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UNC funding foreseen

State Senate Leader Marc Basnight said he expects the UNC System to get the money it needs to open new academic buildings.

The Senate's budget proposal did not include money for operating costs for new buildings set to open on campuses across the state. The House included $12 million, but system officials say they need about $25 million for 55 newly opened or soon to open buildings. The money pays maintenance and utility costs.

Basnight, a Manteo Democrat, said through a spokesman Friday that the Senate wasn't aware that the system needed that money when it passed its budget. Basnight said the Senate would provide the money needed to open academic buildings.

"It is a priority of Sen. Basnight to make sure that the money is there to open these buildings, and we will work to fix it," spokesman Schorr Johnson said.
Coach's passion, faith remembered
Sunday, June 20, 2010
I read with much sadness of the recent death of former East Carolina University assistant football coach “Rock” Roggeman. I found myself nodding with approval at the comments of former coaches and players who stated that they will never forget his voice and presence on the football field. I vividly recall that voice echoing like thunder across the ECU practice fields at a summer football camp my youngest son attended while he was in high school. Roggeman’s intensity and enthusiasm for the game of football was contagious and you never forgot the experience.
But there was a private side to Coach Roggeman that few were privileged to witness. He was a man of deep faith. I often saw him during every off-season and summer months, regularly attending the 8 a.m. daily morning Mass at St. Peter’s Catholic Church, years before he learned he had contracted non-Hodgkin’s Lymphoma. At other times, I would also find him alone in an empty church. The picture was always the same. This muscular former Notre Dame linebacker would be found kneeling in perfect posture, with his hands firmly together and fingers pointing to heaven. He resembled a snapshot of a little child learning to say his prayers at the foot of his bed under the watchful eyes of his mother. Innocence and strength in quiet contemplation.
Coach Roggeman’s passion and intensity was truly driven by his deep and abiding faith. East Carolina defensive tackle Josh Smith was quoted in The Daily Reflector as saying, “Jay Ross said to me today, ‘I won’t ever forget that man’s voice,’ and we won’t.” They are right. Those of us fortunate to witness it will never forget the voice of Coach Roggeman. I also will never forget those hands. Those praying hands.
JOE BLICK
Greenville
Father, son bond over heroic military history
By David Long
Special to The Daily Reflector
Saturday, June 19, 2010

I had never paid much attention to Father’s Day. Paul R. Long was not a particularly doting or affectionate parent. He had grown up in a world where men showed respect or admiration by a firm handshake or a well-placed slap on the back. A necktie on his birthday and a short-sleeved white dress shirt at Christmas were quite appropriate to the low-rent and impersonal father/son relationship that was typical in a conservative Midwestern family.

The idea of making an ostentatious and conspicuous display of filial affection toward a parent was reserved exclusively for Mom and that was always as it should be... or so I believed for the first four decades of my life.

It might fairly be said that even though my father had always been there — when he died in January 2004 he and my mother were two months shy of celebrating their sixty-third wedding anniversary — all the years we had lived together under the same roof, and all the visits we had shared since I had left my parents’ home following high school graduation, we remained virtual strangers.

It was my midlife crisis, a career change whereby I left the practice of law after twelve years to pursue a Ph.D. in history, that I finally gained wisdom, or at least information, about the significance of my father’s youth. In retrospect, it’s almost difficult to believe that somebody who had always loved American history had been ignorant of his father’s role as a member of one of the most storied units in the nation’s military past.

The circumstances of the revelation were not of my own making. I was a graduate student in history at Florida State University at the time. Another student in the program had taken leave from the United States Army, where he was a full colonel. He had no use whatsoever for me, a civilian who had avoided service in Vietnam despite having had my birthday come up sixteenth in the draft lottery when student deferments were ended in 1967. His icy indifference suddenly disappeared one unforgettable day in 1993 when he came to my office door.

Someone had told him that my father served in the 3rd Armored Division in the Second World War.

“Wow,” he said, “a genuine Spearheader. Those guys were something special!”

