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ECU dental school names service sites

By Josh Humphries
The Daily Reflector

Monday, October 19, 2009

Citizens around Elizabeth City, Ahoskie and Sylva soon will have better access to dental care.

East Carolina University officials announced Monday that the ECU dental school will open community service learning centers in those three North Carolina towns. The locations are the first three of 10 dental centers that will be associated with ECU’s dental school.

Students will spend their fourth year working at one of the 10 sites in rural and underserved areas.

ECU Chancellor Steve Ballard said the centers represent an important step toward increasing access to dental care in North Carolina.

Exact locations for the centers in the Elizabeth City, Ahoskie and Sylva have not been named.

Dr. James Hupp, dean of the dental school, said those communities were chosen based on a number of factors including needs, access to care and population. He said local dentists and elected officials also were consulted in the process.

"We are right on target to get this dental school built physically and begin making a difference for the underserved population of North Carolina," Ballard said.

The dental school is slated to open in the fall of 2011 with 50 students and will eventually reach 200 students. Five students in their fourth year will study in each learning center, along with faculty, residents and dental hygienists.

Hupp said the model has never been used in dental education in the country. Providing care to underserved populations is part of the mission of the school and it helped push the idea through the General Assembly, which has appropriated $90 million for the school, he said.

"From this moment on we are departing from the traditional path of dental education," Hupp said. "The students will be in a proper environment that will really round out their education."

North Carolina is below the national average in the ratio of dentists to population. Four counties have no dentists at all, and five more counties may be without dentists soon because their dentists have reached retirement age.

Leaders from each chosen community attended the news conference at the ECU Health Sciences Building on Monday morning.

Cecil Groves, president of Southwestern Community College in Sylva in rural Jackson County, said the center will be welcomed in his community.

"We are very excited about what they are doing, especially in rural areas," Groves said. "Good dental health is important for overall health and we are looking forward to working with ECU in any way possible."

Contact Josh Humphries at jhumphries@coxnc.com or (252) 329-9565.
Family Fare: 'Chasing George Washington'

The Daily Reflector

Tuesday, October 20, 2009

eSDLqChasing George Washington" may sound like a dash for cash, but the new children's musical is really about the pursuit of history.

Co-produced and co-commissioned by the White House Historical Association and the Kennedy Center, the production is scheduled to make East Carolina the second stop on its national tour. It takes the stage at ECU's Wright Auditorium at 7 p.m. Friday as part of the university's Family Fare Series.

"Chasing George Washington" tells the story of a field trip to 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue that goes awry when the nation's first president is knocked out of his portrait and into real life. In a storyline that will be somewhat familiar to fans of the blockbuster movie "Night at the Museum," history comes alive as students work to get George Washington back into his painting.

"There's geography, politics, it's all in there," said Michael Crane assistant dean of ECU's College of Fine Arts and Communication. "It's a great theme with these school children chasing around George Washington to put him back into his picture frame, and they're running into everybody."

The play's main characters, Dee, José and Annie, encounter other famous White House residents — Dolley Madison, Jacqueline Kennedy, Abraham Lincoln and his wife Mary Todd — in the play, by award winning playwright Karen Zacarias.

Zacarias is the founding artistic director of Young Playwrights' Theater, a nonprofit organization that teaches play writing to Washington, D.C.-area students. Students helped Zacarias write "Chasing George Washington."

"We brought a group of public school fourth-, fifth-, and sixth-graders into the process," Zacarias said. "We tried to imagine how it would feel to be living in a house with 35 bathrooms. What would the walls say if they could speak? What would you say if your father was Abraham Lincoln? How does it feel to be a child growing up in the White House?"

Those were the kinds of questions Zacarias asked herself at age 10 when her family moved from Mexico to Boston and she began planning her first trip to the White House.

"I begged my parents to take us to Washington, D.C., so we could see where the president, his wife and his little girl, Amy (Carter), lived," she said.

"One day, we all drove down to find the house we knew so well from TV and pictures. I remember walking around that beautiful house, seeing dishes, and portraits, and rooms all one color. ... The place was so full of history, and yet still so alive."

Through "Chasing George Washington," Zacarias tries to make it come alive for other students as well.

