Several East Carolina University students have been assigned to develop usable plans to give Washington’s old City Hall a virtual makeover.

Hunt McKinnon, an assistant professor in ECU’s Department of Interior Design and Merchandising, recently met with city officials and members of the Washington Harbor District Alliance and Washington Area Historic Foundation to develop a blueprint for the project.

The ECU class involved with the project is offered in two sections this semester, with each section instructed to take a different approach regarding use of old City Hall. One section has been told to develop a plan that calls for retail space on the building’s first floor and apartments on the second floor. The other section has been charged with developing plan that incorporates offices and a Harbor District visitors center on the first and second floors, a computer-ready location and classroom space that could be used by local educational institutions to assist with off-site learning programs.

McKinnon and 11 students visited old City Hall on Monday.

“Maturity — because they’re starting off as students and they need to be professionals. They learn by doing this that they’re not the consumer. The consumer is John (Rodman, the city’s planning and community development director) and the people of Washington who need for this building to be
something more productive than it is now — and that these guys (students) are service providers,” said McKinnon in a brief interview at old City Hall when asked what he wants the students to get from their assignments.

The students spent at least an hour checking out the building and taking measurements with tape measures and light meters.

“Probably a good way of incorporating a residential space with a commercial space and reworking an interior space from the very beginning, from its gut,” said Ana Gustafson, an ECU student from Cary, when asked what she hopes to get from the assignment.

As he instructed the students on how to carry out their assignments, McKinnon reminded them the building does not comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act because it does not provide easy access to handicapped people. That’s something they must consider as they make their plans for the building, he said.

There’s more to the assignments than work in the field.

“Upon completion of their projects, the ECU design students will present their ideas to the City and WHDA, using architectural layouts and wall elevations. Besides giving the ECU students a hands-on practical exercise in planning and design, the designs will be available as suggestions for future development of the property. The City of Washington and the WHDA Economic Restructuring committee are currently in meetings and are developing requirements for an RFP bid process on the structure,” reads an e-mail from WHDA to several media outlets.

Recently, the city spent about $18,000 to maintain the building, which it owns. Old City Hall is on the west side of North Market Street between Main Street and Second Street.

During its Aug. 23 meeting, the City Council discussed two properties the city owns, including the old City Hall

At the Aug. 23 meeting, City Manager James C. Smith told the council there are “a number of developments there” in regard to old City Hall. Smith said a developer expressed interest in acquiring the property. The developer, later identified as Rehab Builders, expressed interest in placing two retail shops in
the ground floor of the building and two apartments upstairs in the building, according to Smith

At its Aug. 23 meeting, the council indicated it planned for the city to sell the property by using the upset-bid process.

Under the upset-bid process, the city would accept a bid on the property. Once a bid from a prospective buyer is accepted, another prospective buyer has 10 days to offer a higher bid for the property. If a higher bid is not received in that 10-day period, the property would be sold to the entity making the initial bid. If a higher bid is received from another bidder, a new 10-day clock begins. The entity making the highest bid that is not upset within 10 days gets the property.
Numbers can't lie, but they can certainly mislead. East Carolina football coach Ruffin McNeill learned during his decade as an assistant coach and defensive coordinator for Texas Tech in the often wide-open Big 12 Conference that even as eye-popping as football statistics can be, they are not the measure of success or failure.

As McNeill spends the week trying to devise a blueprint to beat Central Florida this Saturday, he does so with a defense that's improving, even if the Pirates' stats suggest a team that's being run over by opposing offenses.

In fact, despite their 5-2 overall record and perfect 4-0 mark in Conference USA, the Pirates are at the bottom of the national barrel in numerous defensive categories, including being ranked 105th in total defense.

“With offenses today — and I learned this in the Big 12 — if you get caught up in the stats too much in the league we play in, you'll lose a lot of confidence, because everybody is able to move the ball,” McNeill said at Monday's weekly press conference. “But I am pleased with their progress, really since the Carolina game (Oct. 2). Those guys are growing, and it takes time.”
Over the last two weeks, the Pirates have tightened up considerably in terms of points and yards allowed. In last Saturday's win over Marshall, ECU stifled the Thundering Herd rush attack to 94 yards. In the Pirates' overtime win over N.C. State two weeks ago, an interception won the game and was undoubtedly a jolt of confidence for a team which coughed up more than 40 points in four of its first five games.

According to McNeill, much of the success the Pirates have had defensively in the last two weeks can be attributed to players trusting each other. “Instead of taking care of your job, somebody would try to do something extra, and that's where the gaps happen and the seams happen,” McNeill said of his team's early struggles this season. “I've really seen that improve, and the fundamental confidence is coming on.”

As it stands

The Pirates and the Knights are the only teams left in C-USA that have yet to lose a league contest, so this weekend's 3:30 p.m. kickoff in Orlando will leave just one perfect team. SMU had jumped out to a 3-0 start and was alone atop the West Division last week before being overrun by Houston in a 45-20 rout. An ECU win at UCF would mean a stranglehold on the East and the possibility of an unprecedented third straight divisional crown and third consecutive C-USA championship. If SMU were to win the West and ECU the East, it would mean the Pirates would play the Mustangs twice in eight days. ECU hosts SMU to close out the regular season the day after Thanksgiving, and the C-USA title game is the following Saturday.

Towery out

McNeill confirmed on Monday that junior transfer center Will Towery, who prior to an August injury had been the favorite to become the next starter, has left the team to address what the head coach called personal issues. While he said Towery was still a part of the team, McNeill said only that he hopes Towery will return at some point. “Right now, he has some personal issues at home,” McNeill said. “We love Will and he's welcome back when he's through dealing with that. We'll welcome him back and I'm looking forward to getting him back.”

