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UNC-CH’s academic fraud case puts new scrutiny on professors

By Jane Stancill - jstancill@newsobserver.com

Students get graded by their professors, but who grades the professors?

That question has bubbled up following the revelation that for years, students signed up for dozens of classes in UNC-Chapel Hill’s African and Afro-American Studies Department but received little or no instruction from a professor. Some of the classes were heavily populated by athletes.

A faculty panel on Thursday called for an independent commission of higher education experts to examine the balance between athletics and academics at the university. The subcommittee described an atmosphere of distrust on a campus “with two cultures” and a lack of oversight of administrators who run academic departments.

The faculty panel had combed through a May internal university review that identified 54 such courses – including 45 under Julius Nyang’oro, a former professor and department chairman who is now at the center of a fraud probe by the State Bureau of Investigation. Nyang’oro has declined to talk with reporters about his classes.

Nyang’oro – as department chairman – was not subject to the five-year cycle of evaluation for senior professors known as post-tenure review.

“That was a further check and balance that did not take place,” said Jonathan Hartlyn, a UNC-CH senior associate dean who helped conduct the review of the African and Afro-American Studies department. Hartlyn spoke recently to a separate UNC system panel that is reviewing the campus probe, which zeroed in on the actions of Nyang’oro and Deborah Crowder, a former office manager in the department.

University officials won’t disclose the date of Nyang’oro’s last review, citing personnel privacy rules, though UNC-CH did release other personnel data about the professor in its review of the department.

Despite policies governing teaching practices, Hartlyn said, the problems in the African and Afro-American Studies department escaped attention. “The college relies primarily on the integrity of our department chairs and department managers to implement the policies,” Hartlyn said. “Our system
did not anticipate a situation where both the chair and the manager could have been involved in the irregularities.”

Universities are large decentralized places, where individual academic departments exercise a certain amount of freedom to create courses, assign professors and conduct work independently. And the principles of academic freedom give professors a wide swath to determine what they teach and how they go about it.

That may help explain the gaps that led to what UNC-CH Chancellor Holden Thorp has called “a terrible case of academic fraud” that seriously threatened the integrity of the university.

The university’s reputation took a hit, Thorp said, and students were shortchanged, too. “None of these students in these classes got the quality of educational experience that we expect all Carolina students to get,” he said, “and that is absolutely not OK.”

‘A struggle for us’

The overwhelming majority of faculty perform to the high standards that the public, and tuition-paying students, expect, said Karen Gil, dean of UNC-CH’s College of Arts and Sciences.

“I certainly trust the basic integrity of our courses and our faculty, and believe they’re doing their jobs,” Gil told the UNC system panel. “But it has been a struggle for us, as you know. It has been difficult to convince people that that is true.”

Campus officials say the problem was confined to one department, and new procedures are in place to guard against such rogue courses, including better monitoring of teaching assignments and new rules governing independent study courses.

The UNC-CH case has highlighted concerns by critics who claim the tenure system can lead to abuse by faculty who are granted what amounts to a lifetime job guarantee. Some suggest that there should be more oversight of the nearly 14,000 faculty who teach in the state’s 16 public universities.

The Pope Center for Higher Education Policy, a conservative advocacy organization, recently urged that all of North Carolina’s state universities search aggressively for trouble in their academic programs.

Jay Schalin, director for state policy analysis, wrote in an op-ed piece in The News & Observer this month that the system should look for problems proactively “rather than avoiding them until they accidentally make
headlines.” He said anomalies could be spotted through a computer analysis of grade distributions, and then suspect courses could be more thoroughly investigated.

Problems usually only surface with a scandal such as the one in UNC-CH’s African and Afro-American Studies Department.

“Let’s suppose a teacher or instructor does a mediocre job. Who cares?” said Jane Shaw, president of the Pope Center. “I mean, there’s nobody who’s actually being hurt by that in the system. The department chairman doesn’t get hurt, the dean doesn’t get hurt, the provost doesn’t … unless it blows up in a real embarrassing situation, which this was, to say the least. There just isn’t an incentive to act on whatever the protocol is.”

**The tenure system**

There are a slew of guidelines and policies governing the review of faculty members. They vary by university and even by individual academic departments, so that the criteria for evaluating the work of say, an engineering professor, are different from that of a sociology professor.

The most elaborate is the seven-year probationary path toward tenure itself – an often grueling process and a high bar that some faculty never clear. Generally, a young faculty member starting out is evaluated yearly, with more intensive reviews every few years on the road to the tenure decision in the sixth year. The reviews would likely include some classroom observation by faculty colleagues.

For those who are awarded tenure, there is less oversight from that point on, though there is at least some annual determination of performance to grant merit pay increases, said Suzanne Ortega, senior vice president for academic affairs for the UNC system.

In the 1990s, universities across the nation began to adopt post-tenure review processes to respond to concerns that senior professors weren’t being held accountable for their work.

“It really came in the wake of people’s twofold concern. One is that there were a bunch of tenured faculty who didn’t mind squeaking by with very little annual pay increase – they were sort of sitting on their duffs and not doing much,” Ortega said. “And there was a sense, that furthermore, even if they were maybe not cutting edge and only a little lazy, there might be a few who actually didn’t deserve to still be employed.”
In 1997, the UNC Board of Governors adopted new requirements for post-tenure review in the UNC system’s 16 university campuses. From then on, each campus developed procedures to ensure a cumulative review of faculty members at least every five years. The idea was to identify poorly performing professors and give them a plan, and timetable, for improvement. Sanctions, including dismissal, could be used if a faculty member did not turn around performance.

Few found deficient

A 2010 report showed that rarely are faculty members deemed underperforming. Of 6,606 faculty evaluated systemwide during a 10-year period, 209, or just 3.2 percent, were found to be deficient in post-tenure reviews.

Not many are actually fired, however. In 2008-09, for example, 21 professors systemwide were found deficient in reviews, according to the report. Six completed their improvement plans, and 11 were still working on theirs. Three retired, and dismissal procedures were initiated for one.

Ortega, whose career has spanned four public universities in Washington, Missouri, Nebraska and New Mexico, said she sees nothing unusual in the UNC system numbers.

The reason for the low percentage of faculty found “deficient” may be that the tenure hurdle itself serves as a gatekeeper, she said.

“The process of getting tenure is actually very rigorous,” she said. “I truly believe that only the hearty survive.”

The weakest spot may be the evaluation of administrators. Once a professor steps into an administrative role, he or she no longer falls under the automatic rule for the five-year post-tenure review for faculty whose primary responsibility is teaching and research, Ortega said.

