A couple dressed as Scream characters checks in with their ECU OneCards, during the Student Activity Board’s "Midnight Madness" event at Mendenhall and the Student Rec Center. This gives students another alternative to going downtown on Halloween. Monday, Oct. 31, 2011. (Aileen Devlin/The Daily Reflector)

**ECU students weigh Halloween options**

*By Lynsey Horn*

*The Daily Reflector*

*Tuesday, November 1, 2011*

With Halloween falling on a school night this year, students at East Carolina University had to make a tough decision about when to celebrate.

Use the weekend to enjoy some early holiday festivities? Stay in on Friday and Saturday to be well-rested when the actual day rolls around? Or forget about being responsible or rested, and let Halloween be celebrated in a true enthusiast fashion for three exciting days?

Alison DeMocker, 20, and Megan Ley, 19, decided to tough it out for all three days and had a new costume for every night.

“We were KISS (the band) together with all of our roommates,” Ley said.

Keeping with the musically themed costumes, Ley also dressed as singer Katy Perry. DeMocker donned a hippie costume and planned on being a rainbow fish on Halloween night.

DeMocker’s cousin, Steven DeMocker, came to visit for the weekend and dressed as a girl.
“I was a girl. I was in a tutu. I had my earrings ... hoops,” he said.

Wig? “It got in the way, but I wore a cami with a bra,” he added.

They were among the many students who came up with unusual costume ideas.

Freshman Megan Green planned to dress in a couples’ costume for Halloween night.

“I was going to be a French maid, and my boyfriend was going to be a dust bunny,” she said.

Rino Davita and Nick Walton decided on a group costume that they described as “a large piece of crap.”

Walton, Davita and their two friends chose all brown outfits with accessories to make them tough crap, holy crap, chicken crap and bull crap. When they describe their costumes, they use slightly more cruder vocabulary.

Marissa Dunsmore, 18, decided on a sweeter costume for her weekend festivities. She chose a 100 percent homemade cotton candy costume.

“I got a bunch of tool and wrapped it around myself and then teased my hair and spray painted it pink,” she said.

For Halloween night, Dunsmore said she would not be going out, but “I’ll go people watch.”

Whitney Riggs, 18, celebrated during the weekend “dressed up as myself,” she said. She reserved Halloween night for scholarly duties.

“Of course, all my teachers would have all of our tests (Tuesday), so I’m probably just going to stay in and study,” she said.

Others also decided to celebrate without a costume. Destiny Devone, 18, and Burgandi Anderson, 18, said it was too cold to put the effort into a costume.

“Just put on a dress and kept it moving,” Devone said.
The weekend weather may have kept them from showing their Halloween spirit, but Devone and Anderson, along with friends Quanisha Davis, Coraleisha Banks and Sedonia Scott, dressed up for ECU’s Midnight Madness event. Dressed as Pebbles, The Joker, Harley Quinn, a school girl and one yet-to-be-decided costume, the girls planned to join in on the games, movies and costume contest.

Emily McLamb, associate director of student involvement, said about 50 students usually participate in the costume contest, but many more come to watch. There are cash prizes for first, second and third places and gift cards for the scariest, the silliest and the best group/duo costume.

“Basically for us, it’s an alternative to downtown,” McLamb said. “It gives students on campus a safe environment to participate in Halloween.”

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Halloween partygoers flocked to downtown Greenville Saturday night. Local establishments braced for huge crowds celebrating Halloween and ECU’s Homecoming victory over Tulane. (Rob Taylor/The Daily Reflector)

Downtown partiers keep police busy
By Michael Abramowitz
The Daily Reflector
Tuesday, November 1, 2011

Four nights of homecoming and Halloween festivities kept police busy in the downtown nightclub district, though rain dampened the party’s start Monday.

The department reported large crowds in the district Friday through Sunday, as officers from Greenville and other agencies manned barricades to control costumed partiers and ECU homecoming crowds.