Injuries

There are two additions to the Pirates' injured list this week but, as has been the case virtually all season, neither will seriously impact ECU's lineup Saturday at UCF. Sophomore backup cornerback and special teams mainstay Rahkeem Morgan is questionable with an ankle injury, while freshman receiver and vital scout team member Justin Hardy is out indefinitely with a knee injury.
Also still out are senior safety Dekota Marshall (lower leg) and sophomore reserve defensive tackle Kemory Mann (shoulder). Out for the season are redshirt freshman defensive end Justin Dixon (knee) and freshman offensive lineman Anthony Garrett (knee).

Contact Nathan Summers at nsummers@reflector.com or (252)329-9595.
University Printing and Graphics wins Silver Award in national contest

University Printing and Graphics has been named a winner in the In-Print 2010 competition, a prestigious national contest that recognizes print quality.

UP&G received the Silver Award in the non-offset category, annual reports/catalogs division, for “GAF 2009,” a catalog produced for the Graduate Arts Forum of the School of Art and Design.

“I’m very proud of our entire staff,” Ann Weingartz, director of UP&G, said. “It was an honor for this piece to win.”

The contest is sponsored by In-Plant Graphics and the In-Plant Printing and Mailing Association. It is the only competition strictly for in-plants, an in-house reproduction department operated within an organization such as a company, government office or university.

It took the judges nine hours to select 70 winners from the more than 400 projects submitted. Although this was UP&G’s only award in the 2010 competition, it marked the 13th time ECU’s print shop has placed since 1996.

“We are extremely proud of the recognition our work has received over the years,” Weingartz said. “Meeting the needs of our customers is our first priority. Receiving awards and recognition is just icing on the cake.”

The catalog was digitally printed on UP&G’s Xerox iGen4 Press, bound on the Sulby perfect binder machine and finished on the Heidelberg 42-inch cutter. In picking the winners, judges considered the degree of difficulty required to print a job and analyzed the entries for flaws like spots caused by specks of dust on the printing plate that prevent ink from adhering, as well as defects in folding and registration.

“A beautifully designed piece can be ruined if the colors aren’t right or the binding isn’t up to standard,” Weingartz said.

University Printing and Graphics is at 2612 E. 10th St. in the Harris Building. Operated through the Business Services unit of East Carolina University’s division of Administration and Finance, UP&G is self-supporting and receives no state funding. It is the third largest in-plant printing operation among the 16 constituent institutions of the University of North Carolina system and features printing capabilities ranging from simple forms to four-color process magazines.

Holding the plaque University Printing and Graphics received for its winning entry in the In-Print 2010 competition are, from left, Ann Weingartz, UP&G director; Mike Robinson, production manager; Everette Purvis, bindery supervisor; and Doug Hill, Rapid Copy Center manager. UP&G won the Silver Award in the non-offset category for a catalog printed on the Xerox iGen4 Press.
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

Dr. Sharon Ben-Or, a cardiothoracic surgeon, has joined the Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University and its group medical practice, ECU Physicians.

Ben-Or joins ECU as an assistant professor of cardiovascular sciences. She has a medical degree from the University of Pennsylvania and completed residency training in cardiothoracic surgery at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and general surgery at Lanke-nau Hospital in Pennsylvania.

Ben-Or is certified by the American Board of Surgery. Her clinical interests are minimally invasive thoracic surgery and cardiac critical care. Ben-Or sees patients at the East Carolina Heart Institute at ECU. Call 744-3476.
Death saddens, bewilders Duke

DURHAM Duke University officials say they don't yet know the circumstances surrounding the death of a student who apparently fell from some stairs last week.

Drew Everson's body was found Friday morning at the base of a stairwell in the back of the East Union Building, a dining hall on Duke's East Campus.

A senior from Florida, Everson, 21, lived in an apartment nearby. It isn't clear whether he was alone, why he was on or near the stairwell, and whether alcohol contributed to his death. Duke officials hope to release more information later this week once Duke police finish their investigation. The university has attributed his death to "an accidental fall," according to a news release issued Sunday.

"There are some things we'll just never know," said Michael Schoenfeld, a Duke spokesman. "[But] there is no indication of anything other than a tragic accident."

Everson's friends and family are left this week to remember an affable, quick-witted jokester with smarts and a future in finance. A public memorial service is set for noon Wednesday at Duke Chapel, with a reception to follow at Scharf Hall, adjacent to Cameron Indoor Stadium.

The precise time of Everson's death isn't yet known. He had been out with friends the previous evening at Satisfaction, a popular Durham bar and restaurant, until 2:30 a.m., said Jordan Stone, a friend and president of Pi Kappa Phi, the fraternity where Everson was a member.

"We're not really sure what happened after that," said Stone, a junior from Chicago. "We have no idea if it was a fall down the stairs. My guess is as good as yours."
The area where Everson's body was found is near a loading area, Schoenfeld said. "It's an area where people walk, but it's not a main path," he said.

Everson, from Tampa, was popular, fun and serious about his future, said Stone, who referred to him "the life of the party."

'Totally motivated'
Everson spent the summer interning at Goldman Sachs and was already weighing job offers in financial services. A political science major, he was working toward a certificate in markets and management.

"He'd been absolutely dominating the investment bank internship scene," Stone said. "He was totally motivated. He was just a brilliant analytical thinker."

Everson pledged Pi Kappa Phi as a freshman in spring 2008 and had forged close bonds with members of his pledge class, Stone said.

Everson had many interests. Along with the fraternity, he had written columns for the Duke Chronicle and was a member of Duke's debate team and a student comedy troupe.

"He was a real binding agent; he drew people together," said Steve Nowicki, Duke's dean and vice provost for undergraduate education. "He had hundreds of friends here. And not just Facebook friends. Real friends."

Nowicki met Everson when he enrolled, as a sophomore, in Nowicki's "Translating Science" course meant for juniors and seniors - and excelled in it.

"He was the kind of student I'd go out and tell prospective Duke students and parents about," Nowicki said. "And I still will."

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RALEIGH Randy Woodson has been busy.

Since leaving Purdue University in April to become N.C. State University's chancellor, he has barnstormed the state and beyond to introduce himself to alumni groups. He has slogged through his legislative season - where public universities lobby for money - and he has made his first high-profile hire: new athletics director Debbie Yow.

