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# Higher Ed News Weekly

from the Illinois Board of Higher Education

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June 27, 2008

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Chicago Sun-Times, June 21, 2008

## **Daley urges NU grads to stick to ideals, promotes 2016**

**NORTHWESTERN | Daley: 'You can make a difference'**

**June 21, 2008**

**BY ART GOLAB Staff Reporter/agolab@suntimes.com**

Mayor Daley called on graduating Northwestern University students not to give up on their ideals and to try their best to make the world a better place.

One way, he suggested, would be to tutor young people who lack the same advantages as a graduate of a top university like Northwestern.

Another way, Daley suggested, would be to spread the word that Chicago would be a great place for the Olympics:

"Reach out to your friends to build excitement about Chicago's bid, show your support, sign up on the 2016 Web site or be a volunteer."

A Chicago Olympics "would restore our image to the world as a place where people from different backgrounds and ethnic origins can live together and pursue their dreams," he said. "In Chicago, we live that ideal every day."

The mayor also told graduates that "treating people the way you would like to be treated seems like a simple rule to practice." But, "politics today has become an exercise in tearing down other people."

Compromise, both in politics and life, is essential, Daley said.

"I deeply believe that the people in our city, our state and our nation expect their leaders to work together. Even when there are differences on policy, they want public discourse to be respectful, they want things to get done."

Northwestern's choice of the mayor as this year's commencement speaker had sparked some criticism from students who said he lacked star power. Yet, despite bobbling the name of the school official who introduced him and calling them the 105th rather than the 150th graduating class, Daley got a warm welcome from the nearly 4,000 graduating students and about 15,000 guests who filled half of the Ryan Field football stadium.

The mayor's final words were borrowed from architect Daniel Burnham: "Make no little plans, hold on to your ideals and principals. Pursue them with the steadfast notion that one determined person can power change that lifts a generation and, yes, even a nation."

"Don't let the cynics and skeptics discourage you," he said. "You can make a difference. In fact, we're counting on it."

Journal Gazette & Times-Courier, June 23, 2008 (Page 1 of 2)

## **Eastern Illinois University to look for energy conservation opportunities**

By AMBER WILLIAMS, Staff Writer  
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CHARLESTON — Eastern Illinois University will be working with Honeywell International to identify possible energy conservation projects, including replacement of the power plant.

The Board of Trustees Monday approved a contract with Honeywell not to exceed \$600,000 to complete a campus-wide audit to identify conservation projects and equipment.

At the conclusion of the audit, the university plans to enter into an energy service agreement with Honeywell of Arlington Heights for implementation of any selected projects.

During the audit, Honeywell will be looking at energy-efficient ways to replace the existing power plant, do electrical upgrades and upgrades to the university's electrical grid connection, and possibilities for wind energy generation, said Jeff Cooley, vice president for business affairs.

"There is a wide range of energy conservation measures we will be looking at," Cooley said.

The energy conservation measures identified by Honeywell will be designed to be self-funded over a period of less than 20 years.

The terms of the agreement state that Honeywell will guarantee that Eastern will have operational cost savings at least equal to the cost of financing the conservation project.

In other business, the Board of Trustees heard a report on the ongoing construction projects on Eastern's campus.

The much-anticipated completion of the Doudna Fine Arts Center should soon be realized, said Steve Shrake, associate director of design and construction at EIU.

Furniture is now being moved in to the fine arts building and painting nearly completed, Shrake said. Students will be able to use the building this fall.

"We are starting to talk about move in," Shrake said. "We will have it open for fall semester."

The 138,700-square foot building that stretches across Seventh Street will house art, music and theater departments.

Some other projects in the works this summer are the painting of the water tank near Blair Hall, masonry restoration for five classroom buildings, renovations to Pemberton Hall and the drawing up of construction documents for the new textbook rental service.

The service will be located east of Carman Hall along Edgar Drive.

The Board of Trustees approved the purchase of materials for the foundation of the Student Success Center, a 6,000-square foot addition to Ninth Street Hall.

Journal Gazette & Times-Courier, June 23, 2008 (Page 2 of 2)

Cooley told the Board of Trustees that it will soon be time to think about future improvements to Eastern's campus.

The last comprehensive plan for the campus was developed in 1999 and the university is now in the fourth year of the second phase of that plan.

"The future is here," Cooley said.

Some major projects and renovations that have been completed from the comprehensive plan are Booth Library, the Union food court, O'Brien Stadium, the Human Services Center, the Tarble Arts addition and the Alumni Clock Tower.

The Board of Trustees also approved a \$2.50 increase in the Student Recreation Center fee from \$69.50 per semester to \$72. The funds will cover the increasing cost of maintenance of the facility.

The fee increase was supported by the Student Senate, said Dan Nadler, vice president for student affairs.

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Herald & Review, June 23, 2008

## Nursing exam challenges grads

By VALERIE WELLS - H&R Staff Writer

DECATUR - The road to becoming a nurse is rigorous.

Two years of difficult course work - four years, if the student wants a bachelor's degree - and then the National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses, commonly called NCLEX.

But in most two-year programs, before you can sit for the licensure exam, you have to pass the Health Education Systems Inc., or HESI, and for some students, that prospect is even more daunting, because if you fail, you most likely won't get the degree you worked so hard to earn.

"Since we implemented the HESI (a year ago), we have had 20 of 21 students come through the HESI and sit for the licensing exam and succeed with a 100 percent pass rate," said Lisa Gregory, executive assistant to Richland Community College President Gayle Saunders. "So we feel the HESI is an adequate diagnostic tool in preparing for the NCLEX."

The HESI is used as an exit exam in nursing programs nationwide and locally at Richland, Lake Land College and Lincoln Land College.

The test is designed to predict a student's chances for successfully passing the licensure exam. Practice tests and study guides are available online and at major retailers such as Amazon.com.

Students at Richland who fail the HESI the first time can enroll in a remediation program designed to find their weaknesses and correct them, she said, and so far the students who have taken that remedial course have all passed on their next try.

"I think the important thing to remember is that nursing education and practice is an integral part of our health care delivery system, and we know at Richland that it calls for a broad base of knowledge and special skills," Gregory said. "We want to make sure the students have the ability to acquire these skills and that we are putting into the field safe and successful practitioners. I think that's the bottom line for our testing requirement."

Lincoln Land Community College has been using the HESI for several years, said associate dean of nursing Cynthia Maskey, and has found it to be a very good predictor of whether a student will pass the licensing exam. Students can take the test a total of three times in their last semester. Failing the first time can often be due to anxiety, Maskey said.

"We don't let them leave without sitting down with a faculty person," Maskey said. "They need to sit down and talk to somebody. It feels like a monster at that point, and they really need to talk to somebody."

Professors can usually see beforehand if a student is really having trouble grasping the material and address the problems prior to the test, she said. Most often, a student just needs to step back and try again, and very few fail the second time.

Study materials and tutors are available, and if all else fails, students can repeat their last semester of study. The Lincoln Land staff is working on a plan to provide independent study for those students.

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The Chicago Tribune, June 24, 2008

## Global gulp

About a year ago, the University of Illinois launched its grand-sounding Global Campus. University President B. Joseph White wagered that the university could lead the next generation of higher education, or at least a lucrative cyberventure. Students would get an education online, learning from U. of I. educators and earning a U. of I. degree from anywhere in the world. The early results are looking pretty bad. The inaugural class of Global Campus enrolled just 10 students and generated \$500,000 less in revenue than expected. The 2009 school year is off to a slow start: only 42 students have enrolled, way short of the original expectations. You have to figure the folks at U. of I. are getting a little nervous.

This should be a viable venture. Penn State's World Campus, just 10 years old, has more than 7,000 students from 40-plus countries. UMassOnline—the University of Massachusetts' equivalent—boasts upward of 26,600 students and 1,500 online course offerings. Colorado State University's online degree program debuted just last month and has already received 57 applications.

So why is Illinois off to such a slow start?

There are a few likely reasons. The program was roiled by infighting at its inception. A marketing campaign was hastily executed and the menu was modest, with just nine degree programs. (There are 15 more under development, according to the university). As for the failure of key benchmark goals: White cites misjudgments and overly optimistic projections to explain low enrollment and revenue figures.

