THE DAILY CLIPS

December 1, 2009

News, commentary, and opinion
compiled by the East Carolina University News Bureau from:

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The New York Times
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Pirates Treasure collecting students' bounty

By Josh Humphries
The Daily Reflector

Monday, November 30, 2009

As hundreds of East Carolina University students move at the end of each semester, they often leave a trail of items that one organization wants to put to use.

The Pirates Treasure program, organized through ECU Off-Campus Student Services, collects unwanted household items and donates them to local nonprofit organizations.

"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," Lucia Brannon, coordinator for ECU Off-Campus Student Services, said. "A lot of folks that are moving just leave their stuff behind and a lot of it is new and can be used by someone else."

Donations will be collected from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Thursday and Friday at the Willis Building on the corner of First and Reade streets.

Instead of trashing reusable items, students are encouraged to drop off items like furniture, kitchen appliances, clothing and nonperishable foods 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 what they need for free.

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

Contact Josh Humphries at jhumphries@reflector.com or 252-329-9565.

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C-USA championship game a hot ticket in Greenville

The Daily Reflector

Monday, November 30, 2009

Greenville's Earl Castellow has been an East Carolina University season ticket holder for more than 30 years, but he says he can't remember a game during that time that meant as much as the one this weekend.

Castellow was among the herd of Pirate fans that swarmed the university's athletics ticket offices Monday for a chance to see Saturday's Conference USA football championship game between ECU and No. 18 Houston.

Tickets for the game went on sale Sunday.

"It is very important," Castellow said. "It is probably the biggest game that they have played here."

Kickoff is scheduled for noon in Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium. The game will be televised on ESPN2.

Saturday's game will mark the first time the Pirates have hosted the C-USA title game. ECU will be seeking its second straight league title, a feat no other team has accomplished since the league began playing a championship game.

Tickets are $40 and can be purchased at the ticket offices or online at www.ecupirates.com.

Active Pirate Club members have the first opportunity to buy tickets. Pirate Club members who purchased 2009 season tickets and are reserved parking permit holders are guaranteed to receive their same seat and parking locations if their orders are received by 5 p.m. today. Season ticket holders also have the chance to keep their same regular season seating location if they order by 5 p.m.

Orders placed by non-Pirate Club members will be filled on a first-ordered, first-served basis following the Pirate Club deadline.

General students can pick up a free ticket and purchase guest tickets beginning at 8 a.m. today at the Minges Coliseum box office or at 10 a.m. at the Mendenhall box office. Student Pirate Club members were eligible to purchase tickets Sunday.

Any remaining tickets will go on sale to the general public Thursday.

ECU athletic ticket office hours this week

Tuesday-Wednesday, 8 a.m.-6 p.m.
Thursday, 8 a.m.-8 p.m.
Friday, 8 a.m.-6 p.m.
Saturday, 8 a.m.-halftime.

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Holtz: ‘Empty the chamber’

By Nathan Summers
The Daily Reflector

Tuesday, December 01, 2009

Skip Holtz admits he did not begin studying East Carolina’s Saturday opponent in the Conference USA championship game until he was certain which team it would be.

Now that he knows his East Division champion Pirates (8-4, 7-1 C-USA) will take on West Division top dog Houston (10-2 6-2 C-USA), Holtz hopes a regular game week scenario will keep ECU in the same groove that’s led to five wins in six games.

“I had not looked at a snap of Houston until (Sunday),” the fifth-year ECU head coach said in reference to his team’s preparation for Saturday’s noon kickoff inside Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium. “The only film that I had looked at was the crossover films — like when you’re playing Marshall and you watch Houston on offense to watch Marshall’s defense.”

As is often the case in C-USA football, both the East and West divisions were not decided until last Saturday’s end of the regular season.

ECU toppled Southern Miss, 25-20, in a battle for the East crown last weekend. In the West, Houston’s 73-14 demolition of Rice was plenty to scoot the 18th-ranked Cougars past SMU for the top spot in the division.

For that reason, Holtz found no cause to speculate until he was sure which team ECU would have to get past to claim a second consecutive C-USA title Saturday.

