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252-328-6481
ECU asks for OK to release firing details

BY JANE STANCILL - jstancill@newsobserver.com

GREENVILLE–An East Carolina University official said Wednesday that the school is seeking consent from Paul Isom, former director of student media, to release confidential personnel information to describe the process that led to Isom's firing.

Isom was dismissed from his role as student media adviser last week, two months after The East Carolinian newspaper published nude photos of a streaker at an ECU football game. Free press and student rights groups have come to the defense of Isom in the past week.

A statement from ECU's attorney, Donna Gooden Payne, said ECU continues to disagree with statements by advocacy groups that connect the decision with a First Amendment issue.

"A fuller knowledge of the facts at hand will help distinguish between any personnel matter and the First Amendment," said Mary Schulken, ECU's director of public affairs.

Isom said he was not informed about the consent request before ECU released it to the media. He has said that when he was fired, he was given the vague explanation that ECU wanted to move in a different direction.

"If they have an explanation to provide to the rest of the world, show it to me first," he said in an e-mail. "I'll decide whether or not I'll waive my rights after I see their explanation. ... This is an insulting way to treat a member of the ECU community."

Isom still teaches a class at ECU as an adjunct faculty member.

Several groups have called for ECU to reinstate Isom, including the Student Press Law Center, the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education and the National Press Photographers Association.

Stancill: 919-829-4559
ECU attempts to clarify response

By Jackie Drake

East Carolina University is seeking permission to release confidential information about the student media adviser it fired Jan. 4.

The university said in a statement Wednesday it is seeking the consent to describe the process used to dismiss Paul Isom.

Isom was fired two months after The East Carolinian printed unaltered photos of a streaker at a football game.

ECU continues to disagree with reports and statements by advocacy groups that connect that decision with a First Amendment issue, its statement said.

“A fuller knowledge of the facts at hand will help distinguish between any personnel matter and the First Amendment,” Mary Schulken, director of public affairs, said.

The College Media Association on Tuesday and the National Press Photographers Association on Wednesday joined other groups concerned that the dismissal was retaliatory.

The CMA has launched an inquiry into the situation, according to an announcement posted Tuesday on its website.

The National Press Photographers Association sent an email dated Wednesday asking that Isom be reinstated, according to president Sean Elliot.

The Foundation for Individual Rights in Education sent a letter to ECU dated Jan. 6 asking for Isom’s reinstatement, and the Student Press Law Center sent a letter via email Monday.

On Tuesday, ECU issued a statement that it was concerned the dismissal had been connected to the First Amendment, but did not specify why Isom had been fired. Tuesday’s statement called the action “deliberate, correct and legal.”

Donna Gooden Payne, university attorney, said Wednesday the university will seek permission from Isom to release his confidential personnel information.

Isom told The Daily Reflector on Tuesday his personnel file contained no blemishes and he would make it public.

Contact Jackie Drake at jdrake@reflector.com or 252-329-9567.
First lady Michelle Obama announced collaboration that will increase training and research on brain injuries and PTSD

By Drew Brooks
Staff writer

Medical schools across the country have joined a White House-led effort to better prepare future doctors for treating the next generation of veterans.

A total of 130 medical and osteopathic schools, representing nearly 80 percent of the nation's medical students, will be involved in the initiative announced Wednesday by first lady Michelle Obama.

Three schools in North Carolina are involved in the initiative: the Wake Forest School of Medicine, the Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Medicine.

The collaboration is part of the Joining Forces campaign, an initiative led by Obama and Dr. Jill Biden that focuses on issues affecting veterans and their families.
Obama's announcement came after a tour of the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine, which is among the institutions included in the collaboration.

With an audience dressed in equal parts Army camouflage or white lab coats, Obama said the collaboration would "make sure that our heroes receive care that is worthy of their service."

As a result of the collaboration, medical schools will include more course work on post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injuries, officials said in a conference call Tuesday.

"Everyone is stepping up," Obama said while highlighting the ongoing work of researchers at some of the colleges involved in the initiative.

She said a willingness to help veterans was strong across the nation and extended beyond Veterans Day parades and rallies on Fort Bragg.

