Dental mission remains

It appears that Dr. James Hupp, the founding dean of the new dental school at East Carolina University, did indeed have some questionable travel expenses and failed to strictly follow rules with regard to disclosing some outside income (as required of those working for public institutions). But Hupp, who has been removed as dean but will remain a faculty member, did a good job in getting the dental school started.

He and other university leaders indicate the school will focus on training dentists to serve in smaller communities that often go without accessible dental care. This is not unlike the stated mission of the ECU medical school, which has turned out many family physicians who have stayed in areas of North Carolina where such care has been hard to find. This university, in other words, has a clear vision of public service appropriate for a school that enjoys public support.

In a recent interview with N&O reporters and editors, Hupp clearly showed his dedication to filling a troubling void in dental care. He emphasized the school's aim to train these medical professionals not only in their most important skills in the treating of patients, but also in how to run their practices efficiently and as viable businesses.

And make no mistake: Dental care isn't some luxury. Those who neglect their teeth can develop serious medical problems, including, for example, heart valve infections. Regular checkups are every bit as important as regular medical checkups.

The most acute need for care is found in the same sorts of place where the need for general medical care also is greatest. Once again, ECU has stepped up to answer that need. Hupp's resignation as dean because of errors in judgment as he worked to get the new dental school up and running is unfortunate, but the university's solid commitment to this important public health venture should not be deterred.
Greenway expansion gets grant
By Ginger Livingston
The Daily Reflector
Thursday, August 18, 2011

The City of Greenville received a $907,609 federal transportation grant to fund a greenway project between downtown and the Brody School of Medicine complex, U.S. Sen. Kay Hagan announced Wednesday.

The estimated 2.4-mile project will use a combination of new greenway construction and existing sidewalks and roadways to connect the Town Common to Moye Boulevard, said Wes Anderson, Greenville public works director.

“Who are our biggest bicyclists? People who are going to the university or who can't afford their own cars,” Anderson said. “We are trying to get people from where they live to where they want to go. And where is the main area they want to go? The hospital complex.”

Greenville already has about six miles of greenways extending from the Town Common to Elm Street Park. This is the first greenway to be built in the western part of the city.

It's estimated the project will serve as an alternative transportation route for about 17,000 students, employees and faculty of East Carolina University who travel from the main campus area to the medical school, according to Hagan's office. City residents also will have easy access to the route.

“Greenways in Greenville are beginning to provide a transportation alternative as well as recreational opportunities. The city is most grateful to Senator Hagan for her support of this grant,” Mayor Pat Dunn said.

The grant, along with $240,000 in matching funds from the city, will fund the design and construction of the project, Anderson said. The design phase should take eight months. Construction should begin sometime in 2012.

Greenville was one of three North Carolina municipalities to receive funding from the U.S. Department of Transportation's Transportation, Community and System Preservation Program. The City of Hickory, in partnership with Catawba Valley Community College, received $978,300, and the Town of Matthews received $526,027.

“Investments in infrastructure are investments in our communities and in attracting, developing and growing business,” Hagan said. “With local governments facing tighter and tighter budget constraints, this funding will support crucial transportation projects
that will ensure safe and easy access to our vibrant North Carolina cities and towns and promote economic development and growth.”

Contact Ginger Livingston at glivingston@reflector.com or 252-329-9570.
University Health Systems of Eastern Carolina is renaming itself and Pitt County Memorial Hospital starting Oct. 1.

The hospital will be called UHS Medical Center and UHS will drop Eastern Carolina from its name, according to a Wednesday news release.

The hospital's name change will align it with the health system and reflect its role as the region's only teaching hospital and Level 1 trauma center, according to the news release. System officials said the name change would make it easier for patients and their families to identify and access UHS facilities.

The legal names of the entities will not change.

“We are continually assessing how we can better serve the people and communities of eastern North Carolina,” Dave McRae, UHS chief executive officer, said in the release. “We want to simplify our name and our system-naming structure to communicate directly and plainly who we are, what we offer, and the value we bring to the communities we serve.”

