THE DAILY CLIPS

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Letha Dixon Sumerlin

WINTERVILLE — Mrs. Letha Dixon Sumerlin, 85, died Monday, August 30, 2010. A graveside service will be conducted Wednesday at 11 a.m. in Pinewood Memorial Park.

Mrs. Sumerlin was born in Pinetops and lived her early childhood in the Black Jack community where she attended Chicod School. She lived the majority of her adult life in Greenville, where she was employed with East Carolina University as a Recreational Coordinator, retiring in 1988 after 22 years of service. She was a charter member of Temple Free Will Baptist Church, and a past member of the White Shrine. She was a devoted Christian who put others before herself. Mrs. Sumerlin loved traveling, especially spending the winters in Hudson, Florida where she had many friends.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Snowdie and Lizzie Mills Dixon; husband, George Hoyt Sumerlin; brothers, Leroy and Theodore Dixon; and a sister, Gladys Johnson.

Surviving are a daughter, Loretta Eakes Arnold, of Winterville; sons, Wayland “Wade” Sumerlin and wife, Linda Stocks Sumerlin, and Gordon Sumerlin and wife, Lue Worthington Sumerlin, all of Greenville; nine grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren; and two great-great-grandchildren.

She was a loving mother, grandmother and always encouraged her family to do their best.

The family will receive friends tonight from 6 to 8 at Wilkerson Funeral Home and other times at the home of her daughter Loretta Arnold.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to Temple Free Will Baptist Church, Building Fund, PO Box 7106, Greenville, NC 27835.

McNeill isn't prepared to reveal his QB yet

BY EDWARD G. ROBINSON III
STAFF WRITER

GREENVILLE - East Carolina coach Ruffin McNeill fielded at least five predictable questions on Monday about who he planned to name as the football team's starting quarterback before Sunday's season-opener against Tulsa.

By the fifth question, he decided to have some fun at his news conference.

"What I'm going to do is ask [assistant athletic director for media relations] Tom [McClellan] to have another press conference and whoever raises their hand first is going to be the quarterback in this room," McNeill said.

Pressed for an answer, the first-year coach said the competition between junior transfer Dominique Davis and sophomore Brad Wornick continues after a month of training camp to determine who will succeed veteran Patrick Pinkney.

McNeill, in his first head coaching job after 25 years in the college ranks, most recently as Texas Tech's associate head coach, has installed a new spread offense and now must appoint a quarterback to direct his no-huddle system.

He said the two quarterbacks are "battling," and no front-runner has emerged.

"I'm sure by this week, it will work its way out," he said. "I'm pleased with it; I like where we are with it. We'll make a decision pretty soon. I'll let you know if something comes this week."

Wornick, at 6 feet 2 and 205 pounds, impressed the new coaching staff during the spring and worked into the conversation from the scout team with his consistency.

Davis, a former starter at Boston College, enrolled in the summer and has impressed the staff with his grasp of the offense. He is 6-3 and 215 pounds.

McNeill seemed in no rush to reveal a starter, preferring to talk about the offensive linemen who must protect the passer.

He said the Pirates won back-to-back Conference USA championships based on the performance of the linemen on both sides of the ball.

In jest, he required reporters to name an offensive lineman before they asked a question about the quarterbacks.

Asked if there was any chance he'd start both quarterbacks, McNeill deadpanned, "Yeah, at the same time."

Expanding his answer, McNeill said he is not partial to a two-quarterback system.

The veteran coach would prefer a starter to claim the position and grow into the job as the season unfolds.

"You hope you get one guy and let him lead," he said. "It's not a bad deal to have two guys ready to go."

He said the quarterbacks' seven-on-seven tape looked equally impressive.

"They are getting enough reps to make us feel good about either one of them right now," he said.

Losing 18 starters from a year ago, the Pirates are looking at a season of uncertainty with reserves forced to find their way in new offensive and defensive schemes. They will be expected to play fast on both sides of the ball.

McNeill said after years of coaching he's not nervous, even with so many new factors swirling around the program, mostly because he feels the team is prepared.

He said the goal during camp was to ensure his team possessed leadership and that there was competition at each position.

"I think they have adjusted well," McNeill said. "Kids are like clay ... they adjust and mold and adapt. But only if you're honest with them. Only if you're up front with them and only if you give them expectations before you ask them to do something."

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Rhett Butler/The Daily Reflector
ECU Football Coach

QB hot topic at press conference
By Nathan Summers
The Daily Reflector
Monday, August 30, 2010

Whoever starts at quarterback for the East Carolina football team this year, he could have taken some great pointers from head coach Ruffin McNeill on Monday afternoon.

Holding his first game-week press conference at ECU since taking over as head coach last winter, McNeill faced a blitz similar to the ones he expects to see coming at his QB against Tulsa in Sunday’s season opener.

McNeill found himself inundated with numerous versions of the same question at Monday’s conference regarding his open starting quarterback position, and McNeill managed to scramble away from them without much incident. All questions were met with the same reply: the competition at QB remains just that.