Obama said the "hidden wounds" faced by many veterans were the "most difficult struggle they will face."

She said it was important for the nation's physicians to understand the mental health challenges involved.

"Mere words and anecdotes don't do any of this justice," she said.

The Defense Department estimates that nearly 213,000 military personnel have suffered traumatic brain injuries in Iraq and Afghanistan since 2000.

An earlier report by the Rand Corp. think tank estimated that 300,000 veterans of both conflicts suffered PTSD or major depression. Fewer than half had sought treatment for PTSD over the preceding year and nearly 60 percent of those reporting a probable brain injury weren't evaluated by a physician for one.

**Signature injuries**

Brad Cooper, executive director of Joining Forces, said PTSD and TBI were the signature injuries of the latest generation of veterans.

One in five veterans suffers from one or the other, Cooper said, and nearly half of those affected seek help outside the military health care system.

The collaboration is aimed at bettering understanding in communities that may not have large military populations.

"We've got to meet our veterans where they live," Cooper said. "This is really just the beginning."

Obama reiterated that message.
"No matter where you are or what you're going through, please know that America will be there for you and your families," she told troops gathered for the speech.

The efforts, which will not involve any direct federal funding, include shared research and clinical trials around the country.

John Prescott, chief academic officer of the AAMC, said the goal was to ensure that young physicians are more familiar with the "hidden wounds" suffered by many of the nation's recent veterans.

"Because of our integrated missions in education, clinical care and research, America's medical schools are uniquely positioned to take a leadership role in this important effort," Dr. Darrell G. Kirch, president and CEO of the AAMC, said in a release. "Medical schools have long recognized the sacrifice and commitment of our military, veterans and their families."

"The relationship between the Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers and academic medicine dates back to the end of World War II and serves as a model for successful partnerships between public and private institutions," Kirch said. "Our work with the White House on Joining Forces is a natural extension of our efforts in this area and renews our commitment to the wellness of our nation's military."

**N.C. schools**

Researchers at all three of the North Carolina schools already are involved in studying PTSD or TBI, officials said, but hoped to increase their efforts through the collaboration.

Prescott said that while some schools included military health among their curriculums - he highlighted Wake Forest University as one that did great work in the area - many do not.

At Wake Forest, the university's Baptist Medical Center already has teamed with the Department of Veterans Affairs to research those issues.

"PTSD and mild TBI are serious problems for our vets coming home from Iraq and Afghanistan," Dwayne W. Godwin, a neuroscientist at Wake Forest Baptist, said in a release. "It's a problem that will only continue to grow in the future as our troops return home from these conflicts. This challenge provides a unique opportunity to learn more about this disorder from data that exists on a well-defined pool of patients who have been medically evaluated and tested."

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

Staff writer Drew Brooks can be reached at brooksd@fayobserver.com or 486-3567.
Former University of North Carolina President Bill Friday.

**Friday: UNC system needs to make do with less**

Chapel Hill, N.C. — Longtime University of North Carolina President Bill Friday said Wednesday that he would prefer that the system's 16 university campuses make the needed cuts to staff and programs to avoid the hefty tuition increases they have proposed.

Friday is backing an effort by at least 20 former members of the system's Board of Governors to urge the current board to reject tuition increases requested by every campus for the coming year.

The group signed a three-page statement that was sent to the board before it meets Thursday in Chapel Hill. The board is expected to begin reviewing tuition proposals but isn't expected to vote on any until February, at the earliest.

University officials say they need the added tuition revenue to make up for deep cuts in state funding in recent years, which have forced them to cut staff and programs.

UNC-Chapel Hill has proposed raising tuition by 40 percent over the next five years, while North Carolina State University wants to increase tuition by 9 percent next year and more in subsequent years. East Carolina
University, North Carolina Central University and other campuses are also seeking increases in excess of a 6.5 percent cap put in place several years ago.

Because state lawmakers didn't adequately fund higher education, Friday said, it's up to university administrators to make tough decisions. He suggested cutting course offerings and increasing class sizes.

"That's not the best thing, but it's the choice that has to be made, and you make it because you don't have any other way of doing it," he said.

