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Letter: Details needed on ECU budget cuts

State funding reductions for East Carolina University are significant. How significant is not obvious to this reader.

Since state funding is but one part of the sourcing of school income, the impact on the school is not measured by the 16 percent number.

Some state-supported universities I've seen data for indicate state funding to be in the order of 20-25 percent of the total. ECU's state funding might be much higher at 37 percent if I'm reading its website properly.

If that is the case, ECU's budget may be impacted by about 6 percent if all other sources are stable. If there were tuition increases, the impact might be a little less. A clearer understanding of the impact on the total budget would be helpful to this reader to better understand what ECU is facing.

HARLAN JANES
Chocowinity
Smithfield-Selma seeking 30 mentors for at-risk students

Thirty at-risk students at Smithfield-Selma High School will be getting mentors this fall thanks to a dropout prevention grant sponsored by East Carolina University, said ECU dropout prevention coach Linda Ridout.

According to Ridout, mentoring is a major goal of the grant because it is a very powerful and personal way to improve the lives of at-risk youth.

Ridout is currently looking for volunteers who would like to help the students by becoming mentors.

“I’ve been approached by a lot of people in the community who are very passionate about mentoring,” she said.

She added that being a mentor is not as demanding on a volunteer’s time as most people think.

Mentors volunteering at Smithfield-Selma would only be required to visit their student once a week for 15 to 30 minutes. She said during that time they will be able to check in with their student and see what is going on in their lives.

“Mentors can do so many things for our at-risk kids just by showing up,” said Smithfield-Selma assistant principal Elisha Hope.

According to Hope, the school is very thankful for the grant, and she hopes the mentors will be able to give students the extra support they need.

“Most of these kids have a desire to graduate,” she said. “But a lot of them have issues at home and some tough choices they have to make.”

She added that having a high school diploma is extremely important, especially in the current economy.

“We are very appreciative of any support we can get,” she said. “The more bodies we have the better.”
According to Ridout, mentors should be active and empathic listeners, possess a sincere desire to be involved and have respect for young people, and be able to see solutions and opportunities, while being flexible and open. Mentors will be matched with an at-risk student and also participate in a two-hour training session that will be conducted by members of the Wake County “Communities in Schools” mentoring program.

She added that by June of next year that 85-percent of the students participating in the program will likely have (when compared to the previous year) higher rates of attendance, fewer office referrals for behavioral issues, improved attitude towards school, and a decline in reported drug and alcohol use.

The dropout prevention grant will also help the at-risk students by providing academic support, vocational preparation, and also personal needs support. The grant is not geared towards a particular grade level, and many of the teachers of the at-risk students will be taught additional instructional techniques that will help them to better educate the students in the program. Ridout said that another projected outcome of the program is that 85-percent of students will pass all of their core classes with a C or higher, and they will score a minimum of Level-3 (a passing grade) on their end-of-course tests.

Anyone interested in becoming a mentor can contact Linda Ridout at 919-915-0415 or at ridoutl@ecu.edu
Student sues St. Augustine's over denial of graduation rite

BY JANE STANCILL - Staff Writer

RALEIGH A recent St. Augustine's College graduate is suing his alma mater after he was not allowed to march in the commencement ceremony because of comments he made on Facebook.

Roman Caple filed suit July 8 against St. Aug's and its president, Dianne Boardley Suber, saying college officials were "petty, spiteful and mean-spirited" in denying him the experience.

The lawsuit seeks monetary damages, as well as a graduation ceremony and reception for Caple, "complete with a program, distinguished speaker, orchestra, and all other customary 'pomp and circumstance.'"

The suit said St. Aug's violated his freedom of expression and breached its contract to allow all students to participate in commencement after fulfilling academic requirements. The suit also accuses the college of denying him due process rights and trying to censor his use of social media.

Suber could not be reached Wednesday, and college officials declined to talk about the specifics of the lawsuit.

"We're just going to let the courts handle it," said Marc Newman, vice president of institutional advancement. "We believe in the end we'll be OK."

The case stems from a situation following the tornadoes that struck Raleigh, including the St. Aug's campus, on April 16. The college closed temporarily but reopened April 18, though some students were still without power.

