State warns residents near coal ash spill to avoid fish, contact with river water

A drone aircraft operated by researchers at Wake Forest University’s Center for Energy, Environment and Sustainability collected data that showed how many million gallons of arsenic-contaminated water and ash spilled into the Dan River in Eden, N.C., from a Duke Energy coal ash dump.

Biology professor Miles Silman and a team of researchers used the data to create a three-dimensional model of the spill.

“Our goal is to use drone technology to help stakeholders deal with the spill and its consequences,” Silman said. “We want to show that the technology is a cheap and cost-effective way to monitor the environment.”

The New York Times ran an animated graphic created by the researchers showing the aftermath of the coal ash pond rupture.

The story behind the SAT overhaul

The SAT is getting a major overhaul and The New York Times Magazine broke down exactly what that will entail. “The test highly correlates with family income. High-school grades do not,” said Joseph Soares, a sociology professor at Wake Forest and the author of “SAT Wars: The Case for Test-Optional Admissions.” Since Wake Forest became test optional, “we have a lot more social, racial and lifestyle diversity,” he said. “You see it on campus.”

New study says high school GPA matters more than SAT

The largest study of students at colleges that do not require SAT or ACT scores has found that there is “virtually no difference,” in the academic performance (measured in grades or graduation rates) of those who do and do not submit scores.

Dean of Admissions Martha Allman shared her thoughts on the new study and Wake Forest’s test-optional policy in a USA Today article Feb. 26.

“(This study) gives college admissions offices significant food for thought,” Allman says. “It is a valuable addition to a very important conversation in higher education, ‘do we really need college admissions tests?’”
Higher Ed Friend or Foe?

Private ventures are stepping in to fill the college-to-career transition gap — an indication that higher education has, in some ways, failed to address the need to help graduates launch their post-graduation lives. Andy Chan, vice president for personal and career development at Wake Forest University, has been a leader in rethinking the traditional model of career development for this very reason. “I think that there is a tension on the surface that having programs like these may make colleges be perceived as not doing their full job. I think that’s fair — that tension does exist.”

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

A new report by the Association of American Colleges and Universities tracks the long-term earnings and employment rates of liberal arts graduates and counters stereotypes about the value of liberal arts education.

“It’s the difference between a 50-yard dash and a marathon,” said Katharine Brooks, executive director for personal and career development at Wake Forest University. It might take liberal arts students a little longer to settle on a particular career path than it does graduates who were gunning for accounting or nursing jobs from freshman year, but they often take similar jobs in the end, including in finance, education and social work.

Psychology Today

How to succeed at a career fair

It’s the season for career and job fairs. While sometimes frustrating (lots of people and lots of lines), just the chance to have face-to-face encounters in this day of internet communications is a great thing, wrote Katharine Brooks, executive director of personal and career development at Wake Forest University.

Business Insider

4 reasons why job fairs aren’t a total waste for companies

On the flip side, Brooks explained in a Business Insider article that a career fair is not just for students to market themselves, it’s a form of public relations for the company. “It’s a way to get your name out in a positive light, to encourage talented job seekers to consider you, and to have a conversation with real people, rather than resumes.”

Swimmers create enough wave power to keep the lights on

Could power generated from swimming laps create the next wave in sustainable energy? With the help of an oscillating water column and a summer undergraduate research grant, sophomore Yinger “Eagle” Jin discovered waves made by swimmers in the campus pool produce enough electricity to power 10 100-watt lightbulbs for a day.

Painting robot lends surgeons a hand in the operating room

Sophomore Timothy Lee built a robotic painting arm that can replicate the lines and shapes a surgeon makes with a scalpel using a paintbrush and canvas. His invention, a creative blend of art and science, could one day lend doctors a hand in practicing complex, robot-assisted surgeries without having to step foot in an operating room.

A church divided over marriage equality

The author of “Polity, Practice, and the Mission of the United Methodist Church,” Thomas Frank, a professor of American religious history at Wake Forest University, noted that Methodists have historically not been litigious. “We’re not a Church of trials,” he said. “Rarely do things go to trial, especially not anything about beliefs, doctrines, or teachings.” There might have been an odd case here and there, but these trials are reserved for clergy misconduct.”
Religious liberty or anti-gay discrimination?

