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James Johnson, center, is recognized for winning a state wrestling championship outside the Pitt County courthouse in this 1976 photo. Standing with Johnson are D.H. Conley coach Milt Sherman, left, and Conley principal J.R. Carraway. (Contributed photo)

Local coaching Olympians
By Ronnie Woodward
Friday, July 27, 2012

James Johnson is in London and he plans to enjoy the Olympics opening ceremony and maybe watch some events this weekend, but he doesn’t plan on the buzz associated with the Games to distract him from his goal.

Johnson’s goal is a simple one, but it can be difficult in an Olympic environment.

“My first goal is to get these athletes ready,” Johnson, who in 1976 became the first D.H. Conley wrestler to win a state title, said during a phone interview earlier this week.

Johnson is a volunteer coach for the U.S. Greco-Roman wrestling team, which begins competition on Aug. 5. He is one of a handful of Olympic participants with Greenville ties, including former East Carolina track standout LaShawn Merritt and swimmer Lauren Perdue, who is a J.H. Rose graduate.

This is Johnson’s first time coaching in the Olympics and he said keeping the wrestlers mentally prepared is his focus.

“There’s a lot that goes on and we just want the athletes to stay grounded and stay focused on the task at hand,” he said.

Although this is Johnson’s first Olympic opportunity, he has plenty of coaching and wrestling experience in pressure situations.
His accomplishments include winning three U.S. Nationals titles in Greco-Roman and he was the first North Carolina wrestler to earn All-American status at the USA Wrestling Junior Nationals. He was an NCAA qualifier at Kentucky and finished second at the 1992 Olympic Trials, just missing a chance at the Olympics as an athlete.

As a coach, Johnson has been in international tours that included stops in Turkey, Hungary, Serbia and Finland. He has coached the Sunkist Kids the last eight years and the club has won the USA Wrestling Division II Greco-Roman national title the last four years and five of the last six campaigns.

His experience in recent years has allowed him to gain familiarity with the wrestlers who will be competing in London, and although Johnson doesn’t like to make predictions, he likes his athletes’ chances.

“At the Olympics, anybody can win on any given day,” said Johnson, who lives in Phoenix. “You have to be prepared every day because everyone is capable at this level. Everyone has a chance and I just hope and pray that we can win as much as possible.”

Johnson, who is in the North Carolina Wrestling Hall of Fame, said forming a wrestling strategy is complex, and watching video is an integral part of that process. He said there will be video watching in England, and he’s glad to be involved.

“It’s an honor and a blessing,” Johnson said of the opportunity. “It’s a challenge at this level and I just want to do the best I can to get these guys ready.”

Contact Ronnie Woodward at rwoodward@reflector.com or 252-329-9592.
Nearly a dozen Greenville-area people with an entrepreneurial spirit gathered downtown on Wednesday at Winslow’s Cafe to learn more about the newest project to help get business ideas off the ground.

The session — hosted by program director Scott Senatore, a senior vice president for the Greenville-Pitt County Chamber of Commerce — focused on the new Support Economic and Entrepreneurial Development (SEED) program.

The project, housed in a 1,200-square-foot co-working space on the first floor of the Self Help Credit Union on East Third Street, is a public-private partnership designed to provide entrepreneurs with a turn-key environment for three months to cultivate a business idea or concept at no cost.

During the three-month period, each entrepreneur will have access to peers, coaching, desks, high-speed WiFi, a conference room, a copy machine, printer and Uptown Greenville, a nonprofit organization established to develop plans and implement actions to revitalize and grow Greenville’s business district.

At the meeting, potential participants had an opportunity to question and learn about the project from Senatore and his fellow SEED committee members. They also saw the floor plan of the co-working area and learned about opportunities to receive mentoring from established business people and entrepreneurs.

“This mentoring aspect of the project can be a huge benefit to aspiring entrepreneurs and is a major component of the project,” Senatore said. “I would say nearly every successful entrepreneur has initially failed in their efforts. Listening and posing questions about their ideas and concepts to folks who have started businesses in town and hearing how they overcame their own set of barriers and challenges will be very invaluable to these participants.”

Senatore said the meeting also was an opportunity for him and committee members Nikki Jones of the Greenville Community Development Department and local real estate business person Grady Nichols to get a
handle on the types of assistance and expert mentoring that most will benefit the project participants.

“We’ll try to match our assistance to the needs they’re telling us about,” Senatore said. “If there is a need for website assistance, for example, we’ll try to match someone with that expertise to fill their need. If they need legal advice or financial advice, we’ll try to find that for them.”

The project will run from Sept. 10 to Dec. 7, located within proximity to restaurants, coffee shops, bars, the Town Common and the Tar River area. The shared office space will include space for up to 10 workstations, a conference room, a bathroom, a kitchen, a private room and a break room.

SEED supporters include the City of Greenville, Greenville-Pitt County Chamber of Commerce, East Carolina University, Pitt County Economic Development Commission, Uptown Greenville, Evolve Inc., Self Help Credit Union, CopyPro and CenturyLink.