“We haven’t tried to trick anybody,” McNeill said of the ongoing tussle between junior Dominique Davis and sophomore Brad Wornick to win the starting job under center. “Some positions, and that’s one of them, they’re battling. Both guys are doing a great job.” Davis did not enroll in classes until summer session, and that meant Wornick and redshirt Rio Johnson had 15 more practices under their belts.

Yet, the competition remains too close to call even during game week.

“What I like about them is they’ve both cherished this and are really immersed in the challenge, which is unique,” McNeill said. “We’ll see. It might come right down to the wire.”

The first-year ECU coach said Wornick reminds him of some of the former passers at Texas Tech, where McNeill spent 10 years on the staff of head coach Mike Leach. But McNeill knows the value of the experience Davis accrued first at Boston College and then at Fort Scott in Kansas. McNeill also thinks it’s unfair to characterize Wornick as just the smart passer and Davis as simply the naturally athletic one. He said Wornick is fast on his feet under pressure, and noted that Davis’ devotion to his playbook often has forced him to take his lunch into his room during camp in order to continue film study sessions.

One thing seems certain; unless things go very wrong, there will be no rotation system like the one former head coach Skip Holtz employed with Patrick Pinkney and Rob Kass back in 2007. “You hope you get one guy to lead it, and let him learn and develop, but it’s not a bad deal to have two other guys ready to go,” McNeill said. “We hope to single out one guy. As far as flip-flopping and those kinds of things, I’ve never been a part of that.”
Injuries
McNeill confirmed Monday that junior nose tackle Antonio Allison will likely not return from his lingering ankle injury against the Golden Hurricane, but said transfer lineman Diavalo Simpson did make his return this week and sophomore Robert Jones is back on the depth chart after his year-long absence with a knee injury.
“He’s working his hind parts off to get back,” McNeill said of Allison, one of the few defensive linemen on this year’s team with true playing experience, but one who the coach said simply cannot play at the speed right now needed to keep up with the pace of both teams.
Listed as out for Sunday’s game are sophomore defensive lineman Michael Brooks (knee), freshman offensive lineman Anthony Garrett (knee) and senior safety Dekota Marshall (lower leg).
Also, junior starting middle linebacker Steve Spence is still recovering from his groin injury and will likely split time with senior Melvin Patterson, and junior center Will Towery (shoulder) might be forced to give way to redshirt Dalton Faulds on Sunday.

Suspended
Redshirt freshman running back Damonte Terry and true freshman defensive end Derrell Johnson will be suspended for the first game of the season for violation of teams rules after their alleged involvement in an off-the-field incident.

Contact Nathan Summers at nsummers@reflector.com or (252)329-9595.
Lebo leads ECU through workout
By Tony Castleberry
The Daily Reflector
Monday, August 30, 2010

Any East Carolina men’s basketball players who feel they haven’t yet had much face time with first-year coach Jeff Lebo will get their opportunities in the coming weeks. Monday marked the first day of workouts for the Pirates, who will meet with Lebo and his assistants in groups of four or less a couple of times a week until team workouts begin Sept. 15. These preliminary sessions will consist of skill-related instruction, i.e. shooting and dribbling drills mainly, and each player is allowed a maximum of two hours of work with the coaches per week in accordance with NCAA rules.
Lebo said he sees these next couple of weeks as an opportunity to build a solid foundation heading into team workouts and the first official practice on Oct. 15.
“This is an exciting time for us to get back out on the court and work with our guys,” Lebo said prior to overseeing a workout with Jamar Abrams, Erin Straughn, Jontae Sherrod and Wakefield Ellison, who all return from last season’s team. “When we took over, it was so hectic, you’re not in a place where you really get a chance to know your kids much and get on the floor with them. ... because you’re going 100 different directions.
“This rule’s been in place for a while where we can get out there and work with small groups and get a feel for them and (discover) things that they need to work on.”

After a summer spent mostly trying to get his immediate family — a wife and three kids — settled into a new town, Lebo seemed excited about turning a big chunk of his attention to his basketball family, even if mapping out Xs and Os or deciding on his starting five is still a long way down the road.
That doesn’t mean that the new coach, who’s compiled a 211-156 all-time record in 12 seasons as a head coach, isn’t going to be able to recognize trends and draw conclusions about the Pirates as soon as possible.
“We’ll use these (workouts) this year, with a new staff, to get a chance to learn our guys. Who handles it? Who can come off a screen and make a shot? Who can beat a guy off the bounce? Who can defend a little bit? Who’s a good rebounder? Who’s mentally tough?” said Lebo, who was fired by Auburn on March 12 after six seasons in charge. “There’s a lot of questions that you can get answered in some of these things.”

Smith out
An ECU official confirmed Monday that former J.H. Rose standout Tony Smith, who signed with the Pirates in late April, is not enrolled at ECU and likely won’t play for the Pirates this season.
The 6-foot-5 guard averaged 14.3 points and 6.5 assists per game at Seward (Kan.) Community College last season.
Contact Tony Castleberry at tcastleberry@reflector.com or (252) 329-9591.
HIGH SCHOOL Huddle

Coaches recall college

By Tim Stevens
STAFF WRITER

Area high school football coaches didn't have a common college football experience.

