ALTERNATIVE SPRING BREAK

Dozens of local teens are forgoing the weeklong, beach-front partyfests in favor of hard work, educational opportunities and religious retreats.

They aren’t all bad

Ahh, spring break: Time to break out the sun screen, work gloves and shovels.

"In the profession of campus ministries, it is one of the things we agree is good to do," said the Rev. Ira DeSpain, minister at Baker University. "We think students are interested in what is more than a traditional spring break. We offer a chance to contribute to communities."

DeSpain and seven Baker students spent last week working with a Habitat for Humanity crew in Alabama.

Junior Emily Nickel said she got involved with the program two years ago "because it sounded like an amazing chance to do volunteer work.”

"It was so rewarding," she said, "I decided to do it again this year."

Here is a look at alternative spring break plans at three area colleges.
BAKER UNIVERSITY
Destination: Baldwin County, in the southern tip of Alabama between Mobile and Pensacola, Fla.
Dates: Left March 2, returned Friday
Program: Started working with Habitat for Humanity in 1993
Students: Seven this year, down from an average of 20 to 30.
Itinerary: Worked Monday, Tuesday and half of Wednesday of last week, then enjoyed 2½ days on the beach. The students did finishing touches on a house just hours before the family moved in.
Benefits: Learn life, labor and construction skills; open eyes to what is happening in community; good for résumé
Led by: The Rev. Ira DeSpain, university minister

EMPORIA STATE UNIVERSITY
Destination: Washington, D.C.
Dates: Left Saturday, returning this Saturday
Students: 10 to 12 students, all members of the United Methodist campus ministry
Itinerary: Visit the General Board of Church and Society, one of the four international general program boards of The United Methodist Church.
Benefits: “We will learn more about the Methodist faith and just bond with each other and get out of Emporia,” said sophomore Libby Craner. “We love Emporia, but ... you know?”
Led by: Kurt Cooper, United Methodist campus minister

THE UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS
Destination: Chicago
Program: DOOR — Discovering Opportunities for Outreach and Reflection
Dates: Left Saturday, returning Friday
Students: 10 students from the Wesley Foundation at KU
Itinerary: Students will work with volunteers at various community agencies, then meet in the evening to share with the others what they learned and discuss ways of implementing those lessons to improve life in Lawrence.
“We will have a little time to explore on Sunday and Wednesday, but for the most part we will be working with those agencies,” said campus pastor Creighton Alexander.
Benefits: “This raises questions about what we are called to do,” Alexander said. “How do we live out God’s justice in this world?” For example — “There isn’t a homeless population (in Lawrence) like there is in Chicago. We want to step into a new situation and bring it back. What can we do in a small but significant way in Lawrence?”
Led by: Alexander
Institute brings distant culture to Kansas

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

OVERLAND PARK — Less than one year after it opened, the University of Kansas Confucius Institute has proven to be a big draw with Midwesterners eager to learn Chinese culture and language.

The institute, based at the university’s Edwards Campus in Overland Park, is one of 120 around the world, with just four located in the United States.

A joint project of the University of Kansas, the Chinese Ministry of Education and Huazhong Normal University, the institute has attracted 275 students since last May to its classes in Mandarin Chinese.

Many are schoolchildren, but the course is also popular with professionals and other business people for whom a working knowledge of China’s most widely spoken dialect would be an advantage.

Jack Nagle, an engineer with Overland Park-based Black & Veatch, is one such student. Although his Chinese co-workers find his mispronunciations amusing, his attempts to speak their language have sealed a bond between him and those he manages at the engineering and construction firm.

“It has really bridged a gap and has helped us work together,” said Nagle, who hopes to visit China someday. “I think they appreciate me trying to learn their language. That’s probably the best benefit.”

So high is the interest among Black & Veatch workers in learning Chinese language and culture that, at the company’s request, the institute holds classes twice a week at the firm’s offices. Nearly 50 employees have participated so far.

Black & Veatch employees communicate often via teleconference and videoconference with their counterparts in the company’s Beijing office.

“I think that people understand that Chinese is economically and politically relevant,” said Sheree Willis, associate director for institute programs.

According to the Kansas Department of Commerce, China purchased more than $300 million in Kansas goods and services in 2005, making it the third leading buyer of Kansas products.

“A lot of companies like Black & Veatch are very forward-looking in understanding that in order to be effective, international companies need to be very well-versed not only in other languages but in other cultures,” Willis said.

That is why the Confucius Institute is so attractive to area businesses, said John Watson, director of trade development for the Kansas Department of Commerce.

