THE DAILY CLIPS

September 16, 2010

News, commentary, and opinion
compiled by the East Carolina University News Bureau from:

The Greenville Daily Reflector
The Raleigh News & Observer
The New York Times
The Wall Street Journal
USA Today
The Charlotte Observer
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Newsweek
U.S. News & World Report
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Underperforming ECU programs may get the ax

The university is expecting further cuts next year as the state faces a potential $3.3 billion shortfall.

BY JOSH HUMPHRIES
The Daily Reflector

The East Carolina University Board of Trustees will discuss the possibility of eliminating underperforming programs in a special session during its regular committee meetings today. The board will hold committee meetings today at the Mendenhall Student Center on campus.

Provost Marilyn Sheerer will present the policies for examining programs at the university that could be eliminated in an effort to save money. Having already absorbed millions of dollars in cuts from the state, the university is expecting further cuts next year as the state faces a potential $3.3 billion shortfall.

The University of North Carolina system dictates how universities can eliminate programs. If a program is eliminated and classes are taught by tenured professors, the professors would have to be given a new assignment because they cannot be laid off with the elimination of a program.

Options include eliminating a program while making sure students already in the program can graduate, restructuring the program, consideration of combining the program with one from another UNC school, keep the program with steps to improve its enrollment or keep the program the same. Officials will consider things such as enrollment numbers in the program and other factors, including the importance of the program to the university’s overall mission, faculty involvement and the quality of the program.

The facilities and resources committee, which meets at 3:30 p.m., will take a look at plans for a new gym complex to be attached to Minges Coliseum. The building will include locker rooms for Williams Arena.

Contact Josh Humphries at jhumphries@reflector.com or (252) 329-9565.

See ECU, A9

ECU

Continued from A1

University staff will be examining programs throughout campus to make recommendations for the future of those programs.
‘Spacetalking with Astronauts’ launches Friday

The Daily Reflector

As NASA finalizes plans for the last-ever space shuttle mission, two astronauts will reflect on their former missions Friday at East Carolina University.

Husband and wife astronauts Steve Nagel and Linda Godwin will present “Spacetalking with Astronauts” at 10 a.m. in the Murphy Center’s Harvey Hall.

The two will discuss their experiences with NASA, followed by a question-and-answer session.

Nagel, a former NASA astronaut and retired colonel in the U.S. Air Force, became a NASA astronaut in August 1979, and he first flew as a mission specialist on the Shuttle Discovery in 1985.

Later that year, Nagel piloted the Shuttle Challenger on its last successful mission. He went on to complete two more missions as commander, one of the Shuttle Atlantis in 1991 and his final on the Shuttle Columbia in 1993. Nagel logged 723 hours, or 30 days, in space.


After serving as payload commander on Shuttle Endeavour in 1994, Godwin again flew on Atlantis in 1996 on a docking mission with Russian Space Station Mir, completing her first space walk. Her last mission, in 2001, was to the International Space Station aboard Endeavour.

Prior to her retirement last month, she had logged more than 912 hours, or 38 days, in space.

Friday’s event is sponsored by the NASA Astrobiology Institute, Astrobiology@ECU, the Department of Biology and GO-Science. Doors open at 9 a.m.; refreshments will be served.

The talk is free, but tickets are required. For tickets, visit www.go-science.org/spacetalk or call 565-0302.
COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Lebo’s time crunch

Pirates hold first team workout at Minges

BY TONY CASTLEBERRY
The Daily Reflector

Jeff Lebo is hoping he can get a lot accomplished in just two hours a week.

Lebo, East Carolina’s first-year men’s basketball coach, conducted his first team workout Wednesday afternoon in Minges Coliseum and the session was short on talking, but long on activity.

After the players had a brief shootaround and Lebo had a quick word with his team, the new ECU coach hit the ground running, putting the Pirates through basketball camp-like drills, but at a rapid pace with very little rest in between. Lebo has to work quickly since he’s only allowed two hours of work with his team per week until practice officially begins Oct. 15.

“It’s hard to get a lot done with (just) two hours in a week,” Lebo said. “You just want to try to get some things in that will help you so when you start practice, they’ve got kind of a feel for what it’s going to be.

“The bad thing about it is, we’re going twice a week for an hour and they get used to thinking that practice is going to be an hour.”

Lebo laughed out loud after that statement, implying that his players better be prepared for a much more demanding schedule in a month’s time.

But the Pirates have already begun building a solid foundation, having participated in individual workouts in groups of four or less for the past couple of weeks and playing pickup ball every chance they get.

The workouts have been beneficial for Lebo as well.

“I’ve been pleased with those,” Lebo said. “The kids have been working hard and you get a little taste of what they can do.”

While ECU will be trying to focus even more on the team concept from this point forward, the Pirates weren’t at 100 percent capacity on Wednesday.

Senior point guard Brock Young, the team’s leading scorer and Conference USA’s leading assists man last season, sat on the sideline with an ice bag on his right knee while Tony Smith, a 6-foot-5 junior college transfer who prepped at J.H. Rose, won’t play for the Pirates this season and isn’t enrolled in school.

ECU’S CHAD WYNN, left, is guarded by teammates Darius Morales, right, and Miguel Paul during a team workout at Minges Coliseum on Wednesday. Follow ECU sports online at reflector.com.

Not having Smith is a setback, but one that Lebo is confident his squad, which returns 10 letterwinners from last season, can overcome.

“We’ve got some pieces,” Lebo said. “We’ll rely on some guys that are all pretty experienced guys coming back. They’ve been through the wars.”