The deadline for applications to SEED is Aug. 24. Anyone interested in the program can contact Senatore at 752-4101 or visit www.greenvilleseed.com and fill out the “Contact Us” form to receive a program application.

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March shows continued need for domestic violence awareness

July 25, 2012

Raleigh, N.C. — About 50 people showed up in downtown Raleigh Wednesday afternoon for a silent march against domestic violence – a turnout that some say indicates the need to keep the issue in the public eye.

The march, organized by the Wake County Domestic Violence Task Force, was in response to three recent homicides in Wake County that authorities have determined were the result of domestic violence.

Sherry Howard, 50, died in May, Nancy Margarita Pedraza, 23, died in June, and Marisol Mendoza Rojas died this month.

Last year in Wake County, four deaths were attributed to domestic violence, according to the North Carolina Department of Justice.

"It saddens me to see the response to the march," said Rene Raeford. "There are not a lot of people here today, and in 2012, I can't believe we're still keeping this in the closet."

Raeford's sister, Yvette Raeford, was a teacher who was killed in a 2005 murder-suicide at the hands of her ex-boyfriend.

"We were very close, and it's devastating, still today," Raeford said. "It hurts me. I guess I would feel a lot better if we were more ahead with what's happening with domestic violence and trying to make a better change."

Cynthia Foxx lost her daughter, Tiana Williams, in July 2002, after Williams' fiancé fatally shot her.

The 21-year-old had just graduated from Meredith College in Raleigh and was getting ready for medical school at East Carolina University on a full scholarship.

"She did not anticipate being murdered by someone who professed to love and care for her," Foxx said. "Her death has changed our entire family and community. Needless to say, we refuse to remain silent."
Editorial: Olympic Games foster community
Friday, July 27, 2012

Considering the political, social and cultural fractures evident in the United States today, rare is the event that can help bridge those divisions and facilitate some measure of shared experience among citizens. Strangely enough, it is sports that seems to transcend the divide and bring people together — and the start of the Olympic Games may accomplish that feat this year.

The nation has its ups and downs, its very serious problems affecting lives both here and abroad, but there remains a measure of deep-felt pride in seeing our young men and women competing on the world stage. Though it is probably too much to ask that these games promote some type of greater understanding across America, let the coming two weeks cultivate the type of excitement and enthusiasm the nation could use.

The city of London — indeed, the whole of England — had little more than a day to celebrate the announcement seven years ago that it would host the Games of the XXX Olympiad. Less than 24 hours later, a coordinated attack on the London Underground and a double-decker bus killed 52 innocent people. After all, the global reality is never fully separated from events of this magnitude.

It is a lesson the world hardly needed. These games mark 40 years since Munich, Germany, and the massacre that killed 11 Israeli athletes and coaches. And yet, the Olympics are meant to celebrate the human spirit, the promise of sports and the purity of athletic competition, offering a respite, however brief, from those tragedies.

Perhaps that is too ambitious a goal — to hope that bringing the world under a common banner of sports can be successful. But it should not dampen our aspiration that it be so — if not for the larger global village, than in our nation, our state and our community. At a time when neighbor hardly knows neighbor and our interactions with one another are largely superficial, the Olympics offer the shared human experience uncommon in our modern, plugged-in society.

In fact, it seems that only sports is capable of this achievement. The Super Bowl, for instance, is annually the most-watched program on television and people routinely gather in order to watch. Locally, that same spirit revolves
around East Carolina University sports, especially when 50,000 people fill Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium for Pirate football.

So let these games forge those same bonds. That may be too much to ask, but ambitious goals are what the Olympics are all about.
UNC-Chapel Hill faculty calls for outside review of athletics and academics

By Dan Kane - dkane@newsobserver.com

CHAPEL HILL–A report by a special faculty committee looking into the academic fraud scandal at UNC-Chapel Hill found an athletics program divorced from the faculty, academic counselors for athletes improperly helping them enroll in classes and poor oversight of faculty administrators who have wide latitude in running their departments.

The three professors who wrote the report called for an independent commission of outside experts in higher education to review athletics and academics at the university.

“It is our hope that such a panel of distinguished experts will both highlight what we are doing right and identify areas of deficiencies in organization and procedure,” the report said.

The report comes after a university probe found 54 courses within the Department of African and Afro-American Studies that had little or no instruction, and dozens of independent study classes that had little evidence of academic rigor. The classes were largely filled with athletes, and some had nothing but football or basketball players enrolled.

University officials have said the fraud does not merit an NCAA investigation because nonathletes also were enrolled in the no-show classes, though they represent a minority of the students and the class enrollments. But the report is almost entirely focused on what it called an atmosphere of distrust on a “campus with two cultures,” one academic and one athletic.

University officials also say the blame for the scandal falls upon two individuals – Julius Nyang’oro, the longtime chairman of the department now forced into retirement, and Deborah Crowder, the longtime department manager who retired in 2009. But the report suggests that academic counselors who are assigned to help athletes keep up with their classes – and therefore remain eligible to play – share some of the responsibility.

The report said an unidentified “departmental staff manager” within African studies may have directed athletes to enroll in the no-show classes, and that
“it seems likely” someone in the department was calling counselors for athletes to tell them “certain courses” were available.