"1600 Pennsylvania Avenue is both a symbol and a real home," she said. "... Living in the White House, and writing a play about it, is a possibility for every American child."

"Chasing George Washington" is directed by John Vreeke, with music by Deborah Wicks La Puma. The six-month tour of school and public performances will travel to 34 cities in 25 states.

A book based on the musical was written by Ronald Kidd with illustrations by Ard Hoyt and was published in
September.

If you go!

What: The Kennedy Center for Young Audiences on Tour presents “Chasing George Washington”

When: 7 p.m. Friday

Where: ECU's Wright Auditorium.

Tickets: Advance tickets are $6 for children and $9 for adults. All tickets at the door are $9.

Visit: www.ecu.edu/srapas and click on family fare

Call: 328-4788.

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New faces find field against Rice

By Nathan Summers
The Daily Reflector The Daily Reflector

Monday, October 19, 2009

While blowout wins might not count for anything more than other kinds of wins, they often allow teams to do things that are otherwise impossible.

East Carolina's 49-13 rout of Rice last Saturday was the Pirates' first comfortable win of the 2009 season, and while the Pirates were firing on all cylinders, head coach Skip Holtz and his staff were able for the first time to unveil a full roster of players.

Redshirt freshman quarterback Josh Jordan made his long awaited debut with the ECU offense, while defenders like linebacker Dustin Lineback were able to parlay previous playing time into big days against the Owls.

A slew of ECU players caught passes, including senior reserve Darnell Ballard and redshirt freshmen Andrew Bodenheimer and Jacobi Jenkins.

Senior squad man Justin Brockmeyer logged a couple of carries in the running game and, with Jordan under center, Ballard also cashed in a late touchdown in the Pirate win.

"Eleven different guys caught passes, seven different guys carried the ball," Holtz said at Monday's weekly press conference. "It was great to see Darnell Ballard get into the end zone, a senior and a guy that's been a special teams player for us here."

Another advantage of the heavy use of reserves last weekend is that, coupled with the Pirates' extended layoff until next Tuesday's game at Memphis, the 4-3 team should be well-rested heading into the season's home stretch.

"It was great to see so many guys get to play, so many first catches and runs," Holtz said. "It created a lot of excitement and energy, something that we needed in that locker room."

Lindsay status

Senior running back Dominique Lindsay is listed as questionable for the game at Memphis after sustaining an ankle injury against Rice.

The Pirates' rushing leader with 431 yards and three touchdowns in parts of five games, Lindsay sat out all of last season with a knee injury and missed two games this season with a shoulder injury.

After distinguishing himself as the leader in a well-stocked backfield, the offense will miss Lindsay's punch if the swelling in the ankle does not subside this week, Holtz said.

The Pirates are off today and also rested Monday, giving Lindsay time to make progress.

"We'll find out a little bit more from him on Wednesday when we have the opportunity to get out on the field," Holtz said. "He's walking around on it. I just don't know how long it's going to be at this point. It might be three or four days, it might be two weeks."

"It's a shame because he's really playing with a lot of confidence and when you look at the difference between him and everybody else, there is a huge difference in yards per carry."
Other injuries

Holtz said Monday outside linebacker Matt Thompson, who has played a key role for the Pirates in recent weeks and made his first career start at SMU, is likely out indefinitely with an elbow injury that could require surgery.

Holtz said Thompson had MRIs done on Sunday.

Junior defensive lineman A.J. Johnson, who also took on a bigger role in recent weeks, will have surgery on his injured knee, according to Holtz.

Junior running back Jonathan Williams could be out at least two more weeks with a knee injury and sophomore defensive lineman Antonio Allison remains sidelined with a broken foot.

Sophomore receiver Michael Bowman remains questionable as he returns to practice from a broken arm, and senior running back J.R. Rogers is listed as probable for the Memphis game.

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NCCU summit showcases Burr

DURHAM -- A sign outside the meeting Monday morning at N.C. Central University called it the "Burr-Bowles Summit," but it could have just read love fest.

Five years after Republican Richard Burr and his Democratic opponent, Erskine Bowles, spent $26 million to tell Tar Heel voters why the other fellow was unfit for the U.S. Senate, the old rivals now can't find enough nice things to say about each other.

