THE DAILY CLIPS

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Editorial: Stand and be counted

“The case is especially odd because the criminal prosecutors seem to be trying to expand the definition of what constitutes a campaign expense at the same time that the courts, in civil cases, have been doing the opposite.”

Tuesday, October 18, 2011

Gaining entry into an athletic conference with an automatically qualifying bid to the Bowl Championship Series would allow East Carolina University to do more than compete at the highest level of college football. It would bring millions in additional revenue to the school, money that can strengthen academic programs and improve the region’s economic outlook.

Amid news that the Big East Conference stands poised to invite six additional institutions — East Carolina not among them — this moment could well define the Pirates’ prospects for years to come. Now is the time for East Carolina’s voice to be heard and for all with the best interests of this institution and this region at heart to stand and be counted.

The purple and gold faithful had to worry about more than the Saturday football game against Memphis this weekend as reports emerged that the Big East was close to a long anticipated expansion. East Carolina formally applied for entry to the conference in September, but it appears that petition may be denied as the conference looks to add Boise State, Navy and Air Force as football-only members and Central Florida, Southern Methodist and Houston in all sports.

Such an expansion would gut Conference USA, of which the Pirates are a member. CUSA officials announced plans of a football merger with the Mountain West Conference with an eye toward gaining a bid to the lucrative Bowl Championship Series, but those hopes would take a significant hit should the Big East poach some of its most attractive football programs.

For East Carolina, remaining in CUSA without an automatic qualifying bid to the BCS would be a tremendous disappointment. The school believes that it can compete at the highest level of college football and can point to numerous achievements in program history as evidence. But it would also mean that East Carolina does not share the millions in television revenue divided by BCS conferences and member schools. That money could bolster
academic programs and dramatically extend the school’s mission of regional service.

It is for those reasons, not simply for football, that East Carolina needs its advocates to be heard. School officials are doing their best, but they could use the assistance of state officials and others in the University of North Carolina system to gain access to a BCS conference. This is a defining moment for East Carolina and the region, one that must not be squandered.
ECU to be featured in MTV show ‘Savage U’
By Lynsey Horn
The Daily Reflector
Tuesday, October 18, 2011

East Carolina University will be featured on an MTV television project.

The university was asked to be a part of MTV’s “Savage U” that features Dan Savage, sex columnist and author of column “Savage Love.” MTV will be at ECU’s campus today through Friday.

Virginia Hardy, vice chancellor for student affairs at ECU, said MTV approached the university about hosting productions for the show. She said the university agreed to host the production because it would provide an opportunity for ECU students to engage in an intelligent, healthy discussion about personal relationships, situations and challenges they will encounter at the university and after they graduate.

“Savage U” follows Savage and his sidekick, Lauren Hutchinson, “as they travel across the country to different college campuses, offering a crash course to students on relationships, responsibility, sex, love and life,” an MTV spokesperson said.

Savage is an author, journalist, television personality and activist known for his humor and brutal honesty when it comes to sex, dating and relationships. He has appeared on CNN, MSNBC, “The Colbert Report” and “Real Time with Bill Maher.”

On Wednesday, a lecture and question-and-answer session will be held in Hendrix Theatre in Mendenhall Student Center. The audience will be limited to 250 students. Videotaped sessions and meetings will be held with Savage and smaller groups of students during the rest of the week. To participate, students must be at least 18 years old and sign a consent form for use of the any video in which they appear.
“The response from students on this tour has been overwhelmingly positive, and we’re all very excited about the next stop at ECU,” the spokesperson said.

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Martin Tanski, owner of Peddlin’ Pirates, a rickshaw taxi service for downtown Greenville and surrounding areas, talks about a recent robbery and drive-by shooting that occurred at his home and injured one of his drivers. (Aileen Devlin/The Daily Reflector)

**Drive-by shooter hits rickshaw driver in legs**

“When I started the business, I knew it wasn’t a matter of if, but when, this would happen.”

By Michael Abramowitz
The Daily Reflector
Tuesday, October 18, 2011

A Greenville rickshaw taxi driver was shot through both legs in a drive-by shooting minutes after he was robbed near the ECU campus, according to police and his employer.

Damien Lovett, 33, was working the late shift for Peddlin’ Pirates Rickshaw Taxi Service when the robbery occurred about 1:40 a.m. Saturday, business owner Martin Tanski said. As Lovett peddled alone past City Market, two men approached him and flagged him down, his boss said.

