North Carolina could have a completed state budget by Saturday as the Senate gave final approval Thursday to a $19.7 billion spending plan that cuts taxes and adds teachers but reduces funding to all levels of education and environmental agencies.

The House is expected to vote today and early Saturday morning before the bill heads to Gov. Beverly Perdue's desk.

The Republican-controlled Senate voted 31-19 along party lines on a plan that would reduce spending in the Department of Environment and Natural Resources by more than 12 percent, cutting the agency's overall workforce by about 160 positions. The plan cuts the budget for K-12 education by 5.8 percent, the University of North Carolina system by 12 percent and the community college system by 10.7 percent.

The Senate's final version of the budget keeps all teaching assistants and adds 1,100 more teachers in primary grades. The plan lets expire a one cent sales tax that would have generated $1.3 billion in revenue, and increases discretionary cuts to local school systems.

“I think we've got a bi-partisan budget that can be supported on both sides of the aisle,” said Sen. Louis Pate, R-Wayne. “We did the best we could under the economic circumstances that we have. We could raise taxes and fund all sorts of things, but that's a billion out of the state economy.”

Perdue has suggested she might veto the bill unless it's changed, but Republicans may be able to override a veto if House Democrats who said they'll support the final plan remain allied with the GOP.

“I would certainly support it, I'm very proud of this budget,” said Rep. Bill Cook, R-Beaufort. “It was well-done. I think it will pass with bi-partisan support so it will not be vetoed by the governor.”

“I expect that it will pass (the House) and I expect that I will not support it because of the severe cuts, especially to education,” said Rep. Marian McLawhorn, D-Pitt. “There are some good things.”

The East Carolina University dental school, set to open this fall, is fully funded. ECU spokesman John Durham said he would not comment until the a final budget is approved and the university had a chance to examine the document. The UNC Board of Governors
in February approved a 6.8 percent or $304 increase in tuition and fees for ECU that awaits final approval from the legislature.

“We're talking about generations of structural damage that this will have on all 16 campuses,” Perdue said in a conference call with reporters on Thursday afternoon. “We're going to lose courses, faculty, campus safety positions.”

McLawhorn echoed Perdue's concerns about the effects on education. “I'm very concerned that while some money was added to education, the amount of negative reserve passed down to the local level was increased significantly and I'm afraid the job loss will be significant too,” McLawhorn said.

The budget would decrease state funding to Pitt County Schools by $6.8 million, according to Michael Cowin, assistant superintendent for finance. Cowin said to realistically balance the reductions, county classrooms and programs would be affected.

Pate disagreed. “The last place I expect to see cuts made is in the classroom; there are other areas,” Pate said.

A call to Edith Warren, D-Pitt, was not returned.

The budget takes aim at environmental regulations and funds designed to protect land and water, expand parks and track mountainsides to avoid development in the path of potential landslides.

Money to help local governments and conservation groups protect water quality would be slashed by tens of millions of dollars.

“This budget is bad news for North Carolina's environment,” said Margaret Hartzell, a lobbyist for the group Environment North Carolina. Republicans who assembled the environmental provisions in the budget say everyone in state government had to take cuts and that environmental protections won't be harmed. They also argue the changes will encourage business and industry by eliminating unnecessary regulations.

“We had cuts to make. We had to make them and wherever you make them you're going to get blamed, it doesn't make any difference,” said Rep. Roger West, R-Cherokee, co-chairman of the House environment budget subcommittee. “I think some of the regulatory change will help business — I see no way for it not to.”
State budget's advance fires up critics  
BY JANE STANCILL AND LYNN BONNER - Staff writers

As the Senate gave final approval to a $19.7 billion budget plan Thursday, a chorus of education leaders warned of harmful consequences for North Carolina's classrooms.

The discontent grew louder among Democrats and the state's education establishment as the Republican budget plan moved to the House for a series of quick votes starting today. The House plans to send it to Gov. Bev Perdue on Saturday. Five House Democrats have said they will join Republicans in support, creating a veto-proof margin.

