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ECU dental school dean resigns
By Ginger Livingston
The Daily Reflector
Wednesday, August 17, 2011

The first dean of East Carolina University's School of Dental Medicine resigned Tuesday after the state auditor and school officials discovered questionable travel expenses and failures to report outside income.

Dr. James Hupp will remain on the dental school's faculty, Chancellor Steve Ballard said during a news conference. An interim dean should be announced in the next seven to 10 days, he said.

“We absolutely must address these reporting issues,” Ballard said. “While we do that, the mission, the facilities and the plans for the School of Dental Medicine are all intact and robust, and the school remains one of our proudest and most important initiatives.”

State Auditor Beth Wood said Tuesday that her office discovered $90,000 in questionable travel expenditures submitted by Hupp and four other dental school administrators.

The dental school audit began after Wood's office received a hotline tip and report from other audit divisions, she said.

Wood said the trips were pre-authorized, but there was insufficient documentation submitted to support whether or not the trips should have been reimbursed.

The auditor's report focused on trips taken by Hupp to Kiawah Island, S.C., Destin, Fla., Germany and Switzerland. The auditor's report stated “the relationship between the travel and the establishment of the (dental) school was not always clearly documented.”
Hupp repaid $5,000 he received in reimbursements, Ballard said. The travel expenditures of the other faculty members still are under review, said Phyllis Horns, vice chancellor for health sciences. None of them have been asked to repay the reimbursements they received.

Ballard said the university will address the reporting issues.

No itinerary was included to document the purpose of a five-day trip to Kiawah Island. While eight hours of continuing education credits could be earned during the meeting, “the majority of the trip does not appear to be training-related,” the report stated.

The were significant changes to the travel arrangements for the Florida trip, including a side trip to Georgia's Emory University for a presentation. This trip, the audit said, prevented Hupp from arriving in Florida until the last full day of the conference.

The trip to Europe, which was to see dental equipment in use, was questionable because the manufacturer covered some of Hupp's expenses, the auditor said. The university also had arranged for equipment demonstrations on campus, and equipment at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill also was available for review.

The report noted that during Hupp's overseas travel, Horns “apparently had concerns about the extent of the dean's travel during this same time frame.”

The auditor's report said email correspondence between Horns and Hupp re-emphasized the need to reduce “travel expenditures from state dollars, especially out of state travel” as well as the inappropriateness of accepting vendor-paid travel.

The university didn't purchase equipment from the manufacturer that paid some of Hupp's travel expenses, Horns said.

Ballard said after auditors and university officials reviewed the findings in July, the university continued to examine Hupp's records.

It was found Hupp had not reported accepting a part-time instructor's position at the UNC School of Dentistry at Chapel Hill and the $130,000 salary that accompanied it. He also didn't report the salary he received for editing a dental journal. Hupp's annual university salary is $350,000 as of January 2011.

University rules require administrators and faculty to report outside income, Ballard said. A UNC spokesman said Tuesday that Hupp continued to be listed as a part-time instructor with the dental school.

Hupp's resignation comes as 52 students making up the first class of dental students arrived on campus this week. A majority of the students attended Ballard's announcement.
“We are exactly on track to where we said we would be six years ago,” Ballard said. The student's dental education won't change, he said.

When asked for a comment one student said students had been directed to refer all questions to university spokesman John Durham.

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ECU's dental dean quits after audit
BY JANE STANCILL - Staff Writer

GREENVILLE One day after East Carolina University's dental school opened its doors to students, the school's dean resigned Tuesday because of questionable travel expenses and his failure to disclose outside income.

Dr. James R. Hupp, the school's founding dean, stepped down from his administrative position but will remain on the faculty at ECU, the university announced.

The resignation came hours after the release of a state audit that showed what it termed "extensive" travel by administrators during the startup for ECU's School of Dental Medicine.

But that was only part of the reason for Hupp's departure. ECU Chancellor Steve Ballard said an internal university review revealed "unacceptable behaviors on his part related to outside compensation and not following the rules of the system."

The dean also had taught part time at UNC-Chapel Hill without receiving approval for dual employment, as required by UNC system rules. Hupp also edited research journals, using state resources for personal gain, but failed to report the outside income, Ballard said.

Hupp, who earned $350,000 annually as dean, could not be reached for comment Tuesday.

