Equality NC held a statewide rally to oppose an amendment to ban same-sex marriage in North Carolina. Monday, Sept. 12, 2011. (Aileen Devlin/The Daily Reflector)

**Gay marriage ban on ballot**  
Staff, wire reports  
Wednesday, September 14, 2011

Pitt County legislators split down party lines this week as the General Assembly determined North Carolina voters will decide next May on a constitutional amendment to ban gay marriage.

The state Senate voted 30-16 on Tuesday afternoon in favor of putting the question on the statewide primary ballot — the minimum number of yes votes needed to meet the three-fifths majority for such amendments. Republican Sen. Louis Pate voted for the ballot initiative and Democratic Sen. Clark Jenkins opposed it.


North Carolina is the only state in the Southeast without such a prohibition in its constitution. State law already defines marriage as between a man and a woman, but amendment supporters argue that traditional marriage would be better protected against potential legal challenges by same-sex couples in six other states and the District of Columbia. Thirty states have a gay marriage ban in their constitutions.

Sen. Jim Forrester, R-Gaston, who had filed amendment bills for several years without success, finally won Tuesday after an hour of intense debate on the Senate floor. The amendment, which had been blocked for years by Democrats, won a hearing after Republicans took control of the General Assembly for the first time since 1870. Republicans voted heavily for the measure.

“If people reject it and say, ‘no, we don't want this in the constitution,' then I'll live with it,” Forrester said, adding he would campaign at the state's churches for its passage. He said the bill wasn't designed to single out gays and lesbians.
“This wasn't a slap in the face at them,” he said. “It was just something I thought we needed to do to continue to have a strong family structure here in North Carolina.”

Opponents said the question will hurt the state's business climate because of the perception that gays and lesbians aren't welcome.

They likened the marriage amendment to previous constitutional provisions in North Carolina that banned interracial marriage and sought to discourage the desegregation of the public schools.

“This is the unfortunate history of social issues in our in our state constitution,” said Sen. Josh Stein, D-Wake.
“How will the votes we cast today be seen through the lens of time? How will history remember this day?”

Debate on the amendment in the Senate began as several hundred opponents rallied behind the Legislative Building. Earlier, several business executives and a nonprofit leader warned passage would move jobs to other states and discourage companies that offer benefits to partners of same-sex couples from expanding here.

Greenville resident Aaron Lucier was among the crowd waiting to hear the vote tally Tuesday. He serves as faculty advisor to the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgendered Student Union at East Carolina University.

“There was somewhat of an expectation, especially after the House voted yesterday,” he said. “This was a blow that came in bits and pieces.
“I think our community is prepared not so much to fight this as to educate people and share our stories. We are a state full of understanding people who have other things on their minds ... jobs, the economy, hurricane recovery.”
ECU coach Ruffin McNeill talks with quarterback Rio Johnson during practice on Tuesday afternoon. (Rhett Butler/The Daily Reflector)

Practicing with purpose
By Nathan Summers
The Daily Reflector
Wednesday, September 14, 2011

The East Carolina football team returned to practice Tuesday night mindful of its 0-2 start to the season but determined to begin filling the empty half of its record with wins. Perhaps the toughest part of the Pirates' scheduled bye week is knowing how great of a chance they had against both No. 12 South Carolina two Saturdays ago and No. 11 Virginia Tech last weekend, games they led at halftime.

Although wanting to play right away is a natural reaction to a loss, ECU head coach Ruffin McNeill is hoping to make the most of the team's bye week.

“We came here to win football games, we came here to win championships,” McNeill said following Tuesday's practice. “We have played two great football teams and I feel like we could have won both (games), and we learned from it, so I'm looking forward to this week.”

As a former player, McNeill knows all too well what it's like to want to play the next game on the schedule and how tough it is to be forced to wait. The second-year head coach also knows how valuable an extra week can be, no matter when it comes.

“They want to play a game, and (the bye week) came early to us this year,” said McNeill, now 6-9 with the Pirates. “We'll deal with it. I'd really like to keep playing to get our rhythm offensively, defensively and on special teams. Maybe about the fifth or sixth game is probably best (for an open date) if you had to pick.”

Scouting C-USA
Although there are still nonconference tilts remaining for East Carolina against in-state rival North Carolina and Navy, the quest for a third C-USA crown begins next weekend with the 0-1 UAB Blazers, who endured a 39-0 season-opening loss at Florida last week. This Saturday, senior quarterback Bryan Ellis and the Blazers get their C-USA start by hosting West Division member Tulane (1-1) at Legion Field.