John Dinan has commented for news outlets in North Carolina and around the country on primary elections, regional politics, and state constitutional issues. Regarding same-sex marriage laws in several states, Dinan said, “Having gay marriage in more states is likely to increase the number of conflicts that we see with cases concerning business owners or others who have religious (conscientious) objections to same-sex marriage,” Dinan said.

Wake Forest is one of the nation’s “Best Value” colleges and universities according to The Princeton Review. The 2014 list features 150 schools in all-75 public and 75 private colleges and universities.

“Wake Forest has long been a place of extraordinary opportunity,” said President Nathan O. Hatch. “We continually strive to balance financial aid and academic resources to assure the highest level of educational quality.”

The Wake Forest University School of Business full-time MBA program is ranked among the top 50 in the U.S., according to the Financial Times of London. With an overall ranking of #47 in the nation, the Financial Times ranking also placed the School at #2 for salary growth.

How to cope with mommy ambivalence

Acknowledging that raising children isn’t all cuddles and cute things they say, or even exactly what you’d imagined it would be, is not the same thing as wishing those children didn’t exist. Complex feelings are normal, in parenthood and in life. Wake Forest University sociologist Robin Simon wrote that parents experience more negative emotions than non-parents, citing her own extensive studies as proof.

Immigration reform still alive

The debate about changes in immigration laws continues in a year in which many lawmakers face elections, representing a double-edged sword, said Peter Siavelis, professor of political science and director of the Latin America and Latino studies program studies at Wake Forest.

Can software tycoon Vivek Ranadive make the NBA popular in India?

Todd McFall, a sports economist at Wake Forest University, believes Vivek Ranadive’s internationalization strategy for the NBA will eventually pay off. “The NBA has invested in the Internet and can broadcast games anywhere on the planet. Ranadive and teams like the Sacramento Kings are using that technology to build a market that will make the NBA more successful than ever. Eventually, as young people in India learn more about basketball and get excited about playing the game, there will be a great Indian basketball player that will expand the connection with the fan base in that country — much like Yao Ming has done in China.”

70 million customers affected by Target security breach

Elizabeth Baker, visiting assistant professor of business at Wake Forest, said Target ignored one basic security rule that made it vulnerable to hackers. “They stored the 3-digit security code on your card on their databases. And that code is never supposed to be stored anywhere,” said Baker. “That’s part of the safety and security standards that you have to uphold in order to use the Visa and MasterCard credit system.”
Celebrating Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Wake Forest's "Building the Dream" award is traditionally presented to a student and a faculty or staff member who exemplify the qualities of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and promote diversity within the community. This year, one student and three campus leaders were recognized. Junior Gracie Harrington was recognized for her advocacy on behalf of the LGBTQ community. Marianne Magjuka, Shelley Sizemore and Matt Williams were recognized for planning and leading a weeklong Alternative Spring Break civil rights tour through Alabama and Mississippi.

Celebrating ‘Hoop Dreams’

Communication professor and film director Peter Gilbert celebrated the 20th anniversary of the documentary "Hoop Dreams" at the Sundance Film Festival. Gilbert produced and directed photography for the award-winning film that showcases the basketball aspirations of Arthur Agee and William Gates.

‘Unbroken Circle’ benefits community

"Unbroken Circle," Wake Forest’s multi-generational string band, played for a standing-room only crowd at a benefit performance for the Shalom Project. The concert raised more than $7,000. The Shalom Project offers clothing to those in need, tutors at risk children, and runs one of the largest food pantries and free medical clinics in Winston-Salem.

TEDx at Wake Forest

In February, Wake Forest hosted TEDx, an independently organized event licensed by TED. Nine thought leaders delivered talks on topics ranging from sustainable urban farming to sports to education. TED is a nonprofit organization devoted to "Ideas Worth Spreading." Follow @TEDxWakeForestU on Twitter and check out #TEDxWakeForestU for photos and videos from the event.

A new place to dine, study and socialize

For coffee, lunch, dinner or a late-night study session, North Dining Hall is the newest gathering place on campus. The two-story, 21,000 square-foot dining facility is filled with natural light and sustainable features. The space is home to a Starbucks, a convenience store, an à la carte cafe and a fine dining restaurant.
The Wake Forest chapter of Chi Omega, working with the local Make-A-Wish organization, raised funds to grant six-year-old Ava Elsner’s wish to go to Disney World with her family. Elsner, who suffers from spinal muscular atrophy, was the guest of honor at a princess-themed “wish” party hosted as a prelude to her weeklong Disney adventure. Students dressed as Cinderella, Snow White and Jasmine, greeted Elsner and placed a sparkling crown on her head.