Pitt County Memorial Hospital once was owned by Pitt County government. The county's decision to give up ownership so the hospital could become a not-for-profit entity was controversial at that time.
Many believed the phrase “Pitt County” should always remain part of the hospital's name.

“It's surprising to me to hear that they are changing it because I remember how important it was for the name to stay on the hospital,” Jeff Savage, a former Pitt County commissioner, said.
“I think it's important Pitt remain part of the hospital's name,” Savage said.
“The people of this county built that hospital.”

Pitt County Commissioner Eugene James said when he learned about the name change several weeks ago he and others hoped the name would be UHS Medical Center of Pitt County and that the hospitals in other communities would have a similar naming system.
“We wanted it to be recognizable to the citizens of those counties because those citizens gave a lot of time and money to build those hospitals,” James said.
“I think in some way that Pitt County should be left in the name so it can be recognizable to the people of Pitt County and eastern North Carolina,” he said.
Hospital President Steve Lawler said renaming PCMH will help spur its growth and medical recruitment efforts by identifying it as a facility that has evolved into something more than a small community hospital.

The hospital name dates to the 1950s when the first facility was built on West Fifth Street.

It moved to its Stantonsburg Road site in 1977 and later became a teaching hospital for East Carolina University's Brody School of Medicine.

Greenville-based UHS was created in 1997, and the system now includes eight hospitals, physician groups and incorporated home health, hospice and wellness entities, serving 29 counties.

On Tuesday, the UHS board voted unanimously to approve a proposed lease with Beaufort Regional Health System in Washington, N.C.
The deal would include a 30-year lease for a $25 million price tag.

The proposed lease requires the approval of the Beaufort Board of Commissioners and the two entities that oversee the Beaufort medical facilities, the Beaufort County Medical Center board of trustees and the BRHS authority's board of commissioners.

Votes by the Beaufort boards are scheduled for Aug. 25.
Like any great head coach, Ruffin McNeill stressed the value of repetition on Wednesday.

The second-year East Carolina head football coach kicked off the second season of the Greater Greenville Sports Club's series of guest speakers, and the Lumberton native spoke from the heart about his team, his drastic offseason weight loss and the community that has embraced the one-time ECU player a second time.

But in delivering his words at ECU's Murphy Center, McNeill held firm to the statement that his message isn't set to change.

“I'm not changing what I say because I believe in it, and I've got to make sure everybody understands what I believe in, especially those young men that I'm working with,” McNeill said. “I want them to be champions on the field and champions off the field. That means discipline, and I have no problem doing that, and that means loving them and I love our boys from head to toe.”

After being introduced by the man who hired him, ECU director of athletics Terry Holland, McNeill promised to talk about this year's team, and he did. McNeill broke down, position by position, all facets of the 2011 team which will vie for a sixth straight bowl appearance.
But before, during and after the football talk, McNeill talked about the bigger reality of his job, his team and the community in which it's ingrained.

McNeill cited the two most recent additions to his team — true freshman Jeton Beavers and junior college transfer John Lattimore, both defensive ends who were forced to tie up numerous loose ends before reporting to August camp — as examples of what he sees as his role as head coach, and he urged the community to join him in that capacity.

“We're their family,” McNeill said of the players. “They moved everything they have here to Greenville. They have nowhere to go. This is it. Both those young men are here to stay. I am it for them. I am their dad, I know I am, and I take great pride in that.”

McNeill described his vision for raising all the players at ECU in a village environment, openly encouraging people in the community who recognize them in public to encourage them and to remind them to never put themselves in front of the team or the university.

The coach — who has lost nearly 150 pounds and says he's not done yet in his physical rebirth — said to make a winning team, everyone involved must first swallow their pride, joking that pride is fat-free.

“With all of the things going on, I really want to enlist you to help raise your Pirates, and I'm not afraid to ask,” McNeill said. “Young men now need more guidance than ever before.”

