THE DAILY CLIPS

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Police utilize 300 surveillance cameras
By Michael Abramowitz
The Daily Reflector
Tuesday, May 17, 2011

When an East Carolina University student was reported abducted on April 25 from a Third Street parking lot bordering campus in downtown Greenville, surveillance cameras played an integral role in the subsequent police investigation, campus and city police officials said.

The cameras, among more than 200 operated by ECU police and their telecommunicators, did not capture video of the actual abduction, Assistant Chief Dawn Tevepaugh said, but they did show that the victim and alleged assailant both were in the lot moments before the abduction occurred.

“We shared that recorded footage with Greenville Police Department investigators, who led the investigation,” Tevepaugh said. “Fortunately, it proved to be an important tool.”

Helping solve crimes after the fact is only one way video surveillance cameras are used by campus and city police. Their presence also serves to deter criminals and can even protect the innocent from accusations of wrongdoing, local law enforcement officers said.

“Most of the time, the surveillance cameras help us investigate campus crimes after they've occurred, and the information they provide can help us prosecute criminals,” Tevepaugh said. “But they also can act as a deterrent to potential criminal activity and provide a sense of safety and security to students and visitors in the campus community.”
Sgt. Nick Lucas oversees the city police department's video operations and shares Tevepaugh's view about cameras' versatility as peacekeepers and conflict resolvers, he said in a recent interview at the department's communications center, where dispatchers watched a bank of monitors for possible illegal activity.

“We have two general uses for cameras; one for traffic, used to investigate wrecks and other activities on the roadways; the other is for security and criminal investigations, of which there are several types,” Lucas said.

Beginning about five years ago, there have been approximately 104 video surveillance cameras mounted in the city limits, not including ECU cameras. The most versatile type is known as the PTZ, for pan, tilt and zoom.

The cameras are remotely computer-operated by dispatchers, officers in the field and anyone in the department who has access to the service provider's system.

The most frequent users are telecommunicators Diane Johnson, LaTecia Hentz, Frank Danza and Leonard Fleming, who monitor screens in the department's communications center inside police headquarters and dispatch calls to officers in the field. Their primary objective is to quickly get on top of any crime in progress, said Johnson, a 24-year GPD veteran.

“We want to get any helpful information to the officers to aid in their investigation, including identifications of people and vehicles,” Johnson said. “Sometimes we can zoom right in to the license plate of a car and get that back to the officer along with the vehicle's direction of travel.”

Cameras also are capable of being relocated to any part of the city, Lucas said.

“We select the most strategic locations where we know incidences of crime have been statistically higher and where we've had problems in the past,” Lucas said. “This provides an obvious deterrent because would-be criminals can see them and think twice about committing a crime. And if something does happen, we can use the video footage as an investigative tool.”

Video cameras often verify or refute accounts of incidents, either helping build a case against a criminal or vindicating a person who is the object of a complaint, the detective said.

“We're concerned with finding the truth, and cameras, more often than not, help us piece together the whole story and verify each person's version of where they were and what occurred,” Lucas said.

On the ECU campus, students and staff meander day and night under the eye in the sky. Senior Ray Ferrell confirmed Tevepaugh's assessment.
“I think it's great that they have the cameras up,” Ferrell said. “It makes you feel a lot safer walking on campus, especially heading home after a night class. It's part of the overall good job the ECU police do on campus safety.”

Ferrell and other students said they never have felt uncomfortable about being watched because, for them, safety trumps privacy.

“The only ones who should be nervous about the police watching them are people getting ready to commit a crime,” he said.

Contact Michael Abramowitz at mabramowitz@reflector.com or 252-329-9571.
A Chief's goal for students: beat the EOG

Kansas City Chiefs wide receiver Terrance Copper, who played at East Carolina, gives Creekside students a pep talk.

BY JACKIE DRAKE
The Daily Reflector

The chief goal for students about to take year-end tests is to succeed, and students at Creekside Elementary got some help on Friday from a real live Chief — a Kansas City Chief, that is.

NFL wide receiver and former East Carolina University player Terrance Copper led students in third through fifth grades in a rally to kick off end-of-grade testing this week.

"Today we are one team, the Creekside Elementary team," Copper said. "Our goal is to beat the EOG."

In the NFL, Copper said, players are supposed to get a good night's sleep before the big game but sometimes they work on their "victory dance." He had students volunteers from each grade demonstrate their own victory dances as the others cheered.

"The kids have worked really hard all year," Creekside principal Carla Frinsko said. "This is to celebrate their hard work. It's their pep talk for the big event. We did something like this last year, and the kids loved it."

