THE DAILY CLIPS

May 4, 2011

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

The Greenville Daily Reflector
The Raleigh News & Observer
The New York Times
The Wall Street Journal
USA Today
The Charlotte Observer
The Fayetteville Observer
The Greensboro News & Record
Newsweek
U.S. News & World Report
Business Week
Time

East Carolina University News Bureau
E-mail to durhamj@ecu.edu  Web site at http://www.ecu.edu/news
252-328-6481
Pitt’s average income drops in recession
By Ginger Livingston

Recently released statistics show the 2008 recession lowered the average income of Pitt County families, but there are signs that the downturn is over.

The Bureau of Economic Analysis recently released county-level, personal income statistics for 2009.

Pitt County's per-capita personal income, the income of all Pitt County residents divided by the county's population, dropped 1.3 percent in 2009 to $33,089. It was less than the 2.3 percent drop statewide and the 2.6 percent drop that occurred nationwide.

The bureau, an agency of the Department of Commerce, works to promote understanding of the U.S. economy by supplying economic data.

Along with the per-capita personal income, the bureau released county personal income, which is a comprehensive measure of the income of all persons from all sources. This includes wages and salaries, employer-provided health insurance, dividends and interest income, Social Security benefits and other types of income.

Pitt's personal income increased 0.63 percent, to $5.2 billion, said James W. Kleckley, director of the Bureau of Business Research at East Carolina University's College of Business.

There's a simple reason the county's average income went down when countywide personal income went up, Kleckley said.

“You have two factors working here, population that went up and income which went down,” Kleckley said.

The income dropped because of the recession, losses in manufacturing jobs and a standstill in raises for employees.
“We are looking back in time, looking back to 2009. For half the year we were officially in a recession, and throughout the year we were losing jobs,” Kleckley said.

When 2010 income figures are released, Kleckley said he believes average income levels will increase, and it will continue into 2011 and beyond. Kelly Andrews, associate director of the Pitt County Development Commission, said anecdotal evidence suggests the upturn is happening.

“A couple of years ago we were hearing from industry they were cutting back, whether it was personnel (layoffs), and we heard some were cutting back in salaries instead of layoffs,” she said.

“What we are seeing is that trend is correcting itself, and companies are bringing salaries back up to what they were,” Andrews said.

Area industries are starting to hire, but not in large numbers, she said, because managers don't want to face another round of large layoffs.

“It's not a big jump but it is a move in the right direction,” Andrews said.

Contact Ginger Livingston at glivingston@reflector.com or 252-329-9570.
Senate GOP will tweak House budget
BY LYNN BONNER, CRAIG JARVIS AND ERIC FERRERI - Staff writers

The House has not formally passed its $19.3 billion budget, but Senate Republicans know already they want some trims.

Republican legislators were talking about changes to the House proposal even before the floor debate began Tuesday.

The budget passed a preliminary House vote by a veto-proof 72-47 tally. Shortly before the vote, at least three people were removed from the gallery and handcuffed after they began chanting, "Money for jobs and education, not to bail out corporations." Companions identified the three as students and members of the group N.C. Defend Education Coalition.

Most Democrats chafed at the GOP cuts, but House Republicans overshot the spending targets that lead budget writers set a few months ago. The House budget calls for spending higher than the targets in all broad categories from education to justice.

Rep. Harold Brubaker, the House budget writing chief, said the totals were skewed by accounting moves, such as the transfer of highway funds that pay state troopers to the state treasury.

The budget represents a determination that the state learn to live within its means, Brubaker told his colleagues. "The budget is right-sizing government," he said.

Senate leader Phil Berger said his chamber's budget will come closer to those preset targets, and will probably give more to the UNC system. The House cut state universities by about $447 million, or 15.5 percent.

Senate budget subcommittees will begin discussing the House budget next week and expect to have a final vote on its own version by June 1.

Senate leaders said they have not settled on a UNC budget, but system leaders are hoping for total cuts of no more than 10 percent to 11 percent.
"At that level, we feel we can manage and navigate our way through, and we can recover without permanent damage to the university," Hannah Gage, chairwoman of the UNC system's Board of Governors, said Tuesday. "We've already cut a lot, and we're willing to cut more to be a good partner."