The change in attitude and demeanor was so profound that my mind began racing. What did he know that I didn’t? I had many times seen my father’s “Spearhead in the West” book, published about his wartime outfit. But my interest in military history had always been in the Civil War. I had never asked my father about his wartime experiences. And like most war veterans, he had never been one to volunteer much about what he saw.

The few things Dad had ever said regarding his combat experiences made clear that he hated war, that he had lost many very close friends, and that he profoundly hoped I would never have to experience the things he had. Only in 1993 did an experience from nearly thirty years earlier take
on the real significance it had when it occurred.
My father had never been very comfortable with the kind of heart-to-heart, birds-and-bees
communications fathers are expected to have with their sons. But one conversation had been
unforgettable. I remember it occurred around 1967, when I had started college and after the war
in Southeast Asia had begun to heat up. I remember my mother being present also, though she
didn’t say anything.
The whole country had been having a conversation at this time about the injustice of rich white
kids getting out of serving because of student deferments, while poor kids of color didn’t, and
Congress was about to end that loophole and make young male collegians eligible. That change in
the law would accompany a much publicized draft lottery, the first in U.S. history since Franklin
Roosevelt had pulled a number out of a jar in 1941. On campuses across the nation all televisions
were tuned that evening to the selection process. My number came up sixteen (out of 365) and it
was just a matter of time before I would be ordered to report for a physical.
That was the situation when the conversation with Dad took place.
“Your mother and I have been talking about this awful war, and about this draft and your age,” he
said. “And we just want you to know that if you’re drafted to go and you choose not to go... well,
we will support you and stand behind you whatever you decide to do.”
My immediate reaction was shock, not because of what he was saying... I hardly took notice of
that... but shock over the fact that for the first time I could ever remember, my father was looking
me squarely in the eye. My lifelong Republican, wounded war veteran, bashful, low self-esteem,
easily embarrassed father, was looking straight into the heart of my soul. And though it would
take me a while to process what he had said and what it actually meant, he was saying something
as important as anything he would ever say to me.
Nearly thirty years later, when that U.S. Army Colonel and fellow graduate student taught me a
lesson about the respect that I had failed all those years to show my father, I experienced a kind of
apotheosis — one of those moments in life when we realize how blind and dumb we have been
and the revelation occurs in a split second and we know that we will never look at that thing the
same way again.
Dad had suddenly gotten taller and stronger and younger and handsomer in that moment, and I
felt a little bit ashamed that it had taken me so long to come to this place, and that it had taken
somebody else to make me realize something about my own father. I vowed then and there to
make up for lost time.
My father and I talked a lot during the last decade of his life. Fortunately there had been enough
time and distance that had elapsed since his experiences in 1944 and 1945 that he was now ready
to talk.
He started laughing again and he became more animated and livelier than he had been in years.
He taught me things, not just about the war, but things I had never really known or appreciated,
like patience and respect and how somebody in his eighth decade of life still has a story to tell
and a song to sing, if only so the rest of us can slow down enough to listen and appreciate.
And I showed him something as well, something that came to be very important to him ...that I
genuinely loved him and was proud he was my father, and that his life genuinely had made a
difference.
Had Dad not lived to be 86, I would not have realized all those things. We would have missed the
opportunities we now had, to laugh together... to cry together... and to share a love we had both
missed out on for many years.
On Father’s Day 2010, I dedicate this letter to my Dad. It took me a long time to realize why this
day is so important. Due to him I now understand, and I will never forget again.
I love you, Dad.

David Long is a history professor at East Carolina University. A noted Civil War historian and
Lincoln scholar, he has authored several books about the 16th president of the United States. E-
mail longd@ecu.edu
A group of East Carolina University alumni have formed Pirate Pulse, a business network of ECU alumni and supporters.

Pirate Pulse, a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, will seek to increase awareness of East Carolina University in the Triangle region and beyond. The organization aims to serve as an advocate for issues related to ECU and may eventually form a political action committee.