“We were told that athletes claimed they had been sent to Julius Nyang’oro by the (Academic Support Program for Student Athletes)” the report said.

**Counselors, advisers**

Chancellor Holden Thorp previously confirmed that academic counselors to the athletes had registered football players through the African studies department for a no-show summer class in 2011 that has sparked a criminal investigation. Nyang’oro hatched the class two days before the start of the session, records show, and within a few days it was filled with 18 football players and one former player.

Counselors for the athletes are not supposed to steer them to particular classes. But the report noted that the athletes were likely using those counselors to help them select classes because the university’s academic advising staff-to-student ratio is 500 to one, twice the national average.

Much of the 13-page report describes an athletics program that has too much control over athletes, and not enough effort by the university to make sure athletes are getting a full educational experience. The authors noted that the admissions office under its current director has never rejected a student athlete with a subpar academic record that has received a recommendation from a special advisory committee.

They said the academic support program for athletes is supposed to be run by the College of Arts and Sciences, but its funding comes from the athletics department, and its director, Robert Mercer, also reports to John Blanchard, a senior athletics director.

“This reporting system is ambiguous, lacks clarity, and is likely not to be very productive,” the report said.

The academic fraud case has generated numerous investigations and reports, but the faculty report said the various probes have different missions that may miss the larger issues at stake.

“The piecemeal statements of the university in response to each new report ends up being imperfect, because none deals comprehensively with the larger issues, nor has the time been taken to confront constructively and proactively the systemic issues around athletics and academics,” the report said.

**Faculty frustration**
Many faculty members, the report found, felt they have no say in academic decisions, particularly regarding student-athletes. They say the university should examine athletes’ course selection over a period of roughly 10 years to see if they are clustering in certain classes and departments with the intent of protecting their eligibility in sports.

“Generally, (faculty) call for an external review of athletic advising, independent of the Athletic Department, as well as more forthright statements from the administration about the compromises made to host Division I athletics at UNC,” the report said.

The authors are professors Steven Bachenheimer, a professor of microbiology and immunology; Michael Gerhardt, a law professor; and Laurie F. Maffly-Kipp, a professor of religious studies.

Chancellor Holden Thorp said in a statement he supports an outside review. “It will complement the other activities and inquiries in progress,” he said.

Jay Smith, a history professor who has been one of the strongest voices for a full investigation into the academic fraud, also praised the authors for an “excellent” report.

“Subtle, measured, carefully worded,” he said, “and bracing to anyone who’s reading closely.”

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The story so far

Last August, The News & Observer reported that an academic transcript of a former UNC-CH football player -- kicked off the team for NCAA violations -- showed he had taken an upper level African studies class the summer before he took a full slate of introductory classes, including remedial writing. Professor Julius Nyang’oro taught the class, and gave the player, Marvin Austin, a B-plus.

The story and questions from the N&O regarding other classes in the African and Afro-American Studies Department prompted an internal investigation that found 54 classes with little or no instruction over a four-year period, and dozens of independent studies that were poorly monitored and administered.

Since then, the SBI has launched a criminal investigation, and the UNC Board of Governors is conducting a review. The university has put forward numerous reforms intended to promote academic integrity after what is acknowledged as the worst academic scandal in recent memory at UNC-CH.
NCCU chancellor to retire

By Jane Stancill - jstancill@newsobserver.com

DURHAM–Charlie Nelms, who for five years toughened academic standards and preached quality as chancellor of N.C. Central University, announced his retirement Thursday, effective Aug. 6.

The news, weeks before the start of a new semester, caught his senior staff off guard. He met with his executive team Thursday morning and told them that he had never had a break in his career and that now it was time. Then he sent an email to the campus community, invoking Robert Frost’s famous poem, “The Road Not Taken.”

“Five years ago, I took the road that led me to North Carolina Central University and experienced one of the most fulfilling periods of my extensive career in higher education,” the email said. “As I complete my five-year commitment to my beloved NCCU and prepare to celebrate my 66th birthday, I have made a decision that will carry me into the next phase of my life.”

Attempts to reach Nelms were unsuccessful, but his staff said he would be available for interviews next week. His email said he wanted to spend the rest of his career helping ensure the academic success of students at historically black colleges and universities. In 2010, he wrote a treatise calling for the reinvigoration of black colleges.
In a statement, UNC President Tom Ross said: “Chancellor Nelms has made extraordinary contributions to the academic quality and stature of N.C. Central University that will hold it in good stead as we search for his successor.”

Ross appointed Charles L. Becton of Durham – an attorney, law professor and former judge on the N.C. Court of Appeals – as interim chancellor.

NCCU’s Board of Trustees will form a search committee to find a permanent successor. A recommendation will be made to Ross and the UNC Board of Governors, which will elect a new chancellor.

Before coming to NCCU, Nelms was Indiana University’s vice president for institutional development and student affairs. He also had previously served as chancellor and professor of education at the University of Michigan-Flint and chancellor and professor of education at Indiana University East in Richmond.