Students complained, and the college announced a town hall meeting with Progress Energy representatives to discuss the college's recovery and electricity on campus.

Before the meeting, Caple posted on the college's Facebook page, urging students to bring documentation and be prepared to challenge college officials. According to the lawsuit, he wrote: "Here it go!! Students come correct, be prepared, and have supporting documents to back up your arguments bcuz SAC will come hard!!!!That is all"

About a week later, the suit said, Eric W. Jackson, then vice president for student development and student services, sent a letter to Caple stating he
would not be allowed to participate in commencement activities because of his "negative social exchange" that hurt the college's reputation.

Caple was also barred from picking up his cap, gown and diploma until the day after the ceremony.

In media reports of the controversy, college officials said Caple was trying to incite other students with his Facebook post. St. Aug's leaders also said there had been other incidents involving Caple but did not disclose them, citing confidentiality policies.

Caple, among the first generation in his family to earn a college degree, was forced to call his relatives and tell them to cancel plans to come to his graduation. The student also was unable to have photographs taken with his cap and gown, the suit said.

"The defendants' actions were malicious and were taken with the specific purpose to punish, embarrass, and humiliate Plaintiff," the lawsuit said.

Caple's name was not read at the May 1 ceremony, the suit said, and he has since suffered emotional distress and has undergone therapy.

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Community colleges argue against mergers
BY LYNN BONNER AND ROB CHRISTENSEN - STAFF WRITERS

Community college trustees and administrators argued unsuccessfully against the idea of merging small schools with larger ones, with a legislative committee Wednesday pushing forward consideration of an idea its staff says will save about $5 million a year.

Community college trustees said the mergers would hurt rural schools and limit residents' chances at higher education.

"You make education in North Carolina less affordable, less accessible, and you defeat the purpose" of the community college mission, said Charlotte Griffin, chairwoman of the Martin Community College board of trustees.

The report suggests 15 mergers, where schools with fewer than 3,000 full-time students would join with larger schools. The state has 26 community colleges with fewer than 3,000 students, according to the report.

Opponents said small campuses would lose programs; local boards of county commissioners, which help pay for community colleges, would withdraw their support; and schools would lose their identities.

Legislative staff said savings would come from combining "back office" functions, such as having a president, payroll office and accounting office serve more than one school.

Sen. Debbie Clary, a Cherryville Republican and a chairwoman of the Joint Legislative Program Evaluation Oversight Committee, said detractors were overreacting.

"No one has talked about changing the identity of a community college," she said. "I think there's been a lot of emotion generated and a lot of false rhetoric."

But the legislative report talks about three types of merger that go from a "multicampus" college - where a large and small school would merge and the smaller school would become a satellite campus - to a centralized system...
that would have the central office perform all administrative jobs for the 58 schools.

Community College System President R. Scott Ralls said the cost of merging one-quarter of the campuses would be greater than the savings and would not count "the intangible nature of what a college means in a small county that is struggling."

The committee sent the report to an education oversight committee for further consideration.
Judge denies request to restore McAdoo's eligibility

BY LUKE DECOCK - Staff writer

DURHAM As a lawyer representing the NCAA repeatedly called him a "cheater," Michael McAdoo turned to his family sitting behind him in the first row of the courtroom and rolled his eyes.

It only got worse for the former North Carolina defensive lineman on Wednesday. His attempt to return to the Tar Heels football team may be over after Durham Superior Court judge Orlando Hudson denied his request for an injunction against the NCAA and UNC that would have restored his eligibility.

Hudson, after a hearing that lasted more than two hours, found that McAdoo's claim did not meet the standards required for an injunction, and that McAdoo "would not likely suffer irreparable loss if the injunction is not imposed."

While McAdoo's request for an injunction that would allow him to play this fall was denied, his lawyer, Noah H. Huffstetler III, said the overall case against the NCAA and UNC will proceed. One of seven UNC football players who missed the entire 2010 season as a result of an NCAA investigation into academic misconduct and improper benefits among Tar Heels players, McAdoo filed suit on July 1 against the university and the NCAA. In addition to seeking to restore his athletic eligibility, the suit seeks unspecified damages against UNC and the NCAA, which is accused in the suit of "gross negligence" in declaring him permanently ineligible.