"Erskine Bowles is the best president of the university system we have had the pleasure of having," Burr said in introducing Bowles to 200 people at a conference on economics and education.

Bowles, if anything, was nicer. "I've had a chance to work with this guy for four full years, and nobody works harder or smarter for North Carolina than Richard Burr does," Bowles said.

The friendship between Burr and Bowles is about more than making nice. Bowles, as president of the 17-campus University of North Carolina system, which is struggling with budget cuts and layoffs, needs all the help he can get from Washington. And Burr faces a potentially tough re-election fight next year.

Monday's event was typical of Burr's style of campaigning while seeming not to campaign. Burr not only invited his old political rival to be a key speaker, but he also held his conference at a historically black campus in what may be the most Democratic city in the state.

Burr has developed an inclusive, easy-going style. Even at Republican rallies, he avoids the divisive rhetoric many find to be red meat for the party's base.

It is a strategy suited for a Senate seat that no party has been able to hold since Democrat Sam Ervin won re-election in 1968. The seat has flipped parties every six years from Democrat Robert Morgan to Republican John East to Democrat Terry Sanford to Republican Lauch Faircloth to Democrat John Edwards and finally to Burr.

His de-emphasis on partisanship suits Burr's style as a career businessman who seems to care most deeply about economic issues rather than the more controversial social issues, said Andy Taylor, a political science professor at N.C. State University in Raleigh.

"It's not only a function of strategic politics," Taylor said. "It's who the guy is. He's a businessman."

Burr said Monday that he hopes to hold a series of economic development seminars devoted to finding ways to ensure North Carolina's economic recovery.

Burr's business connections were evident Monday. Among the participants at the conference were Jim Goodnight, CEO of SAS Institute, the Cary software company; Bob Ingram, the retired GlaxoSmithKline executive; and Bob Greczyn, president and CEO of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina.
Study Finds Growing Work for School Counselors

By JACQUES STEINBERG

The struggling economy has taken a toll on those directly responsible for advising students about the college admission process.

Nearly half of public schools have raised the caseloads of high school counselors this year, compared with last year, with the average increase exceeding 53 students, according to a study by the National Association for College Admission Counseling.

At the same time, the report said, the pressures on applicants (and, by extension, their counselors) are growing, as the number of applications to four-year colleges continued to rise, along with the number of students applying to colleges under early-decision programs.

In many respects, the report, “2009 State of College Admission,” seeks to quantify the extent of the frenzy engulfing many of today’s college applicants.

For example, about 22 percent of students who enrolled in college in the fall of 2008 applied to at least seven colleges, up from about 19 percent from a year earlier. Meanwhile, the average acceptance rate at four-year colleges declined slightly, to 66.8 percent in 2007, the last year for which the report provided full data in that category, from 71.3 percent in 2001.

Those applicants who find themselves on a waiting list face tough odds of being accepted. Fewer than one in three on such lists in 2008 were ultimately accepted, according to the report, about the same as a year earlier.

And yet the report included some indications that the pressures on applicants could soon ease. The number of students graduating from high school annually is believed to have peaked this spring, at 3.33 million, according to the report, so competition for places in colleges should diminish over the next few years.

But families of children in elementary school take note: the nation’s collective high school graduating class “is projected to rebound to 3.31 million by 2017-18,” the report said.

Many applicants rely on their school counselors for advice on college admissions, and the report described the rising workloads of those counselors, particularly at public high schools. (While private school counselors are also working harder, in many instances, fewer than 20 percent reported that their caseloads had increased since the last school year, compared with 45 percent of their public school counterparts.)

Among the states with the highest student-to-counselor ratios are California (986 students for each counselor), Minnesota (799) and Utah (720), according to the report, which cited government data for the 2006-7 school year. While Illinois was listed as having the highest ratio (1,172), the report suggested that the
figure was probably “the result of a reporting error,” and was most likely closer to about 700.

Sandie Gilbert, a counselor at Highland Park High School in Illinois said in an interview that she had a caseload of about 280 students this year — an increase of about 45, or 20 percent, since she first began working at the school 15 years ago.