**Focus on service**

Nelms, with his precise cadence and sharp-dressed style, was insistent that NCCU improve its service to students, from the phone manners of office workers to the landscaping that would make the campus more inviting. He mandated customer service training for faculty and staff. He helped students move into their dorm rooms each fall.

While he demanded more from the campus, he also wanted his students to step up. Under his leadership, the campus increased the required minimum grade point averages – returning students have to have a 2.0 grade point average to remain in school. Several hundred students left the campus in the past year as higher standards kicked in.

The average grade point average of incoming students climbed from 2.7 to 3.2, said Kevin Rome, NCCU’s vice chancellor for student affairs and enrollment management. Rome said Nelms thought it was unethical to allow students to accumulate debt if they weren’t progressing toward a degree.

“One of the things he talked about was excellence without excuses,” Rome said. “That was an excellent message that people bought into.”

**Successes, challenges**

Under Nelms, the university established the first doctoral degree program in more than 50 years – a Ph.D. in integrated biosciences, which will enroll the first students this fall.
Online courses increased by half, and the campus opened a new dorm and a nursing building. Nelms also oversaw NCCU as it moved from Division II to Division I in athletics.

He also had challenges. In 2010, an internal audit showed that a former employee embezzled state and federal grant money from a campus program. An anonymous online petition also accused Nelms of charging personal expenses on a state-issued credit card. The issue was resolved after an internal audit found no serious problems, a UNC spokeswoman said.

Earlier this week, the university reinstated football coach Henry Frazier, who had been charged with assaulting his wife. NCCU officials said the legal charges had been resolved and Frazier was cleared to return to his job. Rome said the job of chancellor can take a toll.

“Those types of things can wear away people who are trying to make a difference,” Rome said. “I’m sure there were people who didn’t like him being a strong leader.”

In his email, Nelms said now that NCCU’s new strategy for student success is in place, the next leader can start with a good foundation.

“I am certain that now is an excellent time to pass the baton to a new chancellor who can carry out the strategy,” he wrote.

But his departure now means that NCCU will be with an interim leader as a new academic year begins.

Founded in 1910, N.C. Central University was the first publicly supported liberal arts college for African-Americans. It has 8,300 enrolled in academic programs including law, biotechnology, library science, business, nursing, education and the arts.

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**The interim chancellor**

Charles L. Becton, a Morehead City native, is a lecturer at the UNC law school and a visiting professor at Duke University’s law school. He taught law as a chaired professor at NCCU’s law school in 2010.

Becton practiced with the Raleigh law firm of Fuller, Becton, Slifkin & Bell after his retirement from the Court of Appeals. Before his service as an appellate judge, he worked with the Charlotte firm of Chambers Stein Ferguson & Lanning, establishing the firm’s Chapel Hill office. He earned an
undergraduate degree from Howard University and law degrees from Duke University and the University of Virginia.

“Judge Charles Becton is known and respected throughout the Durham community and the state of North Carolina for his sound judgment and ability to get things done, so I’m confident that NCCU won’t lose any momentum as the search for a permanent chancellor gets under way,” UNC system President Tom Ross said. “I am grateful that Judge Becton has accepted this important assignment, and I know that the campus will be in very capable hands.”

**Duke names new dean of Duke Chapel**

By Yonat Shimron - Correspondent

Its former dean was an Anglican theologian who left Duke Chapel to lead an upper-crust congregation in London that caters to government leaders.

Its new dean grew up in a Holiness-Pentecostal church, where ecstatic prayer and faith healing rituals are common. He is an ordained Baptist minister.

The Rev. Luke Powery, who was appointed the new dean of the Duke Chapel Thursday, stands in marked contrast to his predecessor. But Duke’s search committee hopes he will bring a down-to-earth dynamic to the towering stone church in the heart of Duke University’s west campus.

Powery, an assistant professor of homiletics (or preaching) at Princeton Theological Seminary, will also become the first black man to lead the chapel, known as much for its Gothic architecture as for hosting some of the world’s most noted preachers.

“For so long, the chapel has been perceived as a ‘city on a hill,’” said Richard Lischer, chairman of the search committee and a professor of preaching at Duke Divinity School. “Luke will help us open doors between the chapel and the city.”
Powery was among 130 candidates for the position after the Rev. Samuel Wells returned to England this summer to become the vicar of London’s St. Martin-in-the-Fields.

Powery was already on the short list before he was invited to give a sermon at the chapel on June 24. He opened by singing the first stanza of a traditional hymn “Spirit of the Living God,” popular in Baptist churches, both black and white.

Powery, 38, loves to sing. He received an undergraduate degree in music with a concentration in vocal performance from Stanford University. And he’s not afraid of lifting his voice – even in the imposing expanse of the Duke Chapel.

He said his philosophy was that Sunday worship is “the source and summit of life,” but that worship should flow into service and social witness during the week.

Powery said he wanted to build on the chapel’s relationship to the larger Durham community, including its black population. But he emphasized he wanted to be a minister to all. The Chapel has historic ties to the United Methodist Church, but it is not affiliated with the denomination.

“I’m coming in to minister to high church folks, low churches and no church folks,” he said. “We’ll see where God leads us.”