In describing his remarkable physical transformation, McNeill recounted a conversation he had with his brother last spring prior to gastric bypass and hip-replacement surgeries.

The head coach was lamenting all the foods he wished he could eat but wasn't able to anymore. McNeill said his brother waited until he was done complaining before answering, “You don't have any choice.”

Holland said of McNeill on Wednesday, “He isn't half the man he used to be, but he's going to be twice the coach for twice as long as he would have been.”

ECU, which finished 6-7 last season, kicks off the season Sept. 3 in Charlotte against No. 12 South Carolina.

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New UNC board learns ropes in private 'retreat'

BY JANE STANCILL - Staff Writer

A gathering last week of the UNC Board of Governors was not open to the public, and notice of the event was not provided to the news media ahead of time - raising questions about whether the gathering violated the state's open meetings law.

A majority of the public board met privately at the university system's Center for School Leadership Development in Chapel Hill from 1 to 5:30 p.m. Aug. 10, before adjourning for a reception and dinner together. On the morning of Aug. 11, members gathered privately for breakfast and about two hours of discussion.

Later that day and the next, the board convened again at regularly scheduled meetings that were open to the public and attended by reporters. A three-page agenda for the orientation event called it a "workshop." Some board members referred to it as a "retreat."

A university spokeswoman said about 30 of the board's 32 members attended the event, which was paid for by the university. UNC President Tom Ross also was there. No roll was taken, and no minutes were kept.

Laura Luger, vice president and general counsel for the UNC system's General Administration, said the event was an informal gathering where no deliberations or decisions were made. Therefore, she said, the university was under no obligation to open the event to the public.
"Well, it wasn't a meeting, and we didn't close it," Luger said. "It was outside the scope of an official meeting by all of its parameters."

'Rules of the Game'
Amanda Martin, an attorney for the N.C. Press Association, said the gathering appeared to be subject to the open meetings law. She pointed out that the event was hosted by the university, held at the university and had all the markings of an "official meeting."

"It's true that the open meetings law does not apply to social meetings, but at least a portion of this meeting was not of a purely social nature," Martin said. "If this simply had been cocktails and dinner to get to know one another, that would be different."

Discussion at the event was facilitated by Terry MacTaggart, a senior fellow with the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, a national organization that serves academic boards.

The detailed agenda included topics such as: what it means to be a high-performing board; board leadership and communication; informed advocacy and support for the university; and what the board needs from its president and vice versa. Under a section called "Rules of the Game," one heading said, "For today, discussion ... not decision-making."

But the agenda also included information about the issues facing the university. It said: "Change is the order of the day in North Carolina and its public higher education system."

Partisan shift
The group's first gatherings last week had a historic feel, with a new slate of members constituting a Republican majority after decades of a board dominated by Democrats. The new members were elected this year by a legislature controlled by Republicans for the first time in more than a century.

Bill Daughtridge, a board member and former Republican lawmaker from Rocky Mount, said the gathering was valuable.

"I feel like everybody felt good when we left that we were going to work together peaceably," he said.

Luger, the UNC attorney, said she was present to ensure compliance with ground rules that no university business be discussed. She called the gathering "an opportunity for these people to come together and introduce themselves."
But Martin, the media attorney, said the university's classification of the event as a private gathering is a stretch. "All signs point to this as an official meeting that simply had a social component," she said.

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Gift to transform Duke library

BY BROOKE CAIN - Staff Writer

A $13.6 million donation from billionaire financier David M. Rubenstein will complete a decade-long renovation of Duke University Libraries, where the philanthropic donor worked when he was a student at the school.

Duke said Wednesday that the gift is the largest ever to the school's libraries, and it will be used for the modernization of the Rare Book, Manuscript and Special Collections Library.

Rubenstein, a native of Baltimore and the co-founder and managing director of The Carlyle Group, graduated from Duke in 1970, then received a law degree from the University of Chicago.