UNC leaders have lobbied hard in recent weeks against proposed House provisions like a two-year prohibition on tuition increases as well as a sizable decrease in need-based financial aid.

The House would cut $35 million from the pot of grant money doled out to needy public university students. That's a far cry from the $36 million in new funding that UNC requested be added. Gov. Bev Perdue's budget plan would keep funding at the current level, $162 million.

Reducing need-based aid makes education considerably less accessible, Gage argues.

"This is how you take the 'public' out of 'public education,'" she said. "You don't provide financial aid, tuition goes higher, and the door begins to close."

**Democrats worried**
The talk of a cut to the overall House plan made Senate Democrats anxious. Democrats want a bigger budget and fewer state employee layoffs.

Democrats contend that the House budget will cost 30,000 state jobs.

Republicans say those layoff projections are greatly exaggerated, because they do not take into account vacant positions and natural turnover due to retirement and other career changes.

"Employment with the state is not about jobs," said Senate Minority Leader Martin Nesbitt, an Asheville Democrat. "It's about serving people. But on the other hand, if in fact the estimates are right and we're fixin' to do away with 30,000 jobs in this state, that's about three-quarters of a percent on the unemployment rate. I'm concerned about what that will do to the economy."

Budget protests began in earnest Tuesday. Teachers and other school workers filled the mall across from the Legislative Building in late afternoon, chanting "No more cuts."

The state Democratic Party publicized its "Promise of Public Education" video that paints Democrats as defenders of education and Republican legislative leaders as the agents of its destruction.
Earlier, a dozen people in period dress took turns circling the state government complex in a horse and buggy to drive home the message that the GOP budget takes the state back in time. Together NC sponsored the demonstration.

**Preschool programs**
The House debated dozens of amendments over more than nine hours. Democratic women failed to change a budget provision that would ban the state health plan from paying for abortions, except in cases of rape or incest or to save the life of the mother.

Democrats failed to win a temporary reprieve of the Health and Wellness Trust Fund, an office that pays for anti-smoking and anti-obesity programs with money from the national tobacco settlement.

Sen. Neal Hunt, a Raleigh Republican and a chief budget writer, said his chamber won't offer dramatic changes, but senators are talking about putting more into education by using some of the money that the House leaves unspent.

Senators are also examining one of the controversial moves in the House budget, which puts the pre-kindergarten program More at Four under the control of the state Department of Health and Human Services.

"Smart Start and More at Four are definitely up in the air," he said.

Senators are thinking of moving More at Four back to the state Department of Public Instruction, and transferring the early childhood program Smart Start to DPI.

"To me, it's an education thing," Hunt said. "Smart Start and More at Four need to go into education and put all in one organizational structure."

Senate Republicans want to come up with a plan that will win support from Democrats, including Perdue, he said.

"We're all after the same goal," Hunt said. "Hopefully, we can get there."

lynn.bonner@newsobserver.com or 919-829-4821

**House plan vs. Perdue plan**
The House of Representatives is expected to pass its budget today. It's a far cry from what Democratic Gov. Bev Perdue presented earlier this year, but Senate
Republicans say it doesn't go far enough and have promised more cuts. They will began debating the budget proposal next week and plan a vote by June 1.

Here's a look at the numbers so far.

-- Perdue's budget: $19.9 billion
House budget: $19.3 billion

-- Perdue's education budget: $11.2 billion
House education budget: $10.7 billion

-- Perdue's health and human services budget: $4.7 billion
House health and human services budget: $4.5 billion
Local psychologist develops ADHD test

By K.j. Williams

An improved test to diagnose attention deficit hyperactivity disorder could lead to fewer cases of children receiving unnecessary medication, said the Greenville psychologist who developed another way to measure information processing skills.

Dr. Ray Webster, a professor emeritus of psychology at East Carolina University, has given talks to national associations on the information processing test, the fourth test he's developed during his career.

Webster, who has a private practice, said there are few tests available that objectively measure the criteria that point to either ADHD or to learning disabilities.

Testing by a licensed psychologist can provide the necessary information, Webster said. In the absence of proper testing, pediatricians may put a child on medication for ADHD when it's not needed.

An earlier test developed by Webster in the 1980s measures learning efficiency and is in use as a diagnostic tool. The new information processing skills test expands on that criteria. It evaluates short-term memory and the way information is processed, and measures long-term memory access and retrieval, along with understanding language concepts.