In a show of confidence, the board of trustees recently committed an additional \$3.4 million for fiscal year 2009, bringing total spending to about \$10 million. White is shifting his focus to expand degree offerings and improve recruitment and retention.

The board made the right decision to reinforce a commitment to Global Campus despite the disappointing launch. This can work. It is working elsewhere. It will work at Illinois if the university community embraces it and students come to believe they can get a quality education.

The Southtown Star, June 25, 2008

## **PSC board approves pact for new president**

By David Schwab, Staff writer

Prairie State College officials on Tuesday night unanimously approved a three-year contract with incoming college President Eric Radtke, who takes the post Aug. 1.

Radtke, who did not attend the college board's meeting, will receive an annual salary of \$180,000. He's now executive vice president of administration at Cuyahoga Community College in Cleveland.

He succeeds interim President David Brownell, who came out of retirement this year to lead Prairie State for several months after the resignation of Paul McCarthy.

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The Southern Illinoisan, June 26, 2008 (Page 1 of 2)

## **Study: SI teachers in middle of pack**

By Laura Chapman, The Southern

Southern Illinois educators are among the middle of the pack in quality among teachers statewide, according to a study released Wednesday by the Illinois Education Research Council at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville.

The study, "Leveling Up: Narrowing the Teacher Academic Capital Gap in Illinois," measured teacher quality in schools among different regions and demographic groups in the state from 2001 to 2006.

It is the most comprehensive study of Illinois teachers in the state's history, said John Luczak, education program manager for the Joyce Foundation, which funded the research.

The report looks at how many teachers came from strong academic backgrounds, which has a strong correlation to student success, said Jennifer Presley, the report's lead investigator and director at the research council.

"All schools want to be striving to hire the strongest teachers they can," Presley said.

The study found schools in Southern Illinois had little noticeable change in teacher quality over the time period, she said. This was consistent with other regions in the state, with the exception of the Chicago area, which had only a slight increase over the years.

Southeastern Illinois ranked right at the state's average, while southwestern Illinois was a little below average.

Schools in the Chicago area showed the most change, she said. There was an increase in teachers with qualities associated with student learning.

Hiring teachers from strong academic backgrounds has proven beneficial for schools, Presley said, showing inexperienced teachers can sometimes be more beneficial than hiring teachers with weaker academic backgrounds.

Arne Duncan, chief executive officer of Chicago Public Schools, said the school district has made a conscious effort to hire teachers with stronger academic backgrounds, relying in part on incoming teachers from programs such as Teach for America.

Although teachers hired through these programs receive certification through alternative routes, they have strong academic experiences and idealism to bring to the classroom, he said.

"We fundamentally believe that talent matters," he said.

The study was based on an analysis of data gathered from the approximately 125,000 public school teachers who worked in the state each year between 2001 and 2006. The schools were evaluated based on the Index of Teacher Academic Capital, which consists of five attributes:

The Southern Illinoisan, June 26, 2008 (Page 2 of 2)

- the mean ACT composite scores of the school's teachers;
- the mean ACT English scores of the school's teachers;
- the percentage of teachers at the school who failed their first attempt at the Illinois Basic Skills Test;
- the percentage of teachers who received emergency or provisional certification;
- and the mean competitiveness ranking of the undergraduate institutions the school's teachers attended according to Barron's "Profiles of American Colleges."

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Daily Herald, Letter to the Editor, June 26, 2008

## **The boon of NIU's proton therapy**

Last week, Northern Illinois University made a significant step toward bringing a state-of-the-art proton therapy cancer treatment center to the Chicago area when officials broke ground.

This project is only the sixth of its kind in the entire country and is slated to open its doors in 2010.

Regularly, I hear stories about cancer patients who are waiting desperately for this kind of treatment.

Many of these patients are young children who have been diagnosed with very serious cases of brain cancer and have very few treatment options to facilitate a full recovery.

Because of potential negative developmental issues associated with treating pediatric patients with traditional radiation technology, proton therapy is the only real answer.

As with any type of disease, time is always a critical factor.

This is one of the main reasons officials at NIU have worked tirelessly to see this project built in the Chicago region and have it ready within 24 months.

Our hope is to save many of these lives by opening this center, treating patients, continuing to develop this promising technology through extensive research and advancing the education of health care professionals.

NIU is excited to bring proton therapy to Chicagoland, and we look forward to opening the doors in less than two years.

Manuel Sanchez

NIU Board of Trustees

Chicago

Quincy Herald Whig, June 21, 2008 (Page 1 of 2)

## **Diploma vs. GED: Perceptions follow those who graduate high school late**

By HOLLY WAGNER  
Herald-Whig Staff Writer

Diamond Jade Bence is a semester short of earning a high school diploma.

At 20, her high school career has had gaps caused by the births of her two boys. The oldest is 2 and the youngest, 4 months.

It hasn't been easy going to school and taking care of two babies. Their father is no longer part of her life, Bence said. She's worked off and on, but most recently has relied on Temporary Assistance Needy Families for support. That's ended now that school is out for the summer.

Bence knows she can find a job working nights, but then there's the problem with arranging for child care.

If it were not for the child care available at Quincy Public Schools' Teen Parent Services school, Bence would be not be so close to graduating. It's enabling her to achieve one of her goals.

Receiving a diploma "proves that you gave it your all and didn't give up," she said. "I think a high school diploma means a lot more than a GED. I think it's a much bigger accomplishment."

Bence is not alone in her belief that a high school diploma is more valuable than its equivalent. But it's a belief based in perception more than fact.

"Bottom line ... the GED says they have the knowledge," Quincy High School Principal Terry Ellerman said.

The GED, with its tests in mathematics, science, reading, writing and social studies, is designed to certify mastery of high school-level knowledge. John Wood Community College administers the GED and preparatory classes for free for students over 16.

A study by the American Council on Education, which determines the make up of the GED, indicates that 40 percent of high school seniors would fail it.

But when a person holds a GED, the implication is that they are a high school dropout "and that scares some people," Ellerman said. The perception is that "employers are going to want the person who has been going to school and doing what they need to to get along."

In fact, employers make little distinction between the GED and a high school diploma when hiring, said Jennifer Young of ADECCO Employment Services.

Employers say they like GED students because it shows they've have made an effort to turn around their situations and they're ready to work, said Renee Higgins, director of education at JWCC.

Local colleges also accept a GED because they rely on the ACT to determine if a student will succeed. Once students earn a college degree, employers don't look back at their high school career, said Julie Bonansinga of Snelling Personnel Services.

Quincy Herald Whig, June 21, 2008 (Page 2 of 2)

However, the high school diploma carries with it a greater sense of accomplishment, particularly for students who may be the first in their family to earn one, said Kathy Citro, TPS coordinator.

TPS offers both the GED and high school diploma. Only about 2 percent of the program's 150 students annually enter with the objective of earning a GED.

In Illinois, districts can only count high school students toward their average daily attendance until they turn 21. While most TPS students are between the ages of 16 and 19, case workers consider each student individually. They may counsel older students, who have several semesters of high school left, to take the GED and enter post-secondary school.

This year, 32 TPS students earned diplomas from QHS, two from Unity High and one from Central High. Twelve passed GED tests.

TPS students often come from a culture that doesn't value or encourage academic success and they believe college to be out of reach, Citro said. For most students she sees, the graduation ceremony is very important. It shows family and friends that they've earned the skills and knowledge to graduate.

"The GED opens some doors but it doesn't offer the same sense of esteem," Citro said.

The same high school diploma goes into the hands of the valedictorian and the student at the bottom of the class. Completing a rigorous high school education is still the best predictor of success, Ellerman said.

"My fear is not for the middle-of-the-road kid, but for the bright kid, who can do well taking a test but doesn't have study skills," Ellerman said. "Eventually when ... they have to study, they don't know how (to) do what they need to do."

Once she her diploma secure, Bence plans to enroll in the veterinary technician program at JWCC.

"I've worked really hard and I'm really close," she said. "I'm not going to settle for less ... I want my kids to see me do my best so they can do the same."

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Rockford Register Star, June 23, 2008 (Page 1 of 2)

## Education could spur Rock River Valley's economy

By Jeff Kolkey  
RRSTAR.COM

ROCKFORD —

Raising educational attainment across the Rock River Valley could spur economic development and raise quality of life, community, business and political leaders said during a forum Monday at Rock Valley College.