“Last week was winner take all,” Holtz said of his team’s third-ever home win against Southern Miss. “You couldn’t put your time, effort and energy into the one next week when that wasn’t guaranteed. You had to make sure that you got here first.”

With the knowledge his team is back in the title game, Holtz vowed to leave no stone unturned when it comes to his game-planning for the Cougars.

“This is when you shoot every bullet in the gun, empty the chamber, let’s leave nothing there,” Holtz said. “Let’s not come out of this game thinking, ‘I wish we would have done this or I wish we would have done that.’”

Dodge ball

Holtz admitted in Monday’s weekly press conference he was less than happy to see punter Matt Dodge try, for the second week in a row, to run the ball for a first down instead of kicking it.

In ECU’s win over UAB a couple of weeks ago, the Pirates ran a rugby-style punt play on fourth down, allowing the senior punter to take a few strides forward and watch the defense before booting the ball away on fourth down.

When he saw nothing but the back of UAB players, Dodge took off for a memorable first down.

Last weekend against Southern Miss, the Pirates employed the rugby punt again and Dodge took off again, but this time he was stopped well short of the first down marker.

According to Holtz, Dodge was likely influenced by his previous success, and by at least one teammate, to try it again.
“Matt said (defensive end) Scotty Robinson, right before the punt, said, ‘You know it's only fourth-and-one. If you want to go get this, I'll go get that guy,’” Holtz said of his punter. “So right before he punted it, he's got in his head, 'I'm going to run it.'”

Injuries

Holtz said the Pirates would not get anyone back from the injured list for Houston.

Senior receiver Jamar Bryant (shoulder) has returned to practice, but has since had a setback and Holtz said it's not likely he'll play against the Cougars.

The good news, according to Holtz, is there were no new injuries from the Pirates' win over Southern Miss.

Probable to play after already making partial returns are senior linebacker Jeremy Chambliss (shoulder), sophomore linebacker Austin Haynes (knee), junior defensive lineman Josh Smith (shoulder) and junior running back Jon Williams (knee). True freshman linebacker Marke Powell (foot) is doubtful.

Out for the season are senior tight end Rob Kass (knee), junior linebacker Dustin Lineback (knee), junior corner Dekota Marshall (leg) and sophomore linebacker Matt Thompson (elbow).

Contact Nathan Summers at nsummers@reflector.com or (252)329-9595.

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Duke prof's conference speech is news to him

DURHAM -- It seems reasonable that Duke scientist Kevin Schulman would speak at a conference on global economic and human welfare issues next year.

It's a stretch, though, to believe that U.S. Sen. Ted Kennedy will be there, too.

The inclusion of Kennedy, who died this year, on the agenda for a two-part, two-continent "World Conference on Global Economy and Human Welfare" is just one of many clues that something is amiss.

Schulman, director of Duke's Center for Clinical and Genetic Economics, had never heard of the conference until being told recently that he's slated to give a Feb. 1 lecture in Senegal.

It is apparently all a hoax.

The supposed conference is advertised by the "Action World International Organization," whose Web site lists a New York City address and a phone number that goes unanswered.

The charade was exposed recently by a reporter with an online science magazine, the-scientist.com, who became curious after being offered free entry and travel to the conference.

The organization's motives aren't clear. There is no link on its Web site to wrangle registration fees. An e-mail inquiry Monday was not answered.

For the record, Schulman won't be in Senegal on Feb. 1, as the conference advertises.

"I think I have a conflict that day anyhow," he said.

eric.ferreri@newsobserver.com or 919-932-2008
U.S. Swine Flu Cases Chart Sharp Decline
But as pandemic seems to ebb, CDC notes a rise in child deaths linked to flu

Posted November 30, 2009

By Steven Reinberg

HealthDay Reporter

MONDAY, Nov. 30 (HealthDay News) -- U.S. health officials said Monday that H1N1 swine flu infections appear to be on the wane nationally, even as the number of American children dying from the illness continues to rise.

The latest report, released Monday by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), finds that "visits to doctors for influenza-like illness nationally decreased sharply this week over last week with all regions showing declines."

