ECU is offering a mentoring program for overweight youth in participation with obesity studies. Mentors Daniel Godil, left, and Alicia Miller, right, play basketball with the youth. Thursday, Dec. 2, 2010. (Aileen Devlin/The Daily Reflector)

Youth obesity studies lack participants
By Kim Grizzard
The Daily Reflector
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As a health sciences professor, Amy Gross McMillan would not dispute statistics that indicate childhood obesity is becoming more prevalent. But, as a scientist, she cannot help but see a contradiction.

Despite the increasing numbers of overweight children, East Carolina University researchers like McMillan are finding fewer such children to participate in studies of childhood obesity.

“Where are all the kids?” asked McMillan, an associate professor in ECU's Department of Physical Therapy. “There's over 30 percent (overweight and obese) kids out there. I see them out there. We know they're out there.”

McMillan, who is conducting research designed to help obese youth move in ways that are safer for their joints, needed 40 children for a study funded by the National Physical Therapy Association. In about a year and a half, she has enrolled 20.

McMillan's peers in exercise physiology and sports science are also struggling to fill the quota of young, overweight participants needed for obesity research.

Mike McCammon, associate director of ECU's Human Performance Laboratory, is looking for overweight participants ages 12-18 to exercise three times a week with a mentor. Like many obesity studies at ECU, McCammon's is operated at no cost to participants and even provides some compensation. But there are few takers.
“Forty percent of the kids in Pitt County are potentially at risk for weight-related illness,” McCammon said. “That's a big number.

“We only need 30,” he said. “We can't even get those right now. I was surprised that we had such an enrollment issue.”

launch an initial exercise mentoring study in 2004, he had no problem recruiting teens to participate. While McCammon is not sure what might have brought about the change, he and other researchers have a number of theories to explain it. One is that parents could be hesitant to enroll their children for fear of having them labeled negatively.

“There's still the social stigma,” McMillan said, adding that she has avoided using the word “obese” on advertising for her current study. “That still has this horrible, negative connotation.”

Robert Hickner, a professor in exercise and sports science, wonders if he and fellow researchers might have saturated the market. Hickner has enrolled more than 100 children ages 8-11 in a study of fat and cardiovascular disease risk. But he still needs another 20-30 participants for the ongoing 16-week study.

“The number of studies throughout the university, people studying childhood obesity, has increased in the last five years,” Hickner said, adding that children are generally prohibited from participating in more than one study at a time.

Hickner, whose National Institutes of Health study involves both overweight and lean children, said he has struggled more to find inactive healthy weight children to participate. He is not sure of all the reasons potential participants shy away. Research indicates that parents of overweight children often misperceive their child's weight as healthy or even light. Other studies show that overweight people often overestimate their activity level.

When people inquire about Hickner's study but do not enroll, he tries to evaluate factors that prevented them from participating. For some, transportation may be an issue. For others, it is the fact that the study is invasive, requiring blood analysis and a process known as microdialysis.

Katrina DuBose has a study that is painless and doesn't require travel. Research being conducted by the assistant professor in the Department of Exercise and Sports Science involves calling patients seen at ECU’s Pediatric Healthy Weight Research and Treatment Center. Researchers phone the students once a week for two months to talk about their activity level, and students are asked to track their movement with a pedometer. Still, DuBose said, getting participants and keeping them is a problem.
“They may not be as interested in being active,” she said. On the other hand, some types of activity can work against obesity studies. Some parents and children DuBose sees simply seem to be involved in too many other things to commit to making exercise a priority.

“Children are highly scheduled,” she said. “I think it's part of the larger problem with the struggles that we have with recruitment is that people are just really busy.”

Contact Kim Grizzard at kgrizzard@reflector.com or (252) 320-9578.
East Carolina University announced on Monday that the first African-American general in the North Carolina National Guard will deliver the commencement address on Dec. 17 at Minges Coliseum.

Brig. Gen. James R. Gorham, an ECU alumnus, is director, Joint Staff, of the North Carolina Joint Force Headquarters in Raleigh. He also serves as commander of the N.C. National Guard Joint Task Force, responsible for joint training and deployment.

Gorham was commissioned as second lieutenant in 1980, following training in the officer candidate school at Fort Bragg. Before receiving his commission, he served as an enlisted member both on active duty and with the North Carolina Army National Guard for a total of six years.

Gorham's recent assignments include support of Operation Iraqi Freedom through service as commander of the 130th Finance Battalion; deputy commander of the 130th Combat Support Brigade (Maneuver Enhanced), commander of the 113th Brigade; and assistant adjutant general — Army, North Carolina National Guard.