Major industry employers in the region already operate in other locations across the United States and internationally. That makes it relatively easy for them to shift operations to another location if there aren't enough qualified workers to fill professional jobs, said Janyce Fadden, president of the Rockford Area Economic Development Council.

"They can go, if they don't get the workers here," Fadden said.

It was the 17th in a series of sessions across Illinois organized by the Illinois Board of Higher Education as it works to create a blueprint for the Illinois Legislature to direct education policy and resources.

The local forums drew elected officials and educators along with community, business and industry leaders who said the Rock River Valley is struggling to produce a well enough educated work force.

"The reality is that if you do not have some kind of post secondary certification ... you are unemployable in the kind of economy that's developing in Illinois and around the country," said Aims McGuinness of the National Center for Higher Education.

To examine the state's higher education system, the center divided Illinois into 10 regions by county.

Winnebago, Boone, Stephenson and Ogle counties are grouped into the "Northern Stateline Region."

Across the region, 16.1 percent to 22 percent of 18- to 24-year-olds do not have a high school diploma, according to data presented at the forum. Just 17.3 percent to 25.6 percent of 25- to 64-year-olds, who are considered to be prime work force candidates, have a bachelor's degree or higher.

That lags the national average of 27 percent, an official said.

Meanwhile, per capita personal income across Illinois is falling compared to the national average. Where once Illinois' per capita income was 117.8 percent of the national average in 1960, it's fallen steadily to just 105 percent in 2005.

Rockford Mayor Larry Morrissey said efforts to improve the educational attainment in the region must look at public education which he said is producing "deplorable" graduation rates, especially among minorities.

When high school graduation was measured by the percentage of ninth graders who earn a diploma within the standard four years, the region was the worst in the state at 65.5 percent, nine points lower than the state average in 2005 and 2006.

"We had three of our four public high schools named by Johns Hopkins as high school dropout factories," Morrissey said. "Those are your future folks on public aid or in the local correctional facility. It's a cost to our economy instead of adding to our economy."

Rockford Register Star, June 23, 2008 (Page 2 of 2)

Rock Valley College board of trustees Chair Ted Biondo said part of the problem is that higher education is not a priority for too many.

“We have to create demand for higher education by showing the possibilities,” Biondo said. “We have to demonstrate the practical need for higher education.”

*Staff writer Jeff Kolkey can be reached at 815-987-1374 or at jkolkey@rrstar.com.*

### **More education can mean more money**

Median earnings of population age 25 to 64 in 2005

#### **Less than high school**

State: \$22,932

U.S.: \$21,199

#### **High School diploma**

State: \$30,576

U.S.: \$29,557

#### **Some College**

State: \$36,691

U.S.: \$35,162

#### **Associates Degree**

State: \$39,952

U.S.: \$38,729

#### **Bachelor's Degree**

State: \$50,960

U.S.: \$49,635

#### **Graduate Degree**

State: \$65,228

U.S.: \$61,151

*Sources: Illinois Board of Higher Education and the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems*

The Chronicle of Higher Education, June 24, 2008

## **Illinoisans Value Local Community Colleges Over 4-Year Institutions, Survey Finds**

A recent survey of 1,143 Illinois residents found mixed attitudes about higher education in the state. Results of the survey, conducted by a University of Illinois research center, will be released today at the Illinois Higher Education Summit, where academic, business, civic, and political leaders are meeting to discuss the future of higher education in the state.

In the survey, the Institute of Government and Public Affairs found that respondents were more likely to have positive perceptions of their local community colleges than of four-year institutions statewide. Eighteen percent of those surveyed said their local community college was doing an “excellent” job, whereas just 11 percent said the same of four-year colleges and universities.

The survey found that while 72 percent of Illinoisans strongly believe that any qualified student in the state should be able to go to college, only one-third strongly believe that every student who is motivated actually has the opportunity. Only 8 percent of residents said they strongly believe that “college students are getting their money’s worth.”

The survey also found that about one-third of residents said colleges in Illinois were about the same as those elsewhere in the country. As a researcher at the institute put it, the public thinks colleges in Illinois are “good but not great.”

Citing the finding that 73 percent of residents think college is very important, Stanley O. Ikenberry, a professor at the institute, said by e-mail that people clearly see higher education as central, “but they may not appreciate the depth and breadth of higher-education resources available.” —*Ingrid Norton*

The Macomb Journal, June 25, 2008

## Area teachers rank high in quality report

The Associated Press

When it comes to hiring teachers, experience shouldn't automatically trump academics. That's the conclusion of a new study released Wednesday that looks at the quality of public school teachers in Illinois.

The 44-page report from the Illinois Education Research Council found the highest percentage of academically talented teachers were at schools in the Champaign area, with those in suburban Chicago and west-central Illinois close behind.

While schools serving minorities and low-income students in Chicago rated lower in "teacher quality" compared to everywhere else in the state, those schools also made the biggest gains in hiring academically talented teachers over the years studied, 2001-2006.

That was the best news to emerge from the report, said one of its authors, Jennifer Presley.

"There was very little change in most of the rest of the state," she said. "Chicago as a whole still has a long way to catch up, but these findings should be encouraging for parents in the city."

Chicago narrowed the quality gap, the report said, by seeking out people new to the profession who didn't necessarily have teaching experience but who had solid academic pedigrees. On average, teachers hired more recently in Chicago scored higher on their college-entrance exams than those hired in previous years, the study found.

The study, entitled "Leveling Up: Narrowing the Teacher Academic Capital Gap in Illinois," looked at data on 125,000 Illinois public school teachers. Among the criteria it considered were scores on college-entrance exams.

Chicago "has shown that not only is it possible to improve teacher quality, but that by hiring new teachers who have stronger academic characteristics, it is possible to do so over a relatively short amount of time," the report said. It added "schools that show gains in their teacher academic capital also show gains in student achievement."

That led the study to question the emphasis some districts appeared to place on hiring veterans, saying the solid academics of many new teachers is "a factor whose positive effects on student performance tends to counter the negative impact of teacher inexperience."

"We know that all teachers get better with practice," added Presley. "But teachers with strong academic backgrounds start higher on the proficiency ladder."

Chicago seems to have a larger pool of academically strong candidates for schools to draw from, the report said. The number of applicants for teaching jobs in the city surged to 10 candidates per opening in 2006 from about 2.5 candidates per opening in 2002.

"Teaching is becoming more popular," Presley said. "It's attracting people with stronger academic backgrounds."

The report also gives a nod to President Bush's No Child Left Behind law for the uptick in qualified teachers, noting it has set more stringent requirements for educators, including that they all attain at least a bachelor's degree. It also credits tougher state-mandated tests for would-be teachers.

The Chicago Sun-Times, June 25, 2008

## **Less than 10 percent strongly feel students get their money's worth**

### **SURVEY | Is college worth the cost?**

BY DAVE NEWBART Staff Reporter [dnewbart@suntimes.com](mailto:dnewbart@suntimes.com)

Fewer than one in 10 Illinois residents feels strongly that college is worth the cost, a new survey has found, leading some educators to worry that more families might begin foregoing college if costs continue to rise.

A survey out Tuesday found strong support from just 7.8 percent of 1,150 people who were asked if "college students today are getting their money's worth."

While more than half agreed "somewhat" with that statement, former University of Illinois president Stanley Ikenberry said the results are worrisome.

"If I had my way, 100 percent would agree," he said. "The cost of college tuition levels have gone up quite substantially over the last half-dozen years, and the public really does feel the pain of that."

Two-thirds of those responding to the survey said students have to borrow too much to go to college.

The report also found that only 11 percent of residents thought Illinois' public universities were "excellent;" many thought the state's higher education system was simply on par with other states'. For years, educators have prided themselves on having some of the top rated U.S. colleges.

"It is a bit of a wake-up call," said Ikenberry, who's now a fellow with U. of I.'s Institute of Government and Public Affairs, which commissioned the survey. "We've got a lot of work to do."

Still, current U. of I. president Joe White said he thinks parents do understand the value of a college degree in today's economy.

