Students present plans for old City Hall

By MIKE VOSS, Contributing Editor
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Published: Tuesday, November 16, 2010 2:15 AM EST

Keeping the historical integrity of old City Hall while going green in developing an adaptive-reuse plan for the structure was the theme of three presentations by East Carolina University students Monday.

A second round of presentations is slated to begin at 9 a.m. today at the Washington Civic Center. The students, working in teams, were given an assignment to develop usable plans to give Washington’s old City Hall a virtual makeover.

Hunt McKinnon, an assistant professor in ECU’s Department of Interior Design and Merchandising, and several of his students visited old City Hall late last month, with students taking measurements and closely examining the structure so they could better prepare their plans for its reuse.

The ECU class involved with the project is offered in two sections this semester, with each section instructed to take a different approach regarding use of old City Hall. One section was told to develop a plan that calls for retail space on the building’s first floor and apartments on the second floor. The other section was charged with developing a plan that incorporates offices and a Harbor District visitors center on the first and second floors, a computer-ready location and classroom space that could be used by local educational institutions to assist with off-site learning programs.

“We are thrilled to have them working in conjunction with the city on this building,” said John Rodman, the city’s director of planning and development.

The students who presented their plans Monday incorporated a retail space — a green grocer — on the building’s ground floor and residential use on its second floor.

Each of the presentations included “green elements” for both the commercial and residential uses. Many items related to flooring, lighting and interior construction were chosen because they are eco-friendly, the students said.

Student Jordin Mack said her four-member team consisting of herself, Lorrie Somerville, Alexis Miles and Elizabeth Crowe used Washington’s motto of “Pride in the past, faith in the future” as its inspiration for its plan.

“It was a huge part because using what the building already has in it. It has character. We didn’t want to take that away from Washington, so we wanted to incorporate the bannisters which were upstairs, downstairs and let everyone be able to see it,” Mack said.
about her team’s “green” approach to adaptive reuse and yet preserve the building’s historical significance.

“Obviously, about the fire-rating system and also just the process learning what restoration is and how to incorporate new ideas and keeping in code with restoration guides,” Mack replied when asked what she learned during the two-hour session Monday.

Old City Hall provides a good framework to support adaptive reuse, according to the students.

“When we all came to see this space, we all just loved the brick and the historic, rustic look that the building had, and we all realized we could do a lot of great things with what we already had,” said Ana Gustafson, a member of another team.

Last month, Rodman said he hopes the ECU students’ work will “show us some uses the building can be used for and then we, in turn, can use those uses to help market the building.”

In recent months, there has been some interest in the building by developers. Recently, a Massachusetts man, who plans to move to Cypress Landing, expressed interest in old City Hall, according to Rodman.

Aside from two public bathrooms downstairs and an elevator to provide handicapped people access to the second floor (both elements were part of the students’ design instructions), each of the three presentations called for using the structure’s existing brick walls.

“We wanted to keep the exposed brick,” Crowe said. The students said comments from audience members who have experience in adapting old buildings for new uses provided them valuable insight because those people have completed projects, whereas the students have only planned projects. By listening to such people, students said, they can learn from their experiences and incorporate those experiences into their coursework.

“In the long run, I think they will realize just how much they learned, because we can be in the studio and we study all this and memorize it out of the textbook and be examined on it. When they get here and present their drawings and they have questions like they had from the audience today — it’s real showtime.” McKinnon said when asked about the importance of the students making their presentations to those who attended the session.

McKinnon said such presentations and the work leading up to them is of great benefit to the students because they are better prepared to work as professionals in their field. “East Carolina is very, I think, focused on actually getting students out with real skills to do real good for real people,” McKinnon said.

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UNC-CH to offer an online MBA

By John Murawski, Staff Writer

UNC-Chapel Hill is taking the online plunge and will offer an online MBA degree, becoming among the highest-ranking business programs in the nation to do so.

UNC-CH plans to recruit top-flight students "from Western North Carolina to eastern India," said the program's executive director, Susan Cates. UNC-CH officials assure that their online master of business administration degree - which will cost $89,000 - will not be a cheapened version of the traditional MBA, which is considered a ticket to the world's corporate executive suites.