The co-founders are Nick Francis of Madison Group Consulting, who will serve as president, and Kieran Shanahan of Shanahan Law Group PLLC, who will serve as legal counsel.

"According to the East Carolina University Alumni Association, the Triangle area has the highest concentration of ECU alumni in the state," Francis said. "However, there is not currently a mechanism in place for Triangle-area alumni to advocate for our alma mater. Pirate Pulse will help focus the Pirate Nation on advocating for our university, not just having the largest caravan going down Highway 264 for sporting events."

"Nick is onto something," said Tom Drew, president of Phoenix Communications. "When we started the Coalition 2000 for N.C. State, it concentrated solely on issues related to N.C. State University. Pirate Pulse is going to look both ways by saying, 'How can we help ECU and each other.'"

In addition to its advocacy and publicity efforts, Pirate Pulse will hold quarterly meetings and social events at the Sheraton Imperial Hotel in Research Triangle Park.

"This is an exciting opportunity to elevate the level of interaction of the business community of East Carolina graduates in the Triangle and across the state," J. Fielding Miller, chief executive officer of CapTrust Financial, said.

As an independent organization, Pirate Pulse has no direct affiliation with the university and functions in the service of and at the direction of its members. Members and leaders will advocate and take collective action that is deemed to be in the best interest of East Carolina University.

Registration is available at http://www.piratelpulse.org.
Valley of Enfield Scottish Rite Bodies makes donation to ECU Speech and Hearing Clinic

The Valley of Enfield Scottish Rite Bodies recently donated $2,500 to East Carolina University’s Speech and Hearing Clinic.

Scottish Rite Masons Jim Alford of Tarboro, Dr. Hartwell Fuller of Pinetops, Carl Hunsicker of Murfreesboro and Gene Todd of Scotland Neck toured the clinic and made the donation. North Carolina’s Scottish Rite has a long-standing partnership with ECU’s Speech and Hearing Clinic. In the past 38 years, the fraternal organization has given almost $1 million to ECU’s Scottish Rite Childhood Language Disorders and Dyslexia clinical program.

“They are not only supporting the children in our program, but they contribute to the education of our students,” said Dr. Gregg Givens, chairman of the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders at ECU.

The Scottish Rite program specializes in diagnostic evaluations for children and adolescents who are suspected of having or have been diagnosed with a language-based learning disability including problems with pre-reading skills, reading, writing, understanding speech or expressing themselves. It is one of the premiere facilities in the southeastern United States, Givens said.

North Carolina’s Scottish Rite Masons support speech, language and hearing clinics at Appalachian State University, the Scottish Rite Center in Charlotte and at ECU.

For more information, visit http://www.ecu.edu/cs-dhs/
ECU brings Moonshine and Molasses to Festival Park

East Carolina University's School of Theatre and Dance will be performing Moonshine and Molasses, a full-length contemporary dance to the folk-rock music of Uncle Mountain, on June 22, 23, and 24 at 8 p.m.

The performances will take place in the Pavilion at Roanoke Island Festival Park and are a part of RIFP's Performance Series and are free and open to the public.

Tommi Overcash Galaska, an instructor and choreographer at East Carolina University, says that the performance combines dance with drama. "Each song tells a different story. And the relationships are dictated by the music. The whole work is about relationships - love stories." For Galaska, the music of Uncle Mountain brings to mind childhood memories with her family. Through the dance and drama combination, the performance seeks to make the sounds of Uncle Mountain come alive. The production of Moonlight and Molasses includes 16 dancers. Uncle Mountain, a five-piece band, will perform live for the dance.

