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You study just as hard, but text costs get easier

Buy, rent or download – students have new options for books

BY MARK HENSCH
STAFF WRITER

Triangle college students racing to pick up textbooks this week are saving money through a number of alternatives to the old practice of buying new and used classroom tomes from campus bookstores.

Students are increasingly able to rent books for the semester at up to half the list price or to purchase electronic texts on devices such as Kindle, Nook or iPad. The expanded range of options came after the National Association of College Stores predicted each student would pay an average of $667 in textbook costs this school year.

Alternatives such as these are a departure from the days when students would spend hundreds on a book and take their chances selling it back for a small fraction of the cost after exams.

"It used to be between new and used book sales," said association spokesman Charles Schmidt. "Different people study in different ways. Now it is a choice of new, used, rental or e-book sales."

This year's average textbook bill is down from 2009's $702 average bite. A big reason for this, Schmidt said, is increased used textbook sales in college bookstores. The association is hoping to drive costs down even further for students, he said, by renting texts for a semester at a fraction of the book's original cost. The group estimates 1,500 of its 3,000 member stores will offer the service, up from 300 in 2009.

BackPackers Student Bookstores al-

TEXTBOOK TIPS
1. Buy used books when possible.
2. Consider electronic texts if they are cheaper, viable alternative.
3. Follow campus bookstore Facebook or Twitter accounts for updates on sales.
4. Keep receipts and be aware of a store's refund policy, especially return deadlines.
5. Avoid extensive writing or highlighting of books for bigger returns at semester's end.
6. Avoid textbook study packages if they are unnecessary.
7. If buying locally, pay by cash or debit card to avoid credit fees and interest.

SOURCE: NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGE STORES
so features textbook rentals. The chain’s three Raleigh stores serve N.C. State University, and its new rental policy saves students up to 60 percent off the list price of textbooks, depending on the likelihood of the book getting resold later. Students pay the rental price and keep the books for the semester, turning them in after exams. There are no refunds like those of a buyback sale, but the initial cost of getting the text is less.

**Rent is cheap**

Renting books usually brings bigger savings for students, said Rodger Berg, BackPacker's textbook manager, as students pay less for rentals than new books without the worry of a tiny refund at a buyback. Citing a new financial management text costing $155.65, he said the same book costs $63.80 when rented.

“This will be significantly cheaper for students,” said Berg. “At the end of the year, you can turn your books in and not have your hopes and dreams crushed by buyback.”

Duke University is experimenting with a limited textbook rental program, offering 11 course books for larger classes at 50 percent their initial cost this semester. Despite this, the school’s focus remains on its buyback program. Bob Walker, Duke’s general manager of retail and book operations, said his bookstore tries getting faculty as early as possible to make the most of student returns on texts purchased for class.

“Students are the best source of saving money on textbooks,” he said. “They can buy used books and sell them back for more students to buy right down the line.”

UNC-Chapel Hill is taking another approach. The university is teaming with N.C. State and East Carolina University in a multicampus buyback sale. The program will expand students’ buyback options, letting them sell a text not needed at one campus to textbook stores at one of the other two schools.

“We can pay students more for books and other schools get more copies cheaper,” said Anthony Sanders, NCSU’s book division manager. “It is win-win.”

**E-books are easy**

Each institution is also entering the emerging arena of e-books. Products such as the Amazon Kindle, the Barnes and Noble Nook and the Apple iPad let students download texts at costs 30 percent to 40 percent less than hardcovers, on average. UNC’s course materials manager, Kelly Hanner, said her school began offering electronic books in 2008, a move which has seen purchases slowly but steadily increase. E-book sales rose to 247 purchases in spring 2010, she said, up from 232 in fall 2009. UNC offered 65 e-book titles in fall 2009 before adding 16 more last spring. So far, Hanner said, the e-book phenomenon hasn’t reached its potential.

“It is a very new medium,” said Hanner of the e-book statistics. “There’s still a lot of comfort having a textbook in your hand.”

Schmidt, spokesman for the national college stores organization, said e-reader technology hasn’t revolutionized textbook retail but that it would eventually. Two or three percent of NACS textbook sales this year were electronic, he said, and the group is forecasting electronic texts to make up 10 to 15 percent of its 2012 total sales.