"People can say what they want in opinion polls, but when you see 24,000 applications for 6,000 positions at the Urbana campus, can it really be true that they think education isn't worth it?" he asked. "That's not what they are saying when they vote with their feet and vote with their dollars."

The Chicago Sun-Times, June 26, 2008

## 'Remarkable progress' in caliber of CPS teachers

**SIU | And more are opting to stay, researchers find**

BY DAVE NEWBART Staff Reporter/dnewbart@suntimes.com

Tiffany Mohiser, a Purdue University graduate who had decent ACT scores, says teaching third grade in an Englewood school was tough. Four fights broke out in her classroom on her first day of work.

But, after 2½ years and strong mentoring from other teachers, she has things under control and thinks she is making a difference in students' lives.

"I love my kids," she said. "I can't leave them."

Teachers like Mohiser are key to the success of the Chicago Public Schools, according to a new study that found more teachers with stronger academic qualifications are choosing to work in the city.

The study of 125,000 teachers, released Wednesday by the Illinois Education Research Council at Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville, is the largest ever done of Illinois teachers.

It found that while the academic qualifications of CPS teachers remain far below those at districts elsewhere in the state, the gap is narrowing.

Chicago schools narrowed the academic achievement gap between 2001 and 2006 by 27 percent. That contributed to a statewide gain at low-income schools, which cut the gap in academic achievement by 22 percent, and at schools with the highest percentage of minorities, which closed the gap by 21 percent.

"Chicago, especially, has made remarkable progress in bolstering the caliber of its teaching force," the report says.

CPS chief Arne Duncan said the district is committed to hiring "the best and brightest . . . to make Chicago the mecca nationally for folks that are passionate about public education."

CPS has also seen an increase in applications for openings, from 2.5 per position in 2002 to 10 in 2006.

The district has cut teacher attrition from more than a third after three years to 15 percent in recent years, Duncan said.

The study found that the average ACT scores of new teachers had increased, since 2001, to more than 21 on a 36-point scale, while veteran teachers averaged less than 19.

The researchers credited the No Child Left Behind Act, which requires teachers have a bachelor's degree, as well as changes in standards that required teachers pass more-stringent skills tests.

Daily Herald, June 26, 2008 (Page 1 of 2)

## What's the recipe for good teaching?

By Emily Krone | Daily Herald Staff

The average teacher in Illinois received an average ACT score and went to an average college, a report on teacher quality released Wednesday by the Illinois Education Research Council found.

And while the report found that teachers with better academic backgrounds produce students with better test scores, some suburban principals argued there's no simple formula for determining what makes a good teacher.

"You're talking about people here," Naperville North Principal Ross Truemper said. "They can't be defined by a small number of quality indicators."

The study by the group from Southern Illinois University analyzed the academic background of every public school teacher in the state between 2001 and 2006, using an index of scholastic variables.

The index included teachers' high school ACT scores, the academic reputation of their undergraduate alma mater, whether they passed the Illinois basic skills test on the first try and whether they have proper certification.

The study found that the average ACT composite score of an Illinois teacher is 21. The state average for high school juniors last year was about 20.

And according to the study, the average Illinois teacher attended an undergraduate institution that Barron's, a college guide company, ranked as a 3 in competitiveness on a scale of one to six.

The study also found:

- Poor and minority students are the most likely to be taught by teachers with the weakest academic backgrounds.
- That gap is closing, as the Chicago Public Schools in the past five years significantly improved the academic background of their teaching staff.
- When the academic background of teachers improves, student achievement scores improve.

During the five-year period of the study, teachers at schools with the state's highest poverty levels made the greatest gains in academic capital, narrowing by 27 percent the gap between Chicago and the east central region of the state, where the educators with the highest academic index teach.

The gains were largely a result of hiring inexperienced teachers with stronger academic backgrounds, the study found.

George Olson, interim dean of the college of education at Roosevelt University, said city schools are following the lead of suburban schools, which have become increasingly stringent about the academic credentials of teachers.

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"It used to be that the criteria for placing students in student teaching spots was minimal," Olson said. "They were going on our recommendation and students could go and do a modest to poor job and get hired. There wasn't a lot of scrutiny. It was based much more on their ability to perform in the classroom than expertise in content."

But some suburban principals say ACTs and GPAs aren't the determining factors in hiring.

"It's where you do your student teaching," Aurora District 129 spokesman Mike Chapin said.

In a competitive market, Chapin said, the references and contacts made during student teaching are what distinguish one qualified candidate from another.

"Grades are part of it, but there are a lot of people skills involved," Chapin said.

Truemper agreed that teacher academics should constitute just a piece of the hiring puzzle.

"We want to see that there's competency and that they value their education, but that's not a straight-A student necessarily," Truemper said. "You can't just be the most intelligent person in the world and expect to be a great teacher unless you have the skills to deliver that knowledge."

And suburban principals stressed that most local school officials don't have to choose between academic firepower and strong classroom skills.

The Maine Township schools often draw 100 candidates for every opening, Maine West High School Principal Audrey Haugan said.

"The grade part is what gets you in the door. Anything below a 3.0 would raise a red flag," she said.

But after that initial culling, teachers are chosen based on how they perform in the classroom and in a series of interviews, Haugan said.

"For us, it's how successful can you be in the classroom and how successful have you been in the classroom?" Haugan said. "You can be an excellent student and all, but not be able to reach kids at all."

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## Merit Aid Still King

Despite increased pressure to move more money away from merit-based aid programs and into need-based grants, there is little sign of such a shift happening across the nation as a whole, according to a report released today.

The annual report, issued by the National Association of State Student Grant and Aid Programs, shows that need-based grants made up about the same proportion of total grants awarded in 2006-7 as they did in 2005-6. Need-based grants constituted about 72 percent of the total grants awarded last year, which was actually down slightly from 73 percent in 2005-6.

The association's report comes as a growing chorus of critics call on states (as well as private institutions, for that matter) to place their grant dollars in programs that might help needy students enroll in college who might not otherwise, instead of merely changing the enrollment patterns of those who could still otherwise afford a college education. Grant aid, which is measured in isolation within the report, is particularly coveted for needy students because it does not have to be paid back.

Sandy Baum, senior policy analyst for the College Board, said she's seeing more institutions stress need-based aid — even if seismic shifts aren't reflected (at least so far) in the national figures compiled by NASSGAP.

"I do think that there is increasing consciousness of the importance of need-based aid," said Baum, a professor of economics at Skidmore College. "I think there is some movement in that direction."

With the data currently available to analysts, it's still somewhat difficult to discern how many needy students are in fact helped by programs that are classified as merit-based, Baum added.

"Actually, more meaningful [data] would [show] how many of these state dollars are going to students who could afford to pay anyway. We don't have that answer," she said.

The report notes that need-based aid over all has increased, even if it hasn't gone up as a proportion of total grant aid awarded. Need-based grant aid grew to about \$5.3 billion nationwide in 2006-7, a one-year increase of about 7 percent.

Marilyn Cargill, president of NASSGAP, said she was encouraged to see that total state aid, including all grants as well as loans, increased by about 10 percent in 2006-7, bringing the total awarded up to \$9.3 billion. But as states slash their overall budgets this year, as many are doing in tough economic times, it remains to be seen whether such gains will continue.

"If there aren't significant increases in grant assistance, I think it's going to create phenomenal hardships," she said. "And it's going to lead to increased lending or borrowing."

Need-based programs accounted for a greater percentage of grants just 10 years ago, making up 84 percent of the total in 1996-97, according to the NASSGAP report. In that time frame, however, large merit-based programs like Georgia's Hope Scholarship and Florida's Bright Futures have exploded. Since Bright Futures began in 1997, the program has doled out just under \$2 billion for students with no demonstrated financial need.

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While states like Georgia and Florida continue to grow their merit-based programs, Washington has ended its largest such program. The Promise Scholarship, established in 1999, was phased out beginning in 2005. As such, the state's merit-based aid dropped by 52 percent, or \$3.4 million, between 2005-6 and 2006-7, the NASSGAP data show. The money saved by ending the program was shifted into need-based aid, according to state officials.

Tennessee has a significant lottery-funded program that primarily emphasizes merit-based aid, and the NASSGAP data show the program's impact. According to the report, 71 percent of the state's aid in 2006-7 was merit-only. State officials, however, think those numbers will shift in the coming years. In the fall, Tennessee will place an additional \$10 million in recurring dollars into the state's need-based program.