Ballard acknowledged that the timing is terrible.

"On the one hand, yes, this is a horrible way to start any school year," he said in a phone interview. "Nobody would want this to happen on the second day of a brand-new school."

Ballard emphasized that the school will move forward. "Nothing has changed on our educational plan," he said. "Our 52 students are really super. We've got excellent faculty that is already here. There are three associate deans who have excellent credentials. So we don't like any time a leader has to resign, but nothing else has changed about our mission and about what we're trying to do with the school."
'This is a shock'

The revelations about the dean are a setback for a school that has been years in the making. ECU leaders pushed hard for the school over the criticism of some practicing dentists who feared that it would compete with UNC-Chapel Hill for students, faculty and state funding.

ECU's school was approved in 2006. The Greenville school aims to address the state's shortage of dentists, particularly in rural, underserved areas.

ECU's dental school has received tens of millions of taxpayer dollars from the legislature. It has also drawn private donations, $4 million from Dr. Ledyard Ross, a retired Greenville orthodontist for whom the school's building is named.

"This is a shock," Ross said of Tuesday's developments. "I'm sorry it happened, because we have a hard time getting things Down East."

Hupp came to ECU in 2008 from the University of Mississippi, where he had been dean of its dental school. Previously, he led departments at the University of Maryland, the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey and the University of Connecticut.

An expert in oral-maxillofacial surgery, Hupp's academic training is extensive: a dentistry degree from Harvard School of Dental Medicine, a medical degree from the University of Connecticut, a law degree from Rutgers University and a master's of business administration from Loyola College Maryland. Hupp had the kind of academic credentials that Ballard had called "impeccable."

Review will continue

On Aug. 4 Hupp met with reporters and editors at The News & Observer to talk about the school's mission, even as ECU was reviewing thousands of pages of documents related to Hupp's travel and outside compensation.

Hupp said then that the school would stress smart business practices. The students will be taught not only dentistry, but management skills that will be crucial in helping them start practices in low-income areas.

"They will have experienced the trials and tribulations of running a practice in the sorts of communities we hope they will be working in," he said.

Ballard said the internal review is continuing. It's unclear how much outside income Hupp was earning, the chancellor said. But in 2010, Hupp and his wife earned a combined $80,000 from one journal.
Ballard said there was no objection to Hupp editing a journal - but he did not disclose the income.

"He violated his contract," Ballard said. "He didn't play by the rules."

Hupp's salary as a faculty member has not been set, but a university spokeswoman said it would be consistent with the average faculty pay in similar positions.

An interim dean will be named in the coming days.

Staff writer Jay Price contributed to this report.

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Audit findings

A report Tuesday from the Office of the State Auditor showed "extensive" travel by East Carolina University's School of Dental Medicine staff. The audit said it was not unusual for key staff to be traveling for one-third to one-half of their working days each month during the startup period for the school. Reimbursements for two unnamed individuals totaled $40,000 or more.

Travel was not always properly documented by ECU, nor was its rationale fully justified, the report said. The university responded to the audit by saying new procedures had been implemented.

The audit also pointed out problems with the travel of the school's dean, Dr. James R. Hupp, including:

-- A trip to Kiawah Island, S.C., on May 2-6, 2009. The dean traveled to a conference, spending $1,611. According to documents with the reimbursements, only eight hours of continuing education credits were available to be earned at the meeting.

-- A trip to Destin, Fla., on June 12-16, 2009. The dean traveled to a dental association meeting, incurring mileage costs of $445. But the audit said because the dean made a side trip to Emory University, the trip was significantly different from the purpose of the travel that had been pre-approved.

-- A trip to Switzerland and Germany on Aug. 22-31, 2010, to tour dental manufacturers' facilities. Total costs for the dean were $1,502, but an
additional staff member incurred costs of $3,499 for the same trip. The audit pointed out that the dean did not submit lodging reimbursements, but instead stayed in hotels at the expense of the manufacturer, thus creating a potential conflict of interest.