He is a recipient of numerous commendations including the Meritorious Service Medal, the Army Commendation Medal, the Army Achievement Medal, the Army Reserve Components Achievement Medal, the Iraq Campaign Medal and the National Defense Service Medal. North Carolina National Guard honors include the Commendation Medal, Governor's Unit Citation and Meritorious Unit Citation.

Gorham is a 1981 graduate of ECU with a bachelor of arts in history. He holds a master of science in strategic studies from the U.S. Army War College. He is a native of Falkland.
The ECU commencement ceremony is scheduled to begin with a band concert at 9:30 a.m. in the Williams Area of Minges Coliseum. The commencement program follows at 10 a.m.

For additional information on the commencement ceremony, visit [http://www.ecu.edu/commencement/](http://www.ecu.edu/commencement/). In addition to the Dec. 17 ceremony, ECU colleges, schools and departments may hold unit recognition ceremonies during the commencement weekend. See [http://www.ecu.edu/commencement/college_school.cfm](http://www.ecu.edu/commencement/college_school.cfm) for those listings.
WASHINGTON, D.C. — The East Carolina football team will continue an era of firsts when the Pirates square off with Maryland for the first time in program history at the Dec. 29 Military Bowl in Washington, D.C.

The 8-4 Terrapins were named as 6-6 ECU’s opponent in the game presented by Northrop Grumman and played at RFK Stadium in a joint announcement by bowl officials and the Atlantic Coast Conference on Sunday night. The D.C. game is set for a 2:30 p.m. kickoff and will be broadcast by ESPN.

“We are looking forward to the challenge of playing Maryland, a tradition-rich program out of a conference which has our highest respect,” said first-year Pirate head coach Ruffin McNeill, the first ECU coach to guide his team to a bowl in his first season with the team. “Coach (Ralph) Friedgen's record and accomplishments speak for themselves, and because of that, I know we'll be facing a quality, disciplined and very well-coached opponent. We are excited to have another opportunity to accomplish something special for this senior class, especially against a team the caliber of Maryland.”

The Pirates will be making a fifth straight bowl appearance for the first time in school history. It will be their seventh bowl since 2000 and 17th overall in program history. ECU returned to bowl play in 2006 for the first time in five years with invitations to the Papajohns.com Bowl and Sheraton Hawaii Bowl (2007) before earning consecutive AutoZone Liberty Bowl berths as C-USA champions in 2008 and 2009.

The Terrapins, who finished in a second-place tie with N.C. State in the ACC's Atlantic Division, return to bowl action after a one-year absence. UM posted victories in the 2006
Champs Sports Bowl (Purdue) and 2008 Roady's Humanitarian Bowl (Nevada), but suffered a setback to Oregon State in the 2007 Emerald Bowl.

The Terps also made bowl appearances in 2001, 2002 and 2003 under 10th-year head coach Friedgen.

Although the Pirates and Terps have never faced off on the gridiron, East Carolina will try to make it two wins in a row against ACC members after handing N.C. State a 33-27 overtime setback Oct. 16. In all, ECU has battled 13 ACC opponents over the last five seasons with series against Virginia Tech (1-3), Virginia (1-1), North Carolina (1-2) and the Wolfpack (2-2).

— ECU Media Relations
East Carolina University's N.C. Teaching Fellows and Maynard Scholars will host a social and toy drive on Dec. 11 at Brook Valley Country Club. The entry fee to the social is an unwrapped toy that will be donated to Pitt County Operation Santa Claus. The scholarship recipients hope to exceed last year's donations, which netted more than 200 presents for Toys for Tots.

In October, this group of 220 students collected more than 1,300 pounds of food for the Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina. They provide annually more than 2,200 hours of free tutoring to public schools and nonprofit organizations.

“It's great to see the impact of what we are doing as a group in our community,” said Lauren Williams, a junior and Teaching Fellow. “When we tutor children, they seem to respond well and get more excited about school. We are grateful for our scholarships and feel it's important to show our appreciation by giving back to the community.”

The N.C. Teaching Fellows Program is a $26,000 service scholarship that is awarded to 500 high school seniors in North Carolina. Recipients agree to work at least four years as a classroom teacher in the state after graduation. The mission of the program is to recruit talented high school graduates into the teaching profession and to help them develop leadership qualities. More information about the ECU Teaching Fellows Program can be found at http://www.ecu.edu/cs-educ/teachfel/.

The ECU Maynard Scholars Program is a $20,000 service scholarship that is awarded to 10 deserving high school seniors in eastern North Carolina each year. Recipients agree to
work at least four years as a classroom teacher in eastern North Carolina after graduation. The Maynard Scholars Program challenges students to see beyond the classroom and to think about the connections of education to the quality of life and the economic survival of our state.

