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Editorial: ECU football offers model response to infraction
Monday, August 2, 2010

East Carolina University revealed last week that it was the latest Division I team to run afoul of the NCAA, with the school announcing the resignation of an assistant coach following a possible rules violation. Special teams coordinator and defensive line coach Mark Nelson stepped down July 27 and was replaced on Friday by Duane Price, who previously worked at Texas Tech University.

That revelation represents an unfortunate setback and a bit of unwelcome instability on the cusp of a new season, the first under Head Coach Ruffin McNeill. However, Pirate fans may find reassurance in the swift and measured actions of the Athletics Department as a strong indication that the school possesses ample leadership in the key roles needed to build a foundation for success.

The summer is always a worrisome time for college football coaches. Good news is sparse in the offseason, since voluntary workouts and player-directed practices hardly make for juicy gossip fodder. Instead the summer months are more likely to feature player arrests, program sanctions and rules violations.

This year has been particularly noteworthy for that reason across Division I, with schools like the University of Florida and the University of Southern California falling under the NCAA microscope or subject to its judgment. The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill is currently under investigation, with the NCAA looking into benefits that may have been illegally accepted by student-athletes.

Last week saw East Carolina admitting its own possible infraction. The school’s Athletic Department announced that it was investigating a coach’s evaluation of players during normal summer activities that were supposed to be strictly voluntary, which would represent a violation of NCAA rules. Nelson, who joined the Pirate staff in February, resigned and Price was tapped as his replacement. It is likely to be a secondary violation.

To its credit, the Athletics Department moved swiftly once it learned of the infraction, working with the compliance office and beginning a report for the NCAA. It is further evidence of that department’s sound leadership. McNeill should also be singled out for his conduct, since he has been accessible and accountable since the moment this issue came to light.

While it is certainly unfortunate that this mishap occurred, McNeill and Athletics Director Terry Holland have offered a model for how best to respond. Their quick action and openness should contain what might have been an ugly episode at a critical moment for the football program.
ECU’s Tuten publishes book set on Internet

East Carolina University
News Release

An East Carolina University marketing professor, originally from Washington, has published a landmark book set that explores how the latest Internet innovations continue to affect business.

Tracy L. Tuten, an associate professor in ECU’s College of Business, is editor of the newly released “Enterprise 2.0: How Technology, eCommerce, and Web 2.0 Are Transforming Business Virtually.” Published in July by Praeger Publishers, the two-volume book set grew out of her first book on social media marketing, “Advertising 2.0: Social Media Marketing in a Web 2.0 World.”

“The Web has a profound impact on marketing as well as other areas of business, influencing both management and strategy. In ‘Enterprise 2.0,’ I set out to find the top experts in their respective areas — all tied together by the theme of Web 2.0’s influence on business. It definitely includes some of the latest thinking on the topic,” she said.

In addition to being the book’s title, Enterprise 2.0 is the industry term for the business tools and processes that are made possible by Web 2.0 technology, the second generation of the World Wide Web that involves social networking as well as more dynamic and shareable content. Research predicts that enterprise spending on Web 2.0 technology will reach more than $4.5 billion by 2013.

Tuten said despite this rapid growth and strong interest, little is available to inform organizational leadership about the resources and potential applications of new Internet technologies — or about the challenges Enterprise 2.0 poses at the organizational and individual levels.

“Every day, business leaders read about the shift in essential business practices and consumer-buying behavior brought about by the Internet,” Tuten said. “This two-volume set introduces readers to these shifts and shows them the way forward, looking at both the micro and macro levels of impact.”
State workers' records opened

With two suspensions for inappropriate contact with a student, Jessica Wishnask quietly left the New Hanover school district two years ago to go work for another. She did not have to disclose her misconduct, and her prior employer did not report the suspensions.

Her new employer, Pitt County schools, did not find out about them until months later, when Wishnask got caught having sex with the same student and was sent to prison.

