THE DAILY CLIPS

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252-328-6481
East Carolina University will welcome prospective students and families at its fall open house Saturday.
Students planning to attend ECU next fall can get to know the university and the campus as they prepare for their freshman year.

“We love seeing the excitement in our prospective students' faces the first time they come to campus,” Jenny Roberts, assistant director of admissions, said. “I think I can speak on behalf of all of the faculty, staff and current students that volunteer for that day to welcome our prospects and say that we look forward to seeing everyone on Saturday.”

Anywhere from 2,500 to 3,000 people usually attend the event, Roberts said. “Most of the students have either applied, are just getting ready to submit an application or have already been admitted,” she said.

An opening session will kick off the day at 9 a.m. in Wright Auditorium. Speakers include Chancellor Steve Ballard, Provost Marilyn Sheerer and Student Government Association President Tremayne Smith.

Following the opening session, walking and bus tours of campus will run through noon. A fair will be held between 9:30 a.m. and noon in the Student Recreation Center that will feature all academic departments, majors and programs as well as numerous student affairs departments.

Special sessions on admissions information and deciding a major will be held in the Science and Technology Building at 9, 10 and 11 a.m. A panel of ECU students will be available to discuss their experiences and answer questions in sessions at 11 a.m. and noon in the Hendrix Theatre at the Mendenhall Student Center. Also at 11 is a financial aid workshop in Wright Auditorium.

Both dining halls will be open for lunch. Residence halls will be open for viewing from noon to 2 p.m., and individual department buildings will be open for tours from 1-3 p.m. Participating departments can be found on the open house schedule on ECU's website.

“Our policy has always been to offer numerous sessions and events over the course of the day as we can,” Roberts said. “We make it relatively easy for our guests to pick and choose what they really want to get out of their visit.”
Students are asked to register online, but walk-ins are welcome. There is no cost to attend. Free parking is available throughout campus as well as at Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium's Gold Lot.

For more information, call the admissions office at 328-6640 or visit http://www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/admissions/open-house-shedule.cfm.

Contact Jackie Drake at jdrake@reflector.com or (252) 329-9567
Playhouse stages Scottish tale 'Brigadoon'

By Kelley Kirk
The Daily Reflector
Friday, November 12, 2010

The curtain will rise and the Scottish Highland mist will clear at McGinnis Theater when the ECU/Loessin Playhouse presents “Brigadoon,” a musical by Alan Jay Lerner and Frederick Loewe and original dances created by Agnes de Mille, at 8 p.m. Thursday through Nov. 23, except Nov. 21 when the show will be at 2 p.m. The ECU/Loessin Playhouse is produced by the School of Theatre and Dance, College of Fine Arts and Communication at East Carolina University.

“Brigadoon” is a fantasy about a Scottish town that disappears into the Highland mist. Themes of simplicity, true love and goodness run throughout the musical.

New Yorkers Tommy Albright and Jeff Douglas are lost in the Scottish Highlands when the curtain rises on a misty glen in Scotland. As the two exhausted men reflect on what they have forsaken in the States for their present predicament, a lift in the Highland veil reveals to them the awakening village of Brigadoon, a village which comes into being for only one day in each century.

If you've seen a production of “Brigadoon” before, you may be in for a surprise with the ECU show.

“We took a very daring approach to this show. All the things that are suggested in the script, we've made actual,” said director John Shearin. “I doubt that they would have seen this visual approach to this show.”

Shearin said that the decision of make all of the action visible to the audience — instead of hiding it behind screens — makes it much more interesting. But it also makes the staging more difficult, especially with a cast of 43 people.
“It's written for these big, lush choral sounds,” Shearin said. The bridge was designed to act as a central metaphor.

“It's a large edifice that's completely mobile,” Shearin said. The bridge's location on stage sets the location within the story.

And no Scottish musical would be complete without the bagpipes. Steve Hawley joins the cast on stage. Hawley is the City of Greenville's public information officer.

“I think it would be kind of disappointing if you didn't have a piper in the show. It's critical to the funeral scene,” Shearin said.

Show tunes include “Almost Like Being in Love,” “The Heather on the Hill,” “There But for You Go I,” “Come to Me,” “Bend to Me,” “I'll Go Home with Bonnie Jean” and “Waitin' for My Dearie.”


