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ECU News Services

Saturday, November 14, 2009

In 2000, Harry Stubbs IV of Arlington, Va., an East Carolina University alumnus, donated sheet music published by his great-great grandmother, folk musician and patent medicine entrepreneur, Alice Morgan Person, to the Joyner Library.

That donation became the basis of a prize-winning audio digital exhibit created by Joyner Library faculty member and Head Music Librarian David Hursh.

Hurst’s curiosity about Person (1840-1913), her life and work led to his research and publication with co-author and ethnomusicologist Dr. Chris Goertzen of the University of Mississippi in Hattiesburg of “Good Medicine and Good Music: A Biography of Mrs. Joe Person.” (McFarland & Company, 2009).

In October, the North Carolina Society of Historians awarded the biography its Willie Parker Peace History Book Award.

On Nov. 6, Joyner Library marked the book’s publication with a presentation by Hursh and a book signing. The book’s publication fulfilled the aspirations and early work by Alice Person and her great-granddaughter Louise Scott Stephenson of Raleigh (1921-2002). Both women had hoped to publish the autobiography that Alice Person completed in 1903, but neither lived to see the book in print. Hursh became involved in the book project after meeting Stephenson in 2000; he finished her project, and the book is dedicated to her.

“Good Medicine and Good Music” not only includes Person’s biography, it also contains research that fills gaps left by Person and discusses her contributions to the history of American folk music and patent medicine.

“Good Medicine and Good Music: A Biography of Mrs. Joe Person” is available for purchase at the publisher’s Web site: www.mcfarlandpub.com/

Music student wins piano competition

ECU School of Music sophomore piano performance major Kyle Walker won the North Carolina Young Artist piano competition held during the 2009 conference of the North Carolina Music Teachers Association in Greensboro on Oct. 11.

His program included Bach’s Prelude and Fugue in G-sharp Minor (Book I, Well-Tempered Clavier); Beethoven’s opening movement of the Sonata No. 31, in A-Flat, Opus 110; and Albeniz “El Albaiçín” (from Book 3 of Iberia).

The NCMTA Young Artist Division includes college pianists through age 26. Walker is one of the youngest ECU students to win this division, which is dominated by seniors and graduate students. He now advances to the regional competition in Birmingham, Ala., in January.

Walker, the Olive G. Long Memorial Piano Scholarship recipient at ECU, is a student of Henry Doskey, ECU professor of piano.

Professor’s lecture to kick off traveling exhibit

The final years of Abraham Lincoln will be the focus of a lecture today at the New Bern-Craven County Public
Collection of shoe-box gifts begins today

By Mark Rutledge
The Daily Reflector

Monday, November 16, 2009

Brightly wrapped shoe boxes packed with presents for poor children all over the world are stacking up again at St. James United Methodist Church, Greenville's collection point for the Operation Christmas Child project.

The 16-year-old ministry, sponsored by international Christian relief organization Samaritan's Purse, offers a simple yet meaningful way to help children living in some of the planet's most impoverished areas.

Betsy Boyd, this year’s OCC coordinator at St. James, says volunteers have been wrapping empty shoe boxes there for weeks, with similar efforts also under way at other area churches.

Don Wigent gets involved in the project every year, shopping for enough items to stuff several shoe boxes.

"It's so much fun," said Wigent, a longtime piano technician at East Carolina University. "I found out it's more fun to do things for other people than having them do things for me."

Organizers say the wrapped boxes contain the first gifts many recipients will ever receive.

While most people never meet the children who receive their gift, many givers enclose family photographs along with brief biographical information and their mailing address in hopes of making personal connections.

Shoe boxes can be dropped off at St. James, 2000 E. Sixth St., today through Nov. 23. Drop-off times are from 4-6 p.m. on weekdays, between 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. on Saturdays and from 1-5 p.m. on Sundays.

Suggested items include: School supplies including pens, pencils, sharpeners, crayons or markers, stamps and ink pad sets, writing pads or paper, solar calculators, coloring and picture books; hygiene items such as toothbrushes, toothpaste, mild bar soap (in a plastic bag), comb, washcloth, etc.; other items including hard candy and lollipops (double bag candy), mints, gum, T-shirts, socks, ball caps, sunglasses, hair clips, toy jewelry, watches and flashlights.

