THE DAILY CLIPS

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Bethel residents speak out

“We’re going to work hard. We shouldn’t have to suffer. We need to let them know we’re not going away. We’re going to fight this to the very end.”

Gloristine Brown, Bethel commissioner

By Jackie Drake
Tuesday, June 12, 2012

BETHEL — The residents of Bethel are rallying against the closure of their main source of medical care.

More than 50 people attended a meeting Monday night called by town officials to support keeping the Bethel Family Medicine Center open. The Brody School of Medicine at ECU announced last week that it would close the center in September due to financial losses in combination with declining patient visits and an aging facility.

“We’re going to work hard,” Bethel Commissioner Gloristine Brown said. “We shouldn’t have to suffer. We need to let them know we’re not going away. We’re going to fight this to the very end.”

Many elderly residents, who are the majority of the center’s patients, cannot drive or do not have access to transportation to get to Greenville, Brown said. Once the center closes, the doctor and three staff members will continue to see their patients in the new Family Medicine Clinic on Heart Drive, opened last year.

“If they’re in Greenville, they may as well be in Chicago,” one man said.
School officials suggested in their original announcement that patients use the Pitt Area Transit System, but several residents pointed out that public transportation no longer comes to Bethel, and the cost of taxis and gas is prohibitive.

“It’s an inconvenience for Bethel,” Brown said. “And I’m really worried the death rate will climb.”

Some residents said the money used for the new clinic in Greenville could have been used in Bethel. Some said they heard that clinic staff were not allowed to take new patients, and that in combination with reduced hours contributed to declining visits.

“They made the problem,” said Bethel resident Linda Gaudet, who has seen full waiting rooms and walk-ins having to berescheduled during her recent visits to the center. “The only problem is scheduling the patients.”

“This is a wellness issue,” said Frederic Whitehurst, an attorney famous for exposing laboratory mismanagement at the Federal Bureau of Investigation in the 1990s, now living in Bethel. “People are ill because they aren’t visiting the doctor enough. This is going to cost Pitt County a lot more than we can afford if they make that mistake (of closing the center).”

Whitehurst said that if it weren’t for the center staff, he wouldn’t be alive because they found his cancer in enough time to treat it.

“The clinic has been the location of my primary care since I was born,” said Elaine Doughtie, who was born in the clinic in 1953. She lives in Edgecombe County — only about three miles away — but no longer drives.

“This is clinic is very important to Bethel,” said the center’s main doctor and Bethel citizen Richard Rawl, whose words were met with applause. “I feel a lot of loyalty to the School of Medicine. But I also feel a great deal of loyalty to the town of Bethel. I wish some accommodation can be reached.”

Residents plan to start a petition, hold a prayer vigil and spread the word through local pastors and congregations.

“There is strength in numbers,” Brown said. “It will not stop here.”

Contact Jackie Drake at 252-329-9567 or at jdrake@reflector.com.
Four ECU faculty members receive achievement awards

Four East Carolina University faculty members recently received Achievement for Excellence in Research and Creative Activity awards. Walter J. Pories, professor of surgery at the Brody School of Medicine, and Jamie Brown Kruse, a professor of economics in the Thomas Harriot College of Arts and Sciences, received lifetime achievement awards.

Craig E. Landry, associate professor of economics in the Thomas Harriot College of Arts and Sciences, and Guili Zhang, assistant professor in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction in the College of Education, received five-year achievement awards.

Pories is a professor of surgery, biochemistry, and sport and exercise science. He joined ECU in 1977 as chairman of the Department of Surgery at the university's medical school, which had just begun its four-year program. He modified a type of weight-loss surgery into the "Greenville Gastric Bypass" and showed conclusively that not only does it result in durable weight loss but also causes a long-term remission of type 2 diabetes in patients who have diabetes and undergo the surgery.

Pories retired from operating at age 70 but still follows up with former patients and has continued with research related to his Greenville Gastric Bypass and diabetes.

Kruse is recognized for her research in economics and decision-making under uncertainty, especially as it relates to natural hazards. She is founding director of the Center for Natural Hazards Research at ECU, and she served as director of the RENCI Center for Coastal Systems Informatics and Modeling for its first two years of operation.

A faculty member at ECU since 2004, Landry's research focuses primarily on environmental and natural resource economics, non-market valuation, experimental economics, and coastal resource management. He is associate professor of economics in the Thomas Harriot College of Arts and Sciences, assistant scientist for the Institute for Coastal Science & Policy, and assistant director for the Center for Natural Hazards Research. He also is an affiliate faculty member for the Center for Sustainable Tourism.

Since joining the faculty in 2006, Zhang has become a leading researcher in the College of Education's Department of Curriculum and Instruction. Her work centers on designing and conducting statistical analyses used in measuring academic program success. Zhang has examined the existing statistical standards, identified inadequacies and developed new tools — including a Robust Root Mean Square Standardized Effect Size and the Bayesian Coefficient Alpha — to better evaluate the effectiveness of programs or treatments.

Zhang, a native of China, holds a doctorate in applied statistics, quantitative research, evaluation, assessment and measurement from the University of Florida.
Sharma, Perkin listed among top sleep doctors

Dr. Sunil Sharma and Dr. Ronald Perkin have been named two of the top physicians in the country for treating sleep disorders.

Sharma is an assistant professor of medicine at the Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University and director of the ECU Sleep Disorders Center. He attended medical school at Maulana Azad Medical College in New Delhi, India, and was a resident at Cook County Hospital in Chicago.

Perkin is chairman of the Department of Pediatrics and co-director of the Vidant Children's Hospital. He specializes in pediatric medicine and pediatric critical care.

Perkin attended medical school at the University of South Florida College of Medicine, Tampa, Fla., and had residency stints at Children's Medical Center in Dallas and Loma Linda University Medical Center in Loma Linda, Calif.

Sharma and Perkin were named in Sleep Review magazine's annual listing of the nation's top sleep doctors and facilities. The issue is available online at http://www.sleepreviewmag.com/issues/2012-TD.asp.

The United States has approximately 2,000 accredited sleep centers, according to the American Academy of Sleep Medicine.
Sea, No Evil:
North Carolina ignores science in sea level planning

Posted by: JeffMasters, 12:48 PM GMT on June 12, 2012

An interesting political battle is underway in North Carolina on how to plan for 21st century sea level rise, newsobserver.com reports. Sea level rise scientists commonly cite one meter (3.3 feet) as the expected global sea level rise by 2100, and more than a dozen science panels from coastal states, including a state-appointed science panel in North Carolina, agree.

However, a coastal economic development group called NC-20, named for the 20 coastal counties in North Carolina, attacked the report, saying the science was flawed. NC-20 says the state should rely only on historical trends of sea level rise, and not plan for a future where sea level rise might accelerate.

North Carolina should plan for only 8 inches of rise by 2100, based on the historical trend in Wilmington, NC, the group says. Republican state legislators introduced a bill that follows this logic, requiring the North Carolina Coastal Resources Commission to make development plans assuming sea level rise will not accelerate.