The ebb in cases means that 32 states are now reporting widespread flu activity, down from 43 states the week before.

The downward trend in H1N1 infections marks the fourth week in a row cases have declined after a month of steady increases in October, the CDC said.

But not all the news was good: 35 flu-related pediatric deaths -- 27 from lab-confirmed H1N1 -- were reported to the CDC this week, bringing to 234 the total number of flu-related child deaths since April. According to the Associated Press, this week's jump in pediatric flu deaths is the largest one-week increase since scientists first spotted the H1N1 virus in April.

Overall, hospitalizations and deaths continue "to be higher than expected for this time of year," the CDC said.

Monday's report follows on news last week that the ongoing pandemic may be driving a recent spike in dangerous pneumonias among younger patients.

"We are seeing an increase in serious pneumococcal infections around the country," Dr. Anne
Schuchat, director of the National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, said during a press conference on Wednesday. "Pandemics put us at risk for not just flu problems, but also bacterial pneumonia problems," she added.

These bacterial infections commonly infect the lungs and sometimes the bloodstream. During most flu seasons, secondary infections such as pneumonia typically occur in people 65 and older, she said.

However, in this pandemic the increase in pneumococcal infections is being seen primarily among younger people, Schuchat said.

For example, in Denver, the average number of severe pneumococcal infections in October typically averages about 20. "But in October 2009 they had nearly triple that number -- 58 serious pneumococcal cases," she said. "Most of that increase has been in adults under the age of 60."

The findings mirror trends in other parts of the country, Schuchat said.

Schuchat noted that a vaccine to prevent pneumococcal infections is available, but "only about one-quarter of high-risk adults have received the pneumococcal vaccine," she said.

People with diabetes, emphysema, chronic heart, lung and liver disease should get this vaccine, Schuchat said.

The supply of H1N1 swine flu vaccine continues to grow, she said. As of Wednesday there were a total of 21.2 million doses "available for the states to order," Schuchat said, and since last Friday, the supply has increased by over 7 million doses. The total number of doses is now 61.2 million, she said.

Questions about the safety of the H1N1 vaccine have lingered, but Schuchat sought to assuage any fear with some of the first safety data available since mass vaccinations began.

"So far, everything we have reviewed is extremely reassuring," she said. "In our look at all of the safety data in the U.S. so far, we are seeing patterns that are pretty much exactly what we see with the seasonal flu vaccine."
The best and brightest take a detour
Recession-wary honor students are using community college as door to elite schools

By Daniel de Vise
Washington Post Staff Writer
Monday, November 30, 2009

Kira Cassels applied to 11 colleges and got in to every one. The kitchen of her Laurel home came to resemble a high school guidance office, the breakfast table buried beneath brochures and financial aid forms from destinations such as the University of Virginia and Franklin & Marshall College.

Over two arduous weeks last spring, Cassels sat with her parents and weighed the costs and benefits of each program until the list was narrowed to one: an honors track at the local community college.

Cassels, 18, is one of an increasing number of high school graduates who pass over top-drawer public and private universities to become honor students at community colleges. Recession-wary students are flocking to selective two-year programs, which allow students to complete half of their college education for about $8,000, then transfer to a more prestigious four-year institution.

Cassels attended Atholton High School in the Howard County school system, one of the region's top college-prep engines. She took Advanced Placement courses, earned mostly A's, scored more than 600 on each 800-point section of the SAT and found time to start a nonprofit organization that delivers comfort baskets to infants in intensive care.

She learned to expect a certain reaction -- surprise and dismay -- when telling classmates and family friends that her university admissions journey had ended at a community college.

"You say Howard Community College, and people are like, 'Oh, community college,' " said Cassels, who lives with a younger brother and parents who both work. "But it's really a lot more than it sounds."

Honors enrollment at Howard Community College, a 9,000-student campus in Columbia, has risen from 123 to 185 in the past two years. Cassels enrolled in the signature program, Rouse Scholars, which takes 45 high school graduates each year and offers a proven pipeline to four-year schools. The average Rouse scholar has a 3.7 grade-point average and a combined SAT score of 1596 out of a possible 2400 points.