Some, like Jeff Smouse at Athens Drive, Ned Gonet of Ravenscroft and Nelson Smith of Garner, played at the major college level.

Others, like Gary Fowler of Clayton and Ron Clark of Enloe, didn't play in college at all.

Some spent part of their college years coaching. Bob Wolfe of Apex and David Green of Leesville Road were coaching well before they earned their college undergraduate degrees.

The coaches were asked for insights about how their college experience shaped them for being high school coaches.

In their own words

Jeff Smouse, Athens Drive:

"I played offensive line and a little defensive line at Western Michigan University, and I don't think it helped me much as a coach except getting me started in coaching. I had a career-ending knee injury, and I coached there my fourth and fifth years."

See Coaches, page 5C

Enloe coach Ron Clark was a basketball team manager at East Carolina.

Ron Clark, Enloe: "I went to ECU and did not play football. I was the basketball team manager and worked under head coach Dave Odom. It was a great experience for me. It truly was one of the main reasons I went into PE and coaching."

Gary Fowler, Clayton: "I had to work my way through college, so I didn't have much time for sports. But I learned that with hard work and determination, great things can be accomplished. That's something I tell the kids every day. I used to hitchhike home from Appalachian State. I wouldn't advise kids to do that today, but for me it was part of learning how to do what had to be done."

Ryan Habich, Fuquay-Varina: "I believe playing at the college level [he played at Western Illinois and Mars Hill] helps by letting you learn from so many different coaches, but coaching at the high school level is not about what you know, but what you can get your players to do well."

Tony Lewis, Sanderson: "I volunteer coached at D.H. Conley while I was in school at East Carolina. It helped me to start learning the fundamentals of football and the difference between being a player vs. a student of the game."

Jason Tudryn, Carrboro: I was a four-year letter winner at free safety at UMass-Amherst. It had a huge impact on my coaching philosophy. I played for and learned a ton from Ted Roof [current Auburn defensive coordinator], Jim Reid [Virginia defensive coordinator], Bill McGovern [Boston College defensive coordinator] and Jerry Azzinario [Oregon defensive line coach]. There isn't a week that goes by that I don't rely on the many lessons I learned at UMass."
UNC tweaks policy on Twitter, Facebook use

Coaches monitor athletes’ posts

BY ROBBIE PICKERAL
STAFF WRITER

Friends and fans are not the only ones this season following what North Carolina athletes post on their Facebook pages and Twitter accounts. Now, their coaches are required to as well.

UNC has updated its 2010-11 Student Athlete Handbook to stipulate that "each team must identify at least one coach or administrator who is responsible for having access to and regularly monitor the content of team members' social networking sites and postings."

The athletic department also reserves the right to have other staff members monitor athletes' posts. If any of an athlete's online content violates the law or NCAA, university or athletic department policies, sanctions could range from removal of the post to dismissal from the team.

UNC associate athletic director Steve Kirschner said the updated social networking policy has been in the works since last spring, "and it is not in response to any one thing."

However, some North Carolina athletes have drawn some scrutiny in recent months for their social network postings.

Defensive lineman Marvin Austin, who has been questioned as part of the NCAA's investigation into whether UNC football players had improper contact with agents, posted more than 2,400 Twitter updates -- including pictures of a watch for his younger sister, a bag from an upscale sunglasses store in Miami and a $143 bill from The Cheesecake Factory in Washington, D.C. -- before his account went dark.

Earlier this summer, sophomore basketball players Dexter Strickland and John Henson, as well as junior point guard Larry Drew II, posted variations of the same message on their individual Twitter accounts: "well coach just talked to us about twitter and told us we offend some people n what not so this is a farewell to bein' myself..lata tweeks."

(They continue to tweet, but their posts have been toned down a tad.)

The updated handbook also states that the athletic department "will not tolerate disrespectful comments and behavior online." That includes derogatory language; comments that constitute a credible emotional or physical threat; and photos that depict unlawful abuse, hazing, harassment, discrimination, drug possession or use, or any other illegal conduct.

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N.C. Research Campus is picking up steam

KANNAPOLIS — For nearly two years, the recession made David Murdock’s plan to create a major research campus look like a business school case study in bad timing.

Murdock, the former owner of Dole Food Co. and a crusader for the benefits of fruits and vegetables, pumped more than $600 million of his own money into the N.C. Research Campus. Campus research was to focus on the relationships among nutrition, agriculture and health.

When it opened in October 2008, eight universities committed researchers, though budget problems kept many from ramping up as quickly as they hoped. Potential corporate partners were reluctant to sign, and some that did commit later backed away.

This year, though, the 350-acre campus, taking shape on the former site of a massive textile mill, is gaining momentum.

It has attracted new corporate tenants, including Dole, Monsanto and General Mills, has a commitment for a new U.S. Food and Drug Administration office, and opened a new community college building with 155 students enrolled in a two-year program to train biotechnology workers.

It also plans to break ground soon on another building - its seventh - which will house a branch of the Charlotte-based Carolinas HealthCare system and other health-related tenants.