In a unanimous vote Thursday, the State Board of Education passed a resolution saying the budget "is not in the interest of the people of this great state."

Board Chairman Bill Harrison called the budget "a disgrace" and took direct aim at Republican leaders in an impassioned 20-minute speech that drew a standing ovation in the boardroom.

"If you want to dismantle the public schools, if you want to privatize them - say it," Harrison said. "Don't say 'We're reforming a broken system.' Say, 'I don't care about public schools, I'm going to break an improving system and here's my budget by which I am going to do it.' Let's be honest with one another, folks."

Republicans said such fears are overblown. The Senate's budget would spend $7.46 billion on public schools, while Perdue would spend $7.57 billion. The difference shrinks, though, when taking into account the fact that the Senate budget transfers $65 million for the More at Four preschool program to another part of the budget.

"I think he's definitely overreacting," said Sen. Tom Apodaca, a Hendersonville Republican and chairman of an education committee. "I think he's out of touch with the locals."

Apodaca said he has spoken with two superintendents in the western part of the state who were not overly concerned. "You know, of course they would like to have more - who wouldn't?" Apodaca said. "But they both said they felt like this was something they could work with."
The Senate plan does not include a specific reduction for teacher assistants, and it includes $62 million for more teachers to reduce class size in grades 1, 2 and 3. But it would force school districts to cut an additional $124 million, which could mean the loss of an estimated 9,200 jobs, including teachers and teacher assistants.

**UNC system cuts**

For higher education, UNC system President Tom Ross said the Senate's net cut of $407 million will be difficult for the universities to absorb and still be able to provide "an affordable, world-class university education to our citizens."

Perdue chimed in with a letter to Republican leaders arguing that deep cuts can be prevented by retaining the three-quarters of a penny sales tax that is due to expire. She also wrote that she's willing to consider other revenue sources to bring in money.

In a conference call with reporters, she called the Senate budget "ideological and dangerous" for higher education. Perdue was joined by retired UNC system President Bill Friday, who said the plan would do long-term damage to the state's economic future.

"We are losing the momentum that has triggered the growth and development of this state," Friday said. "We simply have built what we have because of the quality of these institutions, and our future rests squarely on maintaining that quality."

Perdue proposed a $2.6 billion budget for the UNC system. The budget moving through the legislature puts UNC spending at $2.5 billion.

**Berger decries 'rhetoric'**

Senate leader Phil Berger, an Eden Republican, said the governor is moving "more and more into this extreme rhetoric. She does appear to be more desperate in terms of how she's characterizing things."

While Democrats and Republicans traded barbs, education leaders dissected the policy issues and specific spending cuts.

Harrison, the state board chairman, said the Senate budget sends mixed messages.

For example, the plan would expand the school calendar by five days, but it would cut transportation - making it harder to bus children to school on the extra days. The budget calls for a study on how to ensure students are reading by third grade. But it eliminates a $10 million pilot program for
diagnostic tools that would provide teachers with real-time information on student learning.

The Senate plan also includes a 19 percent reduction in funding for assistant principals, who play a big role in school safety and discipline, Harrison said.

Class size goal doubted

As for the Senate's class-size reduction plan, Harrison is skeptical about the stated goal of eventually funding schools on a 15-to-1 student-teacher ratio in early grades. The current funding ratio is 18-to-1, though class sizes are typically 21 to 24 students.

"We'll never get there," Harrison said. "We won't get there in my lifetime."

But Harrison was most critical of Republican claims that the public school system needs an overhaul. He said he is proud of the progress North Carolina has made recently, citing graduation rates that climbed from 68 percent to 74 percent in the last four years.

"It's not a broken system," Harrison said. "I can list indicators all day long that would show we're not a broken system."

Berger, though, said such progress isn't good enough.

"We've got to move those numbers dramatically," said Berger, who has said the Senate budget gets a start on reform. "We've got to stop being satisfied with inching up."