“I think students will have more choice in course format than ever before,” Schmidt said. “Hopefully it will better match their learning needs and pocketbooks.”
ECU geology professor Richard Spruill opens a hatch at the bottom of the line shaft turbine motor at GUC’s Aquifer Storage and Recovery site on Wednesday.

Justin Falls/The Daily Reflector

ECU geology professor and consultant Richard Spruill stands next to the line shaft turbine motor and pump being used at the Greenville Utilities Commission’s Aquifer Storage and Recovery site. The motor propels a turbine to pump water from an underground aquifer.

Justin Falls/The Daily Reflector

A gauge measures the amount of water being pumped into an underground aquifer.
GUC aquifer program may transform water storage
By Kathryn Kennedy
The Daily Reflector
Wednesday, August 18, 2010
It doesn’t look like much — three bright blue pipes nestled in the woods off Old Pactolus Road. But the Aquifer Storage and Recovery system pioneered by Greenville Utilities Commission engineers and consultants is the first of its kind in North Carolina and could revolutionize how the eastern region manages its water resources.
The utilities provider began testing the process of inserting water and then withdrawing it this month, GUC announced at a commission meeting Tuesday. It’s taken almost 15 years and more than $2.8 million to get to this point. Grants aided in funding the project, with $703,000 coming from the U.S. Economic Development Administration and $500,000 from the North Carolina Rural Center.
“It just seemed like one stumbling block after the other,” Rick Langley, Water Treatment Plant supervisor, said this week. “But we’re there now, so that’s what matters.”
Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) takes potable water that GUC has drawn from the Tar River or local wells and stores it underground in naturally existing geologic spaces. Millions of gallons can be safely pumped in and later extracted during high-usage days or in case of a disaster.
It will have to be disinfected again but not treated like wastewater.
A similar system exists in Chesapeake, Va., and in a handful of South Carolina cities. Greenville sits in the right place in North Carolina to take advantage of deep, natural aquifers, East Carolina University geologist Richard Spruill said. He’s acted as a consultant on the project. The idea arose after state restrictions lessened the amount of water allowed to come from those aquifers using basic recovery wells — GUC has eight scattered across Greenville. Authorities were concerned about the rapidly lowering groundwater supply and established the Central Coastal Plain Capacity Use Area.
An estimated 10 million gallons of water are used daily in Greenville, Spruill said. GUC is able, by state permit, to take 22.5 million gallons daily from the Tar River. That’s a good amount of excess that could be placed in storage for a not-so-rainy day.
Neighboring counties and communities will benefit as they, too, are now required to find other water sources for their populations. GUC is stepping in as the regional provider for Farmville, Winterville, Stokes, Bethel and Greene County.
GUC customers will benefit from the project because better resource management will help keep water costs stable, CEO/General Manager Ron Elks said. Langley said the ASR also will prolong the life of GUC’s Water Treatment Plant.
There are more tests to complete before storage can begin full time. GUC will be required to inject water for 71 days straight, let it sit, and then withdraw and run public water supply tests. That process will be repeated three times, Langley said.
Elks said GUC hopes to hold a ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate the system launch sometime this fall.

Contact Kathryn Kennedy at k kennedy@reflector.com or (252) 329-9566.
Book tells story of ECU’s LeClair

By EDWIN MODLIN II
Staff Writer
Published: Wednesday, August 18, 2010 2:17 AM EDT

Keith LeClair fans may want to be in Washington on Friday evening when author Bethany Bradsher signs copies of her book about the former East Carolina University baseball coach.


After studying journalism at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Bradsher, has spent nearly 20 years as a journalist, including covering the Carolina Panthers and various Olympic events. Bradsher said it wasn’t until she decided to write a book about LeClair that her brass as a writer was tested.

"Just from talking with so many people who knew Keith was very emotional," Bradsher said. "I interviewed over 60 people who knew him so well. It was just a great experience talking with them and really getting to know Keith through them as they shared their memories of him."

LeClair was one of the youngest head baseball coaches at the college level in the country. At age 25, he was named the head baseball coach for Western Carolina University, his alma mater. Shortly thereafter, at age 30, he was named head baseball coach at ECU.

