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Ballard drops out of job race

East Carolina University Chancellor Steve Ballard is no longer in the running for the presidency of the State University of New York in Albany. Ballard announced in a statement released by ECU that he withdrew his name from consideration.

Ballard cited his deep ties to ECU and his desire to continue the work of the institution.

“I appreciate the interest from Albany, an excellent university. However, my heart stays with ECU,” Ballard said in the release.

Ballard confirmed earlier this week that he had talked with SUNY-Albany after the Albany Times-Union listed him as one of nine finalists for the job. At least four other of the named candidates either withdrew or said they were never in consideration after the article was published.

The university has not disclosed or confirmed names of the candidates.

Ballard joined ECU in 2004 after serving as provost and vice chancellor for academic affairs at the University of Missouri at Kansas City.

His salary is $315,000.

This is not the first time Ballard has been a candidate for another job — he was one of three finalists for the presidency of the Kansas State University in early 2009.

He withdrew his name from consideration then, saying “Kansas State just didn’t feel as good to me as ECU does.”
Cops: Burglar ate chicken, sipped wine, hid in bed

A burglar pretended to be asleep when police surrounded the apartment building where an East Carolina University student was hiding during a break-in early Thursday, Greenville police said.

Two women, who WNCT reports are ECU students, told police that a man banged on the door and then broke into a window of their Province Apartment complex home around 1:25 a.m. Police said one woman locked herself in the bathroom, while the other escaped through another window.

Greenville and ECU police officers surrounded the building and got the ECU student safely out of the apartment. When they searched the apartment, the burglar was pretending to be asleep in one of the bedrooms, police said.

ECU student Stephanie Gordy told WNCT that the burglar rummaged through the kitchen, took some chicken and wine from the refrigerator, and told the police who arrested him that he had been invited there.

Derrick Greene, 22, of Greenville, was charged with first-degree burglary and damage to property. He was placed in the Pitt County jail under a $500,000 secured bond.
“The next step is to de-bunk these beds because we’re too big for bunks.”

Adhem Elsawi
On living in Aycock

Pirates ready for preseason camp
By Nathan Summers, The Daily Reflector

Hazing is a major no-no in modern college athletics, but that doesn’t mean there isn’t a pecking order based on seniority.

As the always-affable Justin Dixon dragged his summer belongings into East Carolina’s Aycock Hall — the monthlong camp home of the ECU football team — he recalled with a smile his own freshman dorm experiences, but the junior ECU defensive end from Smithfield much prefers the way things are now.

“Messing with all of the guys and seeing the freshmen come in here with wide eyes and not knowing what they’re getting into tomorrow, I’m loving
every minute of it,” Dixon said Thursday, a little more than 24 hours prior to today’s first ECU practice of fall camp.

At the other end of the spectrum, newcomers like walk-on and former Greene Central standout defensive end Freddie Pressley were admittedly all-business in the buildup to camp, and it’s not hard to tell they don’t know what to expect.

“They get treated kind of badly,” Dixon said of the freshmen, laughing. “I might have them carry some of my stuff up for me. They’ve got to earn their keep around here, but that’s how it goes, that’s how I had to go through it. There’s no hazing or anything but a little teasing and things like that.”

Dorm life means close quarters after long days, and the bigger the player the more cramped it is. But the unified feeling is that the dorm means football is here.

“It’s almost part of the nostalgia. You think of camp and you think of being in the dorm room, and it’s part of the grind,” junior starting left tackle Adhem Elsawi said. “The key to this dorm life is staying comfortable, so I had to bring my TV and my X-Box to relax. My roommate is Ike (Harris) and he’s taller than I am, so that’s going to be an interesting combination. The next step is to de-bunk these beds because we’re too big for bunks.”

Being one of the older guys, of course, also creates a chance to become a true leader.

“I believe everybody is focused, and our mind is on one thing — App State,” junior punter Trent Tignor said, referring to the Pirates’ season opener Sept. 1 against Appalachian State, but adding that the value of being an upperclassmen is mentoring the new arrivals. “If somebody’s lost, I help them out and show them where to go. It’s a leadership mentality.”

Veteran starting defensive end Matt Milner said he spent some long hours training in a shed with no air conditioning while the ECU weight room was being redone this summer. But living in the dorm is no picnic either.