The audit also questioned whether the trip was a valid use of state funds because the university had already set up a site for vendors to showcase simulators and other dental equipment. "Additional research by our investigative auditors indicated that a common method for evaluating dental equipment is to visit other dental schools to see the equipment in use," the audit said. "Such an evaluation could have taken place at the dental school located in Chapel Hill ... as an alternative to the costs of traveling overseas to visit the actual manufacturer."
Chief talks crime to chamber
By K.j. Williams
The Daily Reflector
Wednesday, August 17, 2011

Greenville Police Chief William Anderson was one of two speakers who gave an update on crime in Greenville to an audience of business people Tuesday, noting that statistics show a decreasing number of crimes despite a recent “spate” of crime this summer.

“(Regardless) of whether it's down, it's still a major challenge in our community,” Anderson said. “We understand that. We respect that. We understand the concerns of our citizens, the concerns of our students. And we know it's an issue that we still must address here in our city.”

He addressed the topic of crime at a Greenville-Pitt County Chamber of Commerce luncheon, followed by Bill Koch, East Carolina University's associate vice chancellor of environmental health and campus safety.

Anderson said nine shooting incidents and several armed robberies starting on June 18, that he attributed to gang activity, were met with strong measures. “We just need to keep the pressure on,” he said.

The identification of suspected gang members and their gang affiliations in the media helped stop the outbreak of gang-related violence, Anderson said.
“And the reason behind that is because they always seemed to hide between that umbrella or that wall of being a gang member,” he said. “... By putting this information out there, it exposed them and what they were doing.”

The city has programs in place specifically to target gang members and the most violent criminals, he said.

To meet the needs of a community with a high crime rate, police will welcome residents of the area to the grand opening of the Caldwell Court Police Substation at 3005-1 Caldwell Court at 6 p.m. today.

Anderson said that community involvement can help police. Neighborhood Watch programs work, he said, but they have to be active.

There's also a need for more leaders from the black community to address the issue of blacks victimizing other blacks.

Police efforts in the downtown bar district have paid off, he said. Other factors include improved lighting and the installation of cameras monitored by police.

“But cost still is an issue,” Anderson said. “It takes a tremendous amount of money to police the downtown area, from overtime and the on-duty costs of police officers.”

To beef up police coverage downtown without having to pay overtime to Greenville police officers, the City Council recently approved the hiring of 40 reserve police officers. They will be hired from other law enforcement agencies and will work downtown and at ECU events.

In the next 30 days, there should be 15 in place.

“And I think it's going to make a definite impact in that area,” Anderson said. Koch spoke about the results of a Greenville public safety task force report released in June, emphasizing that ECU's crime problems aren't unusual among college towns.

He said the task force, which he co-chaired, has suggested enacting legislation that would allow Greenville police to enforce ABC laws.

Other ideas to alleviate crime included levying a tax on downtown bars to help pay for their security, and increasing the number of meetings between police and bar owners about crime prevention.

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As realignment rumors continue to swirl around college athletics, East Carolina now has a online resume it can show off to any potential suitors that might come calling.

In a ‘Message to the Pirate Nation' posted on the school's athletics website Tuesday, ECU Director of Athletics Terry Holland unveiled a website called ‘UNDAUNTED' to the general public.

“The UNDAUNTED web page has been used to provide factual information about East Carolina University and ECU Athletics with selected members of the media and intercollegiate athletics,” Holland wrote on www.ecupirates.com. “We wanted to share this data with the Pirate Nation so that you also have this information about what we have accomplished together.”

The site, which is located at www.ecu.edu/undaunted, not only includes information on ECU's facilities and recent accomplishments, but also details the university's television market and compares ECU's football attendance to schools in the Atlantic Coast Conference and the Big East.

“The UNDAUNTED positioning captures the spirit of all Pirates,” Holland wrote. “We are transitioning from the ‘underdog with a chip on our shoulders' to ‘champions providing inspiration' with the same hard work and relentless resolve to succeed and accomplish our goals and vision no matter the odds we face.”

ECU, which has been a member of Conference USA since 1997, has long stated its desire to be in an automatic qualifying BCS conference.
East Carolina University

ECU’s Brian Mitchell, 42, is a former defensive back at Brigham Young who played three seasons in the NFL.

**Pirates defense aims for 'exactness'**

BY EDWARD G. ROBINSON III - Staff Writer

After a season of listening to the message, East Carolina players know exactly what defensive coordinator Brian Mitchell wants.

"He wants exactness in everything we do," senior Bradley Jacobs said. "From the scheme, to technique, to every little thing, he wants exactness. That's what makes a defense."