Aside from the one case at Chapel Hill, Ortega said, there has been nothing that suggests that the UNC system has a fundamentally flawed process. She added, “I think we’re going to learn something about strengthening review processes, because you always do, when you have a problem.”

It is not uncommon for a department chairman to defer the post-tenure review while serving as an administrator, said Bobbi Owen, senior associate dean for undergraduate education. After all, she said, “you can’t review yourself,” and the duties of an administrator would mean that a professor’s scholarship would likely be on hold.
But Owen added, “I think it’s fair to say our oversight of chairs is going to become more vigilant.”

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**ECU auditor: No fraud found**

At least one UNC system campus recently concluded an audit that looked for academic fraud related to athletes.

East Carolina University's internal auditor reported to trustees the findings of a review that looked for clusters of athletes concentrated in courses or majors. The report found no academic fraud.

The review, which covered summer 2011 through spring 2012, did find higher percentages of student-athletes in some course sections that were offered at times of day that did not conflict with practice. It also found heavy enrollment of athletes in sports management courses, which was expected.

The review came after NCAA action last year against ECU's tennis and baseball programs. The case involved a tennis player who wrote papers for four baseball players in 2010. The NCAA placed ECU on one year of probation. Some baseball games and tennis matches were vacated from the record books, but the university was not subject to fines, recruiting sanctions or postseason bans.
McNeill has family first motto
By Nathan Summers
Sunday, July 29, 2012

Ruffin McNeill cares about family first, whether it’s at home, at East Carolina University or in the entire community of Greenville.

Appropriately, the third-year ECU head football coach mentions family first when talking about the fiasco at Penn State University that has become the biggest sports story of the year.

McNeill is also a veteran member of the tightly-knit national college football community left shaking its head in the aftermath of arguably the biggest scandal in the game’s history.

PSU was rocked by the arrest and conviction of former defensive coordinator Jerry Sandusky for his litany of child sex offenses, the death of legendary coach Joe Paterno and the knowledge that Paterno actively participated in covering up the crimes. What followed were major penalties to the football program from the NCAA.

“Our job is to protect young people,” McNeill said. “When I as a head coach or we as a staff go into a home, we place great importance on being responsible for a parent’s most prized possession. It’s an honor to be able to do that.

“The NCAA coming and making those punishments, it’s all new ground for (Penn State football) now and we’ll see how that goes. But you penalize a bunch of kids there too, and for some adult things that happened.”
Final countdown

In a week, ECU will be on the field for its monthlong buildup to the 2012 campaign, which begins at home against Appalachian State on Sept. 1.

Key position battles that began during spring practice — most notably at quarterback — will resume immediately, and McNeill said there is a somewhat different feeling around the team this summer than in the previous two.

“I think we’ve got more guys that have bought in to what we want here,” said McNeill, whose squad finished 5-7 last season. “I’ve preached from the beginning teamwork, no egos, no entitlement. This group doesn’t make excuses and they don’t complain.”

Carden healthy

The two leading men in the race to replace record-setting passer Dominique Davis are both poised to pick up where they left off last April.

Junior and 2011 backup Rio Johnson logged a slew of repetitions during spring ball, especially after sophomore Shane Carden was lost to an index finger fracture that required surgery. While Johnson was fine-tuning his own game, Carden was rehabilitating.

The battle resumes at Friday’s first practice of August camp.

“Shane is full speed,” McNeill said. “He came back toward the beginning of the first session of summer school and he said he feels fine.

“All the quarterbacks have done a great job leading. A lot of times you see them working as a group, and I think it’s going to be a great battle.”

Fantasy camp

McNeill gave ECU fans a day to remember at Friday’s football fantasy camp inside Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium.

The entire coaching staff put participants through the paces and rigors of a true ECU workout. There weren’t many shining stars on the field, but it seems certain the camp delivered the thrills, and spills, it promised.

“There are some guys that have got a little bit of skill but I think their eligibility is up,” McNeill joked while watching dozens of Pirate fans participating in Friday’s fantasy camp, which was followed on Saturday by an annual women’s football camp at the school. “It’s a fun day. We wanted to give them a taste, an experience of how our coaches coach, what the kids
go through and the pace. I like the energy, and it reminds us football is right around the corner.”

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Fantasy meets reality at McNeill camp
Saturday, July 28, 2012

Whatever unfulfilled football fantasies I might have wakened with on Friday morning were turned into sobering, albeit amusing realities in a mere matter of hours by mid-afternoon.

A late addition to the roster for the Ruffin McNeill Football Fantasy Camp at East Carolina, I had few expectations beyond not being the first one to keel over in the near triple-digit heat. But I got a fast reminder that high expectations and will are the life’s blood of college football.

Well aware of my age and somewhat accepting of the fact that whatever athleticism I was born with is headed out the door, playing in front of the coaches I spend much of my life chronicling nonetheless inspired me to compete on a day set aside for fans seeking the thrill of a real football workout.

And I had my moments. Literally.

There was that one pretty nice backpedal around the cones during defensive back drills, and then I ran a decent five-yard out and a workable post pattern during the wide receiver portion of my day.

At quarterback, I even had a couple of decent connections with my receivers. After one of them, third-year ECU head coach McNeill — who
has the best in-practice all-seeing-eye that I’ve been around — hollered, “Good job Nate! Nice throw.”

That was my fantasy moment if there was one, and not just because I was already starting to see mirages of swimming pools inside Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium.

I pride myself on keeping an even keel when covering football, and obviously my job affords me daily conversations with ECU’s coaches. But in a weird, hopefully not creepy way, that compliment rivaled any “Hey, I liked your story today” I’ve heard.

Before I gush any further, I should interject that everyone on the field had such moments and probably more of them than I did because most of them lasted a lot longer than I did.

As we went from warm-ups with formidable strength coach Jeff Connors to defensive drills led by defensive coordinator Brian Mitchell to offensive work with coordinator Lincoln Riley, in fact, my time on the field was steadily replaced by longer and longer visits to the water cooler.

By midday, I was spent. To their credit, most of the others kept going while I kept chugging.

It didn’t get any easier from there. After numerous self-proclaimed media timeouts with my camp sidekick, Troy Dreyfus from Pirate Radio 1250 AM, I found excuses easier and easier to muster.

We were temporarily rescued by former standout ECU punter Ryan Daugherty, who reminded us that kickers got to spend plenty of time watching practice.