About 200 officers were downtown as rain poured after 10 p.m. Monday, Halloween night, when thousands traditionally visit clubs and parade their costumes in the street to celebrate the fright night holiday.

At 11 p.m., rain had kept many from entering a four-block area barricaded along Fifth Street between Reade and Evans streets. The barren scene stood in contrast to the previous three nights, police said.

“Friday presented the level of activity that we see on a normal Saturday, maybe just a bit heavier, but with no major criminal situations in that zone,” Sgt. Carlton Williams said.
The police did not set up barriers with checkpoints Friday night as they do on Halloweens, but they did follow Halloween procedures Saturday, Williams said.

“Saturday, although it was not Halloween, presented us with the same huge visitor volume and incident volume that we see only on Halloweens; lots of drunk and disorderly people and some assaults, but nothing resulting in serious injuries,” Williams said.

The streets were packed from 10 p.m. to 3 a.m. with costumed partiers, as if it were Halloween night, Williams said.

Officers already had set up barriers and checkpoints while students and alumni were watching the ECU football team take on the Green Wave of Tulane at Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium.

Sunday, which is usually a slow night downtown, presented the scenario that officers would typically see on a busy Friday night, again without the need for barriers and checkpoints, Williams said.

Crowds were expected to visit the district after rain subsided Monday, police said. Officers would allow the last people into the area at 1:30 a.m. and begin dispersing them at 2:30 a.m., Williams said.

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A U.S. Army paratrooper died after a stabbing Saturday at a Charles Boulevard apartment complex, but police said little about the death Monday.

Pfc. Keyonn Parkin, 19, a native of Wichita, Kan., stationed at Fort Bragg, was assaulted just after midnight outside a Pirates Place apartment at 1508 Charles Blvd., according to a Greenville Police Department report issued Monday morning.

The state medical examiner’s office confirmed Parkin had died and said it was conducting an autopsy. No official word on the death came from the police department until late Monday.

Chief William Anderson commented briefly during downtown Halloween patrols. When asked if a homicide occurred, he said only that a death had occurred and the department was investigating. He said more information would be available today.

Parkin was with fellow Airborne soldier and friend, Pfc. Robert Micheal Perry, 19. The two drove with a third soldier from Fort Bragg to attend the party, Perry said on Monday. Parkin had heard about the party through an East Carolina University student he knew, according to Perry.

Perry was leaving the party with Parkin and another friend when he realized his jacket and wallet were inside, and he went back to retrieve it, he said.

“When I got back outside, I saw a group of people standing around Keyonn, who was laying on the ground,” Perry said. “He was unconscious, and his white shirt was covered in blood.”

Perry said he and his friends had no idea what precipitated the stabbing.
Perry watched as another friend tried to assist the unconscious and bleeding Parkin, he said.

“I was trying to keep the crowd back so Keyonn could get air, but people kept shoving and closing in. I ended up punching one person. When the police arrived, I went to talk with them and got arrested for punching the guy,” Perry said.

Perry was charged with simple assault and was released on $500 unsecured bond, according to police reports.

He arrived back at Fort Bragg about 3 a.m. and was interviewed by military police about the incident, which he said was jointly investigating with Greenville police. Perry then met with a base chaplain for counseling, he said.

Parkin was an infantryman with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division, according to The Fayetteville Observer. He joined the Army in July 2010 and completed basic combat training and advanced individual training at Fort Benning, Ga. He was assigned to Fort Bragg in December 2010.

Parkin’s awards and decorations include the Army Commendation Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Army Service Ribbon and the Parachutist Badge.

He is survived by his mother, Patricia Simpson.

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Governor supports Pirates in Big East bid

By Caulton Tudor

North Carolina's top government officials made it clear last week that they want East Carolina to become the Big East Carolina Pirates.