Contact Kelley Kirk at kkirk@reflector.com or (252) 329-9596.
A college fair centered around historically black institutions will offer Pitt County students a glimpse at the opportunities available through these unique schools, organizer Patti Smith said Thursday.

The third annual event is scheduled to run Saturday from 9 a.m. to noon at Cornerstone Missionary Baptist Church's Family Life Center on Allen Road. Ten schools are expected to send admission representatives: Barber Scotia College, Elizabeth City State University, Fayetteville State University, Livingstone College, N.C. Agricultural and Technical State University, N.C. Central University, Shaw University, St. Augustine College, St. Paul's College, and Winston-Salem State University.

“I had many other opportunities, but my parents and I felt I needed a small, nurturing environment,” Smith said of her decision to attend Winston-Salem State after high school. “I wasn't just a number. People remember me.”

Smith added that because of their size, historically black colleges are often overlooked at larger fairs. Only one of them is in eastern North Carolina, she said, so many students in this area are simply unaware so many exist.

This year's fair also will feature an alumni panel. Smith said it is important to show students that graduates from historically black colleges and universities go on to build impressive careers, whether as an emergency room doctor or a police chief.

When Smith was in school in the 1970s, she said, there were only two majors available to African-American females — teaching and nursing. That's not the case today. She said it's important to give the colleges and universities a chance to define themselves as places offering numerous majors and opportunities, like the option to study abroad.

The fair is open to all students regardless of race or ethnicity. Scholarship information also will be available.

Contact Kathryn Kennedy at kkennedy@reflector.com or (252) 329-9566.
Doucette was formerly a student at NCSU. ‘I enjoyed computer science, but I wasn't very good at it,’ he said.

New chancellor would make changing majors easier at NCSU

By Eric Ferreri, staff writer
RALEIGH–By the time Greg Doucette realized he was lousy at studying computer science at N.C. State University, it was too late.

Too late to change his major. Too late to transfer. Too late to do anything except slog through with a barely passable grade point average. He managed by propping up that GPA with stellar grades in economics and political science courses - two disciplines he would have preferred majoring in if switching weren't so difficult.

NCSU's new chancellor, Randy Woodson, knows that Doucette's travails are not unusual at the university. He wants to make it easier for students to change majors. The issue will be tackled by a task force looking for ways to improve student success.

Woodson hopes to reduce the number of students who leave NCSU not because of bad grades but because changing majors is so difficult.

NCSU incoming freshmen apply directly into their chosen fields. It's a way to introduce students to major-specific courses early, assuring they have enough time to tackle all the technical courses needed for a degree in engineering, design, textiles and the like.
But if students don't choose the right major the first time, they may be stuck in a discipline they don't like or transfer out of the university in search of a new path.

Many of NCSU's academic disciplines require targeted, specific coursework that doesn't translate to other areas. Students who change course essentially have to start over building credits for their new majors, thus lengthening their stay in college.

NCSU's six-year graduation rate of 73 percent could be far better, Woodson said, if changing majors was easier.

From fall 2008 to fall 2009, 1,109 students left NCSU while in good academic standing, according to university data. Many of those left, Woodson said, because they were in the wrong major and couldn't transfer enough credits to stay on track to graduate on time.

"We've got really talented students, and they're not being successful enough," Woodson said. "We're losing too many students because they can't find a home."

Other universities
This problem isn't unique to NCSU. Across the United States, land-grant universities with strong programs in engineering, natural resources, design and other technical disciplines require a similar path. In contrast, a university with an arts-and-sciences base, such as UNC-Chapel Hill, enrolls students first to an undergraduate college before making them decide on a major.

In admitting students directly to their chosen field, universities like NCSU create a more efficient academic experience for students - as long as they don't change their minds, said David Shulenburger, vice president for academic affairs with the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities.

To ease the transition for the many students who do want to change, many land-grant universities are now adopting principles of a "common core" curriculum. Used more often by universities with an arts and sciences base, a common core is essentially a standard set of courses in English, writing, and mathematics that a student would take in the first two years. These courses are recognized widely, making it easier for a student to change majors within a university or transfer to another.