Yeah, we’re kickers!” I yelled, way too loud and way too close to the ears of guys like Mitchell, who like McNeill has one heck of a weakness detector and an apparent knack for noticing my almost constant slacking. After sneaking out to my car at one point to get my digital recorder for interviews (and to blast my AC for a minute), I walked back to the stadium and there was Mitchell outside the gates, staring at me with a big smile on his face and a shaking head.

Soon, my will crumbled and my water breaks with Troy took on a life of their own. I kept telling myself to imagine doing this every single day when things aren’t so touchy feely and coaches aren’t handing out praise for any marginally successful pass or catch. I couldn’t fathom it.
ECU Notes: Movie authors in review
Sunday, July 29, 2012

The North Carolina Literary Review is marking its second decade of publication with a special feature section on North Carolina literature into film.

The issue includes essays by “Cold Mountain” author Charles Frazier, eastern North Carolina’s Jim Grimsley, and Timothy Tyson, author of the provocative “Blood Done Sign My Name.”

“But don’t expect to read of these writers’ frustration over filmmakers ‘ruining’ their work,” writes editor Margaret Bauer in her introduction to the special feature section. “Rather, you will read of their appreciation of the hard work involved in creating this other medium for their stories.”

Also in the issue: an article by William Hart on James Patterson’s North Carolina-set Alex Cross novel and film “Kiss the Girls” and an interview with Lois Duncan, the author of popular young adult suspense novels including “I Know What You Did Last Summer,” which was adapted into a film by ECU alumnus Kevin Williamson. Also interviewed is Ellyn Bache, who describes the experience of having her novel “Safe Passage” adapted into a feature film and of its resurgence on cable after 9/11.

A North Carolina-focused discussion of film adaptations would not be complete without a discussion of Thomas Dixon, a native of Shelby, whose novels were the inspiration for D.W. Griffith’s infamous but influential “Birth of a Nation.” Film historian Anthony Slide writes about Dixon’s efforts in developing his own film-directing career following the success of “Birth of a Nation.”

Also explored is the screenwriting career of North Carolina’s preeminent playwright, Paul Green, in an essay by UNC Emeritus Professor Laurence Avery. And Larry Tise and Tom Whiteside write about a 1921 movie referred to by those who remember it as “the first Lost Colony film.” Tise
notes that this early educational film probably led to commissioning Paul Green to write “The Lost Colony,” now in its 75th year of performances in Manteo.

Other content in the film section of the issue includes Terry Roberts’ essay on novels by John Ehle that have been adapted into film and the ones that should be. George Hovis argues for “Ten North Carolina Stories that Ought to Be Films,” and Duke University lecturer Elisabeth Benfey writes about a film production class in which her students adapted North Carolina stories, including Randall Kenan’s “The Foundations of the Earth,” into film.

N.C. Literary Hall of Fame poet James Applewhite’s work appears in both the film section and the “Flashbacks” section of the issue.

Former North Carolina Poet Laureate Fred Chappell writes about ECU’s new Stuart Wright Collection of books, letters, photographs and other materials, which Chappell calls “the definitive collection of Southern literature from World War I to the mid-1980s.” From that collection’s content, NCLR 2012 includes a never-before-published poem by Robert Penn Warren, author of the novel “All the King’s Men” and the only person to receive the Pulitzer Prize in both poetry and fiction.

Published by East Carolina University and the North Carolina Literary and Historical Association, NCLR has won numerous awards in its 21 years of publication—most recently from the Council of Editors of Learned Journals in 2010 for Best Journal Design.

NCLR 2012 is being distributed now to subscribers and will be available in independent bookstores across North Carolina. The official launch of the issue will take place Sept. 21-22 during the Eastern North Carolina Literary Homecoming, hosted by J.Y. Joyner Library at ECU. Keynote speaker Charles Frazier and several other writers featured in the issue will be in Greenville for this event.

For a complete table of contents for this issue, subscription and purchase information, visit the website: www.nclr.ecu.edu.

**Scientist gets patent for poxvirus discovery**

An ECU scientist has received a patent for a discovery that could make certain vaccines safer for people with weakened immune systems and could make all vaccines of this type more effective.
Dr. Rachel Roper, an associate professor of microbiology and immunology at the Brody School of Medicine at ECU, received a patent last month for discovering and characterizing an immunosuppressive gene. She showed that removal of the gene significantly weakens the vaccine virus while simultaneously increasing immune responses to it.

The gene is the A35R poxvirus gene. With Roper’s discovery, biotechnology companies could use the procedure to develop improved vaccines for diseases such as monkeypox, HIV, tuberculosis, cancer, severe acute respiratory syndrome and other coronaviruses that are safer for people with compromised immune systems.

The poxviruses have been commonly used to develop vaccines in humans, but a key limitation has been what is called a “virulence gene.” Viruses, having co-evolved with humans over millennia, are uniquely adapted to exploiting vulnerabilities in human immune systems. These genes, of which A35R is one, suppress the immune system to allow the virus to proliferate in the human host.

Roper also believes that the A35R gene or a protein it produces may be used in cases where suppressing an undesirable immune response might help prevent issues like organ rejection after transplantation or autoimmune diseases, including multiple sclerosis and lupus.

From 2006 until now, she has received more than $530,000 in grants to support her poxvirus research, including more than $240,000 from the National Institutes of Health.

ECU has been talking with biotechnology companies in hopes of licensing Roper’s discovery for use in a technology that can be brought to market, said Mark Foley, a licensing associate with ECU’s technology transfer office.

Roper also has worked with Dr. Emmanuel E. Zervos, a professor of surgery at ECU, to investigate ways her research could help get around a key roadblock in cancer vaccine development: the tendency of these viruses to suppress rather than strengthen the immune system.

This is the second patent for Roper. In 2011, she received a patent for the SARS genome sequence and its use for diagnostic, therapeutic or vaccine purposes.
Great Smoky Mountains National Park pilots artist-in-residence program

By Amy McRary

The Smoky Mountains have inspired painters and poets long before the Great Smoky Mountains National Park was established in the 20th century. This year the park builds on the land's creative influence as it pilots a resident artist program to inspire artists and connect with the public.

Six artists will live and work in the park in separate stints through November in the park's Artist-in-Residence (Air) program. Each selected artist spends about a month in the park.

Air is part of the National Park Service's volunteer program. Artists aren't paid; they live in park employee housing and get an art supply stipend. Friends of the Smokies pays housing and art stipend costs in the program that costs a total of $6,000, said Dana Soehn, the park's volunteer coordinator.

The program also collaborates with Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts in Gatlinburg. Resident artists may take Arrowmont classes at a discount. A
committee of Arrowmont and park personnel selected the Air artists from 25 applications.