Contact Tony Castleberry at tcastleberry@reflector.com or (252) 329-9591.
Lara Bailey Lee

Lara Bailey Lee "Mama Lee", 78, of Aurora passed away on Sunday Sept. 12, 2010 in the home of her daughter.

She was born in Franklin County, Tenn.

She is survived by one son, Raleigh Bradford Lee III and wife, Barbara Lee, of Aurora; two daughters, Cindy L. Johnson and husband, Danny Johnson, of Aurora and Bonnie L. Dixon and husband, Perry Dixon, of Kennels Beach; grandchildren, Marshall Bradford Lee, Jessica Johnson Smith, Cole Johnson and Danielle Johnson.

She is one of nine children, survived by three sisters, Wilma Hesketh, Nora Mae Burkhalter and Arlene Swiner, all of Tennessee.

Not only was she a loving mother, she had a preschool and daycare in her home in Aurora. She was housemother for ADPi of ECU for 17 years. She received several awards for her service. She loved the Lord and her family and will be missed by all.

A celebration of her life will be held at 2:00 p.m., Saturday, Sept. 18 at the home of Danny and Cindy Johnson, 27 Whitley Road, Aurora.

In lieu of flowers donations may be made to United Hospice, 1310 Helen Ave., New Bern, NC 28560 or any cancer research facility of one's choice.

Arrangements by Bryant Funeral Home & Cre- mations, Alliance.
GREENVILLE

Sickle cell symposium planned

A sickle cell symposium is scheduled for 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Friday at Eastern AHEC, 2000 Venture Tower Drive. "Sickle Cell Disease at 100: Celebrating accomplishments and looking for a cure" will present a program on the historical review of sickle cell disease, management of sickle cell disease in children, management of sickle cell disease in adults and the CareCard. There also will be a patient panel and personal testimony on living with the disease. Lunch will be served.

Other centennial celebration events will include a program on therapies and future perspectives at 7:30 a.m. on Sept. 22 in Room 2E-92 of East Carolina University's Brody School of Medicine. Dr. Beng Fu of the Department of Pediatrics will speak.

For more information, call 744-5220.
Colleges’ costly spending sprees

By Andrew Hacker and Claudia Dreifus

At Pomona College, a top-flight liberal arts school in California, this year’s sticker price for tuition and fees is a hefty $38,394 (not including room and board). Even after adjusting for inflation, that comes to 2.9 times what Pomona was charging a generation ago, in 1980.

This kind of massive tuition increase is the norm. In New England, Williams College charges $41,434, or an inflation-adjusted 3.2 times what it did 30 years ago. Southern Cal’s current tab of $41,022 is a 3.6 multiple of its 1980 bill.

Tuition at public universities, in a time of ailing state budgets, has risen at an even faster rate. The University of Illinois’ current $13,658 is six times its 1980 rate after adjusting for inflation. San Jose State’s $6,250 is a whopping 11 times more.

If you look at how that added revenue is being spent, it’s hard to argue that students are getting a lot of extra value for all that extra money. Why? Colleges aren’t spending their extra revenues, which we calculate to be about $40 billion a year nationally over 1980 revenues, in ways that most benefit students.

One thing colleges are spending more on is athletic teams, which have become a more pronounced – and costly – presence on campuses everywhere. Even volleyball teams travel extensively these days, with paid coaches and customized uniforms. Currently, 629 schools have football teams – 132 more than in 1980. And all but 14 of them lose money, including some with national names. It’s true that alumni donations sometimes increase during winning seasons, but most of those gifts go specifically to athletics or other designated uses, not toward general educational programs.

And meanwhile, the cost of sports continues to rise. The average football squad has gone from 82 to 102 players, due to sub-specialties required by esoteric coaching strategies. The number of women’s sports teams has also risen sharply. Since 1980, for example, the number of women’s soccer programs has soared from 80 to 956. And teams cost money – often lots of it. Varsity golf at Duke, open to both genders, costs an estimated $20,405 per player per year. Because there are no revenues for most sports, the deficits often have to be covered by tuition bills.

Another source of increased expense is administration. Since 1980, the number of administrators per student at colleges has about doubled; on most campuses their numbers now match the number of faculty. Here are some of their titles: senior specialist of assessment; director for learning communities; assistant dean of students for substance education; director of knowledge access services.

Needless to say, these officials claim that they offer needed services. Who can be opposed to ensuring access and assessment? But let’s not forget that tuition pays for all these deans and directors; having more of them means higher bills for students.

Added tuition revenue has also gone to raise faculty salaries. Yale’s full-time faculty members now average $129,400, up 64 percent in inflation-adjusted

Cont’d...
dollars from what they made in 1980. (Pay in other sectors of the U.S. economy rose only about 5 percent in this period.) Stanford's tenured and tenure-track professors are doing even better, averaging $153,900, an 83 percent increase over 1980.

We're told such stipends are needed to get top talent, but we're not so sure. Faculty stars may raise prestige, but they are often away from the classroom, having negotiated frequent paid leaves and smaller teaching loads — underwritten, of course, by tuition.

Complete data on college presidents' pay is easily accessible only back to 1991. Yet even in that relatively short span, many college leaders have seen their salaries double in inflation-adjusted dollars. Carleton's president today gets 2.4 times more than the president did 19 years ago; at NYU, pay has risen by 2.7 times. Measured another way, it takes the tuitions of 31 Vanderbilt students to cover their president's $1.2 million annual stipend. We have yet to see evidence that lofiting more money to the top enhances the quality of instruction.