On Thursday, a state senate committee signed off on the bill, sending it to the full Senate. NC-20 also successfully made an "intense push" to get the North Carolina Division of Emergency Management, which is using a $5 million federal grant to analyze the impact of rising water, to lower its worst-case sea level rise scenario from 1 meter (39 inches) to 15 inches by 2100.

Figure 1. Global sea level rise from 1992 - April 2012, as measured by three satellite instruments (TOPEX, Jason-1, and Jason-2.) Sea level rise has been relatively constant at about 3.1 mm per year (1.2 inches per decade) during this time period. The big downward dip during 2010 is due to the fact that year had a record amount of precipitation over land areas. By 2011, that precipitation had run-off into the oceans, bringing sea level back up again. Image credit: University of Colorado Sea Level Research Group.

Commentary

East Carolina University geologist Stan Riggs, a science panel member and coastal science expert, said of the proposed legislation, “We’re throwing this science out completely, and what’s proposed is just crazy for a state that used to be a leader in marine science.

You can’t legislate the ocean, and you can’t legislate storms.”

Our climate change blogger, Dr. Ricky Rood, had this to say in his latest post: "I would dismiss the proposed law as an attempt to legislate away that which stands in the way of our desires to consume and build for our personal imperatives. I would dismiss it as politics and note the names of the unserious politicians for the next election." I agree with both of these assessments.
The best science we have argues the planet will continue to warm, melting icecaps, causing accelerated sea level rise. Between 1900 - 2007, global sea level rose at 1.7 mm per year (Bindoff et al., 2007). Between 1993 - 2012, sea level rise accelerated to 3.1 mm per year, a 75% increase over the 20th century rate. If this accelerated rate continues to 2100, global sea level rise will be 10.7", which is higher than the 8" rise North Carolina is being told to plan for.

The continuing accelerating trend in Greenland ice loss since 2000 I blogged about last month should make anyone leery of betting that sea level rise will not accelerate even more in the coming decades. Betting that sea level rise won't accelerate this century is like betting that a slowly intensifying tropical storm will maintain that slow rate of intensification, ignoring that the majority of the computer models are predicting the storm will rapidly intensify into a Category 3 hurricane at landfall.

Sure, sometimes the models are wrong, but there is good science behind their predictions. If we wait until storm begins its rapid intensification to act, it will be a very costly mistake. The most sound action would be to prepare for the very plausible bad outcome our science is saying is most likely, instead of putting all of our chips on the low-probability, good-for-business outcome we hope for.

**Sea, No Evil**
Comedian Steven Cobert has a humorous piece on the new North Carolina sea level legislation in his June 4, 2012 Cobert Report. Some quotes:

"It would be a tragedy to lose precious coastal wildlife habitats to coastal flooding. Those habitats should be lost to developers' bulldozers."

"If your science gives you a result that you don't like, pass a law that the result is illegal--problem solved!"

Comedy Central reports on the recent decision by Virginia lawmakers to phase out the terms "climate change" and "sea level rise":

"Rather than follow North Carolina in suggesting a law that would make sea level rise illegal, they will simply not speak its name. Climate change is truly the Republican Voldemort…Emerging labels include "increased flooding risk," "coastal resiliency" and, of course, "recurrent flooding."

State Del. Chris Stolle, R-Virginia Beach, said "sea level rise" is a "left-wing term" that conjures up animosities on the right."

**The Atlantic is quiet**
There are no threat areas to discuss in the Atlantic today. The NOGAPS model is predicting formation of a tropical tropical depression in the Western Caribbean this weekend, and takes the storm northwards into Florida early next week. None of the other models is going along with this idea, but there is some support for a broad area of low pressure developing in the Western Caribbean early next week in some of the other models. The waters offshore of North Carolina may be another region to watch, late this week, along the edge of a cold front moving off the U.S. East Coast.
The Wilmington Star News

Published June 11, 2012

Senate's bill would not receive a passing mark in science class

By Stanley R. Riggs

The N.C. General Assembly is considering legislation that will dictate the future of our spectacular and economically critical coastal system. The proposed legislation flies in the face of well-known scientific data concerning coastal dynamics and well-documented changes in climate, sea level and storms.

For the past four decades North Carolina has been a national leader in developing the scientific understanding of our coastal system and building a solid science-based management program guiding development within our dynamic and rapidly changing barrier islands and estuaries. House Bill 819 would change that.

The Senate version of this bill, which is presently being considered, prohibits all government agencies, save one, from developing science-based benchmarks for sea-level rise.

Even worse, it requires that the agency responsible for this benchmark use a restrictive method for developing it—a method that would result in a failing grade for any undergraduate science student who offered it in the most basic college course. Under the method spelled out in the bill, state policymakers would not be allowed to use any predictive modeling data, the basic scientific building blocks for understanding how our oceans will behave as the climate continues to change.

House Bill 819 would also strip authority from state agencies and local governments that may want to rely on science to develop policies that will protect property, lives and our coast's spectacular natural resources that are threatened by climate change.

The bill ignores the evidence of a rapidly changing coastal system as the barrier islands and estuaries respond to the ongoing processes of rising sea level and high-energy storms.

• Almost all of our ocean and estuarine shorelines are receding at alarming rates.
• More than 370 oceanfront and inlet houses are walled with massive sandbags and in the surf zone.
• More than 125 miles of ocean beaches need nourishment sand in order to remain economically viable.
• Many of our barrier islands have narrowed by 25 percent to 75 percent of their width during the past 100 or so years.
• More than 25 miles of our coastal highway N.C. 12 are routinely consumed by the ocean and frequently rebuilt landward.
• Major portions of numerous coastal counties are less than 1 to 3 feet above mean sea level and are routinely impacted by rising water tables, salt-water encroachment and damaging storm surges.
• Numerous coastal harbor towns have historical building foundations and wharves that are now feet below mean sea level.

Special interests are driving the outrageous idea that sea level and storm processes can be legislated, that a dynamic coastal system can be permanently stabilized, that the science of coastal systems can be silenced and that public education must be minimized.

If this horrific legislation is passed, it will lead North Carolina into an ever increasing "disaster-based coastal economy" that will ultimately devastate North Carolina's tourism industry and negatively impact the entire coastal system.

With every storm, we watch our coastal communities and their businesses and citizens struggle to recover from yet another severe catastrophe. Yet, the proposed legislation wants to cut off planning for ongoing change, essentially imposing a death sentence on much of our highly vulnerable coastal system. Older readers may not see the results in their lifetime, but their children and grandchildren will inherit what we commit our coastal system to today.

Following five years of work, North Carolina's Legislative Commission on Global Climate Change submitted its final report to the General Assembly in May 2010. All of the commission's recommended legislative proposals dealt either directly or indirectly with adapting to a dynamic coastal system dominated by changes in climate, sea-level rise and storms.

HB-819 goes contrary to everything that was laid out by this commission, as well as decades of solid, science-based land-use planning already developed by the N.C. Division of Coastal Management and N.C. Coastal Resources Commission. North Carolina was a national leader with these critical economic and resource initiatives.