Before all that, LeClair was a walk-on baseball player at WCU, becoming an All-Southern Conference selection in 1988. He played on four consecutive Southern Conference championship baseball teams, and he was ranked in the top 10 in six different WCU hitting categories.

After his collegiate career, LeClair signed with the Atlanta Braves. Later, after a spring-training stint with the San Francisco Giants in 1989, he was offered a student-assistant coaching position at WCU.

Bradsher said the title of the book, "Coaching Third: The Keith LeClair Story," denotes how LeClair lived his life, with coaching coming third in is life — behind faith and family.

LeClair coached at ECU until his battle with Lou Gehrig’s disease forced him to retire in 2002. He became the second-winningest baseball coach in ECU history in just five seasons.

The new baseball stadium at ECU, Clark-LeClair Stadium, was built in honor of LeClair and Bill Clark, an ECU alumnus and key contributor.

After LeClair died, Bradsher contacted his widow, Lynn, about writing a book about him. At first, there were several writers who wanted to write about LeClair. Three years later, Bradsher noticed a book about LeClair had not come out yet, so she contacted LeClair’s widow again. LeClair’s widow gave Bradsher the green light to move forward with writing the book.

It took a year from the first interview Bradsher conducted to when the book was published.

"We weren’t able to put all the devotionals in the book," Bradsher said. "As there were dozens of them, we were only able to put in 10. And that is something I really wanted to put in — all of them."
"And you really got to know Keith through those devotionals, from his hotheadedness in the games when getting ejected from games to his heartfelt times with his family."

Bradsher wants to revise the book so it contains all the devotionals.

When LeClair was in his second year as WCU’s head coach, he was one out away from winning the college world championship, she noted.

"Just one out away and only 26 years of age. Can you imagine?" Bradsher said. "I was told by his wife when he and coach (Bill) Jarman were there they were jumping up and down on their beds like little kids because they were so excited. And then they had to compose themselves in a professional manner when they addressed the media."

According to Bradsher, if a coach has one or two student-athletes go into the coaching field after graduation, then that’s considered quite an accomplishment. LeClair has had well over a dozen former student-athletes follow in his footsteps in the coaching realm.

"A few are coaching and assistant coaching on the college level," she said. "And about half are coaching high-school baseball around the state."

When Bradsher did a book-signing at Clark-LeClair Stadium earlier this year, two big, burly men went up to her, telling her they just wanted to give her hugs.

"These were two men that knew Keith and lived the game of baseball," she said. "They knew him, and they loved him. For some people, it was hard. But they loved the book."

Bradsher said ECU’s current head baseball coach, Billy Godwin, buys copies of “Coaching Third” for his players every year.

Bradsher will at I Can’t Believe It’s a Bookstore from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. Friday night to autograph copies of the book. For more information, contact I Can’t Believe It’s a Bookstore at 252-946-0855.

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Ann Henderson Cory

Ann Henderson Cory, 73, of Greenville, died Aug. 15, 2010 in St. Augustine, Fla.

Ann is survived by her husband, Joseph G. Cory; two sons, Fred Joseph Cory of Raleigh and John Ward Cory of Scottsdale, Ariz.; two grandchildren, Daniel Joseph Cory and James Everett Cory; three sisters, Mary Douglas Henderson Buchanan of Tallahassee, Fla., Martha Henderson Maguire of Murrieta, Calif. and Jane Henderson Barron of Tallahassee, Fla. She was preceded in death by two children: daughter, Sarah Ann Cory, and son, James Anthony Cory; and father and mother, John Ward and Annie Belle Anthony Henderson.

Ann was raised in Tallahassee, Fla., graduated from Leon High School, received a Bachelor of Science Degree from Randolph Macon Woman's College (now Randolph College) of Lynchburg, Va., and received a Master's Degree from Mount Holyoke College of South Hadley, Mass. She was a Research Assistant at Southern Research in Birmingham, Ala. before doing Doctoral work in biochemistry at Florida State University. After her marriage in 1963, she was a housewife, had four children, taught chemistry at Hillsborough Community College and was a Research Associate at the Shriner Children's Hospital in Tampa, Fla. After relocating to Greenville, with her husband, she was a Research Associate in the Department of Biochemistry at the Brody School of Medicine and continued her scientific work until she retired in December 2009. To her credit are over 35 articles in peer-review scientific journals and multiple chapters in Biochemistry text books, the most recent of which is The Textbook of Biochemistry with Clinical Correlations.