In theory, all this extra tuition money should permit the hiring of more junior faculty, which might mean smaller introductory courses. But on many campuses, huge classes remain the norm. One reason is that most teaching budgets are consumed by senior professors. Amherst's full professors absorb 77 percent of the cash available for full-time faculty. At Berkeley, they sop up 73 percent. At Northern Arizona, it's 75 percent. The little that's left is parcelled out among junior professors and underpaid adjuncts, who despite rising tuitions are doing an increasing portion of the teaching.

The cost of room and board has gone up sharply too, with charges often double or more in inflation-adjusted dollars. At Bowdoin and UCLA, they have gone up three times. Most college tours will show that student living standards have risen too. Rooms once had only simple beds and battered desks. Now suites are wired for electronic gear, with fully-equipped kitchens down the hall.

As to dining, food costs may be lower than ever, but not on college campuses, where the quality of campus dining has become a marketing tool. Whether more elaborate menus make students more studious is not known.

The travesty of high tuition is that most of the extra charges aren't going for education. Administrators, athletics and amenities get funded, while history departments are denied new assistant professors. A whole generation of young Americans is being shortchanged, largely by adults who have carved out good careers in places we call colleges.

MCT INFORMATION SERVICES

Andrew Hacker, who is on the faculty of Queens College, and Claudia Dreifus, who teaches at Columbia University, are the authors of "Higher Education? How Colleges Are Wasting Our Money and Failing Our Kids and What We Can Do About It." They wrote this for The Los Angeles Times.
Bedbugs come crawling in the Carolinas

Colleges clean dorms as tiny pests invade schools, hotels and homes.

By Steve Lyttle
slyttle@charlotteobserver.com
Posted: Thursday, Sep. 16, 2010

In the latest sign that bedbugs are making a big comeback, officials at Catawba College in Salisbury closed nearly half of the school's dormitories on Wednesday so exterminators could attack a growing infestation.

Nearly wiped out four decades ago, the parasitic pests are again infesting homes and businesses across the Carolinas and the rest of the country, exterminators and health experts say.

"The problem is much more widespread than people realize," said Andrew Rogers, bedbug treatment manager for Indian Trail-based Killingsworth Environmental.

"A few years ago, exterminators' biggest business was termites. In a few years, it will be bedbugs."

In 2006, Rogers' company had no service calls for bedbugs. On Wednesday, Rogers was in Asheville, doing battle with the bugs - the company's 198th call this year.

While exterminators spent eight hours Wednesday in about a half-dozen residence halls at Catawba College, their counterparts in Winston-Salem were doing the same thing at Wake Forest University. Officials at both schools say students returning to campus probably brought the bugs with them.

And it's not just a Carolinas problem.

In recent weeks, bedbugs have become a national story, with infestations reported in government offices across the United States, including IRS buildings in Philadelphia and outside Cincinnati.

"While bedbugs were nearly eradicated in the United States, they continued to exist elsewhere in the world," said Jung Kim, bedbug specialist with the N.C. Division of Environmental Health in Raleigh. "The increase in international travel has brought the bugs back to the United States."
In addition, bedbugs lost their mortal enemy about 40 years ago. Exterminators used DDT in the 1950s and 1960s against the bugs, but the EPA outlawed DDT use because it is a cancer-causing agent.

Bedbugs don't spread diseases, but their bite causes itching and scabs. Infections sometimes result from scratching the bite marks.

Bedbugs are spread by luggage and clothing. Kim said they can be found anywhere in the house but prefer to hide in bedding.

"They'll bite pets, but they prefer humans," he said.

They leave a telltale trail of fecal material, but Kim said most people attribute the bites and black specks to other causes.

'Trying to be proactive'

In Salisbury, Catawba College students who live in Abernethy Village were told to leave their dormitory rooms Wednesday morning and take all their clothing and bedding to be washed. About 120 of the school's 1,000 students were affected. They were to be allowed back in the rooms Wednesday night.

"We are trying to be proactive," said Tonia Black-Gold, spokeswoman for Catawba College. "We initially had four complaints, but the number has grown this week."

Catawba officials said they received a few complaints last week and increased pest management control efforts. But they said the problem grew rapidly.

"More residents complained, and the exterminators found evidence of bedbugs in the common spaces of the residence halls," Black-Gold said. "After several dozen cases, we decided to treat comprehensively all of the residence halls where we had reports."

Students were told to wash clothes, bedding and towels. Pest management experts say it takes water of 120 degrees or hotter to kill the bugs.

Wake Forest officials this week hired a second pest control company after bedbug reports increased. University officials said they began receiving complaints from students when classes started in August. Those problems spread from the south side of campus to the north side in recent days.

Officials at two area schools, UNC Charlotte and Wingate University, said Wednesday they had not received reports of bedbug problems. But both schools said they are watching and waiting.

In homes and hotels

It's not just a problem on campuses.

"We are called to get rid of bedbugs at a lot of hotels in the Charlotte area - the two-star hotels and the four-star hotels," Rogers said. "The quality of the hotel doesn't make any difference."

They're being found in Charlotte-area homes, too.
Augie Vizcarrondo, who lives in west Charlotte near the airport, bought his house four years ago and tries to keep it "spotless." He was horrified to discover bedbugs in a guest bedroom last month.

"On the outer layer sheet I saw spots of blood, like someone was poked or something," said Vizcarrondo, 52. He looked closer and found bugs.

"When I saw that, I got crazy. I didn't know what to do."

He fumigated his house with a kit from Wal-Mart and bought a vinyl mattress cover. He threw away all the bedding from that room. He hasn't seen bedbugs since, but still feels violated.

"It's an ugly feeling to know they were in your house," he said.

