THE DAILY CLIPS

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Medical students finish 26-mile Chicago Marathon for charity groups

BY TOM MARINE
The Daily Reflector

As Erin McClure crossed the finish line at the Chicago Marathon — more than five hours after she began the 26-mile run — she grabbed her necklace and began to cry.

The necklace belonged to her father, who died from a brain tumor in 2001.

McClure and Angela Coton, both of whom are Physician Assistant students at East Carolina University, completed the marathon last month in an effort to raise funds for two research organizations — the American Brain Tumor Association and the Organization for Autism Research.

They were able to raise more than $2,500 through donations and they received medals for completing the race.

"At the end, I just burst into tears," McClure said. "I was doing it for something more than just me, so I felt like I couldn't stop. His memory and what I had committed to, it kept me going."

A couple of big family events occurred this year, McClure said, including her mom becoming a grandmother for the first time and her sister's wedding.

See RUN, B3

COTON AND MCCLURE received medals and raised more than $2,500 for participating in the Bank of America Chicago Marathon.

RUN
Continued from B1

"I remember being so sad that my dad couldn't be here for these momentous occasions," she said. "I just wanted to bring his memory back, to make it feel like he was a part of it. That was important for me."

McClure said she hopes the money raised will lead to a cure that saves other people.

McClure and Coton ran for teams dedicated to fund raising for the organizations, consisting of runners with similar experiences to them.

Coton said she ran for her friend's three-year-old child, who has been diagnosed with autism.

After asking her if she thought it was a good idea, Coton said, her friend's father took the story to his church, to show the impact one person can have on others.

"It was nice knowing I was doing this for a friend," Coton said.

"I never had any intention of stopping because that was never an option. If I had walked away from that race, I would have been so mad at myself."

Coton said her heart goes out to all the mothers of children suffering from autism, a brain development disorder that affects a person's ability to socially interact and communicate.

Training for the race provided its own set of obstacles, as both McClure and Coton said the time commitment and lack of running paths in Greenville were the hardest parts of the experience.

McClure said she even developed some elaborate paths in her neighborhood that added up to an eight-mile loop.

"Taking on a marathon, it changes your lifestyle," said Coton, who first started running in March.

As for the actual fundraising, the two runners said they were humbled by how generous people were to their causes.

Coton said some of her professors, even those she didn't know very well, donated $100. She said the fundraising was fun compared to the running.

"I think 26.2 miles doesn't really sound like that much when you hear that number," Coton said.

"But when you actually start training for it and you start doing the long runs, then it dawns on you just how far that is."

"Crossing that finish line, it was like a permission slip to be able to say why nothing is impossible."

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ECU study: U.S. 17 proven profitable

Special to the Daily Reflector

Eastern North Carolina has made good on the state’s construction investment to U.S. Highway 17, according to a study conducted by East Carolina University. For every dollar the state invested in the roadway in the past two decades, eastern North Carolina has generated nearly $3 in direct output and earnings and more than 20,000 jobs.

Since 1989, the state’s Department of Transportation has given $2.43 billion to upgrade Highway 17, eastern North Carolina’s connector roadway from the Virginia border to Wilmington. In that time, the region has generated more than $5.5 billion in output produced by the construction sector and economic impact; and more than $1 billion in earnings, said Muluatu Wubneh, chair of ECU’s Urban and Regional Planning Department, who led the study.

“We were asked to find out, what did the state get back in return for its investment?” Wubneh said. “This study shows that the investment in infrastructure has a multiplier effect that continues to grow over time and generates additional benefits to the region.”