It may not be an easy fix for NCSU, where students start major-specific coursework during their first year. But at a time when students don't want to pay for extra schooling, many universities are looking for ways to tweak their requirements, said Shulenburger, formerly the longtime provost at the University of Kansas.

"Every university now understands higher graduation rates and shorter time to degree are important," he said. "It's worth having the faculty sit down and wrestle with the question of giving students some flexibility in the freshman and sophomore years."

Advising's importance
If you're a freshman studying animal science at NCSU, you'll take general courses in math and writing as well as classes specific to that degree. The university tries to minimize the number of courses that don't transfer, said Gerry Luginbuhl, assistant director for academic programs within NCSU's College of Agricultural and Life Sciences. But students also must get good advice both when choosing a major and when they arrive on campus.

"Advising is so important," Luginbuhl said. "Students, at 18, some really don't know what they want to do."

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One student's story
Greg Doucette, as a freshman at N.C. State University, signed on as a computer science major because he had some tech savvy and knew the field paid well. But he hit a wall in a discrete mathematics course, which he failed. By then, it was too late to transfer into economics or political science because, either way, he'd have to take an extra year of courses. Instead, Doucette took just enough of those courses for a minor in each. His GPA in computer science: 2.1. His GPA in political science: 3.0. His GPA in economics: 3.6. He's now a law student at N.C. Central University.

"I enjoyed computer science, but I wasn't very good at it," said Doucette, who became a student leader and eventually served as the sole student member of the UNC system's Board of Governors. "I love economics and political science, but the tradeoff wasn't worth it. A lot of the credits I had would not translate to anything useful."

Staff writer Eric Ferreri
Ex-tutor paid for players' travel

By Ken Tysiac and J. Andrew Curliss, Staff Writers

The former tutor associated with the NCAA's investigation into academic misconduct in the UNC-Chapel Hill football program also improperly paid for more than $2,000 worth of travel and transportation for Tar Heel players this year, according to a university letter cutting ties with her.

Jennifer L. Wiley, the former tutor, also provided impermissible academic assistance to some of the school's student-athletes in 2009 and 2010, according to the disassociation letter, which the school released to the media Thursday. The letter says that as a result of Wiley's actions, the eligibility of several athletes has been "adversely affected."

In a statement released Thursday night by Wiley's attorney, Joseph B. Cheshire V, Wiley acknowledged her role in the investigation of the UNC football program.

"She gave several years of her life trying to uplift, educate and enhance the lives of student-athletes that she worked with and befriended," Cheshire said in the statement. "All of these young men were of the highest caliber. She did not intend for her work to 'provide impermissible academic assistance' and to the extent it did, she is deeply saddened, particularly as it has affected the young men she cared so much about."

In addition, UNC said Thursday that at least three former UNC football players and two other individuals provided more than $5,600 in improper benefits to North Carolina players.

In the investigation into improper benefits and academic misconduct, 14 UNC football players have been withheld from at least one game this season. Six - including standouts Robert Quinn, Marvin Austin, Greg Little and Charles Brown - have not played a single snap and are out for the season. Six have returned to the field, but the status of two - fullback Devon Ramsay and defensive lineman Michael McAdoo - remains uncertain.
Wiley's connections to the UNC football program extended beyond tutoring players. She also tutored the son of head football coach Butch Davis from December 2008 to May of this year. In an e-mail message last week, Davis acknowledged that "after we hired her as a tutor and developed trust in her, there were occasions before [Davis' son] had his driver's license when she would drive him when we needed help."

Since the investigation began, UNC officials have acknowledged it was not a good idea for a tutor/mentor to be working for both the school and a coach. In July 2009, UNC's academic support program chose not to renew her contract when it discovered she had become too close to certain UNC football players.

Asked in October whether it was appropriate for Davis to use a tutor who also worked with his players, chancellor Holden Thorp said, "No." Wiley is a kindergarten teacher in Durham. She was hired to teach at the school in August 2009.

Efforts to reach Durham schools officials were unsuccessful Thursday, but the school board's chairwoman has previously said she saw no reason to be concerned about allegations of academic misconduct involving a teacher because it occurred elsewhere.

**Ex-tutor not cooperating**

UNC officials said on Thursday that Wiley has declined requests for interview by the NCAA and UNC, repeating earlier statements that the tutor involved has not cooperated in the investigation.