Large tuition increases shouldn't be considered, he said, noting UNC campuses requested an increase only once during his 30 years as president. Lawmakers imposed increases in other years, he said.

"It can be done. We did it," Friday said of making do without raising tuition.

The North Carolina constitution mandates that university tuition be kept as low as possible for in-state students, and Friday said the proposed tuition increases disregard that.

"The constitution is quite explicit," he said. "Keeping these institutions strong and vital and open is the future of North Carolina."

Students had mixed feelings on trading lower tuition payments for larger classes.

"Personally, I learn better in a small classroom environment, so that's what I prefer," said Maria Lopez, a freshman at N.C. State.

"I've been in some large classes, some small classes, and they both worked out fine for me. So, for me, that would be fine," N.C. State freshman Currey Nobles said.
Letter: Adviser's firing a loss for students

It is with great sadness that I read of Student Media Adviser Paul Isom’s firing from ECU for allowing his students to exercise their First Amendment rights. While their judgment on publishing the pictures that caused this rift may be questionable, they had every right to do so as most have acknowledged.

My son worked with Isom for two years as both co-editor and primary editor of the Rebel, the student literary and arts publication. Those editions (50 and 51) went on to receive numerous awards on both the state and national level for excellence in student publications. Isom’s mentorship and advising were obviously key to these publications being recognized as some of the best student work in the nation.

Unfortunately ECU needed a scapegoat for this incident and it fell on Isom’s shoulders. It is truly a shame that a person of his dedication to helping our students excel in their chosen fields was punished for doing so.

This move by ECU has greater implications and is already a topic of discussion in the journalism field. His firing was unjust, unfair and purely a political decision on the part of ECU.

I wish him luck in challenging this decision. If ECU does not revisit this termination, I have no doubt Isom will find employment at a college or university that values him, his encouragement and the excellence his students will rise to under his guidance.

STEVE SCHWING
Greenville
ECU earns top spots in survey

Two colleges at East Carolina University earned top-20 spots in a new ranking of online education programs in U.S. News & World Report.

The national magazine released its first Top Online Education Programs ranking on Tuesday, saying online enrollment in the U.S. is at an all-time high with more than 6.1 million students.

ECU’s College of Nursing ranked 18 out of 79 master’s or doctorate of nursing practice programs, and the online MBA curriculum in the College of Business ranked 17 out of 161 graduate business programs. The results are available at www.usnews.com.

U.S. News ranked 523 online master’s degree programs in business, engineering, nursing, education and computer information in four categories: admissions selectivity, student engagement and accreditation, faculty credentials and training, and student services and technology.

Programs had to have at least 80 percent of their course content available online to be considered.

U.S. News said that the number of students enrolled in online degrees is growing rapidly, noting a doubling of enrollment between 2007 and 2011 driven in part by a competitive job market and stagnant economy.

“Those prospective students — a very large proportion of whom are working adults — lack needed information to help them determine the relative strengths and weaknesses between online degree programs that they are considering attending,” the magazine said. “U.S. News undertook this project in an effort to begin filling the information gap,”

The College of Nursing has been consistently named since 2004 by U.S. News as one of the largest distance education programs in the country. But the new ranking assesses qualitative categories over size.

“We are so pleased to receive this national recognition for our online graduate program,” Nursing Dean Sylvia Brown said a news release from East Carolina University.

“Our faculty and staff work diligently to maintain a quality program and to provide support equivalent to services on campus. Our program provides
both hands-on clinical and virtual experiences that simulate the clinical environment using cutting edge technology.”

Nursing offers seven online master’s degree options: adult nurse practitioner, clinical nurse specialist, family nurse practitioner, neonatal nurse practitioner, nursing education, nursing leadership and nurse midwifery.

Of 504 total students enrolled in the Master of Science in Nursing program, 446 or 88 percent are distance education students.

The online program in the College of Business developed from a single course offering in 1998 to undergraduate and graduate degrees in numerous concentrations today. More than 800 students are enrolled in the online MBA program.

“In a world with increasing ‘diploma mills,’ we are proud that the College of Business continues to maintain its high quality standards,” said Stanley Eakins, dean of the College of Business.