Gov. Beverly Perdue (Democrat), Sen. Richard Burr (Republican) and Sen. Kay Hagan (Democrat) crossed political lines to send a joint communication to presidents of Big East Conference schools urging them to consider the Pirates for membership.

"We would very much appreciate your serious consideration of East Carolina University," the letter stated.

The letter was dated Oct. 26.

"In this effort, we speak - along with a majority of North Carolinians - with one voice," the letter read.

"Our State has a strong tradition of public universities with both excellent academic records and deep commitments to intercollegiate athletics. ECU, as fully described in the letter from University of North Carolina system President Tom Ross, follows in that tradition."
"ECU is an institution whose presence would serve to strengthen the Big East as a conference by bringing its deep ties to the entire State of North Carolina into the Big East fold.

"ECU, by virtue of its growing academic reach, its proven track record in football and other intercollegiate sports, and its ardent fan base throughout North Carolina, is a school that can and will serve the Big East well."

The Big East, which in the process of losing schools to the ACC and Big 12, is considering a number of possible replacements. But to date, the league has displayed no public interest in adding East Carolina.
Pirates prep for Southern Miss showdown

By Nathan Summers
The Daily Reflector
Tuesday, November 1, 2011

East Carolina’s showdown with Southern Miss this Saturday is rife with importance for both football teams.

Sole possession of first place in Conference USA’s East Division is up for grabs when the two long-standing rivals square off at 4 p.m. inside Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium, as are bragging rights in a series which the teams have evenly split over the last six years.

For ECU head coach Ruffin McNeill, the game will be something of a rubber match dating back to his days as an ECU defensive back under head coach Pat Dye in the late 1970s. McNeill is 2-2 as a combined player and coach against Southern Miss.

One common thread throughout his experience with the Golden Eagles is hard-nosed football.

“They’ve had some battles, even before I got here and in recent years,” McNeill said at Monday’s weekly press conference of the series, which Southern Miss still leads convincingly all time, 26-10. “I was watching them today and I thought about going down there (as a player) with (former Southern Miss greats) Reggie Collier and Sammy Winder. It was a head-
knocking game. It wasn’t a place for the faint of heart. It was hot and heavy, but it was fun.”

As a freshman in 1976 McNeill enjoyed a 48-0 throttling of the Golden Eagles, but in his junior season the starting strong safety was part of a 17-16 loss in which McNeill made five tackles. When he returned to ECU in the early 90s as a defensive assistant, McNeill dropped a 38-21 decision to Southern Miss in Greenville, but got revenge last season as the Pirates’ head coach when his team won a wild 44-43 game in Hattiesburg.

“It’s been a tough series year in and year out,” McNeill said. “Last year was a head-banging game down there, and we know we’ll have another head-banging game here.”

**Big East**


The letter said East Carolina has an ardent fan base, proven sports record and growing academic reach.

“ECU is an institution whose presence would serve to strengthen the Big East as a conference by bringing its deep ties to the entire state of North Carolina into the Big East fold,” the letter said. “ECU, by virtue of its growing academic reach, its proven track record in football and other intercollegiate sports, and its ardent fan base throughout North Carolina, is a school that can and will serve the Big East well.”

**Punting problems**

McNeill opted to pull starting punter Ben Ryan during last week’s win over Tulane after the senior shanked an 11-yard punt out of bounds. The remaining three Pirate punts in the game came off the foot of junior Phil McNaughton, a former transfer from Taren Point, Australia.

McNeill said Monday the two punters would compete this week for the starting role against Southern Miss.
“I get after them just like I would anybody else,” McNeill said of his kickers. “I expect a lot out of Ben, and I have high expectations for those two guys, (placekicker) Michael Barbour and Ben. They’ve been around, they’ve been through it, so I hold them to high standards.”

**Dixon returns**

McNeill benched outside linebacker Justin Dixon for four games, and in fact demoted him to the scout team during that time, but Dixon returned to limited game action against the Green Wave.