Vizcarrondo submitted his experience through the Carolinas Public Insight Network, an Observer reader engagement project.

Inconvenient and expensive

For Catawba students, Wednesday's battle with the bedbugs was inconvenient and expensive, but college officials promised to help.

"It's kind of chaotic," student Holly Steen told WCNC-TV, the Observer's news partner. "It makes it kind of hard to function, with classes and everything."

College officials said they are working with faculty members to be lenient with students because many of them have papers, exams and other assignments due in the next few days.

"The college is also providing funds for students to treat their fabric with high heat in dryers at area Laundromats," Black-Gold said. Observer staff writer Ely Portillo and WCNC-TV contributed.

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NCSU recruits new mascot to prowl sidelines

Fans seemed to like Tuffy I, tended by Danielle Setlener, who debuted at NCSU's game Sept. 4. But the dog didn't work out as Wolfpack mascot because of questions about her kennel. A new Tuffy is revealed tonight.

By Jay Price - Staff Writer

RALEIGH -- N.C. State University hopes to unveil another wolflike Tamaskan dog tonight for its game against Cincinnati. It will be State's second try this season before a home crowd to restore the tradition of fielding a live mascot.

Like the first dog - which was fired over the weekend amid what may have been a manufactured controversy about the quality of its kennel - this one will be called "Tuffy," after the school's battering wolf logo.

Given the university's torturous history of efforts to put a wolf mascot on the sidelines, the setback should come as no surprise. It is a half-century saga of wolf insanity, wolf cowardice, wolf jailbreak, early wolf death and a once-ridiculed counterfeit wolf that helped inspire the football team to within a, uh, whisker, of a national championship.

Not to mention a guest appearance by a mysterious cow bearing a warning to Duke fans.

It's enough to make the current controversy a minor footnote, especially because university officials insist that they are fully committed to getting a live mascot, even if it takes several trials to find the right one.

"Our fans have made this a priority, so it's definitely a priority for us," said Chris Kingston, NCSU's senior associate director of athletics, who is responsible for getting a live mascot.

Fear that losing the season's first "Tuffy" (her real name is Roxy) may end the live mascot experiment has roiled the Wolfpack Nation, which for years has lobbied for another living, snarling embodiment of its carnivore of choice to complement the costumed Mr. and Ms. Wuf. Something with real fangs, real fur and - let's be honest here - an insatiable hunger for...
Never mind that a host of previous attempts ended badly, starting in the early 1950s with an actual timber wolf named "State."

State was a lone wolf in the sense that he appeared just once at Riddick Stadium for a football game. "According to UPI, the wolf had 'to be dragged across the field, a snipping and snarling bundle of fur,'" says this year's NCSU football yearbook.

Perhaps like many ACC fans, he only cared about basketball season. More likely, though, he was just being himself: Wolves are shy, nocturnal and unsuited to appearing in giant stadiums filled with tens of thousands of roaring fans.

Disappointed university officials sold State to a traveling animal show.

By 1959 memories of his troubled performance had faded, and NCSU acquired another wolf. There was barely time to dub it Lobo before it died a premature death, for reasons lost to history.

Soon came Lobo II who, like State, couldn't handle the job. According to News & Observer columnist Charles Craven, Lobo II "essentially had a nervous breakdown," after being exposed to large crowds, and never really recovered.

Lobo II did have enough gumption to escape from his cage one night, though, and was never seen again, said Tim Peeler, managing editor of the official NCSU athletics website GoPack.com and the university's unofficial sports historian.

**Lobo III, they hardly knew ye**

Then in 1966, the Wolfpack faithful put their hopes on one last wolf, a cute cub named Lobo III bought for $125 that students raised by selling 25-cent shares, Peeler said. University officials were relieved to find that his wolf instincts were weak and he held up well to the crowds.

There was a reason he didn't act like a wolf; an NCSU zoology professor spotted Lobo III one day and noted that the university had been sold a coyote.

There were the inevitable taunts from rivals. Students, though, embraced the coyote, and he became the most successful of the "wolf" mascots. He was stalking the sidelines in 1967 when NCSU had its best football season ever, starting with an 8-0 record, winning its first bowl game and coming within what some believe was a single play of winning the national championship, Peeler said.

Lobo III retired in 1970, was donated to the state zoo and soon died of heartworms.

During his reign, Lobo III wasn't allowed at indoor events. This rule, according to one mention that Peeler found, started (understandably) with another little-known mascot: A milk cow that was sometimes paraded around at halftime wearing a sign: "You're dem right we're cow college. Dook better watch its step."

Since then, the only attempt at live mascots was a group of five malamutes and huskies in the 1970s that drew complaints from fans who didn't think they were enough like wolves, Peeler said.

Now the university is focusing on the Tamaskan, a rare Finnish dog that is smart, people-friendly and, most importantly, bred to look like wolves.

New athletics director Debbie Yow, who has pledged to listen closely to fans' desires, heard from many that they wanted a live mascot, and she is excited about the idea, said Annabelle Myers, assistant athletics director for media relations.

Yow, though, wanted to move cautiously. She was particularly worried, Myers said, that the hoopla of a modern football game, such as the fireworks as the team runs onto the field, would stress the dog or cause some other troubling reaction.

So she told other athletics officials to quietly bring "Tuffy" into the coliseum for the Sept. 4 season opener against Western Carolina for a one-game tryout. Feedback from fans was overwhelmingly positive, Myers said, though some thought the dog should be bigger or fiercer. Others said that it was the right dog, but there should be an entire pack.