North Carolina's world-class coastal system is a complex, high-energy and dynamic system of interacting forces and ecosystems dominated by change. To maintain a viable coastal economy and preserve the resources upon which that economy is dependent, we must understand the natural processes of change and learn to live with these dynamics. History offers many powerful reminders of the
follies of human endeavors on our planet. Let's not allow North Carolina's coastal system to become another example of folly by allowing greed and ignorance to trump the science..

Abolish the proposed legislation that buries essential scientific data in the sand, destroys well balanced, science-based land-use management, and stifles public education. We must not allow North Carolina to decline into the Dark Ages.

Stanley R. Riggs is a research professor of geological sciences at East Carolina University and a member of the science panel that drafted the recommendations on sea-level rise preparations for the N.C. Coastal Resources Commission. He also is one of the authors of "Battle For North Carolina's Coasts: Evolutionary History, Present Crisis and Vision for the Future."
Senate budget plan spends less on K-12 than House proposal

By Lynn Bonner and Bruce Siceloff

The Senate took a more conservative approach than the House in drafting a proposed budget for next year, offering to spend about $127 million less than the House and relying less on one-time money to pay ongoing expenses.

The most obvious consequence is that under the Senate plan, K-12 schools would not have as much to spend next year as they would under the House budget.

The House used nearly $227 million in one-time money to help reduce the amount local districts would have to return to the state treasury. The House erased the additional $74 million local school districts would have had to return and compensated for the $259 million in federal stimulus money for schools that runs out in a few months. The Senate budget does not provide state money to fill that $259 million hole.

The decision to limit one-time money also shows up in health spending, where the House budget included more than $8 million for local health programs that the Senate excludes.

“We took a very minimalist approach,” said Sen. Richard Stevens, a Cary Republican and one of the chamber’s chief budget writers.

The Senate proposes to spend less on K-12 public schools and community colleges than the House does, and more for state universities.

The Senate budget rejects proposals by the House and Gov. Bev Perdue to postpone new and increased tolls on state ferry routes – and the Senate goes further by refusing to exempt two ferries that both chambers had agreed last year to keep toll-free.

Perdue had issued an executive order refusing to collect the new tolls. The Senate budget explicitly attacks her order as “an unconstitutional attempt to exercise authority” that she does not have, and it orders the Department of Transportation to ignore it.
House leaders had agreed with Perdue that ferry-dependent communities deserved a reprieve while they recover from the effects of the recession and Hurricane Irene. The House proposed to give the ferry division an extra $2.5 million to make up for the additional revenues that had been expected from the postponed ferry tolls.

The Senate budget directs the Department of Transportation to institute the higher rates and to collect tolls on all seven DOT ferry routes. That includes two that were exempted a year ago: the Currituck-Knotts Island ferry, used by public school buses, and the state’s busiest ferry route from Hatteras to Ocracoke, used heavily by tourists and Ocracoke residents.

The Senate budget includes a 1.2 percent raise for state employees, but no guaranteed raise for teachers. The school districts will receive $84 million that they can use for raises or to hire personnel.

“We don’t have unlimited dollars to put in any particular portion of the budget,” said Senate leader Phil Berger, an Eden Republican.

Dallas Woodhouse, state director for Americans for Prosperity, a conservative advocacy group, said his organization prefers the Senate budget because it believes using one-time money for ongoing expenses is a mistake.

“We were concerned that the House budget might leave the next administration with some holes to plug,” he said.

But Alexandra Forter Sirota, director of the liberal-leaning N.C. Budget & Tax Center, said the budget establishes false choices because it does not consider the options to raise taxes or to limit the tax break legislators gave big companies and wealthy businessmen.

“The impact of not totally replacing those temporary federal dollars will be significant across the state,” she said.

The state Department of Public Instruction calculates that the federal stimulus money pays for more than 5,000 local school employees.

Budget writers rejected the two ideas Perdue came up with to bring in money: a 3/4-cent sales tax increase or a tax on video sweepstakes.

“The Senate Budget means more pink slips for teachers and classroom cuts that would threaten our children’s future,” Perdue said in a statement. “It doesn’t have to be this way. I have outlined two alternatives to fund our schools, but Senate Republicans have rejected both. This budget is simply not good enough for our children or the economic future of our State. I call on the Senate to do better.”

Brian Lewis, a lobbyist for the N.C. Association of Educators, said school districts would likely use the $84 million to keep teachers employed rather than give raises.
“We are going to see more teachers leaving and you’re going to have school systems that don’t have the money to replace those teachers,” he said. “Parents need to be concerned about this budget. You are losing the best teachers out of the profession and you are having larger class sizes for their students.”

The Senate budget includes $47.4 million for the elementary school literacy program leaders in that chamber have promoted.

A Senate budget committee will begin debating the plan Tuesday, and the public will be invited to comment, Berger said.

The Senate is on track to pass its budget this week and begin negotiations with the House on a compromise, he said.

**Differences in the budgets proposed by the N.C. House and Senate**

**Education**

**Senate:**

- Eliminates the $74 million in additional cuts K-12 schools would have to take.
- Provides $4.5 million to keep the three residential schools for deaf and blind students
- Provides $800,000 to renew state support for the Governor’s School, a summer enrichment program for high school students.
- Provides $47.4 million to begin the Senate-supported literacy program.
- Funds UNC enrollment growth at $1.4 million
- Continues state support that allows out-of-state students on academic scholarships (Morehead-Cain and Park scholars) to be charged in-state tuition.
- Erases the additional $9.2 million in discretionary cuts the university system would have to take.
- Uses $35 million in lottery money to increase need-based scholarships for UNC students.
- Provides funds to operate new or renovated UNC buildings, for a new N.C. State Centennial Campus Library, and for a Joint School of Nanoscience and Nanoengineering in Greensboro.
House:
• Provides more than $333 million to eliminate the $74 million in additional discretionary cuts schools would have to take next year and compensates for the loss of $259 million in federal stimulus money for schools.
• Provides $5.1 million to keep all three residential schools for deaf and blind students.
• Funds the Teaching Fellows program.
• Gives the Governor’s School $200,000.
• Eliminates the state subsidy to UNC hospitals.
• Increases funding for need-based scholarships to private colleges by $4.7 million.
• Eliminates the tuition waiver that provides out of state Morehead-Cain and Park scholars to be treated as in-state students.
• Provides $17.2 million to reduce UNC discretionary cuts.
• Anticipates the state passing a tax-break for corporations that donate to private school scholarships, which would cost about $167,000.

State Employees

Senate: 1.2 percent raise for state, community college and UNC employees. Retirees receive a 1 percent cost of living adjustment; $84 million to local school districts for raises, jobs, or other uses.

House: $250 one-time bonuses to all employees. No cost of living adjustment for retirees.

Health and Human Services
• House included $8.4 million for community health programs at county health departments.
• Senate eliminated that money. Senate also adds $100 million to a reserve fund for potential Medicaid overruns.

Transportation

Senate:
• Cuts $17 million in spending to pave dirt roads and improve paved secondary roads
• Eliminates $29 million New Starts and Regional Grants transit programs, shifts the money to highway maintenance
• Overrides executive order by Gov. Bev Perdue, orders new tolls on all four ferry routes that now are toll-free, plus rate increases for the three tolled routes.

