ECU's Godwin receives support
By Nathan Summers
Tuesday, June 5, 2012

CHAPEL HILL — For the 26th time, East Carolina baseball qualified for the NCAA postseason, and for the 26th time the ride ended without a trip to Omaha, Neb., for the College World Series.

ECU head coach Billy Godwin, in the wake of his team’s Sunday afternoon Chapel Hill Regional loss to the host North Carolina Tar Heels, did his best to summarize the circumstance of ECU always getting close but always ending the season without a CWS appearance.

But perhaps it was the words of UNC head coach Mike Fox a few moments earlier that resonated most with those in the postgame media room at Boshamer Stadium, where the Pirates were excused in a 5-3 defeat to the Tar Heels, who were shocked later Sunday night by St. John’s for the regional crown.

While at the microphone, the veteran UNC skipper voluntarily came to the defense of Godwin, a long-time coaching comrade who he feels is being unfairly targeted by ECU fans for the Pirates’ postseason near misses.

“I think the fans need to leave Billy alone and let him run his program and take some of the pressure off,” Fox told media members following UNC’s
15th straight win over the Pirates in Chapel Hill. “Billy is a good man and a good coach and I think we’ve been very fortunate to have that winning streak against them.”

Fox wasn’t just offering lip service in the wake of another victory over ECU, the Heels’ second this year.

The two really do have a history together, and a good one at that.

“Billy and I go way back, we go way back,” Fox said, noting the his memorable years coaching with Godwin at N.C. Wesleyan in the late 1980s, including winning the Div. III national title in ’89. “We were in the dugout together, and we sort of watched our children grow up. So it’s kind of bittersweet for me, really. I know the fans probably don’t feel that way.”

Despite voicing his appreciation for Fox, Godwin contended the negativity from some fans is not something he’s worrying about right now.

“I love the game and I love coaching young men,” Godwin said. “I get up every day and have a passion to do that. You can get hooked by a lot of different things and that’s one thing you can’t get hooked by. You’ve got to understand everyone is frustrated. Nobody is more frustrated than I am.”

Godwin carries the distinction of carrying the team to the regional round in five of his seven seasons in Greenville, and to one of the team’s three Super Regional appearances.

Despite his anguish over the loss on Sunday, Godwin was measured in his remarks regarding the outcome, including reiterating his firm belief that ECU will live out its Omaha dreams in the future.

“Only one team is going to win their final game. One team,” he said. “I just don’t focus on what I can’t control.”

Final goodbye

Godwin wasn’t only one showing composure at the postgame press conference on Sunday.

The lone senior on the dais was catcher Zach Wright, who along with fellow seniors like third baseman Corey Thompson and starting pitcher Kevin Brandt, helped to form the face of the club the last four years.

Wright was drafted by the Philadelphia Phillies last year but could not agree to terms on a contract, bringing him back to ECU for his senior season.

“These guys get to go back out there next year,” Wright said, referring to underclassmen like Drew Reynolds, who sat next to him in the postgame.
“That’s a weird feeling for me because I don’t know if I’ll get to walk onto a baseball field again.

“It’s tough because you dream your whole life of playing major league baseball but you don’t think about college baseball first. It’s the end of one thing, and hopefully it leads to another.”

Also graduating from the program are infielder Mike Ussery and relief pitcher Lance Honeycutt.

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Bill Roper, CEO of UNC Health Care, talks during a press conference announcing an agreement between WakeMed Hospital and UNC Health Care Tuesday, May 22, 2012 at the N.C. Legislative Building.

**UNC Health Care CEO says he doesn’t expect opposition to new Wake psychiatric hospital**

By David Bracken - dbracken@newsobserver.com

RALEIGH–UNC Health Care CEO Bill Roper said Monday he doesn’t expect the leadership of Holly Hill, the private psychiatric hospital in Wake County, to object to UNC’s recent proposal to build its own psychiatric facility in the county.

“Our people have talked to the leadership at Holly Hill and those conversations have been cordial,” he said. “They have a different part of this system that they serve but we want to work closely together.”

Roper also said that he called Victor J. Dzau, CEO of Duke University Health System, on the day the project was announced to let him know that UNC would be pleased to work with them.