Operation Christmas Child can be traced back as far as 1990, when Dave and Jill Cooke of Wrexham, Wales, sent a convoy of nine trucks filled with medical supplies, food, clothing and Christmas gifts into Romania. In 1993, Franklin Graham, president of Samaritan’s Purse, adopted Operation Christmas Child as a project of the ministry. Samaritan’s Purse first delivered gift-filled shoe boxes to children in war-torn Bosnia. More than 68 million shoe box gifts have since been given to children in more than 130 countries.

For more information, call St. James at 752-6154 or visit samaritanspurse.org.

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Library that serves as kick-off event for the traveling exhibit, "Forever Free: Abraham Lincoln's Journey to Emancipation."

Dr. David Long, associate professor of history at ECU, will present "Lincoln's Approach to Immortality: The Final Years of Abraham Lincoln" at 3 p.m. at the New Bern-Craven County Public Library. The exhibit will be at the library through Jan. 6.

The New Bern-Craven County Public Library is one of 63 libraries nationwide selected to host this exhibit, which examines Lincoln's thoughts about slavery throughout his political career and the conditions that led to the Emancipation Proclamation.

Long is the author of "The Jewel of Liberty: Abraham Lincoln's Re-election and the End of Slavery," which was nominated for prestigious prizes in the field of U.S. history, including the Pulitzer Prize and the Lincoln Prize. He also has published articles for journals, including Civil War History Illustrated, Journal of Southern History and Lincoln Herald.

Contact the library at 638-7800 for more information.

Moving soon? Donate, don't throw out items

One person's trash can become another person's Pirates Treasure thanks to a program organized by ECU and the City of Greenville.

The Pirates Treasure program, which started in December 2008, aims to curb the amount of waste left in campus neighborhoods or sent to landfills by departing ECU students.

Instead of trashing reusable items, students are encouraged to drop off their unwanted household goods, such as furniture, kitchen appliances, clothing, nonperishable food, lamps and more, at the Pirates Treasure donation site. From there, nonprofit organizations and social services groups will distribute items to local families in need. Students in need of available items can visit the drop-off location and collect (free of charge) what they need.

This year, donations will be collected from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Dec. 3-4. Items should be taken to the central drop-off point at the Willis Building at First and Reade streets in Greenville.

“This is our second year organizing this event, which is a great opportunity for students and community members to assist with the beautification of our city while helping those who need it,” said Lucia Brannon, coordinator for ECU Off-Campus Student Services.

The program is sponsored by the City of Greenville and ECU Off-Campus Student Services in collaboration with ECU Volunteer and Service-Learning Center.

For more information, visit www.ecu.edu/studentlife/offcampus.

Upcoming Events:

Tuesday: Lecture by Professor Isaac Kalimi, 4 p.m., Science and Technology Building, Room C-209. Kalimi, Whichard Visiting Distinguished Professor and Endowed Chair in Humanities, will present "History and History-writing, Evaluation and Reliability: Chronicles in its own historical context." Free.

Tuesday: Faculty in the Department of Geography will discuss “Water, Water Everywhere: Or Is It?” 6:30—8 p.m., Science and Technology building, Room C-209. Hosted by the ECU student organization, GeoClub, to mark National Geography Awareness Week.

Wednesday: ECU creative writing faculty reading, 7:30 p.m., Bate Building Room 1031. Participating faculty members will be Alex Albright, Christy Hallberg, Marc Petersen, Bob Siegel and Liza Wieland. An update: Attendees are asked to bring canned or nonperishable food to benefit the Food Bank of Central and Eastern North Carolina.

See www.ecu.edu/cs-ecu/calendar.cfm for times, places and more information on these events and other ECU upcoming activities.
Second Century campaign pace ahead of schedule

By Josh Humphries
The Daily Reflector

Friday, November 13, 2009

East Carolina University has nearly reached its goal to raise $200 million as part of the Second Century Campaign.

The university has raised more than $152 million toward that goal, said Michael Dowdy, vice chancellor for university advancement.

"We have had back-to-back record-breaking fundraising years," Dowdy said.

For the 2009 fiscal year, the university raised $38 million.