After you enjoy Roanoke Island Festival Park's special programming, board the park's 16th century replica ship, Elizabeth II. Visit our newest exhibit, the American Indian Town. Explore the Settlement Site and speak with historical interpreters dressed in Elizabethan era garb. Cool off in the indoor Roanoke Adventure Museum that features interactive exhibits from over 400 years of Outer Banks history, or view impressive local artwork in the Art Gallery. Play in the Fossil Pit or watch the film, The Legend of Two-Path. Walk the park grounds and you might catch a glimpse of a bunny on the grass or an egret on the marsh at the Boardwalk. Relax on the front porch rocking chairs. Before you leave, visit the glittering Museum Store and find a treasure to take home.
Grant to boost ECU's primary care education

Saturday, June 19, 2010
ECU News Services

East Carolina University medical students who have an interest in family medicine will be among those who may benefit from a new program funded by the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina Foundation.

The foundation has announced a $1.18 million grant to the N.C. Academy of Family Physicians Foundation that will increase medical students’ exposure to innovative practice in family medicine and encourage more of the state’s medical students to pursue a career in family medicine, ultimately ensuring that more North Carolinians have access to high quality primary care.

“This grant from BCBS of North Carolina is the most significant response to the growing need for family physicians from the health care industry I have seen,” said Dr. Dean Patton, a longtime professor of family medicine and director of the medical student education division at ECU.

“This grant has the potential to make a school that has chosen to remain faithful to its mandated mission an even more significant player in meeting the critical health care needs of our region.”

The following ECU students will participate in the program for the 2010-11 academic year: Hannah Fuhr of Chapel Hill, Kelley Haven of Greenville, Ashley Hink of Raleigh, Holly Love of Mount Pleasant and Patrick Williams of Hickory. Eleven students from ECU, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Wake Forest University are participating.

Dr. Elizabeth Fry of Greenville and 10 other physicians from across the state will serve as mentors.

Recently passed health care legislation will increase the number of insured North Carolinians who seek regular primary care, exacerbating the shortfall of primary care physicians, according to BCBS.

Nearly a fifth of the graduates of the Brody School of Medicine choose family medicine as their career, according to the Society of Teachers of Family Medicine. That percentage ranked ECU second in the nation this year.

“We hope that through this initiative, North Carolina medical students will receive the help and incentive they need to make a commitment to family medicine,” said Brad Wilson, chairman of the BCBSNC Foundation.

The grant supports the establishment of the Family Medicine Interest and Scholars Program, a two-tiered effort to help increase the number of N.C.-trained medical students who elect family medicine residency programs and go on to practice in the state.

The program aims to increase the percentage of medical students who commit to a residency in family medicine by about 30 percent and the percentage of those who elect to stay in the state for their residency training from 56 percent in 2008 to at least two-thirds over the length of the six-year program.

Protein could lead to better HIV treatment
An ECU scientist’s research involving a naturally occurring cellular protein could lead to better treatments for HIV as well as cancers and other viruses. Colin Burns, an associate professor of chemistry, with help from graduate student Chris Wilson, narrowed down which part of that protein, prothymosin-alpha, contains the highest concentration of virus-fighting capabilities. That finding, in turn, has helped researchers at Duke University and the Mount Sinai School of Medicine learn how the protein can block viral replication once the human immunodeficiency virus invades cells.

“Some of the molecules that we’re developing will allow us to study HIV replication in a little more detail,” Burns said. “Then, once we have active molecules and we know what it’s interacting with in the cells, particularly, we have a target that we can use to design more active compounds that are even more effective or more potent.”

The scientists’ findings were published last month in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

The findings may help researchers find more effective ways to combat the spread of HIV in infected people. Prothymosin-alpha appears to tell human cells to produce interferon, a substance that triggers the immune system to eradicate pathogens such as viruses.

An effective virus fighter, interferon is used in treating hepatitis. In combination with other therapies, interferon is also used to treat certain cancers. The injections are costly, however, Burns said. Understanding prothymosin-alpha’s properties may help scientists design an antiviral medication that is more economical and, ultimately, more potent.

To gain understanding, Burns’ lab synthesized pieces of prothymosin-alpha and found the part of the protein molecule that has the ability to suppress HIV replication.

Burns’ collaborators have identified a key molecule that prothymosin-alpha interacts with called Toll-like Receptor 4, he said. “We are planning to study how it and prothymosin-alpha fit together, as it is their interaction that ultimately leads to production of interferon,” Burns said. “With this knowledge, we may be able to design more potent molecules.”