#mywakeforest

Wake Will: The Campaign for Wake Forest offers an ongoing opportunity for alumni, friends and the University community to connect and share how Wake Forest has made a difference in their lives. Join the conversation: Use #Awakewill and #mywakeforest to share what Wake Forest means to you. Visit wakewill.wfu.edu for news, photos and stories.

Founders’ Day Convocation: 180 years

On Feb. 20, the Wake Forest community gathered in Wait Chapel to commemorate the 180th anniversary of the founding of the University. The annual event recognizes student leaders and honors faculty for teaching, research and service. The University’s highest honor, the Medallion of Merit, was awarded to retired art professor Margaret “Peggy” Supplee Smith for her decades of leadership.

Giles-Harris Musical Performance Competition

Over the past 37 years, the Giles-Harris Competitions in Musical Performance have grown into a major event for Wake Forest’s pianists, singers and instrumentalists. The 2014 in-house competition included six pianists and 20 instrumentalists or vocalists from an array of majors and class years. Judges selected from outside the University recognized seven students and awarded more than $3,000 in donor-funded prize money.

Divinity school receives $1 million

With nearly $1 million from three new grants, the School of Divinity will create a state-of-the-art teaching chapel, address economic issues facing future ministers and position early career pastors to be leaders in their wider communities. These gifts bring the total amount raised for the divinity school through Wake Will: The Campaign for Wake Forest to more than $13 million.

The ‘Year of the Horse’

Lion dancers performed on stage to the beat of drums and cymbals, welcoming the “Year of the Horse.” The Chinese New Year celebration was hosted by the Asian Student Interest Association with support from the Office of Multicultural Affairs and the Chinese Student Scholars Association.

Careers in the Big Apple

From Times Square to Brooklyn to Queens, 60 Wake Forest students covered miles of sidewalk and subway lines exploring careers in media, fashion and retail, public relations and advertising, and the arts. On the New York Career Trek, students visited 21 organizations and met with more than 35 alumni and parents.
In an op-ed for the Greensboro News & Record, assistant professor of education Alan Brown challenged the Teach for America model. He wrote, “Regardless of whether teachers come through teacher-education programs or lateral-entry pathways, North Carolina’s goal should be to increase the retention of all beginning teachers by combining the preparation of North Carolina Teaching Fellows with TFA’s motivation for supporting underserved and low-income communities.”

Llewellyn wrote that “despite extensive scholarly study of King’s life and writings, Wake Forest student William Murphy was the first to identify the striking parallels between King’s legendary 1963 ‘Dream’ speech and an address delivered in 1944 as a high school student in Georgia.”

Taking a longer view on The State of the Union Address

Coates, Worrell Professor of Anglo-American Studies, wrote, “it is presumably unreasonable to expect any modern president of the United States to use his best prime-time moment, the annual State of the Union address, to tell Congress and the American people that on his watch the state of the union is not strong — even if that is the truth.”

Faith that the tide will turn

Thomas Frank, professor of religious history at Wake Forest, commented on the revival efforts of First United Methodist Church in St. Petersburg, Florida. “This one sounds like they’re taking a lot of initiative and trying to find a lot of new partners in the community to help them thrive,” he said. “I think that’s the key to not only surviving but to thriving in a new direction and creating something new.”

The Center for Energy, Environment & Sustainability (CEES) created the M.A. in Sustainability, a one-year program that combines classes in social sciences, humanities, natural sciences, management and law. The first students will start this fall. Dedee DeLongpré Johnston, Wake Forest’s director of sustainability, said the degree is aimed at “entrepreneurial self-starters who see themselves doing something important with their work.”

Assuming you can afford it, “splurge on a good accountant,” advises Charles Lankau, a professor at Wake Forest University School of Business. “About 70 percent of American families have both spouses working, and middle-class and upper-middle class families don’t have time to do taxes properly. A big thing people waste money on is missed tax breaks that an accountant will be aware of. Accountant fees generally include audit protection as well.”
The New York Times Retro Report examines big news stories from the past couple decades to see what added perspective the years have brought. John Llewellyn, a professor of communication and crisis communications expert, offered his commentary on the landmark 1992 case when Stella Liebeck spilled scalding McDonald’s coffee in her lap. Liebeck later sued the company, attracting a flood of negative attention.