“We strive to prepare both faculty to teach online and students to learn online while using a variety of technological and instructive methods to do so. It’s no surprise the College of Business is looked upon as a leader in distance education innovation.”
East Carolina baseball coach Billy Godwin talked to Shawn Armstrong around 9 p.m. on the final day for players selected in baseball’s amateur draft to sign with major league clubs last year, and it appeared that Armstrong was going to return to ECU for his junior season.

Almost three hours later — about 15 minutes before the midnight signing deadline — Armstrong had exhausted his college eligibility by signing with the Cleveland Indians, who drafted him in the 18th round.

“Just like that, he was gone,” Godwin said Wednesday while talking to the Greater Greenville Sports Club at the Hilton Greenville.

Godwin, who is 21 wins short of 500 career victories as he approaches his seventh season in Greenville, went on to tell the crowd that recruiting around the MLB draft is the most difficult task for a college baseball coach. This offseason, the Pirates lost Armstrong and Mike Wright, both pitchers, along with three recruits who never made it to campus because they decided to begin their professional careers.

Godwin said there is plenty of projecting and guessing involved with recruiting, and filling out a roster on an annual basis can be tricky.
“We had 13 kids in our program (last year) who met with at least one (MLB) organization, and we had five that met with over 13,” he said. “You have to have a crystal ball a little bit, and you have to get lucky sometimes. We felt fortunate to bring the kids that we did to campus.

“We lost some we would like to have, but you’re not going to get them all and those Major League Baseball teams have a lot more money than we do.”

The Pirates begin this season Feb. 17 with a three-game weekend series versus Milwaukee in Greenville.

Godwin spent part of his time on Wednesday previewing this year’s squad. He also introduced his assistant coaches and gave them the chance to address the crowd.

The coaches discussed the depth the team will have on offense, with key cogs like John Wooten, Corey Thompson, Chase McDonald and Zach Wright back in the fold. They also touched on the Pirates’ expected youth on the mound, as senior Kevin Brandt returns as the only solidified starter.

Pitching coach Dan Roszel said freshmen Deshorn Lake and Jeff Hoffman are lead candidates to make an early impact, but pitching roles are far from being set.

“There’s going to be a bunch of young guys making mistakes that only experience can overcome, but at some point they are going to get it,” Roszel said.

The annual goal for the Pirate program is to make it to the College World Series in Omaha, Neb., which has never happened in school history. ECU has made three Super Regional appearances, the last in 2009 in Chapel Hill.

Godwin reinforced that goal on Wednesday while stressing that making it to Omaha can be a multi-faceted process.

“We have a poster in our locker room that says Omaha, but one of the things I talk very little to our players about is Omaha,” Godwin said. “We talk about the process that is playing and practicing at a championship level every day, because if they’re just looking at that poster all the time, they have no clue how to get there.”

**Homan joins staff**

Godwin announced Wednesday that former player Austin Homan has been named the Pirates’ new director of baseball operations. He replaces Brian
Cavanaugh, who resigned earlier this month to take a teaching position at the university.

Homan was a four-year letterwinner and two-time captain from 2008-11. He became the first two-time recipient of the No. 23 jersey in honor of former ECU coach Keith LeClair and made three regional trips and one Super Regional appearance during his career.

Contact Ronnie Woodward at rwoodward@reflector.com or 252-329-9592.
Editorial: Other Views
'Affordable' UNC? Not so much

BY GREGORY RANDOLPH

CHAPEL HILL–As evidenced by Kiplinger's once again ranking UNC-Chapel Hill the best value in public higher education, higher education in North Carolina remains stronger and more accessible than in most other state university systems. But such rankings ultimately ask the wrong questions. They fail to ask whether the best public universities remain affordable in absolute terms.

They also allow legislators and administrators in states such as North Carolina to justify massive budget cuts and tuition increases in already trying economic times, employing the logic that we are "still outperforming our peers."

Take, for example, the comment by UNC-Chapel Hill Chancellor Holden Thorp that "what's cool about Carolina is that it really took three years of the crisis before we got to this point, whereas around the country you were seeing scenes like this play out three years ago."