Following the Pirates' Oct. 1 home clash with UNC, they travel out of state for the first time to take on Heisman Trophy possibility Case Keenum and C-USA favorite Houston, already 2-0 and set to face 1-1 Louisiana Tech on Saturday. After wins over UCLA and North Texas, the Cougars boast the top pass offense in the nation (463.5 yards per game). The following week ECU heads to Memphis, where the Tigers have continued last season's tailspin with an 0-2 start thanks to blowout losses to Mississippi State and Arkansas State. This week the Tigers host 0-1 Austin Peay.

Following their final nonconference date against the Midshipmen on Oct. 22, the Pirates host consecutive league games — Oct. 29 against the Green Wave and Nov. 5 against Southern Miss (1-1).

Tulane outlasted Southeastern Louisiana on opening day before being routed by Tulsa last week.
The Golden Eagles, meanwhile, had their record evened by Marshall last week in an East Division clash, and will look to bounce back this week at home against the same Lions of Southeastern Louisiana.

ECU's final leg of C-USA play includes away games against 1-1 UTEP and the 1-1 Thundering Herd sandwiched around a home tussle with unbeaten UCF, quite possibly to decide C-USA East.
UTEP needed overtime to overcome Stony Brook, and then lost its C-USA debut to SMU.

The Knights, who helped to derail the Pirates' title hopes in last year's meeting in Orlando, have already chalked up easy victories over Charleston Southern and struggling Boston College.

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UNC's Withers reassures faculty in email

BY ROBBI PICKERAL - Staff Writer

North Carolina interim football coach Everett Withers wants to win games. But in a Sept. 7 email sent to the university's faculty, he stressed that he wants to do so with players who also want to earn a degree.

"We are committed to a recruiting process to find young men who possess a desire to achieve success not only on the football field, but in the classroom and the Carolina Community," wrote Withers, whose team is 2-0 entering Saturday's game against Virginia.

North Carolina's football program has come under fire over the past 15 months as the NCAA investigated academic misconduct by Tar Heels players and cases of impermissible benefits. University officials are scheduled to address the NCAA's allegations of nine major violations by the football program at an Oct. 28 hearing in Indianapolis.

The academic issues include an undergraduate tutor - who also worked for former coach Butch Davis - who paid for a player's parking tickets and airfare, and who gave multiple Tar Heels improper help on class assignments.

Earlier this month, the chair of the Department of African and Afro-American Studies, Julius Nyang'oro, resigned his position after The News & Observer reported he hired a sports agent to teach a summer class while the
agent was representing two Tar Heels football players, without telling his boss about the agent's profession.

Nyang'oro also missed a blatant case of plagiarism in a paper submitted by one football player, Michael McAdoo, and his department allowed incoming freshman Marvin Austin, a prized recruit, to take a 400-level class taught by Nyang'oro before Austin had taken introductory classes.

McAdoo and Austin were among those kicked off the team last season as part of the NCAA investigation.

Withers wrote in his email to faculty that when recruiting players, the football coaches promote, in this order:

The top-notch academic reputation of North Carolina;

The school's 28-sport program playing at a high level;

The great social experience on campus and in the surrounding community.

Withers then urged faculty to call him, or the associate director of academic football for counseling, if they had any issues with football players.

"We understand it is our responsibility to develop young men athletically, but also to help in their maturation and social skills," he wrote.

This isn't the first time Withers, promoted at the end of July to replace the fired Davis, has reached out to different groups. Last week, he wrote a letter to students, printed in The Daily Tar Heel, asking them to support the team. During training camp, he also invited former lettermen to attend a closed scrimmage; as part of his thank-you note to them, Withers included a poem titled, "The Bridge Builder."

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Withers' letter to UNC faculty

I wanted all of you to know that the football staff, support personnel, and I have a commitment to the University of North Carolina to play an exciting brand of football, but more importantly, to play football with young men who want to graduate with a degree second-to-none from this great institution.

We are committed to a recruiting process to find young men who possess a desire to achieve success not only on the football field, but in the
classroom, and in the Carolina Community. We talk a lot in Kenan Football Center about three distinct areas to promote in recruiting:

1. The top-notch academic reputation of UNC

2. Athletics at UNC; 28 sports playing at a high-level, including championship football!

3. The great social experience on campus and in the surrounding community

These three points are referenced consistently in recruiting young men that want a great education and an opportunity to play exciting, championship football in a terrific social setting.