**House:**
• Cuts $40 million in spending to pave dirt roads and improve paved secondary roads
• Cuts $2.6 million in transit grants
• Postpones for one year an order that NCDOT start charging tolls on two ferry routes now toll-free and increase rates on the three tolled routes, and increases $2.5 million in ferry spending to replace the additional toll revenues that had been expected
Editorial

**Broken hearts**

Wade Hargrove loves the University of North Carolina as much as anyone does. So it’s alarming to hear this graduate of UNC-Chapel Hill and its law school characterize still-unfolding revelations of a scandal connected to academics and athletics as “troubling in the extreme.” And Hargrove, current chairman of the school’s board of trustees and a man cautious with words, had it right when he said, “You can’t love Carolina and not be heartbroken.”

Let’s hope other trustees share his sentiments, for they must be aggressive in getting to the bottom of yet another embarrassment related to the football team.

First, Butch Davis was forced out as coach and then-Athletics Director Dick Baddour retired early as improper connections came to light between athletes and agents. There were sanctions from the NCAA governing body.

Since then, many questions have arisen about courses within the African and Afro-American Studies department apparently tainted by academic fraud. The latest surround a course taught in summer school last year (or not taught, depending on one’s interpretation) by Julius Nyang’oro, the department’s former head.

Nyang’oro retired after earlier News & Observer stories reported that he had one star football player in an upper-level class in the department in 2007, and the player received a B-plus even though he had not yet taken a remedial writing course. And there was another instance in which a player submitted a paper with material that appeared to have been plagiarized. He also was in Nyang’oro’s class.

**Some ‘way’**

Now The N&O’s Dan Kane and Andrew Carter report that he had one star football player in an upper-level class in the department in 2007, and the player received a B-plus even though he had not yet taken a remedial writing course. And there was another instance in which a player submitted a paper with material that appeared to have been plagiarized. He also was in Nyang’oro’s class.

The university, which used to boast of its “clean” athletics program, the “Carolina way,” has always maintained that it does not treat athletes different from other students, that they are not guided to courses designed to keep them eligible because of easy material or agreeable professors.
That sanctimony, especially, makes this latest development an outrage. And Chancellor Holden Thorp remains evidently reluctant to ask and answer the questions that linger, questions that must be answered before all those broken hearts Hargrove has been talking about can be mended.

They include:

How was it possible for this course to be added to the summer school list, for Nyang’oro to take it over from the professor who normally would have taught it and for it to include only football players (who knew to register for it within days of registration opening) without someone in the academic support staff or in the university’s middle-level administration not raising an eyebrow, and more?

What do students who were in the class say? Do Thorp and others want to find out?

**Who’s in charge?**

Where is the accountability in terms of the university ensuring that students, athletes or not, get the instruction to which they’re entitled? Nyang’oro taught this class as one requiring a paper at the end, but performed no instructional duties.

Thorp has tackled the issue at those points where The N&O has obtained records and reported on what happened, or didn’t happen, but he hasn’t seemed to push for a really aggressive investigation – even while the university’s academic standards have been corrupted and the “Carolina way” has become a joke.

The public has a right to know how this happened, who is responsible and how that individual and perhaps others will answer for this embarrassment. The State Bureau of Investigation and the Orange County District Attorney’s Office are looking into Nyang’oro’s department.

Trustees now must insist on answers to these “troubling” questions, no matter how uncomfortable and embarrassing the process of getting them may be. This university has been shaken to its core, and these problems must be taken seriously.
UNC-Chapel Hill needs to be more transparent and stop operating behind closed doors. Last year, media organizations had to file suit against the university for denying the public access to the football program’s records during the NCAA investigations. Recently, as a student journalist, I experienced that same secretive obstinacy.

I was seeking to access budget data for university departments in order to find out the real effects of the 2011 budget cuts. For many months, administrators had insisted that the budget cuts would damage the “academic core” and thereby diminish the undergraduate experience. To see whether the cuts had actually affected the departments, I needed to see department budgets for different years.

Most of the news coverage, however, revolved around cuts to the university as a whole. Overall numbers are helpful for some things, but they don’t show the entire picture. So I tried to do a little investigating, starting in December 2011.

As a senior, I could see some of the changes within my own department (Economics) unfolding over the last four years. I wanted to compare the Economics Department’s budget with other department budgets to understand the decision-making process that determined what was cut or kept.

Unfortunately, none of this information was online, so I contacted the associate vice chancellor for finance. He sent me the following response: Departmental budgets are maintained in the university’s financial system – FRS. Security access to the system is limited to university employees who need access to conduct official university business.

His response didn’t seem right – this is a public university, and it seems unreasonable that departmental budgets are kept secret from the public [budget figures for units above the department level, the College of Arts and Sciences, for example, are available]. I eventually met with him and the vice provost for finance and academic planning, but they said they could not provide me with the information I was seeking.

At their suggestion, I contacted the business manager of every academic department in the College of Arts and Sciences and a few of the other schools, 48
people in total. Only 15 responded, and only eight of them gave me the slightest bit of information.

One business manager responded, “No Anthony – this is not possible,” without explanation. Another merely replied, “Sorry, I do not know you and cannot help you.”

A department chair was willing to give me a general overview but concluded: “You would need to contact the Dean’s office for copies of any budget reports that we submit to them.”

I then contacted the dean’s office only to be told by the director of communications that each department had the budget report, not the dean’s office.

I made a final attempt and submitted a public records request with the university counsel on March 1 for one department’s budget. My request remains unfulfilled three months later. Even my phone call recently to ascertain a tentative timeline for my request has gone unreturned.

I understand that with the budget cuts the university’s support staff members are being asked to do more with less, as this response indicated: “Unfortunately, it would take us substantial effort and time to properly collate and organize this information so as to provide it to you in any form that would be useful to you. As part of the budget cutbacks, we are operating with reduced department staff whose time for their department duties is already severely strained. As such, I cannot allocate our limited resources to putting together such a detailed report for you at this time.”

On the other hand, shouldn’t university departments already know their budgets? How can any such operation function without knowing how much it spends?

Furthermore, this information is a public record and should be made accessible. The counsel’s office never said it wasn’t public; instead, I was shuffled around the university system and given excuse after excuse, most likely with the goal to frustrate me so that I would give up.

And they were right. I did my best, but almost five months after I began, I feel as though I’ve exhausted all the means of obtaining that information and come up dry. This is not how a university that seeks to be responsive to the needs of students – and taxpayers – should operate.

Anthony Dent is a 2012 graduate of UNC-Chapel Hill, where he served as chairman of the College Republicans and editor of the Carolina Review.
Narrow focus

I read the June 8 story about researchers at N.C. State University earning a National Science Foundation grant of some $240,000 to educate black college-age women about the dangers of HIV infection.

Title IX is a sword with edges on both sides of the blade. It specifically states, “No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance...”

The National Science Foundation is a federal agency. Title IX has been used to level the opportunities in sports and elsewhere for women. In this case the grant seems to specifically exclude men. It would seem the population to be educated should be chosen on some other basis – perhaps poverty or literacy might be a better metric than skin color and sex.