Former U.S. Comptroller to speak

ECU’s College of Business will host The Hon. David M. Walker, former U.S. Comptroller General, as its fourth speaker in the Cunanana Leadership Speaker Series. Walker’s presentation, “Keeping America Great,” is free and open to the public. The event will be held at the Hilton Greenville at 3:30 p.m. Wednesday.
Student wins scholarship in child welfare

The Daily Reflector

East Carolina University's School of Social Work has announced that Roxanne N. Staton has been awarded a grant to specialize in child welfare as a part of her work in the Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) program. She is the daughter of Elena and Curtis Staton. Roxanne received an associate degree in human science technology at Pitt Community College. She is one of nearly 200 award recipients statewide. She was selected based upon her scholarship, her demonstrated commitment to child welfare, and her goal to seek a career in public service.
Laurels — To Dawn Singleton and Michael Pollard, who were honored by Pitt County Schools as principal and assistant principal of the year, respectively, at a banquet this week. Singleton leads Wintergreen Primary and Elementary Schools and Pollard helps to lead Hope Middle School. Thanks to them, and all of the district’s talented administrators.

Laurels — To the Halloween festivities in downtown Greenville that always attract a massive throng of revelers. Law enforcement officials did not estimate the number expected this year, but good weather promised a healthy turnout of ghosts and goblins throughout the night. Appreciation goes to the officers charged with keeping the peace amid the massive celebration.

Darts — To the exertion and expense involved in protecting the safety of so many people on Halloween each year. Greenville has experimented with different ways to manage the crowd, and may have finally settled on a workable strategy. But hosting a party that large takes its toll on city coffers and on the men and women in uniform. Our thanks to them for their work last night and this morning.

Darts — To the decision by the Pitt County Board of Elections to not extend early voting hours today, meaning that One-Stop sites will close at 1 p.m. today. The board cited the expense involved in keeping the sites open and the declining number of people who vote close to 5 p.m. as evidence for shuttering the sites early. But with so many voters expected this year, perhaps erring on the side of access would have been a better choice.
Laurels — To the opening of the rerouted Dickinson Avenue, the roadway affected by a land swap between the city of Greenville and Jarvis Memorial United Methodist Church. Last year the City Council confirmed the exchange, which closed parts of Pitt and Sixth streets and necessitated the movement of Dickinson so it connects with Evans Street. Motorists should welcome the reopening.

Darts — To a Sunday night game for the East Carolina University football team, which is playing Central Florida that evening at 8:15 p.m. The Pirates may be fortunate to be featured on national television thanks to ESPN2, but it is quite an odd day to see the team in action. Let’s hope the schedule doesn’t have an adverse effect. ECU needs that win.

Laurels — To the close-enough-to-touch-it end of election season and the incessant campaign advertising in North Carolina this year. Things turned ugly this week in the races for governor and U.S. Senate, and most citizens will be quite content to see the election completed in order to have their airwaves free of mud-slinging once again.

Compiled by Brian Colligan, editorial page editor of The Daily Reflector. Contact him at 329-9507 or via e-mail at bcolligan@coxnc.com
Liberal profs, little influence

BY PATRICIA COHEN
THE NEW YORK TIMES

An article of faith among conservative critics of American universities has been that liberal professors politically indoctrinate their students.

This conviction not only fueled the culture wars but has also led state lawmakers to consider requiring colleges to submit reports to the government detailing their progress in ensuring "intellectual diversity," prompted universities to establish faculty positions devoted to conservatism and spurred the creation of a network of volunteer watchdogs to monitor "political correctness" on campuses.

But three sets of researchers recently concluded that professors have virtually no effect on the political views and ideology of their students.

If there has been a conspiracy among liberal faculty members to influence students, "they've done a pretty bad job," said A. Lee Fritschler, a professor of public policy at George Mason University and an author of the new book "Closed Minds? Politics and Ideology in American Universities."

The notion that students are induced to move leftward "is a fantasy," said Jeremy D. Mayer, another of the book's authors. When it comes to shaping a young person's political views, "it is really hard to change the mind of anyone over 15," said Mayer, who did extensive research on faculty and students.

"Parents and family are the most important influence," followed by the news media and peers, he said. "Professors are among the least influential."

A study of nearly 7,000 students at 38 institutions published in the current PS: Political Science and Politics, the journal of the American Political Science Association, as well as a second study that has been accepted by the journal to run in April 2009, both reach similar conclusions.

"There is no evidence that an instructor's views instigate political change among students," Matthew Woessner and April Kelly-Woessner, a husband-and-wife team of political scientists who have frequently conducted research on politics in higher education, write in that second study.