UNC officials would not provide any other details about what Wiley did, including what type of travel they believe Wiley provided or to whom. In his statement, Cheshire said that Wiley allowed one individual to use her credit card when the use of a credit card was required.

"As a bank deposit would show, she was immediately repaid for the cost applied to her card. Ms. Wiley never knew this type of transaction was impermissible," Cheshire said.

Wiley is paid $34,233.75 a year, according to the Durham Public Schools system.
The release of the disassociation letter, which was dated Nov. 5 and signed by Athletic Director Dick Baddour, marked the first time the university had mentioned Wiley by name, although she had previously been identified in media reports.

"Disassociation" from the program means that the school will not accept any assistance from Wiley or permit prospective or enrolled athletes to have contact with her. She is banned from campus athletic facilities, unless she is attending events to which she has purchased tickets available to the general public.

Wiley, formerly of Matthews, is the third person whose disassociation letter from UNC has been released to the media in connection with the investigation. UNC also has sent disassociation letters to former UNC football player Chris Hawkins, who's been labeled an agent by the NCAA, and Miami jeweler A.J. Machado, who provided diamond jewelry that, according to the university, led to a UNC football player's banishment from college sports.

UNC also released a document providing additional details of impermissible benefits in the investigation. Player reinstatement requests sent by the university to the NCAA indicate that impermissible gifts, including cash, jewelry and travel and entertainment expenses, were provided to football players by:
• Former UNC player Hakeem Nicks ($3,300). Nicks' agent, Peter Schaffer, said late Thursday he was unaware his client was identified in the probe as providing impermissible benefits, and said he couldn't comment immediately. Nicks is a wide receiver for the New York Giants.
• Former UNC player Omar Brown ($1,865).
• Former UNC player Mahlon Carey ($140).
• San Francisco 49ers tight end Vernon Davis ($20).
• A person from Miami whose full name is not known to the university ($323).

The amount of those benefits includes the estimated value of lodging provided by those former players in their home, UNC reported. The UNC players repaid some of it before they or their hosts knew that the benefits violated NCAA rules, according to UNC.
The school reported that there is no evidence that links former Tar Heel players Nicks, Brown and Carey to inappropriate relationships with agents, prospective agents or "runners" for agents.

UNC had previously released documentation showing that impermissible benefits have been provided to players by Hawkins, Machado, Rosenhaus Sports agency employee Michael Katz, and Todd Stewart, who is identified as a prospective agent.

In releasing the information related to impermissible benefits Thursday, UNC Chancellor Holden Thorp acknowledged the interest that media and the public have in the investigation.

UNC's refusal to release certain information led to a lawsuit filed Oct. 28 in Orange County Superior Court by The News & Observer, The Charlotte Observer and other media companies seeking public records the school has claimed are protected. UNC has stated that a federal student privacy law prohibits the release of certain information.

The information the media are seeking includes:
• Phone numbers from bills of telephones issued to and used by Baddour, coach Butch Davis, and former associate head coach John Blake.
• Names, employment dates and salaries of all individuals employed as tutors and/or mentors for UNC athletes since January 2007, including any documents mentioning Wiley.
• Any parking tickets issued by UNC to 11 players.

The university's release Thursday did not include any of the parking violations but said the university has reviewed parking tickets for the players and determined that each car receiving a ticket was registered either to the student, a parent or a fellow student.

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3 will be honored for saving NCSU student's life

RALEIGH–Three N.C. State University students who used CPR to save a fellow student's life are being honored.

The N.C. State Police Department will hold a ceremony this afternoon in the Talley Student Center at the university's Raleigh campus.

Robert Olson, Matthew Cross and Jonathan Smetana will be recognized for their quick thinking Sept. 2 when they saw a jogger collapse on campus.

They noticed the jogger wasn't breathing and administered CPR until emergency medical workers arrived. The jogger, also an N.C. State student, survived.

Five other students will also be recognized at the ceremony for pitching in at the scene of the jogger's collapse.
Stolen: UNC football helmets, gear
CHAPEL HILL UNC-Chapel Hill police want to know who stole two football helmets and other equipment from Kenan Stadium.

The Department of Public Safety is seeking help to identify suspects in a break-in Oct. 20 at the Kenan Football Center, part of the stadium complex.

