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Our Views

UNC football trouble offers lessons
to ECU, others

Those delighting in the troubled times at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill might be served by remembering the words of English reformer John Bradford: "There but for the grace of God go I." The scandal involving the football program may offer passing distraction, but also serves as a stern warning to other institutions about the high-stakes game of intercollegiate athletics.

East Carolina University makes no secret of its effort to compete at the upper echelon of college football, but it knows striving toward that summit means playing within the rules. UNC’s pursuit of a national championship may have caused it to push those boundaries, and East Carolina should take a lesson, not enjoyment, from the missteps of its in-state rivals.

The Tar Heel football team taking the field at Kenan Stadium on Saturday was probably as eager to play East Carolina as it was to have four hours free of questions and distractions. Days earlier, a report on Yahoo! Sports offered evidence of financial ties between former associate head coach John Blake and NFL agent Gary Wichard. Blake resigned on Sept. 5, one day after UNC’s season opener, but questions about his actions remain the subject of an NCAA investigation.

The span of that scope is not limited to the possible misdeeds of a coach and an untold number of players who may have received financial benefit and thus compromised their eligibility. The NCAA is also investigating allegations of academic fraud, specifically an undergraduate tutor who was terminated by the university for becoming too close to several football players. The tutor also worked privately for Head Coach Butch Davis.

Though a full accounting of the facts is not complete, the damage is already severe and widespread. There are calls for Davis and Athletic Director Dick Baddour to resign.

However this episode unfolds, the lessons to learn are plentiful and must not be overlooked by any university competing in the high profile world of college athletics. With so much money and attention at stake, schools can make the cardinal error of treating their players as a commodity rather than student-athletes, losing their integrity as a result.

East Carolina is fortunate to have capable hands in key positions, ever watchful of infractions and quick to provide guidance when needed. Yet it must also be ever wary of the corrupting influences on the college sports landscape and learn from the missteps made by others, not revel in them.
ECU learning center considering location in county

Published: Monday, October 4, 2010 at 2:45 p.m.

A new dental learning center of a major state university could land in Davidson County.

According to Davidson County Health Department Director Layton Long, East Carolina University is considering Davidson County as a potential site to locate the dental learning center. Davidson County was identified by ECU as having unmet dental needs. Long said he was contacted by ECU in December 2009 about the possibility. Early discussions have pinned Davidson County Community College as a potential location for the learning center.

Students in the ECU dental school program would spend their fourth year of enrollment in one of the learning centers providing dental services.

The Davidson County Board of Commissioners will hear more information from Long at the board’s information meeting Thursday at 8 a.m. The board meets on the fourth floor of the Davidson County Governmental Center.

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NEWS

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Getsinger to be feted by East Carolina Alumni

By STATESVILLE RECORD & LANDMARK STAFF
Published: October 05, 2010

C. Layton Getsinger, a Statesville resident and 1969 geography graduate of East Carolina University, will receive a Distinguished Service Award from the East Carolina Alumni Association on Fri., Oct. 22 at the Alumni Awards Ceremony and Dinner in Greenville.

Getsinger is being recognized for his service to community, university and country, according to a press release. He is a career naval aviator and Vietnam War veteran. Following his military career, Getsinger served as associate vice chancellor for administration and finance and executive director of Business Services at ECU. After leaving ECU, he took over as chief operating officer of CopyPro, Inc. In 2005, Getsinger served as chairman of the East Carolina Alumni Association’s board of directors.

He has been recognized for his leadership and courage with several commendations, including a City of Greenville Certificate of Appreciation for services rendered during a hostage situation, induction into the George Whitfield Hall of Fame in 2000 and Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society in 2006. Getsinger is also a 1999 Outstanding Alumni Award recipient and member of the Chancellor’s Society.

Getsinger is also heavily involved with the Rotary Club of Statesville.

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Lawyers say Blake accepted 'gifts' from sports agent

Lawyers for former North Carolina associate head coach John Blake said Monday that agent Gary Wichard provided "gifts" to Blake to pay for Blake's son's private school tuition while Blake was coaching at North Carolina.