"The objective of (the injunction) was to allow Mr. McAdoo to play this coming season at Chapel Hill," Huffstetler said Wednesday after Hudson's ruling. "It will make it very difficult for us to make that happen in light of this ruling.

"There are some other legal remedies we can consider, and we'll be looking at that in the next couple days."

McAdoo, his mother and grandmother left the courtroom through a side door without speaking with the media.

McAdoo was initially withheld from the first three games of last season after it was determined that he had received $110 in improper benefits. The
NCAA then ruled him permanently ineligible in November for accepting improper academic assistance from UNC tutor Jennifer Wiley, a central figure in the NCAA's investigation of the North Carolina football program. The NCAA denied UNC's request for reinstatement as well as the school's appeal of that decision.

Huffstetler argued that while North Carolina reported three violations to the NCAA, the school's Honor Court found him guilty of only one, and the NCAA "stubbornly and inexplicably" chose to ignore the new information. For that violation, which according to the Honor Court ruling involved improper help from Wiley with citations and a "works cited" page for an African Studies research paper, McAdoo was placed on probation for one semester and suspended from school for another.

When the paper in question was published with the court filings this month, a number of passages were discovered to have been plagiarized from other sources.

Lawyer Paul Sun, representing the NCAA, hinted at the plagiarism in his argument Wednesday, referring to "more recent information that blatant plagiarism has occurred," and threatening to "expose that fully on that front if we need to."

The university, meanwhile, found itself "caught in the middle," as Assistant Attorney General Stephanie Brennan put it.

"The university has said consistently that the penalty imposed was too harsh," Brennan said. "We appealed [to the NCAA] and lost. ... As a member of the NCAA, we have to respect the decision and have the obligation to comply with it."

An affidavit filed Wednesday by UNC associate athletic director for compliance Amy Herman indicated that the university was willing to keep McAdoo on scholarship and offer him a position as a student coach for the 2011 season. Huffstetler said that offer "hasn't been emphasized" in previous discussions with the school.

North Carolina is currently preparing a response to the NCAA's Notice of Allegations covering nine major alleged violations and has a hearing scheduled with the NCAA in Indianapolis in October.

"We agree with the court that these kinds of issues should be decided within the framework of the institution and the NCAA," North Carolina athletic director Dick Baddour said in a statement released by the school. "It is disappointing any time a student-athlete can no longer compete in his or her
chosen sport, but we will support Michael and encourage him to finish his education at the University of North Carolina."

Huffstetler said McAdoo was aware that it would be difficult to obtain injunctive relief, but this was the most likely way to get McAdoo eligible in time for the football season.

"We continue to maintain that Mr. McAdoo was unfairly treated," Huffstetler said. "Whether it was the university's responsibility or the NCAA's isn't the most significant point. We do think that the NCAA has tremendous authority and power to affect the lives of young men and women who play intercollegiate sports. What happened today just illustrates how much power the NCAA does have and how very difficult it is to challenge one of their decisions once it's made."

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Admission dean pulls back curtain on merit aid

By Daniel de Vise

Colleges are generally reluctant to tell applicants how much financial aid to expect, particularly at institutions that dispense grant funds according to academic merit.

“Need-based” aid is fairly easy to predict; many colleges spell out their formulas so plainly that a student can calculate a likely aid award based on her or his household income. “Merit” aid is comparatively opaque, meted out in rough proportion to the applicant’s academic credentials.

So, I was surprised to see the admission dean at University of Rochester pen an unusually candid list of 12 “steps that mattered” in merit awards at his school this year, and the approximate dollar value of each factor in shaping the merit award.

Jonathan Burdick, dean of admission and financial aid at Rochester, analyzed merit award data at his school to discern “some rules of thumb about how the mythical ‘average’ student succeeded in earning a scholarship this year,” he writes in the June 11 post, titled “What kind of scholarship can I get?”

Here are some of the dozen variables:

1. Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses. Burdick found that merit awards increased by $400, on average, per AP or IB course taken by an applicant.

2. Grades. Every A grade translated to $62 in merit aid. Lower grades chipped away at the award.

3. Test scores. An upward variance of 10 points on the SAT was worth $115 in merit aid, and each additional point on the ACT was worth $425. In other words, “a student with three 750s on the SAT on average received $1,725 more in scholarship than a student with three 700s.”
4. Earnings. Merit awards increased by one cent for every four dollars less in family income.