Born in the Bronx to a father from the Cayman Islands and a mother from Jamaica, Powery grew up in Miami. His father was a minister in the Holiness-Pentecostal Church but worked most of his life for the American Bible Society. Powery said he remembers traveling with his father to a variety of different churches when he was growing up.

After earning a master’s in divinity from Princeton, he served for two years as associate pastor of the interdenominational International Protestant Church in Zurich.

Unlike his predecessor, he does not have a Ph.D., but the less rigorous doctor of theology, a Th.D., which he earned from the University of Toronto after his return from Switzerland.

Lischer said Duke liked his international experience and ability to bridge cultures. He said he saw in Powery a man of solid faith and quiet integrity.

Powery has taught at Princeton, a Presbyterian-affiliated seminary, since 2007. He has also filled in frequently at an inner city Presbyterian congregation in Newark, N.J.
“He has it all,” said Martha Simmons of Atlanta, creator and director of The African American Lectionary, an online resource for black church leaders. “He’s a world citizen, a world preacher and a world thinker.”

Ashley Crowder Stanley, a university trustee, Methodist minister and member of the search committee, said of the new dean, “He impressed me with his commitment to engaging both the Duke and Durham communities in dialogue, noting, ‘Before I ever speak, I have to listen.’”

For Powery, adopting a “posture of listening” is as important to ministering as preaching and singing.

He said, “I look forward to continue, as the Chapel motto says, ‘keeping the heart of the University listening to the heart of God,’ which beats with love for the world.”

Powery begins his new post Sept. 1.

Staff writer Amanda James contributed to this report.

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UNC-CH to invest in Northside study
By Katelyn Ferral - kferral@newsobserver.com

CHAPEL HILL—UNC-Chapel Hill will spend $210,000 to help protect a historically black community from too many students moving in.

The university announced Thursday that it will seek ways to promote affordable, single-family housing and save the history of the Northside neighborhood, which stretches along West Rosemary Street downtown to Carrboro.

The university will contract with the Center for Community Self-Help, a financing and advocacy organization based in Durham, to develop a five-year plan to evaluate current zoning and building ordinances and find ways to promote public-private affordable housing partnerships and home ownership in the community.

Chapel Hill Foundation Real Estate Holdings, a not-for-profit corporation founded by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Foundation will fund the plan. The organization is also seeking Town Council approval to redevelop the University Square strip mall on West Franklin Street.

Self-Help staff will also collaborate with residents, the university, the town and the Marian Cheek Jackson Center for Saving and Making History, a non-profit dedicated to recording and preserving the history of the neighborhood.

The university has been concerned about Northside for years, UNC-CH Chancellor Holden Thorp said in an interview Thursday.

“The Northside neighborhood is somewhat in danger because there’s a lot of student rentals there, and we worry that the historical nature of the neighborhood will be disrupted,” he said.

Northside has changed from a black, working-class community during the days of segregation to a student rental neighborhood. Students rent about half of the houses in the neighborhood, according to estimates by the university and the Jackson Center.

The town created a special conservation district for Northside with rules banning new duplexes and restricting new construction in the neighborhood in 2004. The Town Council passed additional restrictions on building height,
additions to houses and parking earlier this year after a coalition of residents and housing groups said some property owners were finding ways to skirt the rules.

The number of black residents in the Northside neighborhood dropped by hundreds between 1980 and 2010. In 1980, there were 1,159 black residents; in 2010 there were 690, according to census data.

The plan will have three phases: research and analysis, program design and implementation.

The first phase will include a housing market analysis, baseline report and review of zoning and related regulations. Self Help will also research best practices on student rental enforcement, form an advisory group, facilitate collaboration between nonprofit developers and the neighborhood, promote home ownership, and explore community-based land banking.

Preserving the historical character of Northside and promoting more home ownership benefits Chapel Hill and the university, said Gordon Merklein, executive director of real estate development with the university.

“It’s in all of our collective best interests to ideally see the neighborhood stabilized, which in my mind is a good, solid balance between historical ownership that is there and what is the right amount for the future,” he said.

Della Pollock, a professor in the department of communication studies at UNC and the executive director of the Jackson Center, came up with the idea for the study and partnership with Self-Help.

“I see this as really the first time in as long as I’ve been here ... where the town and the university and the community are coming together about a real vision of vitality ...,” she said.
Appalachian State will take several all-league players to opener at ECU

By Cauliton Tudor - ctudor@newsobserver.com

Appalachian State will take a large percentage of the Southern Conference’s preseason all-league team to ECU for the teams’ noon football opener on Sept. 1.

Long a Football Championship Subdivision (formerly Division I-AA) power, the Mountaineers finished 8-4 overall in 2011 and were eliminated in the second round of the playoffs by Maine.

At the Southern Conference preseason media day in Spartanburg, S.C., on Thursday, the league’s 10 head coaches picked Jerry Moore’s 24th Appalachian team to finish second, behind Georgia Southern. In the media vote, the Mountaineers were third, behind Georgia Southern and Wofford.