With the money, Duke hopes to transform the 1928 West Campus library building and its 1948 addition into a state-of-the-art research facility.

Officials plan to rename the renovated special library the David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library. Construction is slated to begin in 2012 and will last for several years.

Deborah Jakubs, university librarian and vice provost for library affairs, said the planned renovations go beyond brick-and-mortar work.

"It's a complete reconceptualization of a special collections library," Jakubs said. "Much more focused on public spaces and better conditions for our distinctive collections."

World-class library
Having a named library makes it more distinctive and enhances Duke's academic and intellectual reputation, Jakubs added.

"It's about time this happened at Duke," she said. "It creates an institution that's commensurate with the level of our collections, and it puts us in the league with Beinecke at Yale, Houghton at Harvard and Bancroft at Berkeley."

Rubenstein is a signatory of The Giving Pledge, an effort started by Bill Gates and Warren Buffett to encourage the world's most wealthy people to give a majority of their money to charity.

In his letter to The Giving Pledge, Rubenstein noted that he was raised in a blue-collar family in Baltimore and relied on scholarship money to attend college and law school.

Rubenstein practiced law and served as a domestic policy advisor for the Carter administration before he and his partners founded The Carlyle Group, a global financial services firm.

Now 61 and living in Bethesda, Md., Rubenstein told The Giving Pledge that he became interested in philanthropy when he turned 54, and that he intends to give away at least 50 percent of his wealth before he dies.

Forbes magazine estimates Rubenstein's wealth at $2.6 billion, and ranks him 440 on their list of global billionaires (128 in the U.S. ranking).

The Washington Post has estimated that Rubenstein gave away more than $26.6 million in 2010. He's rated 40th on the Philanthropy 50, a list of the nation's biggest donors.

**He shares his treasures**

In 2007, Rubenstein bought the last privately owned copy of the Magna Carta from Texas billionaire H. Ross Perot for $21.3 million, then loaned it to the National Archives in Washington so that it could be viewed by the public.

Rubenstein also has purchased and loaned out a signed copy of the Emancipation Proclamation and a rare copy of the Declaration of Independence.

Rubenstein, a Duke University trustee, serves on numerous boards, including those of the Smithsonian Institution, The Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center.
Zybak and Bowman searched the Internet for information on their daughter's condition, then turned to Duke for help.

**In a first at Duke, a baby's skull and life are reshaped**

BY ANNE BLYTHE - staff writer

DURHAM–Catherine Zybak knew right away that something was a bit off when she rubbed the tiny head of her older twin daughter.

The smaller of the girls, Catherine, born to Zybak and husband James Bowman on April 13, had a hardened ridge where Margaret, the infant's fraternal twin, and most other babies have a soft spot.

Zybak waited, thinking her namesake's head might smooth out to be more like her sister's in the days and weeks after their birth.

But no such luck.

So Zybak and her husband sought out surgeons at Duke Medical Center who would perform a procedure that could help reshape her daughter's head and ultimately her life. The procedure, one that doctors are training to use more and more, had never been done at Duke until Wednesday.

A baby's skull is typically made up of five pieces of bone that are held together with sutures, or fibrous joints, that expand as the brain grows rapidly during the first years.
Craniosynostosis, when one or more of the fibrous joints is fused prematurely, can occur in one out of every 2,500 to 5,000 births, according to some medical literature.

If the sutures close too early, either in the womb or after birth, the brain has to grow in a less malleable space and a deformed head results. In some cases, the deformity can cause seizures, blindness or mental retardation if not fixed in time.

Although doctors were not worried that Catherine would have such severe side effects from the early suture fusion in her skull, they agreed to let her be the first patient at Duke to undergo an endoscopic procedure that could be used more and more to stave off complications that can occur when more traditional, more invasive surgeries are used to reshape disfigured heads.

**Problem found early**

Zybak, who picked up on her daughter's problems earlier than many parents and physicians do, pulled out a small photo album Wednesday with photos of Catherine, her sister Margaret and Jack, their 5-year-old brother, to show how different the girls looked shortly after their birth.

