Bethel residents gathered at the Bethel Family Medicine Center for a prayer and protest to its pending closure on Thursday, June 21, 2012. (Aileen Devlin/The Daily Reflector)

Bethel residents pray to save clinic
By Ginger Livingston
Friday, June 22, 2012

BETHEL — More than 60 people held a prayer vigil outside the Bethel Family Medicine Center on Thursday.

The group is opposed to the Brody School of Medicine’s plans to close the clinic, which has operated in the northern Pitt County town for 32 years.

Medical school officials announced earlier this month that the clinic is closing on Sept. 1. Patients are being asked to travel to the school’s family medical center in Greenville. Officials said declining patient enrollment, cost overruns and an outdated facility drove their decision.

Bethel residents said many of the facility’s patients lack transportation to Greenville.

“I believe that the power of prayer can save this clinic,” said Mary Sue Gooch, president of HomeTown Bethel. She briefly spoke about how her daughter made it through heart transplant surgery because of the prayers of her friends and neighbors in Bethel.

Bethel Mayor Mike Whitehurst spoke about the repeated burdens outside governmental forces have imposed on Bethel — EMS services being moved outside the town and the installation of a $20 million water line and $15 million sewer line to Greenville because the town’s facilities were deemed unsuitable.
The medical school said the clinic must close because it is losing patients, but that is happening because the medical school ordered it to stop accepting clients, Whitehurst said. When a business loses clients, it is going to lose money, he said.

“I’m not here today to moan and point fingers. I’m here to exercise two of my constitutional rights, freedom of speech and freedom of religion,” Whitehurst said. “We are standing as a family to talk to the Almighty God.”

Whitehurst quoted Matthew 7:7 “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.”

Whitehurst said he believes God will hear the group’s prayers, but his plan may not be what the group wants.

“Whatever his will is, be happy with it,” he said.

After a prayer led by the Rev. Walter Summerlin, Pitt County Commissioner Eugene James spoke.

“I believe in prayer, but at the same time, God believes we should make things happen,” James said.

The Pitt County Board of Commissioners on Monday directed the county manager to prepare a resolution supporting efforts to keep the clinic open.

James encouraged the group to ask members of Vidant Medical Center’s board of trustees to work with the medical school to keep the clinic open.

“I’ve had three sons born here,” James said. “We’ve got to band together and make sure this clinic stays open.”

Contact Ginger Livingston at glivingston@reflector.com or 252-329-9570.
Letter: Clinic's closing abandons patients

“What of the staff working in Bethel? They will also move?”
Friday, June 22, 2012

Even despite the town meeting in Bethel to discuss the closing of their medical clinic and a petition presented, the original decision stays. Why have the powers-that-be decided to abandon those who need them, who were using their services? Is it only economics? Is it truly the right plan put forth to make them come to Greenville, to Vidant’s family clinic, to fully utilize their staff? What of the staff working in Bethel? Will they also move?

Patients abandoned. Change comes. Bethel loses another link. Is there not a way to keep the clinic open too? Pray God will help wiser decisions prevail.

DEBORAH CHAPMAN
Greenville
Perdue under pressure to veto three major bills

By Lynn Bonner

After months of watching the action from the sidelines Gov. Bev Perdue is back at center stage.

Three weighty issues are on her desk, and state employees, natural gas companies, environmentalists, prosecutors and teachers are watching to see if she will get out her veto stamp.

Some of the most intense scrutiny is over the $20.2 billion budget the Republican-led legislature approved Thursday. But legislators also gave a final OK to drilling into North Carolina’s shale basin for natural gas. That followed Wednesday’s vote unraveling a 2009 law that allows death row inmates to use statistics to show their sentences were rooted in racial bias.

Both bills had vocal opponents.

So far Perdue hasn’t shown her hand, but she is under pressure to veto each and has a track record on all three.

Last year, she vetoed the state budget, but the legislature was able to make it law over her objections.

