THE DAILY CLIPS

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Ashaolu joins Pirates

Wednesday, October 28, 2009

The Daily Reflector

John Ashaolu has officially been named the director of basketball operations for the East Carolina men's team.

Ashaolu fills the position vacated by John Moseley, who was promoted to assistant coach earlier this year.

Ashaolu will work closely with the Pirate basketball staff, helping to coordinate and carry out day-to-day activities of the program.

"I'm excited and honored to be joining the ECU family," Ashaolu said. "Coach Mack (McCarthy) and his staff have Pirate basketball headed in the right direction. The support for the program from the community is great and I want to help bring them what they deserve — a basketball program they can be proud of on and off the court."

Ashaolu previously served as the head coach and director of basketball operations for Basketball Stars of America AAU in Pittsburgh the past two seasons. He also worked in a similar capacity for Grassroots Canada AAU in Toronto for five seasons.

ECU swimming and diving

East Carolina's Jenna Stewart was named the Conference USA swimmer of the week Tuesday, while Meghan Coyne earned her third straight diver of the week honor.

Stewart won the 50-yard freestyle and 100 freestyle in a quad meet against Campbell, Marshall and Towson, while Coyne won the 1-meter and 3-meter diving events.

PCC basketball

The Pitt Community College basketball team will play a Blue-White scrimmage this afternoon beginning at 1:45.

Prior to the game, there will be a Meet the Bulldogs event during which fans can meet members of this year's team.

Today's game is open to the public.
Letter: Campaign raises funds for area needs

Wednesday, October 28, 2009

We at Leo Jenkins Cancer Center are grateful to Beau's Buddies for the exemplary assistance they have provided to our cancer patients. Beau's Buddies is unique in that all funds donated for cancer patients stay in eastern North Carolina. This is a true example of neighbors helping neighbors. Country singing star Heidi Newfield performed at the Hilton and generously donated concert proceeds to Beau's buddies on Sunday. I thank all our good neighbors in the East who helped make this a success.

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Letter: 'Black out' plan a break from Pirate purple

Wednesday, October 28, 2009

I see where there will be a "black out" at the ECU-Virginia Tech football clash on Nov. 5.

This game will be nationally televised on ESPN and will provide great exposure for our beloved university.

So what is a black out? Why, it asks all ECU fans to wear black at the game. Black as in the color (some athletic department officials have told me black is a neutral color) of the jerseys some of our athletic teams wear.

And all these years I thought our school colors were purple and gold. Perhaps following the cultural fashion trends of the moment are more important than tradition.

I'll be at the game ... in purple and gold.

BARTOW HOUSTON

Washington

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Census: High-tech cities attracting college grads

Charlotte and Raleigh saw large jumps in residents with at least a college degree. Each city offers the promise of specialized tech jobs and hip lifestyles.

BY HOPE YEN
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Many college graduates are passing up the Sunbelt and industrial centers, which have been hit hard by the recession, in favor of life in urban, high-tech meccas. Their moves are fueling a resurgence of brainiacs in parts of California, North Carolina and Texas.

Census data released Tuesday offer the first detailed look at U.S. migration data, broken down by education and income, since the recession began in late 2007.

The data covering 2006-08 show that Austin, Texas, Portland, Ore., Charlotte and Raleigh, both in North Carolina, and Seattle saw large jumps in residents with at least a college degree. Each offers the promise of specialized tech jobs and hip lifestyles.

San Francisco, with its burgeoning biotech industry, and Houston, home to NASA and several medical centers, saw significant increases in residents with advanced-level graduate degrees.

In contrast, metropolitan areas with high rates of foreclosures, less tech-based economies or increasing unemployment saw declines or slower rates of growth in residents with a college degree or higher. They included Los Angeles, Atlanta, Orlando, Fla., as well as New Orleans, Detroit and Cleveland.

“During this economic downturn, young, educated professionals are heading for the high-tech ‘cool’ metros rather than the fast growing upstarts of the mid-decade,” said William Frey, a demographer at Brookings Institution, who analyzed the data. “The investment in knowledge industries and young professional amenities in places like Austin, Raleigh and Seattle is now paying off.”

The United States is becoming increasingly educated. More than one in four U.S. residents now has a college degree, with many recent graduates looking for jobs in a depressed economy. States and cities are also striving to boost their tax bases and stay competitive by attracting highly educated and higher income residents.

According to the data, cities with higher levels of education did not always translate to the highest incomes.

Austin, Seattle and Charlotte all saw large gains in the number of residents who earned an income of $65,000 a year or more. But they were outpaced by places such as Bakersfield, Calif., and Sunbelt regions such as Phoenix and Las Vegas, which had larger jumps in richer residents.