Today, he makes it official.

Woodson will be installed as NCSU's chancellor during a formal ceremony highlighting a week of events. He spoke to The News & Observer about his early observations about NCSU and his job. Here are excerpts:

Q: What are your early impressions of the new job? Any surprises?
There haven't been a lot of surprises. The institution is so similar academically to where I came from, I feel the academic part hasn't been a surprise. The only surprises have been positive - the strength of our faculty
and students. If there is a surprise, it's a positive one about how committed our alumni and fans are about the institution.

**Q:** What's going to be the biggest budget fight in the legislative session? A big one for us is to make sure that the tuition students pay stays on campus. The students are investing in their education. Where their tuition goes ... needs to be transparent and clear. And always a big issue is making sure there's adequate funding for financial aid for students with the most significant financial need. It's going to be a difficult session all the way around. We understand that.

**Q:** How do you think UNC President Erskine Bowles' departure at the end of the year will affect N.C. State? I'm confident that any president of the system would quickly come to appreciate the importance of N.C. State to North Carolina and to the system. ...I'm not concerned about being able to convince a new president of the importance of N.C. State. And everything I've heard about Tom Ross has been extremely positive. I'm excited about the transition.

**Q:** Has fundraising taken up a lot of time early in your tenure? It's safe to say that some of every day is committed to it. A lot of fundraising is about building relationships, and that's what I'm working on.

**Q:** Your new Chancellor's Choice ice cream debuts Wednesday. What is it? You're asking me to break the silence. The students want me to keep it a secret until Wednesday [at noon at a social at The Brickyard on campus]. So I'm not talking! But this isn't something new to me. The folks with our food science department have always had a variety of ice cream called the Chancellor's Choice. So early on I was asked to select an ice cream. We've spent the last few months working on a recipe I'm very excited about.

**Q:** How much will your installation cost, and will it be funded publicly? It's all private money. We've tried to keep it below previous installations. We're hoping to keep it under six figures for the whole week of stuff. The bulk of expenses is associated with the installation itself, the staging and the video. We're not doing a big campuswide lunch or celebratory thing. We're not doing takeaway mementos, in an attempt to reduce the cost. So we tried to focus it on the academy, the faculty.... And the football game was already scheduled. It's on Thursday. It's a big one - Florida State.

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DukeALERT test early Wednesday

DURHAM Duke University will conduct a test of its DukeALERT system at 10 a.m. Wednesday that will include an alarm heard in the surrounding community.

In addition to the outdoor warning, the system includes a telephone recording, emergency e-mail and text messages, and an emergency website with blog capability and an RSS feed at www.emergency.duke.edu.

After the test, members of the Duke community will be asked to take an online survey to assess the effectiveness of the various communication methods.

Duke officials hope the exercise will raise awareness of the system across the campus and identify any areas needing improvement.
The commute to a degree in education through the University of North Carolina Wilmington just became a little bit shorter for Brunswick Community College students.

Officials from UNCW and BCC announced a partnership Monday that will address the need for teachers in Brunswick County by providing online, digital and video classrooms from UNCW professors at BCC's Leland Center.

The only part of the education that students won't be able to do online and through video classrooms is the internship, officials said.

"We know that the population in the area is growing immensely," said Karen Wetherill, interim dean of the Watson School of Education at UNCW. "This program addresses the need this area has for teachers."

The program, beginning in January, will give BCC students a four-year or master's degree program through UNCW but eliminate the need to travel to Wilmington, BCC President Stephen Greiner said.

"It is about putting students first and increasing the access they have to higher education," he said.

Although BCC's Supply campus already offers classes that feed students into UNCW's school of education, officials said the majority of BCC students have many other time constraints that make it hard for them to drive to Wilmington.
Even a 20-minute commute can put stress on a student, said Patricia Gilliland, a UNCW student and Leland resident.

The 39-year-old Brunswick County mother of three has had to juggle work, school and family along with the commute to UNCW after graduating from BCC's online classes.

"Future students won't have to commute to UNCW like I have had to," she said. "This program will be less discouraging for those in the area who want to pursue their education degree, but feel like time constraints are holding them back."

The online classes don't detract from the overall education either, she said.

"From having online classes, I have noticed that professors get to know even more students because we all have to participate and are in constant contact," Gilliland said. "Even through e-mail, discussion boards or blogs we get to know each other."

Officials from both schools hope to expand their relationship even further in the near future, said Johnson Akinleye, associate vice chancellor for academic programs at UNCW.

"We want to bring more programs to BCC sooner rather than later," he said. "Even possibly as early as next summer."

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Athletic fees are a large, and sometimes hidden, cost at colleges

By Daniel de Vise
Washington Post staff writer
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Of the $9,855 in undergraduate tuition and fees charged to Virginia residents this academic year by Longwood University in Farmville, $2,022 - about one-fifth - covers a single fee for athletics.

Athletic fees are a large - and occasionally hidden - cost of public higher education in Virginia and Maryland. The athletic fee is the largest single item charged to undergraduate students at many Maryland and Virginia public universities, apart from tuition, according to figures from state education agencies. Fees at some Virginia schools rank among the highest in the nation.

And some families might not realize they are paying them.

The $2,022 fee charged by Longwood is not mentioned on the school's Web page devoted to tuition and fees. All that's listed is a single figure for tuition,
fees and living expenses. Radford University doesn't list its $1,077 athletic fee on its tuition and fees page. Christopher Newport University's $1,147 athletic fee is included within a single "tuition" figure on its Web site. Four-figure athletic fees at James Madison and Old Dominion universities and Virginia Military Institute are not listed on their tuition and fees pages. University leaders say that without the fee, they wouldn't be able to offer high-quality intercollegiate athletic programs. Schools with fewer students and deep-pocket donors have to charge correspondingly larger fees.