A Funeral Service will be held at Garden of Memories Chapel in Tampa, Fla. A Memorial Service will be held at the Catholic Student Center in Greenville at a later date. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that memorial contributions be made to St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital, 332 North Lauderdale, Memphis, Tenn. 38105, or www.stjude.org. Craig Funeral Home in St. Augustine is assisting the family.

Lynn H. Orr Jr.

Dr. Lynn H. Orr Jr., 62, died Tuesday, Aug. 17, 2010. He was a clinical professor in the Department of Cardiovascular Sciences at the Brody School of Medicine.

Memorial service 2 p.m. Sunday, St. Paul's Episcopal Church. Visitation 3-5 p.m. Saturday, Wilkerson Funeral Home. Memorials to St. Paul's Episcopal Church, P.O. Box 1924, Greenville, NC 27835. Online condolences at www.wilkersonfuneralhome.com.
Four to be inducted into ECU's Hall
The Daily Reflector
Wednesday, August 18, 2010

Four former East Carolina athletes will be inducted into the school’s Athletics Hall of Fame on Oct. 15.
The 2010 inductees are Amanda Johnson (track and field), Wayne Lineberry (football), Paul Osman (wrestling) and Paul Trevisan (swimming).
Enshrinement ceremonies will be held at Harvey Hall, located inside the Murphy Center.
The new inductees will also be introduced during halftime of the ECU-N.C. State football game at Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium on Oct. 16.
Johnson was the leader of the women’s track and field program from 1994-97 and was team Most Valuable Performer from 1995-97.
As a sophomore she qualified for the NCAA Championships where she placed 15th in the long jump.
After achieving All-CAA and All-ECAC status as junior, she led the 4x100 relay team to a Penn Relay, CAA and ECAC championship as a senior. She also earned All-ECAC honors in the indoor and outdoor long jump that season.
During her four-year career she led the Pirates to four consecutive second-place finishes at the CAA Championships while competing as a sprinter and long jumper. She still holds the school record in the indoor long jump and is a member of two relay team records.
Lineberry was a three-year starter for coach Clarence Stasvich’s team from 1966-68.
He began his ECU career as a linebacker on the freshman team in 1965 and was named the team’s most outstanding player. He spent his first two seasons at middle linebacker before converting to defensive tackle.
In 1966, he was a member of an ECU defense that held its opponents to a league-best 272.9 yards per game.
ECU finished 4-1-1 in the conference that season to earn a share of its first league championship.
Once the 1967 season concluded, Lineberry joined the wrestling team and competed in the heavyweight division for one season. At the conclusion of his collegiate playing career, Lineberry was selected by the Buffalo Bills in the 17th round of the 1969 NFL Draft.
Osman arrived at East Carolina in 1975 and won three open titles as a freshman and was the recipient of the Most Outstanding Wrestler Award. He helped the Pirates win the first of consecutive Southern Conference titles in ’75.
As a sophomore, he won his first individual Southern Conference title in the 126-pound weight class. A year later, he successfully defended his title. He followed up his second individual title with a national title in the 136.5-pound weight class at the 1977 Junior World Freestyle National Championships.
Osman qualified for the NCAA Championships in 1977 and '78 and finished second at the 1978 East Region Championships. Overall, he claimed 11 individual championships as a four-year letterman.

Trevisan becomes the 15th swimmer to be elected to the ECU Athletics Hall Of Fame. Trevisan set freshman, varsity and Minges pool records in the 50-yard freestyle and a freshman record in the 100-yard freestyle.

He set varsity, pool and Southern Conference records in the 50-yard freestyle as well as helping establish six relay records. He was the 1973 Southern Conference 50- and 100-yard freestyle champion.

As a senior he was named the Pirates’ Most Outstanding Swimmer while he served as team captain.

Trevisan, who continues to swim competitively, owns six world records and six national records. As a Senior Olympic competitor, Trevisan set eight national records in the freestyle and individual medley events.