She has put out a statement criticizing the new plan, but did not say if she would veto it.

“My top priority is increasing our investment in education so that we can prepare our children to compete in the 21st century economy,” she said.

“The budget passed today does not go far enough in restoring funding for public schools in North Carolina. I will continue to review the proposal, but it is my sincere hope that the General Assembly will find a way to do better in the days ahead.”

Last year, she also vetoed a bill that would have allowed fracking, but because of an unrelated issue in the legislation. After a March trip to Pennsylvania to see fracking rigs, Perdue said she thought natural gas drilling possible in North Carolina.

She also rejected a measure last year that would have repealed the Racial Justice Act. But as with the other legislation, has not said what she will do
now. Both chambers appear to have enough votes to override a veto of the Racial Justice Act rewrite.

She has 10 days after receiving a bill to decide what she wants to do: sign it, veto it or let it become law without her signature.

So for now, it’s a matter or waiting and wooing.

Leading House Democrats said they hope Perdue once again smacks the budget with her veto stamp.

They said the budget undermines K-12 schools, community colleges and public universities, the institutions at the root of the state’s economic development.

Public schools will have $190 million less to spend next year, the equivalent of 3,400 teacher salaries.

“In this state, I think that’s reprehensible,” Hackney said.

The new budget proposal is about 2.5 percent more than the legislature planned to spend next year. Although Democratic lawmakers criticized it for not doing enough for education, the budget includes popular items – the first raises that state employees and teachers have seen in four years, and a gas tax cap. Those measures might make it harder for her to veto it this time.

The budget passed 30-15 in the Senate along party lines, and by a vote of 71-45 in the House, where five Democrats joined Republicans in supporting it. The votes indicated that any veto would be overridden again.

The veto pressure on fracking is most obvious so far, with opponents demonstrating in Raleigh this week, running newspaper ads and sending Perdue email.

More than 10,000 residents have contacted the governor’s office this spring, mostly in opposition to fracking.

“We’ve received 7,641 emails since June 8 and 2,824 calls since this issue started getting attention several months ago,” said Perdue spokesman Mark Johnson. “The contacts are overwhelmingly opposed to fracking with very few supportive comments.”

The legislation would begin the process of creating regulations and standards for natural gas exploration by creating a special commission to oversee the process. The state legislature would have to take a separate vote, at least two years from now, to approve the final rules and allow energy companies to pull drilling permits.
The bill passed the Senate with little debate on a vote of 29-15.

Two Wake County Republicans – Neal Hunt and Richard Stevens – voted against legalizing fracking. Wake County lies on the northeastern rim of the area that’s believed to be rich in natural gas.

The House passed the fracking bill last week but the vote was close enough to suggest that supporters may not have enough votes to override Perdue’s veto.

Then the spotlight shifts again.

*Staff writers Craig Jarvis, John Frank and John Murawski contributed.*

*Bonner: 919-829-4821*
Exploring the significance of the Green Book

By Jeff Say

A graduate student from East Caroline University visited Culpeper last week to interview residents who experienced segregation while traveling during the Jim Crow era in the 1940s and 50s.

Richard A. Kennedy, who is studying geography, has been conducting interviews about the Negro Motorist Green Book International Guide to Travel so he can create a literal map of the areas discussed in the book.

“I want to build a theory on the importance of the Green Book in the lives of African Americans in the Jim Crow era,” Kennedy said.

He hopes his interviews will help display the ideas of auto mobility, social power and the politics of Southern hospitality.

“In trying to build a theory about what the meaning of the Green Book both as a reflection of social control of travel during Jim Crow, as well as a mechanism that served as social resistance an empowerment for the African American traveler,” Kennedy said.

Kennedy’s interview process brought him to Culpeper after he read an article about the Green Book by historian and Star-Exponent columnist Zann Nelson. Kennedy reached out to Nelson in an effort to find more interviewees who had experience traveling in the time the book was published between 1934 and 1964.

