THE DAILY CLIPS

October 23, 2009

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

The Greenville Daily Reflector
The Raleigh News & Observer
The New York Times
The Wall Street Journal
USA Today
The Charlotte Observer
The Fayetteville Observer
The Greensboro News & Record
Newsweek
U.S. News & World Report
Business Week
Time

East Carolina University News Bureau
E-mail to durhamj@ecu.edu  Web site at http://www.news.ecu.edu
252-328-6481 FAX: 252-328-6300
Rare piece of history displayed

By Josh Humphries
The Daily Reflector

Thursday, October 22, 2009

A rare piece of North Carolina’s early history was pulled from the Beaufort Inlet this week and displayed in Greenville.

An anchor believed to be from Blackbeard’s flagship, the Queen Anne’s Revenge, was taken from the water by researchers with the QAR Project, a state-funded research expedition that will eventually bring up 700,000 individual artifacts.

The anchor was displayed at the QAR Conservation Lab on the East Carolina University West Research Campus on Thursday afternoon.

Historians say that the infamous pirate and his ship ran aground in 1718 in Beaufort Inlet. The wreckage, which was first found in 1996, is located about a mile from Fort Macon in 25 feet of water.

As more artifacts are recovered researchers are more and more confident that the wreckage is what remains of Blackbeard’s ship.

“This is the oldest shipwreck we have worked on in North Carolina,” Mark Wilde-Ramsing, QAR project manager, said. “It is associated with Blackbeard and every artifact is important for understanding what was going on at the time.”

The 160-pound anchor is one of the largest pieces recovered from the ship so far, but researchers will eventually bring up very large pieces, including cannons weighing about one ton each, Wilde-Ramsing said.

The five-pronged anchor was not the primary anchor for the Queen Anne’s Revenge, it would have been too small. The Queen Anne’s Revenge was a 100-foot ship that could carry 200 people.

Wilde-Ramsing said the anchor was probably for a smaller vessel that was associated with Blackbeard’s flagship.

Researchers brought up the anchor because it had broken loose from the ground and they worried that is could be lost if not recovered now.

Years of dredging in the inlet exposed the wreckage and loosed many items that are at risk of being washed away. The wreckage was previously covered with sand for hundreds of years, Wilde-Ramsing said.

He said it will be more than seven years before all of the items associated with the ship are brought out of the water.

It will take about six months to get the anchor cleaned and then it will be placed in a special bath for two years before it can be displayed in a museum. Most of the items from the shipwreck will wind up at the North Carolina Maritime Museum in Beaufort, Wilde-Ramsing said.

“Archeologists work with real things and to literally have items that were used 300 years ago is a great find for the public,” Wilde-Ramsing said. “I’m really proud that North Carolina has this wreck and is doing such a good job recovering it.”

Contact Josh Humphries at jhumphries@coxnc.com or (252) 329-9585.
Postwar opera at ECU

The Daily Reflector

Friday, October 23, 2009

East Carolina University's School of Music will present Gian Carlo Menotti's "The Consul" at 7 p.m. today-Sunday in A.J. Fletcher Recital Hall.

"The Consul" is an opera in three acts set in an unidentified European totalitarian country. The local production will be conducted by Daniel Bara, directed by John Kramar with musical preparation by Eric Stellrecht.

Lead roles of Magda Sorel and John Sorel will be played by Michelle Ayres and Harris Ipock Saturday and Elizabeth Thompson and Nathan Walker today and Sunday.

The opera premiered March 1, 1950, in Philadelphia. A month later it was performed at the Ethel Barrymore Theatre on Broadway, where it ran for eight months.

"The Consul" received the 1950 Pulitzer Prize in Music and the 1950 New York Drama Critics Circle award for Best Musical.