Mitchell's favorite word, "exactness," was often used, though rarely executed during the Pirates' 6-7 season a year ago. The word, meant to define the right way to do things, has become the goal as the defense prepares for the start of a new season on Sept. 3.

Players and coaches hope to avoid the defensive meltdown from last season, when the Pirates finished with Conference USA's worst total defense. Second-year head coach Ruffin McNeill, a former defensive back at the school, trusts his defensive coordinator to make changes.

When McNeill served as defensive coordinator at Texas Tech, Mitchell was his defensive backs coach.
"He was my eyes and ears upstairs," McNeill said. "Helped me call games and was part of the success we were able to have there."

Mitchell, 42, is a former defensive back at Brigham Young who played three seasons in the NFL. In his 17th year as a coach, he faces a fan base used to watching successful run-stuffing, pass-intercepting defenses.

"No one wants to finish last," Mitchell said. "I've been a winner all my life. They've been winners. We're on the track to get back to where we're playing good defense."

**Change in scheme**

McNeill decided that getting back on solid defensive footing required making a change from a 4-3 base scheme to a 3-4. He met with Mitchell at the end of the season and both agreed the 4-3 did not fit the personnel.

Film of last season's games, when the Pirates yielded 478.8 yards and 44.0 points per game, convinced the coaches of the lack of depth on the defensive line. By the end of the season, limited by injuries and without enough fresh bodies rotating into the lineup, the Pirates were outmanned.

"You self-diagnose everything you've done and say, 'Hey was this good enough to help this defense get better?' " Mitchell said.

The answer came in the form of the 3-4, which he said will match the program's linebacker talent. He said the move will allow him to put playmakers such as sophomore Justin Dixon in position to affect the game.

"You're going to see a defense that is now attacking downhill instead of sitting and reacting to what we're getting," said Mitchell.

**Learned under Glanville**

Mitchell came in contact with the 3-4 scheme as a player with the NFL's Atlanta Falcons in 1991 under coach Jerry Glanville.

He spent three seasons as a defensive back, sharing the field with one of the league's best cornerbacks, Deion Sanders.

His playing days over, Mitchell returned to his alma mater, BYU, where he had played for legendary coach LaVell Edwards in 1987-1990.

"He was a smart player," Edwards said. "He didn't have great speed or anything."

Smart players impress coaches and Edwards took to Mitchell. He offered him a staff position a month before the start of 1994 season after another coach abruptly left the program.
"I was just impressed from Day One. And it just got better with experience," Edwards said.

Mitchell spent 10 seasons in his first coaching job, learning the Cougars' 3-3-5 scheme as a defensive backs coach.

**Out of comfort zone**

Born in Waco, Texas, Mitchell chose to move away from home colleges such as Baylor or Texas and made a surprising choice in BYU. His father was a Pentecostal preacher and the spiritually charged environment on Provo, Utah, campus made him feel comfortable.

Still, there were few African American faces.

"First day on campus you don't see any black kids, other than the football players or few basketball players," Mitchell said. "Yeah, it takes you out of your comfort zone. But if you ever want to excel in something, you're going to need to get out of your comfort zone. And find the good in everything around you."

Of course, football helped. Mitchell made a name with his consistent, methodical effort, collecting 13 career interceptions. Soft-spoken, he listened well.

Mitchell made a play for the history books in 1989 when he intercepted a pass against New Mexico and returned it 97 yards for a touchdown. It stands as the longest interception return in school history.

His assignment was to follow the running back, who went on a reverse and tried a pass. He stuck with his assignment and collected a reward.

"It paid off," he said. "You can finish and make plays when you play within the scheme. When you do exactly what your coaches tell you to do."

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Students in the game

The tension between universities' academic mission and major athletics programs often boils down to a question of double standards.

Coaches and fans want to recruit outstanding players. They want admissions officers to give the green light, sometimes waiving the standards that other, "regular" students must meet. The admissions office has to decide how far over backwards to bend.

This sort of bargaining takes place at universities and colleges large and small. If a university intends to field a football team, there must be enough students enrolled who are capable of playing. But let the standards slip often or far enough, and a school can earn a reputation as a "football factory," say, that's hard to shake.