EOG tests are given in grades three through eight in math and reading, and in grade five and eight for science. They are designed to measure performance and growth under the competencies outlined under the North Carolina Standard Course of Study. High school students will take end-of-course tests in various subjects in June.

Schools had two weeks to choose from this year to administer EOGs, May 17-20 or May 24-27, according to Creekside assistant principal and testing coordinator Cornelia Cox.

"It's been wonderful so far," Cox said. "It was an awesome idea from the county office."

After tests are done, remediation and makeup tests are usually offered for students who score a one or two. Students who passed with a score of three or four generally do creative learning activities.

Rallies, like the one led by ECU head football coach Ruffin McNeill at C.M. Eppes Middle School last year, have become popular to get students excited about doing well on the tests.

"We just try to relieve that pre-test anxiety," Cox said. "They can do it. They're ready; they just need to go for it."

"Today we are one team. Our goal is to beat the EOG."

Terrance Copper
NFL receiver

"It's a way to get all the kids involved," Frinsko said. "The younger kids line the hall and high-five the older kids as they walk into the gym to cheer them on."

Contact Jackie Drake at jdrake@reflector.com or 252-329-9567.

EOG

Continued from B1
Paul Rustand, founder of Widgets & Stone, recently was named a Fellow for the American Institute for Graphic Arts. He is the only designer in Tennessee to receive the honor. Staff Photo by Allison Carter

Local graphic artist wins prestigious award
By Clint Cooper

ABOUT HIM
Age: 40.
Hometown: Born in Philadelphia; raised in Philadelphia, Minneapolis and Asheville/Greenville, N.C.
Education: Bachelor in Fine Arts from East Carolina University, Master of Fine Arts from University of Alabama, Yale University School of Management “Business Perspectives for Creative Leaders.”
Family: Peg, wife of 19 years, nine children, one “naughty dog and 12 chickens.”
Hobbies: All things Italian; following Chattanooga Football Club/international soccer; University of North Carolina basketball.

INFLUENTIAL BOOKS

ON COOKING
Another of Rustand’s hobbies, he said, is cooking (and eating). “I should mention,” he said, “learning to cook from Jamie Oliver TV shows is also pretty important.”

Paul Rustand said the most important aspect of a good graphic has nothing to do with the graphic design. The client, he said, is the most important partner to a designer.

Rustand, founder and director of Chattanooga-based Widgets & Stone, knows of what he speaks. He recently was honored by the American Institute for Graphic
Arts with a Fellow award and is the only AIGA Fellow living and working in Tennessee.

The Fellow award program, according to AIGA, is a means of recognizing designers who have made a significant contribution to the craft. The areas of education, writing, leadership and reputation, as well as the practice of design are given equal consideration in measuring significant contribution.

“While [his] design work speaks for itself, it’s Paul’s personality that draws people and projects around the studio,” said Matt Greenwell, a Widgets & Stone collaborator.

Rustand’s work has been recognized and awarded by the American Advertising Federation, Communication Arts, Graphis, How magazine, the One Show, Print Magazine, Step Inside Design Magazine and the Type Directors Club.

The 16-year-old company’s mission under its founder’s leadership, according to Greenwell, is to “Design the Right Things, and Design the Things Right.”

**Q: What does your honor with the AIGA Fellow’s Award mean to you?**

**A:** I regard it as a great honor as less than 100 people [out of a national organization with more than 22,000 members] have been named fellows in the past 10 years. But more important than the recognition from the professional association of design is the recognition from my peers — colleagues, clients and friends. ... It is very humbling and rewarding.

**Q: What in your early life, education or early career influenced you to go into graphic design?**

**A:** From the age of 3, I found drawing extremely enjoyable — a great tool for getting ideas out my head and into a tangible form — and from then on used that medium as a way of expressing myself. In my junior high years, I became very aware of great advertisements and poster design, but I never knew that it was someone’s job to create such things. Only when I enrolled at East Carolina University’s school of art did I discover a thing called “design.” I was immediately smitten and have pursued design ever since then.

**Q: What is the most challenging or interesting graphic design campaign you have done?**

**A:** A significant watershed project for us was rebranding Rock/Creek. We were asked to create a new identity for the best, most successful and established outdoor
supplier and outfitter in Chattanooga. We worked very hard to stretch ourselves — as well as our client: presenting only one idea/solution — to help them move successfully into the future. We did it, and we made both the client and ourselves happy and extremely proud of the results.