And officials with campus developer Castle & Cooke said this week that three or four other companies have committed to open branches there but aren’t yet ready to announce their plans.

"I’m very pleased with what’s happening now," Murdock, 87, said in an interview Friday. "I was not happy with what was happening for the last year and a half because people were just sitting and waiting for something good to happen. But I’m pretty satisfied that the worst has passed."
Growing work force

By year's end, the campus expects to add nearly 50 percent to its current work force of about 270.

There is even an effort to hire researchers for the seven state-supported universities represented on campus - rare in the UNC system, which suffers under a second year of budget cuts and has lost hundreds of jobs.

By the end of the year, the system will have added about 35 faculty and other workers to the campus. This is possible because the state legislature hiked its budget for the research campus by $1 million for the year beginning July 1, on top of a $3 million boost last year.

Steven Zeisel, head of the Nutrition Research Institute, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's program here, said Thursday that he had just offered jobs to four new faculty researchers.

The recent budget increases for the campus were an important vote of confidence, Zeisel said. Because the campus is in its early phases, that public show of support is crucial as he and other program heads try to lure researchers from some of the nation's best institutions.

"I'm competing with the likes of Harvard and Stanford for these hires, asking them to give up supportive environments and come and build the next great research campus," he said. "There is a note of uncertainty in that, so I need to be able to offer them not only a great package, but some assurance that the state isn't going to leave them hanging."

Research projects done on the campus by the universities are carefully chosen to complement each other, said Steven Leath, vice president of research for the UNC system.

Leath said the model of strategically hiring researchers across a complementary range of disciplines, and the focus on the intersection between health and nutrition, make the research campus unique.

"We're addressing a set of the most important problems in society and doing it in an innovative way," he said. "Also, we have the chance there to leverage tremendous private funds that Mr. Murdock has already put in."

N.C. State University has one of the largest presences on campus. Among other things, its researchers have expertise in growing plants - important when another lab finds a health-enhancing characteristic in fruits and vegetables.

And NCSU researchers are mapping the entire set of genetic information for blueberry plants - something that will help provide a roadmap for, say, breeding them to enhance the hefty amount of antioxidants in the fruit.

Appalachian State University has a human performance lab where the effects of a drug or particular natural substance can be measured. The lab has received grants from the U.S. military and private companies, and has worked on various projects with at least half a dozen other labs on campus, Director David Nieman said. "To us, it's like academic heaven being here," Nieman said.

UNC Charlotte, meanwhile, has a group on campus that provides expertise in bioinformatics, helping researchers in other fields design and execute plans for analyzing the massive amounts of data their work generates.

First-rate facilities

The campus, though not nearly complete, looks like that of a small but expensive private college, with atria and airy labs with plenty of natural light. Murdock thinks scientists should have surroundings that inspire, rather than the dismal rooms they're sometimes stuck with. He also bought $30 million in high-end research equipment to entice faculty.

For now, many of the labs are empty or see little use. Zeisel said the facilities are first-rate, but the campus needs substantially more researchers to reach an intellectual critical mass.

That has been coming too slowly, he said, but it will come if things keep moving like they finally started to this year.

The vision for the campus is often compared to that for Research Triangle Park, which was built upon the research capabilities of NCSU, UNC-Chapel Hill and Duke University. Zeisel said skeptics of the new research campus should remember that it took decades for RTP to
become a major economic force.

"It takes a little while to build the infrastructure of these things," he said. "But I think if we can stay on the same pace, we can have the same kinds of success here."

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ON CAMPUS

Institutional and corporate tenants on the N.C. Research Campus or committed to coming include:

Duke University
UNC-Chapel Hill
N.C. State University
UNC Charlotte
N.C. Central University
N.C. A&T State University
UNC-Greensboro
Rowan-Cabarrus Community College
Appalachian State University
Anatomica
Carolina's Healthcare System
Dole Foods
General Mills
LabCorp
Lovelace
Monsanto
PPD
Red Hat
U.S. Agriculture Department
How to judge a college? Not by arbitrary rankings

By Kenneth P. Ruscio

The stream of college rankings turns into a flood this time of year. Magazines and websites say their judgments hold institutions accountable and help consumers make intelligent choices. Noble virtues aside, it's also not a bad business plan.

In the case of one magazine that otherwise can boast of no particular expertise reporting on education, its rankings enterprise might be the only thing keeping it in the public eye. It is aided and abetted by the schools themselves, who tout the rankings when they provide some reed, no matter how thin, to hang on. One college this year announced how one guide had named it the 13th "easiest campus to get around." A strategic plan to make the top 10 is surely in the offing.

Three years ago, I joined a group of college presidents who pledged never to publicize our national rankings because to do so was to give them our imprimatur. If we didn't take the rankings seriously, why give them prominence? We could claim to be operating from a position of strength because we were, after all, the presidents of the top 20 national liberal arts colleges. The irony was not lost on us. We didn't quite say, "Those of us in the top 20 wish to call attention to our ranking by saying you shouldn't pay attention to our ranking," but in this cynical era some thought we were doing just that.