The Second Century Campaign kicked off publicly in March 2008 with more than $90 million in early phase gifts. The university has quickly reached 75 percent of the $200 million goal, which is something to celebrate in a tight economy, Dowdy said.

Dowdy said that the university might have delayed the campaign if the full extent of this year's recession could have been predicted, but despite the economic atmosphere, the campaign is ahead of schedule.

"The economy has not affected each individual or each company the same," he said. "We are certainly respectful of those that have said that it is not a good time for them right now. But along the way, we have had some pleasant surprises."

The campaign’s push is scheduled to last until the end of 2012, but Dowdy said he believes the university will reach the goal about a year ahead of schedule. But the campaign could continue if officials determine that some programs still need funding.

The campaign has helped to create 15 new distinguished professorships, 85 new scholarships and enhanced the ECU Scholars program to a $45,000 package for each student which includes a stipend to study abroad.

More than $20 million has been raised for scholarships, more than $5 million for capital projects and more than $46 million for athletics scholarships.

The university created the campaign to celebrate its 100 years and to boost its endowment, which was significantly lower than similar institutions. In 2007, ECU had an endowment of $90 million compared to the endowment of $2.1 billion at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, $535 million at North Carolina State and $184 million at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

ECU also hoped to increase alumni participation, which was at 7.3 percent in 2007. Today, about 30 percent of gifts to ECU’s foundations come from alumni.

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UNC wrestles with paid leave policy

CHAPEL HILL -- The UNC system's governing board is not united behind reducing the paid leaves that campus chancellors get when they step down.

A UNC Board of Governors committee Thursday recommended limiting research leaves - which also go to the UNC system president - from one year to six months.

The full board won't act until January, though, and Friday some members said research leaves are a vital part of the total compensation package. Limiting them could hurt recruitment, they said.

"Our benefits - they'd have to improve to get bad," said Paul Fulton, a former UNC-Chapel Hill trustee who recently joined the UNC system's board. "Reducing that leave from 12 months to six is not a good move."

The revisions recommended this week would also reduce the pay those top administrators receive while on leave and require them to subsequently return to a faculty role. It would also mandate work plans; currently, there are no work requirements for the unsupervised leaves. Fulton didn't object to those changes.

A similar policy covering other senior administrators such as provosts and vice chancellors, who also receive paid leaves, likely will be revised as well in coming months.

The committee's actions follow reports in The News & Observer that showed the policies have, at times, been abused. Over the past five years, the universities have paid a combined $8 million to 117 administrators on leaves.

Several board members said Friday that if research leaves are cut to six months, the university president should be able to increase them while negotiating with chancellor candidates.

In June, UNC President Erskine Bowles brokered a resignation deal with beleaguered N.C. State University Chancellor James Oblingerr, under fire for his role in the hiring of former first lady Mary Easley. The terms included a six-month research leave during which Oblingerr would continue to earn his full chancellor's salary - $420,000 annually, or $35,000 a month.

But in August, the UNC system Board of Governors scaled Oblingerr's pay rate back to $173,000 annually, more in line with other faculty members in the department where Oblingerr will return to teach.

The move cost Oblingerr $82,000 over four months and brought Bowles' negotiating power into question.

"I think the Oblingerr situation changed the ballgame," Bowles said during Friday's board meeting. "You have to either give the president the authority or not. For future presidents to speak for the university is very important."

Irvin Roseman, a board member from Wilmington, said the length of a research leave should depend on
how long a chancellor needs to prepare for a return to the faculty. Some academic disciplines may change more over time than others, he said.

"I think you need to look at the person as an individual and what it would take to retool the individual," Roseman said. "I think the president needs the flexibility to make it six months, a year, whatever."

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Greczyn: Start a business yourself

RALEIGH -- Robert Greczyn Jr., outgoing CEO for the state's largest health insurer, confesses that he doesn't read the obligatory books about leadership or management. But when put on the spot, as he was last week before a packed auditorium at N.C. State University, Greczyn showed he can dispense PowerPoint verities with the best of them.

Greczyn, 58, is stepping down next year as head of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina, which he has run for the past 11 years. Greczyn is among the elite of North Carolina power brokers, overseeing a company with 4,800 workers and 3.7 million members and sitting on the boards of East Carolina University, the N.C. Chamber and the Triangle United Way.