North Carolina’s personnel law has helped hide suspensions such as those served by Wishnask for more than three decades. But that will change Oct. 1, thanks to a series of reforms Gov. Bev Perdue signed into law Monday that make public the suspensions and demotions of state and local employees.

"The folks in this state have every right to expect and deserve integrity and honest services from their public servants," Perdue said.

The new ethics law also creates tougher penalties for those who violate campaign contribution limits, it forces all state employees to wait six months after their public service before they can lobby their former agencies, and it funds databases to help the public link campaign money to those who have government contracts. And government agencies that deny access to public records are more likely to find themselves paying the entire cost of the ensuing legal battle.
"This is a red-letter day for North Carolinians who want public records and don’t want to go broke having to fight for them," said Beth Grace, executive director of the N.C. Press Association, of which The News & Observer is a member.

The new law joins several others passed since 2005 to increase accountability in government. Much of the legislation follows the investigation that brought down former House Speaker Jim Black and a continuing probe into the perks former Gov. Mike Easley and his family received during his eight years in office. Lawmakers from both parties overwhelmingly supported the law.

**Hoping for more**

Good government advocates say the law is an important step forward, but they had hoped lawmakers and Perdue would do more. Many of the dropped provisions would have directly affected lawmakers and other elected officials, such as one that would make them personally liable for campaign finance penalties.

The N.C. Coalition for Lobbying and Government Reform, for example, sought a provision that would limit the amount of money government contractors and those seeking government business could give in the form of campaign contributions. Jane Pinsky, the coalition’s director, said 12 states have such a law. But North Carolina lawmakers balked, saying they feared they were creating an unequal playing field between those who had government business and those who might later be seeking it.

Bob Hall, executive director of Democracy North Carolina, a campaign finance watchdog, was disappointed that provisions to increase the number of publicly financed campaigns didn’t get through the legislature. But he praised provisions that require political appointees to many of the state’s most powerful boards to disclose fundraising, and that make it a felony to give more than $10,000 to a candidate in an election.

"There are a lot of important features in the bill, quite a number around disclosure," Hall said. "But there's more that can be done, and no doubt continuing work will be needed to keep us moving forward."

**A perennial problem**

Perdue signed the ethics bill at the state Capitol with several lawmakers in attendance, including House Speaker Joe Hackney, an Orange County Democrat, and House Minority Leader Paul Stam, an Apex Republican. While Hackney spoke to the continuing efforts the Democratic-led legislature has made in recent years to increase accountability, Stam noted that bad behavior by Democratic leaders had led up to Monday’s bill signing.

"We do have a problem with ethics in government at all levels - local, state and federal," Stam said. "This bill will go a long way to assist in that. No bill, though, no piece of paper will stop everyone from doing bad things. Therefore we have to have enforcement, and we have to have vigorous transparency."

Stam and another lawmaker at the signing, Rep. Deborah Ross, a Raleigh Democrat, had sought to limit transparency in personnel matters. Ross pushed an amendment through the House that would have provided less information about disciplinary matters, making them public only if an employee had been convicted of a crime. But that language was dropped from the final version.
N.C. law secretive

A three-part News & Observer series, "Keeping Secrets," reported that North Carolina has had one of the most secretive personnel laws in the nation. No other state, for example, had limited public information to just an employee's current salary. Many states make more information about disciplinary actions public.

North Carolina's new law makes public pay and employment histories and dismissal letters that explain an employee's firing. It also requires the disclosure of all suspensions or demotions but doesn't require an explanation for those actions.

Charles Davis, a former executive director for the National Freedom of Information Coalition, called North Carolina's personnel law changes "hugely important." He also praised lawmakers for making it easier for those who win public records battles against government agencies to collect legal fees. Currently, judges have the discretion to award legal fees, but they have done so only on rare occasions.

"Legal fees are probably the biggest lever we have out there," he said.