The influx of need-based dollars in Tennessee comes on the heels of a string of reports that showed a significant gap between merit and need-based aid in the state. Claude Pressnell, president of the Tennessee Independent Colleges and Universities Association, said he thinks policy makers have realized the state needs to do more to help poor students.

"I think some people were really hoping that the lottery scholarship would solve all of their problems, and it really hasn't done it," he said. "I wouldn't say they were shamed into it; their attention was drawn back to it."

Much of the nation's need-based aid comes from a handful of states. Of all such aid awarded in 2006-7, 69 percent came from California, Illinois, Indiana, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas and Washington. The nine states collectively awarded more than \$3.6 billion in need-based assistance.

### Total Financial Aid Awarded, 2006-7, By State (in millions)

State	Need-Based Aid	Non-Need-Based Grant Aid	Nongrant Aid	Total
Alabama	\$5.905	\$4.212	\$0.177	\$10.293
Alaska	0.587	-	78.06	78.646
Arizona	13.241	-	1.985	15.226
Arkansas	22.003	11.240	3.675	36.918
California	763.399	-	36.656	800.055
Colorado	62.919	9.143	13.219	85.281
Connecticut	41.716	0.482	58.843	101.041
Delaware	10.496	4.182	0.707	15.386
Florida	142.304	351.658	101.067	595.029
Georgia	1.313	485.413	12.270	498.997
Hawaii	0.408	-	24.767	25.175
Idaho	0.972	4.778	1.937	7.687

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Illinois	418.820	27.943	7.648	454.410
Indiana	322.940	8.864	18.747	350.551
Iowa	55.535	-	6.050	61.585
Kansas	16.379	0.119	4.233	20.730
Kentucky	91.016	93.384	5.630	190.029
Louisiana	1.452	120.563	0.060	122.074
Maine	15.556	-	3.325	18.881
Maryland	93.536	4.504	9.706	107.745
Massachusetts	83.649	-	33.528	117.177
Michigan	92.713	117.540	105.220	315.472
Minnesota	162.987	0.079	150.079	313.145
Mississippi	2.414	20.191	8.072	30.678
Missouri	25.050	34.752	11.352	71.154
Montana	4.563	-	0.958	5.521
Nebraska	10.388	-	74.947	85.335
Nevada	15.612	25.392	14.322	55.326
New Hampshire	3.718	0.009	0.339	4.066
New Jersey	249.889	30.726	238.398	519.013
New Mexicc	23.069	48.225	17.970	89.265
New York	843.694	21.243	82.614	947.551
North Carolina	170.127	59.087	67.189	296.404
North Dakota	1.886	0.353	0.450	2.688
Ohio	177.559	78.380	0.562	256.501
Oklahoma	56.188	10.009	100.237	166.434
Oregon	33.118	0.265	35.407	68.790
Pennsylvania	468.319	0.258	36.181	504.758
Puerto Ricc	39.455	-	-	39.455
Rhode Island	13.021	-	-	13.021
South Carolina	50.320	222.966	0.480	273.767

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South Dakota	-	2.140	0.479	2.618
Tennessee	57.962	176.926	1.278	236.166
Texas	410.916	-	150.969	561.885
Utah	7.368	2.103	45.737	55.208
Vermont	18.247	0.096	0.342	18.685
Virginia	102.699	69.747	83.236	255.682
Washington	181.824	3.133	29.201	214.158

Source: National Association of State Student Grant and Aid Programs

— Jack Stripling

The New York Times, June 26, 2008 (Page 1 of 2)

## **Career Programs Stress College, Too, and Give Students a Leg Up, Study Says**

By ERIK ECKHOLM

Forget the old-fashioned “vocational ed” classes that sent students on a decidedly non-college track. Over the last quarter-century, a new kind of high school program known as a career academy has proliferated, especially in low-income districts, that combines job placement, college preparation and classes beyond the vocational trades, from accounting to health care.

Now, a long-term and rigorous evaluation of nine career academies across the country, to be released in Washington on Friday, has found that eight years after graduation, participants had significantly higher employment and earnings than similar students in a control group.

Poverty experts called the findings encouraging because few interventions with low-income teenagers, especially blacks and Hispanics, have shown significant and lasting effects, and they come at a time when young minority men, especially, are losing ground disastrously in the job market.

Career academies offer students experience in the workplace, and help them get paying jobs while they pursue standard academic coursework. When the study, by the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, began 15 years ago, there were fewer than 500 career academies in the United States. Today there are more than 2,500, and the new findings are likely to spur more growth, several experts said.

The participants were mainly Hispanic and black, and the schools had emphases including business, tourism, health care and electronics, with students enrolled for three or four years.

Eight years after high school, when most participants were about 26, the academy group had average earnings 11 percent — or \$2,088 a year — higher than the control group.

“The findings show that you can make an investment in high school that has a measurable payoff in earnings well after,” said James J. Kemple, the author of the study and an education specialist at Manpower, a New York-based group that evaluates poverty programs.

“They also show that you can provide a solid foothold in the labor market without compromising a student’s capacity to go on to college,” Mr. Kemple said.

To compare similar students, all those who volunteered to join a career academy at each school were randomly assigned either to participate in the academy or to serve as part of a control group outside the academy. The increase in earnings was higher for men in the academy group, who showed a 17 percent difference, or \$3,731 per year. The researchers were mystified by the negligible gains for women and plan to study possible factors like the time the women spent raising children and the longer time they spent in postsecondary schooling, which might portend better earnings in later years.

To the surprise of researchers, the groups showed no difference in rates of high school and college completion. Ninety percent of students in both groups finished high school or obtained a G.E.D., and half gained some postsecondary credential — rates far higher than among their school populations over all. Researchers believe that those who initially expressed interest in the academies may have shared similar motivation to succeed, whether or not they were chosen for the special program.

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But this also suggests that something about the academy experience, apart from educational achievement, promoted greater success in the job market. One likely factor is the exposure the academies provide to a range of adults in real workplaces, said J. D. Hoye, who directed a "school-to-work" initiative for the Clinton administration and now heads the National Academy Foundation, which advises career academies on curriculums and other topics.

"The students see what work is like, and they build a network of caring adults at school and in the workplace," Ms. Hoye said.

Students in an academy stay together as a group. They usually get paying internships after their junior year, which for some turn into jobs they keep through college or longer. At the tourism academy at Miami Beach Senior High School, for example, many start working on the front desks of major hotels, some with hopes of entering management.

One school in the study is Valley High School in Southern California, where nearly 90 percent of the 3,000 students are Hispanic and about 180 sophomores, juniors and seniors are in its Global Academy of Finance. Along with traditional subjects, students take computer training and accounting courses and study the stock market, real estate and personal finance. They do internships with banks, law and finance firms and in the school district's administration, among others.

Students seem to benefit from being part of a special, small group, said Mark Bartholio, the academy director. Many do not pursue finance careers but instead go into teaching, social services or criminal justice, he said, but one graduate said the accounting skills he learned in the academy had enabled him to help start a small business.

One student who just graduated, Henry Gomez, 18, started working as a Wells Fargo Bank teller last year and is continuing this summer. "I'm not sure this is what I want to do, but I like the experience I'm gaining," he said.

Before he entered the academy, he had worked at a Target store, said Mr. Gomez, whose parents did not finish high school. He plans to enter a community college in the fall, with the bank wages helping him pay his way.

Another graduate, Cathy Castorena, 18 and working at Wells Fargo, said she would continue at the bank, while she attends a state university and studies psychology. Her dream, she said, is to become a prison psychologist.

"The career academies tell students that if you are willing to make the effort to succeed in a bachelor's degree program, here's a way to do that," said David Stern, an education expert at the University of California, Berkeley, who was an early proponent of career academies. "But if you end up not wanting to apply, or start college and don't finish, you have some work experience and training to fall back on, to give you a little edge in the labor market."

*Correction: An earlier version of this article misidentified the high school in southern California with a Global Finance Academy. It is Valley High School, which is part of the Santa Ana Unified School District, but not Santa Ana High School.*

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## Senior Moments: A Look at High Schoolers Over Time

It probably won't come as any shock to college admissions officers or others who deal with traditional college-age students that high school seniors have changed significantly over the last 30-plus years. But some of the ways in which they have changed — laid out in a new Education Department study Wednesday — may challenge the conventional wisdom a bit.