The implication of the grant as described in the article is that college-bound black women have a lesser understanding of the risks of unprotected sex than any other group. This is insulting to that population and I hope newspaper space considerations did not tell the whole story of the grant.

Anthony Waraksa
Durham
UNC-TV board elects new leaders

By Brooke Cain

UNC-TV recently elected Robert D. Teer Jr. of Durham as its Board of Trustees chairman and Sabrina D. Bengel of New Bern as vice chairwoman.

Both will serve two-year terms.

Teer, president and principal owner of Teer Associates, a commercial real estate development firm in Research Triangle Park, previously served as vice chairman of the UNC-TV Board of Trustees. He is a graduate of East Carolina University with business ties to RTP since 1969. Teer has postgraduate degrees from the University of Tennessee and UNC-Chapel Hill, and he served in the United States Army Reserve for 28 years, retiring with the rank of lieutenant colonel.

Bengel is president of New Bern Tours & Convention Services, which runs New Bern’s Trolley Car Tours, and she serves as an alderman with the city. Bengel also works as a managing partner with “The Birthplace of Pepsi,” a museum in New Bern at the site where Pepsi-Cola was invented. Bengel is also a graduate of East Carolina University, where she is to be honored this fall with the Distinguished Service Award at the school’s homecoming.

The UNC-TV board is a 22-member advisory board reporting to the UNC Board of Governors. The Board of Governors appoints 11 members; four are appointed by the governor, and the president pro tem of the state Senate and the speaker of the House each appoint one. The remaining five members are the president of the UNC system, the president of the community college system, the superintendent of public instruction, the secretary of health and human services, and the secretary of cultural resources.

Both Teer and Bengel were appointed by the Board of Governors – Teer in 2008 and Bengel in 2011, serving a partial term after the departure of another board member.
Managers involved in repeated budget and staff cutbacks are hurting. Unfortunately, many don't have the psychological support they need.

Two University of Kansas researchers, education dean Rick Ginsberg and psychology chair Karen Multon, recently charted the stressful effects of the "financial tsunami" on deans and department chairs in higher education.

Many public universities in particular have been hit with funding cuts that have forced layoffs, fewer and larger classes, and staff morale problems.

The researchers found a greater incidence of headaches, high blood pressure, sleeping difficulty and weight gain among the deans and department chairs who had to oversee those cuts.

Their findings can easily translate into private industry, where many supervisors have had to cope with repeated rounds of job eliminations and budget cutbacks.

They concluded that such managers need the equivalent of crisis management training because the effects of continued cuts are as severe as one massive incident would be.

The professors suggest four kinds of help for managers caught in such cutback environments:

- Be as transparent as possible with your staff, sharing as much financial information as you possibly can so that people understand the reasons for budget takeaways, pay cuts and staff losses.

- Involve your staff as much as possible to come up with ways to cope with budget cuts, perhaps sharing the pain more fairly or sensibly than supervisors might design on their own. That helps defuse anger.

- Develop a close-knit group of managers in similar positions, a group that can meet regularly and be a confidential support system for each other, sharing problems and suggesting solutions.

- Take physical and emotional care of yourself. Schedule regular exercise. Eat a healthy diet. Spend time with your family and friends, but try not to lay your work burdens on them. And seek professional counseling if you need a more confidential or advisory outlet.
U.-Va. board ouster of President Teresa Sullivan sparks anger

By Anita Kumar and Daniel de Vise, Published: June 11

CHARLOTTESVILLE — Outrage escalated on the historic University of Virginia campus Monday over the abrupt ouster of President Teresa Sullivan by a governing board that offered few new details about why it had acted or what exactly had gone awry.

Sullivan was asked to resign after two years in the job, state and university officials said, because the governing board of visitors had grown impatient at what its members perceived as a lack of overarching vision for the future of the state flagship university.

Sullivan learned of the board’s wishes late Friday, after an annual executive retreat during which she and her top staff charted the university’s academic course. Sullivan had no inkling that her job was even in jeopardy, according to multiple sources with direct knowledge of events.

“We had all kinds of projects in the works, things we were trying to do to advance the university,” said John Simon, U-Va.’s provost, who attended the off-campus retreat in Albemarle County. He called Sullivan “one of the stars” of higher education.

Sunday’s announcement hurled the Charlottesville campus into disarray. Faculty demanded a fuller explanation of the board’s action. Academic deans dispatched memos to calm the ranks. High-ranking current and former administrators lined up to defend Sullivan’s record.

In a telephone interview Monday, the leader of the board, Rector Helen E. Dragas, said the board would be vindicated in due time.

“It’s really too early to judge this decision,” Dragas said. “This decision should be judged after a new president is installed.”

Dragas, a Virginia Beach developer who was named to the board by a Democratic governor in 2008, said the board had voiced “overwhelming support” for replacing Sullivan. Dragas denied the move had any “political considerations.”
On Sunday, a statement from the rector had said that the university needed “a bold leader who can help develop, articulate and implement” a plan for the future. In an implied criticism of Sullivan, she faulted what she termed “incremental, marginal change.” Dragas added Monday that Sullivan was seen as an adequate caretaker of day-to-day operations but that board members were concerned about the adequacy of her long-term plans for all aspects of the university.

Gov. Robert F. McDonnell (R), who learned about the action from Dragas on Wednesday night, said he was not consulted until after the decision to remove Sullivan had been made.

“My job is to appoint good people to the board of visitors. Their job is to run the university,” McDonnell said in an appearance in Loudoun County. “They know far better than a governor or anybody in the cabinet what needs to be done that’s in the best interests of the university.”

The board kept state lawmakers, the university community and Sullivan in the dark as its members discussed her potential removal in private conversations over a series of months. Sullivan’s term will be the shortest of any U-Va. president.

The board’s decision, made last week, was unanimous, according to officials who spoke on the condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the matter. The board, with 16 voting members, is split equally between those appointed by McDonnell and by his predecessor, Timothy M. Kaine.

After the board’s action, many of Sullivan’s day-to-day duties were divvied up between the provost, Simon, and Chief Operating Officer Michael Strine. Sullivan herself was in Washington on Monday, attending meetings that had already been on her calendar. She will step down Aug. 15.

Terms of separation will be announced in about two weeks, Dragas said, and an interim president named within a month.

Sullivan indicated through a spokesman that she could not discuss her resignation beyond an official statement that lamented a “philosophical difference of opinion” with the board that had hired her. She and her husband, law scholar Douglas Laycock, are tenured professors and free to remain on the U-Va. faculty.

The Faculty Senate chided the board for an “inadequate and unsatisfactory” explanation of Sullivan’s departure. “[W]e are entitled to a full and candid explanation of this sudden and drastic change in University leadership,” the group said in a statement.

“The faculty is in shock. The faculty is hysterical. This is like a death in the family,” said Gweneth West, a drama professor and former chairman of the Faculty Senate. “She was everything we hoped for and more. And she remains so today.”

Prominent figures in the university community affirmed Sullivan’s record.

“I think history will show that she performed in the time that she was here in an extraordinary manner,” said Leonard Sandridge, a former chief operating officer at U-Va. who served under Sullivan’s predecessor, John T. Casteen. Sandridge said Sullivan understood the operations of a major research university “as well as anyone I have ever seen.”