“He could tell something wasn’t right about the situation, so he sped up and tried to peddle around them, but they grabbed the back of the rickshaw and stopped him,” Tanksi said.

One of the men rummaged through a pack on the handle bars, but there was nothing of value in it, Tanski said. They asked for Lovett’s cellphone and money, struck him and wrestled him to the ground, Tanski said.
Lovett managed to get back on the bike and peddle two blocks to the business headquarters at Rotary Avenue and East Third Street, Tanski said.

While he was talking to Tanski and another rickshaw driver, a white pickup truck drove by and several shots were fired toward the men, Tanski said.

They ran for the cover of a garage, and the truck drove off. Lovett was struck by a .45-caliber bullet that went through both thighs, Tanski said.

Greenville Fire-Rescue paramedics brought him to Pitt County Memorial Hospital, where he was treated and released.

Tanski pointed to three bullet holes during an interview Monday, two fired into a BMW parked on the street, and another in the garage door frame.

The robbers were described as two black men, one heavy and the other thin. Tanski was unable to describe the occupants of the pickup truck, but he said several neighbors witnessed the shooting and gave descriptions to police.

Tanski started his rickshaw business in January 2010. He now has 20 drivers and six rickshaws.

“When I started the business, I knew it wasn’t a matter of if, but when, this would happen,” Tanski said.

Even so, the owner intends to stay put, he said.

“We have a customer base that depends on us for a safe trip home on weekends,” he said.

Tanski met with Greenville Police Chief William Anderson and officers from the East Carolina University Police Department, he said. He received encouragement to continue his business and a pledge from Anderson that his officers will work to protect his staff.

A meeting is planned for Thursday night among Tanski’s employees and a representative from the police department, the business owner said.

“We’ll talk about the ways we can help each other out and keep a closer eye on the streets,” Tanski said.
He doesn’t believe his rickshaws were targeted specifically.
“I don’t think this was a premeditated attack on the company,” he said.

“They just wanted to rob someone, and we just happened to be in the wrong place.”

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McNeill: Pirates 'banged up'

By Nathan Summers
The Daily Reflector
Tuesday, October 18, 2011

East Carolina football approached its game at Memphis last weekend with a win-at-all-costs mentality, and although the Pirates got the victory they needed, it did come with a price.

In the process of ECU (2-4 overall) upping its Conference USA record to 2-1, the Pirates added considerably to their injury list, which could have a profound effect when they trek to Annapolis, Md., this Saturday to square off with a Navy team with an identical 2-4 record.

The Pirates have 14 listed casualties as they dive headlong into game-planning for the Midshipmen, who last season delivered a titanic 76-35 beating to ECU and always require assignment-sound defense against their option attack.

“We’re banged up,” ECU head coach Ruffin McNeill confirmed at Monday’s weekly press conference, perhaps putting it lightly.

Up front on offense, the Pirates will continue to be without starting guard Adhem Elsawi and starting center Doug Polochak, both of whom have knee injuries. McNeill said he hoped Polochak, a sixth-year senior, would return next week.

Receiver Justin Jones, who missed the first three games of the season with a knee injury, is now sidelined with a wrist injury which held him out of the
35-17 ECU win over Memphis. Danny Webster hurt his hip against the Tigers but is probable to return this week, McNeill said, and senior receiver Michael Bowman injured his ankle on a kick return and is questionable.

Running back Reggie Bullock (thigh) returned to practice on Sunday night after sitting out against the Tigers and is probable, while backup Michael Dobson (ankle) is questionable.

On defense, linebacker and leading tackler Jeremy Grove was held out of the Memphis game with a shoulder injury and remains questionable along with fellow LBs Chris Baker (knee) and James Craig (knee). Probable to return to action after practicing Sunday is Ty Holmes (wrist).

“We thought he could play, but after warm-ups we felt Jeremy couldn’t go in the game,” McNeill said of Grove being a late scratch against Memphis.

Senior corner Emanuel Davis, who made a key interception against the Tigers, is questionable with a concussion, as is Bill Wallace (shoulder), while senior end Antonio Allison (ankle) practiced Sunday and is listed as probable.

C-USA Merger

In reaction to the news of C-USA’s planned merger with the Mountain West Conference, which was announced at a joint press conference last Friday night, McNeill mostly deferred to athletic director Terry Holland, saying he had his hands full with getting the Pirates back on track.