The report, *Trends Among High School Seniors, 1972-2004*, examines — yes — demographic, attitudinal and other trends among high school seniors at four points over three decades. The demographic data provide little in the way of surprises; they show the high school-age population growing increasingly diverse over time, with white students making up 86 percent of the national high school senior class in 1972 and declining to 62 percent by 2004.

Black Americans showed the most social mobility over this period, with the proportion of African-American high school seniors who fell in the highest socioeconomic quartile rising to 13.5 from 5.2 percent while the proportion in the lowest quartile fell to 37.1 percent from 62.8 percent. The proportion of Asian Americans in the highest quartile rose to 30.9 percent from 23.1 percent, but the proportion in the lowest quartile increased slightly over that time span, too.

Although many faculty members like to complain about the declining capabilities of incoming students, the data show that students' have increasingly taken advanced courses in high school. The proportion of students enrolling in calculus increased to 13 percent in 2004 from 6 percent in 1982, while the percentage taking no math in the senior year fell to 34 percent from 57 percent. Twenty-five percent of seniors took advanced science courses (chemistry II, physics II or advanced biology) in 2004 compared to 12 percent in 1982, and the proportion not taking foreign languages as seniors fell to 76 percent from 87 percent.

Despite the popular perception that students are engaging in more activities (for resume padding if not out of enjoyment), the statistics suggest otherwise. While the report shows increasing numbers of high school seniors belonging to honor societies (22 percent in 2004 from 14 percent in 1972), the proportions participating in high school publications (19 percent in 1972, 16 percent in 2004), in vocational clubs (22 percent in 1972, 16 percent in 2004) and academic clubs (26 percent in 1972, 21 percent in 2004, even though the 2004 category was broader and included debate) all fell. Participation in athletics basically stayed flat, apart from a spike in 1980.

Perhaps the least surprising (but reasonably encouraging) data come in the area of the future expectations of high school seniors over time. Significantly greater proportions of seniors in 2004 said they planned to attend college (79.2 percent) and to attain a graduate or professional degree (38 percent) than was true in 1972 (59 and 13 percent, respectively).

— James Heggen and Doug Lederman

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## Teachers' schools flunk math prep

WASHINGTON (AP) — For kids to do better in math, their teachers might have to go back to school.

Elementary-school teachers are poorly prepared by education schools to teach math, finds a study being released Thursday by the National Council on Teacher Quality.

Math relies heavily on cumulative knowledge, making the early years critical.

The study by the nonpartisan research and advocacy group comes a few months after a federal panel reported that U.S. students have widespread difficulty with fractions, a problem that arises in elementary school and prevents kids from mastering more complicated topics like algebra later on.

The report looked at 77 elementary education programs around the country, or roughly 5% of the institutions that offer undergraduate elementary teacher certification.

It found the programs, within colleges and universities, spend too little time on elementary math topics.

Author Julie Greenberg said education students should be taking courses that give them a deeper understanding of arithmetic and multiplication. She said the courses should explain how math concepts build upon each other and why certain ideas need to be emphasized in the classroom.

Teacher candidates know their multiplication tables, but "they don't come to us knowing why multiplication works the way it does," said Denise Mewborn, who heads the University of Georgia department of math and science education.

The university was cited in the report for having an "exemplary program," while nine others met basic requirements. The rest offered too little math coursework or coursework that was considered weak, according to the report.

The University of Georgia requires teacher candidates to take courses to help them understand concepts underlying elementary-school math, as well as math courses not designed for teachers.

The report found significant differences in the number and kind of courses required by each education program.

Education schools also are not being selective enough, the report stated. Most require applicants to take an admissions test, usually around their sophomore year of college. But the test, which typically includes reading, writing and math sections, is far too easy, according to the report.

"Almost anyone can get in. Compared to the admissions standards found in other countries, American education schools set exceedingly low expectations for the mathematics knowledge that aspiring teachers must demonstrate," said the report.

U.S. children often fall in the middle or bottom of the pack when compared to other students on international math tests.

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Jane West, vice president of government relations for the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, said her organization had not received a copy of the report Wednesday. The National Council on Teacher Quality plans to release it publicly at a news conference Thursday.

The report also criticized the tests education students take when they complete their coursework, which are generally relied on by states in granting teacher licenses. In many cases, the prospective teachers are judged on an overall score only, meaning they could do badly on the math portion but still pass if they do well in the other areas.

Since states oversee the preparation of the nation's school teachers, the report recommends they set tougher coursework and testing standards.

Francis Fennell, the past president of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, said the report fails to examine the math instruction students receive while attending community colleges, where many elementary-school teachers start their higher education.

He also said the study's authors should have surveyed teachers to get their views on how well prepared they were to teach math.

Fennell, who instructs teacher candidates in math at McDaniel College in Westminster, Md., said a common area of weakness among his students is fractions — the same subject the national math panel described as a weak area for kids. "Part of the reason the kids don't know it is because the teachers aren't transmitting that," he said.

To boost teachers' understanding of math, the math departments at universities ought to place more emphasis on training educators, Fennell added.

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## Colleges wade into survival training for campus shootings

### A new video offers tips on how to react when shots are fired

By ERIC HOOVER

Run here during a fire. Seek help for alcohol poisoning. Call this number if a roommate threatens suicide.

For years students have received instructions for all sorts of emergencies. But should they also learn what to do in the rare event that someone starts shooting?

This month a company in Spokane, Wash., plans to release *Shots Fired on Campus*, an instructional DVD with strategies for preventing and surviving a gun rampage. About 50 colleges have ordered the video, and its creators expect to sell several hundred more this fall.

The market appears ripe. Since the massacre at Virginia Tech last year, colleges everywhere have prepared for "active shooter" scenarios. As last February's fatal shootings at Northern Illinois University affirmed, however, even the most rapid police response may come too late for some people who first encounter a gunman.

That's why some campus-safety experts say colleges must better prepare those who do not wear badges. In April the International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators published "The IACLEA Blueprint for Safer Campuses," in response to the Virginia Tech incident. The group recommended that colleges train students and faculty and staff members in how to respond to such emergencies. Among the training methods it recommends are residence-life programs, orientation sessions, and print and digital materials.

Although colleges everywhere have developed training programs for their employees, many stop short of asking students to think through how they might react if they heard gunshots in their building.

That's a mistake, says Randy Spivey. "Since Virginia Tech, there's been a lot of focus on law-enforcement response strategies and notification procedures," he says, "but very little on what to do if you're that person in the event."

Mr. Spivey used to run hostage-survival programs for the U.S. Department of Defense. Now he is executive director of the Center for Personal Protection & Safety, a company that specializes in prevention of workplace violence. About six months ago, his business released *Shots Fired — When Lightning Strikes*, a training video that recreates an office shooting. More than 300 colleges have licensed the DVD for their use.

Requests for a campus-specific version led the company to create *Shots Fired on Campus*, which sells for \$495. For another \$1,000, colleges can buy media files of the video to put up on their Web sites.

The 20-minute video, filmed at Eastern Washington and Gonzaga Universities, begins with a student hiding behind a tree and calling 911 on her cellphone. "I'm on campus ... " she says. "There's a guy here shooting."

The dramatization includes footage of a man carrying a duffel bag into a campus building, then removing

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a handgun and a rifle. In a classroom, students look up, startled, when they hear the distant pop of guns. During a shooting "you'll need to take direct responsibility for your personal safety and security," says a narrator. "You must develop a survival mind-set."

*Shots Fired*, which includes interviews with law-enforcement experts, shows viewers how they might live through such an ordeal by running, hiding, or barricading a door. It also depicts how, by spreading out and working together, a group of people might overpower and disarm a shooter.

The video does not tell viewers what to do, however. "We're giving them a mental permission slip," Mr. Spivey says, "to think about the options they have."

### 'Delicate' Message

Shawn Burns thinks those options are empowering. This spring Mr. Burns, chief of police at West Texas A&M University, gave 65-minute presentations on campus shootings to some first-year students — something he had never done before.