Their parents have likened Margaret's rounder profile to Charlie Brown and Catherine's more elongated head shape to Snoopy.

"I think she got squashed," Zybak said while waiting for Duke surgeons to drill two holes in her daughter's skull.

**Old way vs. the new**

Traditionally, surgeons cut a zigzag pattern from ear to ear across the top of the infant's scalp to fix such disfigurements. In a surgery that can take hours and necessitate blood transfusions, doctors expose the skull, then remove bone before reconfiguring and reattaching it.

In the 1990s, physicians began to experiment with a less invasive procedure. They cut two incisions in the infant's scalp. Then with the help of endoscopes, instruments with cameras attached, doctors carefully carve out a strip of the fused suture.

The babies are then outfitted with helmets to mold the growth of their skulls.

Doctors at Duke Medical Center in Durham went into an operating room early Wednesday morning with Catherine to try the first endoscopic strip craniotomy ever done at the Duke Children's hospital.
Dr. Gerry Grant, an associate professor of neurosurgery and pediatrics, and Dr. Jeffrey Marcus, associate professor of plastic surgery at Duke, sat down before scrubbing for the surgery to talk briefly about their decision to try the endoscopic technique.

"We're both really excited about this," Marcus said. "The development of this procedure's been going on for a period of about 10 years."

Marcus said he and Grant were not the type of surgeons who jumped into new practices simply to be at the front of a trend. With this technique, they said, they watched and made sure successes were proven.

"The procedure's been refined a great deal," Marcus said.

**Help began on Internet**

Zybak and Bowman first turned to Duke for help after researching their daughter's condition on the Internet. She's a dentist in Sumter, S.C., and he's an accountant at a hospital.

Zybak was the steely one Wednesday morning as the parents waited with their daughter in a hospital room before surgery.

At only 4 months old, Catherine has become known as the laid-back twin in her family. Nurses and other hospital staff hovered around her, attaching monitors to her small toes. She watched with wide eyes, but barely uttered a peep.

Her sister, both parents said, would have been chattering away, and very vocally expressing any displeasure.

As the time grew near to put Catherine in the hands of the Duke surgeons, both parents put their daughter's problems into perspective with some of the needs of other children being tended to at the Duke medical center. Many had illnesses and problems that could not be so readily fixed.

"It's humbling," Bowman said. "We're just thankful it can be fixed. At least we can fix ours. She'll be just fine."

Catherine, according to her parents, was doing well after the endoscopic surgery.

Soon she'll be fitted in Columbia, S.C., with a special orthotic helmet that she'll wear for all but one hour of every day for the next 18 months.

"I wanted a hockey player," her father joked.
Many helmets await

Grant, the neurosurgeon, said the endoscopic method might be less invasive and not require as much time in the hospital. But the helmet adds a new dimension to the recovery.

As the child grows and her head gets larger, she'll have to be fitted for new helmets along the way.

"It's a big commitment for the family," Grant said.

Bowman and Zybak agreed to share their story, they said, with the hope that their experience might help inspire others to seek early intervention.

"When you notice something," Bowman said, "just keep asking questions."

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Elon University graduates to wear plastic gowns

The Associated Press

BURLINGTON The maroon gowns of Elon University's graduates will also be green starting this weekend.

The Times-News of Burlington reports (http://bit.ly/pIvrii) the university is using a new line of commencement gowns made from recycled plastic bottles. Each gown consists of about 23 bottles.

Elon's director of sustainability Elaine Durr says the change shows the university's commitment to the environment and sustainable business.

The university's vice president for business Gerald Whittington says he hopes the change sends an educational message to students and families.

The gowns are made by Virginia-based Oak Hall Cap and Gown. The only parts not made from recycled materials are the zipper and tack that holds the cap's button in place.

Elon's commencement is Saturday morning.