“You always dread it, and come July you always start to think about it, and it’s not the most fun thing,” Milner said, noting that there will be plenty of banter between the offensive and defensive linemen housed at either end of Aycock. “But you always get your paper schedule and you’re always ripping off the days and crossing them out. I think it’s good to have everybody together.”
As always, August also means video games and music will be two of the primary backdrops. Most players fancy themselves the best when it comes to the football battles waged on PlayStations and X-Boxes, but some credit was given to others for their prowess with the controller in hand.

Dixon said sophomore linebacker Brandon Williams is “pretty good on the sticks,” while sophomore defensive end Chrishon Rose admitted sophomore wide receiver Danny Webster possesses solid gaming skills.

But Rose, who rooms with fellow end Lee Pegues, contended there was no gaming system headed for their room, allowing for an environment where thoughts about ECU football dominate. He admitted there would be “a little PlayStation” for him in other rooms, though.

In terms of music, Dixon predicted the sound of Atlanta rappers Future and Two Chainz would dominate the hallways, while Pegues guessed the new Rick Ross album would be prominent and Elsawi said he’d be in the private world of his headphones most of the time, with the new Linkin Park CD and Juelz Santana’s “What the Game’s Been Missing!” in his ears.

Like a true family, some players were quick to point out their guesses for the noisiest room while others didn’t want to risk it.

“There might be a certain quarterback who might or might not be named Rio, but that would be where my guess would be,” Elsawi said of junior Rio Johnson. “A lot of people will congregate there.”

Contact Nathan Summers at nsummers@reflector.com or 252-329-9595.
At the start of his third season at East Carolina, Ruffin McNeill already qualifies as one of Conference USA’s senior football coaches.

When the 12 C-USA teams begin practice this week or next, five will have new coaches.

“I can’t remember anything exactly like this, and I’ve been in the coaching business for more than 30 years,” McNeill said Wednesday.

“Two or three new coaches in one season is unusual, but five out of 12 is just about unheard of. Basically, it’s half the league.”

What sort of impact the newcomers will make and how those coaches might change the league are topics McNeill has mulled during the offseason. “I’m not sure how the league will change, but I do think it will and probably pretty fast. All these new guys are going to run systems they are comfortable with,” McNeill said. “There’ll be a lot of scheme changes. Everyone is going to have adjust on the fly this season.”

The overhaul starts at the top, where East Division winner and league champ Southern Miss lost Larry Fedora to North Carolina and brought in defensive specialist Ellis Johnson.

West Division winner Houston lost Kevin Sumlin to Texas A&M and promoted former assistant Tony Levine, who worked on the Carolina Panthers staff in 2006 and ’07.

Alabama-Birmingham fired one-time ECU aide Neil Callaway and hired Arkansas assistant Garrick McGee. There had been speculation McGee would go back to Arkansas after the school fired Bobby Petrino in mid April.


Such widespread turnover should help the Pirates, who went 4-4 in the league (third East), 5-7 overall and have to replace record-setting quarterback Dominique Davis.
“I’ve always thought stability matters. It’s important,” McNeill said. “Usually coaching transitions come with a few snags. It’s not always the case, but I know we’re a lot better organized and focused this preseason than we were going into our first two camps here.”

The overwhelming majority of McNeill’s aides have been in the program for two or three seasons.

“There shouldn’t have to be any adjustment for us,” McNeill said. “It doesn’t make our schedule any easier, though. The schedule and building more depth in preseason camp are going to be the big challenges.”

The September schedule – road games at South Carolina, Southern Miss and North Carolina after an opener against in-state rival Appalachian State – is primarily why the Pirates are generally predicted to win no more than five or six games.

After the noon opener against Appalachian on Sept. 1, the Pirates won’t be back in Greenville for a game until Sept. 29 against Texas-Paso (7 p.m.), followed by trips to Central Florida (Oct. 4, 8 p.m.) and UAB (Oct. 20, 7 p.m.) that bookend a home game against Memphis (Oct. 13, 4:30 p.m.).

“Five on the road out of the first eight and all five of ’em against top teams (with no open date until Nov. 10),” McNeill said. “It’s a tough schedule, but at the same time I’m optimistic. We’ve got good, tough, determined guys. They won’t back down.”