But in the vote for all-conference, Appalachian placed a league-best 10 players on the first- and second-teams:

First-team picks: junior quarterback Jamal Jackson (North Atlanta High), senior linebacker Jeremy Kimbrough (Decatur, Ga., Cedar Grove) and defensive back Demetrius McCray (Covington, Ga. Newton).

Mountaineers on the second unit: sophomore offensive lineman Kendall Lamm (Charlotte Butler), junior wide receivers Andrew Peacock (Northern Durham) and Tony Washington (High Point Andrews), sophomore defensive lineman Ronald Blair (Greensboro, Ga., Greene County), senior linebacker Brandon Grier (West Charlotte), senior defensive back Troy Sanders (Chester, S.C.) and senior punter Sam Martin (Fayetteville Ga., Starr’s Mill).

East Carolina: 5-7 overall and 4-4 in Conference USA last season, had three players picked for the preseason all-CUSA team: junior offensive guard Will Simmons (Ahoskie Hertford), senior nose tackle Michael Brooks (Roxboro Bartlett Yancey) and senior linebacker Jeremy Grove (Frederick, Md., Gov. Thomas Johnson).

The Pirates also announced earlier this week that they have passed the 20,000 mark in season ticket sales for the sixth straight season.
In addition to the opener, ECU will have home games against UTEP (Sept. 29), Memphis (Oct. 13), Navy (Oct. 27), Houston (Nov. 3) and Marshall (Nov. 23).

Appalachian visited ECU to start the 2009 season. The Pirates held on for a 29-24 win after racing to a 17-0 after one quarter and 29-7 after three quarters.

**Elon**, which opens at UNC on Sept. 1 (12:30 p.m.), was picked to finish seventh in the Southern Conference vote.

The Phoenix, coached Jason Swepson, finished 5-6 overall and 3-5 in the Southern last season.

On the Elon staff is Ron Mattes, the former Virginia standout blocker and father of N.C. State offensive lineman R.J. Mattes.
U-Va. deans hatched online plan the day Teresa Sullivan was asked to resign

By Daniel de Vise

Unfolding details of the negotiation that led the University of Virginia into Stanford University’s Coursera online consortium last week reveal a poignant episode of bad timing.

On June 8, the leaders of the university’s Board of Visitors asked for the resignation of President Teresa Sullivan. Among their chief complaints: U-Va. was ignoring perhaps the most significant development in the brief history of online collegiate learning, the vast experiment in global online learning launched by Stanford, MIT and Harvard.

Earlier that day, a group of academic deans at U-Va. had discussed the prospect of entering one of those experiments, Coursera, at a retreat. During the retreat, the university’s arts-and-sciences dean, Meredith Jung-En Woo, asked Philip Zelikow, an associate dean, “to reach out to Coursera and another group to learn more,” according to an e-mail Woo sent to an alumni group last week.

The previous day, June 7, a group from the university’s Darden graduate business school had visited the Coursera offices in Silicon Valley. Dean Robert Bruner was skeptical of the mass online experiment but saw U-Va.’s involvement in Coursera as “a relatively little bet” that could help the university join the “leading edge” in a race into online course delivery, Bruner wrote last week in a blog post.

Now, some in the U-Va. community are understandably perplexed about how, amid all the Coursera conversation, neither the president nor the rector knew that the institution was poised to join the global online movement.

Joining Coursera keeps U-Va. apace with its academic peers in a movement that may or may not represent the future of technologically driven higher education. Mass online platforms such as Coursera give the nation’s top universities a venue to develop courses for their own students and to experiment with digital delivery. The models also position them to keep up with the technology as it develops; the schools are driven partly by the danger that in 10 or 20 years, low-cost online
coursework will pose a real threat to classroom learning, at least for large, entry-
level general education courses.

There are enough reasons to invest in Coursera and its chief rival, edX, that seven
of the universities ranked as the nation’s 10 best by U.S. News & World Report
are now involved in one or the other: Harvard, Stanford, Princeton, MIT, CalTech,
Duke and the University of Pennsylvania.

Four of the 10 top-ranked public universities (actually 12, because of a three-way
tie) have joined Coursera: U-Va., Michigan, Georgia Tech and the University of
Washington.

Leaders of edX announced today that the nation’s top-ranked public university,
Berkeley, has joined their initiative, a move clearly timed to answer the major
expansion of Coursera last week. Coursera has 16 partners to edX’s three, but the
“X universities” can claim an edge in academic pedigree.

On the day Sullivan was asked to resign, neither she nor Dragas knew how close
the university stood to entering into the Coursera partnership. Dragas
acknowledged this in an e-mail last week. Carol Wood, the chief university
spokeswoman, told me in a note that Sullivan knew only the broad outlines of U-
Va.’s online dealings.

“President Sullivan was aware of broad-ranging discussions on this topic, but did
not know about the specifics of discussion that took place at Dean Woo’s meeting
on June 8,” Wood said. Sullivan was holding her own retreat that day and, later,
receiving her marching orders from the rector.