— ECU Media Relations
Austere actions at Duke pay off
University can avoid layoffs

BY ERIC FERRERI
STAFF WRITER

A surge in private giving plus savings reaped from the elimination of nearly 500 jobs have helped Duke University avoid layoffs while it inches closer to its goals for a smaller budget, President Richard Brodhead said Wednesday.

Duke is halfway through a three-year move to cut $100 million from its annual operating budget, and it doesn't expect to offer a third buyout package to employees, Brodhead said in a meeting with News & Observer reporters and editors.

Brodhead said that though the staff reductions will force the university to re-prioritize at times, they represent a small fraction of the university's 12,000 workers. Those lost jobs will go largely unnoticed, he said.

"We had seen 9 percent annual growth year after year after year, so if there's a year when you have to pull back, I don't see that as apocalyptic," Brodhead said.

Duke's two retirement incentive programs proved popular; 382 employees took buyouts, and Duke eliminated all of their jobs.

In addition, the university reviewed vacant positions and eliminated about 100, said

Kyle Cavanaugh, Duke's vice president for human resources.

Duke has also frozen salaries for the past two years, though it offered some employees $1,000 one-time payments that were not added to base salaries. The salary freeze saved a lot of jobs, Brodhead said.

"If we had given raises last year, something between 100 and 200 more positions would have had to be eliminated to pay for it," he said.

Private donations have helped carry Duke through the lean period; the university brought in $346 million last year, its third best annual take ever and a big jump from the $301 million brought in the previous year, Brodhead said.

Brodhead touched on several other topics as well. They include:

■ Anil Potti, the Duke researcher on administrative leave as medical school officials investigate questions raised by other cancer scientists about the veracity of his findings. Potti also apparently falsely claimed to be a Rhodes Scholar on applications for federal funding.

"Everything that has been alleged, we have taken quite seriously," Brodhead said. "At the same time, every allegation is not a truth."

Investigations are incomplete, and Potti is still on leave. Brodhead said he could not be more specific about the length or status of those investigations. Those who will look into questions about Potti's cancer research will not be Duke employees, he said.

■ Brodhead's future at Duke. Brodhead, 63, has been Duke's president since 2004 and said Wednesday he has no plans to leave. "I would like to serve as president as long as I have the passion for it," he said. "I don't know how long that will be."

■ The growth of international students, who now make up about 8 percent of the undergraduate population.

"The world's a big place," he said. "More students in more places are looking for the best American universities. And we want to get our share of those."

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Universities turn to Wii Fit as way of examining concussions

By Steve Yanda
Washington Post Staff Writer
Thursday, August 19, 2010; A01

Across the spectrum of athletics from youth soccer to the National Football League, concussions are one of the most worrisome of injuries: hard to diagnose and even harder to know when an athlete has recovered. Now, in an unusual combination of real sports and their digital imitators, a handful of colleges, including the University of Maryland, are turning to a video game for help.

Athletic trainers in College Park and on other campuses are using the Wii Fit video game as an objective and practical -- if unproven -- method of assessing athletes' balance, an important yardstick for determining recovery from concussion.

For the past year, Maryland and Ohio State have partnered to conduct research into the reliability of Wii Fit -- an exercise video game played on Nintendo's Wii console, which allows for physical interaction between player and game -- as an effective concussion management instrument. Darryl Conway, Maryland's head athletic trainer, said this will be the third year the school has used components of the game to conduct baseline testing of its athletes' balance.

Proponents of using Wii Fit as a tool to examine concussions praise its simplicity and affordability -- not to mention its popularity with student-athletes.

"The athletes love it because what we've done is we've incorporated this fun game that they're playing at home into their rehab system," said Tamerah Hunt, director of research at the Ohio State Sports Concussion Program. "But they're also enjoying it at a time when they're injured or at a time when their spirits are down, and they have to come into the athletic training room every day and they have to get all this treatment ... and it's kind of a reaction of, 'Oh, this is fun.'"

Others, however, are cautious to accept it as a valid means of treating the injury.

"Obviously, the spotlight on this injury is iridescent right now, and there's a lot of people that are concerned about it," said Micky Collins, assistant director of the Sports Medicine Concussion Program at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center.

"What I'm afraid of is that that's leading to sort of this potentially dangerous, really limited scope in terms of how you evaluate this and trying to come up with easy tools and sort of one-size-fits-all recommendations that can end up being very dangerous."