On Thursday, Perdue did not say whether she would veto the budget, but she wasn't shy about bashing it.

"I can't wait to get my hands on the document," she said, "so I can find more things that are evil."

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What's different?

How the state Senate's budget and Gov. Bev Perdue's budget vary on K-12 education:

Teachers

**Senate**: Adds funding for 1,124 teachers to reduce student-teacher ratio to 17-to-1 in grades 1, 2 and 3. The current ratio is 18-to-1 in those grades, though it's not unusual for classes to have 21 to 24 students. Senate leaders say they want to eventually get to a 15-to-1 ratio.

**Perdue**: Does not add teachers or teacher assistants, but also does not require local systems to make personnel cuts.

**Shift funding to locals**
Senate: Forces school districts to cut $124 million, which could mean the loss of 9,200 positions. Shifts responsibility for school bus replacement to local districts in 2012-13. Perdue: Shifts school bus replacement and worker’s compensation claims to counties.

Administrators
Senate: Cuts funding for assistant principals by 19 percent and central office administrators by 16 percent.
Perdue: Reduces school administrators by 7.5 percent and central office staff by 10 percent.

More at Four
Senate: Reduces this preschool program by 20 percent and moves remainder of funding to Department of Health and Human Services.
Perdue: Would maintain More at Four as an education program.

Other
Senate: Eliminates appropriations for dropout prevention grants, teacher mentoring, school technology fund, staff and teacher training programs.
Perdue: Eliminates appropriations for school technology fund, staff development.
Wrong turns

The vision of North Carolina shared by the Republican leaders in the General Assembly who shaped a budget that shortly will be on its way to Gov. Beverly Perdue is shortsighted at best, catastrophic at worst and certain to hurt public education at all levels.

Dramatic budget cuts will reduce the availability of health services for those who are in critical need of them by cutting Medicaid, put thousands of state employees out of work and restrict the state's capacity to deal with a host of challenges. There will be an additional impact on private employers whose payrolls are dependent on state contracts. The services some of those private companies provide will diminish or disappear.

Yes, the budget must be lean, and yes, a degree of hardship is inevitable with a $2.5 billion shortfall caused by the poor economy. But some of the decisions made by legislative leaders are hard to swallow.

For example: Community colleges are supposed to be able to react quickly if a prospective employer being recruited by the state needs specific training for workers. The colleges are job engines, in other words, in a time when jobs are priceless. Yet funding would be cut, on the grounds that available money remains unspent. This should be a moment to up the ante, not scale it back.

Consider also the shell game of shifting responsibility for some expenses from the state to local school boards. That could have dire consequences because many local governments are just as strapped as the state is. There's nothing under those shells.

Democratic Sen. Martin Nesbitt of Asheville, leader of the Senate minority, noted earlier this week that cuts in public schools will drop North Carolina to 49th in the country in per-pupil spending. Will the Republican boast be, "Hey, at least we're not last"? Perhaps they'll use that as the new license plate slogan.

But the schools aren't all that's at risk in this budget that allows a $1 billion-a-year sales tax boost of one cent on the dollar to expire, and incredibly, further reduces revenue with a tax cut for small business. Having taken charge of both houses of the General Assembly for the first time in a
century, the GOP leadership plans to feast on regulations pertaining to business, in the name of being "business-friendly" in a state that already ranks at or near the top in that category.

It doesn't stop there: Long annoyed by the "tree-huggers" at the Department of Environment and Natural Resources who have struggled to keep the state's air and water clean, and to protect the spectacular assets of our beaches and mountains, the GOP is trying to gut DENR's authority. In exchange for the ideological satisfaction of getting back at environmentalists, finite resources that also happen to be crucial to protecting the tourism industry will be at risk.

Virtually every government department that serves the people suffers, and so will those who have counted on that service (the poor who need Medicaid, for just one example).