"This is not a program for someone who couldn't get into one of our other MBA programs," said David Hofmann, a UNC-CH business professor who will teach in the online program. "The vision of the program is that it will be the same caliber, the same quality, the same faculty."

The nation's top-flight schools have resisted the trend of online distance learning, leaving the fast-growing field to regional colleges and for-profit schools. More recently, big-name universities have seized the opportunity to attract online students - and their tuition fees - from around the world.

The growth of online MBAs has been a reverse trend, coming last to the most prestigious universities that are accustomed to leading educational trends, not following them. Duke University's MBA program, for example, espouses a traditional education model and limits the online component to no more than half of a student's work. Duke's MBA program, ranked sixth nationally by Bloomberg Businessweek, charges $120,100 to $140,900 for its degree program.

N.C. online programs

East Carolina University offered the first online MBA program in this state in 2002. Fayetteville State University created a program this year. Last month, N.C. State University said it would offer an online MBA program next year.

UNC-CH's Kenan-Flagler Business School, ranked 16th in the nation by Bloomberg Businessweek, likely will make online study more acceptable, or unavoidable, for the highest-tier schools if UNC-CH succeeds in attracting the world's top-performing and top-paying students, said Rodney Alsup, a Durham consultant on MBA curricula and former president of the MBA Roundtable, a trade association.
"It's something whose time has come," Alsup said. "It's going to keep on creeping up the [status] scale."

**Initial skepticism**
The online MBA had to overcome skepticism from UNC-CH's business professors. Faculty meetings were held throughout the year to acclimate professors to the online concept and to ease their doubts. In the end, about 20 percent of UNC-CH's business faculty voted against the program.

Kenan-Flagler will enroll its first online MBA class in July, capped at 50 students, representing nearly $4.5 million in tuition. The enrollment cap will be lifted once the program is fully developed.

UNC-CH is developing a multimedia program that officials say will build on the centuries-old model of classroom lectures and assigned textbook readings. Students will study by watching business boardroom scenarios as performed on screen by professional actors. They will call up graphic-rich websites enhanced by professors' voice-overs and high-tech visuals. And they will take part in online group discussions with video, like a dozen simultaneous Skype connections.

The educational experience will be more akin to watching a professionally produced documentary, such as "60 Minutes," Cates said.

Most of the curriculum is still being developed by UNC-CH and 2tor, a New York educational consulting firm.

The students will be required to physically attend two of eight scheduled face-to-face immersion sessions in Chapel Hill, Singapore, London and other locations.

For security, students who take online tests will be monitored by video and their computers disabled to prevent online searches.

"Part of the onus is on us to prove we can do it in the same quality," said Arvind Malhotra, a UNC-CH business professor. "We have our brand to protect and our reputation to uphold."

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UNC trains the military

By Martha Quillin, Staff Writer

CHAPEL HILL North Carolina colleges aren't waiting until soldiers get out of the service to recruit them as students. The UNC system has developed five programs to help active-duty troops get ready for today's battles.

"We need to strengthen the most important weapon we have, which is the American mind," said Kimrey Rhinehardt, vice president for federal relations for the 16-campus UNC system. "No one does that better than the American university."

UNC officials and faculty have been working for the past year with the N.C. Military Foundation, a private, not-for-profit group of current and retired military, business and government leaders whose goal is to help North Carolina build its defense and homeland security industry.

The partnership has produced courses, workshops and fellowships based on what the Army, Air Force and Marines say they need but aren't able to produce themselves.

The services have their own "war colleges," where senior leaders are groomed for positions in international affairs, including national security and military strategy. Fort Bragg also has the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare School, which trains special operations forces as officers, medics, engineers, and communications and weapons experts. And troops are constantly training on the job.