Kennedy met with Nelson over two days last week and Nelson coordinated interviews with area residents who traveled during the time period.

“It was a power-packed and thought provoking discussion,” Nelson said. “He is digging more deeply into the ramifications that the Green Book touches on.”

Kennedy, who resides in Goldsboro, N.C., has done the majority of his interviews close to home but has been expanding his net to encompass more of the region.
“One of the reasons I’m in Culpeper is to expand my regionality of my thesis,” Kennedy said. “I haven’t interviewed enough people, and my regionality of experience isn’t large enough yet and I’m sure if it will become large enough, that I can draw a theory on how different areas of the South differed in their segregation.”

In November, Kennedy will be participating in an exhibit at the Museum of the Coastal Plains, where the Smithsonian Institute is bring their traveling exhibit called Journey Stories.

He hopes to collect more interviews, which will be shared with the exhibit. While he has conducted several interviews, none of the folks he’s spoken with have used the Green Book.

“The individuals I’ve interviewed have said their parents protected them from the humiliation of Jim Crow,” Kennedy said. “As children, their parents explained it to them as a way of life. It was just the way it was.”

One interesting aspect of his interviews has been determining how hospitality has been linked to economic support.

“One individual I’m getting a sense that the level of hospitality he received determined if he economically supported the facility he was at,” Kennedy said. “For example, he talked about going to a gas station. Before he pumped gas he asked if his wife and children could use the facilities. If they couldn’t use the facilities, he’d go somewhere else.”

While his interviewees haven’t used the Green Book, they’ve been intrigued by its concept.

The precursor to today’s AAA Travel Guide was specifically designed to benefit the racially disenfranchised. The book varied in its official title — “The Negro Motorist Green Book” and “The Negro Travelers’ Green Book” — but was always popular and simply known as the “Green Book.”

The book was sold at Esso Standard Oil Co. gas stations — one of the few, if not the only, oil companies that franchised gas stations to African Americans.

Successful marketing of this endeavor required the employment of African American sales representatives and appropriate advertising strategies. Esso endorsed the Green Book and purchased ads within the guide.

“I’ve introduced it into all my interviews, one person said ‘where was this when I was traveling,’” Kennedy said. “But every person said there was an informal information network.”
Preserving the history of the book and the tales of those that traveled during the Jim Crow era is an important endeavor, Kennedy said.

“I think that’s important, I think the oral history needs to be told,” Kennedy said. “I think even more than the oral history, the geographics that come from it. How places were defined by the attributes in the area.”

If you have a tale you’d like to share with him or no someone who traveled during the Jim Crow era, contact Kennedy at 919-344-4586 or email Kennedyr94@students.ecu.edu.
Helen Dragas

Helen Dragas: The leader who forced out U-Va.’s president

By Susan Svrluga and Donna St. George

As a home builder in Hampton Roads, Helen E. Dragas has won praise for solving big problems decisively. Several years ago, she learned that a subcontractor her business hired had been using defective drywall that emitted an odor and raised concerns about wiring corrosion and health. Dragas decided to relocate people, tear out the drywall and rebuild more than 70 houses.

“She did not have to be threatened. She did not have to be taken to court,” said former Virginia Beach mayor Meyera Oberndorf. “She just immediately made it right at her own expense.”

But as rector of the University of Virginia’s governing board, Dragas has been vilified for orchestrating the removal of a president who she thought wasn’t moving fast enough to solve big problems. How Dragas handled the ouster of Teresa Sullivan — a surprise action, without a vote from the full board of visitors — confounds many who know her.

“Helen has always had the reputation of being bright. She runs a good business and is a good citizen,” said Jane Batten, a major donor to U-Va. who lives in Virginia Beach. “I’m surprised at her lapse in judgment in this matter.”
These portraits of Dragas the business leader (smart, tough and generous, admirers say) and Dragas the university leader (secretive, unilateral and divisive, according to critics) conflict so sharply that they are difficult to reconcile. The common thread may lie in a quality her allies often invoke: her resolve.