North Carolina has long prided itself on being a place of hope, promise and unlimited horizons for citizens, particularly those young people whose dreams are nurtured in public education.

This budget will diminish hope, puncture promise, lower horizons and kill those dreams. It will change the face, and the heart, of this goodliest land. But it is not too late to do better.
Blackbeard’s Cannon Rolls Out

Artifact to be featured in maritime-museum display

BY LYNSEY HORN
The Daily Reflector

Booty from a 300-year-old notorious pirate ship-wreck sailed out of Pirate country Wednesday to be displayed in a museum.

The cannon will be among the items featured in “Life Aboard Blackbeard’s Queen Anne’s Revenge,” an exhibit at the North Carolina Maritime Museum in Beaufort that will open June 11.

“This new exhibition will put a lot more material on display than has ever been on display before,” said Sarah Watkins-Kenney.

Watkins-Kenney is the chief conservator for the Underwater Archaeology Branch of the Office of State Archaeology and lab director of Queen Anne’s Revenge Lab (QAR) located at East Carolina University.

The cannon is among 250,000 artifacts recovered in the Beaufort inlet from the shipwreck site of Blackbeard’s flagship, the Queen Anne’s Revenge, and is 8 feet long and weighs 1,912 pounds.

See CANNON, B3
Anthropology students Randy Alan Knoll and Patrick Salland take measurements of a home site while participating in the 2011 Peace College Archaeological Field School at the North Carolina State Historic Site of Brunswick Town and Fort Anderson on May 31, 2011.

**Piece of jewelry a stunning find at Brunswick Town dig**

By Kelly Poe

Tom Beaman has been an archaeologist for 20 years. But he's never uncovered anything like what he's found in Brunswick County.

A small, hand-painted piece of a pendant, decorated to look like a strawberry, is the most personal find he's had in his career.

"That little piece of jewelry we found … it's a very human part of archeology. It was picked out for someone, worn by someone, bought for someone," Beaman said. "I've been very fortunate in my career … and I've never found anything like that."

Beaman, archeology and anthropology instructor at Wake Technical Community College and part-time instructor at Peace College in Raleigh, is co-leading a group of 28 students from across the country excavating Brunswick Town/Fort Anderson. Community volunteers are joining the students to excavate.
The group is investigating Civil War, colonial and prehistoric periods at the historic site near Orton Plantation.

"What's so cool about archeology is when this stuff comes out of the ground, it is literally the first time anyone has seen it in 200, 500, 2,000 years," Beaman said.

Along with excavating, the students are also using metal detectors to survey the land for metals, such as nails, that might indicate the presence of Civil War barracks and running a field lab. For every day spent in the field, five to seven are spent processing the artifacts in the lab, Beaman said.

"The artifacts are great, but what we were really looking for is structure," said Jim McKee, historic site interpreter for the N.C. Division of Historic Sites. "It'll hopefully give us a better picture of what happened there the last month (of the war)."

Friday, the students will welcome a group led by East Carolina University working up the coast at Fort Macon and the groups will work together on the Brunswick Town site. Next week, the Peace-led group will go to Atlantic Beach to work on the other group's site.

"It's a good way to exchange ideas, compare and contrast artifact patterns and that sort of thing," McKee said.

The primary site was first excavated in 1968, and the Peace College group that came in 2009 was the first to reexamine the site since then. Smith will return to the site June 11, the last day of the dig, to speak and participate in an archeology forum for the public.

On May 17, the first day of the dig, the students found definite patterns of brick that seem to make up a hearth and a part of a chimney, likely from barracks.

Matthew Kerr, a senior at the University of North Carolina Wilmington, chose to do work with this group in part because of his interest in Native American artifacts.

"I don't want to go dig in Egypt because that has nothing to do with me. It's not a part of who I am," Kerr said. "As an American, it's important to deal with our history."

Several students on the project come from across the country, from schools including the University of California, Berkeley, and Bucknell University.