“Better diagnosis and the test results lead directly to educational interventions,” he said. “It helps the teachers to identify exactly how they need to teach.”
It's difficult for children with ADHD to encode new information in their short-term memories, Webster said. It takes them longer to grasp the information.

“You may have to repeat it to them to get them to encode it,” he said.

Webster, who retired from ECU in 2006 after 14 years as director of graduate studies in school psychology, spent six years developing the test. In its development stage, more than 3,300 people were tested by 154 mental health professionals in 35 states.

Sold to professionals through Academic Therapy Publications in California, the test measures cognitive functions like attention, concentration, language processing and memory. It can be used to identify a number of learning problems.

Webster isn't alone in decrying the diagnosis of ADHD without the proper testing. Testing makes it clear that “if the child is medicated that the child in fact needs it,” he said.

Dr. Frank Barnhill, a family practice doctor in South Carolina, has self-published a book called “Mistaken for ADHD” on diagnoses made in haste without a full clinical evaluation.

“We call it the quick fix for the symptoms,” he said. “About eight or nine years ago, I started seeing more and more children coming into my practice who were on large doses of ADHD medication and weren't getting better.”

Barnhill said he found that children were being given the wrong diagnosis. His priority is to rule out any other possible causes and then make sure the child meets the guidelines of the American Psychiatric Association for an ADHD diagnosis.

According to the National Institute of Mental Health's website, there is no one test that can diagnosis ADHD, and some illnesses or conditions can co-exist with ADHD.

A licensed health professional needs to make the diagnosis.

“The pediatrician or mental health specialist will first try to rule out other possibilities for the symptoms,” the website states. A specialist also can look at the whole picture by reviewing school and medical records and talking to parents and teachers.

Contact K.J. Williams at kwilliams@reflector.com or 252-329-9588.
Jenni K honored by chamber

By K.j. Williams

The owner and designer behind the creations of Jenni K Jewelry said it was “unbelievable” that she received the Greenville-Pitt County Chamber of Commerce's Small Business Leader award Tuesday for doing her dream job.

A local dental practice received an award for customer service.

Jenni Kolczynski, 51, began making jewelry when she was 13. As she grew older, people laughed at her for pursuing the craft as a potential livelihood. Next year, she will mark 25 years in business. Her store, Jenni K Jewelry, is at 727 Red Banks Road in Arlington Village.

While she was attending East Carolina University, Kolczynski found that waitressing to help pay the bills helped her by providing a built-in customer base for her designs.

“It was a great modeling place for jewelry,” she said. “I still have customers from that job during college.”

After graduating from ECU in 1985 with a bachelor's degree in fine art, Kolczynski briefly worked at a jewelry store in Chapel Hill before returning to her adopted hometown of Greenville.
Kolczynski said she had two other stores — one in Boone and one in Wilmington — but closed them for personal reasons, prior to the recession.

Today, her business is thriving.

“Our website is huge,” she said.

Jenni K Jewelry has eight full-time employees and expands its staff to 15 to 20 employees depending on the season.

“This is just unbelievable,” she said after receiving the award at the event held at City Hotel & Bistro. “It's hard to think you’re getting an award for doing what you love to do.”

The other finalists for the 2010 Small Business Leader award were Lydia Morgan of Morgan Printers Inc. and Bert Powell of Powell Financial.

Gordon Jethro, area executive of First Citizens Bank, presented the customer service award to the dental practice of Lee, Fussell and Humphreys.

“The best reason for honoring this practice comes from the patients themselves,” Jethro said before reading testimonials from patients.

Dr. William Lee accepted the award, crediting his employees for the honor. “We do have a great staff,” he said.

“Our basic philosophy is just to treat other people the way we would like to be treated.”

Before the awards were announced, Pitt County Commissioner Melvin McLawhorn and Greenville Mayor Pat Dunn read separate proclamations declaring May 2-6 as Small Business Week, a time to recognize the contributions these companies make to the community.