Q: What advice would you give people who are studying or getting ready to graduate from having studied graphic design?

A: Learn how to learn — about design, of course, but also about anything else. Everything is relevant and useful in design. And most of all, learn people skills. The best designers are very talented at actual design, but they are even more enjoyable to be around. And lastly, learn how to take care of the seldomly mentioned — at least in school — “client.” This is the most important partner to a designer.
No matter what happens from here, the East Carolina baseball team will bid farewell to Clark-LeClair Stadium after tonight.

The Pirates' 6 p.m. home finale against Old Dominion isn't just one last nonconference game, but also a chance for ECU to match a season high by winning its sixth straight game. It would give the Pirates the momentum they've been seeking heading into their final Conference USA series of the season at Tulane, and add a 35th win to the their season total.

“I think our guys are starting to play well at the right time,” ECU head coach Billy Godwin said after the Pirates completed a three-game sweep of visiting Delaware State last weekend. “It's our last home game so there is a lot of incentive for us to play well before we hit our 10-day road trip. It will be a good challenge for our guys to play a team that's in first place in their league.”

Following this weekend's three clashes with the Green Wave, ECU (34-17 overall, 11-10 C-USA) will converge on Pearl, Miss., for next week's conference tournament.

Between now and then, the Pirates, ranked No. 30 this week in the National Collegiate Baseball Writers poll, have a chance at four more wins. But ODU (26-22) is currently tied atop the Colonial Athletic Association with James Madison, and Tulane has surged to 10-11 in C-USA, one game behind third-place ECU and Houston.

In its five consecutive wins, ECU has outscored its opponents by a count of 51-6.
Juniors Corey Thompson and Zach Wright have each amassed 35 RBIs to lead the team, while senior Trent Whitehead has come on strong and taken over the team lead in total hits with 66. The Monarchs are led by Joshua Wright, who is fifth in CAA batting with a .373 average to go along with 12 home runs, 40 RBIs, 13 doubles and four triples. Christopher Baker leads the team with 50 RBIs.

**Pitching conservation**
While the Pirates feasted offensively against the Hornets last weekend, they were also able to limit the workload of their starters and get their bullpen plenty of work.

None of ECU's three starters against the Hornets — Mike Wright, Seth Maness and Kevin Brandt — pitched more than six innings or surpassed the 66-pitch mark.

Godwin also used nine different relievers, who combined to allow just one earned run over 11 innings.

“Coming into the weekend our goal was to not overextend our starters and not to overextend our pen,” said Godwin of his staff, which posted a 0.50 ERA last week. “This late in the year, I think it's critical we were able to do that. Most of our starters went 60 pitches. We really feel like everyone out of the pen got work to keep them sharp but they're also fresh enough to give us a push down the stretch.”

**Woods honored**
Senior right-hander and former Louisburg College transfer Zach Woods was named Conference USA Pitcher of the Week on Monday. He became ECU's third pitcher this season to receive the honor, joining fellow starters Maness and Brandt on that list.

Woods threw six shutout innings last Wednesday in the Pirates' 9-0 win over Wake Forest in Zebulon. He scattered four hits, walked two and struck out four en route to his second win of the year after returning from an oblique strain suffered April 12 in a start at North Carolina.

**Open wide**
Dentists with East Carolina University will conduct free screenings for oral cancer before tonight's ECU-ODU game.

Dental chairs will be set up outside Clark-LeClair Stadium, and screenings will be conducted for one hour beginning at 4:45 p.m. No appointment is necessary, and patients will be seen on a walk-up basis.

The event is sponsored by the UNC Cancer Network, Cancer Services at Pitt County Memorial Hospital and the Leo W. Jenkins Cancer Center.

Sports editor Jim Gentry contributed to this story. Contact Nathan Summers at nsummers@reflector.com or 252-329-9595.
Letter: Coffee party a more civil cup of tea
Tuesday, May 17, 2011

People approach me and ask is the coffee party real or a tongue-in-cheek group committed to spoofing the tea party. A spoof? Nothing could be further from the truth.

The announcements of monthly programs and the coverage of such programs show that the coffee party is dedicated to holding public forums on pressing issues facing the public.

It was organized nationwide only a year or so ago in response to town meeting fiascoes orchestrated by the tea party. There had to be a better way to provide sensible solutions than yelling and disrupting meetings, regardless of how upset the general public may be with the state of affairs. The coffee party felt the need to fill this gap.