"The most exciting thing is to see students getting here early every day and get in the dirt and the sun," said Vincent Melomo, Peace College assistant
professor of anthropology and co-field director. "You would think no one would want to do that."

"But they do."

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ECU wins NCBA World Series
The Daily Reflector
Friday, June 3, 2011

COLUMBUS, Ga. — The East Carolina club baseball team parlayed one monstrous rally into a national championship Thursday night.

The Pirates scored eight times in the fifth inning and defeated Florida State, 10-3, in the final game of the NCBA World Series. ECU, which finished the year 29-8, started World Series play with a 4-2 win over the Seminoles last Saturday.

Having already left six runners on base and trailing by two runs in the bottom of the fifth, the Pirate offense exploded for eight runs on six hits to gain a commanding 9-3 edge. Maurice Mackey scored on an error to make it 3-2 FSU and the Pirates proceeded to load the bases with no outs. Juan Gloria then singled home Brian Burgess to knot the contest at 3-3 and ECU took its first lead on a single by Jerrod Bornman that scored Korey Merritt for a 4-3 advantage.

After Stihl Sowers came home on a bases-loaded walk, consecutive two-run singles by Mackey and Burgess pushed the Pirate lead to 9-3. ECU added another run the following inning when Cory Schackelford scored on a Mackey single.

Zachary Woodley got the win, limiting Florida State to three runs on four hits while striking out four in seven innings.

Reliever Nash Blackley didn't allow a hit and struck out three in two innings. The top three hitters in the Pirates' batting order — Shackelford, Mackey and Burgess — combined to go 6-for-12 with six runs and seven RBIs. The ECU offense also drew eight walks.

Burgess led all hitters with a 3-for-5, three runs batted in effort. Bornman and Mackey also had multi-hit games for the Pirates.

No Florida State player recorded more than one hit.

Trailing 2-1, East Carolina left a runner in scoring position in the third frame and the bases loaded in the fourth.

FSU extended its lead to 3-1 with a run in the top of the fifth when Peter Fitzgerald singled with two outs and later stole home for a run.
After the visitors scored twice in the first, East Carolina countered in the bottom half of the frame when Shackelford singled and later scored on a single by Burgess.

ECU was participating in the NCBA World Series for the first time.
ECU's Wright gets call tonight
BY SHANE METTLEN - Correspondent

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. Before East Carolina can contemplate a potential weekend matchup with Virginia, the No. 1 overall seed in the NCAA tournament and host team for the Charlottesville regional, the Pirates acknowledged Thursday they need to take care of business today against St. John's in their tournament opener.

Even so, ECU coach Billy Godwin seemed to have the top-ranked Cavaliers in mind when picking the weekend's pitching rotation.

Pirates ace Seth Maness (9-3, 1.88 ERA), is likely to get the start against the Cavaliers on Saturday should both teams win. That means junior Mike Wright (6-3, 2.84 ERA) gets the ball for the opener, his first NCAA tournament start.

"He was a reliever last year," said ECU catcher Zach Wright (no relation). "Mike did a great job of coming back, and he worked real hard and he developed a slider. It is what we call his 'out pitch.' That's what he's been throwing a lot of the time to get strikeouts, and if we need a big pitch in a big situation, that's what he's going to go to."

If Wright is feeling the pressure, he isn't showing it. The right-hander and the other Pirates appeared loose while hanging around the visitors' dugout after practice Thursday, griping each other in bear hugs and teasing Wright before interviews.

Perhaps the reason for the confidence is that despite beginning the season in the role of the No. 3 starter, Wright has, at times, pitched like an ace. It was Wright on the mound on Feb. 27 when the Pirates (39-19) took the final game of a series at UVa's Davenport Field to hand the Cavaliers their only nonconference loss.

In that 4-3 Pirates win, Wright allowed one earned run on five hits in seven innings of work.

"I knew we needed to win that game, and we need to win this game," Wright said. "When you have offense, it gives you all the confidence in the world, and we're hitting good, so it's easy to pitch."
Wright eventually slid into the Friday spot after Maness, the NCAA's active leader in career wins with 37, missed a start with a minor injury midway through the season.