No one disputes that American academia is decidedly more liberal than the rest of the population, or that there is a detectable shift to the left among students during their college years. Still, both studies in the peer-reviewed PS, for example, found that changes in political ideology could not be attributed to proselytizing professors but rather to general trends among that age group.
Duke researcher's persistence pays off with new drug for gout

BY SARAH AVERY
STAFF WRITER

The line of work Dr. Mike Hershfield has pursued for most of his 32-year research career at Duke University is basically scientific social service.

He adopts orphans.

Specifically, he takes on so-called orphan diseases — afflictions so rare that the big pharmaceutical companies have no financial incentive to develop treatments.

Hershfield and his team at Duke are among more than a dozen research groups at Duke, UNC-Chapel Hill and private biotech companies in the Research Triangle Park area that have contributed to a wave of new treatments for people suffering from diseases such as immune disorders, rare cancers and cystic fibrosis. Each disease afflicts fewer than 200,000 Americans, but all the orphan diseases added together strike an estimated 25 million.

Under the federal Orphan Drug Act, passed 25 years ago, grants and exclusive marketing rights are extended to researchers who develop drugs for rare diseases. But the work of finding treatments is still often patched together with small grants, fragile collaborations with private companies — and a tiny group of patients desperate for a breakthrough.

For Hershfield, 15 years of work culminated last week in an announcement at a scientific meeting that the drug he helped develop for people with untreatable gout proved effective in a large trial. Perhaps as

SEE ORPHAN DRUGS, PAGE 13A
A new approach

A child at Duke had not been cured of the immune disease despite two bone-marrow transplants. Doctors wanted to test a new approach — replacing the missing enzyme by attaching it to a large molecule called a polymer and infusing it into the child’s bloodstream.

After treatment, Hershfield’s lab tested the enzyme levels in the child’s blood. He found that the polymer, which isn’t absorbed by the body, enabled the enzyme to circulate much longer and work more effectively. The child was saved, and the technology of fusing the so-called PEG polymer with biological therapies began to be applied in other long-lasting treatments.

By happenstance, Hershfield learned that the company that had produced the lifesaving drug for the immune disorder had developed another potential therapy with the polymer. It was for gout — a disease in which uric acid builds up in the joints, causing inflammation and pain. Hershfield knew firsthand how such a therapy would help his patients. He urged the company to fine-tune its approach so that a drug could be tested in people.

After six years, however, the company decided it wasn’t interested in pursuing the drug, so in 1993, Hershfield decided to press forward on his own. To qualify for a small grant from the National Institutes of Health, he needed to line up another company.

Finally, a startup company in California, Mountain View Pharmaceuticals, indicated it was interested. By 1996, Hershfield and his research partner at Duke, Susan Kelly, won more federal grant money and began testing the technology on mice that had been specifically bred to have gout.

“In mice, it was a fatal disease,” Hershfield said. “Uric acid would build up, and it was so insoluble it would crystalize in their kidneys and they’d die in a few weeks.”

When mice were treated with Hershfield’s experimental drug, they were cured. “They lived to be old mice,” he said.

Finding a drug maker

By 1998 — five years after he started — Hershfield still had not advanced to human trials. To do so, he needed to license the drug. He found Savient Pharmaceuticals of New Jersey, which paid Duke and Mountain View a licensing fee for their roles in developing the therapy. Savient also sought a designation for treatment-resistant gout as an orphan disease.

The designation was critical. Under the Orphan Drug Act of 1983, the Food and Drug Administration classifies a disease as an orphan if it afflicts fewer than 200,000 people in the United States. That is too few for big drug makers to justify the expense and time needed to develop therapies.

To build incentives, the legislation enabled the FDA to provide research grants, tax breaks and market protection to groups that develop treatments for orphan diseases.

“Originally the struggle was just to get somebody interested in these diseases and get companies involved in research and trials and bring drugs to market,” said Mary Dunkle, vice president of communications for the National Organization for Rare Disorders.

The group, based in Connecticut, is credited with galvanizing small groups of patients around the country to win support for the 1983 legislation.