As a senior undergraduate at Chapel Hill, I respect the chancellor's leadership on a number of fronts. But his perspective on tuition is myopic.
Future generations will little note that it took us three years before we raised tuition to the exorbitant levels of our peers. Can't the country's best public university do better than "cool" when it comes to access and affordability?

Comparisons, like Kiplinger's, to peer institutions may say something about competitiveness, but they say little about whether we are upholding the principle of a truly public education. What this ranking means is that we are losing our ethos of "University of the People" at a slower rate than the universities of Virginia or Michigan. That is not good enough.

What if we compared UNC-Chapel Hill to itself? How would today's Carolina score against the Carolina of a recent past?

Consider the following, from the university's Office of Institutional Research and Assessment: Since 2003, the number of students taking out loans has increased by nearly 47 percent. The total debt accumulated by borrowers has increased by over 40 percent since the same year. And the total cost of attendance is now 17.6 percent of the median family income of a Carolina student, compared with 11 percent in 1995.

All of this despite laudable efforts, like the Carolina Covenant, to provide loan-free aid to needy students.

As Mary Cooper, the student body president, told the campus Board of Trustees on Nov. 16, "It is easy to call ourselves the University of the People during years of budget stability, but the values we purport to hold are measured by our commitment to them during hardship."

In the coming months, as the UNC System Board of Governors meets to discuss tuition hikes proposed around the state, and as legislators consider next year's budget, our leaders need to ask a question more difficult than Kiplinger's: Is this state honoring its commitment - constitutionally mandated - to public and accessible higher education?

Gregory Randolph is majoring in religious studies and South Asian studies at UNC-Chapel Hill. He is a former N&O "Our Lives" contributor and a Raleigh native.
Prostate cancer linked to gene

BY JAY PRICE – jprice@newsobserver.com

CHAPEL HILL–A team of scientists that includes three UNC-Chapel Hill researchers has found a genetic mutation strongly associated with prostate cancers that occur at unusually early ages and among people with a family history of the disease.

Men are often diagnosed with prostate cancer late in life, but it develops so slowly that they often die of something else. Those who get the cancer while relatively young, though, are at significantly higher risk of dying from it.

That lends weight to the significance of the new findings, published today in the New England Journal of Medicine.

It's the first high-risk genetic mutation found to be associated with the disease, said Ethan Lange, an associate professor of genetics and biostatistics at UNC-CH and a member of the university's Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center.

Nearly a quarter of a million American men are expected to be diagnosed with the disease this year.

If the results are borne out by larger studies, the mutation could become a valuable genetic screening tool, particularly for men with family histories of early-onset prostate cancer, said Lange, a first author of the research paper.

It also one day could lead to better, targeted treatments for cancers tied to the mutation.

Lange cautioned that the links found between the mutation and prostate cancer were strictly statistical. They point to the need for more elaborate studies to determine whether the mutation actually causes prostate cancer and to the need for larger studies to better estimate the chances that a man will be born with the mutation, and the probability that a man having it will develop prostate cancer.

Also, no relationship was observed between the severity of the disease and the mutation, he said.

Thousands of men studied
The study began when researchers looked at the genetic material of 94 unrelated men from families that had a history of multiple cases of prostate cancer. They found four cases in which the men had the genetic mutation. That piqued their interest because the mutation has been shown in studies using mice to be important to prostate development.

They then checked 14 other men who had been diagnosed with prostate cancer in those four families, and all were found to carry the mutation. That made 18 men from four families, all with the cancer, and all of them carrying the mutation.

The researchers then decided to study a larger group: 5,083 men with prostate cancer and a control group of 1,401 who had been tested and found not to have the disease.

The mutation was found in just one of the men who didn't have cancer, but in 72 of those who did, or 1.4 percent.

Though the percentage is small, it meant among the men examined in the study the mutation was 20 times as common than in those without cancer.

And it was most common - though still rare - among those who both were diagnosed before turning 56 and had a family history of prostate cancer.

The genetics of prostate cancer have been hard to unravel, said James P. Evans, Bryson distinguished professor of genetics in the UNC-CH School of Medicine and an expert in cancer genetics. He called the new findings welcome progress.