Contact K.J. Williams at kwilliams@reflector.com or (252) 329-9588.
Perseverance. It is hard to imagine nowadays that not so long ago, corporations and universities could simply tell a woman that women were not admitted – could not have a certain job, could not even continue her education. But Dr. Ruth Ann Henriksen did not accept these answers. She persevered, and earned a PhD in biochemistry. She persevered, too, when faced with cancer, and battled it, while continuing to work for four more years. She passed away on Thursday, April 28, 2011, in Greenville. She was 72. A memorial service for Dr. Henriksen will be held Thursday, May 5, 2011 at 2 p.m. at the Oakmont Baptist Church in Greenville. Cremation has taken place and the remains will be interred at a later date in Lewiston, Idaho.

Born in Lewiston, Idaho, on Dec. 28, 1938 to George and Margaret Henriksen, she grew up on the family farm and graduated from Lewiston High School in 1956. She received her bachelor's degree in Chemistry from Seattle Pacific College in 1961, and her master's degree in Biochemistry from the University of Washington in 1964. Initially stymied in the pursuit of her doctorate, she continued her research at Case Western Reserve University. She then taught chemistry, at colleges in Canada and Nebraska. She returned to research in 1972, first at Washington University and then, in 1974, at the University of Iowa. It was there that she discovered and wrote her thesis on prothrombin quick, a factor in the clotting of blood. She earned her PhD in Biochemistry based on this research.

In 1987 she accepted a position at East Carolina University in Greenville, as an assistant professor of biochemistry. She was elevated to associate professor, and continued at ECU until the time of her death. Her research interests included the study of blood clots, atherosclerosis, and heart disease.
In an interview before her death, she remembered playing in her grandfather's barn in Lewiston and recalled having her schoolteacher-grandmother, Ruth Millay, as her second grade teacher at Orchards Elementary. She also mentioned high school chemistry teacher Dr. Marion Shinn as being influential in her life, as was her college chemistry professor at Seattle Pacific University, Dr. Andy Montana. During her years in Greenville, North Carolina, she was a member of the Oakmont Baptist Church and taught Sunday School for 14 years at both Oakmont and Christ's Covenant Presbyterian Church. Volunteer activities included the Greenville Community Task Force on Crime and Drugs, and various community organizations helping those in need.

Dr. Henriksen is survived by a brother and sister-in-law, G. Bert and Cheryl Henriksen, of Lewiston, Idaho; sisters, Carol S. Stillman, and husband, Bill, of Craigmont, Idaho, and Louise K. Henriksen and husband, George Grenley, of Pleasanton, Calif. She is also remembered by seven nieces and nephews, and six grand-nieces and nephews, the most recent, Leah Kathleen, bringing joy to Ruth Ann during the last few weeks of her illness.

Ruth Ann was much liked and will be missed by her many friends and colleagues at ECU and throughout the field of research; not least by the many who, while never knowing her, have been helped by the fruits of her research.

The family suggests that memorials can be given to the: University of Iowa Foundation, Attn: Dr. Ruth Ann Henriksen Biochemistry Fund; acct# 30-500-12; PO Box 4550; Iowa City, Iowa 52244. On-line condolences at www.wilkersonfuneralhome.com.
Kolasa: Camp helps build living skills

Q: My teenage grandson is struggling with his weight. He has been heavy for a long time, but for years he said he didn't care. All of a sudden, he says he really wants to lose some weight and take better care of himself. Are there programs you can recommend? — J.R., Winterville

A: Wow, the timing of your question is uncanny. Last week, I attended a Grand Rounds presentation by Dr. David Collier from the ECU Pediatric Healthy Weight Research and Treatment Center. He talked about “immersion therapy” for really overweight kids to put them on the path to healthy eating, physical activity, improved self-esteem and weight loss. Collier was talking about the Take Off 4-Health residential camp that his team has been developing for several years.

“Fat camps” have been around for a long time. I remember from my student days that many dietetic majors got summer jobs working at expensive camps where overweight children lost lots of weight, then gained it back when they returned to their home environment. Some kids were sent every year by their parents.

Collier's team has a better model — one where kids learn new skills for healthy living. Their immediate weight loss isn't so astounding, but many of the campers continue to lose weight after they return home. A couple of years ago, I was involved in helping design the nutrition-education curriculum, but haven't paid much attention in recent years. So I was delighted to hear from Collier about the continuing success the participants have had.
Collier announced that Take Off 4-Health, a three-week residential healthy lifestyle camp and family-centered program for overweight and obese youth ages 12-18 is now taking applications. The cost is $2,850 for the three-week session. This is way less money than most weight-loss camps you see advertised on the Web and in camp guides. Scholarships may be available for Pitt County residents who have Medicaid or who are Medicaid-eligible.