For more information, contact Dionna D. Manning, director of ECU’s Teaching Fellows and Maynard Scholars Program at 328-4126 or manningd@ecu.edu.

**AVID Day challenges students to aim high**

The ECU College of Education recently hosted events aimed at encouraging underachieving middle- and high school students to attend college. The Office of Professional Development and Student Outreach held AVID Days on Nov. 10 and 17 that provided about 400 students with tips for academic success and information on college admission, service-learning, understanding individual personalities and leadership development.

AVID, or Advancing Via Individual Determination, programs at middle and high schools in eastern North Carolina encourage underachieving students to attend college by providing them with opportunities to explore education options after graduation. The students participating in the college access and enrichment activities came from 17 public schools in eastern North Carolina. The theme for each day was “A Quest for Excellence.”

Sessions and events offered opportunities for participants to interact with ECU faculty and students. Virginia Hardy, vice provost for student affairs, gave the keynote address for 193 high school students on Nov. 10, while T. Chanel Sidbury, an instructional coach for Pitt County Schools, gave the keynote for 205 middle-school students on Nov. 17.

Students were encouraged to challenge themselves by daring to fail while working hard to achieve their goals. The days concluded with a campus tour. For more information, contact Christa W. Monroe at monroec@ecu.edu or call the Office of Professional Development at 328-2950.

**Physical Therapy chairman named**

A veteran faculty member and physical therapy consultant to ECU’s athletic program has been named chairman of the Department of Physical Therapy in the College of Allied Health Sciences at ECU.

Dr. Walter Jenkins appointment became effective Nov. 1. He had served as interim department chair twice, and most recently since Jan. 1. “He possesses the personal attributes, professional experience and leadership needed to further advance the department's reputation as an outstanding and nationally recognized program in the scholarship of teaching, research, service, engagement and clinical practice,” said Dr. Stephen Thomas, dean of the College of Allied Health Sciences. “We are indeed fortunate to have him in this key leadership role.”
Jenkins has been a tenured associate professor and associate chair of physical therapy since 2003. He came to ECU in 1995 as a clinical associate professor. His research focus is in the epidemiology and prevention of athletic injury. He also has continued to be clinically active by serving as a physical therapy consultant to the university athletic program.

Before joining ECU, he served as coordinator of sports physical therapy at the Kansas University Medical Center's Sports Medicine Institute, where he was an assistant professor in orthopaedic surgery and physical therapy.

Jenkins received his bachelor of physical education degree from Purdue University in 1977, and a master of science in physical education from West Virginia University in 1979. He was awarded a master of science in physical therapy in 1982, and a doctor of health sciences degree in 2003 from the University of Indianapolis.

Jenkins is course chairman and former vice president of the American Physical Therapy Association's Sports Physical Therapy Section annual team concept meeting. He also has served on several committees with the National Athletic Trainers Association.

**Physician receives research award**

Dr. Laura Barber, a physician and fellow of pulmonary and critical care medicine at the Brody School of Medicine at ECU, received the Young Investigator Award for her research presentation at Chest 2010, the annual meeting of chest physicians held Oct. 30-Nov. 4 in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Barber's research focused on the pulmonary disease sarcoidosis. The study, performed under the mentorship of Dr. Sergio Arce, an assistant professor in the Department of Internal Medicine at ECU, was published Nov. 1 in the online version of Chest, the journal of the American College of Chest Physicians.

Her research found that sarcoidosis patients with reduced levels of a protein called p65 also had more severe disease, responded poorly to steroid therapy and had frequent multi-organ illness. Thus, the research team proposes measuring the levels of p65 protein in sarcoid T-cells to help identify patients likely to develop more active or severe disease and who likely will respond poorly to steroid therapy. Identifying these patients will help prevent steroid toxicity and begin alternative therapies earlier.

Barber is a graduate of Cordoba National University in Argentina and completed residency training in internal medicine at ECU.

**Upcoming Events:**

Today: ECU School of Music holiday concert featuring seasonal favorites performed by the University Chorale and the ECU Symphonic Wind Ensemble and a visit from Santa. 3 p.m., Wright Auditorium. Free. Call 328-6851 for more information.
Tuesday & Wednesday: Pirates Treasure Drop-off, 10 a.m.- 4 p.m., Willis Building, corner of First and Reade Streets. Instead of trashing reusable items, students are encouraged to drop-off unwanted household goods, etc. For more information, contact Off-campus Student Services via email: ocss@ecu.edu.

See www.ecu.edu/cs-ecu/calendar.cfm for times, places and more information on these events and other ECU upcoming activities.
Dr. Susan Maxwell Bane of Greenville recently was recognized with a 2010 Barton College Alumni Achievement Award, presented at the Alumni Awards Brunch during the college's Homecoming celebration.