So here at Washington and Lee, we watch rankings with bemusement and self-discipline. What do we say when a prominent website ranked us the sixth "strictest college in the country" the week before I met with local residents irate about our students' off-campus escapades? A local reporter, noting our presence on this list and the absence of the neighboring military institute and the Mormon-affiliated college down the road, came to the only conclusion: "Go figure."

What do we do when Forbes.com ranks us 37th nationally, and our excellent state flagship university promotes its No. 44 Forbes.com ranking by proclaiming itself the country's "top non-military-academy public university"? Or how about a school announcing that it ranks among the top 3% of the nation's colleges because it is among the top 28% in Forbes.com, and Forbes.com reviewed only 5% of all colleges? They really did "go figure."

As an institution that takes some of its lead from our name-sakes by trying to act with some dignity, Washington and Lee cannot trumpet one publication's labeling of us as one of the "hottest colleges of the decade." We thought that was a good thing, but one can never be too sure of the criteria.

Rankings are not evil. Students and families need information. Four years of undergraduate education is not a trivial commitment. But the rankings game is on the verge of parodying itself. Worse, it threatens to drive strategic decisions on campuses in ways that have little to do with what should be important.

The most worrisome feature is that the frenzy feeds the bumper-sticker, attention-deficit syndrome in our society, a trend that higher education should forcefully resist. Not everything that matters can be measured; the most important things in life are the least susceptible to quantification.

Bits of data do not define the best college, no matter how much they are manipulated into the appearance, but only the appearance, of order and symmetry. Complex judgments about quality should be, well, qualitative. And should be personal, informed by data but backed by intuition and self-awareness.

The false precision of the rankings is appealing, but a delusion. Thoughtful amassing of data is not bad, but it is a terrible substitute for wisdom.

Kenneth P. Ruscio is president of Washington and Lee University, Lexington, Va.
Primary-Care Doctors: Saying No to $191,000 a Year

By Ruehika Tulshyan

Last year, America spent over $2 trillion on health care, the most of any OECD country. Still, with all that money going out the door there is a worsening income crisis among primary-care physicians that, if unaddressed, will lead to an acute shortage of these doctors in the years ahead, when retiring baby boomers will need them most.

The education pipeline offers no hint of improvement. Less than 2% of current medical students are interested in general internal medicine and 4.9% in family-care practice, says a study by Dr. Karen Hauer, published in the Journal of the American Medical Association. (See how to prevent illness at any age.)

While a growing concern, it’s no mystery as to why the general practitioner (GP) is a dying breed. Rising medical-school costs — up between 4% and 7% from last year, according to American Association of Medical Colleges (AAMC) data — and a continually widening gap between general-practitioner and specialist salaries make the career choice for medical students a fairly easy one: get a specialty.

"Primary care, especially family medicine, was what I wanted to do when I started medical school. Now three years later with $150,000 in debt, I am considering specializing in neurology," says Samantha Luk, a third-year medical-school student at Northwestern University. While she hasn’t ruled out family medicine when she has to make her career decision in 2011, the combination of a higher salary and more interesting work that neurology offers is swaying her to specialize.

In 2009, primary-care doctors earned a median salary of $191,401, according to the Medical Group Management Association’s 2010 physician-compensation report. Cardiologists earned a median of $457,310 and dermatologists made $385,088 — doctors who owned their practices earned much more, on average. (Watch TIME’s video ”Uninsured Again.”)

In these tough economic times, most Americans would say that any of those incomes seem high. In fact, the primary-care doctor’s gross is often far short of what they need to make ends meet. The average medical-
Primary-Care Doctors: Low GP Pay Could Cause a Shortage -- ...

school student graduates with $200,000 in loans, according to the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP). This doesn't include their debt related to four years of undergraduate study. For some students the total debt burden can reach nearly $500,000 — a daunting sum that puts many of them off family medicine. "Money is a bigger influence on these decisions than most students will admit," Luk says. Plus, specialties offer lifestyle advantages, like more time with family in the long run.

Even for students without heavy debt burdens, the appeal of a general practice is low. "I don't believe medical students go into this profession to make money," says Jamil Ortoleva, a third-year medical student at Columbia University. "But family physicians don't make enough to cover costs of running a clinic, the insurance is high and so many clinics have closed over the past few years. Even GPs still in business have to take on more patients to pay the bills. The quality of care goes down, and that's a huge deterrent," he adds. (See 10 players in health care reform.)

The trend away from family practice is already producing shortages in rural areas and could produce a national doctor crisis in just a few years. "Unless more primary-care physicians are recruited, we estimate a shortage of 30,000 doctors by 2015," says Dr. Atul Grover, chief advocacy officer for the AAMC. "In 10 years, this shortage could go up to 150,000. It takes seven years to train a doctor, so we need to act now," he says. (Comment on this story.)

The recent passage of health care reform legislation offers some improvement to primary-care doctors, but doctors see it as insufficient. "The new legislation adds a 10% bonus to primary-care physicians' Medicare reimbursement salaries. But this is nowhere near enough. We need to see a 30% to 50% increase in salaries overall to make any real change in the system," says Dr. Lori Heim, president of the AAFP.