Our mission is to provide public forums (town meetings) that are informative, rational, intelligent, respectful and open to the public with time for an extensive question-and-answer period. These monthly meetings can be seen on local television Channel 23. They have included ECU's dean of business school talking about the economy, ECU history chairman discussing elections past and present, ECU professor of religious studies on religion and politics, a panel of physicians, a professor from Brody School of Medicine, and a legislative expert discussed coming to grips with the health care bill — improve it or repeal it? And last month, our diverse panel of educators, past and present, grappled with problems of educating our children.

This month's program, tonight at 7, will be “The Constitution: Can It Still Work For the People?” The presenter, Carol Moore, is both a lawyer and a teacher of law. The public is invited to come and express concerns during the Q&A session.

Now, doesn't the coffee party sound sensible, responsible, hoping to awaken the public on issues germane to the democratic process in the true spirit of the town meeting?

RAYMOND SOBEL
Greenville
Commencement speech wasn't NCCU student's own
BY JANE STANCILL - Staff Writer
A law student who graduated from N.C. Central University last week is in hot water after plagiarizing a speech in front of thousands of people at commencement.

Preston Mitchum, 25, of Youngstown, Ohio, apologized Monday for his conduct, which has triggered a review by NCCU officials.

In an interview, Mitchum said he was under pressure to come up with a speech and found a YouTube video of a speech made last year by Anthony Corvino, a student at Binghamton University in New York.

Mitchum copied the speech, delivering parts of it word for word at Friday's ceremony for graduate and professional students at NCCU. In an interview Monday, he said he meant to credit Corvino in the speech, but didn't.

"I feel terrible, and I know this is going to have a horrific backlash," he said. A faculty disciplinary committee will review the matter, said Raymond Pierce, NCCU's law dean.

"Quite frankly, I'm disgusted," Pierce said. "I spared no words in expressing to Mr. Mitchum how disgusted I am with this, and shocked. I mean, he is a student leader here at our law school. Plagiarism is a sad yet unfortunate
reality in higher education, we all know that. That is not to make any excuse. ... I would say, of all places, a school of law has no place for that."

Corvino's speech was a humorous take on an average kid being asked to deliver a commencement speech. It touted the virtues of living an average life instead of constantly striving for fame and fortune. The speech has gained popularity on YouTube, where more than 178,000 have viewed it.

"We, the average, who have continued to prove that procrastination and apathy are not just big words, but also a way of life," Corvino said. "This speech is for the student who has never seen extra credit as an opportunity, but instead a threat - the same student who still believes that one day, there will be a snow day."

Corvino's words elicited laughs at NCCU, too.

"We, the average, who have committed to understanding that procrastination is not only a big word, but it's our way of life," Mitchum said in cap and gown at the podium. "This speech is for the student who doesn't see extra credit as an opportunity, but instead, a threat."

But, word spread on Facebook that the speech was not Mitchum's. Mitchum, who is set to take the bar exam this summer and pursue another graduate degree at American University, was emotional as he discussed the situation.

"I just don't want this to have an effect on my career," said Mitchum, who has published two law review articles and was head of the law school student body.

**Author's blessing**

Corvino, the Binghamton student who wrote the original speech, called The News & Observer on Monday to vouch for Mitchum. Corvino said Mitchum ran the speech by him via Facebook before NCCU's graduation, and Corvino OK'd it.

"I feel awful for the kid because he seems really sincere," Corvino said. "He apologized to me and everything. I think it was just like a big accident he made."
About a week ago, Mitchum said, he had started writing his own speech. "It just didn't sound right," he said. "It didn't sound right at all. That's when I began to go to different outlets and see, maybe there's a graduation speech that can give me an idea or a point or some kind of direction I can go toward."

He said he liked Corvino's speech and fully intended to credit him by name, but skipped over it "out of nervousness and anxiousness and excitement." He also added some of his own thoughts to the speech.

Mitchum said he is familiar with the rules of attribution.

"I'm not stupid," he said. "It's certainly not like, I was like, 'Oh, I'm going to get away with this,' because I know it's YouTube, it's everywhere." The dean said Mitchum's indiscretion was embarrassing and would be dealt with appropriately.

"You don't need this," he said. "It was a grand occasion - people coming together to see their children, sons and daughters and loved ones - graduate from law school. This is totally inconsistent with our legacy."

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Brandon Hilton gets a hug from girlfriend Erin Barry following UNCW's Commencement Exercises at Trask Coliseum on May 14.

UNCW prepares graduates for careers tackling top issues
By Jason Gonzales
Miiram Zeskind and Brandon Hilton say UNCW has prepared them for the "real world."