In recent days, protesters have massed on the university’s historic Lawn in front of Thomas Jefferson’s Rotunda. Newspaper editorials have demanded answers. Donors have threatened to withhold funds. Faculty have called for Dragas to step down.

“I’ve never seen one person have such a negative impact on a large institution like this,” Elizabeth Friberg, a nursing professor, said at a rally in Charlottesville on Wednesday. “Maybe there were two. Maybe there were three. But she’s the face of it, and she’ll have to live with that.”

Dragas has not retreated. She issued a statement of regret Monday for missteps that contributed to the upheaval but defended the need for the board to make “important and often difficult calls.” She held her ground even as one of her board allies resigned.

On Thursday, the board set a meeting for next week to discuss whether Sullivan should be reinstated — a possibility that her supporters say she would consider if Dragas resigned.

Dragas’s term on the board ends July 1. She is eligible for reappointment and has not indicated in public any desire to leave. Gov. Robert F. McDonnell (R) will make the call.

On Tuesday, he said of her: “From all accounts, she has been an incredibly good leader and strong participant on the board in helping to manage the university.” But the governor has not tipped his hand on whether he’ll keep Dragas.

* * *

Dragas, 50, is president and chief executive of the Dragas Cos., a family business dating back more than 40 years that builds condominium communities and moderately priced homes.

Her father, George Dragas Jr., traveled with his family to Greece for a visit when he was a little boy and could not get home because of the onset of World War II. They were stranded in Nazi-occupied Athens with relatives, often going hungry.
“My husband’s experience in Greece definitely shaped his life, and I’m sure those values have been handed down to our children,” Helen Dragas’s mother, Grace Dragas, wrote in an e-mail. “The dire circumstances they faced gave them a steely resolve and a fighting spirit, and a real commitment to family.”

Helen Dragas grew up with the business — she started when she was 13 with a summer job there and has never worked anywhere else. She returned after graduating from U-Va. in 1984 and again after earning her master’s in business administration in Charlottesville in 1998.

She rose to head of the Dragas Cos. in 1996. Dragas is married with three children.

Development in Virginia Beach can be controversial, Mayor William D. Sessoms Jr. said. But he said Dragas is respected and well-liked in the area. “She goes in and meets with the community, works with the community and comes up with a plan the community can support. . . . She’s analytical. She thinks before she speaks.”

Over the years, Dragas has served on a number of powerful public and private boards and has donated to candidates from both parties. Records tracked by the nonpartisan Virginia Public Access Project show that Dragas and entities related to her business have donated more than $70,000 to political campaigns since 1999, mostly to Democrats. She forged ties with Gov. Mark R. Warner (D) and his successor, Democrat Timothy M. Kaine, who named her to the U-Va. board in 2008. In 2010, the board named Dragas vice rector as she turned back a challenge from another board member. In 2011, she became U-Va.’s first female rector, the year after Sullivan became its first female president.

George Dragas was also a rector, leading the board of visitors of Old Dominion University in the early 1990s. Last week, while Helen Dragas was in Charlottesville, relatives were at ODU for the dedication of a building named in their honor.

The Dragas Cos. recently donated $1.5 million to help the homeless in three cities in the Hampton Roads region, and Helen Dragas has been honored by Habitat for Humanity and other organizations. She is known in her hometown as a civic leader.

But on Wednesday, she lost the support of her local paper.
“Helen Dragas, rector of the University of Virginia, has failed repeatedly to explain why President Teresa Sullivan was forced out a week ago,” the Virginian-Pilot said in an editorial. “Dragas has, however, built a convincing case for another departure — her own.”

* * *

Dragas declined to be interviewed for this article. On Thursday evening, Dragas issued a statement saying that she agreed with critics who said the dismissal could have been handled better. But she reiterated her defense of the decision.