The Broadway production made stars of three young American opera singers too: Patricia Neway, Cornell MacNeil and Gloria Lane. MacNeil became the leading Verdi baritone of the Metropolitan Opera and Neway and Lane found permanent homes at New York City Opera. Neway eventually created the role of the Reverend Mother in "The Sound of Music" and performed at City Opera every Sunday during her "day off" from the Broadway production of "The Consul."

By 1960, "The Consul" had made its mark as one of the most important American operas of the postwar period, a designation it continues to hold today.

Menotti was inspired by a story in the New York Times from Feb. 12, 1947, about Polish-born Magda Sorel's denial of entry into the United States. She and her family were trying to escape persecution by Communist secret police agents. So moved by Sorel's tragic life story that "To this we've come" aria in "The Consul" was written in one night. Often referred to as the "Papers" aria, the English language solo is considered by critics to be both dramatic and stirring.

In Act 1, political dissident John Sorel is fleeing the secret police. His wife and mother successfully hide him. After they leave, he decides to escape to the border while his wife, Magda, applies for a visa to leave the country.

By Act II John's child is ill and the police are interrogating Magda about his friends, but she refuses to give information. A message from John urges Madga to pursue getting the visa with greater effort.

Magda and John's son die, as does John's mother, leaving Magda full of grief by the beginning of Act III. She considers suicide to protect her husband and leaves the consulate. Just as the office closes for the day, John arrives but with the police in pursuit. John is captured and the secretary vainly attempts to call Madga. She has decided, however, to turn on the gas in the oven to kill herself.

If you Go!

What: "The Consul" 
Cost: $15 for adults and $5 for students, $12 for seniors

When: 7 p.m. today-Sunday
Call: 328-4788

Where: A.J. Flecter Recital Hall

Copyright 2009 The Daily Reflector All rights reserved. - -
ECU making changes to parking for Va. Tech game

By Brock Letchworth
The Daily Reflector

Thursday, October 22, 2009

East Carolina University officials are making adjustments to game-day parking schedules and tweaking operations to accommodate a sell-out crowd for the Pirates' nationally-televised football game against Virginia Tech.

In an effort to ease traffic congestion prior to the 7:30 p.m. kickoff on Nov. 5, the university is opening all reserved parking lots near the stadium at 4 p.m. and remote lots near the Brody School of Medicine at 5 p.m. Shuttle bus service from the Brody lot will begin at 5:30 p.m.

The Chancellor’s Executive Council also is encouraging university classes and operations to end at 3 p.m. that day to reduce the potential impact.

"While it is not mandatory that classes and operations end early, supervisors are encouraged to be flexible in allowing staff to use leave time or a flex schedule to make up for any lost time," ECU Provost Marilyn Sheerer said in a recent e-mail to the university community.

Sheerer said faculty are encouraged to use alternate methods such as out-of-class assignments or online assignments to make up for any time lost in the classroom. She noted that some operations and courses may not be able to be shut down, but department heads should review those exceptions and minimize them where feasible.

"Thank you for being flexible during this exciting event," Sheerer wrote. "We look forward to a Pirate victory on November 5 along with significant exposure for the university on national television."

Parking lots are typically opened six hours prior to kickoff, but no earlier than 8 a.m. Officials say they need the parking for university operations most of the day, limiting the amount of time available for pre-game activities such as tailgating.

Officials say they are expecting traffic to increase in the early afternoon with high volumes by 3:30 p.m. and the peak around 5 p.m.

As with all other game days, officials will be closing 14th Street between Berkley Road and Charles Boulevard. All vehicular traffic will be prevented from accessing the road beginning at 5:30 p.m. and ending an hour and a half after the game.

Reserved parking permit holders can reach Berkley Road to enter their reserved lot by accessing 14th Street via Elm Street.

General public RV parking areas in the Belk Lot will be opened at 4 p.m., and overnight stay is permitted after the game.

There will be no tow-behind cookers allowed in reserved parking areas Nov. 5. Officials also said vehicles will not be allowed to wait in line for access to reserved parking areas, including all streets surrounding Elmhurst Elementary and C.M. Eppes Middle schools.