The 2011 summer session will be July 24-Aug. 12 at the Eastern 4-H Center in Columbia. This is a modern 4-H facility with air-conditioned cabins and lots of great facilities for camper enjoyment. I visited a couple of years ago and it is nothing like the tent camps I attended in my youth.

If you have questions, contact Yancey Crawford at crawfardy@ecu.edu or 744-5061 or visit the camp web site at www.takeoff4health.org.

Dear Readers: I just celebrated my 24th anniversary as a Daily Reflector contributor. When I started, I thought this column would “run its course” in a couple of years. I said I would write as long as the questions kept coming in ... and they do. I want to thank you for your kind comments. I want to thank Suzanne Ruffin, my administrative assistant for the last couple of years, who keeps us current, and the medical students who have worked with me to provide well-researched answers to your queries.

Professor emeritus Kathy Kolasa, a registered dietitian and Ph.D., works with the Family Medicine Center, Brody School of Medicine at ECU. Contact her at kolasaka@ecu.edu.
ECU season ticket sales surpass 20,000
East Carolina is selling football season tickets at a record pace.

The Pirates have surpassed the 20,000 mark in season ticket sales for the upcoming campaign. This marks the fifth straight season that ECU has reached 20,000, but this is the first time it has reached this mark by May 1.

After selling a then-record 16,258 season tickets in 2006, ECU reached 22,000 the following season. The Pirates sold 21,293 season tickets in 2009 before setting a new record with 23,436 in Ruffin McNeill's first year as coach in 2010.

East Carolina set new school records during the 2010 season in total attendance (297,987) and average attendance (49,665).

In addition to topping Conference USA in average attendance for the third straight season, ECU stood second nationally among all Bowl Championship Series non-automatic qualifiers in 2010, trailing only BYU (61,381). The Pirates' 99.33 capacity percentage also ranked 24th among the 120 FBS programs.

Games against ACC teams Virginia Tech (Sept. 10) and North Carolina (Oct. 1) highlight East Carolina's season ticket package. C-USA opponents UAB (Sept. 24), Tulane (Oct. 29), Southern Miss (Nov. 5) and defending champion UCF (Nov. 19) are also slated to visit Greenville this fall.

Single home and road game tickets for the Houston, Memphis, Navy, UTEP and Marshall contests are now on sale for Pirate Club members only, while a general public individual game ticket sales date has been set for Aug. 8 based on availability.

Tickets for the Pirates' season opener against South Carolina at Charlotte's Bank of America Stadium on Sept. 3 are currently available to all fans. Tickets are priced at $60 and all orders must received by June 15.

— ECU Media Relations
Gary L. Miller was selected to take over as Chancellor for UNC Wilmington by the UNC system's Board of Governors.

**Wichita State executive will follow DePaolo as chancellor of UNCW**

By Jason Gonzales  
Jason.gonzales@starnewsonline.com

Donning a brand new teal tie and a big smile, Gary L. Miller accepted the role of chancellor at the University of North Carolina Wilmington Tuesday afternoon.

"With great joy, pride and with a little humility I accept the position of chancellor at the University of North Carolina Wilmington," Miller said after his introduction on the UNCW campus.

Miller, 57, is currently provost and vice president for academic affairs and research at Wichita State University in Kansas. He will replace retiring Chancellor Rosemary DePaolo no later than July 1.
A Virginia native and 1976 graduate of The College of William and Mary, he received his doctorate in biological sciences from Mississippi State University in 1982, according to the Wichita State website. He joined Wichita State University, a campus of about 14,500 students, in June 2006.

The UNC System Board of Governors approved his hiring Tuesday, at a salary of $275,000, after trustees at UNCW submitted his name and two others to UNC system President Tom Ross.

Ross said there were many qualified applicants from all over the country during the seven-month search.

"In the end, the search committee found Dr. Gary Miller to be exactly the right person for this time in the history of the University of North Carolina at Wilmington," he said.

Wichita State President Don Beggs said in a press release that Miller has been an important leader of key initiatives there.

"In his five years at Wichita State, he's made significant contributions to documenting learning and creating academic and research programs that further our role as an urban serving university," he said. "I'll miss him as a colleague, and wish him and wife Georgia all the best."