The Wilmington Star News

Published: Tuesday, August 16, 2011 at 2:11 p.m.

**UNCW-sponsored gay resource under scrutiny for church recommendations**

By Jason Gonzales
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A UNCW gay resource guide listing gay-friendly churches is being scrutinized by a professor who said the school should stay out of the business of recommending churches.

The guide, put out by the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transexual, Questioning and Intersex resource center lists businesses, attorneys, doctors and churches as well as other information about the Wilmington area. Amy Schlag, the resource center's coordinator, said it is meant to establish safe havens for the gay community at the school.

But Mike Adams, a sociology and criminology professor, said the university is crossing the line.

"This plays off the very idea that gay people can't be safe without the government selecting their church," he said. "This is a serious matter."

The guide is part of the university's Safe Zone training program. The program is meant to build safe spaces and allies for the gay community.

UNCW Chancellor Gary Miller said in a statement while he agrees that the guide was intended for the purpose of promoting equality and inclusiveness, the school will review how it was created and distributed. He said it is part of the university's efforts to provide resources for all groups.

Schlag said the guide is comprehensive and addresses a key need. Similar guides are put together for other diverse groups, she said.

"Part of the primary core of it (the guide) is to make sure students are safe wherever they go," she said. "There is a history of discrimination in the area with a young student attacked downtown because he was gay."

Adams said the notion of what church a student goes to has no bearing on whether someone stays safe. He said the pamphlet crosses the line of separation of church and state.

He noted that while the guide isn't illegal, it goes too far.
"I think the real concern is the government getting into an area that it doesn't need to get into," she said.

This is not the first time Adams has been outspoken at the campus. He is involved in a lawsuit against the university claiming he was discriminated against because of his "Christian and conservative beliefs" and that the university has "violated his constitutional rights by punishing him for expressing his views freely."

Adams posted his thoughts on the resource guide at http://townhall.com/columnists/mikeadams/.

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Hundreds of students with J-1 travel visas protested unfair wages and work practices on Wednesday at a Palmyra, Pa., plant that packs Hershey's chocolates.

Foreign Students in Work Visa Program Stage Walkout at Plant

By JULIA PRESTON

PALMYRA, Pa. — Hundreds of foreign students, waving their fists and shouting defiantly in many languages, walked off their jobs on Wednesday at a plant here that packs Hershey’s chocolates, saying a summer program that was supposed to be a cultural exchange had instead turned them into underpaid labor.

The students, from countries including China, Nigeria, Romania and Ukraine, came to the United States through a long-established State Department summer visa program that allows them to work for two months and then travel. They said they were expecting to practice their English, make some money and learn what life is like in the United States.

In a way, they did. About 400 foreign students were put to work lifting heavy boxes and packing Reese’s candies, Kit-Kats and Almond Joys on a
fast-moving production line, many of them on a night shift. After paycheck deductions for fees associated with the program and for their rent, students said at a rally in front of the huge packing plant that many of them were not earning nearly enough to recover what they had spent in their home countries to obtain their visas.

Their experience of American society has been very different from what they expected.

“There is no cultural exchange, none, none,” said Zhao Huijiao, a 20-year-old undergraduate in international relations from Dalien, China. “It is just work, work faster, work.”

Each summer, the State Department brings many thousands of foreign students to the United States on the international work-travel program, with visas that are known as J-1. Over the years, the program has successfully given university students from distant countries a chance to be immersed in everyday America and to make lasting friends.

But in recent years, the program has drawn complaints from students about low wages and unexpectedly difficult work conditions. It appears, however, that the walkout at the Palmyra plant is the first time that foreign students have engaged in a strike to protest their employment.

John Fleming, a State Department spokesman, said officials were aware of the students’ protest and had sent staff members to Hershey, Pa., where the candy company is based, to investigate. “It is our job to ensure that all J-1 visa holders are accorded their rights under all provisions of the Summer Work Travel program,” Mr. Fleming said.