“This is much bigger than any one institution and we welcome their involvement,” Roper said.


The two hospital systems recently announced a cease-fire in a public feud that had led WakeMed to make a $750 million hostile takeover bid for Rex Hospital, which UNC owns.

Their agreement calls for UNC to build and operate a $30 million, 28-bed psychiatric facility in Wake County. The project is largely a response to WakeMed’s complaints that UNC wasn’t shouldering its fair share of the charity-care burden in Wake County.
Both Roper and Atkinson said Monday that the psychiatric facility will address a major problem in the Triangle and across the state: mentally ill patients crowding emergency rooms, which they said is both a costly and ineffective way to treat a segment of the population that has suffered since North Carolina halved the number of hospital beds in its mental hospitals as part of a reform launched a decade ago.

“By the time someone makes it to an emergency department or into a traditional hospital bed we’ve already lost half the battle, which is to make sure folks have great care in an outpatient setting,” Atkinson said.

Roper said UNC doesn’t have a specific site in mind for the new hospital, which will require state approval and isn’t expected to open for several years. Atkinson said he hoped it would be centrally located and near public transportation.

“The site clearly does impact the flow of patients,” he said.

Roper and Atkinson also said they support bringing more transparency to hospital bills.

“Clearly the average person is confused and frustrated by the billing, the whole financial transaction process, so I wish we could do it better,” Roper said.

Gov. Bev Perdue has proposed giving the N.C. Institute of Medicine $100,000 to study the problem of overly complicated and opaque hospital bills, but a House subcommittee recently rejected the idea. Roper said he would support such a study, though he cautioned that the state is limited in what it can do to change the way bills appear.

“Much of the reason the hospital bills are the way they are is derivative of federal health policies and there’s a limitation on what a single state can do,” he said.

Although the deal struck late last month settles the grievances raised by WakeMed, the two hospital systems will still continue to aggressively compete for market share in one of the fastest-growing counties in the country.

“I think people of good will can find ways to work together even though we are collaborating on one day and competing on the next,” Roper said.

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University of Virginia’s on-time graduation rate, 85 percent, is the highest among public flagships.

Public universities pushing ‘super-seniors’ to the graduation stage

By Daniel de Vise

MADISON, Wis. — Some of the nation’s top public universities are prodding dallying students toward the graduation stage, trying to change a campus culture that assumes four-year completion is the exception rather than the rule.

It’s a move supported not just by parents whose wallets are depleted by tuition bills. University leaders are pushing for on-time completion amid criticism over wasted tax dollars, spiraling tuition and America’s plummeting global rank in college attainment.

Fewer than half of students graduate in four years at 33 of the 50 state flagship schools. The overall four-year graduation rate is 31 percent for public colleges and 52 percent for private ones, the federal government reported this year.
The universities of Maryland and Virginia are among the exceptions, with on-time graduation rates of 63 percent and 85 percent, respectively. U-Va.’s rate is the highest among public flagship schools.

“Four years and out” is a long tradition at private colleges, a value reinforced by the parents who pay the bills. Public universities, by contrast, have long tolerated the five- or six-year degree. But too often, the slow track leads nowhere.

“The longer it takes people to graduate, the less likely they are to graduate — ever,” said William Bowen, former Princeton president and co-author of the book “Crossing the Finish Line.”

Here at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, about half the students graduate on time. Nick Korger said he arrived in Madison four years ago “with absolutely no clue what I wanted to do.” He thought about pre-med but washed out after seeing his first biology grades. Now he’s studying history and English, writing for the campus newspaper, and driving a truck in the summer.

He plans to return in the fall for a fifth year.

“I’m gonna go watch all my friends graduate,” said Korger, 21, of Oshkosh, Wis. “And if they’re still in the state, I hope they’ll all come watch me graduate.”

Colleges are mobilizing on the issue for several reasons. Public tuition and fees have doubled since the mid-1990s, in inflation-adjusted dollars, to an average $8,244. President Obama has set a goal for the nation to regain the world lead in college attainment by 2020. The economic downturn has pushed state lawmakers to target perceived collegiate “slackers” and the tax dollars that subsidize their education.