But North Carolina's public universities also are home to experts in fields that can help prepare soldiers for what they will find on the ground in combat zones and in places where the goal is to prevent war from occurring. Sen. Kay Hagan dropped in on a meeting Monday of the N.C. Military Foundation's board of directors to congratulate the group on what it has done.
Hagan especially likes a UNC School of Medicine program in the works in which special forces medics will treat trauma cases and provide general medical care at the hospital. The school will establish a fast-track physician assistant program that factors in special forces training and experience.

When they've completed their military service, Hagan said, some of those medics might return to North Carolina and help ease the shortage of medical providers in rural communities.

Rhinehardt said that on campuses where programs have been proposed, faculty has jumped at the chance to work with troops.

In one case, she said, N.C. State University was asked to develop a course to help Marine special forces learn how to build a simple structure. Within two weeks, NCSU had developed a five-day short course that Marines attended on campus.

East Carolina and Appalachian State universities have experts in physiology and psychology who can help prepare troops for the mental and physical rigors of combat.

Other colleges can provide instruction on agricultural practices and basic veterinary care, aquaculture and other specialties that can help with economic development in rural areas where troops now work around the world.

UNC system President Erskine Bowles, who attended the meeting Monday, said other states claim to be military friendly.

"What we are is military forward and mission ready in this state," he said.

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Questions and comments regarding a four-lane throughway intended to link East Carolina University with Pitt County Memorial Hospital will be welcomed tonight at a N.C. Department of Transportation public hearing.

An informal open house including maps and handouts will run from 4:30-6:30 p.m. with the official public hearing starting at 7. Both components will take place on the second floor of the R.G. Michels Center at 2535 Hemby Lane.

The Stantonsburg Road-10th Street Connector project has been in the works for several years, and the five-man steering committee chose the final route one year ago. The proposed symmetrical widening along Farmville Boulevard is estimated to displace 30 residences, 24 businesses and seven institutions.

The environmental assessment is complete, and right-of-way acquisition is scheduled to begin in 2012, Compensation for those forced to relocate has been a significant issue the past two years for city officials and project managers.

Officials tonight plan to explain the proposal including design, relationship between state and federal oversight and funding, right-of-way requirements and relocation procedures.

Maps displaying the location and design of the project are available at the N.C. DOT division engineer's office, 105 Pactolus Highway, and at the Greenville Public Works Department, 1500 Beatty St. They also can be viewed online at www.ncdot.org/doh/preconstruct/highway/roadway/hearingmaps_by_county.

Comments will be accepted until Dec. 16 and can be submitted to Eileen Fuchs by mail at NCDOT-Human Environment Unit, 1598 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-1598; by phone at (919) 431-1610; or by e-mail at eafuchs@ncdot.gov.
November 15, 2010

**Tomblin picks physician for DHHR secretary**

By The Associated Press

CHARLESTON, W.Va. -- A former health sciences chief for West Virginia higher education is returning to state government as the first new face in Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin's cabinet.

Tomblin named Dr. Michael Lewis on Monday as his Health and Human Resources secretary.

A physician since 1974, Lewis was a longtime vice president at West Virginia University and dean of its Charleston medical campus. He was the Higher Education Policy Commission's vice chancellor for health services when he left the state in 2002 to take a similar position at East Carolina University.

Lewis later took other posts at the North Carolina school, including at its Metabolic Research Group. As part of his return to his home state, Lewis has been volunteering at the West Virginia Health Right clinic in Charleston.

Expected to assume the reins early next month, Lewis will oversee a department with roughly 6,000 employees that accounts for 21.6 percent of all state and federal spending in West Virginia. It has a sprawling set of offices and bureaus, responsible for everything from flu prevention to administering Medicaid benefits.

The Senate's president, Tomblin began acting as governor Monday after fellow Democrat Joe Manchin resigned to become West Virginia's newest U.S. senator. Lewis will succeed Patsy Hardy, appointed by Manchin in July 2009. Hardy said Monday that she will help with his transition before returning to the private sector and spending more time with her family.

"Having served as a senior hospital executive moving through five corporate takeovers, I recognize the need for personnel to change," Hardy said in a statement.

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N.C. State student accused of selling pot from dorm room

A North Carolina State University student is in jail this morning after police said he was selling marijuana out of his dorm room.