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No title for Central Florida

There is no official C-USA preseason media or coaches prediction poll, but most of the national power ratings have ECU 2nd or 3rd in the East. Central Florida (3-5, 5-7 last season) is generally rated as the league’s best team, followed by the Pirates or Marshall (7-6, 5-3) in the division.

But the NCAA has ruled UCF ineligible for the postseason and league title game (Dec. 1), meaning only five East teams will have a chance to advance.
QB situation top concern as ECU prepares for first practice

By Chris Kudialis - ckudialis@newsobserver.com

For East Carolina, the road to bowl game redemption is underway. After going 5-7 in 2011, the Pirates missed their first bowl game in six years, and first under coach Ruffin McNeill.

The 2012 season officially begins this afternoon in Greenville.

In the weeks that lead to the Sept. 1 opener against Appalachian State, the Pirates have several questions to answer. Here are the five most pressing:

1. Who will replace Dominique Davis at quarterback?

That’s the big question: 2011 backup Rio Johnson, senior Brad Wornick, sophomore Shane Carden and redshirt freshman Cody Keith are competing for snaps.

Johnson, a rising junior, served as Davis’ backup in 2011, but only appeared in four games and recorded 157 yards passing. He has yet to throw a touchdown in his career.

Wornick, a former walk-on, was the backup in 2010 but fell behind Johnson last season. He is the most game-experienced quarterback on the roster, having played in five games in 2010 including the fourth quarter of the 2010 Military Bowl.

In any case, the Pirates will have an inexperienced quarterback at the helm.

2. Will the secondary hold up?

It’s no secret that the Pirates’ strength should be their defense. Like the Pirates’ offense, the unit returns seven starters. Only one, however, is in the secondary.

Junior free safety Damon Magazu will lead the secondary in his second year as a starter, but the loss of three time All-Conference USA cornerback Emanuel Davis, cornerback Derek Blacknall and strong safety Bradley Jacobs leave gaping holes in the unit. Senior Jacobi Jones is expected to help fill the void at the wide-side cornerback spot along with junior college transfer Adonis Armstrong, while fifth-year senior Leonard Paulk will start at boundary cornerback after waiting behind Davis for three years.

Sophomore Lamar Ivey will compete with junior Chip Thompson for the starting strong safety spot.
3. **Could Justin Hardy have a breakout season?**

As a redshirt freshman last season, the Vanceboro native led the Pirates with 64 catches and 658 yards, also adding six touchdowns despite missing two games to injury. Hardy was named to the C-USA all-freshman team. If he’s healthy, he should be a valuable weapon for whoever emerges as the Pirates’ starting quarterback. The question is: Can he develop the same chemistry with his new quarterback as he had with Dominique Davis?

4. **What’s going to happen with the defensive line?**

The veteran defensive line suffered a setback July 19 when sophomore Terry Williams was suspended indefinitely for a drug-related arrest. Williams played in 11 games last season as a redshirt freshman, recording 31 tackles and forcing two fumbles. His absence could impact the Pirates’ depth and result in extended playing time for preseason All-C-USA selection Michael Brooks, who has been prone to knee injuries throughout his career.

Junior end Matt Milner joins Brooks as the other returning starter from last year, while juniors Lee Pegues and Justin Dixon are expected to compete for the starting position at right end.

5. **How good can the linebackers be?**

This group is a strength. All four starters return. Redshirt sophomore Jeremy Grove earned multiple national freshman awards last season and led the Pirates with 122 tackles – 42 more than the next Pirate. He’s a preseason All-Conference U.S.A. selection and could anchor one of the program’s best defenses in the last decade.

Junior Kyle Tudor and senior Daniel Drake will compete for the inside spot alongside Grove, while sophomore Maurice Falls will remain at outside linebacker after making his first start in the 2011 season finale against Marshall. Junior Derrell Johnson will start at right outside linebacker.

The Pirates finished 56th in total defense and 97th in scoring defense last season – both rankings that leave room for improvement in 2012.
Families Make Big Changes To Pay For College

by Tasnim Shamma

Maureen O'Brien told her daughter Emily Macri: dream big.