“I tell our kids exactly what I expect and I don’t pull any punches because I expect the same thing from them,” McNeill said. “I love Justin but I love our team more. Justin understood that, went on scout team versus the offense and did a great job playing defensive line and wherever they needed him to over there.”

Now that Dixon has met the requirements of his coaches, McNeill said he must regain the acceptance of his teammates.

**Injuries**

The wounded list is much shorter for ECU this week.

Inside wide receiver Justin Hardy, second on the team in receptions, is listed as questionable to return from his right knee injury this week. He’s joined in that regard by outside linebacker Marke Powell (lower back), wide receiver Mike Price (concussion), defensive end and special teams man Robert Huckabee (concussion) and defensive back Cody Lyon (concussion).

Still out are starting left guard Adhem Elsawi (left knee), starting tailback Reggie Bullock (right thigh) and inside receiver Justin Jones (wrist surgery).

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The University of North Carolina is expanding its reach into the Caribbean. UNCW officials are working with a number of schools to bring a research facility to the U.S. Virgin Islands. The university already manages the use of NOAA's Aquarius Underwater Laboratory in the Florida Keys.

The facility will be funded through grants and private donors, according to Bob Roer, dean of graduate school and research.

"Our only investment in building this is time and effort," Roer said. "The fact that UNCW ... will have a presence there lends international prominence, and will certainly add to the prestige and visibility of the school."

The facility will aid in studies that include sea turtles and coral reefs, Roer said.

While there will be a number of opportunities for graduate students, Roer said, he emphasized the benefits the building will bring for undergraduates.

"We envision a suite of semester-long short courses where undergrads can come in and have an intense series of courses with an opportunity for hands-on labs," he said.

The project, in the works since 1999, is now taking bids from possible consultants, said Steve Meinhold, UNCW's associate dean of research. The U.S. Office of Insular Affairs has provided about $950,000 for the project.

UNCW is working with the University of Virgin Islands, Rutgers University and the University of South Carolina on the project. The schools will soon work to raise money to build the building, he said. The goal is to have it built by 2016.

Meinhold, who was in St. Croix on Friday as a liaison for the project, said UNCW is the lead partner in the consortium, "UNCW is handling all of the grant funding," he said.
The other schools will help develop the land use at the site, curriculum and outreach programs.

Roer said he is excited about the possibilities.

"We have about 30 faculty members whose research could make use of the facility," he said.

But Meinhold said the goals look much further than just the university.

"The goal here is to be a world-class research facility," he said. "When people think of coral reef research, we want them to think of this facility."

Jason Gonzales: 343-2075
Want to earn more money? Study STEM.

By Daniel de Vise

Georgetown University economist Anthony Carnevale has shaken up higher education with his cold, hard facts about income disparities that favor graduates of science, technology, engineering and mathematics fields: Those STEM majors pay better. All the talk about the transcendent value of a philosophy degree is so much hot air, at least in terms of actual future earning potential. I say this as a former philosophy major.

My colleague Peter Whorisky, a math major, made a big splash last spring with a story that cited groundbreaking research by Carnevale. He showed that STEM majors earned up to 50 percent more over their lifetimes than humanities majors earned.

Carnevale sent me some new charts last week that take the argument further. Math-science majors can earn more than humanities majors even with a lesser degree. Carnevale believes the economy has shifted over the past 30 years to reward academic fields over educational attainment. In other words: It doesn’t matter how long you have studied; it matters what you study.

Here are a few of Carnevale’s findings:

• 63 percent of STEM workers with associate’s degrees earn more than non-STEM workers with bachelor’s degrees.

• 26 percent of STEM workers with associate’s degrees earn more than non-STEM workers with doctorates.

• 65 percent of STEM workers with bachelor’s degrees earn more than non-STEM workers with master’s degrees.

• 47 percent of STEM workers with bachelor’s degrees earn more than non-STEM workers with doctorates.
• 61 percent of STEM workers with master’s degrees earn more than non-STEM workers with doctorates.