Michael Locklear, 18, of Robeson County, is facing multiple drug charges after campus police found him with 71.4 grams of marijuana, according to arrest warrants filed in the Wake County Magistrate's Office.

Locklear is charged with one count of possession of marijuana with intent to distribute, one count of possession of drug paraphernalia and one count of maintaining a dwelling for the sale of marijuana, the warrants state.

In addition to the drugs, police said they found a scale and a box of small sandwich bags in Locklear's dorm room.

Locklear is in custody in the Wake County jail in lieu of $3,500 bail.
More Professors Give Out Hand-Held Devices to Monitor Students and Engage Them

By JACQUES STEINBERG

EVANSTON, Ill. — If any of the 70 undergraduates in Prof. Bill White’s “Organizational Behavior” course here at Northwestern University are late for class, or not paying attention, he will know without having to scan the lecture hall.

Their “clickers” will tell him.

Every student in Mr. White’s class has been assigned a palm-size, wireless device that looks like a TV remote but has a far less entertaining purpose. With their clickers in hand, the students in Mr. White’s class automatically clock in as “present” as they walk into class.

They then use the numbered buttons on the devices to answer multiple-choice quizzes that count for nearly 20 percent of their grade, and that always begin precisely one minute into class. Later, with a click, they can signal to their teacher without raising a hand that they are confused by the day’s lesson.

But the greatest impact of such devices — which more than a half-million students are using this fall on several thousand college campuses — may be cultural: they have altered, perhaps irrevocably, the nap schedules of anyone who might have hoped to catch
a few winks in the back row, and made it harder for them to respond to text messages, e-
mail and other distractions.

In Professor White’s 90-minute class, as in similar classes at Harvard, the University of
Arizona and Vanderbilt, barely 15 minutes pass without his asking students to “grab your
clickers” to provide feedback

Though some Northwestern students say they resent the potential Big Brother aspect of
all this, Jasmine Morris, a senior majoring in industrial engineering, is not one of them.
“I actually kind of like it,” Ms. Morris said after a class last week. “It does make you
read. It makes you pay attention. It reinforces what you’re supposed to be doing as a
student.”

Inevitably, some students have been tempted to see clickers as “cat and mouse” game
pieces. Noshir Contractor, who teaches a class on social networking to Northwestern
undergraduates, said he began using clickers in spring 2008 — and, not long after,
watched a student array perhaps five of the devices in front of him.

The owners had skipped class, but their clickers had made it.

Professor Contractor said he tipped his cap to the students’ creativity — this was, after
all, a class on social networking — but then reminded them that there “are other ways to
count attendance,” and that, by the way, they were all signatories to the school’s honor
principle. The practice stopped, he said.

Though the technology is relatively new, preliminary studies at Harvard and Ohio State,
among other institutions, suggest that engaging students in class through a device as
familiar to them as a cellphone — there are even applications that convert iPads and
BlackBerrys into class-ready clickers — increases their understanding of material that
may otherwise be conveyed in traditional lectures.

The clickers are also gaining wide use in middle and high schools, as well as at corporate
gatherings. Whatever the setting, audience responses are received on a computer at the
front of the room and instantly translated into colorful bar graphs displayed on a giant
monitor.

The remotes used at Northwestern were made by Turning Technologies, a company in
Youngstown, Ohio, and are compatible with PowerPoint. Depending on the model, the
hand-holds can sell for $30 to $70 each. Some colleges require students to buy them;
others lend them to students.

Tina Rooks, the chief instructional officer for Turning Technologies, said the company
expected to ship over one million clickers this year, with roughly half destined for about
2,500 university campuses, including community colleges and for-profit institutions. The
company said its higher-education sales had grown 60 percent since 2008, and 95 percent
since 2006.
At Northwestern, more than three dozen professors now use clickers in their classrooms. Professor White, who teaches industrial engineering, was among the first here to adopt them about six years ago.

He smiled knowingly when asked about some students’ professed dislike of the clickers. “They should walk in with them in their hands, on time, ready to go,” he said.