She could pick any college she wanted and they would figure out a way to pay for it.

Macri chose the University of Vermont, which costs more than $49,000 in tuition and fees per year for out-of-state residents.

O'Brien and her daughter co-signed a private student loan from Sallie Mae for $24,000 and a $30,000 Parent PLUS loan, a federal loan program for parents. And that was just for Macri's first two years of college.

"That was one of the compelling reasons why I asked her to consider coming to a state school here in Arizona," O'Brien says. "I just couldn't keep doing that. And with my son going to college, too, I can't do that for two kids."
A recent study by the research group Ipsos and the student loan giant, Sallie Mae, shows that approximately 70 percent of families are eliminating college choices based on cost. More students are also now choosing to enroll in community colleges, which is often the most affordable option.

This fall, Emily will be a transfer student at Northern Arizona University, which costs only about a third of the cost of the University of Vermont.

Her younger brother, Casey, will be starting as a freshman at Arizona State University, which costs about the same as Northern Arizona.

The family is expecting to borrow an additional $70,000 to pay for Emily's last two years of college and Casey's next four.

Emily says leaving the East Coast and having to transfer is tough.

"I loved it and it is a shame that I can't go back again in the fall," she says. "But then again, I have to look on the bright side of things, I'll be saving a lot of money."

She tried to offset college expenses by working part time. And this summer, she's working as a cashier at a frozen yogurt shop.

She says she's determined to finish her degree in environmental studies.

"I can't afford to go to college, but I'm taking out loans, I'm putting my foot forward and making sure I get an education so that I can get a really good job in the long run," Emily says.

**Growing Debt**

O'Brien isn't just helping finance her daughter's education, she's also juggling her own student loan debt.

In 2004, after her job at a technology company was outsourced to India, she decided to go back to school. She enrolled in a physician's assistant program at the Rochester Institute of Technology where she had to take out more than $60,000 in loans.

But her salary as a physician's assistant in upstate New York wasn't enough for her to make the monthly loan payments. Her home was facing foreclosure — so she sold it and moved out to Kingman, Ariz., with her son.

She was hoping to enroll in a loan forgiveness program by moving to an underserved region of the country, but she later found out that she was disqualified because she is working as a specialist in urology.

She is paid well now with a salary of $93,000 a year. Still, more than a third of her take-home pay goes toward paying off student loans.
"There's a feeling of satisfaction you get when you help people medically that you didn't get when you're working at a help desk or working at a cubicle," O'Brien says. "But at the same time, I think I've maybe mortgaged my future in ways that I couldn't have imagined when I went back to school."

She has no savings, no money put away for retirement and is thinking of taking on a second job to pay off her kids' loans.

And she even has a little bit to pay off in student loans from her first degree — from 1996.

Despite her family's growing student loan debt, O'Brien still believes in the value of a college education. She says it was her first degree — in French and international studies — that taught her how to think critically. And she wants the same for her kids.

The Promise Of College

Steven Maack, an English teacher at East High in Wichita, Kan., says he feels the same way. He and his wife make $110,000 a year. Ever since their daughter, Eden Maack, was born, they've been saving for college with help from grandparents. They've saved $16,000 so far — but that will soon disappear.

"In order to get her through the first year, we'll have to spend all the money we've saved," Steven Maack says. "It's conceivable for years two, three or four we'll have to borrow quite a significant amount."

Eden will be starting as a freshman at her first-choice school, Beloit College, in Wisconsin in a few weeks. It's also the school that offered her the best financial aid.

Beloit costs about $46,000 per year for both in-state and out-of-state students. Eden earned a $20,000 presidential scholarship and grants from the school, which will cover about half the cost each year, but her family will still have to take out more than $5,000 in loans to pay for her first year of college.

And once her parents' savings are spent on funding her freshman year, they'll have to think about how to fund her next three years of college.

For the Maacks, it's a family affair. Steven Maack says his parents paid for his undergraduate education many decades ago under the condition that he would one day pay for his children's. Eden will also try to take on a campus job to help with costs, but her main job is to finish school.
"It's my responsibility to finish college and make their burden worthwhile," Eden says.

Eden also has a sister just two years behind her and says that if she ever has kids, she knows her obligation is to one day pay for their college educations.