William Beaver, Blake's Orlando-based lawyer, said in a teleconference call with reporters that Wichard gave Blake money for the tuition once in 2008 and twice more in 2009. Beaver said Wichard is the godfather of Blake's son. The lawyers did not say how much Wichard gave Blake.

Beaver also confirmed that while coaching at North Carolina, Blake received a $45,000 bank loan from the same bank Wichard uses in New York. Beaver and Wade Smith, Blake's Raleigh-based lawyer, said they didn't know why Blake got the loan from Wichard's bank rather than from somewhere closer to home.

On Thursday, Beaver had said the last money Wichard provided to Blake was "if not over three years ago, right around three years ago." On Monday, Beaver said he was hurried last week and didn't have a chance to adequately review the records before a teleconference call with reporters Thursday.

North Carolina announced Blake's hiring in December 2006, three years and nine months ago.

Blake's lawyers also confirmed that Blake has spoken to Alabama defensive tackle Marcell Dareus, but did not confirm reports that Blake encouraged Dareus to sign with Wichard. The NCAA suspended Dareus for the first two games of the season for receiving impermissible benefits.

Beaver said Blake "has testified that he has not functioned in a manner that in his mind has attempted to funnel, push, direct any athlete toward Gary Wichard."

On Monday, North Carolina head football coach Butch Davis said he was sorry he trusted Blake and would have fired him if he had known about his financial ties to Wichard.

"I'm sorry that it has affected the football program," Davis said at his weekly news conference. "But I'm going to tell you what I'm more sorry about, I'm sorry that I trusted John Blake."

When UNC found out

Blake resigned Sept. 5 and was paid a $74,500 buyout. North Carolina athletic director Dick Baddour said last week in a statement that the
school first learned that Blake had accepted money from Wichard during an NCAA interview with Blake on Aug. 31.

Baddour said Monday that, judging by NCAA interviews with Blake, he doesn't know whether the exchanges of money between Wichard and Blake violated an NCAA rule.

Wichard is scheduled to be interviewed this week by investigators for the N.C. Secretary of State's Office in their probe of possible violations of the Uniform Athlete Agent Act. The law requires agents to register to recruit athletes with college eligibility and bans gifts or promises of anything of value to athletes before they sign. Howard Silber, Wichard's lawyer, said his client is cooperating fully. Silber declined to discuss the exchanges of money with Blake in detail, but said Wichard has nothing to hide. "The payments are completely unrelated to John's employment as a coach in North Carolina or anywhere else," Silber said, "and of course completely unrelated to any referral of players."

**Did Blake plug Wichard?**

Citing unnamed sources, Yahoo! Sports and ESPN.com reported that Dareus told NCAA investigators that Blake talked to him on the phone and encouraged him to consider signing with Wichard.

Blake got to know Dareus as a high school student in Birmingham, Ala., and Blake tried to recruit him to North Carolina. Beaver confirmed reports that at Alabama, Dareus has spoken with Blake, and that Dareus told Blake of his mother's illness and that Dareus was being besieged by agents.

Beaver did not confirm for reporters that Blake spoke to Dareus about Wichard. "It was not a recruiting call," Beaver said.

Alabama head football coach Nick Saban said Monday that he did not know about any connection between Blake and Dareus.

**Yahoo! report disputed**

Yahoo! Sports also reported that Dareus told NCAA investigators that Blake called then-South Carolina tight end Wesley Saunders to suggest he sign with Wichard. Saunders, from Durham, has been dismissed from the South Carolina team.

His father, Barry Saunders, a metro columnist for The News & Observer, declined to comment for this story. But Wade Smith, one of Blake's lawyers, questioned the information on Saunders.

"We believe we can say on excellent authority that Wesley Saunders has not been connected with John since he was a high school player," Smith said.