“I’ve got to pull the ox out of the ditch here, and the ox is still in the ditch,” McNeill said, noting the planned merger meant playing many different teams, most of which he’s faced at some point during his three decades as a coach. “I don’t think it’s a done deal, and I think it’s still emerging. It’s a big conference. I’ve faced those teams before and there will be some things they’ll do differently than we’re used to, but at the same time they’re similar.”

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Kymia Nawabi, a Durham native, is a competitor on Bravo's new show "Work of Art: The Next Great Artist."

Asides

From staff reports

Local stars on Bravo

Durham native Kymia Nawabi is one of 14 up-and-coming artists competing for a solo show at the Brooklyn Museum and a cash prize of $100,000 on Bravo's "Work of Art: The Next Great Artist." The series' second season premiered Wednesday. Nawabi, a graduate of East Carolina University, lives and works in New York City. In addition to drawing, printmaking and painting, she also dabbles in stop-motion animation. See her work at kymianawabi.com/.

"Work of Art" airs at 9 p.m. Wednesday on Bravo.

Where art is ornament

A major new exhibit, "Deep Surface: Contemporary Ornament and Pattern," is on display at CAM Raleigh through Jan. 2.

Seventy-two works from 42 designers and artists are on display, including Marcel Wanders' "Knotted Chair," wallpaper by Paul Noble and Vik Muniz, and fashions created from reconstructed used clothes by Junky Styling.

The show encompasses graphic and industrial design, furnishings, fashion, architecture and digital media.
Co-curators are Denise Gonzales Grisp, of the N.C. State College of Design, and Susan Yelavich, of Parsons The New School for Design in New York City.

CAM Raleigh is at 409 W. Martin St. It is open weekdays except Tuesday from 11 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. and from noon to 5 p.m. weekends.

Information: 513-0946 or camraleigh.org.

**Homegrown artists show**

"Homegrown/Under 35," an exhibit of works by 16 artists who discovered their passion for the arts in Durham Public Schools, opens Saturday at Craven Allen Gallery.

An artists' reception is from 5-7 p.m. Saturday at the gallery, 1106-1/2 Broad Street in Durham.

Helen Griffin, curator of the show, asked each artist to reflect on the role art in the public schools played in their lives and careers. The featured artists include Chris Alton, Harlan Campbell, Diana Ciompi, Mark Coffman, Jermario Couch, Bryan Crabtree, Jeff Israel, Whitney McDonell, Joe McDonough, Hannah Reed, Damian Stamer, Jacob Streilein, Robert Talley, Lizzie Tucker, Tyson Watson and Leigh Werrell.

The exhibit runs through Nov. 26. The gallery is open 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. weekdays and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturdays.

For information, call 286-4837 or visit CravenAllenGallery.com.

**New company presents dangerous cats**

A new Triangle performance company, Haymaker, premieres a play Thursday night about people who own exotic animals - in this case, tigers.

"Living with the Tiger" runs through Nov. 5 at Manbites Dog Theater in Durham. Haymaker is a trio - Akiva Fox, Emily Hill and Dan VanHoozer - who moved to Durham to start a theater company. Their first production examines what they describe as the uniquely American urge to own dangerous animals.

The trio notes that two nearby preserves seek to rescue tigers from neglectful owners, giving the issue a special local tie.

Performances are at 8:15 p.m. Thursday through Sunday, Oct. 26-30 and Nov. 2-5. Tickets are $12 weeknights and $17 Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Discounts for senior citizens, military and students with valid identification are available.
Thursday's performance is a pay-what-you-can preview; minimum is $5 by cash or check.

Manbites Dog Theater is at 703 Foster St. Information: 682-3343 or manbitesdogtheater.org.

**Potters take natural forms**

"New Works in Clay," a showing of pieces from Bulldog Pottery, runs through Oct. 30 at the N.C. Museum of Natural Sciences' Nature Art Gallery.

This is the fourth appearance of the Seagrove-based pottery at the gallery. Co-owners Bruce Gholson and Samantha Henneke specialize in pieces highlighting the natural world. Many of Gholson's pieces are decorated with what appear to be snake or fish fossils. Henneke often re-creates images from gardens in glaze.

The Nature Art Gallery is on the top floor of the Museum Store. It is open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday; noon to 5 p.m. Sundays and until 9 p.m. on First Fridays.

For information, call 733-7450, ext. 360.