“It’s been inching up every year,” Ms. Gilbert said.

About a quarter of her students are freshmen, who have been streaming into her office since school began in late August with any number of “acclimation” issues, she said. Another quarter are seniors, whom Ms. Gilbert must serve not only in one-on-one guidance sessions but by writing college recommendations for each.

“I wrote 43 recommendations before Oct. 15, and that’s at home, at night,” she said, citing the November deadlines for early-decision applications.

“I was really busy every single period, for the first six weeks of school,” she added. “I’m just now eating lunch. It’s been sitting there on my desk. It’s 2:30.”
Case of swimmer thought killed by shark reviewed

North Carolina's medical examiner's office reversed itself twice Friday, first saying that a Pittsburgh vacationer found washed up on the Outer Banks last month was not killed by a shark as first reported, but died from "accidental drowning."

Hours later, the office reverted to its original conclusion after getting another opinion.

But this "continued uncertainty" means the case requires further review, said Crystal Baity in an e-mail. She's a spokeswoman for East Carolina University, where the autopsy was conducted.

The body of Richard A. Snead, 60, was found Sept. 17 by another tourist in Kill Devil Hills. Snead had been reported missing days earlier after going for a late-night swim.

The medical examiner's office blamed shark bites for his death at the time.

The office on Wednesday came to the drowning conclusion, Baity wrote, after analyzing circumstances at the scene and shark behavior, and reviewing images of the body with marine biologists, and confirmed it earlier Friday.

But later in the day, another researcher expressed a different opinion, leading officials to stay with the shark-bite scenario, Baity said.

She said she didn't know how long the final review would take. If shark bites are confirmed as the cause of death, it would be the first such reported attack in the region in more than eight years.

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The Three-Year Solution
How the reinvention of higher education benefits parents, students, and schools.

By Lamar Alexander | NEWSWEEK
Published Oct 17, 2009
From the magazine issue dated Oct 26, 2009

Hartwick college, a small liberal-arts school in upstate New York, makes this offer to well-prepared students: earn your undergraduate degree in three years (six semesters) instead of four, and save about $43,000—the amount of one year’s tuition and fees. A number of innovative colleges are making the same offer to students anxious about saving time and money. The three-year degree could become the higher-education equivalent of the fuel-efficient car. And that’s both an opportunity and a warning for the best higher-education system in the world.

During the 1960s the United States made almost all of the world’s best automobiles. Detroit’s Big Three—Ford, Chrysler, General Motors—sold more than 80 percent of cars in the United States. Yet that domination had its own intrinsic risks.

In The Reckoning, his chronicle of the American auto industry’s troubles, the late David Halberstam wrote about George Romney, the square-jawed, upstart president of American Motors who saw the Big Three as a "shared monopoly ... musclebound and mindless in the domestic market—increasingly locked into practices that their best people knew were destructive but unable to break out of so profitable a syndrome." Romney warned, "There is nothing more vulnerable than entrenched success."

We know the rest of the story. The Big Three kept producing gas guzzlers while the Europeans and Japanese perfected smaller, fuel-efficient cars. Some of Detroit’s best people even left to help. Ford vice president Marvin Runyon’s team moved to Smyrna, Tenn., to build Nissan’s start-from-scratch plant. Fifteen miles away, in Spring Hill, General Motors invested $5 billion in Saturn, hoping side-by-side competition would help the Americans beat the Japanese. But GM was still too musclebound. Meanwhile, Nissan’s liberated managers and nonunion employees operated the most efficient auto plant in North America. Today, American taxpayers are bailing out GM and Chrysler, foreign competitors make most of the world’s best cars, and the Big Three account for less than half the cars sold in the United States.
American higher education could learn from Romney's warning to the Big Three a half century ago. The United States has almost all of the world's best universities. A recent Chinese survey ranks 35 American universities among the top 50, eight among the top 10. Our research universities have been the key to developing the competitive advantages that help Americans produce 25 percent of all the world's wealth. In 2007, 623,805 of the world's brightest students were attracted to American universities. Not long ago, a few Senate colleagues and I had supper with former Brazilian president Fernando Henrique Cardoso, who was completing a year as scholar-in-residence at the Library of Congress. One senator asked Cardoso what memory he would take back to Brazil about his time in the United States. "The American university," he replied. "The greatness and the autonomy of the American university. There is nothing in the world quite like it."