In Texas, the state pays an average of $7,563 annually per student, said Texas state Sen. Florence Shapiro (R). Each dawdling student, she said, “prevents another student from coming in and starting that process.”

This year, the University of Texas at Austin announced a push to raise its on-time graduation rate to 70 percent by 2016, from the current 53 percent. UT President Bill Powers said the goal is “ambitious but attainable.”

Indiana University will offer discounted courses this summer to encourage on-time graduation. The University at Buffalo in New York created an on-time graduation pledge, hoping to raise its rate from about 45 to 60 percent. Half the incoming class has signed it.
University leaders are pressing four-year graduation as a goal from the day freshmen arrive on campus. At the University of Minnesota’s convocation last fall, each student was given an envelope containing a 2015 tassel. President Eric Kaler told the freshmen, “Hang it where you will see it every day — in your room, on your laptop, on your roommate’s nose — as a reminder that graduating in four years is your goal.”

Other schools are working the four-year theme into recruiting events as a selling point to the cost-conscious.

“The easiest way for me to get a round of applause is to say we expect the students to graduate in four years,” said Michael Amiridis, provost of the University of South Carolina. “And it’s not the students who applaud. It’s the parents.”

At U-Md., the four-year graduation rate hovered below 30 percent well into the 1990s, when the school sought to raise it as part of a campaign for national stature.

The institution also set up an honors program and a collection of scholarly communities modeled on residential colleges at Oxford and Cambridge.

On-time graduation at College Park “has just been an absolute top goal and policy for going on 20 years now,” said William E. Kirwan, chancellor of the state university system.

In Virginia, U-Va. and the College of William and Mary have four-year graduation rates rivaling those of elite private colleges. Both schools rank among the nation’s most selective. U-Va. has a $5 billion endowment, and William and Mary has a three-century heritage. Another factor is culture: On-time graduation is a tradition at both institutions.

“It’s the ethos of the campus,” said Michael Halleran, provost of William and Mary. “It wasn’t mandated by a president or dean. I can’t pinpoint when it started.”

Here in Madison, administrators say they introduced the class year concept to 2010 freshmen and identified the Class of 2014 in a #uw2014 hash tag on Twitter.

“That language was never part of our culture,” said Jocelyn Milner, an associate provost at Wisconsin.

Internal data show that the university’s four-year completion rate has risen from 47 percent in 2005 to 56 percent in 2011. (The new federal data, which
tracked a cohort of students who started college in 2004, put the university’s rate at 49.7 percent.

The Wisconsin flagship, like many prestigious public universities, is becoming more selective as more parents and students shop for value. Most freshmen come from the top 10 percent of their high school class. The average SAT score is nearly 1300 out of 1600 points in reading and math.

Students arrive in Madison expecting to finish in four years, and 83 percent finish by year six. The “professional student,” who stays indefinitely to savor campus life and party on State Street, is all but extinct.

“I don’t really know anyone who’s just hanging out, eight years later, and dabbling in classes,” said Madeline Sivanich, 20, a Wisconsin sophomore from Minnesota.

Why, then, the lackluster four-year graduation rate? Students and administrators cite a tangle of academic and social factors, common to most of the nation’s flagships.

First, most Wisconsin students don’t take enough classes to finish in four years. The average student amasses 14 credit hours per semester, too few to attain the required 120 in four years. University leaders say the key problem is work: By senior year, most students hold on- or off-campus jobs.

Second, some academic programs, including majors in engineering and education, are designed to take five years. Although the American college is built on a four-year model, some programs stretch four years into five.

Third, budget cuts have led to academic bottlenecks: crushing demand for introductory courses that are graduation requirements for large numbers of students.

“What you hear every single semester is the frustration from kids. Courses fill up,” said Robert Schlaeger, 22, a senior from Milwaukee who is graduating on time.

Wisconsin students voted for a series of tuition increase in 2009, partly to fund 75 new faculty positions.

Last, some students are declaring a second or even a third major, driven by a conviction that graduate schools favor overachievers. Many students take a year or two to choose a major.