After showing *Shots Fired* to small groups, Mr. Burns asked students to think about what they could do if a shooter had just entered their building. Could they jump out the window safely? Could they block the door with tables and chairs, maybe tie it shut with a belt? Could they throw their books or shoes at a gunman as a last resort?

Such exercises, he believes, plant a seed that would help students react quickly in a worst-case scenario. "We know that at Virginia Tech some students took proactive measures and survived the attack," he says. "We also know some of them didn't."

Although students tend to find the presentation reassuring, it carries a "shock factor," Mr. Burns says. How can colleges make sure that factor is not too great?

"It's delicate," says Lt. James T. Watkins of the University of North Carolina at Wilmington's police department. "The delivery is really important. You don't want to freak students out."

Recently police officers at Wilmington led several workshops on surviving campus shootings. A total of 1,500 faculty and staff members and students participated. The sessions, which do not include a video, are less a how to than a pep talk. "I'm not going to stand up there with a gun on my hip and tell you to overpower a shooter," Mr. Watkins says. "But I'll tell you I'm not going to get on the ground and be executed."

Several colleges that have purchased *Shots Fired on Campus* plan to show it to some, but not all students. The University of North Florida plans to incorporate the video into resident-assistant training before inviting members of student organizations to view it.

Clemson University plans to put the video on its network, so anyone on the campus can view it online. Johnson W. Link, chief of police, says he and his officers will also show it during presentations on campus safety, so they can answer questions. "This is a message people don't want to process," he says.

### A Matter of Balance

Legal experts speculate that a training video with specific survival tips could prove controversial in the aftermath of a fatal shooting. "Plaintiffs' lawyers would scrutinize it through the least forgiving lens," says

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Peter F. Lake, director of the Center for Excellence in Higher Education Law and Policy. Nonetheless, Mr. Lake says, he sees value in discussing survival skills.

Such training may have benefits, as long as it does not distract from preventive efforts to identify and help troubled students, says Alyssa S. Keehan, a risk analyst with United Educators Insurance, a major insurer of colleges. "If a college wants the community to feel prepared," she says, "the training given should not promote unfounded fear about campus shootings."

After all, such events, while devastating, are rare. Robert S. Flowers, vice president for student affairs at Hobart and William Smith Colleges, says there is limited time to tell students about a host of potential threats. "We have to balance that," he says. This fall freshmen on his campus will watch a video about fire safety, but not one about shootings.

Still, Gwendolyn J. Dungy, executive director of National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, predicts that *Shots Fired on Campus* will continue to sell. "People are grasping at anything that could be a resource," she says. "Nobody wants to look as if they didn't prepare."

<http://chronicle.com>

Section: Students

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## States spend more on student aid

### Need-based grants lag behind loans

By ERIC KELDERMAN

State spending on student aid picked up in the 2006-7 academic year, after its growth slowed the year before, according to an annual report released this week by the National Association of State Student Grant and Aid Programs.

But the increases were not equal among all types of programs, with state money for loans and for grants that are awarded on the basis of non-need-based criteria, such as academic merit, continuing to grow at a faster rate than funds for need-based grants.

The 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico doled out a total of about \$9.3-billion to students through financial-aid programs in 2006-7, an increase of nearly 6 percent, adjusted for inflation, over the previous academic year, the report said. Year-to-year growth in state support for financial aid had slowed the year before, rising just 3.4 percent from 2004-5 to 2005-6, down from a growth rate of 5.4 percent the previous year, the study found.

In the 2006-7 academic year, nearly 57 percent of the funds that states allocated to aid for undergraduates came in the form of need-based grants, which received \$5.29-billion. That amount represents a 3.4-percent increase over the previous year. While states have long spent most of their dollars for student aid on need-based grants, growth in money for those programs has been eclipsed over the past decade by increases in the amount that states are awarding for loans and non-need-based aid.

Money for loans provided by states surged by nearly 29 percent, to \$653-million in the 2006-7 academic year, from the year before. That follows a one-year increase of 17 percent from 2004-5 to 2005-6.

State money for non-need-based grants for undergraduates grew by 5.6 percent from 2005-6 to 2006-7, reaching a total of \$2.08-billion. Over the past decade, the amount of money for such grants has more than tripled, from a total of \$594-million, when adjusted for inflation, in the 1996-97 academic year. Over the same period, state money for need-based grants for undergraduates has grown by just 58 percent, from \$3.34-billion, when adjusted for inflation, in 1996-97.

The report said South Carolina, Indiana, Georgia, Kentucky, and West Virginia provided the greatest amounts, per capita in the 18-to-24-year-old population, in grants for financial aid in 2006-7.

#### STATE SUPPORT FOR STUDENT AID, 2006-7

All dollar figures are in thousands

	Need-based grants	Non-need-based grants	Nongrant aid*	Total	5-year change in total grant aid
Alabama	\$5,905	\$4,212	\$177	\$10,293	+37%
Alaska	\$587	\$0	\$78,060	\$78,646	-59%
Arizona	\$13,241	\$0	\$1,985	\$15,226	+371%
Arkansas	\$22,003	\$11,240	\$3,675	\$36,918	-12%
California	\$763,399	\$0	\$36,656	\$800,055	+48%
Colorado	\$62,919	\$9,143	\$13,219	\$85,281	+4%
Connecticut	\$41,716	\$482	\$58,843	\$101,041	-7%

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Delaware	\$10,496	\$4,182	\$707	\$15,386	+677%
District of Columbia	\$4,399	\$29,267	\$0	\$33,666	+2,449%
Florida	\$142,304	\$351,658	\$101,067	\$595,029	+54%
Georgia	\$1,313	\$485,413	\$12,270	\$498,997	+34%
Hawaii	\$408	\$0	\$24,767	\$25,175	-23%
Idaho	\$972	\$4,778	\$1,937	\$7,687	+19%
Illinois	\$418,820	\$27,943	\$7,648	\$454,410	+9%
Indiana	\$322,940	\$8,864	\$18,747	\$350,551	+161%
Iowa	\$55,535	\$0	\$6,050	\$61,585	+8%
Kansas	\$16,379	\$119	\$4,233	\$20,730	+26%
Kentucky	\$91,016	\$93,384	\$5,630	\$190,029	+114%
Louisiana	\$1,452	\$120,563	\$60	\$122,074	+17%
Maine	\$15,556	\$0	\$3,325	\$18,881	+25%
Maryland	\$93,536	\$4,504	\$9,706	\$107,745	+85%
Massachusetts	\$83,649	\$0	\$33,528	\$117,177	-27%
Michigan	\$92,713	\$117,540	\$105,220	\$315,472	+91%
Minnesota	\$162,987	\$79	\$150,079	\$313,145	+25%
Mississippi	\$2,414	\$20,191	\$8,072	\$30,678	+5%
Missouri	\$25,050	\$34,752	\$11,352	\$71,154	+38%
Montana	\$4,563	\$0	\$958	\$5,521	+62%
Nebraska	\$10,388	\$0	\$74,947	\$85,335	+41%
Nevada	\$15,612	\$25,392	\$14,322	\$55,326	+97%
New Hampshire	\$3,718	\$9	\$339	\$4,066	+21%
New Jersey	\$249,889	\$30,726	\$238,398	\$519,013	+32%
New Mexico	\$23,069	\$48,225	\$17,970	\$89,265	+56%
New York	\$843,694	\$21,243	\$82,614	\$947,551	+23%
North Carolina	\$170,127	\$59,087	\$67,189	\$296,404	+38%
North Dakota	\$1,886	\$353	\$450	\$2,688	+26%
Ohio	\$177,559	\$78,380	\$562	\$256,501	+32%
Oklahoma	\$56,188	\$10,009	\$100,237	\$166,434	+96%
Oregon	\$33,118	\$265	\$35,407	\$68,790	+68%
Pennsylvania	\$468,319	\$258	\$36,181	\$504,758	+39%
Puerto Rico	\$39,455	\$0	\$0	\$39,455	-2%
Rhode Island	\$13,021	\$0	\$0	\$13,021	+114%
South Carolina	\$50,320	\$222,966	\$480	\$273,767	+168%
South Dakota	\$0	\$2,140	\$479	\$2,618	0%
Tennessee	\$57,962	\$176,926	\$1,278	\$236,166	+520%
Texas	\$410,916	\$0	\$150,969	\$561,885	+93%
Utah	\$7,368	\$2,103	\$45,737	\$55,208	+128%
Vermont	\$18,247	\$96	\$342	\$18,685	+15%
Virginia	\$102,699	\$69,747	\$83,236	\$255,682	+36%
Washington	\$181,824	\$3,133	\$29,201	\$214,158	+81%
West Virginia	\$31,677	\$46,345	\$18,598	\$96,620	+271%
Wisconsin	\$90,641	\$3,167	\$7,703	\$101,511	+28%
Wyoming	\$163	\$0	\$0	\$163	0%
Total	\$5,514,131	\$2,128,885	\$1,704,607	\$9,347,623	+49%

\* Includes loans, tuition waivers, loan-assumption and loan-forgiveness programs, conditional grants and loans, and other programs.