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Charlotte 49ers football: It's officially a go

By David Scott
dscott@charlotteobserver.com
Posted: Monday, Aug. 02, 2010

The Charlotte 49ers cleared a final hurdle for starting a football program Monday when Gov. Beverly Perdue signed a University Non-Appropriated Capital Project bill that includes a funding plan for on-campus football stadium construction.

That means Charlotte is on schedule to play intercollegiate football in 2013.

"With the Governor's signature endorsing the General Assembly's approval of construction of our football-related facilities, we open a new chapter in the dynamic history of UNC Charlotte," Chancellor Philip Dubois said in a statement. "The path to this point has been a lengthy but carefully considered one, from the trustees' decision in late 2006 to authorize a study of the feasibility of football to final approval by the Board of Governors this past spring."

UNCC's board approved a plan in December for the university to start a football program, calling for the university to borrow $40.5 million to build a permanent stadium and field house. That couldn't happen, however, without the approval of the N.C. General Assembly and Perdue.

The UNC Board of Governors already approved the funding plan, which includes increased student fees and private support to repay the loan. UNCC has raised nearly $6 million since board approval.

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Animal facility plans ditched

UNC-CH also will forgo grant

By Mark Schultz
Staff Writer

Chapel Hill – UNC-Chapel Hill will give up $14.5 million in federal stimulus money to help expand its animal research center in rural Orange County, after determining it could need another $20 million to make the project work.

The National Institutes of Health grant would have added two buildings to the Bingham Facility to house dogs and hogs used to study hemophilia and heart disease. The animals are now housed in an outdated center in Carrboro the university had hoped to close.

“This is a major change of course for us, and it will take some time to determine our future plans for the Bingham Facility,” Associate Vice Chancellor Bob Lowman said in an e-mail note to neighbors Monday.

“Until those plans are complete, the university will continue to maintain and operate the Bingham Facility at its present size,” the note said.

The Bingham Facility, west of Carrboro, houses about 85 dogs used in hemophilia research in a pair of decades-old buildings. A third building, intended for muscular dystrophy dogs now housed in Hillsborough, is nearing completion.

At one point, officials estimated the Bingham Facility might house between 400 and 450 dogs and up to 150 hogs. But the project was beset by environmental problems.

In May, the university paid a $15,000 state fine for leaking an unknown amount of treated wastewater into a nearby creek feeding the Haw River and eventually Jordan Lake. The leak likely contained very low levels of nitrogen and fecal coliform, state officials said.

State regulators also issued UNC-CH a violation notice in April for filling in a small wetland to build a gravel road and filling another wetland to construct a pond to hold treated wastewater.

A third notice cited the university after broken pipes spilled 1,800 gallons of treated wastewater onto the ground in late February.

Lowman said it became clear that fixing the wastewater treatment system, adding a proposed sixth building for veterinary needs and improving security at the site, among other expenses, were going to cost more than the university had calculated.

“We had talked about repurposing the grant,” Lowman said in an interview Monday night. “NIH, I think correctly, said no. They told us we would need to use the money for its intended purpose or relinquish the grant.”

Chancellor Holden Thorp put Lowman in charge after the wastewater problems surfaced. Lowman said he was not surprised the total costs were not known sooner. “I think [for] the grant application, the assumption was we would have the infrastructure we needed,” he said.

Laura Streitfeld, an organizer with the group Preserve Rural Orange, said the expansion was not the right fit for the rural community.

“The neighbors and Preserve Rural Orange have been very concerned about building this facility in a place without municipal services,” she said. “We feel the cost would have been not only to taxpayers but to the environment and public health.”

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Interviews are regaining a foothold in college admissions process

By Daniel de Vise
Washington Post Staff Writer
Monday, August 2, 2010; A01

WILLIAMSBURG -- Lucy King's passion for the trombone was too big to fit on a college application. So she traveled to the College of William and Mary last month to tell someone about it in person.

"You can't really beat having a face-to-face communication," said Lucy, 17, a senior from Carlisle, Mass.