Then, once student-athletes are on campus, comes the effort to make sure they get acceptable grades. Will it mean that the fellow who electrifies the stadium on Saturday with his touchdowns also does the same kind of coursework that regular students must do? Or will allowances be made?

Reformers years ago began trying to prevent universities from letting student-athletes skate by without meeting standards that applied to other students. Prominent in that effort was the Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics, co-chaired by William Friday, president emeritus of the University of North Carolina system.

Now a major Knight Commission recommendation has borne fruit. The NCAA, which sets the rules for intercollegiate athletics, last week agreed that unless at least half the players on a team are on track to graduate, the team won't be eligible for post-season play. Not being able to go to a bowl game or participate in a tournament would represent a significant penalty in lost revenues and a disappointment for fans.

On its face, requiring only a 50 percent Academic Progress Rate seems too generous. But with that standard in effect, several teams would not have made the post-season schedule last year, including basketball champs Connecticut.
Schools must resist the temptation to further water down their standards just so more players can remain on the graduation track. But as Friday told The N&O, the new rule amounts to a "pivotal point" in college athletics reform. The tension between academics and athletics is still there, driven by the lure of money and fame. At least in one respect, though, the academic side has gained an edge.
Surprise! College Costs Even More Than You Thought

You've calculated your college savings, loans and grant money, and have crunched the numbers to develop a workable budget. Now, how much was set aside for the occasional pizza?

"If a college student eats one pizza a week (off-campus), he'll have spent $2,000 on pizza by the time he graduates from a four-year program," says Mark Kantrowitz, publisher of FinAid.org, a resource for student financial aid.

That two grand probably wasn't accounted for when you were calculating your typical college costs. Most families plan their college expenses based on figures provided by the colleges and universities themselves, which are very loose estimates on a degree's cost and essentials such as transportation and textbooks.

"The College Board reports that in 2010-2011, students could expect to spend an average of $1,137 on textbooks and supplies. A new financial accounting textbook can cost $150 to $200," says Carole Walters of Flat World Knowledge, a publisher of free and open textbooks.

Graham Haskin, who graduated from Emerson College in Boston, says he was dismayed by the cost of textbooks, but the really big college expense came from using public transportation. "I took the T (subway) everywhere. The cost of the monthly pass or the cost of the per-trip rate was a surprise," Haskin says.

The website for the University of North Carolina at Wilmington estimates student transportation costs at $1,452 per year, whether a student lives on campus or commutes. Since some students commute to their campuses from as far away as 50 miles, it's good to keep in mind that individual college expenses will vary.

So That's Where Your Money Goes
Because not everyone can be like Rodney Dangerfield's rags-to-riches character, Thornton Melon, in "Back to School," students have to rely on traditional financial planning methods. This involves anticipating rising college costs. However, few can forecast the rates at which today's gas and grocery prices rise.

According to a College Board study, basic public college tuition alone has increased, "from 2000-01 to 2010-11 rang(ing) from 79% in the Middle States region to 161% in the West before adjusting for inflation." Add in unplanned college expenses, and many who think they're prepared are in for wallet shock.

"The dorm and dining hall provide the basics, but students will need everything from laundry money to shaving cream and probably cell service," says Greg Karp, author of several books on personal finance. Students agree and, although some college costs are predictable, others sneak up on them.

Luke Mayberry, a drummer and music major at East Carolina University, in Greenville, N.C., says carrying a major like his costs extra bucks. "I was definitely surprised by how much money I was spending on sheet music and mallets/drumsticks outside of the required materials list I'd been given during the summer."

Mayberry says he spent about $500 extra on equipment and sheet music at the beginning of his first semester. And music majors aren't the only ones: Art and graphic design majors, for example, must often purchase expensive software as well as materials.

Kantrowitz adds that in some states, such as Florida, universities tack on an additional charge once a major is declared. "Those fees aren't necessarily planned for," he says.

A Few (Expensive) Things to Consider

After budgeting for the dorm or apartment, shelling out for a meal plan, paying tuition, activity and insurance fees, experts say you should plan for an additional $300 to $400 out of pocket each month to cover day-to-day extras. Here are some of the culprits most likely to drain your bank account.