To the assembled admirers seeking the secret sauce for success, Greczyn said he often hears from up-and-coming managers that they're gunning for the top job in the organization. But with scores of ambitious aspirants and only one throne, most are bound to be disappointed in their single-minded quest for the CEO's mantle.

His advice to business students: Start your own business, even if it's a lawn-mowing service. Take an externship, shadowing a leader for a short time to learn his or her techniques. Take lateral promotions to gain experience and round out your résumé. Get involved in a mentoring relationship. All of which Greczyn can now say with the benefit of hindsight.

"Me - didn't have a plan," Greczyn said. "Didn't have a plan A, didn't have a plan B. I just worked hard."

Under Greczyn's leadership, Blue Cross doubled its membership, became one of the first health insurers in the country to recognize obesity as a treatable condition, and one of the first to pay for patient consultations with a nutritionist.

The leadership circuit has not all been a cakewalk for the avuncular executive, who favors fluorescent neckties and relaxes by golfing and sailing. Greczyn has come under fire for his pay package, nearly $4 million last year, at a time of rising insurance premiums. This year, Greczyn has faced criticism over his company's aggressive lobbying against President Barack Obama's health care overhaul.

Last Thursday, none of that mattered - maybe the controversy earned Greczyn some extra respect - when he spoke to a rapt audience of more than 400 business students, faculty members and drop-ins from the health industry and local business community.

Here's a selection of Greczyn's comments:

On leadership, then and now: "The old days of leadership were about an autocrat, about ordering people. The hallmark of that kind of style is that when they left the company, nobody was sorry to see them go."

On recruiting and mentoring: "The best thing that a leader can do is hire people who are smarter than you are. A lot of people aren't comfortable with that concept. But people who surround themselves with people who are smarter than they are instantaneously look smarter."
On credit and blame: "Never take credit. Always give credit where credit is due. And always take responsibility when things go wrong."

On doing unto others: "You never treat anybody differently than you would like to be treated at any level of the organization."

On wealth and beyond: "Leadership to me means not only leadership in the business but leadership in the community. Frankly, I don't see that in this community as much as I'd like to see with all the entrepreneurs we have here. They just haven't grasped the concept that when you create wealth, it's your responsibility to give back."

On the American dream: "I have an extreme appreciation for the American dream. I think that's something that's at risk these days."

On levels of leadership: "Leadership is for everyone in the organization, not just for the CEO. A CEO has to create a culture that allows people to make decisions."

On false leaders: "One of the biggest mistakes that business people make is believing that people will buy any garbage you feed them. People can tell. You have to be truthful with people."

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Citizen-Soldier director is out

The University of North Carolina announced Friday that it is changing the leadership of a troubled $10 million program aimed at helping deployed soldiers of the National Guard and Army Reserves.

Peter Leousis is stepping down as director of the Citizen-Soldier Support Program, which UNC Chancellor Holden Thorp has criticized as seriously flawed. UNC officials said, however, Leousis will still be associated with the program.

The program will focus on the behavioral health needs of returning combat veterans, some of whom suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder or traumatic brain injury. Bob Goodale, a retired grocery executive and former official at the N.C. Department of Commerce, will lead the program. Goodale is a Citizen-Soldier program manager.

"Behavioral health is Citizen-Soldier's most successful component, so we'll focus on that strength in providing assistance to soldiers coming back from active duty, along with their families," vice-chancellor Tony Waldrop said in a release.

The program began in 2004, when U.S. Rep. David Price inserted a $10 million earmark for UNC-Chapel Hill into the federal budget. The program was to help soldiers in the Guard and reserves, who are scattered around the state in civilian communities and lack the institutional support available to soldiers stationed at bases such as Camp Lejeune and Fort Bragg. One goal was to develop a model program that could be expanded to other states.

The model turned into a muddle. The program has spent $7.3 million and accomplished little for the people it was supposed to help. One-quarter of the money went to the university for overhead. A large part of the rest has been spent on well-paid consultants, six-figure salaries and travel.

Three of the nine employees, several who work part time, were being paid more than $100,000 a year. A deputy director, Susan Kerner-Hoeg, has been reimbursed $76,000 for food, travel and lodging for commuting from her home in northern Virginia to North Carolina.