**Call for artists**

Cary Photographic Artists invite entries for their fourth annual juried photo exhibition, which will be held Nov. 10-Dec. 16 at Cary Senior Center.

Cash prizes will be presented in two categories - color; and black and white/sephia. Jurors are Diana Hooper Bloomfield and Mary Kay Kennedy. For registration information, visit caryphotographicartists.org or email Ron Mitchell (ronmitch@nc.rr.com) or Bobbi Hopp (bhopp3@nc.rr.com).

**This and that**

Raleigh art gallery owner Lee Hansley will be a juror for the 51st annual Winter Park Outdoor Art Exhibit in Florida. As many as 6,000 artists are expected to submit their work for consideration. The exhibit will showcase works of 225 artists from across the country next year. ... Mary Doherty of Raleigh won first place in a July photography contest sponsored by BetterPhoto.com.
Field, court, classroom

Mighty deeds apparently are expected of Lawrence "Bubba" Cunningham, newly named to the post of athletic director at UNC-Chapel Hill. When a public university hires someone at a base salary of $525,000, he had better deliver the goods. So what are the goods?

In Cunningham's case, it will be to run a financially stable and efficient athletics program, encompassing 28 sports (including both men's and women's teams).

It will be to hire and supervise head coaches in those sports, with an eye toward their success in competition while also making sure that they and their players adhere to the ground rules of intercollegiate athletics.

Perhaps most significant, it will be to hold coaches accountable for ensuring that athletes keep faith with their underlying identity as students - the identity that entitles them to wear the UNC logo in the first place. That means athletes must meet acceptable levels of academic performance, and do so on the up-and-up.

It is no coincidence that Cunningham's hiring comes as UNC-CH deals with the consequences of having fallen short in some of those areas.

Under former head football coach Butch Davis, the football program slipped into disarray in terms of some players' flouting of academic standards and their failure to comply with rules of the National Collegiate Athletic Association.

Davis was fired in July by Chancellor Holden Thorp. At the same time, veteran athletic director Dick Baddour announced that he would retire a year early. His purpose: to allow a successor to be named who then would be responsible for picking a new permanent football coach. That is the burning personnel issue confronting Cunningham, who begins work in Chapel Hill on Nov. 14.

In what has shaped up as a battle over the university's fundamental values, Cunningham will have to reaffirm that even in the big-time sports of football and basketball, there are more important things than victories and championships.
As desirable as those goals are, they must be achieved without sacrificing or subverting the university's soul as a place where students come to learn, not just to perform as entertainers for the amusement of fans and enrichment of TV networks. Let Cunningham make all that crystal clear in return for his very generous paycheck.
Carol Quillen has been on the job since Aug. 1, but she'll officially become Davidson College's 18th -- and first female -- president today during an inauguration ceremony.

Quillen inaugurated as Davidson's president today
By David Perlmutter

Quillen, 51, who came to Davidson from Rice University in Houston, also is the first president since 1957 who is not a Davidson graduate. She replaced Tom Ross (class of 1972) who left his alma mater after nearly four years as president to become president of the UNC System.

The 2:30 p.m. ceremony will be in Belk Arena of the Baker Sports Complex on campus. All of the living past presidents are expected to be there. It is not a public event.

At Rice, Quillen was a teacher, researcher and administrator, and was vice president for international and interdisciplinary initiatives when she accepted the job at Davidson.

When she was introduced last May, she said she'll work to promote Davidson's liberal arts values to an "increasingly skeptical public" as the best way to build the next generation of "service leaders."

Until trustees voted to make Davidson co-educational in 1972, the school was all-male for its first 136 years. Of its 17 previous presidents, the first seven weren't graduates, but since 1888, only three presidents didn't have Davidson diplomas. Of those, two were interim heads.
Potential Charlotte 49ers walk-ons eager to live the dream

By David Scott

UNC Charlotte had everything Thomas Frazier wanted when he visited campus last spring as a high school senior.

"The place was beautiful," said Frazier. "The engineering department was what I was looking for. The people were great. It wasn't far from home. It was just what I was looking for."

The school was able to offer Frazier something else, and it was a clincher: The chance to play college football.

The sport is still two years away for the 49ers. But with coaches in place and a 15,000-seat stadium under construction, there are visible signs around campus now of a football program that will play its first game in 2013.

There also is the presence of potential future 49ers football players like Frazier, who, at 6-foot-3 and 285 pounds, is hard to miss.