5. Personal appeals. Students who had “serious conversations” with admissions and aid counselors earned $3,000 more in merit aid than those who did not.

6. Timeliness. Students who completed their application on time reaped $400 more in merit aid than those who did not.

7. Recommendations. Applicants with very strong letters of recommendation earned $1,800 more in merit aid than other students.

8. Age. Older students received more merit aid than younger students, at a rate of 82 cents per day.
17th century is trendy at New Saint Andrews College

By Libby A. Nelson, Inside Higher Ed

At New Saint Andrews College, students toss around Latin terms and sometimes don black robes. Academic terms have proper names: Jerusalem, Nicea, Chalcedon and Westminster. The curriculum, mostly primary source readings, is based on Harvard University's -- from the 17th century.

The details are meant to create an atmosphere of reverential tradition, but New Saint Andrews, founded in 1994, is as new as its name suggests. The college and its founders see themselves as drawing inspiration from a purer time in higher education, before specialized majors, large lecture halls, prime-time football games and much of the rest of the popular image of the American university. They are also in the vanguard of a new movement with the ambitious goal of reshaping Christian higher education.

That movement calls itself "classical Christian" education, and it combines a Great Books curriculum -- featuring primary source documents from the Western tradition, but few or no specialized majors -- with a theologically conservative, Protestant Christian perspective.

Since its beginnings in elementary and secondary schools, the idea has caught on at the college level: in the 17 years since New Saint Andrews opened in Moscow, Idaho, at least six other such colleges have sprung up across the country, including New College Franklin in Tennessee, Patrick Henry College in Virginia and Imago Dei College in California. Other colleges, including Biola University, have started classical programs within the institution, and another stand-alone college, San Elijo, also in California, plans to enroll students as early as 2012. As many as 20 more new colleges may be under consideration, said Doug Wilson, one of the founders of New Saint Andrews and a proponent of the movement.

To the devout faculty and students at classical Christian colleges, the institutions represent a rebirth in American higher education, turning away from public universities some disparage as "government schools" and from the more established Christian colleges they see as too secularized or insufficiently academic. But these colleges aren't without controversy. Two educators involved with the founding of two of them -- New Saint Andrews and New College Franklin -- have drawn criticism for statements and publications that are seen as intolerant, theocratic or neo-Confederate, though the criticism has been limited to the founders themselves and not the colleges they created.

The institutions themselves differ in some important ways, including how much specialization they offer (Patrick Henry offers majors in government, journalism, history and literature, as well as a classical curriculum) and their faith requirements for students
(most require some sort of written faith statement, though Gutenberg College does not). But they have much in common, including a staunch opposition to much of modern higher education -- in some cases, even the concept of a residential campus.

They try to disprove a common stereotype of conservative Christians, and their schools, as anti-intellectual, presenting a proudly esoteric face to the world and boasting of a rigorous curriculum.

"One of our concerns is that Christianity in America has kind of decided that they should withdraw from the intellectual sphere," says David Crabtree, president of Gutenberg College, which does not describe itself with the phrase "classical Christian" but combines a Great Books curriculum with a Christian perspective. "We need to establish that Christianity is indeed intellectually defensible."

**Christianity at the center**

The most obvious analogue to the classical Christian colleges is St. John's College, whose campuses in Annapolis and Santa Fe also focus on reading classic texts. But describing an institution like New Saint Andrews as a "Christian St. John's" misses how central faith is to the classical Christian experience, college presidents and observers say.

In emphasizing the importance of learning the classics over career-oriented specialization, the leaders often sound like their counterparts at secular colleges. "We've made the mistake in the contemporary university setting of reducing education to simply downloading information," says Roy Atwood, the president of New Saint Andrews, who was previously a professor of journalism and director of the School of Communication at the University of Idaho. "It's not about the formation of the individual as much as acquiring data."