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More would-be interns paying thousands to land a coveted spot

By Jenna Johnson
Washington Post Staff Writer
Monday, August 30, 2010; B01

Each year, thousands of college students descend on Washington for unpaid internships. It can be a nerve-racking process: sending out résumés, trying to make contacts, interviewing again and again.

Increasingly, many of them are finding an alternative: paying thousands of dollars to a placement company for a guaranteed spot.

It's a business just starting to appear in other cities. In Washington, it's been thriving for years.

Estimates of the annual number of interns locally range from 20,000 to 40,000. The placement programs provide about 2,500 of these interns, with the number growing each year.

For their money -- often funded with taxpayer-subsidized loans -- students get an internship, housing, night classes, tours of Washington and college credit. But most say they sign up for the work experience.

"I wanted experience. I was worried about graduating and not getting a job," said Brian Schiller, 21, a soon-to-be college senior from Sherborn, Mass., who interned at an executive search firm this summer through the Washington Center for Internships and Academic Seminars. "I needed an internship, and they found me one."

The Washington Center is the city's largest program, and for the past three years it has placed about 1,500 interns annually, up from about 1,300 in 2007. It charges nearly $9,000 for a summer, including housing.

Others include:

-- The Washington Internship Institute. It will place about 200 interns this year, up from 120 in 2007, and charges about $7,000 for a summer.

-- The Fund for American Studies. It has grown from about 370 students in 2005 to 525 this year and charges as much as $7,800 during the summer.

-- The National Internship Program, formerly the Washington Internship Program. It charges an enrollment fee of $3,400 without housing and has seen its numbers increase from 166 students last year to an expected 250 to 300 this year. The for-profit company has doubled its staff in that time and is beginning to expand into other major cities.

"There has never been a harder time to get hired," said chief executive Lev Bayer, whose mother started
the company nearly 30 years ago. "There is such a need for internships. We have more students than we can ever deal with."

**Career investments**

Those involved routinely point out that the programs cost less than some colleges charge for tuition. And as long as students receive academic credit, they are usually able to pay using their student loans, federal Pell grants or other forms of financial aid. Most companies offer scholarships, some funded by state governments, some by the companies.

Emily Goyert, 21, and her parents debated her decision to get an internship through the Fund for American Studies. She was unable to transfer any credits to the University of Michigan, where she will be a senior.

"We definitely just viewed it as an investment in my future," said Goyert, who interned at the Living Classrooms Foundation and created a weekend program for a D.C. neighborhood. "There are only so many internships, and everyone wants one."

The tuition payments add up to millions of dollars of revenue for the internship programs, many of which operate as nonprofit groups, pay their top employees six-figure salaries and set up shop in prime D.C. real estate.

The nonprofit Washington Center has its headquarters in a former embassy blocks from the White House. The center had about $18 million in revenue last fiscal year and has a staff of 75, with at least eight employees making six-figure salaries. The president, Michael B. Smith, was paid more than $300,000 last year.

Adele R. Cehrs, a spokeswoman for the center, said in a statement that "like any well-managed nonprofit, the Board of Directors determines the salary for the President of the organization and ensures it is comparable to other similarly sized organizations in the industry."

The Fund for American Studies is a nonprofit group based in a renovated mansion in Dupont Circle and had about $8.4 million in revenue last fiscal year. At least four employees have six-figure salaries, including director Roger R. Ream, who is paid more than $250,000 a year. Ream said his salary is comparable to those at similar nonprofit organizations, and he took a pay cut last year because of the economy.

The topic of tuition and salaries "doesn't come up with our students. Maybe because we have been doing it for 40 years," Ream said. "We have a lot of eager students who come to our program."

**Eager employees**

Employers are usually sent a list of potential candidates to select from. A few pay students a small stipend at the end of the summer or assist with travel costs, but a large majority of these internships are unpaid.

"They are all young people who are smart, motivated, willing to work and willing to do grunt work," said Bernadette Musselwhite, a Montgomery County government business development specialist who has received interns from the Washington Center for two years. "We started with one, then two, then three this summer. We might have four or five interns this fall."
Musselwhite said she did not know how much the program cost students. "We didn't go into the specifics," she said. "We'd like to be in a position where we could pay for interns, but given the current economic crisis, there is no way in the world."

All of the programs say that they have inside connections that can provide students an internship they might not otherwise be able to get. The three nonprofit programs tout their ability to place students at federal agencies. A photo on the Washington Internship Institute Web site, for instance, shows five students standing in front of a State Department sign.

Daniel A. Stewart, the State Department's branch chief for student programs, said the agency has no connection with any of these programs and accepts students only through its own application process.

"The only way they are getting in is if they apply directly through us," he said. "The opportunities in the federal government -- beyond just the Department of State -- are open to everyone."

On top of placing a student in an internship, the placement programs promise to be an advocate for that student -- stepping in if problems arise, helping find another internship if a company cuts its program at the last minute and ensuring that students aren't stuck doing just clerical work. They also promise to vet employers, although the process is not foolproof.