Frazier - and the estimated 40 others who attended a September meeting for potential walk-ons - weren't recruited and they're not on athletic scholarships. They just want an opportunity to play - even if that chance is
still two years away and at least one year of their eligibility will have been used up.

"These kids just want to be able to try," said coach Brad Lambert, who has been out recruiting scholarship players they can't sign until February. "You can see it in their eyes. I told them at the meeting, 'Somebody in this room is going to play for us.'"

Lambert knows not to expect too much from the meeting. He made sure every prospective player understood eligibility rules (that they have five years in school to play four seasons, with time away for military service or a missionary trip being the only exceptions).

"Once you enroll in school, wherever it is, the clock starts," said Lambert. "Whether it's a community college or here, it doesn't matter. A lot of kids don't understand. But that was the point of the meeting."

Joining Frazier at the meeting were prospective walk-ons like Yancey Hicks, a 6-2, 270-pound lineman who played at Northern Durham High. Jared Page, on the other hand, is a 5-9, 180-pounder who, despite saying he's an excellent athlete, didn't play football at Hillsborough Orange. He also happens to be Frazier's roommate.

"I figure I'll give it a shot," said Page. "It would be sweet if I made it."

Frazier, Hicks and Page will get their first chance when the football team holds walk-on tryouts next spring. With no games to play, the team will practice next fall - with every player taking a redshirt year.

Frazier might have a legitimate shot at making the team.

He was an offensive tackle at North Davidson whose high school accomplishments included an appearance in last summer's East-West All-Star game in Greensboro.

According to Knights coach Mark Holcomb, Frazier was a late bloomer, standing just 5-9 as a freshman and not coming into his own until his junior year. That limited his college offers for football. He heard from lower-tier Football Bowl Subdivision schools like Akron and Division II Lenoir-Rhyne. He also thought about walking on at N.C. State.

"He was just nasty, a mean blocker," said Holcomb. "But college recruiters have this mold they want you to fit. Thomas isn't 6-4 or 6-5. But I told him that you've got to go to a school where you want to go."

So when Frazier made the one-hour drive from Lexington, N.C., to Charlotte last spring, he knew he'd found the right place. It didn't hurt that Holcomb
and Lambert are old friends from Lambert's days as an assistant at Wake Forest. Or that the 49ers were getting ready to offer North Davidson senior quarterback Karsten Miller a scholarship.

Frazier visited Charlotte the same April day that ground was broken on the football stadium. He applied, was accepted and plans on majoring in engineering with a double minor in business and math.

Now, he's waiting for his chance to try out for football on a campus which, for now, only offers varsity sports like soccer, volleyball and cross country in the fall. He lifts weights at the student activity center. He stays in shape by playing basketball. He goes into the hallway of his dorm between quarters of Carolina Panthers games and tosses around a football with Page.

"That helps keep me in it, I guess," Frazier said. "But football for me really isn't that far off. All I've got is to wait until spring, then I'll be under (the coaches') wings. Then we'll be practicing next fall. It's not that long before football will be back in my life."
Sarah Benson has a Ph.D. in art history and a master's in comparative literature, but this year she is teaching geometry.

Seeing Value in Ignorance, College Expects Its Physicists to Teach Poetry

By ALAN SCHWARZ

ANNAPOLIS, Md. — Sarah Benson last encountered college mathematics 20 years ago in an undergraduate algebra class. Her sole experience teaching math came in the second grade, when the first graders needed help with their minuses.

And yet Ms. Benson, with a Ph.D. in art history and a master’s degree in comparative literature, stood at the chalkboard drawing parallelograms, constructing angles and otherwise dismembering Euclid’s Proposition 32 the way a biology professor might treat a water frog. Her students cared little about her inexperience. As for her employers, they did not mind, either: they had asked her to teach formal geometry expressly because it was a subject about which she knew very little.

It was just another day here at St. John’s College, whose distinctiveness goes far beyond its curriculum of great works: Aeschylus and Aristotle, Bacon and Bach. As much of academia fractures into ever more specific
disciplines, this tiny college still expects — in fact, requires — its professors to teach almost every subject, leveraging ignorance as much as expertise.

“There’s a little bit of impostor syndrome,” said Ms. Benson, who will teach Lavoisier’s “Elements of Chemistry” next semester. “But here, it’s O.K. that I don’t know something. I can figure it out, and my job is to help the students do the same thing. It’s very collaborative.”