The two have grown in similar ways through the school's guidance, saying they have learned lessons in fiscal responsibility, independence and what constitutes a hard work ethic.

While the two are headed in very different career paths, both have found jobs working with some of the most important issues that face the United States – the economy and national security.

The two are part of the spring graduating class of about 1,800 undergraduates and 285 graduate students at the University of North Carolina Wilmington.

The school held ceremonies Thursday through Saturday.

Zeskind, a Blacksburg, Va., native and finance major, said her love of math attracted her to finance.

She will be heading to New York City to work with Barclays Capital Investment Bank on Wall Street.
"The division I will specifically be going into is the credit risk and global financial risk management division," she said. "I will be evaluating the credit of all the institutions that the company is trading with."

It's a job that she said she wouldn't have been able to get if it weren't for her schooling and mentors.

"When I was up for the internship (a year ago), there were 10 of us, most from Ivy League schools," she said. "Through all the resources that were given to me, I ended up being successful."

She said she is excited to jump into a profession that has changed since the financial meltdown.

"Things are really changing within the finance industry, and I get to witness those changes," Zeskind said.

For Hilton, an Apex native and computer science major, his career will have him working on the software that could help catch America's most wanted. He will be working for Praxis Engineering Technologies Inc. outside Washington, D.C.

"I may only write a part of the software code, but I will be part of something that collaborates to help capture terrorists and criminals," he said. "It's cool to think about."

He said he thanks UNCW for helping him find the opportunities to land a job in the defense field.

"I was originally pursuing graphic design stuff," he said.

But a semester with the school's face aging group, which focuses on developing computer algorithms to improve facial recognition technology, changed his career path and helped him find a passion for the line of work.

He said as he graduates from UNCW, he is happy for all he is learned and all he is about to do.

"It's just exciting to go out on my own and pursue what I love doing," Hilton said.

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UNC-CH picks Class of 2015 Morehead-Cain scholars

The University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill has selected its Morehead-Cain scholars for the class of 2015.

Fifty-two students from around the country, and the U.K. and Canada, were chosen for the scholarship program, which covers all expenses for four years of undergraduate study at UNC and offers summer enrichment experiences. It is the oldest merit scholarship program in the United States.

The students were selected for outstanding leadership, academic achievement, moral character and physical fitness.

Here are the Morehead-Cain scholars from our area:

**Hussein A. Ahmad** will graduate from Wake Early College of Health and Sciences in Raleigh, where he is founder and president of the Fitness Club, vice president of the National Honor Society and a regular community volunteer at nearby WakeMed hospital. He plays power forward on a recreational basketball team and has spent time job-shadowing a team of cardiovascular surgeons to learn more about careers in medicine. He is the son of Hannah Kharoufeh of Garner.

**Ioan Bolohan** will graduate from Millbrook High School in Raleigh, where he is president of the student executive board and a varsity runner on the cross-country team. He is president of the Quiz Bowl, captain of the Brain Game team and a member of numerous service organizations. A musician, Ioan learned piano early in life before moving on to clarinet. He is teaching himself to play the guitar. Ioan is the son of Emine and Ioan Bolohan of Raleigh.

**Sarah Whiting Cooley** will graduate from St. Paul's School in Concord, N.H., where she is a captain of the Nordic skiing team and is a prefect. She plays jazz and classical piano and French horn. Sarah is interested in politics and history and has twice participated in the Yale Model U.N. Conference. She also has received the St. Paul's Dickey Prize for best student in the humanities. She is the daughter of Allene Cooley of Raleigh.
Ellen Corbitt Currin graduated in spring 2010 from Broughton High School in Raleigh, taking a gap year between high school and college. At Broughton, she was yearbook editor, captain of the cross-country team and president of Young Women for Women International, a service club that raises funds for and awareness of women's issues across the world. She was a member of Broughton's Class Council and a vocal leader of a campaign against proposed cuts to the school's international baccalaureate program. She is the daughter of Mary and Benjamin Currin of Raleigh.

Safiyah Munzer Ismail will graduate from Cary High School in Cary, where she is president of the student body and captain of the women's cross-country team. She is a longtime volunteer in local retirement homes and chair of the Cary Teen Council. Safiyah is the daughter of Sumaiya and Munzer Ismail of Cary.

Camille Elyse Morgan will graduate from the Trinity School of Durham and Chapel Hill in Durham, where she helped lead the school's robotics team to a first-place finish in the National High School competition. She is a dedicated soccer player and has served as captain of the basketball, tennis and volleyball teams. Camille also is multilingual, having studied Spanish, Latin and a bit of ancient Greek. She is the daughter of Lynne and Doug Morgan of Chapel Hill.