Bane is a 1987 graduate of Atlantic Christian College (now Barton College). Her husband, Art Bane, also from the Class of 1987, introduced Dr. Bane at the awards ceremony.

Bane practices obstetrics and gynecology in Greenville. In addition to her medical practice, she serves as a clinical professor at the Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University, where she teaches medical students and undergraduate students. Bane also serves as an adjunct professor in the Department of Exercise and Sports Science at ECU.

A native of Currituck County, Bane graduated in 1987 with a bachelor of science degree in chemistry. She completed a master of science degree and a Ph.D. in kinesiology from the University of Illinois in 1989 and 1995, respectively.

Bane earned her medical degree from the University of Illinois in 1997, and she completed her residency in obstetrics and gynecology at the Brody School of Medicine in 2001.

As a student-athlete, Bane earned all-conference and all-district tennis titles as well as being recognized as an honorable mention All-American and an academic All-American. Her on-the-court accomplishments led to her induction into the Barton College Athletics Hall of Fame in 1998.

Involved in a variety of community service programs, Bane serves as a volunteer coach and has developed sportsmanship programs for area athletics organizations including
Farmville Middle School and the Pitt County Girls Softball League. Because her 7-year-old son, Max, has autism, Bane has also become an advocate for autism awareness.

Bane is the daughter of Mary Ellen Maxwell of Currituck County and the late Bob Maxwell. She and Art have two sons — Archer, a freshman at Barton, and Max — and one daughter, Riley.
Dr. Jan Wong, a cancer surgeon, has joined the Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University and its group medical practice, ECU Physicians. Wong joined East Carolina University as a professor of surgery and is director of the Breast Care Center. A native of Hawaii, he comes to Greenville from Loma Linda University in California, where he was chief of surgical oncology.

Wong also has worked at the University of California at Los Angeles, where he helped developed sentinel node surgery, and at the University of Hawaii. Wong has a bachelor's degree from Stanford University and a medical degree from Rush Medical College in Chicago. He completed residency training and a cancer fellowship at Oregon Health Sciences University. He also completed a fellowship in surgical oncology at UCLA.

Wong is certified by the American Board of Surgery. His clinical interest is breast cancer, and his research interest is examining the biologic, lifestyle, quality of treatment, and health system factors that contribute to differences in breast cancer outcomes. Wong sees patients at ECU's Leo W. Jenkins Cancer Center at 600 Moye Blvd.

Appointments are available by calling 744-5418.
James Kleckley, director of the Bureau of Business Research at East Carolina University, has been appointed to the Association for University Business and Economic Research (AUBER) board of directors for 2010-11.

Kleckley also is a research associate professor in the Department of Finance and teaches an MBA-level economics course. His work focuses primarily on regional economics, and he has conducted local economic analyses since the mid-1970s as both a private consultant and as a research faculty member at the University of South Carolina, University of Florida, Oklahoma State University and ECU.

Kleckley serves as one of approximately 50 national economic forecasters who regularly participate in the National Association for Business Economics Macroeconomic Forecasting Panel. He obtained his PhD at the University of South Carolina in 1984.

“I am proud to serve on AUBER’s board of directors, and I look forward to continuing to help both business and government better understand the strategic uses of economic information,” Kleckley said. “The insight we can help provide about the economy is particularly important during this period of economic uncertainty.”

Founded in 1947, AUBER is the professional association of business and economic research organizations in public and private universities. The group seeks to continually improve the quality, effectiveness and application of research in business, economics and public policy.
AUBER is based in Missoula, Mont.
Dr. John W. Gibbs III and Dr. Susan Boutilier of East Carolina Neurology have been named best doctors in North Carolina for 2010-11 by Best Doctors Inc.

Best Doctors, headquartered in Boston, polls more than 30,000 physicians across the country annually, asking whom they would choose to treat them or their families. These medical experts have been named to the “Best Doctors” category themselves and are aware of the stringent guidelines that promote the “best of the best.”

Founded in 1989 by two Harvard Medical School-affiliated physicians, Best Doctors seeks out physician experts in more than 400 specialties and sub-specialties throughout the world. This year, 1,600 physicians were recognized in North Carolina, including doctors in 49 specialties, as reported on BusinessNC.com. The number is 168 more physicians than were chosen from North Carolina last year.

Gibbs is one of 63 physicians noted in the specialty area of neurology. This is the third year he has been recognized, receiving the same honor in 2007-08 and 2009-10. Gibbs joined East Carolina Neurology, the largest neurological medical practice in eastern North Carolina, in 2004. He attended the Medical College of Virginia of Virginia Commonwealth, where he received his PhD and MD. He completed his residency at Duke University Medical Center, where he also served as chief resident and later became a Fellow in neurophysiology.