"I have 4,800 students. If I raise [the fee] by one dollar, I get $4,800," said Kathy Worster, vice president for administration and finance at Longwood. School officials say they don't list individual fees on their Web sites out of concern for burying parents in minutiae. The schools generally report prices as a comprehensive fee - a single figure that represents everything a student should expect to pay.

"What we're saying is, this is our total cost for our total experience," Worster said.

Critics say parents might be surprised at how much of that cost goes toward athletics.

Nine public universities in Virginia charged athletic fees greater than $1,000 this year, to support athletic programs that could not support themselves. Three other Virginia schools and seven Maryland institutions charged students more than $500 apiece to shore up their athletics.

An analysis of undergraduate athletic fees at 14 Virginia universities finds that the average fee nearly doubled in 10 years, from $530 to $986.

"Folks assume all fees are nickel-and-dime stuff, that tuition is the main big-ticket item in going to college," said Terry Meyers, an English professor at the College of William and Mary who has emerged as a public critic of fees. "But athletic fees these days can sometimes be stunningly large. And they've grown that way partly because many institutions work hard to keep the fees hidden or obscured."

Virginia law requires public universities to publish "the amount and distribution" of fees on their Web sites and to "facilitate access and availability" of those reports to parents and students.
"In other words, if I'm a parent paying tuition and fees and want to know exactly what I'm paying for, I should be able to find it fairly easily," said Kirsten Nelson, spokeswoman for the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia.

Most Maryland colleges list athletic fees plainly on their Web sites. Virginia schools generally do not.

Virginia Tech posts its athletic fee. That fee is only $257, because Tech sports make big money. Football ticket sales alone generated $14 million in the 2008-09 academic year.

William and Mary has "struggled toward honesty," Meyers wrote in a 2006 industry article, and now lists all its fees online.

The University of Virginia lists its $657 athletic fee, but on a relatively obscure Web page.

"We're working with the budget office to make such financial information easier and more intuitive to find," said Marian Anderfuren, a university spokeswoman.

Other universities lump the fee into a larger sum, such as the $3,680 "auxiliary fee" at VMI. Officials at the University of Mary Washington said it does not charge a separate athletic fee, although state records suggest it does. The fees are tabulated in an annual state report.

A national analysis of athletic fees published last month by USA Today found no university outside Virginia charging an athletic fee higher than $1,000.

Two of the 20 highest fees identified in the report were in Maryland, at the University of Maryland Baltimore County and Towson University. UMBC charged an athletic fee of $802 this academic year, according to state data; Towson charged $767.

UMBC discloses its fee on its Web site. Towson added the fee to its site after publication of the USA Today investigation, according to the article.
School officials cautioned against comparing fees among schools, even within the same state, because different schools may use the fees for somewhat different purposes. Generally speaking, the fees cover only the costs of intercollegiate sports.

Virginia's fees are particularly high because it is one of a few states that forbid public universities to use tuition to subsidize athletics, university officials said.

"In Virginia, every athletic program has to stand on its own bottom," said Larry Hincker, Virginia Tech spokesman.

Each athletic program relies on millions of dollars in fees or donations to keep it afloat.

Ninety-five percent of the revenue in the Christopher Newport athletic program in fiscal 2009 came from student fees, according to institutional data; 83 percent at James Madison; 70 percent at George Mason University.

Elite Virginia schools support athletics with donations. U-Va. collected $22 million in contributions in the 2009 academic year, its largest single source of athletic revenue, according to a state audit. William and Mary earned $5 million in contributions and income from endowments and investments that year.

"We have worked hard to reduce the percentage of our athletics budget that is dependent on the student fee," said Brian Whitson, university spokesman. That's a tall order for a university with a student body of 7,800 and negligible revenue from advertising and sponsorships. William and Mary has limited its reliance on university fees to about half of the total athletic revenue, largely through donations and investments.

At Norfolk State University, by contrast, contributions generated only $289,013 in 2008-09. Of nearly $10 million in athletic revenue, $8.3 million came from student fees.

Larger universities can minimize fees by spreading them out. At George Mason University, a $475 fee collected from 19,000 undergraduate students should yield at least $9 million this academic year.
Fees from graduate students will generate additional revenue.

Virginia Tech collects less money from fees than most other Virginia institutions, largely because of its nationally ranked football program, an endeavor that "basically underwrites all the other programs on our campus," Hincker said. "Our programs are expensive, and our tuition is going to be high. So we have always rigorously held down our athletic fees."

Virginia's athletic fees have stirred little public outcry. Take William and Mary, a school with one of the state's highest athletic fees and an informed student body.

"From time to time you'll see an op-ed in one of the campus papers talking about this," said Matt Poms, a senior who is managing editor of the Flat Hat newspaper at the university. "I've never, in four years here, seen any organized opposition."

The reason might be that parents and students don't know they are being charged.

James Boyle, president of the Virginia advocacy group College Parents of America, said parents might complain about the fee if more were aware of it, particularly those with children who take no part in campus sports.

"I think there's kind of a mistaken assumption that all students are interested in athletics," he said. "And some students aren't."

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Police say drug lab was operating in Georgetown dorm room

By Daniel de Vise
Washington Post Staff Writer
Saturday, October 23, 2010; 11:58 PM

When students at Harbin Hall were rousted from their beds by Georgetown University officials at 6 a.m. Saturday, some thought it might be a cruelly timed fire drill.

It was something odder still: Campus police had discovered a clandestine drug lab inside a dorm room on the top floor of the freshman residence hall. Police arrested two male students and a campus visitor Saturday morning on charges of possession of drug paraphernalia, hours after evacuating 400 students from the nine-floor hall.

Officers initially believed they had found a methamphetamine lab. After further investigation Saturday afternoon, they concluded the chemicals were for production of dimethyltryptamine, or DMT, a hallucinogenic.

Students struggled to reconcile the discovery of a drug lab with their image of Georgetown, a prim national university with a scholarly and somewhat preppy culture.

"I would understand if someone got caught doing it. Making it, that's different. It's shocking," said Gina Park, 19, a sophomore from Hong Kong.