The study was reported by Mary Klotman, chair of the department of medicine at Duke and the senior author of the paper; Mount Sinai assistant professors Arevik Mosoian and Avelino Teixeira; and colleagues Leif Sander, G. Luca Gusella, Cijiang He, Magarian Blander and Paul Klotman from Mount Sinai; as well as Burns.

Burns’ research was funded in part by a $25,000 N.C. Biotechnology Center grant.

**Dietitian receives state award**

A Brody School of Medicine professor has received a state award that recognizes innovation in preventive health care.

Dr. Kathryn Kolasa, a dietitian and professor of family medicine, received the Jim Long Lifetime Achievement Award from N.C. Prevention Partners, an organization that promotes better diets, more physical activity and reduced tobacco use.

The award was presented in Chapel Hill at the group’s annual meeting. Long was a state insurance commissioner, NCPP board member and an advocate of prevention. He died in 2009. Kolasa was recognized for her leadership in bringing awareness and good nutrition solutions to North Carolinians and across the nation.

Her latest project is working to make sure employees and visitors at N.C. hospitals have access to affordable, healthy foods and beverages at all times of day.
COLLEGE FOOTBALL

ECU game times announced

Kickoff times for the rest of the East Carolina football team’s home games were officially announced Friday with the schedule featuring a mix of early and late afternoon starts. Each contest will be televised locally, regionally or nationally.

ECU opens the season in newly-renovated Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium at 2:00 p.m. Sept. 5 on ESPN2 versus Tulsa, then the Pirates host Memphis at noon on WITN and Comcast/Charter Sports Southeast (CSS) the following weekend.

The Pirates return home Oct. 16 to take on rival N.C. State at noon in a game aired nationally on CBS College Sports.

ECU’s other three homes games are against Marshall on Oct. 23 at 4:15 on WITN/CSS, Navy on Nov. 6 at 3:30 on MASN and the Nov. 26 finale against SMU at 2 p.m. on CBS College Sports.
Tom Campbell: Promises to state employees that cannot be kept
Sunday, June 20, 2010

North Carolina is making promises to state employees we cannot keep and the sooner our leaders address these problems the better it will be for both public employees and the citizens of our state. For many years North Carolina provided enough state contributions so that, coupled with reasonable investment returns, our retirement system was considered fully funded, meaning we could pay the retirement benefits promised public employees.

Two things changed. Budget problems prompted our legislature to reduce funding to the retirement system at the same time the recession dramatically reduced annual returns from investments. Treasurer Janet Cowell says to return to fully funded status will require the state to contribute more than $400 million and increase annual contributions going forward. No one believes that is going to happen soon.

Corporate America has already been forced to face the dilemma, making a deliberate switch from employers promising employees a defined benefit upon retirement to employers promising the employee a defined annual contribution to individual pension accounts, with the employee having investment options that will help determine ultimate retirement benefits. For more than twenty years North Carolina leaders have known our state needed to consider this option but they shied away from making the move.

Our leaders have refused to acknowledge or fix the problem of promises made state employees regarding health insurance. Until recently, every state employee was promised that after five years of work their health insurance premiums would be fully paid by the state upon reaching age 65. Actuaries say our liability from those promises currently exceeds $30 billion and North Carolina has no idea how to fund this looming crisis. Our state can ill afford another unfunded liability in our pension system.

We can fix the retirement system problem through several steps. First, we promise current employees that North Carolina will not renege on its promises to them in the current defined benefit plan. We can make a few changes to prevent current abuses of the system, such as perhaps increasing the number of years used to calculate the average income of an employee, penalizing governments that provide dramatic employee pay increases in the last two or three years prior to retirement or perhaps even establishing a maximum percentage of annual salary the state will pay in retirement. At the same time we must change to a defined contribution system for all employees hired after a certain date. North Carolina will likely experience cost increases resulting from running two retirement systems concurrently but the short term pain will be minimal compared to the longer term crisis for not making the change in a timely manner.