We understand it is our responsibility to develop young men athletically, but also to help in their maturation and social skills. If you have an issue with any of our football student-athletes, feel free to contact me or the Associate Director of Academic Counseling for Football. As we are partners in these young men's development, do not hesitate or wait so that we can address issues promptly.

We know that the experience our student-athletes have at UNC lasts not for just four or five years, but for a lifetime. Thanks for allowing me some of your time.

Go Heels!
Oblinger takes research post
From staff reports

KANNAPOLIS James Oblinger, the former N.C. State University chancellor who resigned under pressure in 2009, was named Tuesday to a key post at the N.C. Research Campus in Kannapolis.

Oblinger was named president of the David H. Murdock Research Institute, a public charity that supports research at the campus on the grounds of a former textile mill in Kannapolis. There, scientists from various universities collaborate on research in nutrition, health and biotechnology.

A food scientist, Oblinger already has experience on the campus, where for two years he has been a faculty member in NCSU's Plants for Human Health Institute.

Oblinger resigned from the chancellor's position at NCSU amid the controversy about the university's hiring of former state first lady Mary Easley. He kept his faculty position but worked at the 350-acre campus in Kannapolis, north of Charlotte.

In a news release Tuesday, the institute said that Oblinger would focus on expanding public and private partnerships at the research campus.

The institute is named for David Murdock, the Dole Food owner who founded the $1.5 billion public-private research campus.
Sept. 13, 2011

**Elon quickly addresses incidents involving racial slurs**

By Roselee Papandrea / Times-News

ELON — “Not on our campus.”

It’s the message that Elon University president Leo Lambert sent to students at a college coffee meeting held Tuesday morning to address two recent incidents on campus where students were subjected to racial slurs yelled from vehicles.

It’s also what was printed on stickers that many Elon University students wore throughout the day.

“Our hope is that people will see them and it will raise awareness,” said Sam Warren, an Elon University senior and executive president of the Student Government Association. “… It will, hopefully, at least start the conversation and make sure people know what’s happening in a more visible way.”

Last week, someone drove a car dangerously close to a student walking on campus.

“It was enough to scare her, and the person yelled the N word out the window,” Lambert said. “… That’s been unacceptable in this country for a very, very, very long time. It runs counter to everything that Elon University stands for. We were all shocked and dismayed that this would happen.”

The incident was reported to officials on campus, and the Elon University Campus Police are investigating. No suspects have been identified.

Following the football game on Saturday, racial slurs were yelled from a white pickup truck at a student walking on Williamson Avenue. Officials don’t think a student was involved in that incident.

Lambert decided to address the issue by sending students an email on Sunday.

“We have just welcomed the best qualified and most diverse class in Elon’s history, milestones for celebration,” Lambert said in the email. “In an academic community that welcomes all and operates on an honor code based on the principles of honesty, integrity, responsibility and respect, each of us
must take personal responsibility for protecting and preserving an environment in which we feel safe, a prerequisite for learning and inquiry.”

In the email, Lambert invited students to make a special effort to attend the college coffee held on the Phi Beta Kappa Commons Tuesday morning.

“Your very presence at the college coffee this week can be a symbol of our common resolve,” he said. “Please come and be counted.”

More than 2,500 students participated in the coffee meeting, Lambert said.

“I think what we want to emphasize here is the positive,” Lambert said. “So many people here at Elon have stepped up and said this is not what we are about and we want to come together and express our resolve.”

A total of 16 percent of this year’s freshman class is made up of ethnically diverse students, including 7 percent black, 3 percent Asian, 4 percent Hispanic and 2 percent multiracial. In addition, another 7 percent of the 1,418 in the freshman class is made up of international students.

Warren said the stickers and the discussions held about the recent incidents have impacted a variety of students.

“I think a lot of people actually took it very well and made sure it was handled appropriately,” Warren said. “People understand it’s not just race, but it’s gender and sexual orientation. It could happen to anyone. We want to make sure everyone feels comfortable and no one feels unsafe.”

Lambert plans to reiterate the message Thursday at the university’s Call to Honor ceremony held for the Class of 2015 where time will be spent talking about the school’s policies regarding honesty, integrity, respect and responsibility.

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Texting while walking 'not safe'
BY BRUCE SICELOFF - Staff Writer

Standing on the curb at Horne and Hillsborough streets in Raleigh, Laura Gilleran wanted to get off the phone before the light turned green.

"OK, Mom, I love you," she said. "OK. OK."