Over the past two decades, community college honors programs have found a niche among students who were turned down by increasingly selective state universities and didn't want to pay private-college tuition. Enrollment grew steadily until the recession. Then, it exploded.

Montgomery College in Maryland had a record 275 applications this fall for 25 seats in its Montgomery Scholars program, up from 215 last year. Honors enrollment at Prince George's Community College rose 28 percent this year to 292 students. A new honors program at Anne Arundel Community College grew
from 22 students last year to 33 this year. On the Loudoun County campus of Northern Virginia Community College, enrollment in honors English is up by 50 percent.

The influx of students with good test scores and multiple options for higher education is reshaping community colleges, a class of schools that, although open to all, have been stereotyped as a destination of last resort, sweeping up students with the least money and the weakest academic preparation.

Enrollment in honors programs at community colleges seems to be growing faster than overall enrollment at the schools, which surged by about 10 percent this year in the Washington region, as students of various age groups and socioeconomic levels sought affordable higher education.

"We've sometimes struggled to get sufficient enrollment in the honors seminars. Well, recently, we've been packing them," said Beverly Blois, dean of humanities at the Loudoun campus of Northern Virginia Community College. "More and more of what I call the best and brightest are turning to us."

**Building connections**

Community colleges can't match the prestige of a selective four-year college, nor the experience of living on campus. But they can offer small classes, attentive professors, intelligent classmates and inventive course work.

Hajirah Ishaq, a sophomore at Northern Virginia Community College, is studying the architecture of Dulles International Airport and Raphaelite paintings at the National Gallery in a humanities honors course.

Ishaq, 19, said she is going to community college because she is the eldest of 12 children. She describes her honors classmates as "overachievers" with ambitious transfer plans. "They talk about George Washington, Georgetown; they talk about Boston," she said. "They talk about big schools." Ishaq hopes to attend Georgetown.

In Maryland, the centerpiece of the Montgomery Scholars program is a year-long course called "Perspectives on World Cultures." Four professors team-teach a syllabus that covers literature, history, philosophy and music from a global perspective.

"We're seeing connections between different subjects. I really like that," said Lucy Bauer, 18, a freshman Montgomery Scholar who said she "never, never ever" imagined herself in community college until she took a closer look at her family's finances and the school's offerings.

A recruiting meeting in October for next year's Montgomery Scholars drew 350 people for 25 seats. Graduates have transferred to Smith, Amherst and Cornell.

Montgomery Scholars is 10 years old and is modeled on the Rouse program, which is in its 18th year. Barbara Greenfeld, a Howard Community College administrator who helped establish Rouse, said she thinks it is partly responsible for doubling the share of Howard high school graduates who attend the community college, from 12 percent in the early 1990s to 25 percent today.

Howard Community College offers study abroad and a formal transfer agreement with Dickinson College, a selective liberal arts school in Carlisle, Pa., in a program cited as a national model for collaboration between two- and four-year colleges.
"If you have a strong honors identity, it's good for everybody," Greenfeld said.

Thrift before prestige

In front of a classroom at the Howard Community College campus in Columbia on a recent afternoon, a classmate of Cassels's announced that she was about to "give you guys a little background on the psychedelic experience."

She and two other students embarked on a multimedia presentation on pop art as part of a course called "20th Century Arts, Culture and Ideas." An hour later, the class had moved on to Kurt Vonnegut's "Slaughterhouse-Five."

Cassels and her parents chose the community college with the same sense of thrift that guides them these days at the grocery store or the mall. "We're not hurting for money," she said. But she and her parents didn't feel comfortable committing $20,000 to $30,000 a year in tuition and fees, room and board, the amount they would have owed on top of the five-figure scholarships offered by several four-year colleges.

Turning down U-Va. and Franklin & Marshall was a bit of a gamble: There's no guarantee that Cassels will get into the college of her choice as a transfer student in two years. She hopes to finish her bachelor's at Barnard College or Cornell University.

Cassels said it was hard to watch classmates leave home this fall while she stayed behind, as if for a fifth year of high school.