In 2008, the Washington Center was sued by a New Jersey college student who alleged she was sexually harassed while at her internship in a doctor's office during the summer of 2007.

According to the lawsuit, center employees did not visit the office, interview the doctor or investigate his credentials before placing the student. The doctor's license had been suspended for a year in 2003 because he inappropriately touched female patients.

In mid-July, a center employee visited the office, learned what was happening and removed the intern from the office. The lawyer who represented the doctor at the time declined to comment. Messages left for the doctor were not returned.

The case was settled out of court for an undisclosed amount. The Washington Center said in a statement it could not comment on the settlement.

In a statement, Smith said: "As a parent and the president of [the Washington Center], my goal is to work with my staff to carefully evaluate all our host organizations, with [the] same care and consideration I would take if my son and daughter were participating."

**A safe place to stay**

Many of the students in these programs are doing their first internship and also living in a major city for the first time.

"Safety of students is a priority of these programs. As a parent, that's something that's very attractive," said David Fitzgerald, a career center adviser at the University of Iowa, which sends 40 to 50 students to the Washington Center each year. "You don't really want your student finding a roommate on Craig's List."

Each of the programs offers housing, often renting college dorms or floors in apartment buildings. The Fund for American Studies, for instance, has a partnership with Georgetown University, and students are
required to live in the dorms, which cost about $1,800 for the summer.

The Washington Center does not require its students to live in its housing, but most do. In recent years, the center has housed interns in six apartment complexes in the Washington suburbs. Half of those buildings are owned by the Paradigm Cos., headed by Stanley W. Sloter, a member of the center's board of directors.

The center paid $1.7 million in rent in fiscal year 2007 to "an entity operated by a member of the board of directors," according to tax filings. In 2008, the center paid $1.5 million in such rent. Sloter referred a call from a reporter to the center.

This summer, the center opened its own dormitory near the New York Avenue Metro station in Northeast Washington. The $38 million dorm can house about 350 students and features a 500-seat auditorium, six classrooms, a student lounge, a fitness center and flat-screen televisions in each room. The project was financed chiefly with tax-exempt bonds.

The facility was built by Paradigm Construction, which was founded by Sloter. Paradigm was awarded the contract through "a transparent process of sealed bids" because it promised to complete the project for $1.1 million less than the second-lowest bidder, Cehrs said.

"Clearly, this board member did not benefit unfairly from this process. The Washington Center and ultimately its students are the true beneficiaries," Cehrs said in a statement.

Four students live in each two-bedroom apartment, cook for themselves and pay $3,540 each for 10 weeks. That housing fee includes furnishings, cleaning costs, utilities, and Internet, cable and phone service, plus the support of full-time resident assistants, Cehrs said in a statement.

"All rental properties have been rented by [the Washington Center] at market or below market rates," she said. The center's "residential housing fee is comparable in price to local Washington area high end residential facilities such as those provided by Georgetown and George Washington Universities."

Dean A. Zerbe, a former senior counsel for Sen. Charles E. Grassley (R-Iowa), who led an investigation into nonprofit groups, said contracts with board members raise "one of the biggest flags."

"How independent as a board member am I if I am getting a sweetheart deal?" Zerbe said. "Are these children's funds, in a sense, being used appropriately?"

Some colleges, including Boston University, Stanford and the University of Texas, run their own programs in Washington. Independent programs such as the Washington Center and the others allow colleges to offer their students a D.C. experience without the liability and cost of setting up their own programs, award credits without tying up campus resources and, in a few cases, continue collecting some of a student's tuition money.

Over the past 40 years, the programs have collectively placed more than 60,000 interns. Some of them participate in alumni networks that function like college alumni associations, fundraise for the programs, join Facebook groups, volunteer to mentor or take on interns of their own.

"I can't wait to get back to school and talk to everyone about it," said Farah Ardeshir, 21, a junior at Eastern Kentucky University who interned at a D.C. human rights research institute through the Washington Center. "Living in the real world, even just for two months, is critical."

Researcher Meg Smith contributed to this report.
Harvard Researcher May Have Fabricated Data

By NICHOLAS WADE

Harvard authorities have made available information suggesting that Marc Hauser, a star researcher who was put on leave this month, may have fabricated data in a 2002 paper.

“Given the published design of the experiment, my conclusion is that the control condition was fabricated,” said Gerry Altmann, the editor of the journal Cognition, in which the experiment was published.

Dr. Hauser said he expected to have a statement about the Cognition paper available soon. He issued a statement last week saying he was “deeply sorry” and acknowledged having made “significant mistakes” but did not admit to any scientific misconduct.

Dr. Hauser is a leading expert in comparing animal and human mental processes and recently wrote a well-received book, “Moral Minds,” in which he explored the evolutionary basis of morality. An inquiry into his Harvard lab was opened in 2007 after students felt they were being pushed to reach a particular conclusion that they thought was incorrect. Though the inquiry was completed in January this year, Harvard announced only last week that Dr. Hauser had been required to retract the Cognition article, and it supplied no details about the episode.