Professor White acknowledged, though, that the clickers were hardly a silver bullet for engaging students, and that they were just one of many tools he employed, including video clips, guest speakers and calling on individual students to share their thoughts.

“Everyone learns differently,” he said. “Some learn watching stuff. Some learn by listening. Some learn by reading. I try to mix it all into every class.”

Many of Professor White’s students said the highlight of his class was often the display of results of a survey-via-clicker, when they could see whether their classmates shared their opinions. They also said that they appreciated the anonymity, and that while the professor might know how they responded, their peers would not.

Last week, for example, he flashed a photo of the university president, Morton Schapiro, onto the screen, along with a question, “Source of power?” followed by these possible answers:

“1. Coercive power” (sometimes punitive).
“2. Reward power.”
“3. Legitimate power” (typically by virtue of one’s office).
“4. Expert power” (more typically applied to someone like an electrician or a mechanic).
“5. Referent power” (usually tied to how the leader is viewed personally).

To Professor White’s seeming relief, a clear majority, 71 percent, chose No. 3, a sign that they considered his ultimate boss to be “legitimate.”

And then, to his delight, the students emerged from their electronic veils to register their opinions the old-fashioned way.

“They can be very reluctant to speak when they think they’re in the minority,” he said. “Once they see they’re not the only ones, they speak up more.”

A version of this article appeared in print on November 16, 2010, on page A14 of the New York edition.
College study abroad suffers its first decline

By Mary Beth Marklein, USA TODAY
November 15, 2010

The number of U.S. students earning college credit abroad dipped in 2008-09, the first decline in the 22 years since the data have been tracked, a State Department-funded report out today shows. The dip is mostly due to the recession.

The economic downturn also may have accelerated a trend in which students increasingly travel to less traditional destinations, says the report, based on a survey of about 3,000 colleges by the Institute of International Education, a New York-based non-profit organization.

Europe still attracted the largest share of U.S. students — more than 140,000 — but enrollments dropped 4%. They rose in Africa (16%), Asia (2%) and South America (13%). That growth was fueled in part "by new and sometimes more affordable" programs in developing countries, the report says.

"The economic situation around the world, not just the U.S., is clearly having an impact," says Peggy Blumenthal, executive vice president of the institute. Although the 2008-09 figures are the latest available, there are signs that the most recent year has begun to see an uptick in U.S. students going abroad.

For those who didn't go abroad, money wasn't the sole factor. Mexico's H1N1 virus outbreak probably contributed to a 26.3% decline in the number of U.S. students studying there, the report says. Also, many colleges pulled programs there based on State Department advisories about drug-related violence along the border, Blumenthal says. Family finances and campus budgets were top concerns.

"I heard stories about parents losing their jobs and students who would really like to go, but could not afford it," says Howard Davison, a program coordinator for at Central Penn College in Summerdale, Pa., who canceled a 2008 student trip to Ireland. State Department Assistant Secretary Ann Stock said study abroad is an important part of making U.S. students more world-conscious. "In a globalized economy, this just makes sense for our young people and our country," Stock said of student travel to more diverse locations.

Among the highlights of the institute's "Open Doors" report:
• 260,327 U.S. students earned credit for study abroad in 2008-09, the latest year for which comprehensive data are available. That's more than double the number from a decade ago but down 0.8% from the previous year.
• In a "snapshot" survey last month of 238 colleges, 55% reported an increase in the numbers of students going abroad last fall, a sign that the 2008-09 decline could be a short-term blip.

• A similar slowdown occurred among foreign students enrolling in U.S. institutions last year. Enrollments increased 3%, to 690,923, and pumped about $20 billion into the U.S. economy, according to Commerce Department estimates. However, the growth was driven primarily by a 29.9% surge among Chinese students; more than half of countries that send large numbers of students to the USA showed decreases.

Some, such as Davison, say they are hopeful that things are turning around. He took nine students abroad last year, and returns today from seven weeks in Croatia with 17 students. They "have had their horizons not only expanded, but exploded," he says. "Students come back from this program with a new confidence."