"My other friends, they go away to these other schools, and they come back sometimes, weekends and holidays, and I feel like I miss the college life," she said. "I don't know if it's a shallow thing on my part."

But Cassels said she loves her new classes, the professors and the interdisciplinary projects. She feels challenged. If there is more to college, she's willing to wait a year or two to find out.

"It's not like I'm really losing anything," she said, "except the name of a school."

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The Washington Post

Fiscal straits test ambitions of fast-growing Sun Belt university
Arizona State trimming staff, programs in face of state budget cuts

By Nick Anderson
Washington Post Staff Writer
Saturday, November 28, 2009

TEMPE, Ariz. -- More than 55,500 students are enrolled here at Arizona State University, many thronging its paths on bicycles, scooters and longboards. By most reckoning, this sun-drenched campus is the nation's largest.

Counting three other ASU campuses in metropolitan Phoenix, the mega-university's enrollment is 68,000, up 24 percent in seven years. University President Michael M. Crow has said the total could eventually approach a staggering 100,000.

But huge growth comes with the huge fiscal challenges of the toughest economy in a generation.

To offset nearly $90 million in state cuts -- about 18 percent -- ASU laid off 500 employees this year and cut nearly 500 vacant positions, gave other employees mandatory furloughs of 10 to 15 days, raised the size of some classes, increased course loads for professors, consolidated dozens of academic programs and imposed a tuition surcharge of $510 to $710 per student.

Such moves raise questions about whether one of the nation's most ambitious university presidents is hitting a wall. But Crow said ASU remains a model for what he calls a "new American university" that can help meet President Obama's goal of returning the nation to world leadership in college completion rates by 2020.

"We're probably too thick-headed to let a temporary economic downturn discourage us, when what we do is more important than ever," Crow said. "We're at the front line of social and economic change for the United States. We're trying to figure out how do you offer the highest-end university to large numbers of students at the lowest possible price."

In-state tuition and fees total $6,844, but officials predict increases in the coming year. They say the school is striving to remain affordable to the widest spectrum of the population.

Sophomore Corbin Smith said academic cutbacks have been noticeable, "but I don't think it hit us as hard as it could have." Tuition, he said, is "very reasonable."

Michael McBeath, a psychology professor, said that the budget cuts were a shock but that he viewed the furlough as a way to help the university and the nation. He said faculty members worry about the possibility of more cuts. "We're still sort of claiming we want to do it all," he said, "and at the same time we're not increasing the resources."
ASU is not alone. The Association of Public and Land-grant Universities reported this month that 85 percent of its members have been hit with state funding cuts. For nearly half, the cuts were 10 percent or more. Federal stimulus money has filled some gaps but not all. And the stopgap funding will run out soon. Last week, University of California regents voted to raise student fees 32 percent in response to state funding cuts.

"There is a disconnect between the high aspirations of the [Obama] administration and the reality of what's going on in our states," said William E. Kirwan, chancellor of the University System of Maryland. "We've got to overcome that. We can't just sit back, wring our hands and close the doors to students."

ASU belongs to a class of four-year public research universities with campuses akin to mid-size cities. Reports show the next largest campus after ASU in Tempe is Ohio State in Columbus, with 55,000 graduate and undergraduate students. Others in the 50,000-plus range include the University of Central Florida in Orlando, the University of Minnesota in the Twin Cities and the University of Texas at Austin.

The University of Maryland in College Park, the largest in the Washington area, has 37,000 students.

In his eighth year at ASU, Crow is known as an innovator, although skeptics say he overreaches. He has jettisoned layers of management to unify ASU's four campuses, promoted research on environmental sustainability and merged academic fields to create interdisciplinary teams. In 2006, geology and astronomy were combined to form the School of Earth and Space Exploration. This year, the same thinking led to creation of the School of Historical, Philosophical and Religious Studies.

ASU also opened a nine-acre campus this year within the Tempe campus. Barrett Honors College aims to be a liberal arts enclave for 2,700 students. Mark Jacobs, dean of the college, said it stands out among 65 or so similar colleges at public universities. He pointed out some of its finer touches: the dining hall with serpentine glass windows and a baby grand piano, the courtyards lined with bougainvillea and palo verde trees, the residential and academic halls built with textured patterns of polished and rough cinderblock.