Sullivan had been aware of the Darden delegation traveling to California on a
“Tech Trek” as well, Wood said, although she might not have known every stop
on their itinerary. “But she did not know about the outcome of Dean Bruner’s trip
until later, because, again, the dates align with her dismissal,” Wood said.

At some point after Woo’s retreat — Sullivan doesn’t recall the exact date — the
president spoke to her old boss at the University of Michigan, President Mary Sue
Coleman, about that institution’s experience with Coursera. Michigan, where
Sullivan served as provost, was among the first institutions to join the Stanford
partnership.

Sullivan’s own provost, John Simon, checked with his old colleagues at Duke,
which was already committed to joining Coursera. Then, U-Va.’s two academic
leaders gave their formal blessing to the initiative.
Texas A&M University’s plan to outsource support services including landscaping affects 1,647 of its public employees.

An Outsourcing Plan Stirs Fear at Texas A&M

By REEVE HAMILTON and MATTHEW WATKINS

When the Texas A&M University System announced that its flagship would gain $260 million in new revenue and savings in the next 10 years by outsourcing its building maintenance, landscaping and dining services, Chancellor John Sharp said the plan was an unprecedented way to raise money in financially struggling higher education.

“Today’s announcement means more money will be available to recruit, pay and retain faculty and researchers,” he said at a news conference on June 21.

But excitement over the plan is not universal. Many people on campus and in the surrounding community are worried and angry. A&M staff members who perform the support services have expressed concern over their future employment. And Bryan-College Station vendors fret that they could lose one of their biggest clients.

“Texas A&M has one of the finest business schools in the country, and yet we can’t figure out how to in-house save money out of our department,” said Walter Draper, an assistant custodial supervisor and one of the outsourcing plan’s many detractors. (Texas A&M University is a corporate sponsor of The Texas Tribune.)
As financially squeezed public universities increasingly turn to the private sector to generate revenue, their actions can create discord within college communities. The University of Texas at Austin has been derided for starting the Longhorn Network, a 24-hour sports channel that it said would raise hundreds of millions of dollars but that has failed to win major cable contracts.

The private partner in A&M’s effort is Compass Group USA, based in North Carolina. The company is expected to take over support services at A&M in August, creating its largest partnership with a university.

The 1,647 A&M employees who currently do that work will have to resign from the university and join Compass Group. They have been told that their jobs, after they undergo a reapplication process and pending a background check, are guaranteed for at least two years with comparable benefits and the same salary. That includes a 4 percent raise to offset the difference between the benefits that A&M and Compass Group provide.

Yet many of the affected employees are still worried, saying that they feel jilted by “the Aggie family.” Six days after the outsourcing announcement, more than two dozen members of the A&M support staff met in the lobby of the College Station Hilton to commiserate.

“We mean less to them than the grass under their feet,” said Sandra Roney, who has worked as a custodian for 17 years.

R. Bowen Loftin, Texas A&M’s president, said adequate accommodations for the staff was a critical component of the agreement with Compass Group. “They really deserve to be treated well,” Mr. Loftin said, “because they have treated us well.”

Representatives from Compass Group have met with workers to help guide them through the transition.

Still, that has not eased the concerns of many workers. Some say they are bothered by the fact that they will no longer be public employees and will not accumulate any more years of public service toward retirement. Others are fearful of how they will be treated by their new employer.

“What we’re being told is you can take it or leave it,” said a mechanic in building services who asked not to be named out of fear of repercussions.

Local vendors, meanwhile, say they have not heard from Compass Group. In the past, A&M has relied on nearby companies like Slovacek Sausage, Scarmardo Produce, Ruffino Meats and a Mrs. Baird’s Bread distributor to
supply its kitchens. But none of those companies have been told whether that relationship will continue after the transfer.

“We really don’t know,” said Greg Scarmardo, a co-owner of Scarmardo Produce, who said that A&M is one of his five biggest clients.

Sarah Hada, a spokeswoman for Compass Group, said all current food providers would be reviewed as part of the transition. “There is a process where potential vendors can apply to become an approved vendor,” Ms. Hada said. “But strict standards must be met.”

Compass Group already handles food services for Texas State University in San Marcos and provides janitorial services for Texas A&M-Corpus Christi. But when Chancellor Sharp measures the success of his revenue-generating plan, he points to the Longhorn Network, the television network of A&M’s main rival.

“I probably shouldn’t say this, but this overall contract is two-thirds bigger than the Longhorn Network pays the University of Texas,” he said at the news conference last month.

U.T. partnered with ESPN on the network, which started last year and was projected to earn the university about $300 million over the next 20 years. The Longhorns have received $5.7 million so far this fiscal year, of which nearly $4 million will go toward academics. A new faculty chair in fine arts has already been established using the proceeds, with more expected in departments including philosophy, physics and mathematics.

Unlike A&M’s arrangement with Compass Group, U.T.’s television partnership is geared solely toward generating new revenue as opposed to saving on existing operations. But the network has had a difficult transition, and its widespread lack of availability has become a repeated source of frustration and derision. The network is still pursuing distribution deals and encouraging would-be viewers to contact major cable providers and ask them to carry it.

Not even William Powers Jr., U.T.’s president, can currently tune in to the network from his home, though he said it was still a work in progress.