Neel Mahendra Patel will graduate from Carrboro High School, where he is student government president and a four-year member of Model United Nations. Neel also is a longtime golfer and has been captain of the varsity team since his sophomore year. He is the son of Mahendra and Panna Patel of Chapel Hill.

Cecilia Stefany Polanco will graduate from Northern High School in Durham, where she is president of the student body and founder of the international club. She has volunteered for several years with Teen Voices, helping to plan community health forums. Cecilia is the daughter of Jose Sandoval and Nora Polanco of Durham.

Yasamin Ege Sanii will graduate from Enloe High School in Raleigh, where she is student body president and in the senior company of the Academy for the Performing Arts. She attended the N.C. Governor's School East for Dance and has worked summers as a dance instructor. Yasamin serves the volunteer organization Helping Horse, a therapeutic riding
program for individuals with disabilities, and cheers on Enloe's athletic teams through their Eagle Club. She is the daughter of Gul Ege and Ezat Sanii of Cary.

**Sagar Samir Shukla** will graduate from the N.C. School of Science and Mathematics in Durham, where he is student body president, a member of the varsity tennis team and co-president of the Multicultural Association for Indian Awareness. As founder and president of the school's Vegetarian Society, Sagar brought awareness of the needs of vegetarians to cafeteria workers and classmates. Sagar is the son of Yesha and Samir Shukla of Charlotte.

**Katrina Marie Wertz** will graduate from Cary Christian School, where she is captain and goalkeeper for the soccer team, a member of the swim team and a student government senator. As president of Interact Club, she founded a tutoring program for local Hispanic children. She is a referee for the local children's soccer league. Katrina is the daughter of Christine and Scott Wertz of Cary.

**Violette Liang Zhu** will graduate from the N.C. School of Science and Mathematics in Durham, where she is a member of student government and a starter for the women's lacrosse team. Previously, she had founded a Science Olympiad chapter at Chapel Hill High School. At the School of Science and Math, she continued her involvement in Science Olympiad, helping the school's team reach the national competition. Violette is the daughter of Liang Shi and Tong Zhu of Chapel Hill.
UNC Health says Rex isn't for sale
BY ALAN M. WOLF - STAFF WRITER
The board of the UNC Health Care System reiterated Monday that it doesn't plan to sell its Raleigh subsidiary, Rex Healthcare, but will form a committee to consider an acquisition offer from rival WakeMed.

During a meeting Monday, the UNC Health board approved a resolution that stated that its preliminary review of WakeMed's $750 million offer showed a takeover "would substantially disrupt the business model" of UNC Health.

"We are not interested in selling Rex," said UNC Health CEO Bill Roper, after the board meeting.

WakeMed leaders notified UNC president Tom Ross about its proposal to buy Rex in a letter last week. That letter did not include details such as how WakeMed would pay for a deal or its ability to afford it, Roper said.

When UNC Health receives an official offer from WakeMed, it plans to form a special committee of board members to review it, Roper said.

"We consider it a major step forward that UNC Health Care's Board of Directors has acknowledged that WakeMed's offer to purchase Rex is deserving of review and consideration," WakeMed CEO Bill Atkinson said in a prepared statement.

Roper declined to say whether UNC Health might accept a higher price, except to say that Rex isn't for sale.

Roper said selling assets such as Rex would only be a short-term solution for North Carolina's cash crunch.
Our Views:

Change agent

There's no credible reason to change a 2010 law that made North Carolina's once-secretive state personnel records more open. But Republican state Sen. Pete Brunstetter insists the window is too wide and that the law causes unfair inconvenience for local officials.

Brunstetter is sponsoring a bill pushed by some of those officials, including sheriffs, school board members and county commissioners (he was once a commissioner in Forsyth County). The bill seeks to prevent the public release of dismissal letters written before that new law took effect, and it also would not require government officials to release dismissal letters written for "at will" employees such as deputies and teacher assistants.

That's not all. Brunstetter's bill would stop the release of records of disciplinary actions taken before the new law, and limit the release of salary data to only that going back to Oct. 1, 2007.

This is a sorry bit of business. And before the bandwagon gets crowded, let's remember why the law was passed.

Proper oversight

The information first should be public because the employees it covers are public. And public money pays them. State and local governments are not Wall Street firms or independent music or grocery stores. They do the people's business, and how they do it is the people's business. More importantly, open government helps ensure honest government. Personnel records sometimes can contain information pertinent to decisions made in departments.