A Harbin resident called campus police about 5 a.m. to report a strange odor coming from a room on the ninth floor. Officers went to the room and found "a variety of chemicals," D.C. Fire Department spokesman Pete Piringer said. "They did have some heating equipment. They did have a ventilation system."

By 6 a.m., "people were going around pounding on doors, saying, 'You need to evacuate,'" said Natalie Muller, 18, a Harbin resident.

Hundreds of freshmen in pajamas poured out of the building into the chilly morning air and were sent to the dining hall or student center.
Seven people were evaluated for exposure to the chemicals, which can be harmful if inhaled or exposed to skin. All were cleared.

Students were briefly allowed back inside the building three hours later, then ordered to leave again.

"We didn't find out until 2 1/2 or three hours later what was going on," said Katya Funk, 18, a bleary-eyed freshman in a sweatsuit. "It's been so much fun."

Authorities entered the room Saturday afternoon to remove the chemicals. University spokeswoman Julie Green Bataille said there was no sign that any toxins had spread.

"It appears to be confined to that one room," she said. "It will have to be decontaminated."

Displaced Harbin Hall residents milled around among rescue vehicles and drug-sniffing dogs. Gawkers included the university's bulldog mascot.

Students at Georgetown, as at many colleges, are known for occasional binge drinking and casual drug use.

Hard drugs are less common, students said, and a drug lab in a freshman dorm room was heretofore unheard of.

"For this campus, this is very out of the norm," said Kayla Bostwick, 18, a Harbin resident. "This should not happen."

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Difficulties in Defining Errors in Case Against Harvard Researcher

By NICHOLAS WADE

The still unresolved case of Marc Hauser, the researcher accused by Harvard of scientific misconduct, points to the painful slowness of the government-university procedure for resolving such charges. It also underscores the difficulty of defining error in a field like animal cognition where inconsistent results are common.

The case is unusual because Dr. Hauser is such a prominent researcher in his field, and is known to a wider audience through his writings on morality. There seemed little doubt of the seriousness of the case when Harvard announced on Aug. 20 that he had been found solely responsible for eight counts of scientific misconduct.

But last month two former colleagues, Bert Vaux and Jeffrey Watumull, both now at the University of Cambridge in England, wrote in the Harvard Crimson of Dr. Hauser’s “unimpeachable scientific integrity” and charged that his critics were “scholars known to be virulently opposed to his research program.”

Also last month his principal accuser outside of Harvard, Gerry Altmann, allowed that he may have spoken too hastily. Dr. Altmann is the editor of Cognition, a psychology journal in which Dr. Hauser published an article said by Harvard to show scientific misconduct.

When first shown evidence by Harvard for this conclusion, Dr. Altmann publicly accused Dr. Hauser of fabricating data. But he now says an innocent explanation, based on laboratory error, not fraud, is possible. People should step back, he writes, and “allow due process to conclude.”

Due process, in this case, includes an independent inquiry by the Office of Research Integrity, a government agency that investigates scientific
misconduct. Its inquiries take seven months on average, ranging up to eight years, says John Dahlberg, director of the agency’s investigations unit.

Under Harvard’s faculty policy, the university cannot make known its evidence against Dr. Hauser, nor can he defend himself, until the government’s report is ready. That leaves both in difficult positions. Harvard has accused a prominent professor of serious failings yet has merely put him on book leave. Dr. Hauser, for his part, cannot act publicly to prevent the derailment, at least for the moment, of his rising scientific career.

Harvard’s investigation has been “lawyer-driven,” says a faculty member who spoke on condition of anonymity, and has stuck so closely to the letter of government-approved rules for investigating misconduct that the process has become unduly protracted — it lasted three years — and procedurally unfair to the accused.

“I think it legitimate to ask why the Harvard brass did not push back against their lawyers,” this member said. “At Harvard we now have the Un-Larry administration — no risk-taking, no thinking outside the box, no commitment to principles that challenge standard university practice,” he said, referring to Harvard’s previous president, the economist Larry Summers.

Dr. Hauser’s difficulties began in 2007 when university officials went into his lab one afternoon when he was out of the country and publicly confiscated his records, an action based on accusations by some of his students.

For the next 18 months he had no idea what he was accused of. A troika of Harvard department heads then delivered a secret report. Dr. Hauser has amassed substantial legal debts in defending himself, his friends say. Harvard presumably has substantial evidence against Dr. Hauser.

He was investigated by a committee of fellow professors, and their findings were endorsed by the dean of the faculty of arts and sciences, Dr. Michael D. Smith. But from what is on the record so far, at least, Harvard’s charges may or may not meet the government’s definition of scientific misconduct, which is reserved for ethical offenses, like fabrication, falsification or plagiarism, that directly undermine the research process.
Two of Harvard’s eight charges of scientific misconduct involve published papers for which some of the original raw data is missing. But Dr. Dahlberg, of the Office of Research Integrity, said: “Missing data is not scientific misconduct. The whole purpose of O.R.I. is to go after serious fraud and not the peccadilloes one might find in many labs.”

Dr. Hauser and a colleague have redone the experiments and notified the two journals involved that they got the same results as reported. A third charge, apparently the most serious, concerns the article in Cognition.

The article, published in 2002, reported that rhesus monkeys can distinguish a novel string of sounds from a control sequence, an issue which has important bearing on their capacity for language. The novel and control sound sequences must be alternated so as to keep background conditions as similar as possible. But the video of the experiment contains only novel sequences.

Critics like Dr. Altmann at first charged that the controls had never been done, and that since control conditions are reported in the paper, they must have been concocted. But Dr. Altmann, a psychologist at the University of York in England, now says his earlier accusation was “heavily dependent on the knowledge that Harvard found Professor Hauser guilty of misconduct.” When he gave the issue further thought, he saw an alternative explanation.