The equipment is valued at hundreds of dollars, but losing it didn't have any direct impact on football operations, said campus police spokesman Randy Young.

"They didn't make off with several duffels of items," said Young. "It was mostly what they could carry out."

Still, the university would like the public's help in recovering the equipment.

"Somebody may actually know these people," Young said. "A high-end football helmet would typically stand out a bit on somebody's mantel."

Anyone who has information about the break-in or can identify either suspect is urged to contact Crime Stoppers at 942-7515 or call UNC Police Detective Matt Dodson at 962-8176. Callers can remain anonymous.
UNC Wilmington is demolishing the College Road Cinemas building at 632 S. College Road, across from the campus, to make way for about 160 more parking spaces.

More parking space is slated to be constructed by next semester to alleviate congested parking lots at the University of North Carolina Wilmington.

The university is demolishing the College Road Cinemas building at 632 S. College Road, across from the campus, to make way for about 160 more parking spaces.

The university started using the adjacent lot in 2003, which added about 300 parking spaces to the campus, but parking is in high demand, Charlie Maimone, vice chancellor for business affairs, said in an e-mail.

“Parking remains a high priority, given the continued loss of parking space on the main campus,” he said.

The university estimates it has lost about 500 spaces to the construction of the nursing and psychology buildings, spokeswoman Dana Fischetti said in an e-mail. The university will lose another 500 spaces with the construction of the health and human services building.
Although a parking deck with 1,000 spaces has been built, Maimone said the demand for parking has continued to increase with more students enrolling at UNCW.

“The university continues to grow in population, even if just by a couple hundred students every year,” he said. “And we continue to have a large number of commuter students.”

Demolition of the building started in early October and crews will begin to wrap up in early December. The total length of the project will be about 150 days, which is longer than expected, Maimone said.

“The discovery of asbestos in the building basically doubled the length of the project,” he said.

The building and parking lot were purchased for $1.8 million, and the projected cost of the demolition and pavement for parking will be about $175,000, Maimone said. Asbestos removal accounted for about $56,000 of that cost.

Maimone said the cost of the project has been kept low and that the university will continue to look to purchase land or structures with existing parking lots to create more parking.

“It makes good sense economically – but also environmentally – so that we're not turning more land into parking lots,” he said.
Early decision increases at Penn, Northwestern, Duke

By Daniel de Vise
Early Decision applications are rising at some of the most selective universities that offer the program, which requires students to enroll if admitted.

Anecdotal reports from Northwestern, Penn and Duke suggest the early, binding admission decision is more popular than ever at first-tier schools that offer ED as a choice. An important caveat: several top universities abandoned Early Decision with great fanfare a few years ago, amid debate on whether the program helped or hindered students.

Early Decision is widely regarded as a good choice for a student who is dead-set on a particular university, especially if the school has a financial aid program based entirely on need. Schools that offer merit aid might offer less aid to a student who has promised to attend.

ED can improve a student's chances for admission. Early Decision students are attractive to colleges because they boost the "yield" of admitted students who choose to attend, and because they can fill a big part of the freshman class months ahead of the regular admission cycle.

The downsides: Students who apply early cannot change their mind. And they potentially lose out on an admissions bidding war among several colleges in the regular admissions cycle.

Penn's ED applicant pool has increased 17 percent to 4,500, the largest number of applications the university has ever received by the Nov. 1 deadline. Penn has a higher admission rate under Early Decision and an aid policy that pledges to meet full need without loans.

At Northwestern, ED apps are up more than 25 percent to at least 2,100.

Duke's ED applications are up 14 percent to 2,282.

"We are interested in students who are willing to make that level of commitment and we respond to it," said Christoph Guttentag, Duke's undergraduate admissions dean, in a statement.

Recent data from the National Association for College Admission Counseling show that 65 percent of colleges with ED accepted more students through the program in 2009 than in the prior year, compared with 43 percent in 2008 and 36 percent in 2007.
Kiyan Rajabi, 19, a pharmacology major at University of California, Santa Barbara, was excited about his study-abroad program in Spain this fall. His plans were foiled, however, when earlier this year he realized that a basic biochemistry course he needed as a prerequisite for higher-level science classes was offered only in the fall. If Rajabi didn’t stay put in Santa Barbara, he was likely looking at an extra year of college. Barcelona and the Sagrada Familia Church would have to wait—for a while. Rajabi’s summer session is booked, too. “Summer classes have become the norm for the majority of students seeking to graduate in the traditional four years,” he says.