"Mike has emerged as our Friday guy, mainly because of Seth having some arm issues," Godwin said. "We play a very good team in St. John's, and Mike has been our Friday guy through the last half of the season, and that's why he got the nod."

A loss in the opener would put the Pirates in a tough spot, but Wright isn't worried.

"All I have to do is my job," he said. "I'll let the offense and everybody else take care of what they have to do."

**NCAA Division I Baseball Tournament**
Charlottesville (Va.) Regional At Davenport Field
Today's games
1 p.m.: Virginia (49-9) vs. Navy (33-23-1)
6 p.m.: East Carolina (39-19) vs. St. John's (35-20)
Union Pines Senior Wins Junior Builders Cup

By Hannah Sharpe

Lindsay Caddell is this year's recipient of the Junior Builders Cup awarded by the Kiwanis Club of the Sandhills.

The senior at Union Pines High School received the award and a $2,500 scholarship at National Golf Club during a recent Kiwanis luncheon.

Caddell was one of four local high school students nominated for the annual award, which recognizes a graduating senior in Moore County who exemplifies achievement in academics, athletics, school activities and community service.

Each year, principals and teachers from the area's high schools nominate an outstanding student for the award.

The Kiwanis has given the award since 1962.

Other nominees for the award were Garrett Berk from Pinecrest High School, Amelia Schirmer from The O'Neal School and Tyler Wallace from North Moore High School.

Each of these students received a $1,000 scholarship for their nomination.

Junior Builders Cup committee chairman Mike Thomas said each of this year's candidates were more than qualified for the award, and decision to give the recognition to one student was a difficult one.

"Today, the word 'outstanding' is an understatement," he said. "The academics are just the tip of the iceberg for these four students. They're all winners in every sense of the word."

Thomas said after the luncheon that the "intangibles" of the students' interviews were the main elements that helped the committee select just one student for the award.

"Nobody had any idea [who would win]," he said. "It was just that kind of year, but it's nice that we're getting people [nominated], who are that outstanding."

Caddell is the first senior from Union Pines to win the Junior Builders Cup in the last five years.
She was both surprised and honored to be this year's recipient. While thanking club members for her recognition, she also highlighted the achievements of her peers.

"We do a lot," she said. "It's hard, but it's what makes our lives fun. Doing all that we do makes us who we are."

North Moore senior John Spivey II received the award last year.

Caddell, the daughter of Janet and Bryan Caddell, plans to attend East Carolina University to study nursing after graduating at the top of her class at Union Pines with a weighted grade-point average (GPA) of 4.88.

She is a recipient of the EC Scholars award, the most prestigious scholarship offered at ECU.

Caddell hopes to become a neonatal nurse practitioner and eventually return to Moore County to work at FirstHealth Moore Regional Hospital, where she has spent several hours volunteering and shadowing Dr. Nicholas Lynn, a neonatologist at the hospital.

Caddell's desire to become a neonatal nurse stems from her family's personal experience with her baby cousin, who spent his first weeks in a neonatal intensive care unit.

She said she still remembers the nurse who cared for her cousin and worked with her family to ease anxiety.

"That was hard for our family," she said. "I want to give that level of comfort and stability to somebody else."

At Union Pines, Caddell has been a member of the softball and track teams, as well as president of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes and a member of the yearbook staff, marching band, National Honor Society, Key Club and spirit club.

In a recommendation letter, Union Pines principal Robin Lea compared Caddell to a "treasured heirloom quilt" created by a patchwork of "impeccable, individual qualities and accomplishments."

"Her rare down-to-earth personality combined with an intellectual curiosity and drive to succeed is what powers Lindsay's success," Lea wrote. "Her character is the centerpiece of her quilt."