Best of all in these lean times, Jacobs said, building the $130 million complex barely weighed on the university's bottom line. A developer fronted most construction costs in exchange for a stream of student housing rental income.

"Someone pays all the money. You don't have to raise a cent yourself. And you get to design an entire college campus," Jacobs said. "Imagine!"

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How med students learn from cadavers
A rare peek at how doctors-to-be learn from bodies donated to science
The Associated Press
updated 8:35 a.m. ET, Mon., Nov. 30, 2009

WASHINGTON - Color-coded denim cloths cover the row upon row of black body bags atop cold metal tables. Blue means a body that eventually will go into a common grave. Tan, the family wants those remains back for burial, eventually.

These are bodies donated to science, awaiting one of the most sensitive rites in becoming a doctor. Before first-year medical students lay their hands on the living, they learn anatomy from the dead.

Week after week, for six months, teams of students will file into in a laboratory at Georgetown University to slowly take apart "their" body.

First goes the skin on the back, peeled away from the yellow globs of fat that made up what in life someone may have called love handles.

They lay bare the spinal cord and marvel at how its lower roots resemble the tail of a horse.

Carefully probing a lump inside one chest, a team unearths what at first looks like a metal button — a port through which this man once received chemotherapy.

The room quiets as students unwrap the protective covering over each hand. One torso, they quickly learn, looks pretty much like another. But a hand is unique, somehow more intimate, as they hold it with their own blue-gloved hands. Many of the women's nails still bear polish. One year, shockingly, students found a wedding ring.

"You will be working with somebody's grandmother, father or wife," Dr. Carlos Suarez-Quian tells his 200 students before they unzip those body bags for the first time.

They're beginning a balancing act: How to steel their emotions so they can help people, without losing their compassion.

Dissecting cadavers is an evolving tradition. No, sophisticated simulators and the plastic-infused organs of museum exhibits can't replace seeing and touching and lifting real bodies. In fact, demand is growing for whole-body donations.

What's changing is how they're used. Nearly one-third of medical schools have begun integrating nuts-and-bolts anatomy with clinical training spaced throughout their first year. That means Georgetown students dissect the heart, for example, the same week they begin learning how to tell the "lub-DUB" of a healthy heartbeat from the "lub-SHOOP" of a blocked valve.

"There's a very big difference between talking about chromosomes and having your knife in fat," says student Sarah Buchman of Bethesda, Md., as she eases through fat that, yes, looks like the squishy goo encountered on raw chicken.

**Meeting the cadavers**
Day 1 opens with an interdenominational prayer: "Make us grateful for these gifts these donors have given us," says the Rev. Paul McCarren as students wait silently amid the bodies.

Then Suarez-Quian has some class rules. Wear goggles when sawing bone, he warns. All the medical devices people have implanted today can mean flying bits of metal. And absolutely no photos of the bodies on Facebook.

"We've been anticipating this moment a long time," says Christopher Chen of Irvine, Calif., anxious to get
started. "It hits you — wow, you're a medical student."

But unzipping the lab's 44 body bags brings a surprise, and hesitation. The cadavers aren't lying on their stomachs, ready for students to make their initial cuts on the back. They have to be flipped over. The first lesson: How stiff and heavy a dead body is, especially one filled with at least eight gallons of embalming fluid.

"I was really worried the body would fall off the table," Chen admits.

Finally his team's cadaver is in position, and Chen asks to make the first cut, tracing the faintly visible spine with his scalpel.

"This skin's pretty thick. Can I have the forceps?" he asks, getting adjusted to how much force it can take to penetrate a body.

Suarez-Quian moves from table to table, showing students how to patiently peel back skin and then gently lift the triangular trapezius muscle without accidentally destroying the first nerve they'll encounter, the greater occipital nerve.

"This is not dissection by grenades. You have to go just deep enough," he calls to the room.

He stops to calm a nervous student. "If you make mistakes, that's fine. Your patient's not going to complain."