His areas of medical interest include sleep medicine, epilepsy, and equilibrium disorders and dizziness. Gibbs serves as assistant clinic professor of medicine at the Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University.

Boutilier was one of only four doctors in the state recognized in the category of pediatric sleep medicine. Joining East Carolina Neurology in 1998, Boutilier's range of educational experience includes a bachelor of science degree in nursing from the University of Vermont, a medical degree from the Davis School of Medicine from the University of California, and dual residencies in pediatrics and child neurology at Duke University Medical Center.

In addition to her post at East Carolina Neurology, Boutilier is a clinical instructor of pediatrics in the Department of Pediatrics at the Brody School of Medicine.

Appointments with Gibbs, Boutilier or another of the ECN providers can be made by calling 752-4848. Visit www.ecneurology.com for more information.
Erskine Bowles, the president of the University of North Carolina, resurrected perhaps his greatest role of a long and varied career this week - that of a skilled bipartisan negotiator seeking to put the nation's financial house in order.

Bowles, as co-chairman of President Barack Obama's deficit commission, defied expectations by cobbling together a majority for a series of painful spending cuts and tax increases designed to address the nation's growing deficit.

In doing so, Bowles becomes part of a tradition of UNC presidents taking national assignments - from investigating sports scandals to examining the security clearance for the father of the atom bomb to negotiating labor agreements during World War II.

The deficit commission was a reprise of a role Bowles played in 1997 when as President Bill Clinton's chief of staff, he helped midwife the last balanced federal budget, by negotiating a deal with House Speaker Newt Gingrich and Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott, both Republicans.

This time, he managed to get such ideological opposites as Republican Tom Coburn of Oklahoma and Democrat Dick Durbin of Illinois to sign on.

"He has set a framework on where we need to go as a country," said Nelson Schwab, of Charlotte, who co-founded Carousel Capital with Bowles. "You can argue some of the specifics. But if we don't do something like this, we are never going to solve our problem."

While Bowles and his co-chairman, former Sen. Alan Simpson of Wyoming, were able to get 11 of 18 commission members to approve the recommendations, they fell short of the super majority of 14 needed to adopt it.
Bowles told reporters that the commission had enabled the nation's leaders to have "an adult conversation about the deficit," adding that he believed its various recommendations would be considered as Congress prepared its budgets.

"The era of deficit denial is over," Bowles said earlier this week.

But Bowles did not have the success he had in 1997.

"I think we now have had 13 years of bitterness and division accumulating so the task is tougher this time," Schwab said. "But the need is greater, frankly. We have got to solve these problems."

In an age of hyperpartisanship, Bowles has been a political moderate who easily works across party lines.

Although a member of one of North Carolina's most prominent Democratic families, Bowles has spent his career moving in Republican circles as an investment banker and now sitting on the boards of General Motors and Morgan Stanley.

The late Sen. Jesse Helms was an old family friend; legislative Republicans enthusiastically backed him for the UNC post; and Republican Sen. Richard Burr prominently displayed Bowles' quotes praising him on his campaign website this year.

But Bowles was never able to translate his brand of moderation into political office, losing Senate races to Burr in 2004 and Sen. Elizabeth Dole in 2002.

The fact that Bowles seems unlikely to run for political office again freed him to help propose politically difficult solutions that would require real sacrifice on the part of citizens - something that most budget experts say will be necessary to avert a debt crisis, but something that most political candidates are afraid to talk about for fear of offending voter sensibilities. Bowles is not the first UNC president to play a role in Washington.

UNC has long been one of the nation's most prestigious universities, headed by leaders of national stature who are called upon to play roles on the national stage.
William Friday (1956-86) was co-chairman of the Knight Commission, which in 1989 sought to clean up the scandals in college sports by recommending a series of reforms designed to emphasize academic values.

Gordon Gray (1950-55) led a committee appointed by Atomic Energy Commission Chairman Lewis Strauss, which recommended revoking the security clearance for Robert Oppenheimer, the father of the atomic bomb, because of his earlier associations with communists while teaching at University of California, Berkeley.

Gray was secretary of the Army under President Harry Truman before going to Chapel Hill and later became national security adviser to President Dwight Eisenhower among other jobs after leaving the UNC post.

Frank Porter Graham (1930-1949) had almost two full-time jobs during World War II, spending his week in Washington and commuting home by train every weekend to Chapel Hill.

President Franklin Roosevelt named him to the War Labor Board, where he helped settle disputes between organized labor and industry from 1942 to 1945.

After a 12-hour negotiating session with Graham, John L. Lewis of the United Mine Workers asked: "Who locked me in with that sweet little SOB?"