Selected artists' disciplines range from painting to videography to paper relief images. As part of the residency each will conduct a public program during his or her residency. They also will contribute a piece of art inspired by their time in the mountains to the park. The artwork must be donated within a year of the artist's residency.

The program is modeled on programs at other national parks and it expands the Smokies' mission, said Soehn.

"One mission of the park is that this is a place for inspiration and the Smokies are a perfect backdrop for inspiration," said Soehn. The program, she said, aims to inspire artists to create art that in turn inspires members of the public "including some people who may never see these mountains. That will extend that part of our mission."

Resident artists include Kelly Adams from Greenville, N.C. An associate professor at East Carolina University's School of Art & Design, Adams paints and draws, primarily using charcoal and graphite. She'll be in Cades Cove and other sections of the park until early August. She's the second Air artist; Miami, Fla., high school teacher and woodcut artist Tom Virgin was at the park in June and July.

For Adams, the views of the Smokies offer different perspectives from those in the swamps of eastern North Carolina near where she lives. The mountains also have much different vistas than the two western United States parks — Colorado's Mesa Verde and Arizona's Petrified Forest — where she worked previously a resident artist.

Adams primarily creates large landscapes in her Greenville studio. In eastern North Carolina, her landscapes often narrate an artistic focus on water quality. Her work also focused on water when she worked in the western parks. Her art reflected water's effect on Native Americans at Mesa Verde and how water helped form the Petrified Forest's now arid landscape.

But in the lush green of the Smokies, Adams is looking "at a lot of trees and indigenous plant life. So I am looking at the ideas behind exotic invasive plants and how they are impacting the park and the native diversity."

In the park she's been working in Cades Cove but will visit Elkmont, Clingman's Dome and the area around Cherokee, N.C. Michael Voors, an ECU art professor and Adams' husband, accompanied her to the mountains.
"When it comes to studio work we work separately but it's nice to have a partner to wander around with," she said.

In the park Adams is doing a lot of sketching and photographing. Her sketches and photos will serve as reference information back in her North Carolina studio. She also uses her time to become familiar with the Smokies. "That is what the residency is great for, that kind of research time. I can look at a lot of things, do a lot of photographs. Most of the work is done back in the studio," she said.

Other Air resident artists are South Bend, Ind., filmmaker Michael Burke and photographer/writer Rob Wilson of Orlando, Fla. Scientific illustrator Leigh Ann Carter from Monterey Bay, Calif.; and Lowell, Mass., resident Michal Truelsen, who creates paper relief images, are the other resident artists.

In addition to the resident artists, Cherokee, N.C., High School student Tagan Crowe participated in Air. Crowe paints primarily in oils on large canvasses. He painted at the Oconaluftee Visitor Center on the park's North Carolina side through July 28. Crowe is a grandson of John A. Crowe, former chief of the Eastern Band of the Cherokee.

Photo by Adam Brimer, copyright © 2012 // Adams' work in the Smokies is focusing on plant life, including exotic invasive plants.
N.C. folks among Most Beautiful

Three North Carolinians made a list of the most beautiful people in Washington.

Alyssa Dack, 24, a Duke graduate who serves as Rep. Mike McIntyre’s outreach coordinator, was named No. 7 on The Hill’s 50 Most Beautiful People list. Andrew Simpson, 24, of Chapel Hill has worked as a staff assistant for McIntyre and currently is a field organizer for the N.C. Democratic Party. And then there is Ryan Mills, 23, of New Bern, who the authors said could easily pass as a Kennedy.

“With his brown hair, piercing blue eyes and golden tan, he’s a dead-ringer for Bobby Kennedy,” reporter Debbie Siegelbaum noted.

Go here to see the full list: http://bit.ly/LMTbNa.

Hundreds of staffers, lobbyists and politicians were nominated for the closely watched list that is the source of endless water cooler talk around Washington.

Dack, a native of Asheville, studied public policy, journalism and English at Duke University. The newspaper cited Dack’s “rebellious spirit.” She grew up surrounded by Republicans but emerged as a Democrat.

Simpson skateboards to work and likes to work out, The Hill reported. The son of a North Carolina pastor, Simpson said he tries to see both sides of political issues. But he leans left, growing up in church and hearing his father talk about caring for the poor.

Mills studied political science at East Carolina University and also interned for the Charles Koch Institute and raised money for fellow Most Beautiful winner, U.S. Rep. Michele Bachman of Minnesota. He now works at a government affairs firm as a development associate. The young Republican has heard the Kennedy comparisons before, but he’s quick to point out that he’s not a fan of their policies.

Staff writers Craig Jarvis, Lynn Bonner and Franco Ordoñez
I didn’t last long and didn’t expect to (I hope that late afternoon scrimmage was fun, you guys), but after spending the last two decades covering sports, a couple of hours on the field with McNeill, Mitchell, Riley and Co. gave me a perspective on things I hadn’t yet seen.

Beyond the footwork, the techniques, the drills and even the memorable day of camaraderie with coaches, fans and media pals, the reality of this fantasy is that there is no such thing as a lazy college football player.

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Jan Foust is presented with a Resolution of Appreciation for her 32 years of service from Scott Buck, left, associate vice chancellor for Administration and Finance, Business Services; Willie Lee, director of Auxiliary Services, and Bryan Tuten, far right, director of Dowdy Student Stores.

**Foust retires after 32 years with ECU**
Monday, July 30, 2012

Jan Foust is free to spend as much time as she would like at the beach — she retired in June, ending a 32-year career at East Carolina University.

Foust was senior executive accountant for Dowdy Student Stores and Business Services.

Although the majority of her time was spent overseeing the accounting of Dowdy Student Stores, Foust also advised Business Services managers with budgeting and other financial matters.

“I enjoyed everything about my job,” she said. “There were hardly ever two days that were the same. New and challenging changes were always taking place.”

Bryan Tuten, Dowdy Student Stores director, said he and many others relied on Foust when it came to financial matters.

“She always gave such good advice on what we should and shouldn’t do,” he said. “We’re really going to miss her.”

Foust especially was proud of her involvement with the Textbook Rental Program and Student Stores’ scholarship programs.

“Jan knew how much students and families relied on these programs for their college education,” said Scott Buck, associate vice chancellor for
administration and finance, business services. “When tough economic times made some question whether scholarship funding should be cut, Jan was the one who stood up for scholarship funding, saying we could probably go another year.”

Foust has been with the store for most of her ECU career. The Student Loans Office hired her in 1980. Two-and-a-half years later, she moved to the Student Stores as an accountant. She remained in that position for 22 years until 2005, when she was named accountant for Business Services.