“I believe that the more business executives and the more students take advantage of the opportunity to learn the language, the more opportunities created for business between Kansas and China,” Watson said.

Employees from Harrah’s Casino, Sprint and many small firms have taken the classes.

Saturday morning classes have attracted whole families, some of whom plan to visit the country and others who are just curious about the language and the culture.

“The classes have been really popular at Black & Veatch,” said David Swift, who coordinates global professional training for the company. “We did one class last fall, and when we announced that we had room in it for 20 people, it was full in less than five minutes.”

On the Net

http://www.confucius.ku.edu
Former Senate Majority Leader Howard Baker Jr. will receive the Dole Leadership Prize from the Dole Institute of Politics at the University of Kansas.

Baker will receive the award and take part in a moderated discussion on April 22. He served three terms in the Senate and was Minority Leader from 1977 to 1981 and Majority Leader from 1981 to 1985. He is married to former Republican Sen. Nancy Kassebaum Baker of Kansas.
KU to honor area students

Students from fifteen Kansas high schools will be honored Wednesday, April 4, by the University of Kansas Alumni Association and KU Endowment.

A total of 53 seniors from high schools in Cheyenne, Decatur, Gove, Logan, Rawlins, Sheridan, Sherman, Thomas, and Wallace counties will be recognized for their academic achievements and named Kansas Honor Scholars at a 6:30 p.m. dinner program at The Gateway, 1 Morgan Drive, Oberlin.

The Kansas Honors Program began in 1971 and honored its 100,000th student this year. Scholars rank in the top 10 percent of their high school senior classes and are selected regardless of curricula, majors, occupational plans or higher education goals. Honorees' names are listed online at www.news.ku.edu/2007/march/14/khpoberlin.shtml.

During the ceremony, each student will receive an American Heritage Dictionary in hardback and CD versions, presented by Sarah Blaney, Kansas Honors Program coordinator for the KU Alumni Association.

Stuart Bell, Dean of the School of Engineering, will speak to the students, parents and guests.

Honored students will be guests of the alumni association and KU Endowment; parents and area alumni are welcome to attend at a cost of $10 each.

Community volunteers collect reservations, coordinate details and serve as local contacts for the event. Kurt Vollertsen, Oberlin, will be the site coordinators as well as county coordinator for Decatur County. Other county coordinators are Mike and Brenda Day, St. Francis, for Cheyenne County; Wade Park, Oakley, for Gove, Logan and Sheridan counties; Charles and Connie Peckham, Atwood, for Rawlins County; Jeff and Nona Mason, Goodland, for Sherman County; and Sharon Steele, Colby, for Thomas and Wallace counties.

The Kansas Honors Program is made possible through KU Endowment and proceeds from the Jayhawk License Plate program.

Area high school students invited to the Oberlin gathering on April 4 include:

- Brewster High School: Audrey Hoyt.
- Cheylin High School: Josh Johnson and Aubrey Kehlbeck.
- Colby High School: Ashley Barnes, Kristin Cox, Elizabeth Erickson, Steven Juennemann, Rishonna Martin, Trevor Siebert, and Rashaun Wilson.
- Decatur Community High School: Karli Fredrickson, Andrew Gilliam, Aaron Helm, Nolan May, Kurt Olson, and Kimberly Wessel.
- Golden Plains High School: Megan Juennemann and Stephanie Juennemann.
- Goodland High School: Sarah Borneman, Ashley Cebula, Nathan Linin, Jena McCall, Lea Shores, Michael Smith, and Molly Witzel.
- Grinnell High School: Allison Dohm.
- Hoxie High School: Rebecca Farber, Tiffany Goetz, and Benjamin Mense.
- Oakley High School: Brittany Brenner, Lindsey Hubert, Nathan Jurey, Paul Kuhlman, Holly Poe, and Jackie Zerr.
- Quinter High School: Jocelyn Anderson, Todd Cooksey, and Brice Kesler.
- Rawlins County Junior/Senior High School: Jason Argabright, Simone Cahoj, Matthew Migchelbrink, Valerie Sis, and Kendra Solko.
- St. Francis Community High School: Russell Rogers, Lauren Ross, Addie Swidart, and Alecia Zimbelman.
- Wallace County High School: Bracey Fischer and Kyler Knobbe.
- Weskan High School: Jade Sexson and Preston Smith.
- Wheatland High School: Jill Kennedy and Katie Waldman.
Bogus diplomas sold at an alarming degree

By STEVE ROCK
The Kansas City Star

Need a college degree to get ahead? Don't want to attend classes to get it? Well, hop on the Internet and buy a fake transcript and diploma.