Former Treasurer Harlan Boyles frequently boasted of our retirement system saying, "Promises made, promises kept." Change in our pension plans is inevitable if we are to continue to boast of kept promises.

Tom Campbell is former assistant North Carolina treasurer and is creator/host of NC SPIN, a weekly statewide television discussion of state issues airing Sundays at 12 a.m. on WITN-TV and on Cable 7 Sundays at 10:30 a.m., Mondays at 8:30 p.m., Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. and Friday at 9 p.m. Contact him at ncspin.com.
Scholar takes grades to task

DURHAM -- You'd think Cathy Davidson would like grades. She got great ones herself in college, all A's aside from one pesky C in introductory German.

But after more than three decades teaching everything from traditional American literature to a free-wheeling, futuristic course about the Internet, the Duke scholar is trying to get as far from the grade book as possible.

To do so, she has turned over grading in one course to her students, a move that brought her headlines and some criticism from those who see it as an irresponsible challenge to a long-held academic practice.

To Davidson, 60, it makes perfect sense. Academia, she argues, has long been stuck in a rut, grading today's students with standards developed for the Industrial Age. It bugs her.

"We're doing a great job of training people for the 20th century," she says.

Davidson is an English professor, but lately she has focused on the interdisciplinary course "This is Your Brain on the Internet."

The first version of the class, which analyzes technology, communication and the Internet, stretched educational convention. It demanded heavy student participation. Two students taught each class, and all class members wrote long critiques on a blog they all could view and comment on.

But at the end, two students pointed out that, though the structure of the class was unusual, Davidson still graded in the customary way. It didn't seem right, they said.

So Davidson let students grade themselves. And the next time she offered the course, each student got an A.

To the skeptic, that proves a flaw in Davidson's grading model. Are students really equipped to evaluate each other? And in turning over the power to grade, is Davidson assuring an easy class?

Just the opposite, she argues. She contends that her students worked far harder knowing they were being judged by their peers.

In part, Davidson employed what is known as "Contract Grading," a method used for decades in which the instructor clearly spells out what work students must do to get an A, B, C, or worse.

But in this course, students decided whether those benchmarks were met. Students wrote 1,000 words a week in blog posts discussing the classes, more than is required for Duke courses that actually offer a writing credit, which Davidson's does not. They all had to lead a class section, go on two field trips, and do a team research project.

'Lower-order thinking'
Davidson didn't make her grading change lightly. She first researched the history of evaluation and found that universities didn't give letter grades until about the 1880s, when Mount Holyoke College began doing so. Until then, professors had commented on student work.

"Letter grades were considered lower-order thinking at the time," Davidson said.

She announced her grading plans on her blog last year, and buzz grew quickly. Higher education trade publications and mainstream media, including The News & Observer, wrote about her intentions. She was floored by the reaction, much of which was negative and, thanks to the anonymity of online commenting, faceless.

Others, though, felt she was really on to something.

"There's a world of people who love it and a world of people who think I'm the worst person on the planet," she said. "Grading: People hold it like a religion."

At Duke, officials like what Davidson is doing, said Lee Baker, dean of academic affairs with Trinity College, the undergraduate home of arts and sciences.

"So much of higher education now is taking students outside the classroom, like study abroad," Baker said. "But she has rethought what it looks like inside the traditional classroom."

Davidson grew up in Chicago, an avid reader drawn to math and science. She was always "the only girl at math camp" and hoped at one point for a career exploring artificial intelligence.

She got great grades and scored well on intelligence tests. But she struggled with some simple things, like reading aloud from a sheet of paper. It wasn't until she became an adult that she was diagnosed with dyslexia.

"Learning disabilities didn't exist when I was a kid," she said. "I was the obstinate kid."

To this day, the woman who has written 20 books and hundreds of scholarly articles struggles to write a check and can barely remember the lyrics to "Happy Birthday." Dyslexia forced Davidson, from an early age, to work around problems and may help explain her interest in stretching boundaries in the classroom, she said.