Also, though, university officials began to get e-mail accusing Tuffy's owner, Kevin Settineri of RightPuppy kennel in Salisbury, of poor breeding practices.
On Saturday, Kingston, the senior associate director of athletics, told Settineri that the trial was ending and Tuffy’s services were no longer required. In an interview Kingston declined to say whether the puppy mill accusations affected the decision. Several factors were involved, he said, including a worry among some fans that the dog wasn’t large enough.

Settineri said in an interview that the accusations cost him the mascot deal, which would have been great publicity. The complaints, he said, came from people affiliated with a competitor. He added that his kennel had been inspected repeatedly by the American Kennel Club and Rowan County Animal Control.

Rowan animal control officer Thomas Staton said officers had found nothing wrong in several visits. “He’s got a lot of animals, but he takes care of them,” Staton said.

Kingston said Wednesday that there was still paperwork to do on the replacement Tuffy, but that it looked like the arrangements would be complete by game time.

Tonight’s Tuffy, he said, fits NCSU’s goal of finding a local Tamaskan owned by a family rather than a kennel. Even so, tonight will be considered a trial, because you can’t predict how a new mascot will work out.

“There’s just really no way to replicate 60,000 people and the screaming and fireworks,” he said. “So yeah, it’s a trial, but we are committed to doing this and doing it right.”

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During her one-game tryout, Tuffy did well. But she’s been replaced.
ETHAN HYMAN
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RAMSES, THE RIVAL

One reason that N.C. State fans want a live mascot is envy over UNC-Chapel Hill’s Ramses the ram. Since 1924, UNC-CH has fielded a string of live rams, a creature that perhaps makes up for its lack of fierceness with crowd-friendly practicality.

The NCSU student senate passed a resolution in February that calls for a Tamaskan dog as a live mascot and cites Ramses as evidence of the need: “WHEREAS, other Universities across the United States, for example, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill ... and several more still use living mascots ...”

UNC’s mascots have had problems of their own in recent years, though. At the Orange County farm where they live, one ram was mysteriously slaughtered in 1996, and months later a local man confessed to the crime, saying he had been drunk and hungry. Another died in 2008 of an infection after losing a horn in a butting contest with his own son.

And things don’t look so good for the long term. Ramses’ breed, the Horned Dorset sheep, is in danger of going hincetonless, thanks to the growing dominance of a variety bred at (surprise!) N.C. State.

LUCY STAYS HOME

When the second Tuffy makes his debut at Carter-Finley Stadium tonight, he won’t have to worry about tangling with the Cincinnati Bearcats’ live mascot.

Lucy the bearcat is scheduled to appear at all but one Cincinnati home football game this season, but she does not travel with the team. Lucy lives at the Cincinnati Zoo, where she presumably watches the away games on TV.

By the way, the bearcat, also known as a binturong, is neither a bear nor a cat, but a member of the civet family from Southeast Asia and is about the size of a big, furry otter with a long tail. Though classified as carnivores, they mostly eat fruit and have a distinctive odor not unlike hot popcorn.

BEWARE OF TRAFFIC

Tonight’s 7:30 p.m. kickoff for the N.C. State-Cincinnati game means thousands of football fans will be arriving at Carter-Finley Stadium while commuters are making their way home.

N.C. State’s parking lots will open for tailgating five hours before kickoff, but the crowd of 55,000 will still be filing in right up to game time. If your evening travels usually take you through West Raleigh, you might want to plan an alternate route or make other adjustments.

Those with permits to park at Cardinal Gibbons High School will find the lot doesn’t open until 4 p.m., to give the school time to clear its parking lot.
Researchers recruiting Durham families for landmark children's study

BY JIM WISE - STAFF WRITER

DURHAM -- Researchers at UNC-Chapel Hill and Duke University are looking for expectant Durham County parents - and parents who expect to become expectant - to be subjects of a long-term, nationwide study of how children are affected by their environments.

Durham researchers want to enroll 250 children a year for the next four years for a total of 1,000. They announced Durham's part in the National Children's Study on Wednesday at the Museum of Life and Science.

"This is a landmark study of environment and children's health," said UNC-CH sociologist Barbara Entwisle, one of the study's principal investigators for North Carolina. The researchers want to enroll women during pregnancy and follow them and their families until the children are 21.

For study purposes, "environment" is a broad term, including "the air they breathe, the water they drink, the food they eat ... family, friends, neighborhood, all aspects of their health," she said. "It's so important to look at all these holistically."

Entwisle said Durham County was a "random pick" as a study site. The study is under way in 30 other localities, with plans to enroll 100,000 children in 105 locations.

The project has been in design since Congress mandated it in 2000. The home office is the Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, part of the National Institutes of Health. Researchers plan to issue reports and announce findings along the way.

"As soon as we learn something, we'll let people know," Entwisle said.

The announcement was made in a festive setting, with offering of temporary tattoos, beanbag tossing, crayons and paper, goody bags, cake and three drawings for bicycles.

Word had gone out on the museum's mailing list, museum spokeswoman Taneka Bennett said, and with Wednesday being free-admission day for Durham County residents, the announcement was made to a meeting room packed with children and young mothers.

"We want to get the word out to the community about the study, so we thought we'd use a community venue that is likely to attract young families who are likely to have more children," Duke pediatrician Emmanuel "Chip" Walter said, who will share the lead investigator role in Durham County with Anna Maria Siega-Riz of the UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health.

The study is strictly an "observational study," Entwisle said, with no experiments involved.

Parents-to-be are welcome to contact the study if they're interested in participating, and the researchers will also be recruiting for a subject pool fitting a pre-determined demographic profile.