Yet, as with the auto industry in the 1960s, there are signs of peril within American higher education. It is true that the problem with car companies was monopoly, whereas U.S. colleges compete in a vibrant marketplace. Students, often helped by federal scholarships and loans, may choose among 6,000 public, private, nonprofit, for-profit, or religious institutions of higher learning. In addition, almost all of the $32 billion the federal government provides for university research is awarded competitively.

But as I discovered myself during my four-year tenure as president of the University of Tennessee in the late 1980s, in some ways, many colleges and universities are stuck in the past. For instance, the idea of the fall-to-spring "school year" hasn't changed much since before the American Revolution, when we were a nation of farmers and students put their books away to work the soil during the summer. That long summer stretch no longer makes sense. Former George Washington University president Stephen J. Trachtenberg estimates that a typical college uses its facilities for academic purposes a little more than half the calendar year. "While college facilities sit idle, they continue to generate maintenance, energy, and debt-service expenses that contribute to the high cost of running a college," he has written.

Within academic departments, tenure, combined with age-discrimination laws, make faculty turnover -- critical for a university to remain current in changing times -- difficult. Instead of protecting speech and encouraging diversity and innovative thinking, the tenure system often stifles them: aspiring professors must
win the approval of established colleagues for tenure, encouraging likemindedness and sometimes inhibiting the free flow of ideas.

Meanwhile, tuition has soared, leaving graduating students with unprecedented loan debt. Strong campus presidents to manage these problems are becoming harder to find, and to keep. In fact, students now stay on campus almost as long as their presidents. The average tenure of a college president at a public research university is seven years. The average amount of time students now take to complete an undergraduate degree has stretched to six years and seven months as students interrupted by work, inconvenienced by unavailable classes, or lured by one more football season find it hard to graduate.

Congress, acting with the best of intentions, has tried to help students with college costs through Pell Grants and other forms of tuition support. But some of their fixes have made the problem worse. The stack of congressional regulations governing federal student grants and loans now stands twice as tall as I do. One college president lamented to me that filling out these forms consumes 7 percent of every tuition dollar.

Because of the recession, Harvard is laying off workers and Stanford is selling a billion dollars of its endowment. Declining state support makes the pain in public universities even worse. From 2000 to 2006, total state higher-education funding rose only 17.6 percent while average tuition at public four-year institutions went up 63.4 percent. The main cause of declining state support was the runaway costs of Medicaid, which rose over the same period by 62.6 percent. And Congress is now considering a health-care reform bill that would shift even more Medicaid costs to the states. The recent federal stimulus dollars offer only temporary relief. Tennessee Gov. Phil Bredesen described the situation in his March budget address: "When this money ends 21 months from now, our campuses will suddenly need to begin operating with about $180 million less in state funding than they had this year."

For all of these reasons, some forward-looking colleges like Hartwick are rethinking the old way of doing things and questioning decades-old assumptions about what a college degree means. For instance, why does it have to take four years to earn a diploma? This fall, 16 first-year students and four second-year students at Hartwick, located halfway between Binghamton and Albany, enrolled in the school's new three-year degree program. According to the college, the plan is designed for high-ability, highly motivated students who wish to save money or to move along more rapidly toward advanced degrees.

By eliminating that extra year, three-year degree students save 25 percent in costs. Instead of taking 30 credits a year, these students take 40. During January, Hartwick runs a four-week course during which students may earn three to four credits on or off campus, including a number of international sites. Summer courses are not required, but a student may enroll in them—and pay extra. Three-year students get first crack at course registration. There are no changes in the number of courses professors teach or in their pay.

In April, Lipscomb University in Nashville also announced a three-year option, along with a plan for veterans to attend tuition-free and make it easier and cheaper for community-college students to attend Lipscomb. Lipscomb requires its three-year-degree students to take eight semesters, which means summer school is required. Still, university president Randy Lowry estimates that a three-year-degree student saves about $11,000 in tuition and fees.