“It is a very high priority for us to make sure our fans, alumni and people that are interested can get it,” Mr. Powers said.

He applauded other institutions for finding new revenue opportunities.
“We’re always looking to be entrepreneurial in how we can provide the highest-quality education at the lowest cost to both taxpayers and students,” Mr. Powers said.

“Change is always difficult,” said Mr. Loftin, A&M’s president. “Human nature is to embrace stability and reject change. But those who embrace change and make it work for them have been the most successful.”

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No ‘magic solution’ to college affordability
By Daniel de Vise

Here is a guest post from Eugene J. Cornacchia, president of Saint Peter’s College in New Jersey.
Saint Peter’s College in Jersey City, N.J. (Saint Peter’s College)

The numbers are alarming. The real cost of a college education in the United States has grown more than 100 percent over the last three decades, a rate that is exponentially higher than the wage increases and cost of living adjustments of most Americans.

The latest figures from the College Board put the average cost for 2011-2012, including tuition, fees, room and board, at $17,131 for four-year public colleges (a 6 percent increase over the previous year) and $38,589 for private, nonprofit institutions (a 4.4 percent increase over the previous year). At this rate, it is estimated that a private, four-year undergraduate education will cost $280,000 or more when today’s preschoolers enter higher education in 2026.

Perception, for the most part, has driven the national dialogue about the rising price of college. One view, held among elected officials, the media and even the general public, is that gold-plated amenities, prestige games among colleges and universities and bloated administrations are chiefly responsible for escalating costs that take an increasing share of middle-class incomes and price the less-privileged out of a college education.

Reading the book “Why Does College Cost So Much?” (Oxford Press), written by two economists from the College of William & Mary, reaffirmed my personal view on the issue of the rising cost of college. The book points out that the price trajectory is similar to that of other service industries such as law, health care and entertainment. While it is easy to view the cost of higher education as growing faster than the inflation rate, one can reexamine the situation and question why the price of goods has gone up slower than the price of higher education.

Two factors help explain the phenomenon. Unlike the manufacturing sector, where product cost is lowered or becomes stable over time with improvements or outsourcing, higher education can’t achieve the same kinds of productivity gains. In fact, the high standards of a Jesuit education at an institution like Saint Peter’s College means that measured productivity will often go down. Increasing output at
any college or university can only be achieved through measures such as increasing class size, trading full-time faculty for adjunct professors or delaying the kinds of technologies that keep research and learning at the cutting edge.

Tuition assistance in the form of merit awards or financial aid also drives up the list price and contributes to sticker shock. If institutions reduced incentives for students who have a high likelihood of attending college regardless of the size of the offer, the list price would come down and the process would be more inclusive, because students driven away by sticker shock would see a more realistic price.

At Saint Peter’s, where the $28,900 tuition in 2011–2012 was slightly higher than the average for private nonprofits, the discounting is primarily directed to students with demonstrated financial need. For many schools like us, it’s not the merit money, it’s the financial need money. People look at the sticker price of around $30,000 and think, ‘Wow, that’s a lot of money.’ But the average student is paying a lot less than that, because we give institutional aid based on family need. We’re using our resources to attract our “bread and butter” students and help them afford it because we know our education lifts people and gives them a better life prospect.

The primary factors driving the cost of education have to do with an increase in the cost of basic, essential operations. Everyone has been struggling with rising healthcare costs over the last decade or two. For a while, the cost of energy was going up double digits every year, but we’ve taken steps to reduce it with conservation and green initiatives. But I think the biggest piece of all is financial aid.

Financial aid has become even more challenging in recent years, with the recession driving more requests for assistance, coupled with the elimination of state aid to New Jersey’s independent colleges and universities. Uncertainty also persists with direct state aid programs to students such as Tuition Aid Grants (TAG) and Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF) that go up and down every year. There’s no magic solution to this, and that’s why I think institutions need to find a better way to make college affordable.

I don’t think any of us have the answer yet, but we’ve done everything on our end, from trimming our budgets, scrutinizing staff levels and cutting back on all manners of waste, to ensure that a Saint Peter’s education remains affordable. Our commitment to students is measured not just in academics but also in their ability to afford the education and persist until they graduate.
According to the state justice department, domestic violence deaths in the state have dropped since 2008, when 137 people died, but that number has fluctuated in recent years. In 2009, 99 people died; 107 died in 2010; and 106 died last year.

North Carolina is currently ranked fourth in the nation in homicides committed by men against women, says Leigh Duque, executive director of InterAct of Wake County, a nonprofit that promotes awareness and offers counseling, education, support and shelter for victim of domestic violence.

"It is absolutely critical for us to create awareness about the issue of domestic violence," she said. "This is everybody's business. This isn't someone else's problem."

Duque says she hopes that with marches, like Wednesday's, her group and others are creating greater awareness and that people will reach out for help more than ever.

"Domestic violence is often called the silent crime, and it is just critical that we remain silent no more about this issue," she said. "The march today was silent in honor of and in memory of (the latest victims). However, our call to action at the end of the march was to go forth and be silent no more."