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K2 is a form of synthetic marijuana.

BY ALAN SCHER ZAGIER - ASSOCIATED PRESS

COLUMBIA, Mo. -- Authorities in 13 states thought they were acting to curb a public health threat when they outlawed a form of synthetic marijuana known as K2, a concoction of dried herbs sprayed with chemicals.

But before the laws took effect, many stores that did a brisk business in fake pot had already gotten around the bans by making slight changes to K2's chemical formula, creating knockoffs with names such as "K3," "Heaven Scent" and "Syn."

"It's kind of pointless," said University of Missouri sophomore Brittany May after purchasing a K2 alternative called "BoCoMo Dew" at a Columbia smoke shop. "They're just going to come up with another thing."

Barely six months after Kansas adopted the nation's first ban on K2, even police acknowledge that the laws are all but meaningless because merchants can so easily offer legal alternatives.

In North Carolina, at least one state lawmaker has said he intends to introduce legislation early next year to ban the product. Sen. William Purcell of Laurinburg said that if he's re-elected this fall, he will investigate K2.

Until a year ago, products such as K2 were virtually unknown in the United States. Clemson University chemistry professor John Huffman developed the compounds in 1995 while researching the effect of cannabinoids, the active compounds found in marijuana.

Huffman had little reason to believe his lab work would morph into a commercial product. He calls users of K2 and its chemical cousins "idiots," noting the lack of research into the substance's effects, which include reports of rapid heartbeats and high blood pressure. It's often labeled as incense, with warnings against human consumption.
"It's not going to be effective," he said. "Is the ban on marijuana effective?"

He also doubts that law enforcement agencies will be able to devote the necessary resources to identify such complex creations as the compound sold as K2.

"The guy in the average crime lab isn't really capable of doing the kind of sophisticated tests necessary" to identify the substance, he said.

**Minimizing a threat**

Missouri state Sen. Kurt Schaefer, a Republican from Columbia, acknowledges that the marketplace has quickly adapted to his state's ban. He also firmly believes that the new law, along with a wave of media reports, is an effective deterrent, especially for potential users under 18, and their parents.

"We've at least minimized the threat to public safety," he said.

The Missouri statute identifies five synthetic cannabinoids by name but leaves out many others.

Police and public health experts say that users seeking the more benign high associated with marijuana may be unprepared for the synthetic version. Users of K2 describe a more intense but shorter high, with effects lasting about 20 minutes as opposed to several hours.

Schaefer said lawmakers may consider a broader ban next year if the law proves ineffective.

But new laws have not prevented a seemingly brisk online business. The website K2Fast.com, for instance, touts its ability to "ship fast to any state," while noting its product does not contain the ingredient that was just made illegal.

Alternatives are widely available in head shops, gas stations, convenience stores and coffeehouses.

Micah Riggs, owner of the Coffee Wonk in Kansas City, said his business is just as good, if not better, since Missouri's ban took effect. He says his newest blend is stronger and has a smoother taste than the banned form of K2.

"I researched this stuff pretty heavily before I started selling it," he said. "I'm not just going to take a risk with people's health."

The Georgia Poison Control Center has seen just a "trickling" of K2 cases since legislators outlawed the product in May, said Dr. Gaylord Lopez, the center's director.

Lopez, who visited several Atlanta stores that continue to sell K2, said he was not aware of an increase in knockoff products since the ban was enacted. He said the trade in K2 has just "gone underground" now that it's illegal.

"If you play the part, and don't look like a DEA agent, they tell you they still have it," he said.
A plan to save public education by abandoning it

The proposal by UCLA's Anderson School of Management to raise tuition and forgo public funding would cut off access to the less than wealthy and set a dangerous precedent for other public professional schools.

By Jason Ball and Lincoln Ellis

September 15, 2010

Understandable as the University of California's precarious budget situation is, raising tuition to the level of private universities for specific programs is unacceptable.

We see problems with both the process and the substance of the drastic proposal to essentially privatize the UCLA Anderson School of Management and charge $50,000 for in-state tuition, as reported on Sept. 9 by The Times.

On the process side, we expect administrators to involve students in the decisions that shape students' lives, especially a decision of this magnitude. Instead, administrators have met behind closed doors and failed to formally include students. Beginning most notably last November, people throughout the state have mobilized to protest these types of top-down proposals, which have been implemented at the expense of students and the public. Jerry Trapnell of the Assn. to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business supports Anderson's move to break free from UCLA as a way to avoid being "heavily compromised" by the "bureaucracy" of the larger institution. We disagree with his premise. The UC system should be a democratic space, and students should have input, even if that means key decisions are arrived at in a matter of months rather than weeks.

The proposal itself, already touted as a potential model for other programs, is even more disturbing. Anderson Dean Judy Olian describes her plan as "win-win" because it would redirect public funds to departments such as English and math that don't have the kind of private fundraising prowess Anderson does. There is an appeal to the underlying logic: Why should taxpayers subsidize the education of these wealthy professionals or those who it's assumed will strike it rich after graduation? Stereotypes of rich professionals should not guide university policy toward students, many of whom are more likely to be seen consuming ramen noodles and Fanta than steak and martinis.
This kind of thinking ignores those students pursuing professional school degrees as a path to public service. The president of our country is a former public interest attorney, and many important government and nonprofit posts demand instruction from business, medical or law schools. Such students are not exceptions to the rule; they make up the heart of our universities. UC administrators should not have to be reminded that pursuit of idealistic but low-paying work represents the fulfillment of UC’s stated mission of teaching, research and public service.