“In my view, we did the right thing, the wrong way,” Dragas said. “For this, I sincerely apologize, and this and future boards will learn from our mistakes.”

Dragas also listed challenges facing the university, including financial pressures and the emerging role of online learning, and said the board concluded that there was a need for a rapid development of a new strategic plan.

Some e-mails, released by the university after a public records request from the Cavalier Daily student newspaper, hint at Dragas’s management style.

On June 7, Dragas wrote to Sullivan: “Terry, [Vice Rector] Mark [Kington] and I will both be in Charlottesville tomorrow afternoon and would appreciate a meeting with you. Are you free sometime after 3 pm? Thank you, Helen.”

Sullivan replied that she would be free by 5 and asked, “Is there anything you would like me to prepare?”

At that meeting, Dragas and Kington told Sullivan that they had the votes on the board to force her out.

On June 10, Sullivan resigned and a firestorm erupted.

On June 14, according to an e-mail obtained by The Washington Post, Dragas told the provost and the chief operating officer that she and the vice rector wanted them to issue a joint statement by noon. They should tell the faculty and staff, she wrote, that they would support future U-Va. presidents and make clear “that you understand that the [board’s] action is authoritative and resolute.”

* * *
At nearly 3 a.m. Tuesday, Dragas left the Rotunda after a marathon board meeting. She was shepherded by a police escort past students who shouted “Shame!” and “Resign!” She didn’t answer questions. She had already spoken her piece, a prepared statement read many hours earlier.

It had taken more than 11 hours, but Dragas had gotten the result she wanted, overriding board members who fought to reinstate Sullivan. The board had chosen an interim president, commerce school dean Carl P. Zeithaml. She was pushing ahead.

“She’s very considered and careful and deliberate in her thought process,” said Philip Shucet, a friend and former head of the Virginia Department of Transportation. “She made her decision and is now about the business of moving forward. That’s very Helen.”

In an interview with Virginia Business magazine, published in March, Dragas said: “The academic environment is one of shared governance, which is quite different than running a for-profit company. I recognize that, and I try to honor that.”

As for her management style, she said, “I would say I set high standards, but I put a lot of thought and energy into hiring the right people.”

*Staff writers Daniel de Vise in Charlottesville and Anita Kumar in Richmond contributed to this report.*
New Meeting Is Set on Fate of President of University

By TAMAR LEWIN

The campaign for the reinstatement of Teresa Sullivan as the University of Virginia’s president took a giant step forward on Thursday as the governing Board of Visitors scheduled a special meeting for Tuesday to consider “possible changes in the terms of employment of the president,” the university announced.

Since the board forced Dr. Sullivan to resign June 10, the campus has been in tumult, with thousands of faculty members, alumni and students urging that she be reinstated. Although the board voted 12 to 1 on Monday night to appoint Carl Zeithaml as interim president, the calls to return Dr. Sullivan to her job have only grown louder.

It would take eight votes of the board — usually 16 members, but down to 15 with the resignation on Tuesday of the vice rector, Mark Kington — to reverse the decision. While three board members may call a special meeting, faculty members said their understanding was that such a meeting would be called only if Dr. Sullivan’s supporters had mustered the necessary eight votes.

But others said it was premature to assume that she would be reinstated. “I’m happy, but I’m not counting my chickens yet,” said David Leblang, a political science professor who supports Dr. Sullivan. “The governor could show his hand and appoint someone to Kington’s seat who’s not in favor of reinstatement, and then there’d be a split board. Another caution is that we don’t know what the governor has up his sleeve, and there’s going to be a lot of arm-twisting in the next few days.”