Secretary of State George Marshall in 1947 named Graham to a three-person United Nations team to negotiate a truce between the Dutch and the anti-colonialist forces in the Dutch East Indies. Graham spent several months in Southeast Asia hammering out a truce that would eventually lead to an independent Indonesia.

Bowles was following a well-worn path.

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By JOHN VORWALD
Like many college radio stations across the country, Rice University’s KTRU and Vanderbilt University’s WRVU play a broad swath of music — from undiscovered indie bands and obscure blues acts to ’60s garage rock and ’80s postpunk. It’s a mix largely absent from commercial broadcasts, and students active in radio say their stations add distinct voices to their cities’ broadcast landscape.

But as colleges across the country look for ways to tighten budgets amid recession-induced shortfalls, some administrators — most recently in the South — have focused on college radio, leading even well-endowed universities to sell off their FM stations. That trend was felt this summer at Rice and Vanderbilt, among the most prominent of Southern universities, stirring debate about the viability of broadcast radio, the reach of online broadcasting and the value of student broadcast programming.
“We play music that you won’t find on any other Houston radio station” said Joey Yang, a junior at Rice and station manager for KTRU. “KTRU’s mission is to broadcast exactly what you can’t find elsewhere on the dial.”

Scott Cardone, a sophomore disk jockey at WRVU with a two-hour electric blues show, pointed to the potential void in Nashville if Vanderbilt’s FM signal were to be sold. “The community will lose what probably is the last radio station playing anything other than country, Christian or Top 40 in the whole city,” he said. “You can’t hear the music that we play anywhere else.”

At the center of public discussion are “student habits” — or whether students are actually tuning in to the universities’ FM signals.

In September, Vanderbilt Student Communications, the corporate body that oversees Vanderbilt University media, released a statement announcing it would explore the migration of its student-run radio station to exclusively online programming. The exploration, which was voted on by a board of five at-large students and three faculty members, was a response to “changing student habits and evolving economic challenges,” according to a statement by the group.

In August, Rice announced the decision to sell student-founded station KTRU — its 50,000-watt FM frequency, broadcast tower and F.C.C. license — to the University of Houston, for $9.5 million. In a statement, David W. Leebron, the president of Rice, called the station a “vastly underutilized resource.”

The announcements at Rice and Vanderbilt highlight a stream of college radio station closings in recent years, including KTXT at Texas Tech University in 2008 and Augustana College’s KAUR in South Dakota in 2009.

While officials at both Rice and Vanderbilt emphasize that the stations will continue to broadcast online, Mr. Yang believes the loss of a terrestrial signal will effectively delegitimize KTRU.

“As a 50,000-watt station that can be heard all across Houston, there’s a sense of responsibility to the community,” he said. “When you lose a terrestrial footprint in Houston — anyone can put out a signal that’s on the Internet — it takes away the legitimacy of what we’re trying to do.”
Despite obvious parallels between KTRU and WRVU, Chris Carroll, director of student media at Vanderbilt Student Communications, draws a stark contrast between the situations at the two universities. At Vanderbilt, he said, “what’s happening, really, is a big public discussion about is this a good idea or not, and there’s no conclusion to that yet.” Rice, he said, made the decision to sell KTRU behind closed doors — without student input. Mr. Carroll, who does not vote on the organization’s board, contends that students just don’t listen to terrestrial radio anymore.

“We will pull a random sample of Vanderbilt undergrads — of 500 or so at a time. And what we’ve found is that these students aren’t listening to radio at all. It’s not just WRVU,” he said. Instead, students are listening on mobile devices like smartphones and laptops, both of which are more readily serviced by the Internet, he said.

Mr. Cardone acknowledges that WRVU’s audience may be thinner on campus than off, but he believes the station justifies its value as one of the only relevant connections between the students and the city. According to Arbitron, a media and marketing research firm that measures local radio audiences, the station reaches just over 30,000 people each week in greater Nashville.

After a tumultuous summer, groups focused on saving the stations have mobilized at both campuses. Both have Web sites — savektru.org and savewrvu.org — and Facebook pages to gather comments and provide updates.

Friends of KTRU, a group opposed to selling the station, retained the Paul Hastings firm to represent it, and on Friday, the group filed a petition to deny with the F.C.C., claiming the sale was not in the public interest.

At Vanderbilt, Mr. Carroll says the WRVU page on vandymedia.org, an umbrella site for the campus student media, has garnered more than 700 comments. He says he will sort them into common themes before the board reviews them early next year.
Doctor Faces Suits Over Cardiac Stents
By GARDINER HARRIS

Word quickly reached top executives at Abbott Laboratories that a Baltimore cardiologist, Dr. Mark Midei, had inserted 30 of the company’s cardiac stents in a single day in August 2008, “which is the biggest day I remember hearing about,” an executive wrote in a celebratory e-mail.