Board members insisted they made the decision with no input from Richmond.

“The board is given the authority to operate,” said board member Alan Diamonstein, a former Democratic state delegate. “We really try not to get politics involved in the university.”

“I’ve never been prouder of the utter transparency of a process,” another member, businessman R.J. Kirk, said.
Other board members referred questions to Dragas.

Several academic leaders contend Sullivan had a clear vision for the university. Her top priority was to foster “the premier undergraduate experience in the United States,” along with top-ranked professional programs, and the capacity to hire and keep the best scholars for the faculty, Simon said. She envisioned a “radical” shift in undergraduate teaching, he said, to stress in-depth and one-on-one interactions for upper-level students, technology, and academic innovation for freshmen and sophomores.

Sullivan drew standing-room crowds at speaking engagements and forged deep relationships in Washington and Richmond.

“I thought she was a breath of fresh air,” said state Sen. R. Creigh Deeds (D-Bath), who represents Charlottesville. “I really liked her.”

*Kumar reported from Richmond and de Vise from Charlottesville. Staff writer Ben Pershing and researcher Sue Noftsinger contributed to this report.*
Big East files lawsuit seeking $5M from TCU, which backed out of membership agreement

By Associated Press, Published: June 11

The Big East sued TCU for failing to pay the conference $5 million after the school reneged on an agreement to become a member and chose to join the Big 12 instead.

The Big East filed the lawsuit Monday in U.S. District Court in Washington.

TCU agreed in November 2010 to join the Big East, beginning this July. The Big East contends TCU agreed to pay the league $5 million if it did not follow through on that agreement.

In October 2011, TCU accepted an invite to the Big 12.

In the lawsuit, the Big East says it has “made demand for the payment owed under the Agreement, but TCU has refused to make that payment or acknowledge its obligation to do so.”

“TCU administrators were surprised by this lawsuit and believe it is premature. The University is hopeful for an amicable resolution of this matter,” the school said in a statement. “Because of the pending litigation, TCU will have no further comment.”

TCU is leaving the Mountain West and will become a member of the Big 12 in July.

Big East spokesman John Paquette said in an email to the AP the league had no further immediate comment.

The Big East settled in February dueling lawsuits with West Virginia, which is also joining the Big 12 in July. The Big East received $20 million and West Virginia was allowed to leave the conference before the end of the 27-month notification period required by the league’s bylaws.

Pittsburgh, which has accepted an invite, along with Syracuse, to join the Atlantic Coast Conference, sued the Big East last month. The university also wants to be allowed to leave the Big East early, after the 2012-13 school year. Pitt cited TCU’s and West Virginia’s departures as grounds for its claim.

The Big East has said it is open to negotiating an early exit for Pitt and Syracuse.

The Big East is entering a lame duck season with Pittsburgh and Syracuse. Temple is re-joining the conference to replace West Virginia this year and five more schools are set to join — including Boise State and San Diego State in football only — in 2013.
Deaths in Auburn University shooting include two ex-football players

By Erik Matuszewski, Published: June 11

June 11 (Bloomberg) -- Two former Auburn University football players were among three people killed in an off-campus shooting over the weekend that left three others hospitalized with gunshot wounds.

Ladarious Phillips of Roanoke, Alabama, and Ed Christian of Valdosta, Georgia, were killed when a gunman opened fire following a June 9 fight at an apartment complex in Auburn, Alabama, police said. Both were 20 years old, as was the third person who died, Demario Pitts of Opelika, Alabama.

Three additional victims were taken to East Alabama Medical Center for treatment of gunshot wounds, including Eric Mack, a sophomore offensive lineman for the Tigers. The shooter, who fled the scene in a vehicle with two other people, remains at large, Auburn police said.

“The only connection that the Auburn football team has to this is they’re the victims of a brutal shooting,” Auburn Police Chief Tommy Dawson said at a news conference. “Sometimes the young men get a bad rap, I feel like, but they’re the victims.”

Dawson said police, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the U.S. Marshal’s Service are trying to find Desmonte Leonard, 22, of Montgomery, Alabama, who is wanted on three warrants for capital murder. His vehicle was found abandoned.

Phillips was a fullback for Auburn last season, while Christian didn’t play football because of a back injury.

“This is a sad, sad day for everyone associated with the entire Auburn family,” Tigers coach Gene Chizik said in a statement. “I am devastated by the passing of three young men, including two that I personally knew in Ed Christian and Ladarious Phillips and my heart goes out to their families.”

Chizik said Mack is expected to make a full recovery.
“Now I have to worry about this, too? Really? This shouldn’t be what they need to do to get where they want to,” said Dodi Sklar, after listening to her ninth-grade son, Jonathan, describe how some classmates abuse stimulants.

By ALAN SCHWARZ
Published: June 9, 2012 742 Comments

Risky Rise of the Good-Grade Pill

He steered into the high school parking lot, clicked off the ignition and scanned the scraps of his recent weeks. Crinkled chip bags on the dashboard. Soda cups at his feet. And on the passenger seat, a rumpled SAT practice book whose owner had been told since fourth grade he was headed to the Ivy League. Pencils up in 20 minutes.

The boy exhaled. Before opening the car door, he recalled recently, he twisted open a capsule of orange powder and arranged it in a neat line on the armrest. He leaned over, closed one nostril and snorted it.

Throughout the parking lot, he said, eight of his friends did the same thing.

The drug was not cocaine or heroin, but Adderall, an amphetamine prescribed for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder that the boy said he and his friends routinely shared to study late into the night, focus during tests and ultimately get the grades worthy of their prestigious high school in an affluent suburb of New York City. The drug did more than just jolt them awake for the 8 a.m. SAT; it gave them a tunnel focus tailor-made for the marathon of tests long known to make or break college applications.

“Everyone in school either has a prescription or has a friend who does,” the boy said.
At high schools across the United States, pressure over grades and competition for college admissions are encouraging students to abuse prescription stimulants, according to interviews with students, parents and doctors. Pills that have been a staple in some college and graduate school circles are going from rare to routine in many academically competitive high schools, where teenagers say they get them from friends, buy them from student dealers or fake symptoms to their parents and doctors to get prescriptions.

Of the more than 200 students, school officials, parents and others contacted for this article, about 40 agreed to share their experiences. Most students spoke on the condition that they be identified by only a first or middle name, or not at all, out of concern for their college prospects or their school systems’ reputations — and their own.

“It’s throughout all the private schools here,” said DeAns in Parker, a New York psychologist who treats many adolescents from affluent neighborhoods like the Upper East Side. “It’s not as if there is one school where this is the culture. This is the culture.”

Observed Gary Boggs, a special agent for the Drug Enforcement Administration, “We’re seeing it all across the United States.”

The D.E.A. lists prescription stimulants like Adderall and Vyvanse (amphetamines) and Ritalin and Focalin (methylphenidates) as Class 2 controlled substances — the same as cocaine and morphine — because they rank among the most addictive substances that have a medical use. (By comparison, the long-abused anti-anxiety drug Valium is in the lower Class 4.) So they carry high legal risks, too, as few teenagers appreciate that merely giving a friend an Adderall or Vyvanse pill is the same as selling it and can be prosecuted as a felony.