Parking: Most universities charge to park on campus, even for dorm-based students. Expect to pay upward of $500 for two semesters of parking privileges at most major universities; less at community colleges and rural schools. And watch those parking tickets: An illegal five-minute parking job can end up costing anywhere from $2 (a no-parking zone at Brandeis University) to $75 (a handicapped parking ticket at Vassar College) in fines.
Sororities and fraternities: If your student pledges, then he or she (or you) will be on the hook for upward of $2,000 in fees and other Greek-associated expenses over the course of a college career. The University of Southern Mississippi at Hattiesburg estimates the average total new member cost for the first two semesters at $1,050.

Hidden apartment costs: Opting out of the dorm can be expensive in ways you might not realize. Most campus-style apartment complexes require 12-month leases, so you or your child will be paying for the summer months, even if he or she isn't enrolled in school. If you sublet, benefit from Haskin's unfortunate experience: He sublet his share of a home without a contract. When the renter didn't pay and trashed the place, "I had no recourse. If you're subletting, get a contract," he says.

Laundry: Mom won't be doing it anymore. If your kid has to pay to wash clothes, the costs of detergent and dryer sheets, as well as several bucks a load to use a community washer and dryer, will add up. Don't laugh -- doing two loads a week at approximately $3 per load (not including the price of detergent) could run college expenses up by more than $200 a year. It will cost even more if a student leaves his or her clothes unattended and someone walks away with them -- an unfortunate but not uncommon occurrence.

Computer malfunctions: As soon as the warranty on your student's laptop tanks, so will it -- or at least it seems that way. If available, buying a computer through the college can be a potential route to take. While it can cost a bit more, the college often offers free or reduced tech support, which can help cut college costs and reduce long-distance parental anxiety. Laptop rental may also be an option, so check in with the university to find out if this is an option.

Unless your student is comfortable handling personal finances, resist the temptation to plunk a semester's spending money on a debit card and trust it will last. Kantrowitz says that it's best to start releasing your hold on your child's funds gradually. Otherwise, you may find the money you earmarked for a bus pass has paid for a new iPod. And that's one unexpected college expense that you can head off at the pass.
Applications to U.S. graduate schools from international students surged in 2011, reaffirming the strength of American institutions in an increasingly competitive market for prosperous foreign students, according to an annual survey by the Council of Graduate Schools.

America’s flagship public universities depend on a growing population of international students to supply the revenue they no longer get from their states. Out-of-state students pay two or times as much as residents to attend public institutions. Foreign students tend to come from prosperous families in China, India or South Korea and to pay full fare, a quality that makes them desirable to public and private colleges alike.

Those students covet an American education. Growing demand has spawned a cottage industry of agents who earn thousands of dollars in finder’s fees for delivering students to American schools, employing methods that have drawn criticism from inside and outside academia.

Chinese and Indian universities covet those students, as well, and a collegiate building boom in those nations has succeeded in luring some of them away. China and India are investing heavily in higher education at a time when America and Britain are perceived to be pulling money out, at least in terms of government subsidies.

International applications have risen in each of the past six years; but the 11-percent bump from 2010 to 2011 is the largest since 2006.

China is the engine driving the increase: applicants from China rose 21 percent in 2011, compared to an eight-percent increase in India and 2 percent in South Korea, the second- and third-leading supplier of foreign students to American schools.

Offers of admission rose, as well. The survey does not report on how many admitted students actually chose to attend, presumably a more telling measure.
Recruiters at Black Colleges Break From Tradition

By SUE SHELLENBARGER
August 17, 2011

Katy Daugherty enrolled at Tennessee State University because of the school's flexible daytime, evening and online classes and its new urban-studies program.

Once on campus at this historically black college, where more than 70% of the students are African-American, Ms. Daugherty, 29, who is white, became the minority.

"It was definitely different, having grown up and been in the majority, and all of a sudden you are in the minority," she says.

In what has become a mutually beneficial relationship for schools and students, many of the nation's 105 historically black colleges are increasingly wooing non-black students. The goals: to boost lagging enrollment and offset funding shortfalls.

Some black colleges are stepping up recruiting at mostly white or Hispanic high schools and community colleges. Delaware State University is bringing 100 Chinese students to its Dover campus this fall for cultural and language training. Other colleges are showcasing unique programs. Florida Memorial University in Miami Gardens promotes its chorale, which backed Queen Latifah in the 2010 Super Bowl, for example. Even top-ranked black schools such as Howard University in Washington, D.C., and Spelman College in Atlanta, are recruiting more aggressively in the face of intensifying competition for top African-American students.
About 82% of students at the nation's 105 black colleges are African-American, a percentage that has been fairly constant over the past 30 years, according to a data analysis for this column by the Thurgood Marshall College Fund, a New York nonprofit.