Last week, Blake's lawyers confirmed that Blake has received money from Wichard, calling the exchanges "loans." They also said Blake had a credit card from Pro Tect Management, Wichard's company, which has since been closed. Beaver said Monday that the card had a $5,000 limit and was used to purchase items such as T-shirts for a camp Blake ran when he was out of coaching.

**Financial troubles**

The lawyers said Blake encountered financial difficulties after he was fired as head coach at Oklahoma in 1998. About the same time, the construction of a large, expensive house for him was completed.

They said the house did not sell for 16 months, and said payments on the house plus rent that was due in California caused Blake to turn to Wichard, his friend for 27 years now, for financial help.

Nonetheless, Blake has maintained an expensive lifestyle in North Carolina. Tax records show he purchased a home in Durham for $533,500 on June 25, 2008.
On Dec. 31, 2008, Blake paid taxes on a 2007 Mercedes valued at $68,920. His lawyers said they didn't know why Blake would need gifts to pay for private school for his son during the same period, but speculated that Wichard might have given the money out of desire to do something for his godson.

"As we've consistently explained, [Blake and Wichard] are extremely close," Beaver said. "It's more like brothers. It's a well-developed, very close relationship over almost 30 years."

Staff writers J.P. Giglio and Robbi Pickeral contributed to this story.

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Community colleges grow and bask in the limelight

Scott Ralls, president of the N.C. Community College System, will be in Washington today for the first White House Summit on Community Colleges, an event hosted by Jill Biden, wife of Vice President Joe Biden. Jill Biden teaches at a community college in Northern Virginia.

Ralls spoke to the News & Observer on Monday about the summit. Here are excerpts:

Q: This is the first community college summit. What is the significance of that?

There's been more discussion about community colleges in the last 12 to 18 months than maybe in our previous years of existence. We've seen the growth of interest nationally over the last few years when presidents started mentioning them in State of the Union speeches. I think we've grown out of the shadows in higher education.

Q: Why?

A couple of things. Community colleges are so jobs-focused that because of the recession, the attention on community colleges rises.

Secondarily, but related to long-term economic prosperity, there's been a lot of attention on college completion rates, the need for citizens broadly to gain postsecondary credentials, which for us means diplomas and industry certifications as well as degrees. Because of that need, almost half of undergraduates are community college students.

There's a realization that to meet national goals, it requires community colleges.

Q: What is the primary challenge facing community colleges that you hope gets discussed in Washington?

It is the exploding growth numbers combined with the budget constraints. We've been fortunate in that we've had surging enrollments but have gotten generous funding, but it continues to be a challenge.

Also, looking at how we help our students and pay attention not just to the numbers, not just August but May - the number who walk across the stage at graduation and who complete their technical certifications. Those are numbers that can be very challenging.

Many of our students are part time, and working, and parents. We realize we can maybe pay attention to some areas and support some areas to encourage more student success, greater completion.
Q: The weak economy has sparked an enrollment explosion at community colleges nationwide. In North Carolina, enrollment is up 23 percent in the past two years. How long do you expect that surge to continue?

We don't have our fall numbers yet ... last year we grew by 15 percent overall for the year. Early on, as registration was beginning, I was hearing huge numbers. But over time I expect it to moderate, if for no other reasons than capacity.

We want to serve as many students as we possibly can, and we appreciate the unique role we can play.

The flip side is that our colleges have faced significant strain. We're getting beyond bending to breaking in some places.

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Deaths on fire escape unexplained

Authorities still don’t know what led to the deaths of two young men found on this Raleigh fire escape.

RALEIGH -- Mystery surrounds the unexplained deaths of two young men found dead Saturday morning on the fire escape of an apartment building near downtown Raleigh.

An unidentified 911 caller told a dispatcher that the men, one a student at N.C. State University, had been on the fire escape for at least 16 hours before anyone realized they were dead.

"I was with them yesterday," the 911 caller said. "I went down the fire escape to my car and I called out to them, ‘Hey are you guys all right?’ I assumed they were drunk. I came back this morning, and they are in the exact same position."

The 911 caller reported that one man was straddled over the rail of the fire escape,
while the other was "laying back."