Phony diplomas are proliferating on the Web, leading to fears of academic fraud and a constant legal battle by universities to protect their good names.

Officials at Kansas State University, for example, recently instructed their trademark-licensing agent to send a cease-and-desist letter to a Web site that offered a fake K-State diploma and transcript for $249.99. On any given day, the same thing could be happening at many other universities, including the University of Kansas and the University of Missouri-Columbia.

Various Web sites advertise the documents as "replacement" or "novelty" diplomas. Disclaimers on some sites say the diplomas should not be used in place of authentic sheepskins. But education officials fear that the documents

DIPLOMAS: Colleges fight fraud

FROM A1 can lead to people pretending to have degrees or grades they did not earn.

"Diploma fraud is an enormous problem," said Barmak Nassirian, the associate executive director of the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers in Washington. "Stuff is coming at us so fast that we can't even gain awareness, let alone do anything about it."

The Kansas City Star found at least 12 Web sites that claim to offer diplomas from legitimate U.S. institutions. One site brazenly boasts "10 years in the underground of counterfeiting documents."

When universities learn of the sites — as K-State officials learned from The Star — they act to keep the phony diplomas out of circulation.

The site to which K-State officials sent the letter shut down recently, but former FBI agent Allen Ezell said it is only a matter of time before another site takes its place.

Ezell, who spent more than a decade investigating fake colleges and fraudulent degrees, said the industry is worth millions of dollars and is growing.

"It's whack-a-gopner," Ezell said. "One goes down, another one comes up."

Jeff Lanza, an agent in the Kansas City office of the FBI said federal officials are aware of fake diploma services, but such white-collar crimes "are not the highest of priorities."

"We don't have any cases in this area," Lanza said.

Officials at K-State, KU and MU said they could not cite specific examples of people using phony degrees, but they know that diploma and academic fraud is a problem.

That is clear at Web sites such as DiplomasUnlimited.com, which before shutting down sold degrees from K-State and other institutions. The site offered what it called the "finest quality replica diplomas in the world." The design templates, ink and paper were "custom created according to the college or university you select," the Web site said.

Officials with the company could not be reached for comment.

"These are things we need to follow up on," said Duane Nellis, K-State's provost. "But it's hard, given the proliferation of things that are available on the Web."

INSIDE THE STAR

IRAQ | U.S. military officials announce the deaths of seven American soldiers, and at least five Iraqis are killed in a car bombing. | A8

MURDER PROBE | A six-hour police operation fails to turn up Shauntay L. Henderson, a woman wanted in connection with recent gang violence. | B1

SPRINT CENTER | Brenda Tinnen, the arena's general manager, is putting her skills and connections into play. | D1
MU, KU and K-State are clients of the Collegiate Licensing Co., a Georgia-based trademark-licensing firm that represents more than 150 colleges and universities. Jim Aronowitz, the associate general counsel at Collegiate Licensing, said his firm sends cease-and-desist letters to various businesses “multiple times a day.”

Aronowitz said that most of those businesses have nothing to do with fake degrees, and ones that sell phony diplomas typically remove Collegiate Licensing clients from their lists of available schools after the firm sends a threatening letter.

Said Todd Cohen, a spokesman at KU: “We have to stay vigilant about protecting the brand. We don’t spend our days surfing the Web looking for these sites, but as soon as we find out about them, we immediately react.”

One Web site that offers degrees, PhonyDiploma.com, lists more than 200 colleges and universities. The site says its diplomas include “actual designs” from schools as varied as Ottawa University in Kansas, the University of Texas and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Prices for replica college diplomas start at $184.95. Other products include high school diplomas and General Educational Development diplomas.

According to its Web site, PhonyDiploma is based in Richmond, Va. A person who answered the phone at the company declined to answer questions but suggested corresponding by e-mail. Officials with the Web site did not reply to several e-mails.

Elsewhere on the site is this disclaimer: “PhonyDiplomas and transcripts may only be used for entertainment purposes, to replace a lost or damaged document. They are not real documents and cannot be used as real diplomas. Phony Diplomas are not meant to be used for unlawful purposes or any other illegal uses. This means that they cannot be used to pass as real diplomas under any circumstance.”

Comparable disclaimers are found on other such Web sites but some sites also offer an array of transcripts.

The transcripts available at Backalleypress.com, the site says, use the same kind of security paper that most colleges use. The transcripts also come with embossed seals, a registrar’s signature, or both. The price: $50 per semester.