Gilleran snapped her phone shut as the pedestrian signal chirped its "walk now" tune. After checking the cars that were slowing to a stop in front of the N.C. State University campus, she started across busy Hillsborough Street.

If she'd still been in the middle of her phone conversation, she said, she'd still be back on the sidewalk.

"I don't use my phone when I'm crossing the street," said Gilleran, 27, of Raleigh. "If you can't hear a car coming and you don't see what's going on, it's not safe. It's not safe."

That's what Kumar Trivedi says, too. He oversees the bicycle and pedestrian division at the state Department of Transportation, and he recently alerted pedestrians about the dangers of distracted walking.

Put away your mobile phone and unplug your mobile music before you cross the street, he said, so you can see what's coming.
"You need to be aware of your surroundings when you cross the road," Trivedi said. "School is opening up, and the weather is so good that people are walking around. Sometimes we need to remind the public, as we remind our children, what to do and what not to do."

About 2,500 pedestrians are struck by cars in North Carolina each year, with about 170 of them killed and an additional 240 injured seriously. Investigating officers report apparent alcohol use by pedestrians in about 12 percent of these crashes - that's triple the alcohol rate reported for the drivers.

**More study needed**

Safety experts have developed estimates about the hazards of distracted driving, but there are no solid numbers for pedestrians distracted by their iPods and Androids.

"You'll read in a newspaper or hear about a cellphone being knocked out of somebody's hand, or a cellphone found on the pavement at the scene of a pedestrian crash," said Charlie Zegeer, who heads the Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center at the UNC Highway Safety Research Center.

One case involved an exchange student at UNC-Chapel Hill who was wearing music headphones as she jogged across the campus in October 2008. She died when she ran into the path of a bus. Investigators concluded that she never heard or saw the danger.

Other examples from research:

Ohio State University researchers reported that 1,000 pedestrians visited hospital emergency rooms in 2008 for injuries they suffered after they tripped or hit something while they were talking or texting on their mobile phones.

Phone distraction was especially hazardous for Londoners on one busy street, where 68,000 texting mishaps were reported in 2007. Authorities wrapped lampposts with padding so these walking zombies wouldn't be hurt when they bumped into them.

A study by the University of Alabama at Birmingham found that school children using cellphones took 20 percent longer to cross the street and were 20 percent less likely to look both ways. These slow-crossing phone users also were 43 percent more likely to get hit by a car.

'It won't happen to me'
Lauren Brown didn't hang up her phone Monday when she walked across Hillsborough Street to get lunch. The Road Worrier asked whether she felt she pays enough attention to the traffic while she's on the phone.

"Probably not," said Brown, 24, of Cary.

"I pay attention to that sign," she said, pointing to the pedestrian crosswalk signal. "But probably not, like, the whole looking left and right thing.

"I guess everyone thinks nothing really bad can happen to them."

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Two charged with rape at College Inn

BY THOMASI MCDONALD AND KEN TYSIAC - Staff Writers

RALEIGH Two men, one of them a student at N.C. State University, have been charged with raping a woman at the College Inn student apartments on Western Boulevard last week.

Court records indicate two other men may have been involved, but they have not been charged.

Jelani Ajani Atsu Idesle Allen and Brian Marvin Carridice, both 21, both have been charged with first-degree rape and first-degree sex offense, according to arrest warrants. Allen is a senior at NCSU.

Raleigh police Detective A.J. Doughty stated in a search warrant made public Tuesday that he arrived at the NCSU campus on Friday after a woman reported that she had been sexually assaulted late Thursday night through the early morning hours.

The woman told Doughty that she accepted a ride from Carridice from downtown Raleigh. The woman told police that Carridice and a second man in the car traveled to 2717 Western Blvd., where they met Allen in a third-floor room. The woman told police Carridice, Allen and two other men sexually assaulted her while holding her down against her will, court records show.

Officers with the City County Bureau of Identification arrived at the room and took the bed linens. They also found open condom wrappers and used condoms, Doughty stated in the court affidavit.

Investigators on Friday night obtained two search warrants that enabled them to gather DNA samples to compare with the evidence that was discovered in the room, court records show.

Carridice, who lives at 3041 Richward Place in Raleigh, was in the Wake County jail Tuesday in lieu of $600,000 bail, which could be reduced to $250,000 bail with electronic house arrest, a jail spokesman said. State records show that Carridice has previous criminal convictions for drug violations, resisting an officer and breaking and entering.
Allen was released Monday on $150,000 secured bond. In court papers requesting a reduction of Allen's bail, defense lawyer A. Patrick Roberts stated that Allen has no prior criminal history and is majoring in computer science.