Since the act was passed 25 years ago, nearly 300 orphan drugs have won FDA approval, and thousands of them are in development. Dunkle said the act has helped millions of people and given attention to diseases that had long been ignored.

Still, getting drugs to market is difficult, as the Duke team learned.

“There is not enough attention” to orphan diseases, said Dr. John Sundy, who led Duke’s clinical trials of the gout drug, called PEG-uricase. That’s especially evident, he said, in immune disorders and diseases that afflict the joints — such as gout.

Relieving gout pain

Millions of people suffer from gout. It’s among the oldest disorders described in literature, yet doctors still don’t know why uric acid crystals begin building up in some people’s joints. For more than 40 years, a drug called allopurinol has been the main source of relief.

“Everybody assumed gout was taken care of,” Hershfield said. But some people — perhaps 40,000 Americans and many of the people who showed up in Hershfield’s office in Durham — can’t tolerate the drug, or it loses effectiveness.

As Savient moved the drug to human trials, Hershfield took a back seat to avoid a conflict of interest, because he retains a share of royalty rights if the drug goes to market. Sundy began running the human tests.

A small, first-phase trial in 2002, in which the drug was injected, was halted when patients broke out in hives. Hershfield despaired that Savient’s interest would wane, but the group switched gears and had better results with intravenous infusions. Last year, Savient launched advanced phases of testing — enrolling more than 200 patients at multiple sites around the nation. At a conference of rheumatologists last week, Sundy reported that uric acid levels declined within hours for all patients treated with the drug and re-
mained low months later in about 40 percent of patients.

Janet Wheless, 63, of Nashville, N.C., was enlisted in the trial at Duke on a referral from her doctor at UNC Hospitals. She had suffered gout for 25 years but could take only a small dose of allopurinol because it harmed her already weakened kidneys.

Four years ago, she developed red-hot painful joints, swollen to the point of popping. Her index finger “looked like ET’s,” she said, and she couldn’t use her hands. “I was crippled,” she said. Her husband had to help her use the restroom, dress her, open doors.

Six weeks after beginning twice-monthly infusions of the therapy, she said, her gnarled and painful fingers began feeling better. Now they’re normal, and she has no pain at all. The turnaround came just in time.

In April, her husband of 34 years, Bobby, suffered a stroke, and she was able to tend to him in his last days, just as he had tended to her.

“I’m thankful I was able to do that,” Wheless said through tears. “This drug saved my life, and my sanity.”

That, for Hershfield, is worth 15 years of paternal persistence.

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UNC-CH No. 1 in value

ERIC FERRERI ON CAMPUS NOTES

File this under "no kidding."
UNC-Chapel Hill has once again been named the "best value in public higher education" by Kiplinger's Personal Finance magazine. No, the magazine isn't on the university payroll, but it has given Carolina top honors each year since it started the ranking in 1998.

The ranking will be part of the magazine's Nov. 11 issue. N.C. State ranks 18th on the list; UNC-Wilmington checks in at 25 and Appalachian State is 29.
He filters politics out of economics of aging

BY THOMAS GOLDSMITH
STAFF WRITER

The things that have long occupied Robert L. Clark's mind are on everyone's minds these days.

Clark, 59, an internationally recognized economist at N.C. State University, teaches and studies the economics of aging and pension and retirement policies. He's been on this case a long time, having written papers on the economics of aging since the 1970s.

"I've been very lucky," Clark said in his office at Nelson Hall at NCSU. "I started out my professional career in an area that has gotten more and more attention." A Mississippi native, Clark has taught at NCSU since 1975. He travels all over the United States — and to destinations including Australia and Japan — to confer with universities, businesses and governments. The questions Clark has explored are increasingly taking center stage in the debate about governments' ability to manage tax dollars.

How will the U.S. pay for the multitrillion-dollar obligations to people on Social Security and Medicare as the baby boomers age? Closer to home, how will North Carolina meet the $24 billion cost of health care for state retirees?

"The first thing is for the politicians to get together and think seriously about how we are going to solve these problems," Clark told a session at the N.C. Conference on Aging in Greenville on Tuesday.