“It’s become less about the degree level, and a lot more about what you take,” Carnevale told me in an interview earlier this year. “The whole structure that we all grew up with has essentially broken down.”

Generally speaking, an AA holder will earn about $1.7 million in his or her career; a BA yields $2.3 million.

“But if I get a certificate as an engineering tech — not even an AA degree — I’ll make more than 30 percent of the people with BAs,” Carnevale said. “That wasn’t true 30 or 40 years ago. The world changed at the end of the 1980-81 recession. It’s what you study, and what occupation that puts you into.”
October 31, 2011

**Cooper Union Looks at Charging Tuition**

By RICHARD PÉREZ-PEÑA

Facing serious financial trouble in a weak economy, Cooper Union, the New York City college founded in 1859 to provide free education for the working class, may begin charging undergraduate tuition for the first time in more than a century, its president said Monday.

“Altering our scholarship policy will be only as a last resort, but in order to create a sustainable model, it has to be one of the options on the table,” Jamshed Bharucha, who took over as president in July, said in an interview.

Such a change would be a cultural shift for an institution whose tuition-free education and esteemed programs in engineering, architecture and art have made it one of the nation’s most selective schools, admitting 5 percent to 10 percent of applicants annually, depending on the department.

Peter Cooper, a self-taught industrialist, inventor and social reformer, founded the college with the mission of making higher education available to all; it was among the first to admit blacks, women, students of any religion and those who could not pay, making it need-blind long before the term existed.

Dr. Bharucha emphasized that lower-income students and many middle-income ones would continue to attend free, and that none of the 900 current undergraduates would be charged. He said that if the school decided to charge tuition, it was not clear whether it would set its price comparable to those at other private colleges, $40,000 or more, or adopt a different payment structure.

Despite consternation at the East Village school and on Facebook among students and alumni who had heard murmurs of a possible change, Dr. Bharucha said no decisions had been made. He plans to ask the board of trustees next week to approve creation of a task force to look into ways to solve the school’s persistent, and worsening, budget problems, and report back next spring.

“We have to find new, robust revenue streams, and we have to do that quickly,” he said.
For many Cooper Union alumni, the idea of charging tuition feels like an assault on the college’s identity and social mission.

“It’s a contradiction to everything we’ve learned about Cooper,” said Milton Glaser, 82, the graphic designer and co-founder of New York magazine.

“It’s the last opportunity for free education on that level in the entire country.”

Gerard W. Ryan, an alumnus who works at Motorola and has been an adjunct professor of computer science at Cooper Union, said, “I think the idea is dreadful, and I really hope it doesn’t come to pass.”

“This spirit of Peter Cooper, that there should be an excellent education for everybody, that’s pervaded everything,” he added. “It’s in the DNA of the school.”

But he praised Dr. Bharucha for confronting financial troubles he did not create.

In its first decades, Cooper Union collected tuition from students who had the means to pay. But since 1902, following major gifts from Andrew Carnegie and Cooper’s descendants, it has been free for all undergraduates. (Students enrolled in nondegree night programs do pay tuition and undergraduates pay for room and board.)

A result has been a student body that, for an elite college, is unusually diverse, ethnically and economically. Fewer than half of Cooper Union’s students are white, and almost two-thirds attended public high schools.

Dr. Bharucha said that in recent decades, the school had resorted to unsustainable practices to support its operations — like selling assets and dipping into the principal of its endowment, which stood at $577 million in mid-2010 — rather than just spending the endowment’s earnings. In recent years, it also spent heavily on a new academic building and renovations of its historic building, both on Cooper Square.

The school also generates significant income from real estate it owns, including the land under the Chrysler Building, but the value of those properties has also been dropping.