And it allows her to see things differently than most, says Ken Wissoker, Davidson's husband of nine years.

"It gives her clarity," said Wissoker, the editorial director at Duke University Press. "She can look at a manuscript, and the key sentences just jump off the page."

Davidson attended Elmhurst College, outside Chicago, and majored in English in part because a mentor told her that's what women studied at the time. She graduated in 1970.

She has taught American literature courses for decades, occasionally pushing the envelope.

As a visiting professor, she shook up somewhat-stodgy Princeton in 1988 by enlisting two junior faculty members to argue points of view from readings in front of a class. This was unusual then at Princeton, where junior faculty were treated as glorified grad students - expected to grade papers but do little else.
Intellectual dialogue ensued.

"It got written up in the student newspaper as an educational experiment," Davidson recalled. "Which I thought was funny."

Davidson came to Duke in 1989, and in 1998 became vice provost for interdisciplinary studies. In that role, she tried to create new courses and programs by meshing seemingly disparate academic disciplines.

She now directs the Duke-based Humanities, Arts, Science and Technology Advanced Collaboratory, or HASTAC for short. Pronounced "Haystack," it is a consortium of scholars from across the academic spectrum who look for ways to mesh their expertise using new technology.

Freedom to rant

For Lacey Kim, Davidson's "Your Brain on the Internet" course was liberating. An economics major, Kim was accustomed to the constant stress that goes with a semester of traditional class work and the end-of-semester scramble for a good grade. In Davidson's course, Kim swapped those stresses for the adrenaline rush of self-expression.

Kim, who took the course in the spring as a senior, found a more liberal, livelier inner voice when critiquing each class. She wrote differently, knowing she'd be evaluated by her peers and not by her professor.

"People said I ranted a lot and was very passionate," Kim said. "I don't think I could have done that in a more traditional class. It really made a power shift in the classroom."

That added freedom is one benefit cited by proponents of Davidson's technique. Baker, the Duke dean, said that in posting student work to a blog, Davidson forces students into a higher level of scholarly responsibility.

"It makes students authors of their own ideas, which is different from just having a teacher critique it," Baker said.

The blog was an internal site, so students could view it but it wasn't public.

Gill Bosonetto, who teaches public speaking at Mars Hill College in Western North Carolina, read about Davidson's course in a higher education trade publication. She has long had students grade themselves, though she balances theirs with her own grades as well. She has often found students to be tough on each other.

"I find it's usually very close to what I score them at, and interestingly enough, they can be harsher," Bosonetto said in an interview. "They take it seriously."

Leonard Cassuto, an English professor at Fordham University, credits Davidson with creating a dynamic "learning community" but believes she is shirking her responsibility in not giving grades herself. He likens the student grading to peer review, in which academic experts vet each other's work prior to publication in scholarly journals.

"But in the academy, peer review is done by experts," Cassuto said. "If a journal receives an article on medieval ceramics, they send it to experts on medieval ceramics. My concern is that she is letting these
apprentice peer-reviewers make final judgment."

And is there a problem if every student gets an A?

"If the students have done amazing, high-level work, there may not be anything wrong," said Todd Zakrajsek, executive director of the UNC-Chapel Hill Center for Faculty Excellence, which trains professors to teach better. "[But] you go off to college to get an education. There has to be a way to convey to people what you've learned."

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Community-college transfer students in Va., Md., easing into university level

By Daniel de Vos
Washington Post Staff Writer
Thursday, June 17, 2010

Public universities in Virginia and Maryland are drawing unprecedented numbers of students from community colleges, building a transfer pipeline that is changing the traditional path to a four-year degree.

In the past few years, state colleges have agreed to common standards for many community college courses and then guaranteed admission to applicants with good grades. The shift helps families save money on tuition while bringing the four-year schools a more diverse student body.

Transfer students also can alter the dynamics of a college campus. Unlike typical undergraduates, for instance, they often have far more experience in the ups and downs of the working world.