"I would like to address Social Security and get it off the table, so we can move forward and address Medicare."

SEE TAR HEEL, PAGE 7B.
Social Security options

The N.C. Conference on Aging, organized by the UNC Institute on Aging, attracts a diverse group, from college students to social-work professionals and retirees. All appeared rapt as Clark laid out the choices ahead for individuals and for society. The one-time chairman of a national technical panel on Social Security's financial obligations said the program's future options are plain.

"You either raise taxes or you cut benefits," Clark said. "There are lots of ways to do both."

The comment is classic Clark, colleagues say, going behind heated talk to uncover the details of economic policies that closely affect people's lives.

"He is all substance and very little fluff," Padilla said. "He does everything with a lot of grace and a lot of timeliness."

Clark said he's troubled that both sides in this political season have seemed to play fast and loose with the facts in his areas of expertise.

"In my professional life, I try to be very apolitical," he said. "I talk to people on all sides of the issues. I'm much more likely to look at pros and cons."

Both presidential candidates, Clark noted, say they'll tackle the funding problems of federal entitlements by eliminating waste.

"They've been looking for that waste for a long time," he said dryly.

Top-quality answers

His audience at the conference asked questions about health care costs, long-term care insurance and retirement accounts, personal matters that can vary greatly based on actions of governments. Clark's talk, and his answers to questions, presented facts that often suggested courses of action.

"You have to give up consumption today in order to have something in the future," he said of retirement planning.

"We have to think about how we are going to manage our resources over the next 20 to 30 to 40 years. At what age am I going to retire and how much income will I need at that time?"

Recent declines in financial markets mean that many people with retirement money in a 401k and other accounts may move funds into less risky vehicles such as money market accounts or Treasury notes.

Clark didn't say whether that's good or bad, but noted that any such decision should take risk and return into account. And big decisions should come with real-world advice from a disinterested source.

"Who do people trust for information?" he said. "It's a friend, it's a relative, it's somebody you know, instead of seeking high-quality advice. Try to find the information that you need to make these choices."

There's a place for long-term insurance, he said in one answer. But a better option, he added, given possible changes in Medicare and private insurance, might be to have a considerable chunk of retirement money available for all varieties of care.

His audience was getting a rarity — free and valuable economic wisdom from a scholar whose knowledge on the economics of aging takes him from the halls of Congress to the boardrooms of Japan.

After the session, Victor W. Marshall, head of the UNC Institute on Aging, called Clark one of the three or four most highly regarded economists working in the field of aging.

"Wouldn't you like to have him as your economic adviser?" Marshall added.
Budget cuts beset colleges

Construction, jobs, classes on block

BY ERIC FERRERI AND JAY PRICE
STAFF WRITERS

Public universities plan to ax classes, leave jobs vacant and delay construction projects in the hopes of avoiding layoffs as the state struggles with a budget shortfall that could approach $2 billion.

UNC system leaders, following the direction of Gov. Mike Easley and UNC president Erskine Bowles, have told campuses to prepare for cuts of at least 4 percent this year, meaning they will receive 96 percent of the state funding they had anticipated. Students might not feel cuts right away, but campus leaders say course and staffing reductions will likely become evident by next year.

The reductions, some made already and some to come, are a response to the state's warning early in the fiscal year that cuts are coming, said Rob Nelson, the UNC system's vice president for finance.

"We got early notice and they're temporary cuts, and we have flexibility, so we're working hard to minimize the impact to the classroom," Nelson said.

"The challenge will be if the economy doesn't get better by July 1. Then we might have to work next year with the governor and the General Assembly to make permanent cuts. That will be a difficult challenge."

Some campuses and academic departments with plenty of unfilled positions or those bolstered by grants can absorb the pain with little effect. But at others, salaries account for 95 percent or more of the operating budget.

SEE UNC, PAGE 6A
Budgeting is complex

At UNC Chapel Hill’s Gillings School of Public Health, dean Barbara Rimer is cutting $500,000 from her school’s budget. She’s doing so the same semester that her school celebrated its largest private gift ever, $50 million from Quintiles Transnational Corp., founder Dennis Gillings and his wife, Joan.