The public college and other selective schools are rediscovering the admission interview, a ritual that had fallen out of favor in recent years because of concerns about equity and expense.

With tens of thousands of applicants at many institutions, colleges are more desperate than ever for any scrap of intel that might distinguish one straight-A student from another. As a new admission cycle begins this summer, colleges are finding there's nothing like an interview to bring out revelatory details.

Lucy King talked about the Concord-Carlisle Regional High School concert band. Another William and Mary visitor challenged his interviewer to pick a number from one to 1,000 and then calculated its square in his head. Someone else recounted his feats as a world-champion wooden-duck carver. Students have danced, done comedic impersonations and showed YouTube videos.

All of this plays out in six closet-size rooms under the admissions office, where trained college seniors meet with probable applicants for half-hour sessions while anxious parents wait in a reception room upstairs.

But interviews don't always help. Some overwrought William and Mary applicants have broken down in tears. One young man asked his interviewer to rate the looks of female students on a 10-point scale. Another decided mid-interview to take a call on his cellphone.

A good interview or bad one can help admission committees sift through a crowded field.

"It seems like everybody who applies is the captain of their cross-country team, is a section leader in their orchestra, is in National Honor Society, has 1450 SAT scores, has a four-point-something ridiculous grade-point average," said Nick Velleman, who interviewed Lucy. "When everyone is like that, then we start looking for the people who really stand out."

But few institutions have the resources to meet with 10,000 or 20,000 prospective students, one at a time.
Worth their weight?

College interviews were on the wane until recently. By 2007, most Ivy League schools had halted formal campus interviews, with the exceptions of Yale and Harvard. The sheer number of visitors had become unwieldy, and the endeavor seemed unfair to those who lived far away and could not afford travel expenses.

"We felt that students who managed to come to campus were not reflective of the diversity of our applicant pool," said Maria Laskaris, dean of admissions and financial aid at Dartmouth College.

But the interview appears to be making a modest comeback. Some colleges are finding new ways to make personal connections on a large scale.

Harvard, Yale and Dartmouth reach more applicants than ever through their global alumni networks. Stanford University launched an alumni interview program two years ago in six cities and is offering its first interviews in the Washington region this year. The effort will reach about 5,000 students, a fraction of Stanford's 32,000 applicants.

In 2008, Wake Forest University in North Carolina began offering interviews via webcam, using the Internet telephone service Skype.

Debate persists about the value of interviews. Admission officials gently encourage the belief among applicants that a face-to-face meeting will help their chances. But they play down the interview's role in the admission process and fight the perception that it bestows an unfair advantage.

Surveys of college officials suggest that interviews typically are less important than grades or test scores but more important than extracurriculars. The share of colleges attaching "considerable importance" to the interview rose from 9 percent in 2005 to 11 percent in 2008 on the annual survey of the National Association for College Admission Counseling.

Some schools, including the University of Maryland and the University of Virginia, do not offer formal interviews. Others, including American University, offer "non-evaluative" interviews that are said to be for informational purposes only. Johns Hopkins and George Washington universities offer interviews and use them in admission decisions. Georgetown University requires them.

Many colleges that offer interviews struggle over how much weight to assign them, lest they penalize students who can't meet face to face.

"We need to be judicious in how much emphasis we can put on the evaluation aspect," said Eric Furda, dean of admissions at the University of Pennsylvania, whose alumni interview about one-quarter of applicants.

Starting a relationship

For many high school students, the interview is the first step in an intricate courtship with prospective colleges. Interview season starts in the summer, before most students have started college applications. Most colleges let applicants initiate interviews. At some competitive schools, the invitation must come from an alumnus.

Small, private colleges generally value the interview more than large, public universities. The
face-to-face meeting is particularly important at moderately selective regional colleges, partly as an indication that the applicant will attend if admitted.

Hood College, a private liberal arts school in Frederick, reinstated interviews a few years ago after letting the program lapse. Towson University, a state institution in Baltimore County, will begin interviewing applicants by WebEx videoconference this fall.