Frey attributed the differences to younger college graduates in the high-tech areas who are moving up the career ladder and have not yet reached their peak levels of income.
Campuses Largely Unhurt by Recession, but Officials Are Fearful About the Future

By JACK KADDEN

The economy may be on the mend, but the chief finance officers of colleges are far from upbeat about the near future, according to a survey conducted by The Chronicle of Higher Education.

The survey found that 62 percent of the officers think the financial pressures on their colleges will get worse, and almost two thirds fear that 2010-2012 will be even more difficult.

Still, the article points out, few colleges have significantly changed the way they operate.

The absence of radical change is probably a measure of the resiliency of the higher-education sector, the cushion provided by federal stimulus funds, and the political difficulty of instituting swift changes at such complex and decentralized organizations.

The survey found that only 6 percent of colleges had imposed unpaid furloughs on staff, but 40 percent of the 166 respondents had frozen hiring for faculty and adjunct positions, and 60 percent had frozen hiring for non-faculty jobs.

From the perspective of colleges’ fiscal health, the survey was encouraging.

While the number of “downgrades” to credit ratings in the first three quarters of 2009 was more than twice as high as for all of 2008 (26 versus 12) and the number of negative outlooks so far in 2009 also outpaced the number for all of 2008 (40 versus 20), the credit ratings for the vast majority of colleges remain unchanged.

“It’s important to remember that this is an industry that has been in a golden era for a decade or more,” says John C. Nelson, managing director for the Moody’s group that evaluates colleges’ creditworthiness. “It shows how just fundamentally stable the business model of the university is. They can absorb a lot.”

Enrollment at both public and private institutions was stable, the article said, but public universities suffered a 3 percent drop in state aid, which would have been 4 percent if not for federal stimulus money.
October 27, 2009

Colleges Are Pushed to Convert Loan System

By TAMAR LEWIN

Congress has not given final approval to legislation ending federal subsidies for private student loans for college. But Secretary of Education Arne Duncan sent a letter Monday to thousands of colleges and universities urging them to get ready to use the government’s Direct Loan Program in the 2010-11 school year.

The House of Representatives last month passed the Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act, expanding the government’s direct lending and ending the current program of government subsidies and loan guarantees for private lenders. Under that law, all colleges would be required to convert to the federal Direct Loan Program by July 1.

But the Senate has yet to take action on the legislation, and it is uncertain whether it will do so before the health care debate is resolved.

Meanwhile, most of the nation’s 5,000 colleges and universities have not taken the necessary steps to convert to direct federal lending. The letter, sent to some 3,000 campuses that have never used direct lending, was an effort to prod them into action.

“Some campuses are thinking they’ll wait until Congress acts, but to wait is to endanger loan access for students,” said Robert Shireman, the deputy under secretary of education.

In the past year, Mr. Shireman said, about 500 institutions have switched from the subsidized program, the Federal Family Education Loan program, into direct federal lending.

A year and a half ago, when uncertainty in the financial markets threatened the availability of private loans, Congress passed a stopgap law to ensure that families with financial need could get student loans, even if their college was not in the federal direct loan program.

But that temporary legislation, which colleges used to make billions of dollars worth of new loans in the past year, will expire in June. And even if Congress does not act to end the subsidized lending program and require direct federal lending, there is no guarantee that any lenders will continue with the private loan program.

Private lenders are fighting to stop the switch to direct federal lending. And at their third-quarter earnings conference call last Wednesday, executives of Sallie Mae, a private lender, spoke of the “transition risks,” saying many schools’ financial aid offices are thinly staffed, have only just finished processing loans for this academic year and would have trouble making the transition to a new lending system in time for next year.

Mr. Shireman said that for most colleges and universities, it takes three weeks to four months to make the
switch, which requires changing computer programs and retraining financial aid administrators.
October 28, 2009

New Meaning for Night Class at 2-Year Colleges

By ABBY GOODNOUGH

BOSTON — Winston Chin hustles on Tuesdays from his eight-hour shift as a lab technician to his writing class at Bunker Hill Community College, a requirement for the associate’s degree he is seeking in hopes of a better job.

He is a typical part-time student, with one exception. His class runs from 11:45 p.m. to 2:30 a.m., the consequence of an unprecedented enrollment spike that has Bunker Hill scrambling to accommodate hundreds of newcomers. In the dead of night, he and his classmates dissect Walt Whitman poems and learn the finer points of essay writing, fueled by unlimited coffee, cookies and an instructor who does push-ups beforehand to stay lively.