In the experimental setup, the monkey is in a soundproof box. The researchers can see the computer is playing a sound but cannot hear it. What could have happened is that the computer, through a programming error, substituted a second test sound for the control sounds, and the researchers, unaware of the problem, wrote up their report assuming the control sounds had been played as planned. Even so, it is far from clear how the data on the video led to the reported results. This would be a devastating error, but not fraud. “It is conceivable that the data were not fabricated, but rather that the experiment was set up wrong, and that nobody realized this until after it was published,” Dr. Altmann wrote.

Mr. Watumull, a linguistics student, said that when he worked in Dr. Hauser’s lab in 2007 he performed a similar experiment. It is “perfectly possible” that such an error could occur, he said, because the experimenters are blinded to the conditions of the experiment.
Harvard’s five other charges of scientific misconduct involve disagreements between Dr. Hauser and his students, all of which were corrected before any articles were published. E-mails in one of these cases, leaked to The Chronicle of Higher Education, concerned the same kind of experiment as the Cognition paper: researchers scored how often a monkey turned its head to the loudspeaker, meaning it heard the sound as novel.

In analyzing the experiment, Dr. Hauser scored the head turnings as significant, but a graduate student and a research assistant both found the monkey did nothing. The e-mails show Dr. Hauser telling his students that “we need to resolve this because I’m not sure why we are going in circles.”

The research assistant later wrote to the Harvard authorities, “The most disconcerting part of the whole experience to me was the feeling that Marc was using his position of authority to force us to accept sloppy (at best) science.” It was this complaint that prompted the inquiry.

In at least one previous disagreement with students, Dr. Hauser backed off when challenged. A former student who worked in Dr. Hauser’s lab before 2007 said Dr. Hauser had required the use of a statistical test that provided a publishable result.

The student, who spoke on condition of anonymity, felt the test was inappropriate and objected. After discussion, Dr. Hauser agreed and the result was not published. “I worked with Marc for years on dozens of experiments, and I never saw any problems with the handling of data that were this serious,” this student said, referring to the Harvard committee’s charges.

A more recent student, Mr. Watumull, said he never saw Dr. Hauser putting improper pressure on people to reach a conclusion. “He’s truly one of the greatest teachers I had as an undergraduate,” Mr. Watumull said. “He’s very well known in the department for being solicitous of students and inviting them to offer their own opinions.”

One of the few people to have seen any documents from the Harvard inquiry is Bennett Galef, an expert on animal behavior at McMaster University in Ontario. Because of his interest in research ethics, he was asked by Dr. Hauser to review the charges relating to the three published papers. Dr.
Galef said he concluded, based on what he was shown, that there was no clear evidence that Dr. Hauser had acted unethically.

Dr. Galef referred to the tensions that can arise in a large laboratory where some students are more successful than others. “Marc should have supervised more closely,” he said. Dr. Galef also questioned whether those conducting the inquiry fully understood the culture of an animal behavior laboratory. “As I understand it, the investigating committee were all physical scientists, and they have a very different approach to research and data-keeping than behavioral researchers do,” he said.

In an interview, Dr. Hauser declined to discuss the eight charges against him. But he did talk about another of his experiments cited by critics, a mirror recognition test, which is not part of Harvard’s investigation.

In 1995 he published a finding, which he later wrote that he could not repeat, that cotton-top tamarin monkeys could recognize themselves in a mirror. This contradicted a well-known finding by the psychologist Gordon G. Gallup that only humans, chimps and orangutans can recognize themselves. Dr. Gallup asked for a tape of the experiment, which Dr. Hauser provided. But Dr. Gallup could see no evidence, he has said, that the monkeys were reacting as Dr. Hauser had reported. To critics, this seemed an example of Dr. Hauser rushing to unsustainable conclusions.

In Dr. Hauser’s view, his article correctly reported the cotton-tops’ reactions. One of the difficulties of the animal cognition field is that experimenters have to recognize often subtle changes in an animal’s head movements, and judge whether this is a response to the test sound. Scoring an animal’s responses is quite subjective. It can take months to train someone to score rhesus monkeys, and a person skilled at scoring rhesus may fail with tamarins.

Dr. Hauser’s 1995 article was written with two colleagues trained in scoring cotton-top tamarins reliably. Dr. Gallup may not have spotted the reactions because he is not trained in scoring cotton-tops, Dr. Hauser said.

Why, then, could Dr. Hauser not repeat the experiment? The reason, he believes, has to do with another unresolved problem in the animal cognition field, that of how to deal with the variability in individuals.
Just as with people, some animals are gifted, others less so. Alex was the wonderfully intelligent gray parrot studied by Irene Pepperberg; no other parrots have equaled his abilities to distinguish colors and numbers. A collie dog called Rico was reported in Science in 2004 to possess a 200-word vocabulary, but has never been heard of since, suggesting that for whatever reason the experiment cannot be repeated.

The prodigy problem can interfere with less spectacular experiments. Dr. Hauser says that the first group of tamarins he tested for self-recognition may have included a few very adept individuals but that later groups were more average. He was unable to get the same result, and published his failure to do so.

Disagreements over the appropriate method are quite common in the animal cognition field, as is evident in the fact that some of the most spectacular experiments cannot be repeated. Disagreements over method also seem to have been involved in at least some of the five cases involving differences between Dr. Hauser and his students.

The e-mails leaked to The Chronicle of Higher Education were portrayed as an instance of Dr. Hauser pressuring his students to reach conclusions they thought unjustified. But they could also have involved a technical difference of opinion about how to score rhesus monkey behavior, a matter in which Dr. Hauser is trained and the two students were not.

Dr. Hauser has already acknowledged making “significant mistakes,” but has admitted to nothing worse. It remains to be seen whether or not the Office of Research Integrity will see these mistakes as serious enough to count as scientific misconduct.

“Maybe down the line there’ll be some forgiveness and a way to re-enter,” Dr. Hauser said. “I feel I have a lot more to contribute. But it’s been brutal.”
Putting a Price on Professors
A battle in Texas over whether academic value can be measured in dollars and cents.

