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## Student records may be released

### CRITICS SAY NEW METHOD COULD POSE PRIVACY RISK

BY ERIC JOHNSON  
STAFF WRITER

The federal government is considering a sweeping change in the way it collects and manages data about college students.

If implemented, the modifications would allow the U.S. Department of Education to track the individual records of students enrolled in higher education institutions.

The National Center for Education Statistics, a division of the Department of Education responsible for gathering and pro-

cessing data, is reviewing a proposed redesign of its Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System.

The database relies on summary statistics from each university in order to calculate graduation rates, enrollment, degree completion and cost of attendance for each student.

Under a revised system, such information would be calculated based on the records of each individual student instead of on a schoolwide summary.

A review panel commissioned

by the education department concluded that a program based on individual records would improve the quality of data collected.

Advocates of the redesign say the present database has numerous shortcomings that limit the scope of its information.

The panel reported that the system as it stands cannot track students who transfer, co-enroll, stop-out or shift between full-time and part-time enrollment.

The panel also cited problems with calculating the true cost of enrollment at many colleges.

"Many states need better indicators for public institutions for accountability, workforce initiatives and other policy concerns," the report states.

Information for individual students could be broken down in any number of ways, allowing policymakers at the state and national levels to analyze statistics for specific states, schools or even areas of study.

All public and private universities would have to submit their student records to NCES, just as they now are required to provide summary data for IPEDS in order to maintain eligibility for federal financial aid.

The ambitious project would initially put a greater burden on schools and could require comprehensive restructuring of computer systems at some institutions.

"The first year of any system change is difficult," the report

states. "NCES would field test the (new) collection system, but some bugs may be missed."

Critics, particularly lobbyists for private colleges, contend that the new method of collecting data on individual students could pose a risk to privacy.

Sarah Flanagan, vice president for governmental relations and policy development of the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, expressed concern about such a large database in the hands of a government agency.

Having information on individual students — as opposed to individual schools — will make the

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## School board to host forum

Candidates will share their views

BY KATHRYN REED  
STAFF WRITER

Candidates looking to fill the vacant position on the Chapel Hill-Carrboro Board of Education will have an opportunity today to share their qualifications and views with the school board.

The board will conduct a public forum to interview the 10 candidates vying for the position at 5 p.m. at the Lincoln Center.

The vacancy came about when Valerie Foushee resigned her position after being elected to the Orange County Board of Commissioners.

Foushee's replacement will fulfill the remainder of her term, which expires in November 2005.

"The board will evaluate each candidate and seek the most well-rounded person," said Vice Chairwoman Lisa Stuckey.

Stuckey said candidates will have an opportunity to make opening remarks about their qualifications before being questioned by board members.

Candidates also will be able to make closing statements.

Stuckey said the board is seeking candidates with experience in the school system, as well as those with an ability to bring a cross-section of the community to the board and those with an ongoing commitment to the welfare of children in the district.

Still, "there's not a specific formula," Stuckey said. "We're looking for the best person we can find."

Among the candidates is former school board member Gloria Faley, who lost a bid for re-election by 28 votes in 2003.

"I have been active in the school system for 12 years in hundreds of ways," said Faley. "I think I would bring balance to the board that Valerie brought."

Faley, whose candidacy has prompted concerns from those who say her appointment would go against the will of the district's voters, said teacher shortages, federal mandates lacking funding and racial concerns are among the biggest problems facing the board.

She added that she doesn't think her re-election bid will affect the school board's decision.

Carolyn Schwarz, president of the Phillips Middle School Parent Teacher Student Association, said she thinks high school reform is one of the most important issues facing the district.

"I love the idea of high school reform," she said. "It looks very similar to how it was when I was in high school. Everything around

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## A DAY AT THE RACES

Holiday shoppers begin their work

BY ALEX GRANADOS  
STAFF WRITER

Let the stocking stuffing begin.

The Friday after Thanksgiving typically is the biggest shopping day of the year, and experts from the International Council of Shopping Centers predicted a 4 percent increase in sales this year.

Mike Robbins, general manager of the Triangle Town Center in Raleigh, said sales have been increasing steadily as the holiday shopping season approaches.

"Leading into the season, our center is averaging about a 20 percent increase in traffic over the past six months," Robbins said.

And experts think shopping centers nationwide could benefit from increased traffic.

Malachy Kavanagh, ICSC spokesman, said sales for this year could eclipse last year's totals.

"Last year, perhaps, we were still in a recession. This year we are seemingly out of it," he said.

The nation's economic recovery was seemingly evident Friday morning at Sears in Crabtree Valley Mall. General Manager Mark Micol said the store handed out \$10 gift cards to the first 200 people through the doors.