That juxtaposition illustrates the complicated nature of budgeting at state universities.

The Gillings money will pay for new research projects, but plays no part in funding school operations. So as Rimer’s school is starting 10 new cutting-edge research initiatives, it is making big cuts to its travel budget, hedging on hires, and even ditching one of the two issues of the school’s magazine it publishes each year. Cutting just one issue, which goes to 20,000 alumni and friends of the school, saved $30,000.

“It’s a big deal,” Rimer said. “It was a difficult decision and not everyone is happy. It’s one way we communicate to the world about what we do.”

At UNC-Greensboro, the cuts are having at least one obvious effect — the delay of a long-awaited $47 million building for its School of Education. “I hope this will be the extent of the cuts, but it is very possible that we will be asked to absorb further cuts this year or next,” said Linda Brady, UNCG’s chancellor.

In the sociology department at UNC-CH, chairman Howard Aldrich will tap grant funding that faculty members have amassed over the past few years to absorb a cut of about $66,000. No jobs will be eliminated, no courses lost, he said.

If a one-year cut becomes a two- or three-year cut, his department will be in trouble, Aldrich warned.

“I can’t even contemplate what that would mean,” he said.

Greg Doucette, an N.C. State senior and the sole student on the UNC system’s Board of Governors, said students haven’t felt the impact of this year’s cuts, but could if tuition goes up or classes get canceled.

“I haven’t heard yet that, for example, students can’t graduate on time because they can’t get into the right class,” he said. “That would be the most tangible impact, and one we may face next year.”

The system adapts

Compared with other states, North Carolina is quite generous to its public universities. The state ranks sixth nationally in per capita appropriations to higher education, according to an annual study conducted at Illinois State University.

The UNC system manages a budget of more than $8 billion, educates more than 180,000 students and employs more than 10,000 faculty members.

Budget cuts at state universities are not unprecedented. In the state’s last fiscal crisis following the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, the UNC system grappled with several years of budget cuts, some temporary, others permanent.

State money accounts for about 34 percent of the UNC system’s total budget, and at some research-heavy campuses like UNC-CH, private funds account for an even larger proportion. So campus leaders are adept at finding other forms of revenue and saving money where they can.

One common strategy is to delay hiring.

“If someone leaves and it takes a month or two to fill it, that’s a sixth of the salary that is unspent,” said Nelson, the UNC system’s vice president for finance. “Sometimes you do have to hold positions open longer.”

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Economy Forces College Hopefuls To Lower Sights
Many Weigh Cheaper Options As Financial Woes Mount; From Pre-Med to Nursing

BY SHELLY BANJO

High-school senior Kelsey Stokes initially planned to apply to what she calls her dream school, Northwestern University, under an early-admissions program. She had worked hard to get good grades and write her application essays, but as the deadline neared this fall, another obstacle presented itself: How her family would pay for college.

Kelsey, of Beecher, Ill., says her parents, increasingly nervous about the weakening economy, often reminded her to consider the $52,000-a-year in tuition and living expenses at Northwestern. So Kelsey decided not to seek early admission, which would have obliged her to attend the private college. She still hopes to get in to Northwestern, but she's added to her list some lower-cost colleges, including Roosevelt University and Loyola University in Chicago. "I didn't want to commit my family to something they couldn't follow through with financially," she says.

While many parents and students have long emphasized getting into a top school over financial considerations, families in recent months have seen the value of their homes decline, their investments dramatically shrink and sometimes monthly incomes lost due to layoffs. Other students who in the past would have taken on thousands of dollars in debt, are being stymied as lenders tighten access to loans amid the global credit crunch.

Many college-age kids are setting their sights on less prestigious and lower-cost colleges or adding "financial-safety" schools to their lists as a backup. Some students are considering spending their first two years at a community college, while others are focusing on schools closer to home to save on fuel and housing costs. Students stuck on going to their top-choice colleges are trying to help out by getting after-school jobs and increasingly applying for scholarships.