The bodies of Ray Allan Ausbon, 21, and Zachary Martin Tigner, 19, were found about 9:30 a.m. outside Ausbon's apartment at 817 Hillsborough St., Raleigh police spokesman Jim Sughrue said.

Investigators apparently did not find obvious signs of blunt force trauma or gunshot wounds and do not suspect foul play. They are awaiting word from the state Medical Examiner's Office on how the two men died.

Autopsies were performed on both men Sunday, said Sharon Artis, a spokeswoman with the medical examiner's office. The medical examiner's office has not yet released a preliminary cause of death and does not expect results from toxicology reports for at least six weeks.

Ausbon and Tigner both graduated from Apex High School. Tigner attended Gardner-Webb University and had enlisted in the U.S. Army. According to his obituary, he was to report for duty Monday.

Ausbon was a senior accounting major at NCSU. He was one of 160 students who made the dean's list at the school's College of Management, according to the N.C. State website.

News researcher Peggy Neal contributed to this report.

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Debit cards replacing credit cards on college campuses

By Ylan Q. Mui
Washington Post Staff Writer
Monday, October 4, 2010; 3:03 AM

Soon after they arrived on campus, more than a million college students across the country received a welcome letter and a plastic card bearing a MasterCard logo from a little-known company called Higher One:

"Meet your new best friend on campus," the letter reads. A school's emblem is featured in the letterhead - and even on the card - and students are urged to activate their accounts quickly.

This is not a credit card offer. Instead, it is a new type of plastic that allows students to easily access money from their college loans everywhere from the bookstore to the bar with the swipe of a card. These cards, however, are not subject to the sweeping reforms that took effect this year and sought to curtail similar relationships between colleges and credit card issuers. Meanwhile, students complain that the loan cards are riddled with high fees, and they have organized protests at several campuses.

"That's really just not the best thing to be doing with our financial aid," said Shane Gerbert, who helped lead the campaign against Higher One at the University of North Dakota. "They're siphoning it away little by little."

But college officials contend that the loan cards make life much easier for administrators and students, and that they can provide an extra bit of income for cash-strapped schools.

"Sometimes people are looking for evil intent where there is none," said Anne Gross, legislative affairs director for the National Association of College and University Business Officers.
Students often take out college loans worth more than the cost of tuition so they can pay for books, housing and living expenses. Schools are responsible for distributing the difference, often resulting in long lines of grumpy students waiting for their checks in front of the bursar's office.

Enter Higher One, which offers to take over that cumbersome process for colleges. The company also sets up accounts for students where the loans are deposited. Once activated, Higher One's product acts as a debit card, allowing students access to loan money left over after tuition.

But sometimes, even those who don't receive financial aid are urged to sign up, just in case. At some schools, the loan cards double as IDs, ensuring that every student on campus has one.

That's the case at Portland State University. School officials say students must carry the cards but aren't required to activate the Higher One account. Yet a majority who have student loans do so anyway.

"You pretty much went to go take your [ID] picture and in the mail you receive these cards and it gives you directions to activate it," said senior Natalia Grozina. "When it's a rule, you don't have the option of not having it."

Complaints about the loan cards offered by Higher One and other firms echo the outcry over marketing techniques and fees by credit card companies that prompted Congress to pass dramatic industry reforms last year.

Higher One charges students a $19 monthly penalty for accounts that aren't used for nine months, a practice now banned for credit cards. On its Web site, rival PNC Bank tells schools that setting up tables on campus to market its product to students may be required for a successful program - this is another tactic that was restricted under the credit card law. The legislation also requires colleges to submit their contracts with credit card companies to the Federal Reserve, which must issue a public report. Loan cards are not included.

More broadly, consumer groups say the cards raise questions about the ties between colleges and corporations, especially because many of the cards prominently display the logos of both. Some colleges receive a portion of the fees generated by the cards, though Higher One said it has discontinued the practice for schools that sign up now.