By STEPHANIE SIMON And STEPHANIE BANCHERO

Chester Dunning, a history professor, has won several teaching awards. According to a report by the chancellor, he also loses money for the university, though his department is in the black overall.

Carol Johnson took the podium of a lecture hall one recent morning to walk 79 students enrolled in an introductory biology course through diffusion, osmosis and the phospholipid bilayer of cell membranes.

A senior lecturer, Ms. Johnson has taught this class for years. Only recently, though, have administrators sought to quantify whether she is giving the taxpayers of Texas their money’s worth.

A 265-page spreadsheet, released last month by the chancellor of the Texas A&M University system, amounted to a profit-and-loss statement for each faculty member, weighing annual salary against students taught, tuition generated, and research grants obtained.

Ms. Johnson came out very much in the black; in the period analyzed—fiscal year 2009—she netted the public university $279,617. Some of her colleagues weren't nearly so profitable. Newly hired assistant professor Charles Criscione, for instance, spent much of the year setting up a lab to research parasite genetics and ended up $45,305 in the red.

The balance sheet sparked an immediate uproar from faculty, who called it misleading, simplistic and crass—not to mention, riddled with errors. But the move here comes amid
a national drive, backed by some on both the left and the right, to assess more rigorously what, exactly, public universities are doing with their students—and their tax dollars.

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<th>Controversial Numbers: Cash Flow at Texas A&amp;M</th>
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As budget pressures mount, legislators and governors are increasingly demanding data proving that money given to colleges is well spent. States spend about 11% of their general-fund budgets subsidizing higher education. That totaled more than $78 billion in fiscal year 2008, according to the National Association of State Budget Officers.

The movement is driven as well by dismal educational statistics. Just over half of all freshmen entering four-year public colleges will earn a degree from that institution within six years, according to the U.S. Department of Education.

And among those with diplomas, just 31% could pass the most recent national prose literacy test, given in 2003; that's down from 40% a decade earlier, the department says.

"For years and years, universities got away with, 'Trust us—it'll be worth it,'" said F. King Alexander, president of California State University at Long Beach.

But no more: "Every conversation we have with these institutions now revolves around productivity," says Jason Bearce, associate commissioner for higher education in Indiana. He tells administrators it's not enough to find efficiencies in their operations; they must seek "academic efficiency" as well, graduating more students more quickly and with more demonstrable skills. The National Governors Association echoes that mantra; it just formed a commission focused on improving productivity in higher education.
Carol Johnson lectures at Texas A&M; she netted the university $279,617, according to the chancellor's report.

This new emphasis has raised hackles in academia. Some professors express deep concern that the focus on serving student "customers" and delivering value to taxpayers will turn public colleges into factories. They worry that it will upend the essential nature of a university, where the Milton scholar who teaches a senior seminar to five English majors is valued as much as the engineering professor who lands a million-dollar research grant.

And they fear too much tinkering will destroy an educational system that, despite its acknowledged flaws, remains the envy of much of the world. "It's a reflection of a much more corporate model of running a university, and it's getting away from the idea of the university as public good," says John Curtis, research director for the American Association of University Professors.

Efforts to remake higher education generally fall into two categories. In some states, including Ohio and Indiana, public officials have ordered a new approach to funding, based not on how many students enroll but on what they accomplish.

Details vary, but colleges typically earn points under such a system for pushing students to take science, engineering and math; for ensuring that they complete classes that they start; for improving on-time graduation rates; and for boosting more low-income students to degrees.

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These performance metrics generally affect just a portion of an institution's public funding—but that can be significant. In Ohio, for example, state funding for one community college jumped 11% in each of the past two years because of the new formulas. Several four-year campuses, by contrast, lost about 5% a year. President Barack Obama has pushed for similar incentives on a national level but could not get a proposed $2.5 billion fund for high-achieving colleges through Congress.

A second approach to reform is driven by college administrators seeking to build credibility with the public by disclosing their school's strengths and weaknesses.

Minnesota's state college system has created an online "accountability dashboard" for each campus. Bright, gas-gauge-style graphics indicate how many students complete their degrees; how run-down (or up-to-date) facilities are; and how many graduates pass professional licensing exams.
The California State University system, using data from outside sources, posts online the median starting and mid-career salaries for graduates of each campus, as well as their average student loan debt. "Taxpayers can make a pretty good estimate of their rate of return," says Mr. Alexander, president of CSU Long Beach.

A few schools have even taken to guaranteeing their education. Henry Ford Community College in Dearborn, Mich., pledges to retrain any of its graduates whose employers are dissatisfied with their skills or attitude.

Assistant professor Charles Criscione works one-on-one with an undergraduate; he ended up $45,305 in the red.

Concern about America's higher-education system kicked into high gear in 2006 when Margaret Spellings, education secretary for President George W. Bush, issued a biting report. She chided universities for coasting on their reputations and urged them to start measuring how much students learn—and why a degree costs so much.

The same year, a survey conducted by a coalition of corporations found that nearly 30% of employers ranked new hires with four-year college diplomas as "deficient" in written communication skills.

The reports jolted academia. Scrambling to respond, scores of public colleges agreed to post data they had previously kept private on a "College Portraits" website—including their scores on standardized tests that attempt to measure how much a school improves students' critical thinking skills between freshman and senior years. About 300 colleges now participate in the site, run by two consortiums of public colleges.

(continue)
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, which formally opened in January 1795 with a single professor, Rev. David Ker, was the country's first public university to admit students. One of the duties of the school's early professors was to perform morning and evening prayers and examine students on the "principles of morality and religion." By the end of June, 41 students had enrolled.

The University of Virginia

1795
1819
Thomas Jefferson, along with his friend James Madison, believed that public education was vital to maintaining a strong republic. In 1789, he wrote that "wherever the people are well informed they can be trusted with their own government." He founded the University of Virginia—the country's first nonsectarian university and the first to use an elective course system—in 1819.