For many college students today, Rajabi’s predicament is commonplace. College is pretty much sold as a four-year stint. But take a look at the statistics and you’ll find it’s far from that simple. On average, both public and private schools are graduating just 37 percent of their full-time students within four years, according to a 2008 analysis by the American Enterprise Institute, a D.C.-based public-policy think tank. That’s about a 3 percent slowdown from the 1990s, and a 10 percent drop from the 1960s, says the Higher Education Research Institute at the University of California, Los Angeles. But experts expect these dismal numbers to sink even further. With the economy in the dumps, school budgets being slashed, and more students than ever attending college, getting an undergraduate degree in four fast years could one day become as unlikely as finishing in three is now. “In the short run, the fiscal pressures on colleges and universities, particularly in the public sector, are likely to lead to a decrease in four-year graduation rates,” says Andrew Kelly, American Enterprise Institute research fellow in education policy.

When colleges and universities report their graduation rates to the federal government, they are more likely to use a six-year benchmark, not four, because it’s more realistic. But students tend not to think about timing when they sign up for college orientation.

“Right now, most American students plan their futures and save money for college assuming that a bachelor’s degree is a four-year commitment,” says José Cruz, vice president of the Education Trust, a national student-advocacy group. “But that simply isn’t the reality on most college campuses.” What’s more, that falling four-year grad rate may eventually shift the overall timeline approach to college down the road. “As more and more students fail to finish in four years, it is becoming acceptable to work ‘toward’ a degree,” says education consultant Donald Asher, “rather than to have a plan and follow that plan to that finish line.”
For most students, extending college by an extra year or two is probably not a worthwhile investment. “Students take on greater financial responsibilities the longer they stay in school,” says James Boyle, president of College Parents of America, “because not only do they end up paying more money to graduate, they also have a longer period of lost or lesser income potential.”

Sure, some young people may unwillingly—or willingly—drag their feet. Common issues that slow students down include changing majors, poor course planning, transferring schools, and dropping courses. But others who have planned their course load carefully still may not be able to avoid a growing number of factors getting in the way of a four-year finish. For one, campus life is a lot more crowded these days. College enrollment has risen 25 percent since 2000, according to the National Center for Education Statistics. Add in growing university budget cuts, and for most students with limited resources graduating in four years becomes a lot harder to achieve. “Schools are changing their requirements and class offerings constantly, and these forces are all working against the student who wants to get in and out in four years,” says Asher. Many colleges have eliminated classes and instructors to save money, but graduation credit requirements haven’t changed, leaving more students elbowing their way into fewer classrooms—if they’re lucky enough to get in at all.

Many state schools, like those in the University of California system, have undergone massive budget cuts. About $637 million from California’s total higher-education budget was slashed, which is 20 percent of its 2009–10 fiscal-year financing. Moreover, state funding to colleges and universities fell an average of 4 percent from 2008 to 2009, leaving only $6,928 per student, according to a survey by the National Conference of State Legislatures. “Applications are up. Enrollments are up. But universities have cut instructors and classes,” says Asher. “There’s bound to be some impact on time to graduate.” Since January 2009, Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge has suffered a $42 million cut in state funding, which led to a 10 percent reduction in its faculty. Private schools hurt by losses in endowment funds are likewise cutting faculty and financial aid: earlier this year, Dartmouth College announced it would lay off more than 70 employees and eliminate full student grants for families earning more than $75,000 a year, mainly due to a 20 percent drop in its endowment fund.

Also weighing on graduation rates is the sticker price of college, which has skyrocketed over the decades. The high cost is forcing some students to take fewer classes per semester to squeeze in a job, which further delays graduation. Inflation-adjusted tuition and fees for four-year public colleges and universities are three and a half times higher than they were in 1980, according to the College Board. And at private nonprofit four-year schools, prices have nearly tripled over the same time frame. “College is markedly more expensive … rising much more than any other sector of the economy, even health care,” says Boyle.