Different possibilities for reinstatement have been floated: As many as six of the board seats may turn over on July 1, when some of the members rotate off and others would need to be reappointed by Gov. Bob McDonnell. But Dr. Sullivan’s supporters were eager to get the matter considered even sooner, both because Heywood Fralin, the one member who had voted against the appointment of Mr. Zeithaml, would be rotating off the board, and because Mr. Kington’s resignation meant that the decision could be overturned with just eight votes. Two members abstained from the original vote, and a third was absent.
One obstacle to Dr. Sullivan’s resuming her presidency could be the presence of Helen E. Dragas, the rector, and, by most accounts, architect of the ouster, who exchanged e-mails with others on the board expressing concerns about financial positioning and, in particular, whether the university was moving into online education as quickly as it should.

The Washington Post has reported that Dr. Sullivan has said that she would like to return to her job, on the condition that Ms. Dragas resigns, and if communication with the board improves. Ms. Dragas has not indicated any plans to leave, and while her term expires July 1, the governor, while criticizing the ouster process, has not yet said whether he will reappoint her.

There has been wide agreement that Dr. Sullivan, in office less than two years, was treated poorly: John T. Casteen III, Dr. Sullivan’s predecessor, called for her reinstatement. The faculty voted no confidence in the Board of Visitors. The American Association of University Professors wrote to the board, urging it to reconsider. And the student newspaper, The Cavalier Daily, called on the whole board to resign.

After days of organized campaigning among faculty members, the push for reinstatement picked up momentum on Thursday, when the deans of all the schools — except Mr. Zeithaml, the commerce school dean who was not asked to sign because of his position as interim president — wrote to the board.

“The deans do not make this suggestion lightly,” the letter said, going on to say that the appointment of an interim president would delay action on the fiscal and other issues that had led the board to seek a change in leadership. “We recommend strongly that discussions begin immediately to reset the relationship with President Sullivan, reconstitute the team she had put together over that past year, and accelerate the important decisions to be made.”

George Cohen, the law professor who heads the Faculty Senate, said: “We asked and he said he would be happy to return to dean if the president were reinstated.”

Dr. Sullivan issued a statement on Thursday, calling for civility on campus, known as Grounds:

“I know that emotions are running high on Grounds, but there is no excuse for abusing anyone with whom you disagree,” she said, singling out Mr. Zeithaml and the board as praiseworthy members of the university community.
Gov. Mitch Daniels of Indiana was unanimously voted the next president of Purdue University by the board of trustees on Thursday, making official what had been reported by a number of local and national news outlets this week.

Mr. Daniels, a Republican who cannot run for a third term because of term limits, will start as the university's 12th president in January.

"No institution of any kind means more to Indiana today or tomorrow as Purdue University," Mr. Daniels said in a statement released by the university.

"Its research gives rise to the innovative new goods, services and companies on which American and Hoosier prosperity must be built," he added. "I can conceive of no other assignment in which a person has the chance to contribute more to building the kind of Indiana of which we dream."

Purdue, about an hour northwest of Indianapolis, enrolls around 75,000 students on its West Lafayette and regional campuses, and employs more than 18,000 people statewide. The university's president, France A. Córdova, announced last July that she would be leaving this summer.

Speculation that Mr. Daniels, a fiscal conservative popular within his party, would be trading a political career for the world of academia began on Tuesday, after unnamed sources close to the governor and the university confirmed that university trustees would be considering him as the next president on Thursday morning. Mr. Daniels' office and university officials declined to comment before the vote.

Now able to speak openly about the decision, the university is promoting its new leader as one that will boost its reputation.

"Gov. Mitch Daniels will continue to raise the global profile of Purdue," Keith Krach, the university's chairman, said in a statement. "He's committed to the success of our land-grant institution, he's an advocate for economic progress through innovative research and he's made Indiana the state to watch for the last several years."
Mr. Daniels declined to run for president last year, citing family concerns. His new post at Purdue also appears to put an end to speculation that Mitt Romney was considering him as a potential vice presidential pick.

"Effective immediately, I will recuse myself from any partisan political activities or commentary," said Mr. Daniels after the trustee vote, according to written remarks.