While these medicines tend to calm people with A.D.H.D., those without the disorder find that just one pill can jolt them with the energy and focus to push through all-night homework binges and stay awake during exams afterward. “It’s like it does your work for you,” said William, a recent graduate of the Birch Wathen Lenox School on the Upper East Side of Manhattan.

But abuse of prescription stimulants can lead to depression and mood swings (from sleep deprivation), heart irregularities and acute exhaustion or psychosis during withdrawal, doctors say. Little is known about the long-term effects of abuse of stimulants among the young. Drug counselors say that for some teenagers, the pills eventually become an entry to the abuse of painkillers and sleep aids.

“Once you break the seal on using pills, or any of that stuff, it’s not scary anymore — especially when you’re getting A’s,” said the boy who snorted Adderall in the parking lot. He spoke from the couch of his drug counselor, detailing how he later became addicted to the painkiller Percocet and eventually heroin.

Paul L. Hoke, a family therapist at Caron Treatment Centers in Manhattan, said: “Children have prefrontal cortices that are not fully developed, and we’re changing the chemistry of the brain. That’s what these drugs do. It’s one thing if you have a real deficiency — the medicine is really important to those people — but not if your deficiency is not getting into Brown.”

The number of prescriptions for A.D.H.D. medications dispensed for young people ages 10 to 19 has risen 26 percent since 2007, to almost 21 million yearly, according to IMS Health, a health care information company — a number that experts estimate corresponds to more than two million individuals. But there is no reliable research on how many high school students take stimulants as a study aid. Doctors and teenagers from more than 15 schools across the nation with high academic standards estimated that the portion of students who do so ranges from 15 percent to 40 percent.
“They’re the A students, sometimes the B students, who are trying to get good grades,” said one senior at Lower Merion High School in Ardmore, a Philadelphia suburb, who said he makes hundreds of dollars a week selling prescription drugs, usually priced at $5 to $20 per pill, to classmates as young as freshmen. “They’re the quote-unquote good kids, basically.”

The trend was driven home last month to Nan Radulovic, a psychotherapist in Santa Monica, Calif. Within a few days, she said, an 11th grader, a ninth grader and an eighth grader asked for prescriptions for Adderall solely for better grades. From one girl, she recalled, it was not quite a request.

“If you don’t give me the prescription,” Dr. Radulovic said the girl told her, “I’ll just get it from kids at school.”

**Keeping Everyone Happy**

Madeleine surveyed her schedule of five Advanced Placement classes, field hockey and several other extracurricular activities and knew she could not handle it all. The first physics test of the year — inclines, friction, drag — loomed ominously over her college prospects. A star senior at her Roman Catholic school in Bethesda, Md., Madeleine knew a friend whose grades had gone from B’s to A’s after being prescribed Ritalin, so she asked her for a pill.

She got a 95. Thereafter, Madeleine recalled, she got Adderall and Vyvanse capsules the rest of the year from various classmates — not in exchange for money, she said, but for tutoring them in calculus or proofreading their English papers.

“Can I get a drink of water?” Madeleine said she would ask the teacher in one class, before excusing herself and heading to the water fountain. Making sure no one was watching, she would remove a 40-milligram Vyvanse capsule from her purse and swallow it. After 30 minutes, the buzz began, she said: laser focus, instant recall and the fortitude to crush any test in her path.

“People would have never looked at me and thought I used drugs like that — I wasn’t that kid,” said Madeleine, who has just completed her freshman year at an Ivy League college and continues to use stimulants occasionally. “It wasn’t that hard of a decision. Do I want only four hours of sleep and be a mess, and then underperform on the test and then in field hockey? Or make the teachers happy and the coach happy and get good grades, get into a good college and make my parents happy?”

Madeleine estimated that one-third of her classmates at her small school, most of whom she knew well, used stimulants without a prescription to boost their scholastic performance. Many students across the United States made similar estimates for their schools, all of them emphasizing that the drugs were used not to get high, but mostly by conscientious students to work harder and meet ever-rising academic expectations.

These estimates can be neither confirmed nor refuted because little data captures this specific type of drug misuse. A respected annual survey financed by the National Institute on Drug Abuse, “Monitoring the Future,” reports that abuse of prescription amphetamines by 10th and 12th graders nationally has actually dipped from the 1990s and is remaining relatively steady at about 10 percent.

However, some experts note that the survey does not focus on the demographic where they believe such abuse is rising steadily — students at high-pressure high schools — and also that many teenagers barely know that what they often call “study drugs” are in fact illegal amphetamines.

“Isn’t it just like a vitamin?” asked one high school junior from Eastchester, a suburb of New York.
Liz Jorgensen, a licensed addiction specialist who runs Insight Counseling in Ridgefield, Conn., said her small center had treated “at least 50 or 60” high school students from southern Connecticut this school year alone who had abused prescription stimulants for academics. Ms. Jorgensen said some of those teenagers landed in rehab directly from the stimulants or, more often, grew comfortable with prescription drugs in general and began abusing prescription painkillers like OxyContin.

A spokesman for Shire, which manufactures Vyvanse and Adderall’s extended-release capsules, said studies had shown no link between prescribed use of those drugs and later abuse.

Dr. Jeff Jonas, Shire’s senior vice president for research and development, said that the company was greatly concerned about the misuse of its stimulants but that the rate was very small. “I’m not aware of any systematic data that suggests there’s a widespread problem,” he said. “You can always find people who testify that it happens.”

Students who sell prescription stimulants to their classmates focus on their burdens and insecurities. One girl who sells to fellow students at Long Beach High School on Long Island said: “These kids would get in trouble if they don’t do well in school. When people take tests, it’s immediately, ‘Who am I getting Adderall from?’ They’re always looking for it.”

Every school identified in this article was contacted regarding statements by its students and stimulant abuse in general. Those that responded generally said that they were concerned about some teenagers turning to these drugs, but that their numbers were far smaller than the students said.

David Weiss, superintendent of Long Beach Public Schools, said the survey his district used to gauge student drug use asked about only prescription medications in general, not stimulants specifically.

“It has not been a surface issue for us — we’re much more conscious of alcohol or other drug use,” Mr. Weiss said in a telephone interview. “We haven’t had word that it’s a widespread issue.”

Douglas Young, a spokesman for the Lower Merion School District outside Philadelphia, said prescription stimulant abuse was covered in various student-wellness initiatives as well as in the 10th-grade health curriculum. Mr. Young expressed frustration that many parents seemed oblivious to the problem.

“It’s time for a serious wake-up call,” Mr. Young said. “Straight A’s and high SAT scores look great on paper, but they aren’t reflective measures of a student’s health and well-being. We need to better understand the pressures and temptations, and ultimately we need to embrace new definitions of student success. For many families and communities, that’s simply not happening.”

**Fooling the Doctors**

During an interview in March, the dealer at Lower Merion High reached into his pocket and pulled out the container for his daily stash of the prescription stimulants Concerta and Focalin: a hollowed-out bullet. Unlike his other products — marijuana and heroin, which come from higher-level dealers — his amphetamines came from a more trusted, and trusting, source, he said.