"While fewer than 1 percent of Caucasian men carry the described mutation in this particular gene, for those men who do carry it, the increased risk for developing prostate cancer is likely greater than for any previous mutation found to date," Evans said. "Larger follow-up studies will be necessary to understand the importance of this finding for prostate cancer, and it remains to be seen whether this mutation is associated with other cancers."

Evans was not involved in the study.

A 17-year quest

The research team has been seeking genetic links to prostate cancer for 17 years, and in 2003 identified a region of DNA material that seemed a likely place to study. Only recently, though, have advances in technology cut the cost of sequencing genetic material to the point that researchers could take a closer look, Lange said. That's where they found the mutation.
The bulk of the genetic testing for the study was funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, via a $225,000 grant to the University of Michigan, he said.

The research team includes scientists at Johns Hopkins University, the University of Michigan Health System, Wake Forest University and the Translational Genomics Research Institute in Phoenix, Ariz.

Price: 919-829-4526

**Prostate Cancer**

Cancer of the prostate, a gland in the male reproductive system found below the bladder, typically begins to develop among men older than 50 and is common among elderly men.

In about two-thirds of cases the cancer grows slowly, and many men harbor it without symptoms or treatment for decades, dying of other causes.

There are fast-growing types, though, that can kill much more quickly, often after spreading to surrounding bone or the lymph system.

The National Cancer Institute estimates that 241,740 men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer this year in the United States, and 28,170 will die of it.

Prostate cancer is one of the most curable cancers, when detected early. In particular, black men 40 and older, white men 40 and older with a family history of cancer, and white men 50 and older are encouraged to have prostate exams.
UNCW-published book finalist for literary prize

By Ben Steelman
Ben.Steelman@StarNewsOnline.com

A short story collection issued by the University of North Carolina Wilmington is a finalist for a $20,000 national literary prize.

"Binocular Vision" by Edith Pearlman, released last year by UNCW's Lookout Books, was announced Wednesday as a finalist for the Story Prize, along with "The Angel Esmeralda" by Don DeLillo and "We Others" by Stephen Millhauser.

Finalists for the Story Prize receive $5,000 cash prizes; the winner gets $20,000.

Established in 2004 and administered by a board of writers, editors, librarians and booksellers, the Story Prize honors achievements in the short story. Previous winners include Tobias Wolff, Mary Gordon and Edwidge Danticat.

"Binocular Vision" was the first book released by Lookout, a project of the UNCW creative writing department and its Publishing Laboratory.

Since its release in January 2011, the collection was featured in a front-page piece in The New York Times Book Review and was a finalist in fiction for
the 2011 National Book Award, an unprecedented accomplishment for a first title from a small literary publishing house.

In December, "Binocular Vision" was named winner of the 2011 PEN/Malamud Award for short fiction, an annual award by the PEN/Faulkner Foundation.

"The hits just keep on coming," joked Philip Gerard, chairman of the UNCW Department of Creative Writing. Gerard credited much of the book's success to the editing, marketing and design work by Emily Louise Smith, director of the Publishing Laboratory and co-founder of Lookout with faculty member Ben George.

Ben Steelman: 343-2208
Population of needy college students is exploding

By Daniel de Vise

A higher education official from Wisconsin who attended the recent Council of Independent Colleges conference in Florida made a remarkable statement during a question-and-answer session.

There is a group of students who enter college with such dire financial need that the amount the federal government expects their families to contribute to college is effectively zero. In Wisconsin, that zero-pay population has grown by half in a single year: from 42,641 students in the 2008-09 academic year to 65,800 in 2009-10.

The data come from Rolf Wegenke, president of the Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, and surely they mirror a national trend.

Incoming college students have grown markedly more needy since the 2008 economic downturn.

“The precipitous increase in student need represents a genuine crisis for these students and their families—a crisis which is replicated across the country,” Wegenke told me. “The opportunity for this country to meet the goal to return to first place in educational attainment and to be competitive in the ‘Knowledge Economy’ will be compromised if we have a ‘lost generation’ who—from lack of resources, not lack of ability—are denied opportunity.”