**How The Average American Family Pays For College**

Using savings, income and loans, students paid 30 percent of the total bill for college, up from 24 percent four years ago, according to a recent study. Parents covered 37 percent of the cost, down from 45 percent four years earlier.

**Notes**

Telephone interviews about how families paid for college in academic year 2011-12 were conducted with 801 undergraduate college students, ages 18 to 24, and 800 parents of undergraduates.

Source: Sallie Mae, Ipsos

Credit: Angela Wong / NPR
Math and science fields battle persistent gender gap

By Mary Beth Marklein, USA TODAY

If the goal of an engineering camp at Kettering University is to get high school girls jazzed about math- and science-related careers, let there be no doubt that Lauryn Watkoske is jazzed.

On this July afternoon, she sewed up a 1-inch gash in a hot dog that she could see only by watching a video camera, an exercise that simulated robotically assisted surgery and tested her hand-eye coordination.

"I used to like building things when I was little, but I never expected robotics, something so stereotypically male, to be exciting," says Lauryn, 16, of Grand Blanc, Mich.

During a mock intestinal surgery exercise in a lab at the C.S. Mott Engineering and Science Center, 16-year-old Riley McGarry, left, of Oxford, Michigan, and and 17-year-old Tori Royale, of Charlotte, Michigan, practice a procedure inside a box to simulate real world laparoscopic surgery.
That's encouraging news for people who are concerned about a persistent gender gap in college degrees in science, technology, engineering and math—STEM, for short. The notion that it might have to do with aptitude has long been dismissed. Yet research shows that girls who enjoy—and excel at—math and science in high school are less likely than boys to pursue a college major in those fields.

And even if they start college majoring in a STEM field, women are more likely than men to change majors, federal data show. Women make up 24% of STEM jobs, which offers some of the most lucrative careers, a Commerce Department report says. More than half have degrees in the physical and life sciences.

The Obama administration has stressed the importance of plugging that leaky pipeline, arguing that expertise in science, technology, engineering and math is crucial to nation's global competitiveness.

Some critics of the focus on gender parity say the concern is overblown. "There may be something about (certain math- and science-related) fields that are just less interesting to most women," says American Enterprise Institute scholar Christina Hoff Sommers, editor of The Science on Women and Science, in which several contributors argue that biology is a factor. "No one is saying they're not as talented, but they have different aspirations."

A number of colleges that specialize in these fields have recently taken steps to increase female enrollment and are seeing results:

This spring, Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Worcester, Mass., graduated 247 women, its largest number of women ever, representing 30% of its graduating class. The percentage of women at Harvey Mudd College in Claremont, Calif., who graduate with a computer science degree (a field where national numbers for women are especially low), jumped from an average 12% in recent years to more than 26% in 2010, 43% in 2011 and 38% this year. The percentage of women earning engineering degrees at the historically black North Carolina A&T State University in Greensboro has climbed from 20% in 2004 to 45% in 2011.

The schools' strategies vary, but a key component is to create opportunities for women to apply their talents and skills to matters that appeal to them. Harvey Mudd College, for example, overhauled a required introductory computer science course to allow students more choice in how they apply principles being covered.
"Many of the guys would be just as happy in a class that focused exclusively on video games and robots," says department chair Ran Libeskind-Hadas. For women, "seeing the applications of computing to society is really important, and seeing applications of computing to things they use in their day-to-day lives is important. That includes things like, how does Google Maps work, or how does a music recommendation system work."

Worcester Polytechnic has put more emphasis on team-based projects that solve global problems such as irrigation and health care. "The issue was values-based," says Kristin Tichenor, a senior vice president of enrollment. "They did not see engineering and the hard sciences as a mechanism for helping make the world a better place."

Not to be ignored is the school's decision in 2007 to make SAT scores optional in admissions. Tichenor says math SAT scores were not accurately predicting the success of its female students. Historically, average math SAT scores for women have been lower than those for men.

Celina Dopart, who graduated this spring from Worcester Polytechnic with a degree in aerospace engineering and is headed to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology this fall for graduate work, says she submitted her scores, but liked the message sent by the test-optional policy.

"It showed that they were looking for the people themselves rather than the numbers," she says.