For example, and this is hypothetical: Let's say an employee in the state Division of Motor Vehicles works hard for the election of a state senator. That employee then gets some promotions and huge bumps in pay, way outside the norm, because that senator has spoken to people at DMV.
Without access to employment history and salary history, no one would be able to connect the dots. The recent law provides that.

Or consider a sheriff's deputy who gets in a fight with someone being arrested, and the person is injured. Without the access provided to information under the recent law, a sheriff could refuse to say whether that deputy had previous problems with suspects for which he had been disciplined.

In both these cases, the public has a clear interest in knowing the entire stories. It must be said that employees also have an interest in the information being public. A case of someone who was demoted and suffered a pay cut because of politics might be hidden by a supervisor who could shield records. A deputy who had never had any trouble before would have his position strengthened by the public availability of that information from a personnel record.

The full picture

Brunstetter would in effect limit access by shortening the length of time salary data could be available and shielding more dismissal letters. The senator makes it clear he's acting at the behest of officials who offer the excuse that looking up such data is cumbersome and inconvenient for them.

Too bad. The importance of recognizing the public's right to know trumps any (likely) minor inconvenience. And the benefits of the new law go far beyond being a help to the news media. Those records, or what's in them, sometimes can reflect on the effectiveness and honesty of government itself. Republican Sen. Phil Berger, now the Senate leader as president pro tem, properly showed last year an understanding of what was at stake, and this would be a good time for him to maintain the high ground.

In addition to Brunstetter's effort, the 2010 law already has been challenged by public officials who wanted state Attorney General Roy Cooper to give them a legal interpretation that would have allowed them to restrict some access. Cooper, to his credit and in a testament to the law's credibility, did not deliver and supported the greater openness of records the law established.

That is where things should stand.
Shown here pitching for the USA Baseball Women's National Team in 2008, Marti Sementelli has been offered a small athletic scholarship by Montreat baseball coach Michael Bender. / Koji Yamazaki/Special to Citizen-Times

Rare baseball scholarship offer yields uncommon reaction for Montreat College
Written by Tyler Norris Goode
Montreat College baseball coach Michael Bender expected some publicity when he offered a small athletic scholarship to a female pitcher.

He didn't anticipate a frenzy.

Even though right-handed pitcher Marti Sementelli hasn't signed a letter of intent to play for the Cavaliers, Bender said the story was mentioned on the bottom ticker of CNN before he spoke to anyone at the network.

“I think the media probably got hold of this before they should have,” said Bender, Montreat's second-year coach. “I'm not trying to skirt away from this because I have given her this opportunity, and I knew that some of this would come with it. It's hard because I didn't really want to be known around Asheville for this; I kind of wanted to be known around Asheville for playing pretty good baseball.”

Instead, Bender said he's received unpleasant emails from Montreat alumni as well as current players threatening to transfer because he extended a collegiate opportunity to a female pitcher from Birmingham High School in
Lake Balboa, Calif.

Though he's also had positive feedback, the sheer volume of media interest surprised Bender because Sementelli has no guarantee of even making Montreat's varsity team. The coach said that as a general rule, all Montreat freshmen start out on the developmental team until they earn a varsity spot.

“We're not the only school that's offered her a scholarship,” Bender said. “I'm giving her an extremely low amount of money to come here and play JV baseball. The level of high school baseball she plays in California is better than the JV level you play at small Christian colleges. I don't mean the varsity level; I mean the JV level.”

Sementelli did not return a phone call to her house on Monday. She played on the USA Baseball Women's National Team in 2008 and 2010 and is listed at 5-foot-2 and 115 pounds on Birmingham's roster on maxpreps.com.

Several current Montreat players reached by the Citizen-Times on Monday said they knew very little about the situation and hadn't talked to any players who've considered quitting the team.

“It's not the color of the skin, and it's not the gender that's going to determine a good baseball player,” said Montreat catcher Brent Rowe, a rising sophomore from McDowell High. “I think it's a cool opportunity for her, for the school and for baseball because it's never been really determined that a girl can play.”

Also excited for Sementelli's opportunity is Ashley Bratcher, director of the women's national team for USA Baseball. Bratcher estimates there are 1,000 girls playing high school baseball and said most who play beyond that are on club teams in college.

“It's definitely a step in the right direction,” Bratcher said. “I know that from an early age, a lot of athletes start playing baseball. Then there's this sort of 12-year-old funnel where, ‘OK, girls, you go play softball, and boys, you keep playing baseball.' And I know for players — particularly like Marti — they like baseball. She's always been the only girl on her team. So this is a chance for her to keep playing the sport she loves.”