“When you read, ‘Woman’ … ‘Coffee’ … ‘Millions’ … it sounds like a rip-off,” said Llewellyn. “Not the logical consequence of a thoughtful trial.”

Ed Morris has spent the past eight years breathing new life into the Wake Forest Historical Museum. As director, he has helped assemble, in a new building, artifacts collected over more than 50 years to create a coherent tale of both town and college. The shared history of the town and college is now remembered in fond detail at the museum.

A $7.5 million donation from former football player Bob McCreary (’61) and $2 million from Alan Fox (’79, MBA ’81, P ’12) in support of the football program have added significant momentum to Wake Forest Athletics’ plans for a 95,000-square-foot sports performance center.

Designed to meet the training needs of more than 350 student-athletes who compete in 18 sports, the four-story sports performance center will be located behind Miller Athletic Center. The new building will serve as the home for the football program, while featuring a robust strength and conditioning facility that enables multiple athletes in different sports to work out simultaneously. Additionally, the facility will include space for football coaches’ offices, team meeting rooms and other areas designed to enhance recruiting efforts. There will also be space dedicated to enhancing the nutrition program for all student-athletes.

When combined with $3 million pledged by other donors, these gifts bring the total commitments made in support of the football program to $12.5 million since the launch of Wake Will: The Campaign for Wake Forest in October and nearly $10 million since the arrival of new head football coach Dave Clawson.
Wake Forest President and NCAA Division I board Chair Nathan Hatch wrote an op-ed outlining his hopes for the attempt to streamline NCAA governance prior to the February NCAA convention in San Diego.

“Most importantly, the board must become more of a champion for the core values that enliven the NCAA. College athletics, like American politics, can, at times, seem all about the money. Fully aware of these pressures, the board must reassert the core responsibility of its member institutions to student-athlete well-being and serious academic purpose.”

Roger Beahm, professor of marketing and director of the Center for Retail Innovation, regularly comments on retail news for a variety of media outlets.

**Why the Super Bowl is a distinctly American cultural event**

The Super Bowl is more than Broncos vs. Seahawks, it represents a shared experience that is truly American, said Beahm. “What is truly interesting is that marketers and advertisers have successfully created the Super Bowl as an ‘event’ that lasts more than just three hours on Sunday evening.”

**Trader Joe’s service and value win praise in Winston-Salem**

Beahm commented for news outlets in North Carolina on the expansion of Trader Joe’s, a national grocery store chain. “Trader Joe’s — because its retail penetration has not yet been fully realized — is enjoying the publicity from that.” Beahm added that people see having a Trader Joe’s in their area as a special opportunity. 

**Drones add flying eye on our ecosystem**

Biology graduate student Max Messinger, biology professor Miles Silman and a small group of Wake Forest researchers, came up with the idea of using drones (also called unmanned aerial vehicles, or UAVs) to gather forest canopy data in the western Amazon region of South America. The area, approximately 3,000 miles wide and home to an estimated 390 billion trees, is a major catalyst for Earth’s climate and weather patterns. The researchers’ goal: to better understand and predict the effects of climate change, which many scientists say threatens our ecosystem and water supply.

**Trees on the move**

Miles Silman, a forest ecologist, has been looking hard at patches of forest on the slopes of the Andes mountains in Manú National Park in Peru. The trees in each patch have been counted, measured and watched, providing a good baseline to see how things have changed. He and his colleagues have discovered that trees on these mountain slopes are already in motion.

**The world premiere of ‘Embers and Stars: The Story of Petr Ginz’**

“Embers and Stars: The Story of Petr Ginz,” premiered in Feb. at the Scales Fine Arts Center. The play, based on a documentary film, “The Last Flight of Petr Ginz,” and Ginz’s diary, was written by Cindy Gendrich, professor of theater and dance, and Andrew White, co-author and director of the Lookingglass Theatre Company in Chicago.

**School of Law ranks #31**

In its annual listing of the nation’s best law schools, U.S. News ranked Wake Forest School of Law #31, up five spots from last year and tied with the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. It is the law school’s highest-ever ranking.

**NCAA Chair has good shot at ACC autonomy**

Wake Forest University President Nathan Hatch, who is also the chairman of the NCAA’s Division I board of directors, told ESPN that he thinks the ACC has a good shot at being granted the full autonomy over its championship game that it has formally requested — but that the legislation hasn’t actually gotten in front of the 18-member board yet.