**Garrett Berk**

Berk, the son of Dr. Carl and Jennifer Berk, plans to attend Duke University next fall and is considering pursuing a career in medicine.
He is a member of the National Honor Society, plays in the Pinecrest orchestra and participates in the Pinecrest Global Awareness Club, as well as the swim team, cross country team and track teams, serving as captain of the swim team his junior and senior year.

Of his many awards and honors, Berk has received the coach's award for swimming all four years and was a recipient of the Knights of Columbus Award for Outstanding Achievement in American History his junior year.

In 2010, he attended Governor's School East for mathematics.

Outside of school, Berk enjoys music, playing six- and eight-string guitar, piano and violin, as well as spending time outdoors, including serving as a lifeguard at Pinebluff Lake.

He is also an active member of his church and has earned the rank of Eagle Scout as a member of Boy Scout Troop 223.

Berk's English teacher, Melonie Jones, described Berk as the "ideal student," who leads by example.

"Garrett is what I would consider a quiet intellect. His strong work ethic, persistence and intellectual integrity show in every aspect. He does not flaunt his intelligence; rather, he motivates others to succeed."

Amelia Schirmer

Schirmer plans to attend the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill next fall, where she hopes to major in environmental studies and explore ways to build environmentally sustainable communities.

She is the daughter of Charles and Katherine Schirmer and enjoys photography, creative writing and participating in various outdoor recreational activities.

Though The O'Neal School does not rank, Schirmer is considered to be one of the top performing students in her class with a 4.15 weighted GPA.

Besides academics, Schirmer has played tennis and soccer all four years at O'Neal, serving as captain of the tennis team this past year and captain of the soccer team her junior and senior year.

She is also president of the school's intramural program, secretary of the Student Government Association, secretary of the Key Club and has been a member of the school's Model UN program for the past three years.

Earlier in the year, students in O'Neal's Upper School elected Schirmer as the 2011 homecoming queen.
Schirmer has also been a camp counselor at Green River Preserve in Cedar Mountain for the past two summers.

Woody Wilder, chairman of the upper school's history department, wrote: "Amelia shines as one of the best students I have ever worked with. She is intelligent and has a depth and soul to her intellect."

**Tyler Wallace**

Wallace, the son of Timothy and Pamela Wallace, will also to attend UNC-Chapel Hill next year, where he plans to study business.

Wallace, a three-sport athlete at North Moore, has ranked number one in his class during all four years with a weighted GPA of 4.77.

This past year, he served as a captain on the football and basketball teams and was named Yadkin Valley Conference All-Conference team for baseball his junior year.

Wallace is currently the president of the North Moore Beta Club and the Central District Club, as well as a member of the Future Business Leaders of America and the Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

He has also served as a student representative for the Student Government Association all four years, serving as vice president this year.

Wallace also began Athletes for Autumn Care, an organization of North Moore athletes who volunteer to spend time with residents at a local nursing home.

Outside of school, Wallace works on his family's farm and shows Boer goats, as well as playing Post 45 Junior American Legion baseball.

In his letter of recommendation, North Moore principal Scott Absher said Wallace is an upstanding student who does everything with great dedication. "Truly, he is an incredible young man," he said. "And he does all that he does with good humor and a good attitude."

Contact Hannah Sharpe at hannah@thepilot.com.
Federal ‘gainful employment’ rule tightens oversight of for-profit colleges
By Daniel de Vise

Federal education officials are tightening oversight of the burgeoning for-profit higher-education sector with the release Thursday of a new regulation they say will require career preparatory programs to yield “gainful employment.”

The action culminates a lengthy debate between the Obama administration and for-profit college leaders and includes several concessions to the industry meant to soften the regulatory impact. The most important change from a previous draft introduces a multiyear grace period before deficient programs are shut down.

The rule could face a legal challenge in courts and is likely to draw close scrutiny from Congress. Republican lawmakers and some Democrats have voiced support for the industry.