Increasing concern
The issue of concussions in athletics has emerged as a major health concern in recent years -- from professional sports organizations such as the NFL all the way down to high school and youth teams. Increasing efforts have been made to attempt to limit the number of head injuries.

Prior to the start of training camps last month, the NFL announced it would dispense posters to its 32 teams detailing the dangers of concussions in blunt terms. The posters must be displayed in each team's locker room all season. Additionally, the NFL recently tested 16 helmet models in an effort to improve the technology of its headgear to better prevent concussions; the results of the tests were distributed to league players.

NFL retirees have reported rates of Alzheimer's and other memory-related diseases at five times or more the national rate, according to a league-funded study. Boston University scientists, whose research was funded in part by the NFL, have discovered a link between head injuries suffered by athletes and a condition that mimics Lou Gehrig's disease, or ALS.

Also, the NFL and its players' union have worked to reduce the amount of hitting during team practices in an attempt to decrease the number of player-incurred concussions.

At the amateur level, the National Federation of State High School Associations has established a new rule, effective this fall, that prohibits football players who merely show symptoms of a concussion from returning to the field of play until cleared by a medical professional. Previously, an athlete had to be "unconscious or apparently unconscious" to be removed from the field.

'An evolving area'

At Maryland, athletes stand barefoot on a small rectangular platform in front of a television screen and mimic the three different yoga poses performed by their digital Wii Fit instructor. They stand in each pose twice -- once with their eyes open and again with their eyes closed. The final component is a test during which athletes shift their weight on the platform as they attempt to get a varying number of virtual marbles to fall through a table of holes on the screen.

After each portion of the test, a numerical score shows up on the screen indicating how well the athlete maintained his or her center of balance during the exercise. Trainers catalogue each score into the athlete's medical file.

The purpose of such baseline testing is to provide doctors with an idea of how an athlete normally functions. If the athlete later suffers a concussion, doctors possess a frame of reference to measure how far an athlete's ability to function is from its starting point. When the athlete returns to his or her baseline measurements, they are deemed safe to return to competition.

Judging the effectiveness of Wii Fit and other balance-testing mechanisms is a question of reliability. Hunt said the studies done by Maryland and Ohio State have shown that Wii Fit's reliability -- when compared with other, more studied balance tests -- is "pretty decent," but acknowledged that, ideally, it would be much higher.

Collins, who was consulted during the treatment of Tim Tebow after the former Heisman-winning Florida quarterback suffered a midseason concussion last year, said part of the issue with Wii Fit and other balance tests stems from the rawness of their data. While neurocognitive testing -- which measures a person's capacity to react, pay attention and remember -- has been researched "extensively," Collins noted that "the balance stuff is just really an evolving area."
The **Balance Error Scoring System** (BESS), developed by clinicians at the University of North Carolina, is the most thoroughly studied and most commonly used balance test, though it also has shortcomings.

Subjects stand either on the ground or on a foam pad and perform a number of stances with their hands on their hips during a given time. The subjects are scored by a spotter based on how many errors they make. Proponents like that the BESS test is reproducible on the sideline. Critics point to the subjectivity of its scoring system; an error judged by one spotter could be missed or not judged an error by another.

Some schools, such as Virginia Tech, use force plates, which are a more intricate -- and much more expensive -- form of balance testing. Subjects stand on a plate in different areas and a computer generates an algorithm that reveals their level of equilibrium.

Force plates cost between $40,000 and $50,000, which makes them a less-affordable option for most schools, and generate in-depth data that only those very familiar with the mechanism can discern. Conway said he purchased Maryland's first Wii Fit unit for $300. Now, all three athletic training rooms at Maryland are equipped with a Wii Fit. Goforth said the training staff at Virginia Tech has discussed trying the Wii Fit system as a balance test for its athletes, and he believes athletes would be more willing to comply with rehab if Wii Fit was an option.

**Question of consistency**

In an **April 29 memo** to all NCAA head athletic trainers, Debra Runkle, chair of the NCAA Committee on Competitive Safeguards and Medical Aspects of Sports, wrote that baseline assessments of an athlete who has suffered a concussion should minimally consist of a symptoms checklist, as well as standardized cognitive and balance tests. Wii Fit was one of the three balance-testing mechanisms Runkle suggested for use.