During Miller's first year at UNCW, he said he hopes to begin planning the strategy for the future of the university.

Miller said he is looking forward to making a commitment to the school's students, faculty, staff, alumni and trustees.

"This is a university with a promising future we need to keep...." he said. He noted that the tough budget times and uncertain future will need to be addressed by leaders around the campus working together to come up with solutions.

"We will begin to challenge and test our ideas," he said.

Many times during his speech, Miller expressed his dedication to UNCW and his willingness to advance the school.
‘This is a time of unparalleled importance filled with great opportunity," he said. "And I realize that great importance."

The school's search committee used Parker Executive Search to assist in the selection of the new chancellor and had a budget of about $100,000.

Miller has been in the hunt for a top job for more than a year, vying for posts as the finalist at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Bowling Green State University, North Dakota State University, Binghamton University, Missouri State and Florida Atlantic University.

Jason Gonzales: 343-2075
On Twitter: @StarNews_Jason
Copyright © 2011 StarNewsOnline.com
Jan Boxill teaches philosophy.

**UNC-CH lecturer breaks ground**
BY ERIC FERRERI - Staff Writer
CHAPEL HILL–For more than two decades, Jan Boxill has advocated for UNC-Chapel Hill's faculty members who don't have the protections afforded by tenure.

Now, the philosopher and ethicist has a real bully pulpit for her cause. She was recently elected chair of the faculty council, the first person who is neither tenured nor on the tenure track to rise to that post.

During a three-year term, she will speak for the faculty and help decide which issues the faculty council should address. She succeeds McKay Coble, a dramatic art professor stepping down a year early because of personal issues.

"It's a validation of Jan," Coble said. "She's a very valuable member of the community."

Boxill began work at UNC-CH in 1988 and teaches philosophy and directs the university's Parr Center for Ethics. She's a senior lecturer, a title given to accomplished faculty members who are neither tenured nor on the tenure track. Lecturers are also known as "fixed-term" or "clinical" professors.

**The money question**
Though she has long advocated for greater recognition for fixed-term faculty members, she doesn't expect to steer the faculty council's focus in that direction.
Budget cuts and their effects on the university will be the faculty's primary focus when she takes hold of the leadership post this summer, she said.

But she does view her election at least partly as recognition by the larger faculty of the value of lecturers.

University lecturers have grown in numbers over the last decade as tenure-track positions have become scarcer. Though they often conduct research along with teaching and service, they don't have the same publishing expectations that tenure-track professors do, and as a result don't receive the sort of job security that comes with tenure.

And in some circles, the positions carry a stigma. At UNC-CH, fixed-term faculty members weren't eligible for teaching awards until the 1990s - and now win them often. In some academic departments, only professors who are tenured or on the tenure track can vote on department decisions. "I don't see it as second class," Boxill said. "It's a choice that we made."

**Contract to contract**

Professors on the tenure track must navigate a research-heavy, seven-year pressure cooker and often leave the university if denied tenure. But once tenured, professors have long-term job protection. By contrast, many fixed-term faculty members must receive new contracts every three to five years. Some are on one-year contracts.

Their numbers are growing. A decade ago, 30 percent of UNC-CH faculty held fixed-term appointments. This year, 40 percent do, and the faculty council last month approved a new, tiered title structure, adding "master lecturer" to "lecturer" and "senior lecturer," patterning the assistant/associate/full professor sequence for tenure-track faculty.

Boxill hopes the new title will provide extra gravitas to lecturers whose résumés don't quite sing like those of their tenured counterparts.

"I am not opposed to being called a lecturer, but there is a distinction," she said. "When we write letters of recommendation, it carries a different meaning than professor."

eric.ferreri@newsobserver.com or 919-932-2008
Barbara Moran, former dean of the School of Information and Library Science at UNC-Chapel Hill, falls into the tank during a fundraiser in the Pit. "It's really cold!" she says. The event raised money for the UNC senior class's 10-house "Build a Block" project. The School of Information and Library Science and the UNC Library system are teaming up to build one of the Habitat for Humanity homes.
Universities fight public health problem: Binge drinking
By Jenna Johnson
As nearly every college and university in the country tries to convince students to stop binge drinking, the president of Dartmouth College has a new strategy: Let’s treat this like any other public health problem.