"Colleges save money, true. But are they completely evaluating the impact on their students?" said Ed Mierzwinski, head of the consumer program at U.S. PIRG, an advocacy
group.

The business model has translated into booming sales for Connecticut-based Higher One. Its loan cards have yet to be widely adopted in the Washington area, but the company has signed up 675 colleges across the country. Higher One raised $124 million by selling stock publicly this summer, and sales in its most recent quarter reached $27 million, more than double from a year ago.

More than three-quarters of that money came from the fees it charges merchants and students. Higher One chief executive Dean Hatton told investors last month that the success of the business depends on signing up as many students as possible.

Several large banks also have begun moving into the growing sector. This spring, Citigroup inked a deal with the City University of New York to create a similar program using prepaid cards. PNC declined to give details about its loan card business.

Higher One says it is not coercing students to use its cards. Students can opt to receive their loans by check or through another bank, though they must go through Higher One's site to make their selection. On average, nearly half of students at each college sign up for the Higher One account, the company said. At schools that have used the program for several years, the adoption rate is closer to 70 percent.

"We want to make students understand there are options," Higher One spokesman Don Smith said.

Schools say the program helps students get access to their loans more quickly and conveniently. Some college administrators say many of their students do not have bank accounts and, before Higher One came along, relied on expensive check cashers to access their loans.

But students say several of the fees associated with Higher One's card are particularly irksome, including the $19 inactivity fee, a 50-cent charge for using a PIN to make a purchase rather than a signature, and a $2.50 fee for using other banks' ATMs. A Facebook campaign against Higher One at the University of North Dakota had more than 300 members.

Higher One said that only 1 percent of customers have been charged an inactivity fee and that more than half are charged the 50-cent fee only once. All fees are listed on Higher One's Web site, along with tips on avoiding them.

"We have a big effort with educating students on how to use the account," Smith said. "We're very passionate about financial literacy."
Some schools are taking a hard look at Higher One after students and faculty complained. At Pace University in New York, which uses a combo ID and loan card, some were concerned that the cards looked like advertisements. Others worried about flashing what looked like a credit card when they hung them around their necks.

At the University of Maryland's Baltimore campus, the only college in the Washington area that uses Higher One, administrator Judith Archambault said the school is careful about how it promotes the cards. At orientation, staff members inform students that they can receive loan refunds by check or direct deposit before mentioning Higher One's debit card.

"We also didn't want it to feel like we were endorsing a particular bank," she said.

Still, the school must warn students not to throw away the card even though it may look like junk mail - especially since it carries a $20 replacement fee.

"The Refund Card mailing may look like an unwanted credit card offer," the school's Web site reads. "PLEASE DO NOT DISCARD IT."

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Families are trimming plans to pay for college, survey finds

By Ylan Q. Mui
Washington Post Staff Writer
Tuesday, October 5, 2010; 12:02 AM

American families are scaling back plans to pay for their children's college education as the stunted economic recovery continues to weigh on household budgets, according to a survey to be released Tuesday that was commissioned by college lender Sallie Mae.

The study, which was conducted by Gallup, found that the percentage of families who planned to make little or no contribution to tuition increased, while the percentage who expected to cover more than half of expenses decreased. The trends were particularly pronounced in Hispanic families, where the number who thought they could only pay a little jumped from 12 percent to 35 percent.

In addition, the percentage of families who said the reason they are not socking away money for college is that they cannot afford it rose from 62 percent last year to 68 percent this year.

"They're adjusting their expectations to the economic conditions, both generally and what they may be experiencing on the individual level," said Bill Diggins, Gallup's lead researcher on the survey.

Still, the study found that even though families are financially stressed, saving for college remained a priority. About one-fifth of families reported it as a top financial goal - up from 14 percent last year and on par with those who rank saving for retirement as the priority.

The rising cost of college education has become a flashpoint in Washington as the recession hampered families' ability to foot the bill. According to a survey by the nonprofit College Board, which administers standardized tests, the cost of attending a private university has risen 2.6 percent a year over the past decade, while public college jumped nearly 5 percent annually. President Obama is slated to hold a
summit Tuesday on the state of the nation's community colleges, which have become an increasingly popular option for students seeking affordable alternatives to four-year institutions.