“Everyone tells you, ‘Oh, you have time to figure it out.’ Actually, you don’t,” said Shelvy Gomez, 22, a senior from Waukesha, Wis. She is graduating on time.
Ohio State Gets $483 Million Bid for Parking Lease

By RICHARD PÉREZ-PEÑA

As state universities try to fill in gaps left by shrinking government support, Ohio State University is taking steps to open a new financial frontier with its parking lots. University officials say that a private bidder has offered $483 million in a lump sum for a lease to operate university parking facilities for 50 years.

The deal, still tentative, appears to be the first of its kind at a large university, according to higher education groups, though Indiana University confirmed on Monday that it is in the early stages of exploring a long-term lease of its parking facilities.

The City of Chicago made a similar deal in 2009, granting a 75-year lease of its parking meters to a private company.

The Ohio State deal is one of several that the university is pursuing in a drive to build its financial reserves. The university recently sold 100-year bonds, a first for a public university, raising $500 million; it made a $25 million exclusive deal with a local bank for campus A.T.M.’s and other services and is looking into privatizing its airport.

Joseph A. Alutto, the provost, noted that state aid now accounted for only 7 percent of the university’s $5 billion annual budget, and that the federal government’s budget troubles could lead to even deeper cuts.

“We need to address an increasingly uncertain environment and set some money aside,” he said. “We can’t go on raising tuition forever. We’re looking at all our assets and asking, ‘If they’re nonessential assets, how can we turn them into revenue?’ ”

The money will be used to maintain other transportation services, and for basic university functions like hiring faculty and awarding scholarships.

Colleges and universities have increasingly looked to deals with outside businesses to raise money, turning over parking lots or campus bookstores to private operators, typically in return for a stream of revenue. But a half-century deal with a huge upfront payment is another matter.
“This isn’t a conversation that would have taken place 10 years ago,” said Daniel J. Hurley, director of state relations and policy analysis at the American Association of State Colleges and Universities. “But state disinvestment in higher education is spurring universities to be more entrepreneurial.”

The university set a floor price of $375 million for the concession for its 35,000 parking spaces — including those at its medical center — and took bids last week. A person briefed on the process said the primary players were financial firms, though parking companies could be involved in the operations. Over the weekend, university officials revealed that the top bid was for $483 million.

The deal is expected to be formally recommended to the university trustees, who would vote on it on June 22.

The plan has stirred controversy on a campus where, according to the school, about 100,000 students and employees park each day. Responding to concerns, the university has included in the deal limits on price increases, and flexibility to increase parking supply.

Chicago’s parking meter lease raised $1.15 billion for the city, but it has been widely criticized as leading to steep price increases and a chronic problem of malfunctioning meters.
Revenge of the Nerds: Tech Firms Scour College Campuses for Talent

Companies Woo Best Students With Equity, Fat Salaries and Free Food

By SPENCER E. ANTE
Updated May 31, 2012, 2:21 p.m. ET

On college campuses these days, the top nerds are getting a taste of what it's like to be star jocks.

For Maxwell Hawkins, a computer science and art major at Carnegie Mellon University, the moment came in March. A technology recruiting firm sent him a letter by FedEx urging him to drop out of his junior year and take his talents to work for a start-up.

"I work for the founder and seed investor in PayPal, Palantir and Facebook," wrote Peterson Conway, a recruiter with Carmel, Calif., firm Goodwyn/Powell. "I have been asked to help identify the founding team of a new venture."

The technology boom has created an acute shortage of engineers and software developers. The industry has responded by taking a page from the playbook of professional sports: identify up and comers early, then roll out the red carpet to lock them up.

With the social media frenzy in full swing, promising students are now wrestling with decisions about whether to stay in school or turn pro. Meanwhile, those who stay on campus are enjoying a bonanza of free food and other goodies as companies rush to win their hearts and minds.
"It is pretty good for my ego, frankly," said Mr. Hawkins, who decided to stay in school and take an internship offer from YouTube this summer.

Starting salaries at leading companies for average computer science grads from top schools range from $75,000 to $100,000, plus signing and relocation bonuses worth $5,000 to $15,000, according to venture capitalists and recruiters. New hires may also get small equity grants, with stars getting additional cash bonuses or larger grants worth as much as 1% of the company.