Word of a possible change leaked out in recent days, leading to student protests over the weekend. On Monday night, Dr. Bharucha discussed the matter with a large group of students for the first time, addressing a gathering in the school’s Great Hall, site of dozens of famous speeches,
including the first New York addresses given by Abraham Lincoln, in 1860, and Mark Twain, in 1867.

Dr. Bharucha said Cooper Union needed to introduce new sources of revenue, reaching $28 million a year by 2018, or about one-quarter of the expected operating costs. He said being more aggressive about winning research grants and raising money from alumni would cover part of that. In the meantime, he said, there will be belt-tightening, like a freeze on faculty hiring he has imposed.

He said the school needed money not just to keep up with current costs, but also to invest in academic facilities and provide more financial aid for poorer students’ room and board.

“I will not be forcing solutions on the organization,” he said, adding that he wanted employees, students and alumni involved in finding answers. “But we have to do the hard thinking now.”
Toughest Exam Question: What Is the Best Way to Study?
By SUE SHELLENBARGER
OCTOBER 26, 2011

Here's a pop quiz: What foods are best to eat before a high-stakes test? When is the best time to review the toughest material? A growing body of research on the best study techniques offers some answers.

With test-taking season upon us, Sue Shellenbarger on Lunch Break looks at the latest findings from the science of studying. For students approaching SAT/ACTs, midterms and finals, which memory tricks work best and does cramming help?

Chiefly, testing yourself repeatedly before an exam teaches the brain to retrieve and apply knowledge from memory. The method is more effective than re-reading a textbook, says Jeffrey Karpicke, an assistant professor of psychological sciences at Purdue University. If you are facing a test on the digestive system, he says, practice explaining how it works from start to finish, rather than studying a list of its parts.

In his junior year of high school in Cary, N.C., Keenan Harrell bought test-prep books and subjected himself to a "relentless and repetitive" series of nearly 30 practice SAT college-entrance exams. "I just took it over and over again, until it became almost aggravating," he says.
Practice paid off. Mr. Harrell, now 19, was accepted at University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, a college he's dreamed of attending since the third grade. He scored 1800 (out of 2400) on the SAT, up 50% from 1200 on the PSAT, a preliminary test during his sophomore year.

Taking pretests "felt like hard work," Mr. Harrell says, but seeing steady increases in his scores boosted his confidence. Practice tests also help with test-taking skills, such as pacing, says Paul Weeks, vice president of educational services for the ACT, which creates and administers college-entrance exams.

Sleep also plays a role in test performance, but in two unexpected ways. Review the toughest material right before going to bed the night before the test. That approach makes it easier to recall the material later, says Dan Taylor, director of a sleep-and-health-research lab at the University of North Texas in Denton. And don't wake up earlier than usual to study; this could interfere with the rapid-eye-movement sleep that aids memory, he says.

A common study habit—the all-nighter—is a bad idea. Although 60% of college students stay up all night at some point in school, the practice is linked to lower grades, says Pamela Thacher, an associate professor of psychology at St. Lawrence University in Canton, N.Y., based on a 2008 study of 120 students. It also impairs reasoning and memory for as long as four days.

Everybody knows you should eat breakfast the day of a big test. High-carb, high-fiber, slow-digesting foods like oatmeal are best, research shows. But what you eat a week in advance matters, too. When 16 college students were tested on attention and thinking speed, then fed a five-day high-fat, low-carb diet heavy on meat, eggs, cheese and cream and tested again, their performance declined. The students who ate a balanced diet that included
fruit and vegetables, however, held steady, says Cameron Holloway, a senior clinical researcher at the University of Oxford. The brain requires a constant supply of energy and "has only a limited backup battery," he says. While many teens insist they study better while listening to music or texting their friends, research shows the opposite: Information reviewed amid distractions is less likely to be recalled later, says Nicole Dudukovic, assistant professor of psychology at Trinity College, Hartford, Conn.