On average, families have saved about $28,000 to pay for college. About 12 percent of that money is in 529 plans, while 14 percent comes from general savings accounts or certificates of deposit. Another 21 percent comes from investments, but the largest portion of that money - 23 percent - is in retirement savings.

Sallie Mae senior vice president Sarah Ducich said the finding that families are relying heavily on retirement accounts "is a little bit disturbing."

Financial experts say that raiding retirement accounts to pay for children's college can be risky. There are tax penalties and other fees if money is withdrawn from the accounts early, and loans against a retirement plan come with restrictions on how quickly they must be paid off and the amount that can be borrowed.

"The education and the retirement are two different buckets. We would never put them together," said Marcia Tillotson, senior vice president of investments for Wells Fargo Advisors. "You can borrow for college. You cannot borrow for retirement."

The study also found that although low-income families saved less money than wealthy households, they still put away an average of $1,788 annually toward college. For families making less than $35,000, that represents about 8 percent of their budget - the largest percentage of any income level. Families making more than $100,000, for example, saved 2.6 percent of their income.

Ducich said the finding underscores the value of college education to poor families, many of whom may not have had similar opportunities.

"For these families, that's the ticket out," she said.
Marketers get creative targeting hard-to-reach college students

By Bruce Horovitz, USA TODAY

Villanova University junior Courtney Chupka (left) of Chatham, N.J., hands a pair of free American Eagle Outfitters flip-flops to fellow student Nicholas Benenati, a sophomore from Miami. Chupka was one of a team of Villanova students dressed in matching T-shirts to promote American Eagle Outfitters on campus.

It may have seemed like just another freshman move-in day at West Virginia University. But for American Eagle Outfitters (AEO), it was D-Day.

Long before the new students arrived at their dorms a few weeks ago, the trendy clothing retailer had a detailed marketing battle plan specific to this Morgantown, W.Va., campus. Facebook updates promoted free car-to-dorm-room help with heavy stuff on move-in day — not to mention free flip-flops.

The savvy strategy wasn't executed by an American Eagle exec. It was overseen by 21-year-old Gina Damato, a WVU senior whose major is public relations. In her spare time, she manages a pizza parlor, writes for the school newspaper, snowboards and is a student rep for AE.

"College students are wary of old-school marketing," says Paul Himmelfarb, managing director at Youth Marketing Connection, which specializes in linking marketers with the college crowd. "You have to take a brand and incorporate it into the college lifestyle by peer-to-peer marketing."

Savvy college marketers have learned that they can no longer reach students by simply putting up posters, handing out samples and hanging ads from dorm room door handles.

That's why there are now nearly 10,000 student reps like Damato on campuses nationally. They are paid in cash, products or a combination of the two — up to $1,500 per semester.

New age of social marketing

Much of their work is via social media, such as relevant Facebook updates and targeted tweets on Twitter. It is detail-oriented marketing intricately tuned in to things vital and specific to student bodies at each of the nation's 4,100 colleges and universities — and in many cases to the individual student. So there is little wasted messaging.

PARENTING: First weeks can be tough for college kids

FRESHMEN YEAR: May be harder on parents than students
If there were a college class for this, it would be New World College Marketing 101.

"College marketing used to be block and tackle," says Matt Britton, founder of marketing agency Mr. Youth, which recruits thousands of students nationwide. "Now, college students are immune to those tactics and expect something much more deeply intertwined in their lives."

These days, it's about reaching students where they are — which is mostly (but not always) on their cellphones or laptops. So the most sophisticated college marketers — from American Eagle to Apple (AAPL) to Red Bull — are increasingly turning to social media focused on students' wants and needs.

For brands like caffeine-stoked Red Bull, the college crowd isn't the gravy, it's the meat.

"Think about college life," says marketing chief Amy Taylor. "It's made up of five main activities: study, work, play, party and, if there's time, sleep. Our product can help with four of those five."