Responding to a written query from The Star, an official with Back Alley Press said in an e-mail: “We sell a lot of diplomas to people who have either lost their credential or want a second copy for their home and do not want to go through the long and hard efforts put forth by schools to replace them. The only thing our service provides is an easier way for them to get this.”

To Nassirian of the registrars association, the suggestion that these products are designed solely for novelty purposes or to replace lost diplomas is laughable.

“Don’t tell me they don’t know how people are using this stuff,” he said.

Besides, school officials say, alumni who lose their diplomas can get legitimate replacements directly from the institution. At MU, alumni can get replacements through the registrar’s office for $30. The process usually takes only a few weeks.

To reach Steve Rock, call (816) 234-4338 or send e-mail to srock@kcstar.com.
Erik Winbald of Winfield, son of James and Rebecca Winbald of Winfield, a student in the Department of Design at the University of Kansas, was a winner at the American Institute of Graphic Artists Kansas City Design Awards. Winbald won in the Tadao Ando: Magazine Spreads.
Prominent leaders lined up for Dole Institute talks

The Capital-Journal

LAWRENCE — Within a three-week period this spring, the Dole Institute of Politics at The University of Kansas will host visits by three prominent political and military leaders — former Vice President Walter F. Mondale, former Senate Majority Leader Howard H. Baker Jr. and former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Richard B. Myers.

The visits are in conjunction with two of the institute’s annual events, the Dole Leadership Prize and the Dole Lecture Series.

“This is a unique situation for us,” said Bill Lacy, director of the institute. “Due to a wonderful set of circumstances, this is the first time we have hosted three such high-level American leaders in separate programs within such a short period of time.”

Each of the programs is free and open to the public, but tickets will be required.

“An Evening with Walter Mondale” will be at 7:30 p.m. April 12 at the Dole Institute. Mondale was vice president under President Carter from 1977 to 1981, was the Democratic Party’s nominee for president in 1984, served in the U.S. Senate for 12 years and was appointed by President Clinton to be U.S. ambassador to Japan in 1993. He is currently senior counsel with the law firm of Dorsey & Whitney LLP, headquartered in Minneapolis.

Baker will receive the Dole Leadership Prize and participate in a moderated discussion at 7:30 p.m. April 22 at the Lied Center. Baker served three terms in the U.S. Senate from 1967 to 1985, where he served two sessions as majority leader (1981-85) and two sessions as minority leader (1977-81).

He was President Reagan’s chief of staff from 1987 to 1989 and was U.S. ambassador to Japan from 2001 to 2005. He is currently senior counsel with the law firm of Baker, Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell & Berkowitz PC, and is married to former Kansas Sen. Nancy Kassebaum Baker.

Myers will present a lecture at 7:30 p.m. May 2 at the Dole Institute. Myers became the 15th chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in October 2001. He previously was vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, commander in chief of the North American Aerospace Defense Command and U.S. Space Command, and commander of the Pacific Air Forces.

He is a native of Kansas City, Mo., and a 1965 graduate of Kansas State University. He entered the Air Force in 1965 through the Reserve Officers Training Corps program.

Tickets for “An Evening with Walter Mondale” will be available at the Dole Institute beginning today. Ticket information and times for the Dole Leadership Prize program and Dole Lecture will be announced in late March.

For more information, contact the Dole Institute at (785) 864-4900 or visit www.doleinstitute.org.
Affiliated medical system desired.

KU chancellor envisions potential for Kansas version of the Mayo Clinic

By Mike Hall
THE CAPITAL-JOURNAL

Efforts to create a comprehensive federal cancer center at The University of Kansas Medical Center are looking brighter with the near-completion of negotiations among several entities.

That was the point emphasized Thursday by KU chancellor Robert Hemenway and Dr. Barbara Atkinson, executive vice chancellor of the KU Medical Center, during an appearance in front of The Topeka Capital-Journal Editorial Advisory Board.

The negotiations are aimed at establishing new working relationships among The University of Kansas Hospital, The University of Kansas Medical Center, the doctors who provide services to the hospital under contract, and St. Luke’s Health System.

The KU Medical Center and the KU hospital sit side by side in Kansas City, Kan., but are separate entities. The medical center trains doctors and conducts research, and the hospital provides patient care.

The hospital relies on faculty and residents from the medical center to provide much of the health care it offers, for which the hospital pays the medical center. The hospital also provides practical experience opportunities for medical students.

Hemenway sees the new affiliation as having even greater potential than just the cancer center. “We want to create the Kansas version of the Mayo Clinic or M.D. Anderson,” he said.