The three-year degree is starting to catch on, but it isn't a new idea. Geniuses have always breezed through.
Judson College, a 350-student institution in Alabama, has offered students a three-year option for 40 years. Students attend "short terms" in May and June to earn the credits required for graduation. Bates College in Maine and Ball State University in Indiana are among other colleges offering three-year options. Later this month the Rhode Island Legislature is expected to approve a bill requiring all state institutions of higher education to create three-year bachelor programs.

Changes at the high-school level are also helping to make it easier for many students to earn their undergrad degrees in less time. One of five students arrives at college today with Advanced Placement credits amounting to a semester or more of college-level work. Many universities, including large schools like the University of Texas, make it easy for these AP students to graduate faster. According to the U.S. Department of Education's most recent statistics, about 5 percent of U.S. undergraduates finished with bachelor's degrees in three years.

For students who don't plan to stop with an undergraduate degree, the three-year plan may have an even greater appeal. Dr. John Sergent, head of Vanderbilt University Medical School's residency program, enrolled in Vanderbilt's undergraduate college in 1959. He entered medical school after only three years as did "four or five of my classmates. I was looking at a lot of years ahead of me, eight to 10 years of medical training after college before I had a real job," he says. "My first year of medical school counted as my senior year, which meant I had to take three to four labs a week to get all my sciences in. I basically skipped my senior year." Sergent still had time to be a student senator, serve as fraternity president, and meet his wife. Today, interviewing hundreds of applicants for medical residencies, he sees several who have graduated in less than four years, mainly because of Advanced Placement credits. "Most of them use the extra time to complete a research project or to think about what to do with their lives. It's not as clear-cut as when we were in college," he told me.

There are drawbacks to moving through school at such a brisk pace. For one, it deprives students of the luxury of time to roam intellectually. Compressing everything into three years also leaves less time for growing up, engaging in extracurricular activities, and studying abroad. On crowded campuses it could mean fewer opportunities to get into a prized professor's class. Iowa's Waldorf College has graduated several hundred students in its three-year-degree programs, but is now phasing out the option. Most Waldorf students wanted the full four-year experience—academically, socially, and athletically. And faculty members will be wary of any change that threatens the core curriculum in the name of moving students into the workforce.

"Most high governmental officials who speak of education policy seem to conceive of education in this light—as a way to ensure economic competitiveness and continued economic growth," Derek Bok, president emeritus of Harvard told The Washington Post. "I strongly disagree with this approach." Another risk: the new campus schedules might eventually produce less revenue for the institution and longer working hours for faculty members.

Adopting a three-year option will not come easily to most schools. Those that wish to tackle tradition and make American campuses more cost-conscious may find it easier to take Trachtenberg's advice: open campuses year-round. "You could run two complete colleges, with two complete faculties, in the facilities now used half the year for one," he says. "That's without cutting the length of students' vacations, increasing class sizes, or requiring faculty to teach more." Simply requiring one mandatory summer session for every student
in four years—as Dartmouth College does—would improve his institution's bottom line by $10 million to $15 million dollars, he says.

Whether they experiment with three-year degrees, offer year-round classes, challenge the hidebound tenure system—or all of the above—universities are, like the automakers, slowly realizing that to stay competitive and relevant they must adapt to a rapidly changing world. Among the 13.2 million automobiles sold in the United States during 2008, just 315,761 were hybrid vehicles. Toyota alone sold three out of four, or 241,405, of these; the Big Three sold 34,042. The number of hybrids is relatively small, but Toyota's persistence and innovation in creating smaller, fuel-efficient vehicles has helped it to become the world's leading automobile manufacturer.

Just as a hybrid car is not for every driver, a three-year degree is not for every student. Expanding the three-year option or year-round schedules may be difficult, but it may be more palatable than asking Congress for additional bailout money, asking legislators for more state support, or asking students for even higher tuition payments. Campuses willing to adopt convenient schedules along with more-focused, less-expensive degrees may find that they have a competitive advantage in attracting bright, motivated students. As George Romney might have put it, these sorts of innovations can help American universities, long the example to the world, avoid the perils of success.

*Alexander, now a U.S. senator, was U.S. education secretary for George H.W. Bush, president of The University of Tennessee, and governor of Tennessee. Alexander.*

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