Anyone wanting to avoid the traffic but see the game can watch it live on ESPN.

Contact Brock Letchworth at bletchworth@coxnc.com or (252) 329-9574.
Student autopsy report edited

CHAPEL HILL -- The state's chief medical examiner has redacted any reference to prior mental illness in the autopsy report of a fraternity president shot by Archdale police in August.

Guilford County Medical Examiner Gordon Arnold had initially listed "depression" as a contributing condition to the suicide threat that led to the shooting death of Courtland Smith, 21.

But Chief Medical Examiner John Butts crossed out that word Wednesday, along with the words "alcoholism" and "depression" under Smith's medical history. "No prior history of depression or alcoholism," Butts wrote.

The medical examiner's report still indicates that Smith was intoxicated; the alcohol content of his blood was 0.22 percent, according to a separate toxicology report. That's almost three times North Carolina's 0.08 legal limit.

Butts also redacted a sentence saying that Smith had "commented to friends on [day of death] and before about possible suicidal ideas." An addendum states, "There is no evidence that prior to this he had expressed suicidal thoughts or intent."

Butts was not available for comment Thursday.

Pat Barnes, administrator for the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, said it's typical for that central office to review reports from county medical examiners, but unusual that Butts would conduct his own second review as in Smith's case.

"Additional information came in to Dr. Butts, and with that additional information, he looked back over the case again," Barnes said. "[The initial] report is filed within days of the death, and more information may be gathered that clarifies what the [original] medical examiner had been told from the outset."

After Dr. Samuel Simmons reviewed and released Arnold's report last week, members of his UNC-Chapel Hill fraternity, Delta Kappa Epsilon, complained about Arnold's "editorial comments."

"We are dumbfounded," the group wrote in an official statement. "Courtland was cheerful and optimistic. We are not autopsy experts, but we are confused."

On Thursday, DKE issued another statement saying it was pleased with the changes. "[The initial report] did not accurately reflect the behavior of the man we knew prior to the early morning of his tragic death," the statement reads.

"This has just been a sad situation for everybody," said Chris Rice, a DKE alumnus and the group's spokesman. "So many of [Smith's] close friends were in the fraternity."

A few days after classes began this fall, Smith called 911 from his speeding Toyota on Interstate 85 in Guilford County, saying he had a 9 mm handgun and was considering suicide. Archdale police set up a
roadblock, stopped him about 5 a.m., and shot him when they thought he was reaching for a gun, according to the medical examiner’s report.

Smith had been drinking at a DKE party that night. After another party two weeks later, the university’s Greek Judicial Board placed DKE on one year of social probation, which means it can't hold mixers or cocktail parties, and shortened its pledge period from eight to four weeks. DKE ran afoul of the judicial board in part for violating policies prohibiting alcohol at recruiting events.

jesse.deconto@newsobserver.com or 919-932-8760
NCSU's research park continues to evolve

RALEIGH -- Somehow it's possible to hide a 1,120-acre research park with more than 2 million square feet of corporate offices, labs and university classrooms inside the capital.

Inside the Beltline even.

N.C. State University is celebrating the 25th birthday of its innovative Centennial Campus today as it breaks ground on a new library that is expected to be its aesthetic and cultural heart.

The campus is revered elsewhere in the world, but many locals aren't aware of what it has become, said Tom Rabon, an executive vice president of Red Hat, the software company with headquarters on Centennial. About three years ago Rabon was invited to Toulouse, France, to talk about the place his company had picked for its headquarters.

"The French government paid me to come over and talk about nothing but Centennial Campus because they wanted to emulate exactly what we have," he said. "People in Raleigh drive past every day and just have no idea what's behind that line of trees on I-40, and no idea that Centennial Campus is the envy of the world."

As it passes the quarter-century mark, though, the campus has begun flowering in ways that are softening its business-park aesthetic and making it more visible here, too.