On the surface, it may seem as though schools are purposely making it harder for students to graduate. After all, each additional year gives universities additional tuition and fees.
But it’s not exactly a conspiracy, experts say. “I don’t think colleges explicitly aim to keep students … longer than four years,” says the American Enterprise Institute’s Kelly.

At the same time, he notes, schools today have little motivation to ensure that their students complete a bachelor’s degree in a reasonable amount of time. A school’s reputation is only as good as its students—and their graduation rate. “Hopefully, with [students and parents] increasingly focused on outcomes like degree completion and degree production, institutions will have incentives to pay more attention to the time it takes to earn a degree,” he says. Boyle, from College Parents of America, agrees:

“[Colleges] want to produce successful graduates, not lingering students who make more payments and bring the school additional revenue on the margin.” Still, with the way economic factors are unfolding, college students might have no choice but to hang around.

FOUR-YEAR GRADUATION TOP PERFORMERS

Four-year graduation rates are closely related to the selectivity of the college. “Schools that have very high admissions standards almost all have high graduation rates,” says Andrew Kelly, Research Fellow in Education Policy Studies at the American Enterprise Institute. The following colleges graduate at least 90 percent of their students within four years, based on federally collected data and analyzed by the American Enterprise Institute:

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<th>College Name</th>
<th>Graduation Rate</th>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Davidson College</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Claremont McKenna College</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Williams College</td>
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At midnight, professor Paul Vinette starts his "Introduction to Psychology" class, which ends at 3 am. Anne Arundel Community College is one of a growing number of community colleges offering late-night courses.

**College Holds Classes At Midnight To Meet Demand**  
by Donna Marie Owens November 10, 2010

A community college in Maryland has joined a growing trend nationwide: midnight classes. Inside a brightly lit classroom, professor Paul Vinette stands near a chalkboard making comical noises. He is trying to keep his "Introduction to Psychology" class engaged and awake.

His class begins at midnight and ends at a yawn-inducing 3 am. Kory Fox-Ponting is 1 of 10 students taking the Wednesday course. "I'm young. I'm always up at this hour anyway, either playing video games or doing work or working on something. It's just an hour [when] my mind's not resting, which is what most people are doing," Fox-Ponting says.

'A Bunch Of Night Owls'

Located in suburban Maryland by the Chesapeake Bay, Anne Arundel Community College has about 17,000 students. Like many community colleges, its enrollment has increased as the economy has tightened. Bunker Hill Community College in Boston and several Midwestern schools have led the way with midnight and 5 a.m. courses, according to Norma Kent, a spokeswoman for the American Association of Community Colleges, which represents 1,200 institutions across the country.

"[Other community colleges] have seen [late-night courses] as a viable way to serve students. And so if students are going to come at those hours, we're gonna be there for them," Kent says. To keep his students alert, Vinette uses everything from sound effects to a buffet with coffee and snacks. The class gets a 15-minute break, although he says most students do not need it.
"It was the complete opposite of what I feared," Vinette says, "which was going to be trying to drag a dozen students as if they were dead bodies through the mud at 1 in the morning. And it's quite the opposite. No one's tired. No one's sleepy. I got a bunch of night owls in here."

**Late-Night Studying**

The students have different reasons for taking a class at this time of night. Cynthia Marshall, a homemaker in her late 40s who travels several hours commuting each way on mass transit, hopes to re-enter the job market.

Ashley Beck, 25, is married with two small children. Her husband attends the police academy by day, while she pursues her degree at night. "There's not a lot of kids in the class, so the teacher-to-student ratio is a lot better," Beck says. "And you don't have to, like, raise your hand and wait for 50 million people to ask questions. It's easier to get the information you wanna get."

Zachary Herd, 19, admits he takes naps to handle the class. Psychology is a required course, but Herd is selective about what subjects he would tackle at this hour. "I wouldn't take any math class at midnight. It's just not something I wanna do at midnight," Herd says.

Other late-night considerations include driving home around the same time as "last call." While driving home late one night, Kory Fox-Ponting was pulled over by a police officer. "And I said [to the police officer], 'Hey, you won't believe me, but I just came out of class.' [It was] 3 in the morning," Fox-Ponting recalls.

Local police and campus security may soon see more students in the wee hours. If demand continues, college officials are considering additional midnight courses in the future.