Foust has received numerous awards, including the Centennial Award for Excellence in Leadership in 2011, the highest award a staff member can receive, and the Chancellor’s Award for Devotion to Duty in 1999.

The Greenville native is a 1980 graduate of ECU, earning a bachelor of science degree in business administration with a concentration in accounting.

She is the wife of the late Steve Foust. Their daughter, Grayson Foust Smith, is a 2010 graduate of ECU.

Although the self-described “Pirate for life” admits to having mixed emotions about retiring, “I’m very excited to have some time for myself,” Foust said. “I’m going to miss being around the students though. It keeps you young.”
Dr. Robert Turner receives Laureate Award
Workweek
Monday, July 30, 2012

Dr. Robert Turner, who practices in the Winterville office of Physicians East, recently earned the distinction of receiving the Laureate Award at the North Carolina chapter meeting of the American College of Physicians.

The Laureate honors Fellows or Masters of the ACP who have demonstrated by their example and conduct an abiding commitment to excellence in medical care, education or research and in service to the community, chapter and the American College of Physicians.

Turner started with Physicians East in 1994. For many years, he was on faculty at East Carolina University Brody School of Medicine, where he served as director of the Department of Medicine clinics. Originally from Abingdon, Va., Turner earned his undergraduate degree from Augustana College in Illinois and his MD from the University of Illinois College of Medicine in Chicago.

He completed his residency in internal medicine at Michigan State University and his fellowship at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He served in North Carolina as a National Health Service Corps physician for two years.

Turner is a Fellow of the ACP and served as the president of the N.C. Society of Internal Medicine in 1996. He has published several articles on
smoking cessation, health promotion and disease prevention. Recently, he returned from one of his many overseas medical missions in the Philippines.

Awardees of the Laureate are senior physicians and Fellows or Masters with acknowledged excellence and peer approval in the field of internal medicine. In addition, awardees have served the North Carolina chapter with distinction, are loyal supporters of the ACP, have rendered distinguished service to the chapter and have upheld the high ideals and professional standards for which the ACP is known.

Physicians East is the area’s largest, private, multi-specialty health care practice with seven locations. It also operates the Endoscopy Center and Sleep Lab.
Report: UNC-Chapel Hill athletic advisers steered players to dubious classes

By Dan Kane - dkane@newsobserver.com

CHAPEL HILL—For eight years, Bobbi Owen has been the highest-ranking official in charge of a program at UNC-Chapel Hill that keeps up with the studies of roughly 800 athletes so they can graduate while juggling the heavy demands of their sports.

The staff of more than 115 full and part-time employees in the academic support program for athletes includes counselors who track academic progress, tutors and specialists in learning disabilities and time management. Nearly all of them work in the plush confines of the new $70 million Loudermilk Center, a 150,000-square-foot building for athletics at Kenan Stadium.

Yet a faculty report released Thursday suggests the support program strayed from its original mission. The report spoke of “potential confusion” in the role of academic counselors at Loudermilk, with the authors saying that they had been told that support program staff steered athletes to classes in the African and Afro-American Studies Department. There, the report said, an unnamed staff member helped the players enroll in no-show classes.

The report also said that athletes complained they were receiving conflicting instructions from counselors at Loudermilk and academic advisers in the university’s main advising center, which serves all students. An adviser’s job is to help students select appropriate classes. The report, however, said that athletes could get counselors in the athletics support center to register them.

At the end of the 13-page report, the authors asked: “Why is there a separate center for support of athletes?”

Owen, who is a senior associate dean in the College of Arts and Sciences, was one of 31 faculty and officials who met with the report’s authors in May and June. Thursday, just hours before the report was released, she said in an interview that she had known nothing of any steering to African studies classes before revelations of academic fraud in the department began surfacing a year ago.
Her counseling staff didn’t tell her about the no-show classes before they became public, she said, and they haven’t talked to her about it since.

“I haven’t had that conversation with any of those individuals,” Owen said. She has since instructed them to report anything unusual.

But Owen isn’t the only overseer of the support program. It has another boss – in the Athletics Department. The support program’s director, Robert Mercer, also reports to a senior athletics official, John Blanchard. The supervision of the support center is “ambiguous,” the faculty report says.

Hiring in the support program over the years has reflected an athletic influence, including former athletes and an administrator who UNC basketball coach Roy Williams brought with him from his previous job at the University of Kansas.

A wide gulf

Top university officials, and UNC system President Tom Ross, have repeatedly said the academic scandal that has now engulfed one of the nation’s top public universities isn’t about athletics.

Non-athletes, they say, were also in the no-show classes in the African and Afro-American Studies Department. They say the wrongdoing there rests squarely with two people: Julius Nyang’oro, the former chairman of the African studies department, who was forced into retirement, and former department manager Deborah Crowder, who retired in 2009.

But the three professors who wrote the faculty report said they found a wide gulf between academics and athletics at the university that is fostering an environment where academic misconduct could flourish, while simultaneously discouraging faculty and staff from helping athletes who truly want an education. They called UNC-CH “a campus with two cultures,” particularly with regard to the two money-making sports, football and men’s basketball, that underwrite the Athletic Department’s roughly $75 million annual budget.

“We were struck in general by the lack of sharing of information about athletics, athletic advising, and the relationship between athletics and academics, to various constituencies across the campus, including the faculty,” the report said.

Sean May’s reasons

Football and men’s basketball players have factored prominently in the scandal. UNC records show football players made up more than a third of
the enrollments in 54 no-show classes, all within the African studies department. Men’s basketball players only made up three percent of the enrollments, but they are a much smaller team in number, and in at least two classes the sole enrollee was a basketball player. UNC records also show that African studies was in the past decade the second most popular major for basketball players, behind communications.

One of those players, Sean May, told the Indianapolis Star two years ago that he chose African studies over communications because it involved less class time.

African studies, May said, offered “more independent electives, independent study. I could take a lot of classes during the season. Communications, I had to be there in the actual classroom.”

Athletic Department officials could not be reached Friday, but in interviews from last year, two former counseling leaders, Wayne Walden and Cynthia Reynolds — who worked with football and basketball players — denied steering athletes to bogus classes. But they did say they helped athletes pick classes. They said they were unaware of the problems in the African studies department.

They both said it is difficult to help athletes keep up with the demands of a college education at a school known as a “public Ivy” with an average SAT score for incoming freshmen at the 1300 range.

Walden, the former counselor who Williams brought with him, said UNC-Chapel Hill was a greater challenge than Kansas because that university had a policy of admitting any in-state high school graduate. That meant Kansas’ academic standards were lower and easier for athletes to meet.