The colleges emphasize their professors' Christian faith alongside or above their academic credentials. New Saint Andrews, where many of the faculty belong to Christ Church Moscow, part of the Confederation of Reformed Evangelical Churches, boasts that more than half of its teachers serve as ministers or pastors: "They have strong academic credentials and teaching experience in their respective disciplines, of course, but more importantly, as Christian spouses and parents themselves, they cherish the responsibility and privilege of nurturing the next generation," the college's website reads.

At New College Franklin, faculty are encouraged to research and to publish, says Matthew Vest, the college's dean. But living alongside students is their most important priority.

"There is no doubt that they are deeply religious institutions -- I'd be tempted to say in every way, all of the time," says Samuel Schuman, who wrote about New Saint Andrews in his 2009 book on religious colleges, Seeing the Light (Johns Hopkins University Press). "What they read, they read from the perspective of their religious outlook. What they pick to read, they pick because of the light it shows on their religious outlook."

The distinctions are perhaps most evident in matters of science: statements of faith at the classical Christian colleges contain assertions that would be heresy (so to speak) at most secular institutions, most notably a belief that the world was created in six 24-hour days and a disavowal of Darwinian evolution.
New Saint Andrews offers courses on "Natural History," which include instruction in biology, and Darwin is on the college's reading list, as he is at New College Franklin. Gutenberg offers a seminar that focuses specifically on modern science and Darwin.

"The quadrivium kind of assumes the world has an order to it and there is a creator behind that order," Vest says, referring to the subjects that formed the core of the medieval university: arithmetic, geometry, music and astronomy. "Studying arithmetic gives us insight into numbers, and geometry gives us insight into space. Those are ways of knowing the world, ways of understanding the world."

As at many religious institutions, students are expected to follow a code of conduct. At New Saint Andrews, students must pledge in writing a commitment to "personal holiness, sound doctrine, cultural reformation, and academic integrity," the college writes on its website. Those who embrace "historic or contemporary doctrinal errors" -- a list that ranges from Arianism, a doctrinal dispute that dates from the third century, to feminism and skepticism -- must offer to withdraw from college. Gutenberg's requirements are more succinct: students who live on-campus must avoid irresponsible drinking, drug use and premarital sex, and "agree to pursue kindness in their dealings with one another."

Few of the students at the colleges come from a public school background. Classical Christian education began at the elementary and secondary levels in the early 1980s, when Wilson started a school in Moscow that adhered to classical principles of learning. Many students at the colleges spent their formative years learning in this educational tradition, and many others were home schooled; in his book, Schuman estimated that less than 5 percent of the students at New Saint Andrews had spent significant time in the public school system.

For these students, their college experience is equally distinctive. At Gutenberg, housing is open both to the college's students and to other young people in Eugene, Oregon, who are interested in the college's activities. New College Franklin believes in the possibility of "residential colleges" that would be structured like family homes, but hasn't yet built any. New Saint Andrews takes a vehement stance against a residential campus, choosing to have students live with families in the Moscow, Idaho, area. Dorms, the college argues, "breed immaturity, immorality and irresponsibility," and were originally intended to foster socialism.

New Saint Andrews sees its opposition to the norms of typical higher education as a central focus, Schuman says, describing the college's views on dormitories as "defiantly different."

"A big part of their definition is how they kind of see the rest of the world as opposing them," he says, adding the officials at the college "would have no trouble defining themselves as warriors in the culture wars."

**Controversial founders**

In some cases, that role has gone beyond promoting Christianity and traditional values. Wilson, one of the founders of New Saint Andrews, has been called a neo-Confederate; among his more than 30 books and pamphlets that outline his perspective on Christianity is one, "Southern Slavery As It Was," that bills itself as a defense of "Biblical" slavery. It argues that taking the Bible literally means embracing it all, even slavery: "The Bible
permits Christians to own slaves, provided they are treated well," wrote Wilson and his co-author, Steve Wilkins, a former board member of the League of the South, in the 1996 pamphlet.

"The 'peculiar institution' of slavery was not perfect or sinless, but the reality was a far cry from the horrific descriptions given to us in modern histories, which are often nothing more than a hackneyed reworking of abolitionist propaganda," the two men wrote.