Or as St. John’s president, Chris Nelson (class of 1970), put it with a smile only slightly sadistic: “Every member of the faculty who comes here gets thrown in the deep end. I think the faculty members, if they were cubbyholed into a specialization, they’d think that they know more than they do. That usually is an impediment to learning. Learning is born of ignorance.”

Students who attend St. John’s — it has a sister campus in Santa Fe, N.M., with the same curriculum and philosophies — know that their college experience will be like no other. There are no majors; every student takes the same 16 yearlong courses, which generally feature about 15 students discussing Sophocles or Homer, and the professor acting more as catalyst than connoisseur.

What they may not know is that their professor — or tutor in the St. John’s vernacular — might have no background in the subject. This is often the case for the courses that freshmen take. For example, Hannah Hintze, who has degrees in philosophy and woodwind performance, and whose dissertation concerned Plato’s “Republic,” is currently leading classes on observational biology and Greek.

“They don’t have someone saying, ‘I have all the answers.’ They’re open-minded and go along with us to see what answers there can be.”

Like all new tutors, Ms. Benson, 42, went through a one-week orientation in August to reacquaint herself with Euclid, and to learn the St. John’s way of teaching. She attends weekly conferences with more seasoned tutors.

Her plywood-floor classroom in McDowell Hall is as almost as dim and sparse as the ones Francis Scott Key (valedictorian of the class of 1796) studied in before the college’s original building burned down in 1909. Eight underpowered ceiling lights barely illuminated three walls of chalkboards. While even kindergarten classrooms now feature interactive white boards
and Wi-Fi connected iPads, not one laptop or cellphone was visible; the only evidence of contemporary life was the occasional plastic foam coffee cup.

The discussion centered not on examples and exercises, but on the disciplined narrative of Euclid’s assertions, the aesthetic economy of mathematical argument. When talk turned to Proposition 34 of Book One, which states that a parallelogram’s diagonal divides it into equal areas, not one digit was used or even mentioned. Instead, the students debated whether Propositions 4 and 26 were necessary for Euclid’s proof.

When a student punctuated a blackboard analysis with, “The self-evident truth that these triangles will be equal,” the subliminal reference to the Declaration of Independence hinted at the eventual braiding of the disciplines by both students and tutors here. So, too, did a subsequent discussion of how “halves of equals are equals themselves,” evoking the United States Supreme Court’s logic in endorsing segregation 2,200 years after Euclid died.

Earlier in the day, in a junior-level class taught by a longtime tutor about a portion of Newton’s seminal physics text “Principia,” science and philosophy became as intertwined as a candy cane’s swirls. Students discussed Newton’s shrinking parabolic areas as if they were voting districts, and the limits of curves as social ideals.

One student remarked, “In Euclid before, he talked a lot about what is equal and what isn’t. It seems here that equality is more of a continuum — we can get as close as we want, but never actually get there.” A harmony of Tocqueville was being laid over Newton’s melody.

The tutor, Michael Dink, graduated from St. John’s in 1975 and earned his master’s degree and Ph.D. in philosophy from the Catholic University of America. Like most professors here, he long ago traded the traditional three-course academic career — writing journal articles, attending conferences and teaching a specific subject — for the intellectual buffet at St. John’s. His first year included teaching Ptolemy’s “Almagest,” a treatise on planetary movements, and atomic theory. He since has taught 15 of the school’s 16 courses, the exception being sophomore music.

“You have to not try to control things,” Mr. Dink said, “and not think that what’s learned has to come from you.”

This ancient teaching method could be making a comeback well beyond St. John’s two campuses. Some education reformers assert that teachers as early as elementary school should lecture less at the blackboard while students
silently take notes — the sage-on-the-stage model, as some call it — and foster more discussion and collaboration among smaller groups. It is a strategy that is particularly popular among schools that use technology to allow students to learn at their own pace.

Still, not even the most rabid reformer has suggested that biology be taught by social theorists, or Marx by mathematicians. That philosophy will continue to belong to a school whose president has joyfully declared, “We don’t have departmental politics — we don’t have departments!”

Anthony T. Grafton, a professor of history at Princeton and president of the American Historical Association, said he appreciated the approach.

“There’s no question that people are becoming more specialized — it’s natural for scholars to cover a narrow field in great depth rather than many at the same time,” he said. “I admire how St. John’s does it. It sounds both fun and scary.”