Two days later, an Abbott sales representative spent $2,159 to buy a whole, slow-smoked pig, peach cobbler and other fixings for a barbecue dinner at Dr. Midei’s home, according to a report being released Monday by the Senate. The dinner was just a small part of the millions in salary and perks showered on Dr. Midei for putting more stents in more patients than almost any other cardiologist in Baltimore.

The Senate Finance Committee, which oversees Medicare, started investigating Dr. Midei in February after a series of articles in The Baltimore Sun said that Dr. Midei at St. Joseph Medical Center, in Towson, Md., had inserted stents in patients who did not need them, reaping high reimbursements from Medicare and private insurance.

The senators solicited 10,000 documents from Abbott and St. Joseph. Their report, provided in advance to The New York Times, concludes that Dr. Midei “may have implanted 585 stents which were medically unnecessary” from 2007 to 2009. Medicare paid $3.8 million of the $6.6 million charged for those procedures.

The report also describes the close relationship between Dr. Midei and Abbott Labs, which paid consulting fees to the cardiologist after he left the hospital. “The serious allegations lodged against Dr. Midei regarding the medically unnecessary implantation of cardiac stents did not appear to deter Abbott’s interest in assisting him,” the report states.

The case has turned into a legal quagmire for Dr. Midei and St. Joseph, which have been sued by hundreds of patients who claim they received unnecessary implants. Some doctors say the case has revealed a level of inappropriate care that is more common than most patients know.

“What was going on in Baltimore is going on right now in every city in America,” said Dr. Steven Nissen, chief of cardiovascular medicine at the Cleveland Clinic, who said he routinely treats patients who have been given multiple unneeded stents. “We’re spending a fortune as a country on procedures that people don’t need.”

Dr. Midei’s lawyer, Stephen L. Snyder, said that his client’s treatment of his patients was entirely appropriate and that Dr. Midei, who has recently practiced medicine at the Prince Salman Heart Center in Saudi Arabia, would be exonerated.
“This is all trumped up to hide the hospital’s criminal conduct,” said Mr. Snyder, who filed a $60 million lawsuit against St. Joseph on Dr. Midei’s behalf accusing the hospital of damaging Dr. Midei’s reputation by making false claims about his care. (The hospital responded that the assessments of Dr. Midei’s care were done by independent experts.)

Last month, St. Joseph agreed to pay a $22 million fine to settle charges that it paid illegal kickbacks to Dr. Midei’s medical practice, MidAtlantic Cardiovascular Associates, in exchange for patient referrals; the hospital did not admit wrongdoing. St. Joseph said in a statement Friday that it now conducts monthly random reviews of stent cases “to assure such a situation cannot occur again.”

As for Abbott Labs, a spokesman wrote in an e-mail that its affiliation with Dr. Midei ended early this year. “Dr. Midei has been a highly regarded physician in his field, with whom Abbott had consulted in the past,” said the spokesman, Jonathan Hamilton. “We have no further comment at this time.”

The case has had wide repercussions. Over the past year, St. Joseph has told hundreds of Dr. Midei’s patients that they did not need the expensive and potentially dangerous stents that the doctor inserted because their arteries were not as obstructed as he had claimed.

Now, state health officials are investigating other local cardiologists who inserted a suspiciously high number of stents, which are tiny wire mesh devices inserted to prop open clogged arteries in the heart.

After reports about the Midei case and the wider state investigation, the number of stent procedures performed at St. Joseph and other area hospitals plunged, raising doubts about the appropriateness of much of the region’s cardiac care.

A landmark 2007 study published in The New England Journal of Medicine showed that many patients given stents would fare just as well without them. Dr. Christopher J. White, president-elect of the Society for Cardiovascular Angiography and Interventions, said that inappropriate stenting was a problem, but a rare one. The federal Medicare program spent $3.5 billion last year on stent procedures.

Prosecutors, malpractice lawyers and state medical boards are only now waking up to the issue. The Texas Medical Board last month accused a widely known cardiologist in Austin of inserting unnecessary stents. In September, federal prosecutors accused a cardiologist in Salisbury, Md., of performing unnecessary stent surgeries, and last year a Louisiana doctor was sentenced to 10 years in prison for inserting unneeded stents.

J. Stephen Simms, a Baltimore lawyer who successfully pursued a federal whistle-blower lawsuit involving kickbacks for coronary procedures, said such cases were “the flavor of the month right now” with federal prosecutors.
Jay Miller, another Baltimore lawyer, said he was devoting his entire practice to unnecessary stent cases. “And I don’t think this is limited to just a few Maryland hospitals,” Mr. Miller said.