William and Mary, which was founded in 1693 and is the nation's second-oldest college after Harvard, revived its interview program six years ago. The college had stopped granting interviews in the 1990s because its applicant pool was too large. That dilemma remains. But admissions officials say they now face a bigger problem: choosing whom to admit.

Asking applicants to travel to campus was less of an issue at William and Mary than at some of its private peers, because most applicants live in Virginia.

William and Mary students interview about 11 percent of the school's 12,500 applicants, at a rate of 36 students a day, in sessions that run through the summer. Students who interview are admitted at a slightly higher rate than others. Once admitted, students who have interviewed are nearly twice as likely to enroll, said Wendy Livingston, senior assistant dean of admissions.

"When you're talking about students of this high of a caliber," she said, "it's often the personal and intangible details that help us make the decision."

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Plagiarism Lines Blur for Students in Digital Age

By TRIP GABRIEL

At Rhode Island College, a freshman copied and pasted from a Web site's frequently asked questions page about homelessness — and did not think he needed to credit a source in his assignment because the page did not include author information.

At DePaul University, the tip-off to one student's copying was the purple shade of several paragraphs he had lifted from the Web; when confronted by a writing tutor his professor had sent him to, he was not defensive — he just wanted to know how to change purple text to black.

And at the University of Maryland, a student reprimanded for copying from Wikipedia in a paper on the Great Depression said he thought its entries — unsigned and collectively written — did not need to be credited since they counted, essentially, as common knowledge.

Professors used to deal with plagiarism by admonishing students to give credit to others and to follow the style guide for citations, and pretty much left it at that.

But these cases — typical ones, according to writing tutors and officials responsible for discipline at the three schools who described the plagiarism — suggest that many students simply do not grasp that using words they did not write is a serious misdeed.

It is a disconnect that is growing in the Internet age as concepts of intellectual property, copyright and originality are under assault in the unbridled exchange of online information, say educators who study plagiarism.

Digital technology makes copying and pasting easy, of course. But that is the least of it. The Internet may also be redefining how students — who came of age with music file-sharing, Wikipedia and Web-linking — understand the concept of authorship and the singularity of any text or image.

“Now we have a whole generation of students who’ve grown up with information that just
seems to be hanging out there in cyberspace and doesn’t seem to have an author,” said Teresa Fishman, director of the Center for Academic Integrity at Clemson University. “It’s possible to believe this information is just out there for anyone to take.”

Professors who have studied plagiarism do not try to excuse it — many are champions of academic honesty on their campuses — but rather try to understand why it is so widespread.

In surveys from 2006 to 2010 by Donald L. McCabe, a co-founder of the Center for Academic Integrity and a business professor at Rutgers University, about 40 percent of 14,000 undergraduates admitted to copying a few sentences in written assignments.

Perhaps more significant, the number who believed that copying from the Web constitutes “serious cheating” is declining — to 29 percent on average in recent surveys from 34 percent earlier in the decade.

Sarah Brookover, a senior at the Rutgers campus in Camden, N.J., said many of her classmates blithely cut and paste without attribution.

“This generation has always existed in a world where media and intellectual property don’t have the same gravity,” said Ms. Brookover, who at 31 is older than most undergraduates. “When you’re sitting at your computer, it’s the same machine you’ve downloaded music with, possibly illegally, the same machine you streamed videos for free that showed on HBO last night.”

Ms. Brookover, who works at the campus library, has pondered the differences between researching in the stacks and online. “Because you’re not walking into a library, you’re not physically holding the article, which takes you closer to ‘this doesn’t belong to me,’ ” she said. Online, “everything can belong to you really easily.”

A University of Notre Dame anthropologist, Susan D. Blum, disturbed by the high rates of reported plagiarism, set out to understand how students view authorship and the written word, or “texts” in Ms. Blum’s academic language.