But out of the political spotlight for good?

"As governor of Indiana and prior to his time as an elected official, Mitch Daniels has been instrumental to the Republican Party," said Kirsten Kukowski, a spokeswoman for the Republican National Committee, "and he will continue to be a leader for conservative principles."
East Los Angeles College summer school turns away many students

First day of school at the only L.A. Community College campus offering a full menu of summer courses left many students stranded as classes quickly filled up.

By Carla Rivera, Los Angeles Times
June 19, 2012, 1:19 a.m.

Thousands of students descended on East Los Angeles College on Monday for the first day of summer session, but many of them walked away disappointed. Classroom spots were a hot commodity, and many students didn't get one.

State funding cuts have forced many of California's public colleges to severely reduce or cancel summer programs. Nowhere is the pressure felt more than in the state's 112 community colleges, where overall enrollment and course offerings have plummeted to their lowest level in 15 years.

In the huge Los Angeles Community College District, East L.A. is the only one of nine campuses offering a full slate of courses — about 329 — and that is a reduction of about 30% from previous years. The campus this year gave priority registration to continuing East L.A. students but expected hundreds, if not thousands, of other students to try to enroll.
About 13,351 spots were available in all, and 13,000 of them had been filled before Monday, officials said.

The result: scenes like that in math instructor Myung Yun's classroom, where about 90 students showed up at 7:20 a.m. to add the class that was already at its capacity of 45.

They included students like Gao Xin, an electrical engineering major who needed the course to transfer to a four-year university. Yun decided to hold a lottery for 10 more students, but Xin didn't win a spot.

Xin said he now will probably have to wait another year to transfer.

"And tuition keeps going up, so by wasting time now I'm going to have to pay more in the future," said Xin, 25.

Cal State Long Beach student Joe Martinez needed a calculus class to maintain standing in his electrical engineering major. He had hoped to take the course at a community college because he doesn't have the money for the much steeper state university summer fees.

"I passed all my prerequisite math courses and just needed the calculus," said Martinez, 18, who will be a sophomore at the Long Beach campus. "I guess I did all of that for nothing."

Tiffany Hee is a math teacher at Alliance Huntington Park College-Ready Academy High School, who hoped to take the calculus class as a refresher because she has been asked to teach Advanced Placement calculus at her school next year.

She offered to act as an unpaid teaching assistant in Yun's class if he allowed more students in, to no avail.

"I saw the class in the schedule and it was early in the morning, so I didn't expect 80 other people trying to get in; it's kind of a shock," said Hee, a Cal State L.A. graduate who has been teaching for a year. "I still have to teach the class, regardless, so if I can't get in, I'll study on my own."

For teacher Yun, the throng of students was not unexpected. For two months
he has been flooded with emails from students begging to be let in. But too large a class would hamper instruction, he said.

"I want to keep them all, but it's not fair to all," Yun said. "We need more money. We're suffering."

About 40 of the students later met with Richard Moyer, vice president for academic affairs, to vent their frustration over not being accommodated.

"This is a budget crisis, not something that we at this college have any control over," Moyer told them.

In answer to a student's question, Moyer said he was fearful that if Gov. Jerry Brown's proposed tax initiative fails on the November ballot, the campus may not be able to offer any classes next summer.

"There is a huge demand of students and they want to accelerate their education," Moyer said. "We think of ourselves as a year-round school, but financial pressures are making us put more focus on fall and spring schedules, and it's setting students back."
By now everyone living in the world of MBAs knows that the summer internship is really a two-month interview to determine if the candidate fits in well at the company and merits a full-time job offer.

“If a student completes the internship without (a) acquiring new skills, (b) developing a list of new contacts and professional relationships and mentors, it was time wasted,” writes Vicki Lynn, senior vice president for client talent strategy and employer branding at Universum U.S.A. “The internship is an opportunity to grow and develop professionally, add to skill sets, and acquire mentors and references—for the next opportunity.”