"We gave out the gift cards in the first 20 minutes," he said, adding that 400 to 500 people lined up before the store opened at 6 a.m.

Kavanagh said the holiday shopping season is an essential time for shopping centers nationwide. "A tremendous amount of money just flows through the economy during November and December."

In anticipation of the holiday money flow, Triangle area malls began preparations for the busy shopping season.

Jeff Johnson, marketing manager of The Streets At Southpoint, said the season requires that store managers beef up their staff.

"Some stores do up to 60 percent to 70 percent of their sales for the year," he said. "Everything is staffed up more."

Johnson said security and sales staff members are added, as well

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Shoppers crowd The Streets at Southpoint on Sunday afternoon. The Friday after Thanksgiving is typically the biggest shopping day of the year. Experts at the International Council of Shopping Centers have predicted a relatively modest, but significant, 4 percent increase in sales this year.

## Local group eschews commercialism

BY BRIANNA BISHOP  
STAFF WRITER

Those in Orange County looking to avoid the commercial storm Black Friday found a different option at Chapel Hill's Internationalist Books & Community Center.

From noon to 5 p.m. Friday, Internationalist Books, a nonprofit organization located at 405 W. Franklin St., recognized "Buy Nothing Day."

Buy Nothing Day began 12 years ago in Vancouver, Canada, and has gradually spread across the globe.

Participants in the movement try not to engage in any consumerism on Black Friday, the day after Thanksgiving, because it is considered to be the busiest shopping day of the year.

Internationalist has recognized the movement for several years, said Kelly Wooten, board chairwoman for the center.

"We continue to do it because people have such a good time," she said.

The celebration at Internationalist included a poetry hour and a crafts session, in which attendees could make gift cards

and gift bags.

Carrburritos, located at 711 W. Rosemary St., donated food for the occasion.

Ruby Sinreich, a participant, said the event helped to make connections between people and to build community.

"It's really focused on being creative and sharing," she said.

Participants mingled while decorating bags with potato stamps, paint and stickers.

Reasons for participating varied among those in attendance, but most agreed that it was appropriate to fight excessive consumer-

ism.

Amanda Earley said she has attended Buy Nothing Day events in previous years and tries not to do any shopping on Black Friday.

"I just choose to do my shopping differently," she said.

Nick Shanglei, another participant, said that Friday marked the first time he had attended a Buy Nothing Day event but that he has never enjoyed shopping in the first place.

"It's not the first time I've dis-

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Horses graze at a Boys and Girls Home at Lake Waccamaw. The exhibition center hosts several large horse shows each year, filling up area buildings.

## Farmers adapt to new conditions, livelihoods

Agribusinesses crop up across state

BY ERIN GIBSON  
ASSISTANT STATE AND NATIONAL EDITOR

Waking up with the sun, cooking breakfast, feeding the animals and tending the fields is a life most North Carolinians have only heard about.

But not long ago, it was the way of life in the Tar Heel state.

Farmland has decreased during the past several years, and so has the money farmers make. The state's economy and job market once hinged on agricultural industries such as farming, tobacco and textiles, but they are changing, and new ones are claiming power.

"The family farm is much more a part of history than you'd like to see," said Brian Long, public affairs director for the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

But many of those who have stayed in the business are embracing changes and finding new ways to make a profit.

Agritourism is an emerging market in North Carolina, started by farmers who saw the desire among urban-bred people to experience farm life firsthand and opened their working farms to the public, Long said.

Goat Lady Dairy in Randolph County is one of many such attrac-

tions.

The 60-acre family farm, which is more than 200 years old, opens its doors to groups several times each year so they can tour the farm and see what it takes to keep one running — a process quite different from maintaining a quarter-acre lot found in suburban neighborhoods.

Other farmers transformed their land into attractions, such as Christmas tree farms, where many people will go this holiday season to choose that perfect tree and cut it down themselves.

Still, there are some who continue to work their own land and sell the product on the market just as they've always done.

"Agriculture is in a period of transition," Long said. "But agriculture and agribusiness ... still

equates to about \$60 billion to the state's economy every year."

Michael Walden, professor of agriculture and resource economics at N.C. State University, said less of that money now is coming from the state's farms, and more comes from the other steps of production.

North Carolina now is No. 1 in the country in total tobacco production, as well as the production of flue-cured tobacco and sweet potatoes.

Walden said the changes in agribusiness now include all steps of production — from the farm to transportation to stores and markets.

"There has been a shift in the parts of business," Walden said, adding that families also have changed

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