Sadly, some of our classmates include California residents who were educated entirely within the UC system and have debt levels well over $150,000 between undergraduate and professional schools. Administrators insist that they want to keep UC affordable for low-income California residents, but we are not convinced. Financial aid for professional students comes predominately in the form of loans rather than grants, and the Anderson's proposed in-state discount is a mere 10% off a sticker price of $55,000 a year for tuition, not including books, room and board.

Moreover, we find it troubling that administrators seem to be repackaging ideas that have already been rejected, apparently hoping that students will fail to notice. In March, the UC Board of Regents rejected a proposal that would have made it easier to set professional school fees at rates similar to private universities; its policy instead requires tuition to be no higher than comparable public schools. The Anderson proposal seems like a backdoor plan to circumvent UC policy that could set a dangerous precedent of restructuring other professional programs. The Anderson plan is analogous to killing a mosquito with a sledgehammer. The state decreased funding to UC by about $630 million last year, which works out to a cut of about $3,200 a student. Olian's proposal is wildly disproportionate, increasing tuition by $10,000 a student.

Californians cannot accept that UC must abandon public education to save it, nor can we allow the Anderson School to take the program and buildings that have been built with public tax dollars and student tuition and effectively deny access to all but the rich. The Anderson privatization plan abandons the public mission of UC and will hurt students.

If UC administrators believe wealthy professionals should subsidize education, they should call for new taxes on the rich. If they insist on treating professional school students as cash cows, or if they believe that public education is too cumbersome to save, it is time for them to change course and recommit to acting as stewards of one of the best public universities in the world.

Jason Ball is communications director for the UCLA Graduate Students Assn. and a doctoral candidate in political science. Law student Lincoln Ellis is the association's president.

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September 15, 2010

Ex-Dean Accused of Stealing $1 Million From St. John’s

By FERNANDA SANTOS

Among the many jobs performed by college administrators, Cecilia Chang’s was at once challenging and glamorous. As dean of the Institute of Asian Studies at St. John’s University in Queens, she traveled the world soliciting donations, luring potential contributors with sumptuous meals, entertainment and gifts, all of it paid for by the college. Her expenses sometimes reached $50,000 a month.

During a routine internal audit at St. John’s, charges submitted by Ms. Chang for reimbursement from a personal credit card raised suspicions. The explanations she gave university officials were not convincing.

On Jan. 6, after 30 years of working at the college, Ms. Chang was suspended. In June, she lost her job.

On Wednesday, Ms. Chang, 57, was arrested at her 15-room colonial in Jamaica Estates and accused of embezzling about $1 million from the university, money that prosecutors said she used to pay for lingerie, trips to casinos and her son’s tuition bills.

As part of her scheme, prosecutors said, Ms. Chang siphoned a $250,000 donation from a Saudi prince’s foundation into a nonprofit organization she had created ostensibly for the university but that, in fact, was a personal piggy bank.

The prince, Alwaleed bin Talal Al Saud, a grandson of the founding king of modern Saudi Arabia, is a prolific contributor to universities and humanitarian causes. A center for Muslim-Christian understanding at Georgetown University was renamed for him after he made a $20 million gift in 2005. He was also the subject of a public rebuff by Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani, who rejected his $10 million donation for disaster relief after Sept. 11 because it came accompanied by a note urging the United States to re-evaluate its policies in the Middle East.

The Queens district attorney, Richard A. Brown, characterized Ms. Chang’s actions as a betrayal that “could have a chilling effect on the school’s future fund-raising efforts.”
Ms. Chang’s lawyer, Todd Greenburg, in denying the charges against his client, said, “Every dime this woman spent was spent on behalf of St. John’s University, entertaining the people St. John’s University told her to entertain.”

Prince Alwaleed’s donation to St. John’s, which a university spokesman said was to support a multicultural lecture series, seems like a pittance given the multibillion-dollar fortune that he commands.

No one connected to the prince could be reached by phone on Wednesday because his foundation’s offices in the Saudi capital, Riyadh, were closed.

Ms. Chang wired the money she is accused of stealing from Prince Alwaleed to China, where she invested it in stocks, according to the district attorney’s office.

At her arraignment in State Supreme Court in Queens on Wednesday, Ms. Chang stood before Justice James P. Griffin with her hands cuffed behind her back and pleaded not guilty. She was ordered held on $1 million bail and would face up to 25 years in prison if convicted on charges that included grand larceny, forgery and falsification of business records.

Dominic Scianna, a spokesman for St. John’s, described Ms. Chang in a statement as “a trusted employee.” University officials contacted the authorities in March, after the internal audit revealed what Mr. Scianna described as “indications of possible serious fraudulent activities.”

Investigators said Ms. Chang did not try hard to cover her tracks. She used her St. John’s e-mail account to communicate with Prince Alwaleed’s foundation.

She also had the authority to give out scholarships, and she made her son, Steven, one of the recipients. University officials found out and told her she had to pay for his tuition. Ms. Chang did so, using a personal credit card and then submitting the bill for reimbursement, investigators said.

Part of the problem, they said, was the way Ms. Chang was allowed to claim reimbursements for charges to her personal credit card. The card was issued in Taiwan; Ms. Chang convinced St. John’s officials that she needed a card from a bank in Asia because American cards are not always accepted there.

Ms. Chang submitted the card’s statements and a note explaining why a charge qualified for reimbursement, but turned in no receipts. Gregory C. Pavlides, the lead prosecutor on the case, said in court that the charges included everyday items like groceries, gasoline and cable television.
The illegal reimbursements Ms. Chang is accused of claiming go back to 2003, but investigators said they were not sure if that was the extent of the illicit claims.