“I lie to my psychiatrist — I expressed feelings I didn’t really have, knowing the consequences of it,” he said, standing in a park a few miles from the high school. “I tell the doctor, ‘I find myself very distracted, and I feel this really deep pain inside, like I’m anxious all the time,’ or something like that.”
He coughed out a chuckle and added proudly, “Generally, if you keep playing the angsty-teen role, you’ll get something good.”

Christine, a junior sitting nearby, said she followed the well-known lines to get her drugs directly and legally, a script for scripts. “I’m not able to focus on schoolwork,” she said in a mockingly anxious voice. “I’m constantly looking out the window.” Although she often uses the drugs herself, snorting them for a faster and more intense effect, she said she preferred to save them for when her customers crave them most.

“Right before everybody took the PSATs, a bunch of kids went to the bathroom to snort their Addies,” she said.

This is one of the more vexing problems with stimulants in high schools, experts said — the drugs enter the schools via students who get them legally, if not legitimately.

Older A.D.H.D. drugs required low doses every few hours, and schools, not wanting students to carry the drugs themselves, had the school nurse hold and dispense the pills. Newer long-lasting versions like Adderall XR and Vyvanse allow parents to give children a single dose in the morning, often unaware that the pills can go down a pants pocket as easily as the throat. Some students said they took their pills only during the week and gave their weekend pills to friends.

The mother of one high school freshman in Westchester County said she would open the kitchen cabinet every morning and watch her son take his prescribed dose of Ritalin. She noticed one day that the capsule was strangely airy and held it up to the light. It was empty.

“There were a few times we were short in the month, and I couldn’t understand why,” recalled the woman, whose son was in eighth grade at the time. “It never dawned on me until I found those empty capsules, and then I started discovering the little packets of powder. He was selling it to other kids.”

A number of teenagers interviewed laughed at the ease with which they got some doctors to write prescriptions for A.D.H.D. The disorder’s definition requires inattentiveness, hyperactivity or impulse control to present “clinically significant impairment” in at least two settings (school and home, for example), according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Crucially, some of this impairment must have been in evidence by age 7; a proper diagnosis for a teenager claiming to have A.D.H.D., several doctors said, requires interviewing parents, teachers and others to confirm that the problems existed long before.

Many youngsters with prescriptions said their doctors merely listened to their stories and took out their prescription pads. Dr. Hilda R. Roque, a primary-care physician in West New York, N.J., said she never prescribed A.D.H.D. medicine but knew many doctors who did. She said many parents could push as hard for prescriptions as their children did, telling her: “My child is not doing well in school. I understand there are meds he can take to make him smarter.”

“To get a prescription for Adderall was the Golden Ticket — it really was,” said William, the recent graduate of Birch Wathen in Manhattan.

A high school senior in Connecticut who has used his friend’s Adderall for school said: “These are academic steroids. But usually, parents don’t get the steroids for you.”

As with the steroids taken by athletes, the downside of prescription stimulants appears after they provide the desired short-term competitive benefits. This was the case with a recent graduate of McLean High School in Virginia, one of the top public schools in the Washington area.
Late in his sophomore year, the boy wanted some help to raise his B average — far from what top colleges expected, especially from a McLean student. So he told his psychologist what she needed to hear for a diagnosis of A.D.H.D. — even gazing out the window during the appointment for effect — and was soon getting 30 pills of Adderall every month, 10 milligrams each. They worked. He focused late into the night studying, concentrated better during exams and got an A-minus average for his junior year.

“I wanted to do everything I could to get into the quote-unquote right school,” he recalled recently.

As senior year began, when another round of SATs and one last set of good grades could put him over the top, the boy said he still had trouble concentrating. The doctor prescribed 30 milligrams a day. When college applications hit, he bought extra pills for $5 apiece from a girl in French class who had fooled her psychiatrist, too, and began taking several on some days.

The boy said that as his A-minus average continued through senior year, no one suspected that “a kid who went to Bible camp” and had so improved his grades could be abusing drugs. By the time he was accepted and had enrolled at a good but not great college, he was up to 300 milligrams a day — constantly taking more to stave off the inevitable crash.

One night, after he had taken about 400 milligrams, his heart started beating wildly. He began hallucinating and then convulsing. He was rushed to the emergency room and wound up spending seven months at a drug rehabilitation center.

To his surprise, two of 20 fellow patients there had also landed in rehab solely from abusing stimulants in high school.

“No one seems to think that it’s a real thing — adults on the outside looking in,” the boy said. “The other kids in rehab thought we weren’t addicts because Adderall wasn’t a real drug. It’s so underestimated.”

‘No Way You’d Notice’

The Sklar family lives near the top of a daunting hill in Ardsley, a comfortable suburb north of New York City. Ardsley High School sends dozens of graduates every year to Ivy League-caliber colleges. When students there use Facebook, they all know that its founder, Mark Zuckerberg, once walked the same halls.

At their kitchen table after school last month, Dodi Sklar listened as her ninth-grade son, Jonathan, described how some classmates already abused stimulants — long before SATs and college applications. An accomplished student who said he would never join them, Jonathan described the ease with which he could.

“There’s no way you’d notice — that’s why so many kids are doing it,” he told his mother. “I could say I’m going for a run, call someone I know who does it, get some pills from them, take them, come home and work. Just do it. You’d be just glad that I was studying hard.”

His mother sighed. “As a parent you worry about driving, you worry about drinking, you worry about all kinds of health and mental issues, social issues,” she said. “Now I have to worry about this, too? Really? This shouldn’t be what they need to do to get where they want to.”

Asked if the improper use of stimulants was cheating, students were split. Some considered that the extra studying hours and the heightened focus during exams amounted to an unfair advantage. Many countered that the drugs “don’t give you the answers” and defended their use as a personal choice for test preparation, akin to tutoring.
One consensus was clear: users were becoming more common, they said, and some students who would rather not take the drugs would be compelled to join them because of the competition over class rank and colleges’ interest.

A current law student in Manhattan, who said he dealt Adderall regularly while at his high school in Sarasota, Fla., said that insecurity was a main part of his sales pitch: that those students “would feel at a huge disadvantage,” he said.

William, the recent Birch Wathen graduate, said prescription stimulants became a point of contention when a girl with otherwise middling grades suddenly improved her SAT score.

“There was an uproar among kids — some people were really proud of her, and some kids were really jealous and mad,” he recalled. “I don’t remember if she had a prescription, but she definitely took more than was prescribed. People would say, ‘You’re so smart,’ and she’d say, ‘It wasn’t all me.’”

One sophomore at Harvard-Westlake School in Studio City, Calif., is unsure what his future holds. Enrolled at one of the top high schools on the West Coast, he said he tried a friend’s Adderall this semester but disliked the sensation of his heart beating rapidly for hours. He vowed never to do it again.

But as he watches upperclassmen regularly abuse stimulants as they compete for top college slots, he is not quite sure.

“Junior and senior year is a whole new ballgame,” the boy said. “I promised myself I wouldn’t take it, but that can easily, easily change. I can be convinced.”