**Students are a rich resource**

Why reaching students on campus is fundamental for marketers:

- Students have money to spend, often courtesy of Mom and Dad. Discretionary spending by the nation's 19 million full- and part-time college students will reach $76 billion this year — up $2 billion from last year — Alloy Media + Marketing projects.

- Students will have more dough in the future.

- Students, particularly freshmen in their first extended time away from home, are developing brand affinities that can last.

But they're very clear about how they want to be reached by marketers. When college students were asked in 2009 how they want to get information on goods and services, 46% said the Internet, research specialist Student Monitor reports. That's up from 26% in 2000.

Where they're not interested in getting information: TV or magazines. While 59% looked to TV ads in 2000, that segment shrank to 44% last year. And while 42% depended on magazine ads for information in 2004, only 25% did last year.

Not everyone can be reached. Bijah Gibson, for one, just wants to be left alone.

The 21-year-old journalism major at Colorado State University in Fort Collins says that while it's hard to miss all the college marketing coming at him — he mostly ignores it.

"It doesn't affect what I buy," he says. "My friends have a much bigger effect on what I buy than what I see on some website or on a Facebook update."

**Being a college student rep**

But such exceptions don't slow down Damato, the student rep at West Virginia. Before her gig as ambassador for American Eagle, she repped for both Apple and Disney.

In return, Apple lent her gobs of computer equipment, Disney helped her get class credit for a six-month internship in Orlando and American Eagle sends her checks.

Damato says being a student rep has helped make her a big shot on campus. "I'm not only recognizable to students, but to professors," she says.

For Apple, she manned tables at freshman orientation last June — supplying detailed Apple product information to students and parents at a moment when many were most susceptible to purchase. Apple doesn't let her make the sale at the tables, but she refers students to an Apple site specific to her school and she gets a commission on each purchase made there.
Last fall, she organized Apple tailgate parties at school football games where students played Guitar Hero on Apple laptops in the parking lot. She posted Facebook updates on the tailgate fun.

But this fall, she's all about American Eagle.

She recruited 40 volunteers — mostly by arranging an AE donation for a fraternity's favorite charity — to work on freshman move-in days. She touted their services on the WVU Facebook page for incoming freshmen with updates such as: "Need help moving in? No worries. AE will be there."

Was it ever. Over six hours, her crew helped 100 freshmen move into their dorms.

And each of those freshmen got a free pair of American Eagle flip-flops (valued at about $15) and a store coupon for 15% off at the American Eagle store at the local mall. As an incentive to get them there quickly, the coupon was set to expire in 30 days.

"The motive is brand awareness," says Fred Grover, executive vice president of marketing. "Our target is a 20-year-old."

Here's what a handful of AE's peers are doing to also seek that 20-year-old on campus this fall:

- **Red Bull.** The brand sells more than 4 billion cans a year in the U.S., a lot of them to college students.

  So it's no accident that Red Bull has an astounding 8.4 million friends on Facebook. That and Twitter are primary ways it communicates with students.

  Also, when students returned to school this fall, thousands got sample Red Bull Energy Shots (2-ounce bottles that retail for $2.99) at college bookstores.

  Red Bull has student brand managers on 250 college campuses who host — and promote via social media — events such as a recent student chariot race at the University of Georgia.

  Red Bull also is active in mobile marketing. There are mobile games and phone apps produced by Red Bull — some of which are free. College students might learn via text message about where to get a free four-pack on a Thursday night, Taylor says.

- **Hewlett-Packard.** (HPQ) The tech company focuses its college marketing by campus. "We've got to be where the students are — on campus and online," says Lisa Baker, director of student education marketing.

  HP student reps at Washington State University recently participated in the annual back-to-school music fest featuring local bands. HP student reps demonstrated HP laptops in the thick of the action and announced special HP deals for the 4,000 students at the event. Students who signed up for information there or on Facebook got free giveaways.

  • **Zipcar.** Since launching its first student rep program in 2001 at Harvard University, the nation's largest car-sharing service now has reps on 50 campuses.