Collins, though, said he "certainly would not recommend the use of" Wii Fit until more normative studies are published because "it's just anecdotal in nature. There's no evidence to suggest it works. What the results suggest are that it's convenient and affordable, but it doesn't provide consistent results when you look at it in a controlled study."

In fact, a **study** published last year by three researchers at the Sage Colleges in Troy, N.Y., found that Wii Fit "does not provide consistent, accurate results" when compared with a force plate mechanism.

Hunt said the joint research done by Ohio State and Maryland does not include data on anyone who has suffered a concussion following baseline Wii Fit testing. She said she hopes in the project's second year to be able to grow the sample size and incorporate more schools in the study. She and Conway have reached out to the University of Delaware and the University of Georgia, among other schools, to gauge their interest.

"The most important thing is that you can have some steady norms established, and I'm not aware of any normative data that's been done" on Wii Fit, said Jason Freeman, associate professor of neuropsychology at the **University of Virginia**. "I think in theory it's a great idea. But without normative studies to really establish steady, consistent, reliable data collection, I think that's really the key."

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Why Johnny’s College Isn’t What It Used to Be

By STEVEN KNAPP

HIGHER EDUCATION?
How Colleges Are Wasting Our Money and Failing Our Kids — and What We Can Do About It

By Andrew Hacker and Claudia Dreifus

Andrew Hacker and Claudia Dreifus have written a lucid, passionate and wide-ranging book on the state of American higher education and what they perceive as its increasing betrayal of its primary mission — for them, the teaching of undergraduates. That both are academics — one a well-known professor (Mr. Hacker) and the other consigned to the adjunct, or what they call “contingent,” faculty (Ms. Dreifus, who is also a frequent contributor to The New York Times) — provides them with memorable, often acerbic anecdotes that neatly offset their citations of statistics and (it must be said) their sometimes rather sweeping generalizations.

These anecdotes take the edge off the polemical intensity a reader might expect from the book’s title, “Higher Education? How Colleges Are Wasting Our Money and Failing Our Kids — and What We Can Do About It.” That may be because these anecdotes display insiders’ familiarity, and often an implied intimacy, with distinguished academics and the elite institutions in which they reside.

This is not a book for those seeking a social-scientific explanation of how American higher education, from its simple beginnings as a training ground for gentlemen clergy, has evolved into a diverse industry that, whatever one thinks of it, is unquestionably the envy of the world and an integral, arguably indispensable part of the United States economy. But in a series of well-structured and strongly argued chapters, the book does pose
searching and sometimes troubling questions about the degree to which the social utility, personal benefits and philosophical ideals promoted by admissions and publicity offices are overstated, overpriced, subordinated to extraneous purposes or distorted by self-perpetuating bureaucracies.

As with many indictments, one must distinguish the crimes the prosecutors merely mention from those they really care about. Mr. Hacker and Ms. Dreifus list a host of crimes, or at least flaws in the system, some in the control of universities and others built into the external political, cultural or economic environment, or indeed into human nature. These include the narrow self-interestedness of academic departments; the greed of faculty members and administrators alike; the near-universal hypertrophy of “the athletics incubus”; unfunded government mandates; lifetime employment for pampered professors (thanks to the combination of tenure and Congressional abolition of mandatory retirement); and the demands of students and their parents for frivolous extras (driving what the authors call “the amenities arms race”).

But the target to which they most often and most radically return — radically in the sense that they regard it as the root of all the other evils and propose to root it out — is captured in a single word: research.

There was a time, in their telling, when universities saw their mission as education; now even small colleges compel their faculties to publish (at the expense of teaching) for the sake of an institutional stature that teaching alone cannot confer. The authors’ deepest scorn is reserved for the claim that good teaching depends on research, and their most extreme proposal is that universities drastically reduce the amount of research they support, by “spinning off” medical schools and research centers, discontinuing paid sabbaticals and abolishing the current system of promotion and tenure, a system that tends to reward research productivity more than effective teaching. (The authors raise interesting questions about tenure and its alternatives. Like many critics of tenure, though, they have a keen eye for abuses of power but are remarkably sanguine about the capacity of the First Amendment to shield scholars from pressure exerted by those with the power to fire them.)