“At UNC, I mean the typical student is very, very high-achieving,” Walden said. “I think that was such a big difference.”

He said athletes, like many students, searched out easy classes by talking to other students or using websites such as MyEdu.com that provide professors’ grading information. But he also acknowledged that support program counselors might pass that same information on to other athletes, so long as the classes met academic progress goals.

“Well, I mean we’re constantly gathering information and, yeah, utilizing that in our conversations with students,” Walden said.
Walden served as a basketball counselor from 2003 to 2009 before leaving the university for what he described as family reasons. He now works in Texas for a health care company.

Reynolds oversaw counseling for football players from 2002 until 2009. She was let go the following year for reasons unrelated to the African studies scandal. She said it was a struggle finding classes that fit with athletes’ heavy practice schedules, academic abilities and interests. She said counselors would guide athletes toward degree programs that were a good fit for their interests, such as communications or exercise and sports sciences. She saw Nyang’oro as a principled professor willing to work with athletes. “He is very passionate about these students learning something in his class, learning the things they need to do, learning how to do research, learning how to do papers, albeit probably not like the normal student that comes into Carolina,” Reynolds said. “And that’s where he’s willing to be a little more flexible.”

Walden and Reynolds have not returned recent messages seeking further comment.

**What’s changed so far**

The latest controversy isn’t the only one involving the athletic support program. One of its employees, an undergraduate tutor who later worked for former head coach Butch Davis, wrote parts of papers and committed other acts of “academic fraud” over a three-year period, according to the university and the NCAA. Her actions, uncovered only after the NCAA began probing benefits provided to players by agents, caused multiple players to be declared ineligible, led to sanctions against UNC and has caused the university to stop using undergrads as tutors in the athletic support program.

The university has made numerous other changes to try to prevent another scandal from happening. On the academic side, there are much tighter controls over course offerings and limits on independent studies. Owen has stressed that support program counselors should not be steering athletes to classes.

On the athletic side, the department has added two new officials from other universities to address academic support and compliance issues.

But some on UNC’s faculty doubt much can be done to remedy the situation. Football and basketball at the major athletic conferences bring in
tens of millions of dollars in revenue, making the temptation to compromise on academics in order to win championships hard to resist.

“The athletic enterprise has grown so large and so remunerative that it may not be appropriate at universities anymore,” said Lew Margolis, a public health professor.

Staff writer Andrew Carter contributed to this report.

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**Findings at UNC**

A UNC faculty report released late Thursday recommends that:

- All students, including athletes, have their class schedules reviewed by main campus academic advisers, not just support counselors for athletes.
- Academic advisers and athletics support employees need to communicate better.
- Criteria for appointments and re-appointments of departmental chairmen should be established.
- The university should study others to find “best practices” for ensuring students and athletes are “fully integrated” into the life of the university.
- Chancellor Holden Thorp should appoint an entity of “distinguished individuals” from outside the university to provide an independent review of the athletics and academics relationship and propose recommendations for its management.
The University Arms Apartments in Wilmington, N.C., seen Wednesday, July 25, 2012, will be demolished to make way for new student-oriented apartment complexes that are planned for the UNCW area. Photo by Mike Spencer

**Luxury apartments coming soon to areas near UNCW**

By Wayne Faulkner
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A growing student body at the University of North Carolina Wilmington is spurring construction of off-campus student housing, and there's plenty of room for growth, developers say.

What's more, the new complexes are full of luxuries that people of older generations never dreamed of in their college years.

Though the UNCW area already has several student apartment complexes, three new ones, with more than 450 units total, are in the works near campus.

Unlike college towns such as Chapel Hill, Wilmington has not been thought of as a student housing market, said Adam Sosne, developer of one of the new ones, Camden Forest. Rather it's been seen as a city that just happens to have a college in it.

Camden Forest, which was approved earlier this month, will consist of 104 units in apartments and townhouses on 11.5 acres in the vicinity of Greenway Avenue and Lullwater and Collegiate drives.

The Hub at UNCW, planned by Core Campus LLC on Pepys Lane at Randall Parkway, will offer 124 student-oriented apartments.
Carolina Cove, being developed by University Housing Group, will have 228 units and is under construction at Randall and South Kerr Avenue.

Why the investment now?
College enrollments far outpace availability of dormitory space, said Jim Arbury, vice president of student housing at the National Multi Housing Council, a trade group.

**Filling a gap**
The complexes will help fill a gap left by a shortage of on-campus housing. UNCW, for instance, "has no plans in the design, funding or development phases for additional on-campus housing," said university spokeswoman Dana Fischetti.

Climbing college enrollments nationwide have attracted considerable investment.
The newly formed Core Campus has more than 7,000 beds finished or under development nationwide, said Tom Harrington, who manages site identification for the Chicago-based developer.
The industry measures student housing in beds – one bed per bedroom.
University Housing Group, which is based in Roanoke, Va., has developed more than $310 million worth of student housing in 10 states, and has been in the North Carolina market for more than two decades, said president Wes Bradley.

Sosne, a UNCW graduate, has done two previous student housing complexes here: Wilshire Park and Kerr Crossing.

**Room for growth**
Despite the activity, there's no fear of a glut.
"Projects of 200 to 300 beds won't cut into the market," Bradley said.
UNCW's growth indicates he's right.
The university says it will grow from its current 13,145 students to 15,000 in five years, or about 370 students a year.
The apartments going up here offer vacation-like diversions from study.
"Student demands for housing have changed over the years," said Fischetti, "and many students are seeking more upscale accommodations with amenities that are offered by off-campus developments."
"Off-campus used to be fraternities, sororities, renting out an extra room," Arbury said. "The standard nowadays is a resort-like atmosphere and has been for a long time. A swimming pool and activity room are not out of the ordinary."

**Pick your luxury**

Camden Forest will offer a 48-unit garden-style, three-story apartment building and also 56 three-bedroom, three-bath townhomes.

All the units will be furnished and will include flat-screen TVs, all utilities, phone and high-speed Internet access, Sosne said.

The Hub will have a pool, tanning center, volleyball and basketball courts and clubhouse, Harrington said.

The complex would go up on the site of the University Arms apartments, which is owned by UNCW Corp. and would be demolished.

The developer has a contract to purchase the property, Fischetti said, and is conducting due diligence.

Carolina Cove will have 228 units with 600 beds in 84 two-bedroom, two bath apartments and 144 three-bedroom, three-bath apartments.

The apartments will include full-size, in-unit washers and dryers and come with cable TV and broadband Internet access, University Housing Group says.