Ms. Blum argued that student writing exhibits some of the same qualities of pastiche that drive other creative endeavors today — TV shows that constantly reference other shows or rap music that samples from earlier songs.
In an interview, she said the idea of an author whose singular effort creates an original work is rooted in Enlightenment ideas of the individual. It is buttressed by the Western concept of intellectual property rights as secured by copyright law. But both traditions are being challenged.

“Our notion of authorship and originality was born, it flourished, and it may be waning,” Ms. Blum said.

She contends that undergraduates are less interested in cultivating a unique and authentic identity — as their 1960s counterparts were — than in trying on many different personas, which the Web enables with social networking.

“If you are not so worried about presenting yourself as absolutely unique, then it’s O.K. if you say other people’s words, it’s O.K. if you say things you don’t believe, it’s O.K. if you write papers you couldn’t care less about because they accomplish the task, which is turning something in and getting a grade,” Ms. Blum said, voicing student attitudes. “And it’s O.K. if you put words out there without getting any credit.”

The notion that there might be a new model young person, who freely borrows from the vortex of information to mash up a new creative work, fueled a brief brouhaha earlier this year with Helene Hegemann, a German teenager whose best-selling novel about Berlin club life turned out to include passages lifted from others.

Instead of offering an abject apology, Ms. Hegemann insisted, “There’s no such thing as originality anyway, just authenticity.” A few critics rose to her defense, and the book remained a finalist for a fiction prize (but did not win).

That theory does not wash with Sarah Wilensky, a senior at Indiana University, who said that relaxing plagiarism standards “does not foster creativity, it fosters laziness.”

“You’re not coming up with new ideas if you’re grabbing and mixing and matching,” said Ms. Wilensky, who took aim at Ms. Hegemann in a column in her student newspaper headlined “Generation Plagiarism.”

“It may be increasingly accepted, but there are still plenty of creative people — authors and artists and scholars — who are doing original work,” Ms. Wilensky said in an interview. “It’s kind of an insult that that ideal is gone, and now we’re left only to make collages of the work of previous generations.”

In the view of Ms. Wilensky, whose writing skills earned her the role of informal editor of other students’ papers in her freshman dorm, plagiarism has nothing to do with trendy
academic theories.

The main reason it occurs, she said, is because students leave high school unprepared for the intellectual rigors of college writing.

“If you’re taught how to closely read sources and synthesize them into your own original argument in middle and high school, you’re not going to be tempted to plagiarize in college, and you certainly won’t do so unknowingly,” she said.

At the University of California, Davis, of the 196 plagiarism cases referred to the disciplinary office last year, a majority did not involve students ignorant of the need to credit the writing of others.

Many times, said Donald J. Dudley, who oversees the discipline office on the campus of 32,000, it was students who intentionally copied — knowing it was wrong — who were “unwilling to engage the writing process.”

“Writing is difficult, and doing it well takes time and practice,” he said.

And then there was a case that had nothing to do with a younger generation’s evolving view of authorship. A student accused of plagiarism came to Mr. Dudley’s office with her parents, and the father admitted that he was the one responsible for the plagiarism. The wife assured Mr. Dudley that it would not happen again.
Today's debate: Student loans

High costs, loan defaults expose for-profit colleges

Our view:
Students, taxpayers get soaked as schools fail to deliver better jobs.

When for-profit universities started popping up in the 1990s, they seemed like such a good idea. They would attract money needed to meet surging demand for higher education. They would be innovative and nimble. And perhaps they would even force change at America's non-profit colleges and universities, where costs have soared.

The reality, however, has not been so impressive. For-profit universities have succeeded in harvesting billions of dollars annually in federal student aid. Many are also quite adept at paying huge executive salaries and lobbying to keep the taxpayer money flowing. But sky-high loan default rates among students at these schools suggest that they are not delivering on their promise to efficiently produce the kind of skilled workers that America so desperately needs. The Obama administration is right to flag the problem, though its response seems feeble.