President Abraham Lincoln

1862
The Morrill Act, signed by Abraham Lincoln in 1862, laid the foundation for a nationwide system of public universities. It granted each state 30,000 acres of land for every member of its congressional delegation. The land was then sold off to fund public colleges, with a particular focus on schools that specialized in agriculture, engineering and science. The act ultimately funded 69 universities.

1915
The standards for tenure, or job protection for professors, were first laid out in 1915 by the American Association of University Professors over concerns about academic freedom. (There had been several incidents in which colleges punished or fired faculty—for teaching evolution, for example.) As of 2007, 21% of U.S. faculty members were full-time and tenured, down from 37% in 1975.
1945
In the postwar years, a flood of federal research money transformed U.S. universities and boosted their reputations internationally. Vannevar Bush, director of the Office of Scientific Research and Development, wrote in an influential 1945 report that basic scientific research should take place in universities, relatively free from the pressures of "convention, prejudice or commercial necessity."

1958
From 1958 to 1967, Clark Kerr served as president of the University of California system, expanding its reach and inspiring other state officials to follow his model. He created a system with multiple campuses state-wide to serve a range of students, from community colleges to elite research universities. He also proposed that every student should be able to go to college, regardless of ability to pay.
To critics, that isn't enough. They see a system in which some tenured professors teach just two or three classes a year, sometimes on obscure topics that mesh with their research but not necessarily with student needs. At the same time, more instruction is handled by part-time lecturers, who now make up at least 50% of the nation's higher-education faculty—up from 30% in 1975, according to the American Association of University Professors.

Meanwhile, tuition is soaring; undergraduate costs at public four-year universities climbed 139% between 1990 and 2010, according to the nonprofit College Board. Last school year, average tuition and fees were $7,020 at a four-year public university and $26,273 at a private institution, the College Board says.

Nowhere has the overhaul movement taken hold more firmly than in Texas. A law that took effect this fall—and which passed the legislature unanimously—requires public universities to post online the budget of each academic department, the curriculum vitae of each instructor, full descriptions and reading lists for each course and student evaluations of each faculty member. The law, the first of its kind in the nation, requires the information to be accessible within three clicks of the college's home page.

Supporters say the information will help students pick useful classes so that they can move more quickly toward degrees. Skeptics fear it will spark culture wars as left and right tussle over the merits of specific classes and teachers. Ideologues could "find something they don't like in a syllabus, take it out of context and paint the wrong picture," said Karan Watson, interim provost at Texas A&M.

Others are concerned that posting students' evaluations online will boost the status of professors who are entertaining—or an easy A—over those who require kids to wrestle with tough material. "I know from experience that everyone who taught statistics got a lower evaluation than those who taught courses that were a little less challenging," says John Antel, provost at the University of Houston.

Individual Texas colleges also are moving on their own reforms. Thomas Evenson, dean of the College of Public Affairs and Community Service at the University of North Texas, has ordered his faculty to spend at least four hours a day, four days a week, on campus or engaged in field research, in addition to the hours they spend teaching. The goal: to make "more of an effort" to ensure that faculty are "present, available and productive," he said. The University of Houston has doubled the pot of money set aside for teaching awards, to $400,000 a year.

But perhaps the most far-reaching initiative is the cost-benefit balance sheet at Texas A&M, the oldest public university in the state. Each faculty member is assessed on criteria including the number of classes that they teach, the tuition that they bring in and research grants that they generate.

One metric divides their salary by the number of students that they teach. The range is striking. Some nontenured lecturers earn less than $100 for each student they instruct.
Other professors are teaching such small classes that their compensation works out to more than $10,000—in a few cases, more than $20,000—per student.

Mr. Criscione, the assistant professor studying parasites, came out at $23,563 per student. He says that is because he was setting up his lab and applying for grants most of that year, as is standard for new hires in the biology department, so he supervised just two students.

Faculty on the huge flagship campus, which serves 39,000 undergraduates here in east-central Texas, say some of the data on the spreadsheet are inaccurate, including inflated salaries and missing grants. They also say it's unfair to judge their productivity by class size when they often can't pick what they teach but are assigned by their department heads.

And they point out that the data do not take into account the many hours spent preparing lectures, advising students, serving on curriculum review committees or making other contributions to the college community. "A 50-minute lecture takes me two days to prepare," says Mr. Criscione. "There are 24 lectures in a semester, so you do the math."

In response to complaints, administrators recently pulled the report from a public website to review the data. University President R. Bowen Loftin sent a letter to faculty promising the data wouldn't be used to "assess the overall productivity" of individuals.

Administrators in the chancellor's office, which produced the document, declined to be interviewed. The Board of Regents office also declined.

The concept of a productivity spreadsheet came from the Texas Public Policy Foundation, a conservative think tank that Gov. Rick Perry invited to a state university summit in May 2008. The group suggested several reforms with a common theme: Let taxpayers see what's going on at every public institution—and let them decide what's worth subsidizing.

Bill Peacock, a vice president at the foundation, acknowledges that this approach could mean a radical reshaping of academia, with far more emphasis on filling students with practical information and less on intellectual pursuits, especially in the liberal arts.

That's OK by him. "Taxpayers of the state of Texas," Mr. Peacock says, should decide whether "they should be spending two years paying the salary of an English professor so he can write a book of poetry simply to add to the prestige of the university or the body of literature out there."

When the choice is put that bluntly, Chester Dunning, a history professor at Texas A&M, wonders if he'd pass muster. Mr. Dunning teaches two classes a semester and has won several teaching awards. His salary of about $90,000 a year also covers the time he spends researching Russian literature and history. His most recent book argues that Alexander Pushkin's drama "Boris Godunov" was a comedy, not a tragedy.
Mr. Dunning says his scholarly work animates his teaching and inspires his students. "But if you want me to explain why a grocery clerk in Texas should pay taxes for me to write those books, I can't give you an answer," he says. His eyes sweep his cramped office, lined with books. Then Mr. Dunning finds his answer. "We've only got 5,000 years of recorded human history," he says, "and I think we need every precious bit of it."

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