The arrangements that brought the foreign students to work at the Eastern Distribution Center III, a vast warehouse in a trim industrial park near Hershey, the American chocolate capital, involved layers of contractors.

The students said they mainly placed blame on the organization that manages the J-1 visa program for the State Department, the Council for Educational Travel, U.S.A., which is based in California.

Rick Anaya, chief executive of the council, said he had brought about 6,000 J-1 visa students to the United States this summer. Mr. Anaya said he had tried to respond to the Palmyra workers’ complaints. “We are not getting any cooperation,” he said. “We are trying to work with these kids. All this negativity is hurting an excellent program. We would go out of our way to help them, but it seems like someone is stirring them up out there.”
A spokesman for Hershey’s, Kirk Saville, said the chocolate company did not directly operate the Palmyra packing plant, which is managed by a company called Exel. A spokeswoman for Exel said it had found the student workers through another staffing company.

The spokeswoman, Lynn Anderson, said: “We contract with a staffing agency to provide temporary employees, some from the local work force and some J-1 visa holders. We don’t have a lot of influence over some of those issues that they’ve raised.”

A labor organization, the National Guestworker Alliance, which has been working with the students, presented a complaint on Wednesday to the State Department asking for the Council for Educational Travel, U.S.A. to be removed from its list of sponsoring organizations.

In the protest on Wednesday, about 200 students who were scheduled to start work on an evening shift at 3 p.m. walked into the plant and presented a petition with several hundred signatures to a management representative. Then, together with some students coming off the daytime shift, they marched out.

They came down the driveway to the plant, with semi-trailer trucks wheeling by, chanting, “We are the students, the mighty, mighty students!” and labor slogans in English as well as their own languages. The students said they believed that so many of them walking off their jobs would stop some production on their shifts.

“We want to own our rights,” Ms. Zhao said, speaking in English. She and three other Chinese students held out their arms, pointing to bruises they said they had from moving large boxes.

Representatives from two American labor unions participated in the rally at an intersection outside the plant. Three labor officials, including Rick Bloomingdale, president of the Pennsylvania State Federation of the A.F.L.-C.I.O., and Neal Bisno, president of a Pennsylvania branch of the Service Employees International Union, staged a brief sit-in at the plant entrance and were arrested.

Harika Duygu Ozer, 19, a second-year medical student from a university in Istanbul, said she had heard from friends that the summer exchange program would be fun and that she would earn enough money to pay for her medical school tuition.

“I said, ‘Why not?’ This is America,” Ms. Ozer said.
When she was offered a contract for a job at a plant with Hershey’s chocolates, she said, she was excited. “We have all seen Charlie’s chocolate factory,” she said. “We thought, ‘This is good.’ ”

Like many other students, Ms. Ozer said she invested about $3,500, which included the program costs, to obtain the J-1 visa and travel to the United States.

Several Chinese students, including Ms. Zhao, said they had paid more than $6,000 in the process of securing visas.

Ms. Ozer said she worked an eight-hour shift that began at 11 p.m.

“You stand for the entire eight hours,” she said. “It is the worst thing for your fingers and hands and your back; you are standing at an angle.”

At one of the sites where she worked, she said, cameras were trained on her, and supervisors told her that if she did not want to maintain the pace of work, she should leave.

Godwin Efobi, 26, a third-year medical student from Nigeria who is studying at a university in Ukraine, said his job was moving boxes. “Since I came here, I have a permanent ache in my back,” Mr. Efobi said. “Holding a pen is now a big task for me; my muscles ache.”

The students said they decided to protest when they learned that neighbors in the apartments and houses where they were staying were paying significantly less rent.

“The tipping point was when we found out about the rent,” Mr. Efobi said.

Ms. Ozer and other students said they were paid $8.35 an hour. After fees are deducted from her paychecks as well as $400 a month for rent, she said, she often takes home less than $200 a week. “We are supposed to be here for cultural exchange and education, but we are just cheap laborers,” Ms. Ozer said.