Increases in Hispanic and Asian students have offset declines in whites, partly because of cuts in federal- and state-scholarship programs that encouraged white students to attend historically black colleges, says the fund's president, Johnny C. Taylor Jr. He predicts growth in white, Hispanic and Asian enrollment, as black colleges cast a wider net.

Ms. Daugherty was looking for a school that offered flexible schedules. As a teenager, she lost interest in college after three semesters, dropped out and went to work. In time, she became interested in city planning and decided to go back to school. Tennessee State's downtown Nashville campus enabled her to combine a full-time course load with her job as a supervisor at a nonprofit performing-arts center. As at many black colleges, its cost—at $2,400 a semester—was low as well.

She quickly found her professors and fellow students friendly. Race would sometimes enter the conversation. In one class, she says, her sociology professor looked out at the 40 students, most of whom were black, and asked rhetorically, "When did you first become aware that you were black?" She says she locked eyes with one of the two other white students, laughed and mouthed the words, "Today, I guess!"

After graduating last weekend, Ms. Daugherty regards her experience as a big plus that prepared her to live in a diverse society. "It has expanded me as a person."

Tennessee State's interim president, Portia Holmes Shields sees its mission as a public university to provide a quality education to students of all races, she says. While some older alumni are uneasy with the increasing diversity, younger grads embrace it, says the former dean of education at Howard University.
Michael Sorrell, president of tiny Paul Quinn College in Dallas, says black colleges must stay committed to their historical mission as "beacons of light" for students who need resources and support. "My difference is, I just don't assign a race to that."

After being hired in 2007 to help solve the school's financial and accreditation problems, Mr. Sorrell told alumni that the campus would soon "look dramatically different," he says. "It doesn't mean that we've turned our backs" on the college's historical constituency. "It means we've expanded our mission and our definition of who will benefit," he says. No alumni have objected, he adds.

Part of his strategy is to recruit top students of all races to serve as campus leaders, by offering personal mentoring, full $20,000-a-year scholarships and a post-graduation job guarantee. Among these 20 hand-picked "presidential scholars," six have been white or Hispanic. This fall, African-American enrollment among Paul Quinn's 200 students will likely drop to 85% from about 94% last year.

One presidential scholar, 22-year-old Jessika Lara, who is Hispanic, completed her studies in December and works now as a recruiter for the college. To lure non-black recruits, she tells about her own arrival on campus: "Everybody was so open, so welcoming. They didn't see a difference in me just because I was Hispanic," she tells visitors.

One of Ms. Lara's many Hispanic recruits is incoming freshman, Celia Soto, 19, who graduated with honors from a Dallas high school.

Ms. Soto admits that on her first visit to campus, "I felt weird, like, 'Oh my God, I'm the only one'" who wasn't African-American. But after spending time at Paul Quinn, she says, "it doesn't really matter if you're Hispanic or any other race."

Some black colleges, of course, are doing relatively well financially. Headed for 43 years by current president Norman Francis, an adroit fund-raiser, Xavier University of Louisiana in New Orleans has more than doubled its endowment since 2005 to nearly $134 million, larger than that of many black colleges.

Many schools have track records in producing top African-American professionals. Xavier sends more black students to medical school than any other U.S. college and is among the top-three producers of African-American pharmacists with doctorate degrees.

With just 7,000 undergrads, Howard produces more African-American graduates who go on to earn doctorate degrees in science and engineering than any other college in the country, the National Science Foundation says. Second is Spelman, with about 2,100 students.
"They do it by really nurturing students and providing role models—not by fostering a competitive cutthroat environment," says Marybeth Gasman, professor of higher education at the University of Pennsylvania's graduate school of education.

Black colleges do a good job by another measure, in educating students who enroll with less money and lower college-entrance test scores, on average, than incoming freshmen at other schools. Historically black colleges and universities enroll 16% of all black undergrads, but award 25% of the bachelor's degrees received by African Americans, Dr. Gasman says.

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