The 18-hole Lonnie Poole Golf Course was finished this summer, and soon the Jimmy V Celebrity Golf Classic drew a crowd of more than 11,000 to Centennial, many who had never seen the rows of new buildings. And the new library, with its striking architecture and philosophy built around bringing people together, will give the campus a focal point.

The library will be named for former Gov. James B. Hunt Jr., who led the push to give NCSU the state land for the project. Hunt said this week that after seeing the interest in high technology on trade missions to Europe and Japan in the 1980s it became clear that North Carolina needed a new strategy to avoid being left behind in fields such as microelectronics and biotechnology.

Some city leaders wanted to use the land for private housing, he said, but that would have meant a huge missed opportunity.

"I wanted to help the university do more with research and teaching, and give the companies a real jolt, to help them with their research, too," he said. "We decided to use that land in a way that I think was unprecedented in the United States at the time."

The idea, then-NCSU design school dean Claude McKinney said back in 1986, was to bring private industry onto campus for joint research projects with students and faculty. No other university would have a park that blended the public and private together so thoroughly.

Former Chancellor Bruce Poulton asked McKinney, who died last year, to develop the master plan for
the campus, which clusters most of the buildings in an almost urban grouping, preserving open space for things like the golf course, forest trails, playing fields and future growth.

A place for interaction

As it was planned and grew, the campus spurred debates on how to handle the traffic and the possible risks of letting for-profit companies onto a university campus.

The plans, though, have worked out much as envisioned, minus a few things such as a monorail system McKinney wanted to connect with the main university campus. Another controversial component -- a hotel and conference center -- hasn't been built yet, but is still planned.

Indeed, another 6 million square feet of space is expected in the next 20 to 40 years on the main Centennial Campus and the related 214-acre Centennial Biomedical Campus, near the State Fairgrounds, where the College of Veterinary Medicine is located.

The campus has allowed Prasanth Anbalagan, 27, a computer science doctoral student from India, to work with three internationally prominent companies -- all producing significantly different products -- without leaving the campus where his university department is located.

Anbalagan interned with ABB, which makes electrical transmission equipment, and cell phone maker Ericsson. Recently he started working informally with Red Hat. Even while interning, any time he needed to talk with his academic mentor all he had to do was walk. "It allowed continuous interaction with my adviser because everything was in the same place," he said.

The companies that he has worked with on the campus are among more than 120 government, industry and university partners there. They include the National Weather Service, the state Wildlife Resources Commission and pharmaceutical giant Glaxo-SmithKline.

Construction started this year on a building that will house the FREEDM Systems Center, a smart grid energy research center funded by the National Science Foundation.

On the cutting edge

Companies that locate on the campus can, as Red Hat has, draw on a host of academic disciplines for expertise, Rabon said.

It also helps having NCSU's computer science students exposed daily to Red Hat, an edge when the company is competing for the best and brightest new hires.

In the new knowledge-based economy, the kind of collaboration that springs up naturally at Centennial is the right approach to help the state build a cutting-edge work force and companies that can compete, Rabon said.

Folks who have been driving past the campus without coming in may be surprised at all of this, but Hunt said he isn't.

"Look, I know what it takes to have a successful economy," he said. "It's based on brain power, on research and putting bright people together in the same place."

jay.price@newsobserver.com or 919-829-4526
Georgetown student advertises for a personal assistant

The successful applicant will do laundry, gas up the car and handle other 'everyday tasks' for busy sophomore

By Jenna Johnson
Thursday, October 22, 2009

Georgetown University sophomore Charley Cooper is busy. He has a full load of classes, hours of homework and a part-time job at a financial services company. He's also worried about an illness in the family. And then there are all the other time-consuming aspects of college.

The solution? A personal assistant.