In her research, college students categorized and made judgments about pictures of more than 100 items. Then, they were tested on a new mix of pictures and asked to recall which ones they had already seen and how they had categorized them; half the time, they were also asked to listen and respond to a set of rhythmic sounds. When the students were tested later, they were more likely to remember correctly what they had studied without distractions.

"Students do have this belief that they can do it all and they aren't really being distracted" by music or sounds from a noisy cafe, Dr. Dudukovic says. But while the sounds may "make them feel more relaxed," she says, they won't help them ace the midterm.

Bryan Almanza says he did poorly on the PSAT as a high-school sophomore because he didn't know how to prepare. He got too little sleep the night before and ate only a bowl of cereal for breakfast. On the test, some hard physics questions made him nervous and distracted, says Mr. Almanza, 18, a senior at Campbell High in Smyrna, Ga. "I'm going to fail," he remembers thinking at the time. A test-prep program at his school taught him to get plenty of sleep, eat a good breakfast and pace himself on the test. By staying calm, optimistic and focused, he raised his score significantly on the SAT.

**Tips on Conquering Test-Day Jitters**

Even when students are fully prepared, anxiety can be another burden on test day.

An estimated 35% of students are so nervous before high-stakes tests that it impairs their performance, says Richard Driscoll, a Knoxville, Tenn., clinical psychologist who has researched test anxiety.
To help ease fears, Julie Hartline, lead counselor at Campbell High School in Smyrna, Ga., helped start a three-week program last year to teach juniors anxiety-reduction techniques.

One calming tactic that has been shown to improve scores is to teach yourself in advance to think differently about the test, Dr. Driscoll says. Envision yourself in a situation you find challenging and invigorating; a soccer player might imagine scoring a goal, or a mountain climber might envision herself topping a ridge, he says. Then switch your mental image to the testing room and imagine yourself feeling the same way. With practice, you'll be able to summon up more confidence on test day.

Also, reducing "novelty and stress on the day of the exam" can prevent choking under pressure, says Sian Beilock, a researcher and author on cognitive performance. If you are taking the exam in an unfamiliar place, visit the room in advance.

If you are still feeling anxious, set aside 10 minutes beforehand to write down your worries, says Dr. Beilock, an associate professor of psychology at the University of Chicago. She and a fellow researcher tested 106 ninth-graders for anxiety before their first high-pressure exam, then asked half of them to spend 10 minutes writing down their thoughts right before the test. The anxious kids who did the writing exercise performed as well on the test as the students who had been calm all along. But anxious students who didn't do the writing performed more poorly. Expressing one's worries in writing, Dr. Beilock says, unburdens the brain.

—Email Sue.Shellenbarger@wsj.com
Student Aid: Take Then Give
By REX NUTTING
OCTOBER 30, 2011

Quoted: "We want you in school. But we shouldn't saddle you with debt when you're starting off.
"So that's why since taking office, we've made it a priority to make college more affordable, reduce your student-loan debt."
—Barack Obama, University of Colorado-Denver, Oct. 26, 2011

Reality: The president has a short memory. Less than three months ago, he signed a deficit-reduction law that eliminated $22 billion in subsidies for graduate-student loans. That law could increase the cost of college by thousands of dollars for some students.

The government could have continued those subsidies by paying for them with revenue from undergraduate-student loans. The government makes money on student loans by borrowing money cheaply in the bond markets (the current rate on a two-year note is 0.3%) and then charging students an interest rate of 3.4%, a rate that is scheduled to double to 6.8% next year.

Even with some borrowers defaulting, the loan program's revenue exceeds expenses. Some of those "profits" do finance scholarships and education grants, but billions are being used for deficit reduction.

Despite the actions Mr. Obama took last week to reduce student-loan costs, students are still paying more than necessary for college loans.

—Rex Nutting, MarketWatch's Washington-based international commentary editor, checks the facts behind financial and economic pronouncements of executives, pundits and politicians.—Email: rnutting@marketwatch.com