Interest in transfers has been heightened by the economic downturn. "Think of us as the lowest-cost on ramp to an undergraduate degree," said Glenn DuBois, chancellor of Virginia community colleges. "Americans are pretty good at shopping price and value."

Community college transfers rose 36 percent in Maryland and 34 percent in Virginia from 2000 to 2008, outpacing overall college enrollment growth in those states. Transfers to the University of Virginia doubled in that time, to more than 280 annually, which represents just under 10 percent of the typical junior class. Transfers were up 17 percent at the University of Maryland, 27 percent at George Mason University and 53 percent at Towson University. Each of them accepts
more than 1,000 transfers a year.

Saoussen "Susie" Mahjoub is emblematic of the trend. Three years ago, she enrolled at Northern Virginia Community College, working part time and living with her mother. Now, the 24-year-old Tunisian immigrant is on track to graduate from U-Va. She still can't quite believe that a transfer delivered her to the upper echelon of higher education.

"I wake up in the morning, and I thank God for where I am," she said.

In the past five years, Virginia's 23 community colleges have reached accords from school to school, for transfer admissions.

Maryland higher-education leaders are rolling out new statewide two-year degrees, accepted at every public four-year college. An online database gives community college students the transfer value of each course.

More than one-third of graduates from Virginia's four-year colleges began in community colleges, the state estimates. The rate is higher in Maryland. There are no comparable figures for the District, which until last year lacked a traditional two-year college.

Students who start in community college save enormously on tuition, and they often live with parents and work full time.

The evolving system fulfills the vision of Thomas Jefferson -- the nation's third president and founder of U-Va. -- of a college within a horse ride of every home.
Six UNC Charlotte buildings caught in budget crunch

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UNC Charlotte has six buildings that could close - or in the case of its uptown classroom building under construction, not open - if state legislators don't allocate money the university has requested for operating costs.

In all, UNCC officials have asked for more than $4.4 million to run the six buildings - including $2.5 million to operate the school's new bioinformatics building - for the next fiscal year, beginning July 1.

If they don't get the money, the school would be faced with either cutting expenses elsewhere, or closing the buildings, said Beth Hardin, vice chancellor for business affairs.

Her concerns increased after UNC President Erskine Bowles warned that as many as 17 buildings across the system's 16 campuses could be "mothballed" if the state doesn't come up with the money for items such as utilities, maintenance and security.

"I think President Bowles is making a very valid point - that we could end up with new buildings that we cannot afford to open, or keep running," said Hardin, UNCC's chief financial and administrative officer. "If we don't get the requested money, to open a building or keeping these new buildings running, we'd have to cut expenditures in another place. To some degree, it's easier not to open the building.

"That's the president's mothballing concern."

The requested funds are for all or part of the fiscal year, Hardin said. If the school has to close, or not open, new buildings, it will have to find space elsewhere. The six UNCC buildings affected are:

**Center City Building.** The 12-story, $50.4 million classroom building uptown at 9th and Brevard streets is still under construction. The cantilevered midrise, covering 143,000 square feet, will house the Belk College of Business MBA program and other graduate and continuing-education offerings. It is scheduled to open in May. **Request:** $848,595, which includes some start-up
costs.

The bioinformatics building. The school didn't get requested state funds to operate the building when it opened last year, but instead cut expenses elsewhere. **Request: $2.5 million.**

**The Foundation Building:** Houses the school's development and UNC Charlotte Foundation offices. **Request: $134,418 in operating costs.**

**Harris Alumni Center:** Operating expenses needed. **Request: Nearly $116,000.**

**Cone Center:** UNCC's first student union that's been "repurposed" after a new student union opened last year. It now houses the honors program, Levine Scholars office and a center for graduate students. **Request: $699,042 for operating.**

**Memorial Hall:** The former Brocker Hall that once housed the student health center. The building was renovated and now houses the Army and Air Force ROTC programs. **Request: $171,030 in operating expenses.**

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