Kate Malboeuf, a senior at Nazareth Academy High School in Philadelphia, says she long planned to study pre-med at a school like Boston College, a private university that costs more than $50,000 in tuition and living expenses. Now, Kate says she is "trying to be more practical." She has given up the idea of pre-med, which would require years of education, and instead has decided to apply to nurs.

Please turn to page D5
College Hopefuls Lower Sights

Continued from page D1

ing programs at colleges closer to home, such as Villanova University and Pennsylvania State University. Kate says the college she ends up attending will most likely "depend on who is going to give me the most merit or schol- arship money."

Lowered Aspirations

MeritAid.com, a scholarship Web site, found in a survey this month that 57% of prospective college students say they are "now considering a less presti- gious college due to affordability." The survey, of 2,500 high- school seniors, also showed that 16% of students say they are "now putting their college searches on hold because they don't think their families will be able to pay for college."

Families are saying, "We can afford to apply now, but who knows what will happen" in the spring when it is time to pay tuition," says Tom Bottorf, co- founder of Get College Funding Inc., a college-counseling firm.

To be sure, the number of college applications received so far this year has held steady, or in- creased, even at prestigious Ivy League schools like Harvard University and Princeton University. For one thing, 2009 is ex- pected to be the largest-ever class of high-school graduates. And even as more students scale back their college aspirations, top-notch private schools are seeking new ways to increase affor- dability.

Colleges See Impact

We are seeing a "big impact of the economic downturn on our current students," says Janet Rapelye, Princeton's dean of admissions. The college expects to spend an additional $3 million to $4 million this year "to meet the increased need of current-aid families who have experi- enced job losses, erosion of sav- ings and lost incomes," she says.

Some private colleges have taken other measures to attract new students put off by the high costs. Cornell University, for ex- ample, recently replaced student loans with grants, which don't have to be repaid. And Mass-achusetts Institute of Technolo- gy and Dartmouth College don't charge tuition for families earning less than $75,000 a year.

College counselors say stu- dents shouldn't rule out a pri- vate college without first check- ing with the institution about fi- nancial-aid options. While the sticker price might be high, a fa- vorable aid package could make some private colleges cost-com- petitive with a public institu- tion. The average cost of tuition and fees at public four-year col- leges this year is $6,585 for in- state students and $17,452 for out-of-state students, the Col- lege Board estimates. By con- trast, private four-year institu- tions average $22,143 in tuition and fees.

Cheapest Option

The cheapest option is com- munity colleges, where tuition and fees average $2,402 this year. Enrollments at these two- year colleges have jumped as much as 20% at some schools, ac- cording to the American Associa- tion of Community Colleges.

University in Bloomington were up 32% from last year. The col- lege's total applications so far, at 18,000, grew 22%. University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill has seen a 12% increase, to 15,000, in people who have started online applications. "We've seen phenom- enal numbers of students coming to talk to us," says Stephen Farmer, director of under- graduate admissions. "We think public colleges stand to gain in this tough economic mar- ket," he says.

Jennifer Fondiller, dean of ad- missions at Barnard College, which charges $37,500 for tuition and fees, says the econo- my's effect on college applicants was crystalized for her last week when a student started cry- ing during a high-school visit. "She was gushing about how much she loved Barnard, but then tears welled up in her eyes." She said that because of "recent changes in her family's finances, she wasn't sure if she could afford to attend," Ms. Fondiller says.

Working Two Jobs

Kelsey Stokes is still hoping she'll be able to attend North- western next year. To help cover some college costs, she has started working two after-school jobs, as a middle-school tutor and a secretary at a local truck- ing business, and is putting all her earnings in a college-savings account. She also has applied for 10 merit scholarships. If North- western accepts her, she says, she plans to apply for student loans and take a job on-campus.

"I just keep reminding myself when I'm staying up late work- ing on scholarships that hope- fully I'll get to go to my dream school," she says.
Increases In Tuition At Colleges Slow, for Now

BY ROBERT TOMSHO

A decade of torrential increases in college tuition have finally abated, according to numbers released by the New York-based College Board.