Cooper, 19, logged on to the university's student employment Web site last week and posted an ad for someone to tackle "some of my everyday tasks," such as organizing his closet, dropping him off and picking him up from work, scheduling haircuts, putting gas in the car and taking it in for service, managing his electronic accounts and doing laundry (although the assistant will be paid only for the time spent loading, unloading and folding clothes, not the entire laundry cycle).

The successful applicant can expect to work three to seven hours a week and make $10 to $12 an hour, although "on occasion it will be possible to work additional hours and/or receive bonuses at my discretion." Preference will be given to Georgetown undergraduates, Cooper says in the listing, and the assistant can spread his or her tasks throughout the day.

"As my PA you will receive an email once a day by 9:00 am with a task list for that day and a time estimate for each task," Cooper wrote in the job listing, which was first reported by the student newsmagazine, Georgetown Voice. "Important tasks will be bolded on the list and must be done that day (even though everything on the list should theoretically be finished on a daily basis). At the end of the day you will send me an email telling me what tasks are incomplete or that all tasks have been completed."

Could this be a publicity stunt? Cooper said in a Facebook message to a reporter that he is completely serious and has heard from several interested students, in addition to a few prank applicants. A university spokesman confirmed that Cooper is a student and has posted the job listing.

Cooper would answer questions only through messages sent to his Facebook account, which features a photo of a man in a striped polo shirt holding a champagne flute. He provided only brief details about himself, his family and his job: He grew up in Bethesda and graduated from the Landon School, a private boys school, in 2008. He lives in the dorms and hasn't declared a major but is planning to double-major in finance and management, perhaps with a minor in Spanish. His Linked-In profile says he is considering jobs in finance, entertainment or both. In the spring, he got a part-time job in the D.C.
offices of a financial services company that he didn't want to identify, where he works as an assistant and manages a team of interns.

Cooper said he decided to post the help-wanted ad after a family member had a cancer diagnosis and began to make arrangements for treatment at Georgetown University Hospital. Cooper says he hopes to start interviews in a few days, after the craziness of midterms has passed. "I know that if I didn't already have a job, I would definitely be interested in a job that pays 10 to 12 dollars per hour and is flexible in terms of hours," he said.

The Georgetown Voice posted the listing on its blog Friday under the headline, "Georgetown sophomore seeks personal assistant, takes premature self-importance to whole new level." Soon, dozens of derogatory comments popped up accusing Cooper of furthering the stereotype that Georgetown is filled with wealthy kids who can't do anything for themselves.

"Everybody probably knows who he is now," said Sarah Murphy, 19, a sophomore English major who heard about the job listing from friends. "People are not happy. They think he's just ridiculous and full of himself."

But other students were more understanding. "Listen, I think if there's a market for it, and someone wants to do it, all the more power to him," said Corey Sherman, 20, a junior international politics major who has two jobs. "Maybe he just wants the personal touch -- knowing the human being folding his underwear." (Earlier in the week, a Georgetown junior posted a similar job listing, according to the Georgetown Heckler, a campus humor blog. The student did not respond to an e-mail Thursday and it could not be determined whether the listing was a parody.)

Although the posting created buzz, outsourcing dull duties is not a new thing at Georgetown or other universities. Some students pay to have their group houses or apartments cleaned, or contract with Soapy Joe's, a company that will pick up dirty laundry from the dorms and return it clean and folded within days.

Still, springing for a personal assistant is "definitely out of the ordinary," said Bonnie Low-Kramen, the longtime personal assistant to actress Olympia Dukakis. Low-Kramen teaches workshops to aspiring celebrity personal assistants and wrote a book titled "Be the Ultimate Assistant."

"Whenever someone gets wealthy or famous, things can fall through the cracks," she said. "There's no chance someone like Scarlett Johansson or Angelina Jolie end up on all of those covers without a team of people."

But college students are rarely mature enough to handle the responsibility of managing a personal assistant, said Low-Kramen, whose son is a senior at the University of Maryland (and does not have a personal assistant).