Facebook's disappointing public offering demonstrated that the start-up tech market may not be quite as lucrative as everyone believed. But many students say they think the risks are still worth taking, given the huge potential upside.

Stephen Poletto, a senior computer science major at Brown University, said that in the middle of his junior year, he started fielding calls from headhunters, company recruiters and Brown alumni who work in the industry.

Companies, he said, routinely wine and dine students at posh restaurants to discuss internships and jobs, plying them with free limo rides to bars, $500 cash giveaways and raffles for iPads. So many companies give away free food when they hold technology talks at Brown that sponsors had to move the food inside the computer science auditorium to keep non-engineering students from grazing.

"That did not deter people," said Mr. Poletto, who accepted a job offer with online storage start-up Dropbox.

Google Inc. is particularly active on campus. Brian Yee, a master's student at Carnegie Mellon's School of Computer Science, is one of the search giant's 400 "student ambassadors" at top universities around the world who get paid to assist with recruiting and spreading the word about Google products. In February, Mr. Yee rounded up 100 students to eat free pizza and hear a Google developer give a "Tech Talk" about YouTube.

"For the Tech Talk they sent 100 pairs of Android pajamas," he said. "Those went really quickly." Starting this fall, Google will more than double the ambassador program to over 1,000 students world-wide.

Mark Stehlik, assistant dean of Carnegie Mellon's School of Computer Science said it could make sense for a student to take a leave of absence to join a start-up, in some cases. But most students are better served getting their degrees, he said. "Many companies are trying to seduce students
because they really need them," he said. "Students get a little starry eyed. For many of them they are better off finishing."

Big companies aren't the only ones wooing students. Peter Thiel, a billionaire Facebook investor, recently started a fellowship program offering 20 students $100,000 over two years to skip college and work on world-changing projects.

Tiny start-ups are ramping up their recruiting efforts, too, though it is far from a fair fight. In February, Highland Capital Partners, the venture investor behind Lycos and MapQuest.com Inc. sent executives from some of its portfolio companies on a four-day road trip to interview candidates at the University of Michigan, Carnegie Mellon and Cornell. They made the trip by Chrysler minivan and stayed at inexpensive hotels, like Holiday Inn. After interviewing 100 candidates, five have accepted offers. Total cost for 13 people: $5,000.

The big companies don't always win. Amazon.com Inc. offered Brown University computer science major Kelsey Tripp a lucrative summer internship paying $5,300 a month plus a one-time $3,000 housing stipend. But the college junior turned it down for an even better internship offer at a start-up called Nebula Inc. It paid more and she liked that the program was organized by venture capital firm Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers, a major player in Silicon Valley. A personal call from Nebula's CEO sealed the deal. "I have never spoken to a CEO before," she said.

The National Basketball Association has a rule called "one and done" that requires players entering the draft to be 19 or have completed their freshman year of college. But some prospective programmers aren't even making it that far.

Sahil Lavingia was a freshman at the University of Southern California in 2010 when he got an email from Ben Silbermann, chief executive and co-founder of the fast-growing online scrapbook Pinterest. Mr. Silbermann was looking for help building a version of Pinterest for the iPhone and happened upon a data tracking app developed by the self-taught Mr. Lavingia. Figuring the young student "seemed like a go-getter," Mr. Silbermann drove up to Berkeley from Silicon Valley to meet Mr. Lavingia, who was coming to the Bay Area for the USC-Berkeley football game. A few days later, Mr. Lavingia had an offer in hand and took a leave from school to take the job.

Some companies are grabbing talented programmers even before they reach college. Luke Weber taught himself how to design computer games in high
school and became one of the most popular contributors to Roblox Corp., a company that lets its subscribers play games developed by its users.

After graduating, he attended a Roblox conference last June and met the head of the company's marketing department, who asked him if he wanted to shoot some videos to teach people how to make games. The videos turned into a design job, and now Mr. Weber, who has postponed plans to go to college, works three days a week for the company producing games and virtual goods for $25 an hour.

At 18, he is the youngest employee of the company. "Apparently," he said, "I am really pro at it."