But the easing will almost certainly be short-lived, observers warned. Big new increases are forecast—indeed, some have already been announced—as schools grapple with declining revenue and other damage wrought by the financial crisis.

In its annual report on college costs, the College Board said average tuition and fees at four-year public universities were $6,585 for the 2008-2009 academic year, up 6.4% from the previous year. Private schools notched a 5.9% increase to $25,143. After adjusting for an inflation rate of 5.6%, the real rate of increase amounted to 0.7% and 0.3%, respectively.

By comparison, over the past decade, tuition and fees at public schools rose by 4.2% a year after inflation, while increases at private colleges averaged 2.4%.

Adding room, board and other expenses, the total average cost of attending a four-year public school was $18,326; at private institutions, it was $37,390. Average tuition at two-year community colleges rose 4.7% to $2,402—meaning a decline in real terms.

The relatively small tuition increases for 2008-2009 may be welcome news to parents. But schools are already feeling new pressures to raise tuition.

"The situation has changed dramatically in the last six weeks," said Molly Corbett Broad, president of the American Council on Education, a college trade group. She added that the College Board's report "may prove only to be a snapshot of a time in history that we might soon be referring to as the 'good old days.'"

In a separate report last week, the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, a nonpartisan Washington-based think tank, said at least 21 states have cut their budgets for higher education since July 1, meaning the schools may have to boost tuition to fill funding gaps.

Last month, Rhode Island said students at three state colleges will face midyear tuition increases—a rarity in higher education—of up to 6.5% for the spring semester.

Mike Griffith, a school finance analyst for the Denver-based Education Commission of the States, said other states are likely to follow suit. "I think you are going to see the waves coming after the election," he said.

"It won't surprise me at all if some of the major public universities have double-digit increases" next year, said Donald Heller, an education professor at Pennsylvania State University.
EC studied for possible dental clinic

East Carolina cites dental care shortage

By REGGIE PONDER  
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Responding to the shortage of dental care in rural areas of North Carolina, East Carolina University's School of Dentistry is eyeing a number of communities for satellite dental clinics, including Elizabeth City.

ECU officials cautioned that the plan is still in its infancy stages, and if Elizabeth City is chosen, it could be six years before the dental clinic opens.

Dr. Gregory Chadwick, interim dean of ECU's dentistry school, said the school is interested in starting 8 to 10 "service learning centers," or small clinics, to provide hands-on learning for senior dental students while extending dental service in rural, underserved areas of the state.

"We're still fairly early in the planning process," Chadwick said.

The first phase is expected to include three learning centers — most likely two in eastern North Carolina and one in the state's extreme western region.

The school is slated to open its Greenville campus in 2011 and won't have senior dental students until 2014, so it could be as late as 2014 before the clinics begin operating.

Pasquotank County Manager Randy Keaton announced the dental school's plans in a recent memo to county commissioners.

"I met with Jerry Parks (director of Albemarle Regional Health Services) and representatives from Cansler Fuquay Solutions who have been hired to work with the ECU School of Dentistry to locate a Service Learning Center in the eastern part of the state," Keaton wrote.

"The Learning Center will be a training ground for new dentists and a fully functioning dental practice that will specialize in offering dental care to residents in the community that do not have access to regular dental care."

Keaton told the commissioners the consultants recently toured the vacant Elizabeth City Middle School building and showed some interest in the facility.

Gary Fuquay, vice-president of Cansler Fuquay Solutions, said his firm conducted an analysis of the need for dental services around the state, using a basic question: "Where do we currently have the dental shortage?" The study also projects dentistry needs through 2030.

Camden, Hertford, Pasquotank, Gates and a number of other counties in the northeastern part of the state have a need for additional dentists, Fuquay said.

But Fuquay said the learning center sites have not been selected.

"We've not even developed a recommendation to give to ECU yet," Fuquay said, adding the university would make the actual decision.
“It’s no secret — there’s a real need in those counties,” Fuquay said. “I don’t think it’s any great secret to anyone. But have we yet decided that a clinic is going in Pasquotank County? No sir, we haven’t. We’re just looking at all the possibilities.”

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