The pamphlet, and a conference in Moscow that followed in 2003, provoked an outcry. Professors at the University of Idaho wrote a rebuttal, "Southern Slavery As It Wasn't." The Southern Poverty Law Center wrote a report on Wilson and his friends and connections, including George Grant, the founder of New College Franklin and a frequent presenter at Wilson's history conferences. It was headlined "Taliban on the Palouse?" -- a reference to the region where New Saint Andrews is located.

Wilson says the pamphlet was intended to be a rebuttal of all forms of abolitionism, including the extreme fringe of the anti-abortion movement that advocated killing doctors who performed abortions and whose members he said portrayed themselves as the anti-slavery movement's successor.

"We wrote 'Southern Slavery as it Was' for two basic reasons," Wilson says now. "One, to show that violence and revolution doesn't really fix everything: there's a Biblical way to do these things, not a violent way to do these things."

The second motive is more opaque: In publishing the pamphlet, he says now, he aimed to stop himself from being commercialized. "After the Holy Spirit starts to do something promising, the suits and haircuts move in," he says. "I wanted to make myself unmarketable. That part of it was a wild success."

The founder of New College Franklin, Grant, has been accused in the past of advocating for Christian domination of government based on Biblical law, a movement known as Reconstructionism. "Christians have an obligation, a mandate, a commission, a holy responsibility to reclaim the land for Jesus Christ - to have dominion in the civil structures, just as in every other aspect of life and godliness," Grant wrote in a 1987 book, Changing of the Guard: Biblical Principles for Political Action. "But it is dominion that we are after. Not just a voice." Grant and Wilson also contributed to a textbook, The War Between the States: America's Uncivil War, recommended by the League of the South, an organization that advocates for secession and a new Confederate States of America.

In an e-mail to Inside Higher Ed, Grant said that the quote, "when taken out of its larger context … does indeed appear quite alarming." But he said it is in fact a call for "substantive work in the arenas of justice, mercy and humility for a complacent evangelical church," and that it had been removed from all further reprints of the book. He said he has never been an advocate of Reconstructionism, although the foreword to the book appears to ally it with the movement.

"Even a cursory glance at the work I have done over the past 30 years would put the lie to the notion that I have a theocratic view of politics or culture: I have been a strong advocate of the civil rights, First Amendment rights, and rights of conscience for all," he wrote in the email.
Wilson, who is a member of the New Saint Andrews faculty, estimates that less than half of his time is devoted to the college. His views are incorporated into the curriculum only when he teaches a history course, which he said is rare. Atwood, who serves as the college's president and its public face, is a co-founder whose publications are mostly uncontroversial articles from academic journals on journalism and mass communications.

Grant, who is listed as a permanent trustee and senior fellow as well as the chancellor of New College Franklin, teaches at the Franklin Classical School, an elementary and secondary institution he founded, leads a church and the King's Meadow Study Center, and maintains a career as a speaker.

**Campus culture**

The colleges guard their independence closely. New Saint Andrews, New College Franklin and Gutenberg College don't participate in federal financial aid programs, nor are they regionally accredited, although Gutenberg College has said it might be interested in one day pursuing accreditation. They keep student bodies small -- usually fewer than 200 students -- which is one of the reasons the colleges are expanding so quickly.

Most classical Christian colleges are accredited by the Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools, a federally recognized national accreditor that focuses on private Christian colleges, and New College Franklin is pursuing TRACS accreditation.

The colleges say they shun regional accreditation because they do not want to be pushed to secularize. The same is true for financial aid. "We see that as one of those things where money always comes with strings attached," Atwood says. "The government rightly says, 'We're funding these students, we want to make sure they're getting their value.' You can't take the money and expect it not to have implications for their program."

The lack of regional accreditation keeps them out of the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities, the main organization for Protestant religious colleges. It can also present problems for students who hope to continue to graduate school, as many at the institutions do. Still, many manage to do so. The "Class Notes" of New Saint Andrews magazine, Higher Expectations, feature many male graduates with advanced degrees, the majority in theology or philosophy. Many female graduates describe themselves as homemakers.

The colleges are proud to say that they are not for everyone. But their leaders say that their growing numbers point to a dissatisfaction with the state of American higher education.

"We do broad liberal arts education, but we're doing it from a Christian perspective, just as state or secular schools do it from their secular perspective," Atwood says. "That's one of those things that makes American higher education so exciting is you've got all those different perspectives out there."