The rule effectively would shut down for-profit programs that repeatedly fail to show, through certain measures, that graduates are earning enough to pay down the loans taken out to attend those programs. Advocates say it addresses the chief complaint against for-profit schools, that students emerge from them with too much debt and too little earning power.

“The quality here has been very uneven,” Education Secretary Arne Duncan said of the industry Wednesday in a conference call with reporters. “There have been some absolute superstars. And there have been some players whose intentions, quite frankly, we doubt.”

The 3 million students in for-profit schools have already felt an impact. In anticipation of the rule, large for-profit providers have slowed enrollment, tightened entry standards and warned students against excessive debt.

The reaction

Leaders of the for-profit sector say they serve a population of nontraditional students who might not otherwise secure a higher education. In general, they have contended that a gainful-employment rule will hurt students by shuttering programs and setting off an industry contraction.
Late Wednesday, some leaders in the for-profit sector had a cautious response to the rule.

“I want to acknowledge that the department did make changes,” said Harris Miller, president of the Association of Private Sector Colleges and Universities. “But we really don’t know the bottom-line impact on students and programs.”

Kent Jenkins Jr., a spokesman for Corinthian Colleges, said the changes in the final rule illustrate that “implementing a complex and far-reaching proposal takes time and that schools need a ‘longer runway’ to put effective programs in place.” The Washington Post Co., which owns Kaplan for-profit colleges, also owns 8 percent of Corinthian.

Representatives of several other for-profit schools could not be reached or declined to comment, for lack of information about the new rule.

The new regulation takes effect in July 2012. It denies federal aid to programs that fail three “tests” of gainful employment three times in a four-year span:

• Are at least 35 percent of former students actively paying down their loans? In other words, roughly a third of ex-students must make payments that lower the loan balance by at least a dollar in a given year.

• Are graduates spending 30 percent or less of their discretionary income on loan payments? This test seeks to ensure that loan payments are not eating up too much of the money left after graduates pay for basic needs.

• Are graduates spending 12 percent or less of their total income on loan payments? This standard, related to the previous test, establishes that loan bills should not consume more than about an eighth of total earnings.

Programs that pass any of the three tests would retain eligibility to participate in federal aid initiatives, enabling qualified students to secure federal grants or loans.

Previous actions

The gainful-employment rule was among more than a dozen Duncan proposed to target perceived abuses in a sector where, critics say, regulation had gone lax. The others, including one that restricted commission payments to student recruiters, were approved last year. Gainful employment was the most contentious by far. Pushback against a draft version last year delayed release of the rule.
In draft form, the rule would have yanked federal aid the first time a program failed the three tests.

With the new grace period, the final rule moves back the date when deficient programs could lose funding, to 2015.

“This should be a perfectly reasonable bar and one that every for-profit program should be able to reach,” Duncan said. “... But if you get three strikes over four years, then you’re out.”

Federal officials estimated that the draft version would have shuttered 16 percent of for-profit programs. (Each school can have many programs, such as culinary arts, nursing or graphic design.) They now predict that 5 percent will shut down.

Regulators also removed a draft provision that would have placed a wide swath of programs under “restricted” status even if they passed one or more of the gainful-employment tests. The final rule instead places mounting restrictions on programs only after they fail the three tests. A program that fails once must disclose that fact to students. After two failures, the institution must warn students about excessive debt and the potential for closure and give them transfer options.

Supporters of the rule say anyone displaced from a program that fails the federal tests is probably better off. Opponents say that they support the idea of monitoring earnings and debt but that details in the rule unfairly penalize some types of for-profit programs, especially longer ones that lead to bachelor’s or professional degrees and generate more student debt.

Schools that operate for profit — running the gamut from cosmetology institutes to universities offering medical and legal degrees — have grown from 4 percent to 10 percent of full-time college enrollment since 2000, according to the College Board. Several factors have driven their rise, including a loosening of regulation under the George W. Bush administration and growing acceptance of colleges that operate primarily online.

The gainful-employment regulation also covers most non-degree programs in public and private nonprofit colleges.

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