According to the Department of Education, 77% of for-profit universities' revenue — some $24 billion in the 2008-09 academic year — comes from federal grants and loans. Amazingly, even though the industry accounts for only 10% of students, it is responsible for 44% of all loan defaults. On average, more than one in five people who borrow to attend for-profit institutions is in default within three years of leaving school. The schools don't care because the loans are federally guaranteed — an echo of the practices that led banks to issue subprime mortgages.

The Chronicle of Higher Education found six institutions with default rates greater than 40%. They are mostly small schools such as Angley College of Deland, Fla., and the College America at Flagstaff (Ariz.). But in 2004, the Bush administration criticized the nation's largest for-profit school, the University of Phoenix, for its aggressive tactics to increase enrollment. The company settled the case for $10 million.

This default rate is a clear signal that something is terribly wrong for the students at these institutions. Either they aren't getting the education they need, or they are being charged too much — or perhaps both.

The Obama administration's new rules would require most schools to warn prospective students that the programs they are considering might not lead to salaries sufficient to pay off their loans, a message quite different from the heavy-sell marketing techniques currently in use. The most egregiously underperforming schools would be cut off from federal student aid.

These measures are too accommodating. Institutions could continue benefiting from federal funds if as few as 45% of their former students are paying down their loans. The proposition that government should be lending money for any purpose with the expectation that less than half of it will be paid back on time — or at all — is patently absurd. From the perspective of the taxpayers, this is the very definition of waste.

From the perspective of the schools, it is less a business model than a scam. But today's business and political culture, industries see it as a right to tap into government largesse. Whenever government leaders try to get more return for the taxpayers, they whine about excessive regulation.

The fact is that some for-profit institutions are a bad deal. The average one charged about $14,000 in tuition in 2009, according to the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions. The average community college charged $2,500. The average four-year public university charged $7,000 annually for in-state students.

It's hard to see why taxpayers should lose money sending students to overpriced schools. It's time that such institutions receive the failing grades they deserve.
August 1, 2010

For a College President, the Criticisms Pile Up

By LISA W. FODERARO

It has been only a year since William L. Pollard was named president of Medgar Evers College, a historically black institution in central Brooklyn that is named for the slain civil rights leader. In that time, Dr. Pollard has focused on increasing graduation rates, making the college more student-friendly and, mostly, getting to know the campus.

“"This is a breath of clean air," said Nancy Lester, a professor in the education department for 12 years. "Without denigrating anything that came before Dr. Pollard and his team, we have a new focus, a new energy and a new openness on a variety of issues, from the budget to standards to integrity."

Yet the new administration also finds itself caught in a tempest that continues to brew even during the summer recess. Some professors, Brooklyn elected officials and others have accused Dr. Pollard of being dictatorial and detached from the surrounding community, which in the 1960s pushed the City University of New York to create the college.

They say he has been antagonistic toward some academic centers at the college, in particular the Center for NuLeadership on Urban Solutions, which advocates for former prisoners. Some professors complain that the faculty did not have enough say in the selection of a new provost, and that Dr. Pollard has assembled an administration with too few native New Yorkers and too little institutional memory.

Dr. Pollard’s own academic career has taken him everywhere, it seems, but New York — North Carolina, Chicago, Syracuse and Washington.

“He doesn’t have a reference point,” said Delridge L. Hunter, a professor of interdisciplinary studies. “The administration is out of character with anything we need, and he’s running into conflict because it seems like we’re on parallel universes.”

Some complaints are smaller-bore: that Dr. Pollard toyed with tradition by trying to move the commencement ceremonies from a campus courtyard to the Brooklyn Academy of Music, and
that he tried to abolish the college’s summer jazz series to save money. (He relented on both moves.)

And no one has let him forget his absence in March at the gala dinner of an annual black writers’ conference at the college that was attended by the Nobel laureate Toni Morrison. (Dr. Pollard made some opening remarks at the conference.)