On Friday, Dr. Altmann said Michael D. Smith, dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, had given him a summary of the part of the confidential faculty inquiry related to the 2002 experiment, a test of whether monkeys could distinguish algebraic rules.

The summary included a description of a videotape recording the monkeys’ reaction to a test stimulus. Standard practice is to alternate a stimulus with a control condition, but no tests of the control condition are present on the videotape. Dr. Altmann, a psychologist at the University of York in England, said it seemed that the control experiments reported in the article were not performed.

Some forms of scientific error, like poor record keeping or even mistaken results, are
forgivable, but fabrication of data, if such a charge were to be proved against Dr. Hauser, is
usually followed by expulsion from the scientific community.

“There is a difference between breaking the rules and breaking the most sacred of all rules,”
said Jonathan Haidt, a moral psychologist at the University of Virginia. The failure to have
performed a reported control experiment would be “a very serious and perhaps unforgivable
offense,” Dr. Haidt said.

Dr. Hauser’s case is unusual, however, because of his substantial contributions to the fields of
animal cognition and the basis of morality. Dr. Altmann held out the possibility of
redemption. “If he were to give a full and frank account of the errors he made, then the process
can start of repatriating him into the community in some form,” he said.

Dr. Hauser’s fall from grace, if it occurs, could cast a shadow over several fields of research
until Harvard makes clear the exact nature of the problems found in his lab. Last week, Dr.
Smith, the Harvard dean, wrote in a letter to the faculty that he had found Dr. Hauser
responsible for eight counts of scientific misconduct. He described these in general terms but
did not specify fabrication. An oblique sentence in his letter said that the Cognition paper had
been retracted because “the data produced in the published experiments did not support the
published findings.”

Scientists trying to assess Dr. Hauser’s oeuvre are likely to take into account another issue
besides the eight counts of misconduct. In 1995, Dr. Hauser published that cotton-top
tamarins, the monkey species he worked with, could recognize themselves in a mirror. The
finding was challenged by the psychologist Gordon Gallup, who asked for the videotapes and
has said that he could see no evidence in the monkey’s reactions for what Dr. Hauser had
reported. Dr. Hauser later wrote in another paper that he could not repeat the finding.

The small size of the field in which Dr. Hauser worked has contributed to the uncertainty.
Only a handful of laboratories have primate colonies available for studying cognition, so few if
any researchers could check Dr. Hauser’s claims.

“Marc was the only person working on cotton-top tamarins so far as I know,” said Alison
Gopnik, a psychologist who studies infant cognition at the University of California, Berkeley.
“It’s always a problem in science when we have to depend on one person.”

Many of Dr. Hauser’s experiments involved taking methods used to explore what infants are
thinking and applying them to monkeys. In general, he found that the monkeys could do many
of the same things as infants. If a substantial part of his work is challenged or doubted,
monkeys may turn out to be less smart than recently portrayed.
But his work on morality involved humans and is therefore easier for others to repeat. And much of Dr. Hauser’s morality research has checked out just fine, Dr. Haidt said.

“Hauser has been particularly creative in studying moral psychology in diverse populations, including small-scale societies, patients with brain damage, psychopaths and people with rare genetic disorders that affect their judgments,” he said.
Ah, to return to the halcyon days of academe

The old cliché is true, as old clichés often are. Youth is wasted on the young.

I'll take it one step further. College is wasted on the young, too.

I've been attending a round of farewell parties for college-bound freshmen, all sons and daughters of friends. I look at these kids and want to shake them. Do you have a clue what lies ahead of you? I want to ask. A clue?

They don't, of course. They're bright, not wise.

I will admit I didn't have a clue, either, when I was heading off to Syracuse. I look back on my college years now — that I remember of them — and realize I could have done so much more. I could have gone to class, for instance.

It was indeed pearls before swine. Just think about it. Someone — usually willing parents — gives us four years to read books in an idyllic setting, to hang out with our friends until late into the night, to explore any new world we want to explore, often abroad. They also throw in long holiday vacations — sometimes a month — and summers off.

Nice work if you can get it.

And what did we do? We slept until noon. I know because I did.

So I'm going to make a proposal. Perhaps Congress could put it on its docket when it returns from its summer recess. (The similarities between Congress and college are not lost on me.)

I propose every 60-year-old in America gets sent back to college. Maybe not for four years. I'd take one. We'd appreciate the second chance, perhaps even learn something this time around.

The details have to be worked out, of course. Employers might like to know where we've gone, but imagine how much brighter we'll be when we return.

The cost of such a venture also will have to be covered, but surely Congress can find the money somewhere. It seems to find money for everything else.

We wouldn't even ask for a clothing allowance. We still have our Bass Weejuns. Room and board is all we ask.

Not that we don't have a few requirements.

First, my dog will have to come with me. I also have to live in a single. I have no desire to train a new roommate at 60. It was hard enough at 18.

And I prefer not to eat in the dining hall. Some kind of dine-around card could work, along with a laundry service that picks up and delivers. Hanger, please. Light starch. I also take my coffee black.

Thanks.

In return, I promise to call home every Sunday night. Collect, of course. Just for old time's sake.

Can you even do that anymore?

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