But far from questioning cardiologists who perform an unusually high number of stent procedures, many hospital executives celebrate these doctors because of the revenue they bring, which can be more than $10,000 per procedure.

“Hospital patients expect their care to be based on medical need, not profits,” said Senator Max Baucus, Democrat of Montana and chairman of the Finance Committee. “Even more disconcerting is that this could be a sign of a larger national trend of wasteful medical device use.”

Dr. Midei’s fall was as rapid as it was dramatic. In a June deposition for a lawsuit against him, he said: “I didn’t know what hit me. I was bewildered by what had happened.”

He had been one of the most sought-after clinicians in his region. Trained at Johns Hopkins University, he was a co-founder of MidAtlantic, a practice with dozens of cardiologists that controlled much of the cardiac business in Baltimore’s private hospitals. Dr. Midei was one of the practice’s stars.

When MidAtlantic negotiated a $25 million merger with Union Hospital in 2007, the deal was contingent on his continued employment.

St. Joseph was so concerned about losing Dr. Midei’s business that the hospital offered a $1.2 million salary if he would leave MidAtlantic and join the hospital’s staff. When Dr. Midei agreed, the merger with Union collapsed, MidAtlantic sued, and the practice’s former chief executive vowed in a deposition to “spend the rest of my life trying to destroy him personally and professionally.”

In the June deposition, Dr. Midei estimated that in 2005 — before research revealed that many stents were unnecessary — he performed about 800 stent procedures. Instead of dropping in subsequent years, however, the number of stents Dr. Midei inserted rose to as many as 1,200 annually, he estimated. In a 2007 internal document, Abbott Laboratories ranked Dr. Midei’s use of stents behind only five other cardiologists in the Northeast, including those at hospitals four and five times St. Joseph’s size.

That sort of increase in volume was an obvious red flag, said Dr. William E. Boden, clinical chief of the division of cardiovascular medicine at the University of Buffalo and an author of the 2007 stent study. “For him to have this brisk increase over those years is really unusual,” Dr. Boden said.

In stable patients, stents should be used only if X-rays show that most of the artery is blocked, and the patient has symptoms like frequent chest pain.
Stent procedures can, in rare cases, cause bleeding, stroke or a heart attack. Once a stent is placed, it can result in a life-threatening clot that emerges weeks to months later. Stent patients must spend a year or more taking blood-thinning medications, which have their own risks.

In April 2009, a patient of Dr. Midei’s who was also a St. Joseph employee complained that he had received an unneeded stent and that many other patients had as well. The hospital engaged a panel of experts who reviewed 1,878 cases from January 2007 to May 2009 and found that 585 patients might have received unnecessary stents.

When asked to review the cases himself, Dr. Midei found far less blockage than he had initially, according to the Maryland Board of Physicians. The hospital suspended his privileges and eventually sent letters to all 585 patients. Hundreds of lawsuits against Dr. Midei and St. Joseph followed, including from patients treated well before January 2007.

Abbott responded to the controversy by hiring Dr. Midei as a consultant.

“It’s the right thing to do because he helped us so many times over the years,” an Abbott executive wrote in a January e-mail cited in the Senate report.

The company sent Dr. Midei to Japan, but news of the controversy made his duties impossible, and he flew home. After one particularly critical story in The Baltimore Sun, David C. Pacitti, an Abbott executive, wrote in an e-mail, “Someone needs to take this writer out and kick his ass!”

Edward Chaid, 68, a semiretired general contractor from Timonium, Md., is among those who have sued. Five years ago, Mr. Chaid decided to get his first physical examination in decades. Just to be safe, his doctor sent him for a cardiac stress test at MidAtlantic, which revealed a small “squiggle” of concern, Mr. Chaid said. He was sent to Dr. Midei to get his arteries X-rayed, and he emerged from the procedure with two stents.

“Dr. Midei said: ‘You sure are lucky. You had 90 percent blockage.’ And the nurse said, ‘Oh yeah, you were blocked in your widow-maker.’ And I said: ‘Thank God. I guess I’m really lucky you got it when you did,’ ” Mr. Chaid said in an interview.

Five years later, another doctor concluded that Mr. Chaid’s blockage had been minimal. “I was really shocked,” Mr. Chaid said. “I’m from a generation where doctors are thought very highly of.”

But Mr. Snyder, Dr. Midei’s lawyer, said that his client’s care had been entirely appropriate, that doctors often interpret X-rays differently and that St. Joseph was using him as a scapegoat. A Web site created by friends of Dr. Midei lists dozens of testimonials like this one: “Plain and simple, Dr. Midei saved my life.”