"There's a benefit to learning to do things on your own," she said. "I know -- college is stressful, there's a lot to do. But the pressures are still nowhere near needing a personal assistant."

Post a Comment

View all comments that have been posted about this article.
The Incredible Climbing Cost of College
By Randy James

Wednesday, Oct. 21, 2009

Trend in College Pricing 2009
The College Board, 20 pages

The Gist:
The College Board has released its annual report on the cost of higher education, and the news is distressingly predictable: despite the current economic downturn, college is getting more expensive. Tuition and fees for the 2009-10 school year at a private, four-year college or university now averages $26,273, a 4.4% increase from last year. Throw in room and board and you’re up to $35,636. Public schools are a better deal, of course, but their price tag is growing even faster — up 6% or more. All this in a year where the cost of most everything else (as measured by the Consumer Price Index) actually fell. There is a silver lining: increased aid and tax benefits mean out-of-pocket costs for school are lower than they were five years ago, although only slightly.
(Read "Germany’s Ph.D. Scandal: Were Degrees Bought?")

Highlight Reel:
1. Climbing costs in the classroom: Private colleges and universities come with the heftiest bills, though most students rely on public colleges and universities (in fact, just a quarter of students face costs of $21,000 or more). Public schools are a relative bargain, but average tuition and fees at two-year public schools rose 7.3% from last year, to $2,544. In-state tuition and fees at public, four-year schools rose 6.5% this year to $7,020 ($15,213 with room and board). Out-of-state costs saw similar increases, to $18,548 for tuition and fees and $26,741 with room and board. New England was the most expensive region for several types of schools; private, four-year schools averaged $43,884 with room and board, compared with $30,220 in the southwest.

2. Out-of-pocket costs have drifted down: While tuition and fees have risen by up to 20% since 2004, the average net price of college has dropped. Due to the greater availability of grants, financial assistance and tax benefits, students pay an average of $1,100 less at private schools and $400 at public schools than they did five years ago. (The aid and benefits total $14,400 at private schools, $5,400 at public four-year schools
and $3,000 at public two-year schools). In fact, after benefits, an average student at a two-year college or university pays nothing in tuition and fees and collects about $500 toward living expenses. (Read "Colleges Learn to Navigate the Credit Crunch."

3. **All schools are not created equal**: The report reveals a remarkable wealth gap between the nation's institutes of higher education. Out of more than 2,250 public and private four-year schools, 18 had endowments averaging more than $500,000 per student as of June 2008. Of private universities granting doctorates, 10% of schools had 54% of the endowment wealth, averaging $1.5 million per student. Another 115 schools had endowments averaging $100,000-$500,000 per student, and the 2,000+ remaining schools had smaller endowments or none at all. Faculty pay varied widely as well. After adjusting for inflation, full-time faculty at two-year public schools saw no increase in salary between 1991-92 and 2007-08. At private, four-year schools, by contrast, faculty pay rose by 11%.

**The Lowdown:**
There's a certain cruelty to a rise in education costs amid an economic slump: it makes the single most effective tool to help the underemployed and jobless out of their rut become all the more unreachable. Though the government and private donors have stepped in to ease the financial crunch, the runaway costs of higher education threaten to make it unaffordable, especially to those who stand to gain the most from it. As the College Board report makes clear, the real-world benefit of college is not simply academic: the unemployment rate for those with bachelor's degrees is just half that for people with high school diplomas alone. Among those with bachelor's degrees, the median family income was $101,099 in 2008 — twice the family income for high school graduates.

**The Verdict:** Skim
(Read "Colleges Find Creative Ways to Cut Back.")

[Click to Print]

**Find this article at:**
http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,1931312,00.html
Who Really Gets the Most College Financial Aid?

October 19, 2009 05:14 PM ET | Kim Clark | Permanent Link |

One of the complaints I hear most often, and which I see posted most frequently on Web stories about financial aid, is a version of this: "If you're poor, you get all the free money you could possibly want. If you're rich, you already have all the money you need or want. But if you're in that nice medium called middle class you get screwed right out of your socks," which was posted last year at USNews.com by "College studen" (sic) of Texas. (I'm assuming CS simply mistyped and knows how to spell the word student.)