Similar booms have forced many of the nation’s 1,200 community colleges to add makeshift parking lots, rent extra space and keep thousands of students on waiting lists this fall. While Bunker Hill offers two midnight classes — the other is Psychology 101 — and Clackamas Community College in Oregon holds welding classes until 2 a.m., others have added classes as early as 6 a.m. to make room for the jobless and others whom the recession has nudged back to school.

The deluge also includes an unusually large number of recent high school graduates, diverted from more expensive four-year colleges by the economic downturn.

“I liken myself to the old woman who lives in a shoe,” said Mary L. Fifield, the president of Bunker Hill, where enrollment is up 16 percent over last fall. “The seams are tearing, and people are just popping out all over.”

Virtually every state is dealing with enrollment booms at community colleges, the American Association of Community Colleges says, with some in California reporting increases of 35 percent. The demand comes amid deep cuts to higher-education budgets, but also at a hopeful time for community colleges: President Obama recently announced a $12 billion plan to increase the number of community college graduates by five million by 2020.

“It shines a spotlight on a sector of higher education that by and large has been viewed as the lowest rung on the ladder,” Dr. Fifield said. “Now we have the president of the United States talking about community colleges as an engine that will drive and sustain economic success in this country.”

Most of the students in Mr. Chin’s writing class, who range in age from 18 to 59, are employed but hoping a degree will lead to more stable, higher-paying jobs. Some start work as early as 4 a.m. or finish as late as 11 p.m., making the class time more appealing. They include a taxi dispatcher who dreams of going to medical school, a Dunkin’ Donuts cashier who wants to be a homicide detective and a landscaper who wants to be a
state trooper.

The group cracked jokes and gently mocked one another for mispronouncing the word “blithe” or not reading aloud passionately enough. When the instructor asked around 2 a.m., “Who’s ready to answer the question?” one student wearily answered, “Who’s confused?”

Mr. Chin, who took the midnight class because other writing classes were full, wants to become a surgical nurse. At 57, he has three small children and has not been a student since graduating from high school.

“I probably would have taken something early in the morning if I’d had my pick of classes,” he said. “But this is working out. I never really need more than about four hours of sleep anyway.”

Mr. Chin and his classmates get plenty of parking — a rarity at community colleges these days. Holyoke Community College, in Holyoke, Mass., where enrollment is up 13 percent over last fall, turned its tennis courts into parking lots; it also sent postcards to all 7,500 students urging them to take public transportation to class.

At Northern Virginia Community College, more than 20 classes start before 7 a.m. this fall; many other colleges have classes running as late as 11 p.m.

But with state allocations down sharply this year because of the economy, many community colleges have not been able to keep up with the demand. At Miami Dade College, whose 170,000 students make it the nation’s largest community college, about 30,000 could not get every class they wanted this fall; about 5,000 others were shut out completely.

At De Anza College in Cupertino, Calif., about 8,000 students found themselves on wait lists last month, as did 7,500 students at Central Oregon Community College. And in New York City, where the six community colleges that are part of the City University of New York experienced a record 9 percent enrollment increase this fall, most closed enrollment early for the first time.

Because of budget cuts, Miami Dade College could not add a single new class this fall despite an influx of more than 33,000 new students. Instead, it has eliminated 1,200 class sections over the last two years, said Eduardo J. Padrón, the college president.

“It’s an almost desperate situation,” Dr. Padrón said. “My heart breaks for these students, because I know many are the ones who really need us the most.”

Colleen Roach, Bunker Hill’s spokeswoman, said higher student fees and an influx of federal stimulus money helped the college offer dozens more classes this fall. It is planning to add a third midnight course, Sociology 101, next spring, along with five business and science courses that will run to 11:45 p.m.

Dr. Fifield said putting dynamic instructors in charge of the late-night classes was crucial.

“Not everyone is going to be able to keep people awake until 2:45 in the morning,” she said.

Wick Sloane, who teaches the midnight writing class at Bunker Hill, tried to transport Mr. Chin and the other students from the windowless, concrete-walled classroom one recent night with an essay by Edward Abbey, the nature writer, about encountering a mountain lion in the New Mexican desert. When one
student answered a question with a giant yawn around 2:15, Mr. Sloane asked, “Can everyone make it about 15 more minutes?”

For homework, he assigned an essay analyzing Calpurnia’s rhetoric in Shakespeare’s “Julius Caesar,” leading one student to ask whether Shakespeare used an alias. The room started buzzing with opinions.

“Do you want to stay and debate who Shakespeare was?” Mr. Sloane asked.

They did not, but not for lack of enthusiasm. “He’s got me engaged,” Mr. Chin said, “which is not easy at this time of night.”

Lisa W. Foderaro contributed reporting from New York.