The district attorney’s office also filed a civil lawsuit on Wednesday, asking that a lien be placed on Ms. Chang’s home, which is on the market for $2.88 million, according to an online advertisement. It has seven bedrooms, five bathrooms, a gym, a sauna and a Jacuzzi tub.

Ken Winslow, 74, a next-door neighbor, said that other than the Mercedes-Benz Ms. Chang drove, she did not appear to live ostentatiously. But he said she once tried to use her position at the university to thank him for helping her. She offered his son a scholarship to St. John’s, Mr. Winslow said, who added that he declined.

*Nate Schweber contributed reporting.*
A College Closes for Good as Rescue Plan Is Rejected

By LAUREN ETTER

Clarice and Vaughn Christensen, who met at Dana College, stroll across the empty campus.

BLAIR, Neb.—As colleges open for the fall semester, the Lutheran school on a grassy hill overlooking town will sit empty for the first time in 126 years.

Dana College closed abruptly in June after a long financial struggle. The fate of the private, 600-student liberal-arts school mirrors that of many small colleges whose challenges became more pronounced during the recession. But some officials at Dana think the school was also an innocent victim of a crackdown on for-profit colleges.

Investors proposed to buy Dana and turn it into a profitable operation. But an accrediting agency effectively pulled the lifeline away by denying the college's application to change ownership. Such accrediting agencies were facing pressure from federal education officials, who accused some of being too lenient in certifying for-profit schools with lax standards. Officials said such schools often pushed students to take on heavy debt loads without preparing them for careers.

"I feel like Dana was kind of collateral damage," said Jeremy Bouman, former vice president for institutional advancement at Dana (which rhymes with banana). "There was never a chance to be successful because of the political scrutiny."
The Chicago-based Higher Learning Commission, which accredits many Midwestern colleges, said it denied Dana's application because the prospective buyers lacked experience and sufficient funds to keep the school open. A commission official said the for-profit controversy had nothing to do with the decision.

Companies that operate for-profit schools have become saviors for many troubled small colleges. Over the past five years, at least 11 nonprofit colleges have been bought by for-profit entities, said Kevin Kinser, associate professor of educational administration and policy studies at the State University of New York at Albany.

In the past year, some for-profit colleges have come under fire from government agencies. The Department of Education has proposed a policy change aimed at reducing outsized loan-default rates among students at such schools. Some operators have acknowledged problems and said they would work to eliminate them.

The controversy may be making it harder for ailing colleges to secure help. SUNY Albany's Mr. Kinser said college-accrediting bodies are "asking more probing questions and not simply taking at face value that [for-profit operators are] saving a college."

Nestled amid cornfields in eastern Nebraska, Dana and Blair have grown up together over more than a century. Blair, population 7,700, was established in 1869 by railroad baron John Insley Blair. Fifteen years later, Danish Lutheran pioneers opened a seminary, which later became Dana College.

Dana's red-and-white Viking logo decorates the town. Many loyal locals dedicate free nights to whatever the "Dana kids" are doing, said Vaughn Christensen, 79 years old, who met his wife, Clarice, at Dana about 50 years ago and sent their three children there.

"We went to everything—all the music, the theater, the basketball. I don't think we missed one home game," Mr. Christensen said. Enrollment at Dana peaked in the 1970s at about 1,000. Before closing, the college enrolled just under 600 and employed about 175 faculty and staff. A 2003 study estimated that Dana contributed $20 million annually to the local economy, largely through payroll and local expenditures.

The school began to struggle in the 2000s. Though it heavily discounted tuition, enrollment didn't rise much above 600. Eventually, Dana cut benefits for its retirees and ramped up other efforts to lure students.

The recession made matters worse. By last year, Dana's accumulated deficit had widened to nearly $13 million, from $7 million in 2005. The endowment was near gone from years of tapping it to balance the operating budget.

College officials gathered local business executives at a dinner to launch an emergency fund-raising effort.

An acquaintance introduced then-Dana President Janet Philipp to Niraj Kaji, a Harvard Business School graduate and former vice president at Walden University, a for-profit distance-
Blair Family YMCA, where she is executive director, learned school in Minneapolis. Mr. Kaji assembled Dana Education Corp., a company that proposed in March to buy Dana with promises of an initial cash infusion of about $5 million and another $5 million later if needed. The plan was to boost enrollment through aggressive marketing, and later to offer study-abroad programs and graduate-level classes.

On March 15, Dana sent the acquisition plan to the Higher Learning Commission, one of six regional bodies that accredit U.S. colleges.

The commission was under scrutiny in Washington. On May 24, the Education Department's Office of Inspector General sent a letter to Sylvia Manning, president of the commission, accusing it of wrongly accrediting a for-profit school that had allegedly inflated credit hours. On June 17, Ms. Manning testified before the House Education Committee that "there is room for improvement" in accrediting practices. In an interview, she said the commission "did a good job" on the school in question.

Two weeks later, Dana received a letter from Ms. Manning saying the commission wouldn't accredit the school under the new ownership. Dana couldn't possibly dig itself out of its financial hole, she said, without recruiting "a substantial influx" of non-traditional Dana students, which would compromise the school's "institutional and educational integrity."

, adding, "A school closing is not something we want to see happening." Nebraska Gov. Dave Heineman called Ms. Manning as part of a last-ditch effort to keep Dana open, to no avail.

One recent day on campus, a lone groundskeeper tended a bed of geraniums. "It's lonely around here," said Ted Bansen, who normally would be chalkling stripes on the football field this time of year. "It feels like losing a parent."

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