The complex will have a fitness center, computer lab, conference room and a pool with spa.

The Hub, on about 7.5 acres, will have 23 two-bedroom apartments and 101 three-bedroom units, according to plans submitted to the city.

Camden Forest will have 262 beds in its 104 units.

Such luxury doesn't necessarily add up to higher rent, Arbury said.

Off-campus rental rates typically match up well with what a dorm is charging, he said.

At UNCW, rent in traditional residence halls begins at $2,310 per semester, while apartments in Seahawk Village and Seahawk Landing begin at $2,777 per semester.

None of the developers, however, would give a range of rents for their projects.

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Kent State student, 19, due in court; charged with Twitter threat to ‘shoot up’ the campus

By Associated Press

KENT, Ohio — Authorities say a Kent State University student is due in court after allegedly posting a message on Twitter saying he planned to “shoot up” the northeastern Ohio campus.

Nineteen-year-old William Koberna was arrested at his parents’ home in the Cleveland suburb of Brunswick Sunday afternoon. The sophomore has been charged with inducing panic, a felony, and aggravated menacing. He was to be arraigned Monday.

A university spokesman says the tweet was posted July 25.

University officials monitoring Twitter last week noticed the profanity-laced message and contacted police. They said it included a threat that “I’m shooting up your school ASAP.”

Kent State University President Lester Lefton said in a statement that “our students, employees, and all those who come to campus should know that their safety is our top priority.”

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Doctor Shortage Likely to Worsen With Health Law

By ANNIE LOWREY and ROBERT PEAR

RIVERSIDE, Calif. — In the Inland Empire, an economically depressed region in Southern California, President Obama’s health care law is expected to extend insurance coverage to more than 300,000 people by 2014. But coverage will not necessarily translate into care: Local health experts doubt there will be enough doctors to meet the area’s needs. There are not enough now.

Other places around the country, including the Mississippi Delta, Detroit and suburban Phoenix, face similar problems. The Association of American Medical Colleges estimates that in 2015 the country will have 62,900 fewer doctors than needed. And that number will more than double by 2025, as the expansion of insurance coverage and the aging of baby boomers drive up demand for care. Even without the health care law, the shortfall of doctors in 2025 would still exceed 100,000.

Health experts, including many who support the law, say there is little that the government or the medical profession will be able to do to close the gap by 2014, when the law begins extending coverage to about 30 million Americans. It typically takes a decade to train a doctor.

“We have a shortage of every kind of doctor, except for plastic surgeons and dermatologists,” said Dr. G. Richard Olds, the dean of the new medical school at the University of California, Riverside, founded in part to address the region’s doctor shortage. “We’ll have a 5,000-physician shortage in 10 years, no matter what anybody does.”

Experts describe a doctor shortage as an “invisible problem.” Patients still get care, but the process is often slow and difficult. In Riverside, it has left residents driving long distances to doctors, languishing on waiting lists, overusing emergency rooms and even forgoing care.

“It results in delayed care and higher levels of acuity,” said Dustin Corcoran, the chief executive of the California Medical Association, which represents 35,000 physicians. People “access the health care system through the emergency department, rather than establishing a relationship with a primary care physician who might keep them from getting sicker.”
In the Inland Empire, encompassing the counties of Riverside and San Bernardino, the shortage of doctors is already severe. The population of Riverside County swelled 42 percent in the 2000s, gaining more than 644,000 people. It has continued to grow despite the collapse of one of the country’s biggest property bubbles and a jobless rate of 11.8 percent in the Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario metro area.

But the growth in the number of physicians has lagged, in no small part because the area has trouble attracting doctors, who might make more money and prefer living in nearby Orange County or Los Angeles.

A government council has recommended that a given region have 60 to 80 primary care doctors per 100,000 residents, and 85 to 105 specialists. The Inland Empire has about 40 primary care doctors and 70 specialists per 100,000 residents — the worst shortage in California, in both cases.

Moreover, across the country, fewer than half of primary care clinicians were accepting new Medicaid patients as of 2008, making it hard for the poor to find care even when they are eligible for Medicaid. The expansion of Medicaid accounts for more than one-third of the overall growth in coverage in President Obama’s health care law.

Providers say they are bracing for the surge of the newly insured into an already strained system.

Temetry Lindsey, the chief executive of Inland Behavioral & Health Services, which provides medical care to about 12,000 area residents, many of them low income, said she was speeding patient-processing systems, packing doctors’ schedules tighter and seeking to hire more physicians. “We know we are going to be overrun at some point,” Ms. Lindsey said, estimating that the clinics would see new demand from 10,000 to 25,000 residents by 2014. She added that hiring new doctors had proved a struggle, in part because of the “stigma” of working in this part of California.

Across the country, a factor increasing demand, along with expansion of coverage in the law and simple population growth, is the aging of the baby boom generation. Medicare officials predict that enrollment will surge to 73.2 million in 2025, up 44 percent from 50.7 million this year.

“Older Americans require significantly more health care,” said Dr. Darrell G. Kirch, the president of the Association of American Medical Colleges. “Older individuals are more likely to have multiple chronic conditions, requiring more intensive, coordinated care.”
The pool of doctors has not kept pace, and will not, health experts said. Medical school enrollment is increasing, but not as fast as the population. The number of training positions for medical school graduates is lagging. Younger doctors are on average working fewer hours than their predecessors. And about a third of the country’s doctors are 55 or older, and nearing retirement.

Physician compensation is also an issue. The proportion of medical students choosing to enter primary care has declined in the past 15 years, as average earnings for primary care doctors and specialists, like orthopedic surgeons and radiologists, have diverged. A study by the Medical Group Management Association found that in 2010, primary care doctors made about $200,000 a year. Specialists often made twice as much.

The Obama administration has sought to ease the shortage. The health care law increases Medicaid’s primary care payment rates in 2013 and 2014. It also includes money to train new primary care doctors, reward them for working in underserved communities and strengthen community health centers.

But the provisions within the law are expected to increase the number of primary care doctors by perhaps 3,000 in the coming decade. Communities around the country need about 45,000.

Many health experts in California said that while they welcomed the expansion of coverage, they expected that the state simply would not be ready for the new demand. “It’s going to be necessary to use the resources that we have smarter” in light of the doctor shortages, said Dr. Mark D. Smith, who heads the California HealthCare Foundation, a nonprofit group.

Dr. Smith said building more walk-in clinics, allowing nurses to provide more care and encouraging doctors to work in teams would all be part of the answer. Mr. Corcoran of the California Medical Association also said the state would need to stop cutting Medicaid payment rates; instead, it needed to increase them to make seeing those patients economically feasible for doctors.