To do that, President Jim Yong Kim says colleges need to test new strategies, scientifically measure the results and share their findings. This week Kim, a doctor and humanitarian who has led Dartmouth since 2009, announced the formation of the national Learning Collaborative on High-Risk Drinking.

So far, 14 universities have signed up, and Kim hopes at least 20 will be present at the first meeting this summer. The list includes Cornell, Duke, Northwestern, Boston, Princeton and Stanford universities — plus Frostburg State University in Western Maryland, which has been fighting a party school reputation for years.

Frostburg President Jonathan Gibralter told me this morning that he’s proud of the progress the campus has made in the past few years by partnering with local law enforcement, bar owners, neighbors, landlords, students and others.

“It’s not like we’ve put millions of dollars into this,” said Gibralter, who became president in 2006 and quickly made reducing binge drinking a top priority. (Binge drinking is defined as five drinks in about two hours for men, and four drinks for women.)

The fight against dangerous drinking starts at open houses with prospective students and their parents. The message: Despite what you might have heard, this is not a party school.
The message is repeated at freshmen orientation and when incoming students take an online alcohol education class. If that doesn’t get through to them, then students might learn the hard way when police actively break up off-campus parties and administrators notify parents of nearly all alcohol-related infractions.

Gibralter said it’s working.

In 2009, 43 percent of Frostburg students reported to a national survey that they had binge drank in the previous two weeks — down from 59 percent in 1997. Students also reported drinking less overall: In 1997, they drank an average of 9.5 drinks a week. In, 2009 it was just over five.

The number of off-campus citations has dropped in the past five years, and the university judicial systems sees fewer students get in trouble for alcohol-related reasons more than once.

“Students views about alcohol really do change the more you educate them,” he said. “I’ve never told students they shouldn’t drink or can’t drink.” They just have to do so responsibly.

(You can read more about the Dartmouth-led initiative on binge drinking in the Dartmouth and the Daily Northwestern.)
A new study of student plagiarism finds that the vast majority of “unoriginal” content in papers comes from legitimate sites rather than paper mills and “cheat” sites.

Turnitin, billed as the “leading academic plagiarism detector,” examined nearly 40 million student papers and 140 million “content matches” — instances where passages in papers matched something in an archived Web page.

Today’s students are a bit fuzzy on the difference between original and copied work. Pasting something from Wikipedia into a paper without proper citation is plagiarism. Yet many students apparently are so accustomed to sharing online text that they simply miss this distinction.

Think about it: Today’s student can assemble a 10-page paper on any topic in a few minutes simply by doing a Google search and copying blocks of text from here and there. In the old days, such wholesale theft at least required the writer to physically copy the text, a time-consuming task. Here’s what the study found:

One-third of all unoriginal content in student papers came from social networks, including Facebook and all of the various “content-sharing” sites where users post and share information, such as Answers.com. It’s an interesting finding, because typically, the content of those sites is unverified and unsourced. Users may say pretty much whatever they want, factual or not.

One-fourth of copied content came from educational Web sites, including homework-help sites and organizational Web sites for nonprofits and
government agencies and the like. Much of that content is presumably factual, although clearly not all.

Fourteen percent of content was copied from news Web sites, including this one. Factual? Hey, we try.

Ten percent came from encyclopedias. One of them, Wikipedia, is the single most popular Web site for student scholars.

Fifteen percent of unoriginal content came from Web sites that are “geared toward cheating and academic dishonesty,” the paper states. Such sites, including www.oppapers.com and www.allfreepapers.com, “seek to profit from student need by either selling, exchanging or placing advertising around offers of original student papers.”

One important note: The study did not consider whether students properly cited the copied material. So one cannot draw a conclusion from this study that only 15 percent of plagiarized content comes from cheat sites. It may be that the large majority of content copied from Wikipedia, for example, is properly cited. On the other hand, it’s hard to imagine that student writers would cite material lifted from a cheat site.

The study urges educators to teach proper citation to students who have grown up in a copy-and-paste world.

I close with a list of the eight most popular sites for unoriginal content in student papers.
1. Wikipedia
2. Yahoo! Answers
3. Answers.com
4. Slideshare
5. OPPapers
6. Scribd
7. Coursehero
8. Medlibrary