An internal university review found reams of paperwork but few concrete results. The report, which the university redacted substantially before release, listed problems such as overpaid employees, underperforming employees, an excessive reliance on outside consultants, few practical results and high administrative costs.

The university is cutting three positions in the program, according to UNC spokesman Mike McFarland. He did not specify which ones.

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Column: Dean Sparrow’s legacy is commitment to learning

Mike Parker
2009-11-15 19:16:56

Perhaps one of my best memories of Keats Sparrow, who passed away on Wednesday, came during the 1983-84 academic year when I was a newly hired lecturer in East Carolina’s English department.

Lecturers taught four classes: three freshmen comp classes and one literature class. For the first time, I faced teaching Major American Writers, a survey of American literature from the time of the Puritans until World War II. Covering several hundred years of American literature in a semester is no small feat.

To complicate the matter, the department had not received enough instructor copies of the text we used, so I was not only clueless but bookless, as well. I went to the office to see if anyone had a text I could use.

Keats overhead my inquiry, went into his office, and emerged with his copy of “The Concise Anthology of American Literature.”

“Maybe you can use this,” he said and smiled.

“I’ll return it.”

“No need,” he said.

I still have that book. The binding is broken and the cover is loose, but Dean Sparrow’s notes are still neatly clipped to the pages of the selections he used when he taught the class.

He was a good friend and generous colleague.

The people of Kinston should take pride that one of their own became such a dynamic force at Eastern North Carolina’s flagship university. Keats earned his bachelor’s and master’s degrees at East Carolina. Then he travelled to the University of Kentucky to study for his doctorate. He returned to ECU to teach.

By the time I met him, he was an established faculty member. Later, he became my boss when he was named chairman of the English department.

In 1990, Keats became dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

I am not sure most people can truly understand what that office entails. The College of Arts and Sciences is the largest division of any university. All of the most basic course offerings of a university are housed in the College of Arts and Sciences: English, history, math, social science, science, foreign languages – the core curriculum, the heartbeat of university education.
Keats worked tirelessly to improve both the status and the performance of ECU’s arts and sciences. One of his achievements was creating the Arts and Science Distinguished Professor program. He also founded the Center for the Liberal Arts.

In 2003, chiefly because of his efforts, ECU’s College of Arts and Sciences was named in honor of Thomas Harriot.

Who?

Thomas Harriot, who lived from 1560 to 1621, was a true Renaissance man. He was an astronomer who produced the first drawing of the moon viewed through a telescope. He wrote papers on optics, on refraction and on mathematics.

In 1585-1586, he voyaged to Roanoke Island, where he learned some of the Algonquin language. In 1588, he wrote about his voyage to what is now North Carolina.

Of course, Keats, whose academic specialty was early North Carolina literature, knew both the history and work of Thomas Harriot.

I can understand why Keats so strongly identified with Harriot. Like Harriot, Keats was a true Renaissance man – a man whose love of learning touched his students, his colleagues, and his community.

As long as the love of learning survives, the spirit of Keats Sparrow will be with us.

Mike Parker is a columnist for The Free Press. You can reach him at mparker16@suddenlink.net or in care of this newspaper.
As N.C. families struggle, college aid panel meets

By GARY D. ROBERTSON
Associated Press

Published: Sunday, November 15, 2009 at 4:25 p.m.

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) – Families across North Carolina and state government felt the same financial pressures this year as they cobbled together paths for children to get a college degree.

More parents needed outside help to send their kids to school as the state’s unemployment rate hovered near 11 percent, tuition and fees rose and family college investments tumbled in value.

At East Carolina University alone, financial aid needs for in-state undergraduate students soared from $98 million last year to $135 million this year, according to the school’s financial aid office.

“The economy in general has meant more families having a difficult time to find the means for their children to attend college,” said Sen. Richard Stevens, R-Wake, co-chairman of a legislative study commission meeting for the first time this week to recommend reforms to the state’s financial aid system.

The panel begins after lawmakers this year shuffled around financial aid programs to keep the state budget balanced and University of North Carolina system campuses among the most affordable in the country.