More doctors might be part of the answer as well. The U.C. Riverside medical school is hoping to enroll its first students in August 2013, and is planning a number of policies to encourage its graduates to stay in the area and practice primary care.

But Dr. Olds said changing how doctors provided care would be more important than minting new doctors. “I’m only adding 22 new students to
this equation,” he said. “That’s not enough to put a dent in a 5,000-doctor shortage.”

Annie Lowrey reported from Riverside, and Robert Pear from Washington.

**Doctor Shortages**

Health experts estimate that the expansion of insurance coverage under the new health care law will make it more difficult for people in some areas to find a doctor. Growth and aging of the population will also increase demand.

**Projected Shortages of Patient Care Physicians**

![Graph showing projected shortages of patient care physicians with and without new health care law.](source: Association of American Medical Colleges)
Senator Tom Harkin, chairman of the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, completed a two-year investigation.

Senate Committee Report on For-Profit Colleges Condemns Costs and Practices

By TAMAR LEWIN

Wrapping up a two-year investigation of for-profit colleges, Senator Tom Harkin will issue a final report on Monday — a voluminous, hard-hitting indictment of almost every aspect of the industry, filled with troubling statistics and anecdotes drawn from internal documents of the 30 companies investigated.

According to the report, which was posted online in advance, taxpayers spent $32 billion in the most recent year on companies that operate for-profit colleges, but the majority of students they enroll leave without a degree, half of those within four months.

“In this report, you will find overwhelming documentation of exorbitant tuition, aggressive recruiting practices, abysmal student outcomes, taxpayer dollars spent on marketing and pocketed as profit, and regulatory evasion and manipulation,” Mr. Harkin, an Iowa Democrat who is chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, said in a statement on Sunday. “These practices are not the exception — they are the norm. They are systemic throughout the industry, with very few individual exceptions.”

In a statement on Sunday, the Association of Private Sector Colleges and Universities, the leading trade group of for-profit colleges, called the report
“the result of a flawed process that has unfairly targeted private-sector schools and their students.”

For-profit higher education has long been a politically divisive issue, with Democrats generally arguing that greater regulation is needed to prevent huge publicly traded colleges from plundering the Treasury for student financial aid while leaving students with crippling debt and credentials that are worthless in the job market. Many Republicans see such colleges as a healthy free-market alternative to overcrowded community colleges, offering useful vocational training and education to working adults who will not attend more traditional institutions.

The Republicans on the Senate committee criticized the Democrats’ investigation for including testimony from Steve Eisman, the hedge fund manager who was one of the first to compare for-profit colleges to the subprime mortgage industry; for making public the internal company documents that the committee gathered; for refusing to broaden the investigation to include abuses by nonprofit colleges; and for being what they said was a hostile partisan effort.

Over the last 15 years, enrollment and profits have skyrocketed in the industry. Until the 1990s, the sector was made up of small independent schools offering training in fields like air-conditioning repair and cosmetology. But from 1998 to 2008, enrollment more than tripled, to about 2.4 million students. Three-quarters are at colleges owned by huge publicly traded companies — and, more recently, private equity firms — offering a wide variety of programs.

Enrolling students, and getting their federal financial aid, is the heart of the business, and in 2010, the report found, the colleges studied had a total of 32,496 recruiters, compared with 3,512 career-services staff members.

Among the 30 companies, an average of 22.4 percent of revenue went to marketing and recruiting, 19.4 percent to profits and 17.7 percent to instruction.

Their chief executive officers were paid an average of $7.3 million, although Robert S. Silberman, the chief executive of Strayer Education, made $41 million in 2009, including stock options.

With the Department of Education seeking new regulations to ensure that for-profit programs provide training for “gainful employment,” the companies examined spent $8 million on lobbying in 2010, and another $8 million in the first nine months of 2011.
The bulk of the for-profit colleges’ revenue, more than 80 percent in most cases, comes from taxpayers. The report found that many for-profit colleges are working desperately to find new strategies to comply with the federal regulation that at least 10 percent of revenue must come from sources other than the Department of Education. Because veterans’ benefits count toward that 10 percent even though they come from the federal government, aggressive recruiting of students from the military has become the norm.

The amount of available federal student aid is large and growing. The Apollo Group, which operates the University of Phoenix, the largest for-profit college, got $1.2 billion in Pell grants in 2010-11, up from $24 million a decade earlier. Apollo got $210 million more in benefits under the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill. And yet two-thirds of Apollo’s associate-degree students leave before earning their degree.

On Sunday, William Pepicello, president of the University of Phoenix, sent its 350,000 students a long e-mail warning of the criticism, and extolling the value of a Phoenix education.

On average, the Harkin report found, associate-degree and certificate programs at for-profit colleges cost about four times as much as those at community colleges and public universities.

And tuition decisions seem to be driven more by profit-seeking than instructional costs. An internal memo from the finance director of a Kaplan nursing program in Sacramento, for example, recommended an 8 percent increase in fees, saying that “with the new pricing, we can lose two students and still make the same profit.” Similarly, the chief financial officer at National American University wrote in an e-mail to executives that the university had not met its profit expectation for the summer quarter, so “as a result” it would need a midyear tuition increase.

Many of the for-profit colleges, the report found, set tuition at almost exactly what a student could expect in maximum federal aid, including Pell grants and Stafford loans. According to a Bridgepoint Education document, when a new $400 “digital materials fee” would make students pay more than would be available from federal aid, the chief executive frantically wrote an e-mail to the finance officer to complain that the change was going to cause a “shortfall.” And documents from Alta Colleges mention restructuring schedules “so we can grab more of the students’ Stafford.”

Furthermore, the report found, recruiters are often encouraged to avoid directly answering questions about costs and instead emphasize that with federal aid, student will pay little out of pocket. And costs are not easy for
students to determine. A former Westwood College recruiter explained that prospective students were told that the cost was $4,800 per term, but not that there were five or six terms a year rather than the usual two or three.

At many schools, students learned only after the fact that their credits would not transfer to another college or university or qualify them for the professional licensing they sought.

Students at for-profit colleges make up 13 percent of the nation’s college enrollment, but account for about 47 percent of the defaults on loans. About 96 percent of students at for-profit schools take out loans, compared with about 13 percent at community colleges and 48 percent at four-year public universities.

Colleges with very high loan default rates in the two years after graduation (now changing to three years) lose their eligibility for federal student aid. As a result, the report found, many of the for-profit colleges try to move students having trouble with repayment into deferral or forbearance until they are past the years the government monitors.