  In the spring, Zipcar will set up fake beach scenes on campuses, complete with sand, beach chairs, umbrellas and swimsuit-clad students. Fellow students who stop to check out the "beach" also will see a poster with this pointed spring break reminder: "You need a Zipcar to get here."

  Zipcar courts students via Facebook, Twitter and location-based social network Foursquare. "Students are accustomed to getting things on demand in the way they choose," says Zipcar chief marketing officer Rob Weisberg.

  So it's no coincidence how much Zipcar's latest iPhone app appeals to college students: Zipcar members can use their iPhones to beep their car horns or even unlock car doors.

- **Barnes & Noble.** (BKS) In the past 12 months, Barnes & Noble College Booksellers has expanded from 40 college-specific Facebook pages to 636, says Lisa Malat, vice president of marketing.

  "We need to go where the students live," she says. "We can't wait for them to come to us."
Organizers say the project attracted greater attention this year because of the five male youths who committed suicide in September, including two college students: Raymond Chase, an openly gay sophomore at Johnson & Wales University in Providence, and Tyler Clementi, a freshman at New Jersey's Rutgers University.

RUTGERS: Suicide shows need for civility, privacy online

"These tragedies are a wake-up call to society," said Jen Dugan of Florham Park, N.J., who started the project as a junior at Drew in 2006. "Things are going to change because we are going to change them."

Anti-gay bullying is suspected to have played a role in at least four of the September suicides of males, ages 13 to 19, says Laura McGinnis, spokeswoman of the Trevor Project, a national, 24-hour, toll-free, confidential suicide hotline for gay and questioning youth, which she says has received 187,000 calls since 1998. The other suicides took place in Texas, Indiana and California, she says.

Clementi jumped off the George Washington Bridge into the Hudson River nearly two weeks ago, three days after his roommate and another student used a webcam to broadcast on the Internet live images of Clementi having an intimate encounter with another man, prosecutors say.

Last year, Dugan took the chalk project national, getting students at 50 college campuses involved, including the University of Nevada-Las Vegas, Roanoke College in Salem, Va., and the University of

MADISON, N.J. — Students at Drew University woke up Monday morning to gray skies overhead but rainbow-colored messages of hope on the ground.

Joining students on more than 100 college campuses nationwide, they wrote and found simple messages of love and compassion in colored chalk on well-traveled paths, expressing sentiments such as "You are loved," "You are beautiful" and "Be yourself."

"It lifted my spirits," says Kelly Bronner, 18, a freshman from Ridgewood, N.J., who was studying for a morning exam. "Whatever someone is going through, it tells you to hang in there, it's going to get better."

For the second year, gay, lesbian and transgender campus support groups across the USA sought to raise awareness Monday about the high rate of attempted suicide in their community through the "You Are Loved Chalk Message" project.
Illinois-Chicago.

This year, Dugan's project was supported by the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention and Active Minds, a college mental health awareness group, which helped spread the word further.

- At Texas A&M University, the chalk project was combined with the NOH8 silent photo protest against California’s Proposition 8. Participants were bused in from all over Texas, says Lowell Kane, coordinator of the campus GLBT (Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender) resource center.

- Students at the University of Maine chalked in the evening after a moment of silence, says Whitney Lee Kangas, graduate assistant for the campus counseling center.

- Students at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln participated for the second consecutive year, writing messages outside the student union, says senior Jason Lucht, 21, of Gretna, Neb., who considered suicide as a gay high school student.

"When I was having problems, I tended to look down, so if I'd seen chalking on the ground, I would have seen that someone cared," Lucht says.

Gay youth are two to six times more likely to report having attempted suicide than their peers, said Ann Haas, director of prevention projects for the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention.

There is no data available on the sexual orientations of people who commit suicide, she says.

"It's all too obvious in the past couple weeks how much negative reaction gay youth receive," Haas says. "To create visible messages using art and beauty to drive home positive messages can be a powerful input for young people."