They killed a college affordability program began just last year and championed by then-Gov. Mike Easley to try to make college debt-free for as many as 25,000 students. And while some pots of money for financial aid increased, lawmakers did it by siphoning more cash than ever from a special state fund as an alternative to dwindling tax revenues.

“The Escheats Fund just keeps going down,” said Sen. Tony Rand, D-Cumberland, one of the Legislature’s leading UNC system boosters. “We can’t destroy that fund.
It’s really dangerous.”

The Joint Legislative Study Committee on State Funded Student Financial Aid will make recommendations to the full General Assembly over the next year.

The federal stimulus package approved this year raised the maximum Pell Grant for low-income students by 17 percent to $5,550 next year, and the Obama administration is considering federal loan changes. The Legislature also gave an additional $23 million this year to provide need-based aid to UNC-system students, which was sought by Gov. Beverly Perdue.

“North Carolina has made some gains in access to low-income funding,” said Steve Brooks, executive director of the N.C. State Education Assistance Authority, which distributed $1.2 billion in student aid through 379,500 grants, scholarships and loans last year.

But the Legislature paid for additional need-based aid through the Escheats Fund, where property unclaimed or forgotten by its previous owners is sent to the State Treasurer’s Office by banks, utilities, government agencies or insurance companies.

The constitution requires fund proceeds go to help needy higher education students while the property owners are located.

Lawmakers historically had used interest to pay for scholarships, but in recent years they’ve tapped into the principal for scholarships, replacing money that had come from the general operating funds.

As of June 30, the fund balance was about $500 million after the Legislature spent $169 million in principal – a nearly threefold jump compared with 2006. This year, the principal withdrawal will be $185 million – the highest ever.

The fund will drop to $200 million by mid-2011 and almost $51 million the following year at the current rate, according to projections by State Treasurer Janet Cowell’s office.

“If the corpus of the fund continues to be drawn down at current rates scholarship opportunities for needy and worthy students will be severely impacted,” Cowell spokeswoman Heather Franco said.

Lawmakers learned how painful it could be to wean scholarship programs from the fund’s principal when they decided to pull the plug on Easley’s EARN Scholars program.

The General Assembly agreed in 2007 to approve the Educational Access Rewards North Carolina Scholars initiative, which gave $4,000 grants to students in families
with incomes up to twice the poverty level. The grants replaced low-interest federal loans in the package of financial aid offered to students.

The program didn’t get started in earnest until the 2008-09 school year, when 13,798 students were awarded $48 million in grants, according to N.C. State Education Assistance Authority data.

“It was a really good idea and a really good program (because) you didn’t have to take on a ton of debt,” said Julie Poorman, financial aid director at East Carolina, which had 575 EARN recipients last year. “Your parents could afford to send you to college.”

The General Assembly earmarked escheats for more than half the grant money in part due to worsening budget numbers.

Faced with taking even more escheats or shifting tax money needed to close a huge budget gap, lawmakers decided to end the program after $2,000 grants were issued this fall.

The decision left thousands of students scrambling for replacement funds come January. Poorman said East Carolina was able to tap into university funds to pay an additional $2,000 in the spring to less than 300 students of the 891 who received money this fall.

“When EARN goes away, all that will replace it is debt,” Poorman said.

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Universities Turn to Consultants to Trim Budgets

By TAMAR LEWIN

When Holden Thorp, the chancellor of the University of North Carolina, was looking for ways to cut the university's budget, he did what many executives in private industry do — hired a management consultant.

The consultant, Bain & Company, came up with recommendations that it said could save the university more than $150 million a year. They included centralizing some of the university's widely dispersed procurement operations (up to $45 million) and information technology functions (up to $19 million) and simplifying its organizational structure (up to $12 million).

And since Mr. Thorp hired Bain, both Cornell University and the University of California, Berkeley, have followed suit. In each case, the management consultants examined business functions but stayed away from academic issues like course loads and tenure.

"Like any other large organization," Mr. Thorp said, "we hire people, we buy stuff, we connect to the Internet, we build buildings and take care of our property, and we wanted Bain to look at how we could carry out those functions as efficiently as possible."

"I thought someone from outside the university world would provide a new perspective," he added.

