

Despite the personal rewards, earning an MBA doesn't mean instant career advancement, Stutta said.

Graduates must take the initiative to capitalize on the degree, he said. And so far, he hasn't seen any positions he wants to pursue.

"I haven't opened any doors lately," he said. "You've got to reach out for that handle, and you've got to pull it yourself."
a healthy career choice

A

lthough our state continues to enjoy a better economic climate than most, many North Carolinians still wonder if there is such a thing as a recession-proof career. While there are no guarantees, a nursing career is a pretty safe bet. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, by 2020, there will be an estimated shortage of 800,000 nurses.

Jill Radding, manager of human resources consulting at Rex Healthcare, says the average age of the nurse population at Rex is between 48 and 49. "Although many will work to 65 and beyond, a lot will start retiring at 55 and 60 because of the physical demands of the job."

Early retirement is one cause of the projected nursing shortage. Another reason nurses will continue to be in demand is that our general population is living longer. And for largest generation, the Baby Boomers, make up 28 percent of the nation's adult population. Members of that generation started turning 60 two years ago. The need for healthcare services will rise as they age. "We are seeing a great need in surgery, in neuro-science and also in Oncology," says Radding.

Making a difference

Although nursing provides substantial job security, most choose the profession for a different reason altogether. "We see people from all walks of life who are not satisfied with the intrinsic rewards of their current position, and they want to transition to a career that is meaningful, where they feel like they're making a difference in a person's life," says Radding. "In healthcare and particularly nursing, you can do that. You can be there when the baby is born or you can hold someone's hand as they take their last breath and anything in between."

Flexible hours are another big benefit to a career in nursing. Teresa Rosebrough, 36, is currently a stay-at-home mom to her two sons, Seth, three, and Grant, just seven weeks old. She has not had to give up her nursing career, however; she is a "casual" employee at Rex Hospital, meaning she picks up shifts when she can. It's a great way for her to keep a hand in the working world, while not having to put her kids in daycare.

"Most of the people I went to nursing school with were going back part-time because of the flexibility," says Rosebrough. "They wanted to work, but still have time with their kids." Rosebrough herself plans to work as a casual employee until her youngest is two years old, then she plans to start working regular hours again.

Nursing shifts typically are eight, ten or twelve hours. At Rex, both part-time and full-time employees get traditional benefits: healthcare, dental and life insurance. Even casual employees like Rosebrough can participate in the hospital's 403(b) plan.

Because of the high demand for nurses, they often make requests regarding specific positions. "You can pretty much pick in the hospital setting what area you want to work in. If you
can't get it at one hospital, you can go to another and get it," says Rosebrough, an emergency room nurse.

At Rex, annual salaries for full-time positions start at $43,000 and some positions, such as those within the operating room start a bit higher at $45,000. According to the North Carolina Nurses Association, the median salary for a staff nurse working in hospitals full-time in 2005 was $56,880.

A highly skilled profession

The road to joining the nursing profession looks a lot like alphabet soup. A registered nurse must pass the National Council Li-
censure Examination for Registered Nurses (NCLEX-RN). To be eligible for RN licensure, however, one must graduate from a state-approved school of nursing. There are four-year university programs, three-year diploma programs, and two-year associate programs. Where you attend school dictates the acronym behind your degree — a four-year university degree is called a BSN and a two-year associate degree is an ADN. Diploma programs used to be a common road to an RN for most nurses, but they made up just four percent of RN programs in 2006, according to the N.C. Nurses Association.

There are two other bits of good news. The first is that nurses are highly respected. A 2004 Gallup Poll reported respondents named nurses number one for honesty and ethical standards. The second is that it's highly unlikely, if not impossible, for nursing jobs to move overseas. Radding puts it best: "You can't outsource or offshore healthcare."

To learn more about a career in nursing, visit http://www.allnursingschools.com/find/NC/nursing-schools.php or www.ncnurses.org.