Is there any evidence supporting this?

A soon-to-be-published book by a Princeton sociologist found that low-income minority students (mainly African-Americans and Hispanics) who have good grades and test scores appear to have an edge over whites and Asians with similar grades and test scores (but not necessarily other factors such as extracurricular activities or recommendations, which were not considered in this study) at getting into the elite private colleges that tend to give out the most scholarships.

But by U. S. News's count, only 54 of the 5,000-plus American colleges and universities promise to provide enough scholarships to meet all students' financial need. And those colleges give plenty of aid to the far greater numbers of middle- and upper-middle-class students whom they admit. Harvard, for example, charges no more than 10 percent of a family's income for all those who earn $180,000 or less.

A few dozen other schools promise to meet the need of students from low-income families only, typically cutting their generosity off at annual incomes of about $40,000.

The few students who meet these criteria may very well receive better financial aid deals than similar students who aren't lucky enough to win admission or whose families earn slightly more than their school's cutoff. But the numbers of students who get this advantage is
surprisingly tiny. Most of the really generous schools are quite small. Princeton University, for example, enrolled just 1,300 freshmen this year. An analysis by Postsecondary Education Opportunity, a think tank based in Oskaloosa, Iowa, found that only about 10 percent of Princeton's students come from low-income families. Using some back-of-the-envelope calculations, I'd estimate that these generous schools take no more than 200,000 or so of the 3 million freshmen who start college each year. But because the majority of those admitted to elite schools tend to be from well-off families, the number of low-income freshmen who get full financial aid probably doesn't exceed 30,000—or 1 percent—of all college freshmen.

For the other 99 percent, the think tank found that it is the poor and working class who particularly get the financial aid shaft.

PEO researcher Tom Mortenson has found that families earning less than $70,000, on average, don't receive the amount of scholarships and grants they need to meet the stingy budget formula the government uses to determine a student's "need."

Mortenson calculated the amount of grants students received and subtracted that from the costs of their colleges. When he compared that number with what the government thought the student could afford, he found some depressing results: The poorer the family, the bigger the gap between their aid and their need.

Take students from families earning about $35,000. The government calculates they typically can afford only about $2,600 a year for college. But considering dorms, books, travel, and tuition, those students' bills come to about $20,000 a year. Mortenson found that the average grant these students received in 2008 was about $7,000. That means those families had to spend about $13,000—almost 40 percent of their 2008 annual incomes—to support one child in college. Even adding in more than $5,000 worth of loans and work-study earnings leaves a gap of more than $5,000 between what they actually had to pay upfront and the aid they received.

Families who earned about $65,000 were expected to contribute almost $10,000 toward the student's cost. But they typically got only $4,600 in grants to cover their $11,600 need. Even if the student worked and borrowed, the family was typically left with a gap of $1,443.

Now look at what happened to students from families earning about $170,000 a year. The government estimates those families can afford to pay, on average, more than $36,000 a year, or about 15 percent of income, toward college. That's more than most in-state public
universities, and even some private universities, charge. But some of those students nevertheless win "merit" grants or scholarships, such as Georgia's Hope Scholarship, which covers tuition at in-state public universities for any Georgia student with good grades. In fact, one study found that more than one quarter of students from families in the richest 25 percent got some state merit grants. While good students should be rewarded, no matter how wealthy (or poor) their parents are, the result is that some wealthy students are getting more aid than the government calculates they need.

Have you been able to get enough financial aid to pay for college? Let us know what you think in the comments.

- Searching for a college? Get our complete rankings of America's Best Colleges.

Tags: financial aid | tuition | paying for college | scholarships

Tools: e2 Share | Yahoo! Buzz | Comments (10) |