The rest of their prescriptions are scarcely controversial. Who can quarrel with a call to reduce student debt, “engage all students,” “make students
use their minds,” employ technology with care or “end exploitation of adjuncts”? I do not mean that what the authors have to say on those subjects is bland or uninformative; on the contrary, I hope their analyses and prescriptions will be widely read and pondered. But when it comes to the role of research in universities — and, yes, even in colleges — their insight and imagination appear to fail them.

Consider, for instance, the proposal that universities divest themselves of medical schools: they are, the authors think, too distracting and costly, if not in dollars, then in their demands on a president’s attention. A tempting suggestion, many a president will agree!

But what an odd suggestion from the pen of authors who lament the self-enclosure of traditional academic disciplines. This is an era, after all, in which some of the most searching inquiry — and most exciting teaching, including the teaching of undergraduates — is taking place precisely at the intersection of medicine and other fields, not just engineering and physics but also fields like anthropology and history. It is a time when some of our most engaged undergraduates are fascinated by fields like global health, which brings medicine and the social and human sciences together in ways more rich and subtle than students of my generation could have imagined. And where are the humanities more alive, right here and now, than in seminars in bioethics that expose undergraduates to searing and quite possibly unanswerable questions about the beginning and end of life?

A similar point could be made about the educational value of working at the frontier of discovery in one of the research centers that Mr. Hacker and Ms. Dreifus decry. Have they spoken with undergraduates who have enjoyed the privilege of assisting a top investigator in an active, federally financed laboratory? In my own anecdotal experience, the best of those students, far from shutting themselves away in a narrow specialization, are very likely spending their time outside the lab in life-expanding service activities that, again, were quite beyond the ken of undergraduates in earlier generations.

In short, the dichotomies on which Mr. Hacker and Ms. Dreifus rely — between teaching and research, liberal arts and “training,” humanistic reflection and advanced inquiry — do not quite match the reality they seek to describe, with the always salutory aim of reforming it.

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For-profit colleges' stocks take a hit

Government report calls into question students' ability to pay

By Matt Krantz
USA TODAY

Investors in for-profit colleges are giving the stocks a big fat F.

Shares of several top publicly traded schools were dunned Monday following a government report released late last week raising doubts about the quality of education the industry provides and debt loads students rack up.

“Big trouble is not overstating it at all,” says Matt Snowling, analyst at FBR Capital Markets. “There’s a growing likelihood regulatory changes are coming” for for-profit schools.

The Department of Education data show 53% of the 181 publicly traded for-profit institutions had fewer than 35% of students repaying principal on their loans in a timely manner, according to FBR. That’s well above the 37% of not-for-profit schools with such low repayment rates.

For-profit institutions that fall below a 35% repayment rate could lose their right to collect money from federal student loan programs under rules proposed to begin in the 2012 school year. Schools with repayment rates below 45% may have restricted access to federal aid programs, which account for a large percentage of their revenue.

Among the hardest hit stocks: Strayer Education and Capella Education, which fell 18% to $163.26 and 13% to $60.94, respectively, as investors thought their repayment rates would be 45% or higher, says Trace Urdan, analyst at Signal Hill.

There is controversy, though, over the methodology the Department of Education used, says Amy Junker, analyst at Robert W. Baird. For instance, many Strayer students have consolidated several loans. As part of those programs, some students are given the option to pay only interest, not principal; using the government’s methodology, that makes them appear to be struggling, she says. “There’s confusion over what this data means,” she says.

After adjusting for distortions caused by student loan consolidations, Strayer’s repayment rate is 55.4%, not the 25% reported by the Department of Education, according to the company’s regulatory filing Monday.

Also, the repayment test is just one of three ways for-profit schools will be evaluated, Junker says. For-profit schools with repayment rates below 45% may still qualify to be part of college loan programs as long as graduates’ annual debt payments are less than 8% of their income, she says.

Still, these data are just the latest problem for for-profit schools, following a government investigation of recruiting tactics that found violations at all 15 institutions studied, Snowling says. Congressional hearings over the industry are on deck, he says.

Sterne Agee’s Arvind Bhatia says the revelations are a “wake-up call” and reason for investors to avoid the industry for now. “Investors are playing a game without knowing the rules,” he says.