Bain did offer a new take on a university known for its teaching and research and its beautiful old campus: the report summed up the university with a 10-color organizational chart with 380 little boxes, each representing a department.

For all its academic prominence, the 107-page report found, the university has plenty of inefficiencies. For example, more than half its managers have three or fewer people reporting directly to them.

In addition to the recommended changes that could save up to $161 million a year, the report suggested reining in the more than 100 centers and institutes that have sprung up around the university, many with their own finance, information technology and human resources departments.

"We've already done some of that," Mr. Thorp said recently. "The Institute for Outdoor Drama isn't getting any more state funding."

While most of Bain's recommendations made intuitive sense, Mr. Thorp said, it would have been far harder without the report to know just how to address the problem areas.

"I felt there were too many layers, but I didn't know exactly what and where," he said. "We're trying to cut out two layers."

At North Carolina, the consulting project was financed by an anonymous donor, who specified that Bain
should be the company to do the analysis and that the cost should not be disclosed.

At Berkeley, Robert J. Birgeneau, the chancellor, said the Bain contract would cost $3 million — and hopefully save far more.

“If we could save $30, $40, $50 million for an investment of $3 million, I’d be ecstatic,” said Dr. Birgeneau, whose campus has been hit this year with particularly brutal budget cuts. “I’m a physicist, not an expert on organizational structures. But I believe we can be more efficient.”

For example, he said, Berkeley has one human resources person for every 85 employees, when the university norm is one for 130 and the industry norm is one for 200.

“We have already successfully consolidated some research functions,” Dr. Birgeneau said, “and we want to get a comprehensive view of procurement and I.T. and H.R. across the university to see if there’s consolidation we should be doing there, too.”

Shrinking endowments and cuts in state financing have forced many colleges and universities, public and private, to turn to hiring freezes, layoffs and furloughs. But for long-term solvency, many will need to find longer-term ways to trim their budgets without damaging their academic mission.

At the same time, parents and politicians alike have become increasingly angry that tuition has been rising far more quickly than inflation — and that the growth in support staff in recent years has far outpaced the growth in enrollment.

Still, some university employees criticize the hiring of Bain, or any outside corporate-oriented consulting firm, to advise on university budget cuts.

“I don’t see it as being very productive or valid or worthwhile,” said Tanya Smith, president of Local 1 of University Professional and Technical Employees, which represents about 900 Berkeley employees. “What we're seeing is centralization and treatment of the university as if it were a corporation. And I'm just not sure education and efficiency are on the same page.”

Michael Mankins, a Bain partner, said that while there were many differences between corporations and universities — chief among them that universities do not exist to maximize profits — there are also many similarities.

“Most corporations can save 15 to 30 percent by standardizing their approach to procurement, and most universities can as well,” Mr. Mankins said. “Information technology tends to be very fragmented at corporations, and the same tends to be true in higher education.”

With those guidelines and the publicly available North Carolina report, why should universities hire a consultant and not just start streamlining procurement and information technology?

“Folks who look at the reports will know that procurement is a major area, I.T. is a major area, and reducing the number of organizational layers is a major area, but just because you know procurement’s a problem doesn’t give you the expertise of having handled 930 procurement problems in the last decade,” Mr. Mankins said. “Most doctors don’t do self-diagnosis, and the same reasoning applies in higher education.”
David J. Skorton, the president of Cornell, said he was using the financial crisis as further motivation to grapple with administrative costs.

“We know we have had too much of a proliferation of assistant deans and assistants to ...” Dr. Skorton said. “And this crisis has stiffened my spine about it. My office has gone down from seven to five, people I’m never going to replace, and that has to trickle down.”

Dr. Skorton said he was hopeful that the Bain recommendations would have lasting effects on the university’s finances. Because the budget situation is so dire, he said, there is widespread consensus on campus — even some eagerness — about making changes.

“We’ve crossed the line where there’s a level of awareness that we’re facing the most unsettling financial situation we’ve ever faced and something has to be done,” he said.

“We have dozens and dozens of faculty, right this minute, involved in a couple dozen task forces around the campus looking at our academic operations, the departments and the curricular questions,” he continued. “But I think it’s demonstrable that we can save more money, faster, on our business functions by bringing in people from outside to help us.”