But like any opportunity, an internship can also be a potential minefield. Mistakes that can sabotage any hope of a future with the employer are shockingly easy to make. Here are seven of the biggest blunders MBA interns make and how to avoid them:

Mistake No. 1: Partying Too Hard

While most business school administrators say this is a pitfall that is more common to undergraduates, MBAs can still easily end up drinking too much, saying inappropriate things, or making sexual advances toward a colleague, says Damian Zikakis, director of career services at the University of Michigan Ross School of Business. Frankly, an MBA intern won’t be cut nearly as much slack as an undergrad making this same error.

Mistake No. 2: Never Asking for Feedback

One MBA intern excitedly jumped into a project without asking for guidance or finding out if he was on the right path. When it came time for him to make the presentation, his manager was disappointed because it wasn’t what he was looking for, says Gary Fraser, assistant dean and
executive director of MBA career services at the University of Southern California Marshall School of Business. To sidestep this kind of error, Fraser suggests asking for a midpoint evaluation if the office doesn’t already offer one. This is an opportunity for interns to gauge how they are doing and for managers to steer them in the right direction.

**Mistake No. 3: Failing to Toot Your Own Horn**

Interns have to keep track of their accomplishments throughout the summer, especially if they are taking on projects and assignments from people outside their department, because their managers might not be aware of all they are doing, says Fraser. At the evaluation or as they are completing tasks, interns should keep their managers informed.

**Mistake No. 4: Avoiding Work**

MBA students have often griped about having little to do at their internships, says Zikakis. What they should be doing instead is asking how they can contribute further, he states. They should ask people—even those outside their department—if they could use a hand, especially if they are working on things that interest them. Basically, they should pitch in whenever possible and never look for ways to get out of work or do less.

**Mistake No. 5: Ignoring the Cultural Norms**

Every employer has its culture, which includes a certain set of acceptable behaviors. What time does everyone arrive and leave? Who picks up the coffee? It behooves interns to observe for a bit and try to fit in as best they can. Zikakis recalls an error a BBA intern made that cost him his job and could happen to anyone, including an MBA.

The intern was out late and overslept, which meant he would not make it to work on time. He called and told the intern director what had happened, apologized, and asked if he could come in now. The intern director said no but that he wanted to see him at 8 a.m. on Monday morning. The student arrived at 8:10 on Monday morning, and the intern director told him that he made three errors—sleeping in, calling rather than just coming into the office late and asking for forgiveness in person, and showing up late on Monday morning. Calling might have been O.K. at another office, where there might have been more leniency about arriving late. It wasn’t at this one. The student should have figured that out.

**Mistake No. 6: Keeping to Yourself**
Sure, interns must do a great job. They also need to get to know people. Networking is an important part of this lengthy interview. Interns need to make allies, people who will confirm their good behavior and talent and put in a good word when it comes to hiring or if any problems should arise. Avoiding the first five mistakes on this list is a good first step in making a good impression and getting to know people.

**Mistake No. 7: Fulfilling the MBA Stereotype**

Many an MBA has been accused of arrogance. There are a number of ways to demonstrate humility. The best way is to not be big-headed. Be a team player by working well with others regardless of their alma mater, says Zikakis. In addition, employers sometimes ask interns to do grunt work, which they think is beneath them. This might be another test to determine if interns are team players, and it can produce other opportunities by exposing them to other work. “Make the photocopies,” says Fraser, “if you have to make the copies.”

Finally, interns have to know their place in the office and be respectful of the executives. One intern made an appointment to meet with the managing director of the business expecting to win him over with his charm. When he arrived at the meeting, he had little to say except that he wanted to do a good job and wanted to introduce himself. “This kind of meeting seems insincere and opportunistic,” says Zikakis. “You must provide some kind of tangible feedback about something worthy or have a question that only that person can answer.”

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