Mayo, in Rochester, Minn., and M.D. Anderson, in Houston, are two of the most widely respected research and treatment medical centers in the world.

Talks among the various entities have been reported to be contentious for months, but Hemenway and Atkinson say agreement is near. “We’re extremely close on all issues,” Hemenway said.

The Kansas Board of Regents, meeting in Topeka on Thursday, agreed.

The board approved an official statement praising the groups for essentially reaching agreement.

“We while recognize that a signed agreement has not yet been executed, the Board of Regents is pleased that the parties have reached agreement regarding all outstanding issues,” the statement read. “We look forward to the completion of a formal, signed agreement.”

One stumbling block in the negotiations was the fear by KU hospital officials that the agreement would diminish its prestige and enhance the prestige of St. Luke.

In related developments, Hemenway and Atkinson made a pitch for support of more money for building maintenance on the state’s university campuses, including the KU Medical Center.

The Kansas Board of Regents has asked the Legislature for $663.6 million for priority repair and maintenance needs.

“If anything, they have understated the need,” Hemenway said.

Atkinson described a water line break that flooded her office and required extensive repair work to a large portion of the medical center.

Hemenway and Atkinson also agreed that a bill introduced in the Legislature to sell the KU hospital for an estimated $800 million is a bad idea.

“You would be selling the future for peanuts,” Atkinson said.

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CHICAGO — The tone of the report is as stark as stick-figure art: Yet again this year, success in college basketball doesn’t necessarily mean success in college.

The report itself, though, is as lacking in nuance and explanation as a one-dimensional drawing.

Each year at this time, the Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sports at Central Florida University releases the most recent graduation rates available for each of the teams in the NCAA Tournament. This season, using federally mandated standards, 30 of the 65 teams in the field had graduation rates of at least 50 percent.

Of the four top seeds, Florida and North Carolina made the cut. Ohio State and Kansas didn’t.

“The supposed Final Four, the top seeds are a real disparity there,” Richard

Please see GRADUATION, Page 6A
Lapchick, the institute’s director, told The Associated Press. “That’s certainly an issue.”

At Kansas, officials certainly take issue with the report. “I do believe there needs to be accountability,” said Paul Buskirk, associate athletic director for student support. “Where I struggle with Mr. Lapchick is the numbers are only the numbers and there is no story, nor was there an inquiry. We would love to talk to them about why the numbers are what they are.”

Not just why, but who. In this year’s graduation rates, the numbers have names: Nick Collison, Kirk Hinrich and Drew Gooden.

Those three players will go down as one of the most beloved and decorated classes in Kansas hoops history. They also will forever be an academic albatross, not because of their poor performance but because of the accounting standards used to compile the numbers. Simply put, a student-athlete counts as a graduate for his institution if he or she earns a degree within six years of first enrolling.

The 1999 cohort, which is the fancy academic way to say group or, in this case, class, now and always will have a graduation rate of 33 percent.

Only Collison earned his diploma within the prescribed time frame. Hinrich took six and one-half years, so he is a big, fat zero. Gooden, who left after his junior year, concentrated on his NBA career for a couple of years, then resumed work on his degree through correspondence courses.

“He said, ‘I made promises to people that I want to fulfill,’” Buskirk said. “He’ll never show up in the numbers, but we’re proud of him.”

“The numbers are what they are, but whether they’re 33 percent or not, I’ll stand by that group.”

That is the one-year score. Under federal guidelines for KU’s most recent four-year cohort, which encompasses 1996-99, KU’s current graduation rate is 40 percent. Using the Graduation Success Rate formula adopted in recent years by the NCAA, which credits a school for transfers who graduate within the window but doesn’t penalize it if someone leaves in good academic standing, the number rises to 45 percent.

“I think we’re about middle of the pack,” Buskirk said.

Overall, the athletic department’s GSR is 70 percent. The graduation rate for KU’s student body as a whole is 58 percent.

Numbers are valuable, but they don’t always measure real life. It never will count toward anyone’s graduation rate that Alonzo Jamison, who helped lead KU to the 1991 and ’92 Final Fours, earned his degree in December 2006. It benefits no one’s numbers that Luke Axtell and Billy Thomas are back working toward theirs.

But take heart, Kansas fans. Your team will be the model of success in Lapchick’s report before the 2009 tournament: That year’s cohort — Michael Lee, Aaron Miles, Keith Langford and Wayne Simien — all graduated in time that they weren’t just good student-athletes, they were good statistics.

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