Bender wouldn't reveal the exact scholarship amount he offered but said:
“For a school that costs $33,000, it's chump change.”

That didn't prevent alumni from sending him a sharply worded email.

“‘What kind of program am I running by offering a female a baseball scholarship?’” Bender said, recalling a sentiment in the email. “A lot of people question my integrity through all this just for the simple, ignorant, simpleton fact that they can't look past that she's a female.”

Bender insists Sementelli's skills warrant a college chance regardless of her gender. He specifically likes her curveball and change-up that he described as a “palm ball.”

Asked whether the criticism was making him reconsider the offer, he said: “No, no, no, no, no, no.

“I'm going to stand tall,” he continued. “I'm going to do it. At the same time, I was raised by a woman. I was raised not to think in this prejudicial fashion to think that women can't play baseball. This young girl was raised by a man; didn't really have a mother figure. Baseball is all she knows. If anybody has looked up this female on YouTube, they can see this woman knows how to pitch. She's not just a girl. She's a baseball player. She struck out 14 in 22 innings. That's good stats; I don't really care where you're at.”
College Student Debt Grows. Is It Worth It?
by NPR Staff
Part of a series on young people and financial literacy

The amount of money Americans owe on student loans recently exceeded the nation's credit card debt. That may lead many to ask: Is it smart to borrow a lot of money to go to college? Student financial aid expert Mark Kantrowitz says that college debt is OK — if you're careful.

"It's smart if it's enabling you to invest in your future," Kantrowitz tells NPR's Steve Inskeep. "But if you borrow more than your expected starting salary after you graduate, you're going to struggle to pay your loans."

As an example, Kantrowitz says if you're going to borrow $10,000 a year for four years, you should hope that the field you've chosen has a starting salary of at least $40,000. If you are going to be borrowing more than that, he suggests looking for a less expensive school.

"I can see someone borrowing perhaps $10,000 a year if they're majoring in science, technology, engineering, mathematics, computer science or nursing," says Kantrowitz, the publisher of the FinAid and Fastweb websites.

"But I can't see borrowing that amount of money for a degree in art, or humanities, or sociology, because the jobs just don't pay as well for those fields of study," he says.

That might make some people wince — especially those who focused on liberal arts in college. Kantrowitz says it's not that those majors are worthless, but that students have to face the reality of how they're going to pay back the money they've borrowed for their education.
So what are the most worthless degrees or, at least, the hardest to monetize later on in life? Kantrowitz says he often hears from religious studies and theater majors who have a hard time paying back their loans.

**Graduating With A Debt Burden**

Source: Analysis by Mark Kantrowitz, publisher of Fastweb.com and FinAid.org

Notes: Debt at graduation for bachelor's degree recipients. Data for 2008-11 are projections.

Source: Analysis by Mark Kantrowitz, publisher of Fastweb.com and FinAid.org
Ethnomusicology is another example. Kantrowitz describes one student who was thinking of borrowing more than $100,000 to pay for that degree. "There are only two main occupations for a degree in ethnomusicology," he says. "One is being a music librarian, which doesn't pay very well. The other is being [on the] university faculty, teaching other students about ethnomusicology."

Kantrowitz suggests thinking about a double major in a field that will allow you to pay back that debt.

"I'd be the last person to tell a student not to follow their dreams," he says. "You just need to enter into it with a dose of reality, so that rather than trying to figure out how you repay your loans after you graduate, you have that conversation before you incur the debt."

Kantrowitz, who is also the author of Secrets to Winning a Scholarship, says that to a large extent, debt is unavoidable, and two-thirds of students graduate with some amount of it.

Kantrowitz tells students, "Before you spend student loan money on anything, ask yourself if you would still pay for it at twice the price. Because by the time you've paid back that student loan, it's probably going to cost you about $2 for every dollar you've borrowed."

And that money adds up to a tidy sum: For students graduating this year, Kantrowitz estimates that their debt will be about $27,000. And if you throw parents' loans into the mix, he says, the average is going to be more like $34,000.

**Tips For Minimizing Student Debt**
Advice from financial aid expert Mark Kantrowitz.

-- Save before going to college.
-- Apply for scholarships.
-- Apply for federal loans before applying for private loans — they're cheaper.
-- Think hard about your major. If you don't expect your starting salary after graduation to match what you borrowed, consider a less expensive college.
-- Double major in a more lucrative field.
-- Pay interest while you're in school.