A Southeast Raleigh High graduate, Allen was a walk-on with the Wolfpack soccer team in 2008 and 2009 but never played in a game, an NCSU spokesperson said.

News researcher Peggy Neal contributed to this report.

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As income inequality has increased in the United States over the last decade, so too has the gap between rich and poor colleges and universities.

Between 1999 and 2009, private research universities that enroll about 1.1 million students increased their education-related spending per student by about $7,500, to almost $36,000. But in that same period, education-related spending stayed nearly flat, at slightly more than $10,000 per student, at the public community colleges that enroll 6.7 million students, according to a report, “Trends in College Spending,” being released Wednesday.

“The growing gap between the haves and the have-nots has become much more exaggerated over the last 10 years,” said Jane Wellman, executive director of the Delta Project on Postsecondary Education Costs, Productivity and Accountability, the Washington, research group issuing the report.

While tuition has risen at public and private institutions alike, the inequality between the two sectors has grown, as the public colleges’ increased tuition revenues have not been nearly enough to make up for their loss of state and local appropriations.

Just from 2008 to 2009, the latest year for which data is available, community colleges’ net tuition increased $113, but their per-student spending declined by $254, mostly because of shrinking state and local financing. In that year, appropriations to community colleges nationwide fell an average $488 per student. At public research universities, which enroll 4.1 million students, net tuition increased by $369 — but appropriations declined by $751 per student, and spending per student increased only $92.

“If you’re trying to explain to a parent where the money’s going, it’s going into a big hole,” Ms. Wellman said. “Tuition increases are making up for less than half, on average, of what institutions lost in state funds.”

At private institutions, from 2008 to 2009, both tuition and spending have been rising. Private research universities’ per-student spending increased by $907, and private liberal arts colleges’ $298, while their net tuition increased $293 and $381, respectively.
Ms. Wellman said she did not expect any quick turnaround in state financing for public higher education.

Experts in higher education say it is difficult to imagine the nation’s returning to its former position of having the best-educated work force as long as the community colleges that educate the largest share of the population are the worst-financed sector.

“While it’s always been that way, in the last decade, like everything else, it’s been pushed to extremes,” said Patrick M. Callan, president of the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education. “Higher education is more stratified than it’s ever been.”

The Delta Project report did find some good news. Over the last decade, there has been an increase in the share of enrolled students who complete degree and certificate program, and a decline in the number of credit hours they amass in doing so, compressing the cost of their credentials.

“There’s higher degree productivity across the board, but particularly in public institutions,” Ms. Wellman said.
On Wednesday, Eva Sasson and Justin Mardjuki will present their mobile app at the DEMO conference in Silicon Valley. Unlike most of the other entrepreneurs pitching products at the conference, Sasson, 19, and Mardjuki, 18, are full-time college students. The pair started TappMob this summer while on break from school. They’re one of the ten presentation slots that DEMO is giving to college students during the conference, which began on September 12.

TappMob’s mobile app lets people check in at a location and notify just one person or small groups of people with a single touch of a button as opposed to publicly checking in on a service such as Foursquare. They developed the application for young people like them whose parents asked them to check in when driving. “Everytime I would drive somewhere my mom would be calling to check in but I couldn’t pick up the phone to talk while I was driving,” says Sasson, co-founder and CEO of the company. Now, with a touch of a button, she can send her mother her location on a map to let her know where she is.

The app started out as a summertime project but developed quickly into a full-blown company. Sasson and Mardjuki have received seed funding from Accretive, a private investment firm based in New York City. The amount wasn’t disclosed. On September 11, TappMob submitted its first app to the Apple App Store. The company is now developing three more mobile apps based on the idea of one-touch simplicity.

TappMob will be comprised completely of college students. Sasson is studying at Columbia University and Mardjuki is an undergraduate at the University of Pennsylvania’s Wharton School of Business. They met in eighth grade, while taking the Spanish placement test for The College Preparatory School in Oakland, California. Sasson lent Mardjuki a pencil for the exam.

The pair is part of a new wave of entrepreneurs under the age of 20. In May, Peter Thiel announced the members of the 20 Under 20 Thiel Fellowships, giving young people a two-year stint and $100,000 grant to turn their ideas into companies. A number of those fellowship winners dropped out of college to accept the fellowship.
Sasson and Mardjuki did not receive grants from Peter Thiel and they plan to stay in school. Says Sasson, “We’re not going to drop out, our education comes first.”