It’s also a crisis for colleges. The federal government, through its Free Application for Federal Student Aid, has determined that many more students bound for Wisconsin colleges should have their expenses covered entirely through aid: Their “expected family contribution” is zero. But the federal government doesn’t stipulate where that aid will come from.
The neediest students are eligible for $5,550 in federal Pell grants. Beyond that, grant and scholarship dollars come mostly from individual schools. It’s no surprise that the national student aid budget has skyrocketed since 2008. Grant aid per full-time student has risen from $4,706 to $6,539 in five years, after inflation, according to data from the College Board.

Aid awards are rising faster than tuition at private colleges, with the net result that a private institution costs about the same now, after adjusting for grant aid and inflation, as it did five years ago. The wealthiest colleges have pledged in recent years to meet every student’s full financial need without loans, which makes those schools far more affordable to low-income students -- although more affluent families quip that they cannot afford the “expected family contribution” yielded by the federal formula. Colleges are diverting much more aid money to needy students because many more students are in need.

“We’ve had a 30 to 40 percent increase in need-based aid since 2008 at some of our institutions,” said Christopher Nelson, president of St. John’s College in Annapolis, speaking at the Presidents Institute on Marco Island.
Colleges Slower to Branch Out Abroad

By TAMAR LEWIN

After a decade of rapid growth, universities have slowed their pace of opening branch campuses abroad, and much of the activity has moved from the Middle East to the Far East, according to a survey by the Observatory on Borderless Higher Education, a private British research group, scheduled for release Thursday.

The survey, based on data from the second half of 2011, found 200 degree-granting international branch campuses, with 37 more expected to open over the next two years. The group found 162 branches in a 2009 survey, and 82 in 2006.

As the focus shifts to Asia, the study found, universities are more likely to create branches by entering into partnerships with local higher-education institutions rather than creating independent entities.

“In two incredibly important markets, China and India, there’s a requirement that the foreign university partner with a local university,” said William Lawton, director of the Observatory. “In China, it seems to be because they want to have Chinese-branded education. But in India, it has more to do with domestic political tensions.”

With so many forms of international arrangements proliferating, Mr. Lawton said, it is becoming harder to decide what should be considered a branch campus. The report covers only degree-granting programs with a physical presence in the foreign country; it does not count online programs, study abroad centers or the common twinning arrangements where students spend two years in one country and two in another.

This year, Mr. Lawton’s group slightly changed its definition so as to include some of the new Asian efforts.

“We found a lot of borderline cases,” he said.

For example, Yale’s new offering in Singapore, designed to be that nation’s first liberal arts college, will be a partnership with the National University of Singapore. Yale is involved in the planning and will have half the seats on the governing board. But the degrees will be awarded solely by Singapore,
which previously would have kept it from being counted as a branch campus in the survey.

But while the report counts Yale-Singapore, it does not include Vanderbilt University’s proposed teacher-training facility in Abu Dhabi, where Vanderbilt will design the program and Abu Dhabi will bear the costs. The proposed school would be independently accredited, and Vanderbilt has explicitly said it will not be a branch campus.

Of the 200 operating branches, 78 are connected to American universities, as are a third of the 37 being planned.

Among the planned programs in China are New York University’s liberal arts campus, the University of California, Berkeley’s engineering center, and programs by Duke’s Fuqua School of Business, Kean University and the University of Missouri-St. Louis. Georgia Tech and Virginia Tech are planning programs in India; George Mason and Stony Brook are opening in South Korea; the Berklee College of Music in Spain; and Carnegie Mellon in Rwanda.

The report also found that universities in developing countries are now opening branch campuses in their regions. India, for example, has four campuses in Mauritius.

While the United Arab Emirates still has the most branches (37), the greatest growth has come in China, which has 17 branches now, up from 10 in 2009; and Singapore, which has 18, up from 12.

Over the last decade, as globalization and international rankings have become increasingly important, many American universities have seen branch campuses as a way to bolster their prestige.

And although many university officials like to speak of their international efforts as altruistic contributions to world development, the vast majority are in the Emirates, China, Singapore and South Korea, which pay large sums to attract big-name institutions, and few are in poorer nations in Africa or Latin America.