**Who donates their bodies?**

"All consciousness is past. Use this body well to enhance your knowledge and lessen the pain of another," says a letter one donor wrote to the medical school.

Who donates their bodies? In some programs, women more than men. They come from every demographic. But there are no national statistics or even federal monitoring of whole-body donations, although one estimate suggests there may be 20,000 a year.

This year, Suarez-Quian got a startling phone call a few weeks before class began: The morgue was almost full. Georgetown usually receives about 60 whole-body donations annually yet this year received between 80 and 90.

Schools don't pay for a body donation, but Suarez-Quian still worries that the economy may have played a role — with some families perhaps deciding on donation to avoid funeral costs — instead of a straightforward desire to contribute to science.

There's no evidence of a nationwide donor increase, says Dr. Richard Drake of the Cleveland Clinic, who took an informal survey for the American Association of Anatomists. About half of anatomy programs require that donors themselves, not their surviving relatives, make the decision.

The demand is growing with an increase in medical school enrollment, plus additional programs that use cadavers to allow surgeons, paramedics and other health providers to learn and practice new procedures.

Whole-body donors usually are past retirement age, and because of disease or age can't offer their organs for transplant into someone else. One impediment is weight. Georgetown has quit accepting bodies that weigh more than about 200 pounds. Just last month, the university's embalmer injured his back preparing a heavy cadaver.

Back in the lab, "My hands are getting numb already, " Nicholas Bonazza of Pittsburgh murmurs to his classmates, about 20 minutes into the day's dissection.

Embalmimg fluid is seeping through his surgical gloves. The skin sensation will wear off, reassures Suarez-Quian, but they must wash out their eyes quickly if any splashes.

Bonazza once worked at a funeral home, so "I've seen them," he says of bodies, "but cutting is a very different experience."
Then there's the pungent odor of phenol, a key chemical for long-term preservation. The smell can stimulate saliva, surprising students with feelings of hunger they find inappropriate.

"I couldn't eat meat for a good month or two" after a brief introductory anatomy course over the summer, Buchman says.

Forget the swooning stereotypes. In Suarez-Quian's 23 years teaching anatomy, no student ever fainted before this year. It happened the day the class used electric saws to cut the spine.

Starting on the anonymous back actually eases many students' nerves. A few days later, the bodies are flipped again to start working on the chest. Pretty soon, one team finds hard, irregular breast tissue in an elderly woman. Breast cancer, a student exclaims, although it will take a look under the microscope to be sure.

With bodies age 50 to 93, they'll stumble upon a variety of disease.

"If you don't believe me that smoking causes cancer, trust me, you'll see the evidence here," Suarez-Quian promises the class.

He reminds students to look beyond body structure and not forget "the humanity of anatomy."

Buchman gets the message. "You're going to be working with vulnerable people. There's nothing more vulnerable than a dead body."

Often, the students look over their shoulders to see McCarren, the lead chaplain at this Catholic university. He's there if they want to talk, but also because he's fascinated by this glimpse into the workings of the human body that most people never get.

"You don't lose sight of the mystery of it," McCarren says. "It's very moving — this is a person."

**Those who gave of themselves**

It will be April before these students see their cadavers' faces. The faces are wrapped, in cloth and plastic, to keep the more delicate tissue of the head from drying out. Like with the rest of the body, the skin will be peeled back. They'll remove the skull cap to lift out the brain. Then they'll halve the face, the only way to see sinuses.

"Seeing someone's face is a very tough situation," says Vinny DiMaggio of Brooklyn, N.Y. "It's really a gift" all these donors have given.

He is in charge of organizing a memorial service the class will host for their donors' families in the spring, when dissection is done. That's when students thank families, one on one, for this big step in their education.

About half of the donors' families want the remains returned after dissection is done. Students working on those bodies keep every bit of tissue, for Georgetown to cremate.

The remaining bodies will be cremated, too, although Suarez-Quian retains some organs for additional classes. Those ashes are buried in a local cemetery plot, under a tombstone that reads: "In Memoriam Those who Gave of Themselves that Others Might Benefit.

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