Part of the problem is that the previous president, Edison O. Jackson, served for 20 years and often invited local elected officials to meetings, while Dr. Pollard met with them as a group for the first time in June, after leaders asked to publicly discuss their grievances.

“Dr. Jackson would be in touch with us all the time,” Councilwoman Letitia James of Brooklyn said. “We were, to a certain extent, part of his cabinet.”

Assemblyman Hakeem S. Jeffries criticized Dr. Pollard for switching the campus automated teller machines from the black-run Carver Federal Savings Bank to Citibank.

“That act alone would have raised eyebrows,” Mr. Jeffries said. “But to make this change in the midst of a firestorm where the sensitivity of Dr. Pollard and his team is in question shows the level of disregard.”

The A.T.M. dispute resulted from a CUNY-wide arrangement with Citibank, in which financial aid can be delivered via a bank card. But the college is now seeking to bring back a Carver teller machine as well.

Dr. Pollard, 65, said he had expected resistance to a change in administration. “When you do the work in academic leadership, you’re not going to satisfy all the people all the time,” he said.

He defended his first year as president, citing town hall meetings with the faculty and the extension of hours in the bursar’s and financial aid offices to meet the needs of part-time students who hold jobs.

Dr. Pollard said he was especially puzzled by the criticism because he had yet to make any substantive changes. “At no time in the recent past have we begun to systematically engage in a strategic planning process,” he said. “I hope to do that in the next 12 to 18 months. At that time, we have to ask ourselves if we need to tweak the mission. Some people don’t want to ask the question.”

CUNY officials are standing behind Dr. Pollard, who has the support of some community leaders. Noel Hankin, chairman of the New York Urban League, praised him for focusing on
student achievement and on improving a single-digit graduation rate.

“He’s a very thoughtful person, and he has a wonderful vision for the college,” said Mr. Hankin, who was recently appointed to the CUNY Construction Fund.

Perhaps the biggest source of controversy has been the Center for NuLeadership, which began at Medgar Evers as a project of the Center for Law and Social Justice in 2005 and last year sought to become a full-fledged academic center. Although the governing College Council endorsed the idea, the previous provost never forwarded it to the CUNY board for a vote.

Now the new provost, Howard C. Johnson, is asking tough questions of the center’s leaders, Eddie Ellis and Divine Pryor, who emerged as fierce advocates for inmates after being released from prison themselves.

Dr. Johnson said that before he sent the proposal to CUNY, he wanted to see evidence that the center was the national public policy “think tank” it presented itself as, though it does not have a Web site or publish a journal.

He has also hesitated to give the center approval for a $2.4 million grant proposal, called Court to College, that would bring up to 300 nonviolent drug offenders to campus over three years.

Dr. Johnson has questioned how the program would finance itself after the grant ended, and how it would affect campus security. More than 70 percent of the students at Medgar Evers are women. He asked to see letters from the center’s “collaborating partners,” who, according to the grant proposal, included the Brooklyn district attorney, Charles J. Hynes.

A spokesman for Mr. Hynes, Jonah Bruno, said that while the prosecutor’s office had worked with the college and the center on new approaches to prevent crime and reduce recidivism, it had “not partnered” with the center on the grant.

Instead of answering Dr. Johnson’s questions, the center’s two leaders have mounted a public relations campaign against the college administration, rallying inmate advocates and elected officials to protest.

Dr. Pryor said the administration’s resistance to the plan smacked of discrimination and unsubstantiated fears. “We know from all the evidence that the most effective tool in helping a person reintegrate back into the community and become a law-abiding citizen is to become educated,” he said.

Dr. Johnson countered that 10 percent of the 7,000 students were formerly incarcerated and
had access to counseling and tutoring services through the college. “My goal is not to be an impediment,” he said. “But I have to protect the integrity of the college and make sure I do my due diligence.”

Still, Councilwoman James said the college should find some way to work with the center.

“How could I reject $2.4 million coming into my district?” she asked. “And how could I deny individuals who understand the importance of education and who want to turn their life around?”