**SOURCE:** National Association of State Student Grant and Aid Programs

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## Fewer students pursue computer-related degrees

Monday, June 23, 2008 4:42 PM CDT

**By David Pitt**  
**Associated Press**

DES MOINES, Iowa -- Fewer college students are pursuing computer-related degrees at a time when demand is increasing and thousands of baby boomers are retiring from technical jobs.

The colliding trends have some business leaders worried that they won't find enough workers needed to maintain expected growth.

"There's a bit of a perfect storm going on," said Katherine Spencer Lee, executive director of Robert Half Technology, a California-based consulting and staffing service. "I do think it's serious and I do think we need to start at the elementary school level and get students talking about math and science."

Although a dearth of tech workers has been a problem before, the situation is now more dire because of soaring demand by a wide range of businesses, from tech companies like Microsoft to insurance companies and local hospitals.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 854,000 professional IT jobs will be added between 2006 and 2016, an increase of about 24 percent. When replacement jobs are added in, total IT job openings in the 10-year period is estimated at 1.6 million.

The bureau estimates that one in 19 new jobs created in the 10-year period will be professional IT positions.

"The fact remains that technology permeates all businesses now," said Lou Gellos, a spokesman for Microsoft Corp. "All companies have that person down the hall to help with computer issues."

Amid the growing demand, the number of students entering computer sciences and computer engineering fields at major universities is dropping.

The Computing Research Association's annual survey of universities with Ph.D.-granting programs found a 20 percent drop this year in students completing bachelors degrees in professional IT fields, continuing a trend seen for several years.

Enrollment in undergraduate degree programs in computer sciences is more than 50 percent lower than it was five years ago, the group said. Between 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 the number of new students declaring computer sciences as a major fell 43 percent to 8,021.

"We're definitely concerned around the fact that there's a talent shortage," said Cindy Nicola, vice president of talent acquisition for Electronic Arts Inc., a Redwood City, Calif.-based video game maker of "Madden NFL" and "The Sims."

In response to the problem, Nicola said the company has begun working more with colleges to aggressively recruit graduates, offer internships and help schools shape curriculum so graduates are better able to step immediately into jobs at the business.

The company offers up to 400 hands-on internships a year as well as perks like fitness centers, on-campus coffee shops, dry cleaning, dental services, haircuts, message therapists and game rooms. As a video game maker, it also has the advantage of being in a field that is appealing to many young

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graduates.

Still, Nicola said the top computer sciences engineers she's interviewed have at least five offers upon graduation and the competition for them is fierce.

Gellos said among the students earning bachelor's degrees in Washington state, only 14 percent are graduating with the skills the company needs.

"So that means for Microsoft at its home area in Redmond, Wash., 14 percent isn't going to cut it when it comes to the kinds of people we want to hire to work here, so we have to look in other places," he said.

Rockwell Collins Inc., a Cedar Rapids, Iowa-based maker of avionics, global positioning system and other electronic equipment for airline manufacturers, employs about 6,500 engineers and technical workers among its global work force of 20,000.

CEO Clay Jones said a shortage of those workers restrains growth and can damage customers relationships if projects are delayed.

"When you look at the relative availability of those people in the nation, we believe they're going to continue to be in demand and ultimately in short supply in the next three to five years," Jones said.

The company is reviewing salary and benefits and looking at the work environment, leadership development and diversity initiatives.

Rockwell Collins also is sending mentors into classrooms to work on robotics and rocketry projects in hopes of getting the students interested in future technology careers. Their efforts are part of a larger statewide program coordinated by the Technology Association of Iowa.

The Des Moines-based nonprofit organization recently rolled out a pilot program called HyperStream, a career awareness project aimed at students in grades 8-12.

"We've created a presentation that counters the misperceptions that are out there," said Leann Jacobson, the group's president. "Misperceptions that careers in technology are geeky and not cool, that this is a field that only guys go into."

Microsoft has begun working with teachers to hold annual math camps and has launched programs such as DigiGirlz High Tech Camps, designed to provide girls in the ninth to 12th grades a better understanding of technology careers. Girls listen to executive speakers, participate in technology tours and demonstrations, network, and learn with hands-on experience in workshops.

Microsoft has also lobbied state lawmakers to boost math requirements in schools and has promoted a Math Matters program to raise awareness in schools about raising the level of math understanding.

"Before this year students only needed to complete two years of math in high school," Gellos said. "The technology era has changed everything and that's not going to cut it for students today."

Professor Shankar Sastry, the dean of the College of Engineering at the University of California at Berkeley, said he has seen an uptick in the number of undergraduate applications in computer engineering in the past year. However, the university is enrolling no more students because of inadequate laboratory space and facilities to teach more.

He advocates a public/private partnership with major IT employers to provide the funding needed for a 10 percent increase in the number of students at 10 campuses in the UC system. The California labor

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secretary has estimated that there will be a shortage of 25,000 technical workers in that state in the next seven years, and Sastry said such a partnership would solve about half of that problem.

"I think that if the CEOs of these major companies were to strike a partnership with the governor - and the governor has actually welcomed it - we would be able to create a fund to fuel the growth and this would be a win-win situation," Sastry said.

Failure to provide facilities to teach more students will only contribute to the shortage of IT workers, he said.

"The students will go someplace else and the companies will be left holding the bag," he said. "I think it's pretty time sensitive."

The Chicago Tribune, Opinion, June 25, 2008

## What do we tell the kids?

On June 10, 30,000 Chicago Public Schools students gathered peacefully at Soldier Field for a rally in support of education funding and safety. This remarkable event featured student musicians, poets and speakers, who eloquently and respectfully made the case for the State of Illinois to better protect them and prepare them for college, work and life. Students closed the event with a call to action for Springfield to fund education properly.

As Mayor Richard Daley said, the historic Shout-Out for Schools rally reminded us all that Illinois continues to fall short in meeting its fundamental responsibility to educate children and keep them safe.

Today a state budget that most analysts agree is \$2 billion out of balance awaits action by Gov. Rod Blagojevich.

Meanwhile, desperately needed school, road and transit projects are unfunded because we have no large-scale capital program, undermining both our educational system and our economy.

We are grateful to Springfield for the modest boost in education funding the new budget provides, but it falls far short of what Chicago needs to expand learning programs while protecting local taxpayers. If school funding is further reduced through line-item veto or executive action, the impact on schoolchildren and taxpayers will be very damaging.

Today Chicago does not have the money to offer all children after-school programs and to conquer the dropout problem; we cannot modernize every school or replace outdated textbooks; rising pension costs are forcing us to choose between paying retired teachers and current ones; rising health care costs put our physical and financial health at risk.

While some legislators have led the charge for education funding reform, every proposal has fallen victim to political fear or personal animosities. How do we explain to our children that the adults who run government cannot balance the budget, pay for capital projects and fund the single most important function of a civilized society—education?

It's time to put aside the personal agendas and the politics.

Let's show our children that we heard their voices on June 10. Let's answer their call for a better education and a stronger, safer and brighter future. They told us what they want. What do we tell them?

—*Rufus Williams*  
*President*  
*Chicago Board of Education*

*Arne Duncan*  
*CEO*  
*Chicago Public Schools*

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## **America's Damaging Lack of Investment in Higher Education**

By RICHARD G. DIFELICIANTONIO

Recent efforts to deal with college affordability, including measures now before Congress, raise many questions: Why does college cost so much? How can students ever be expected to pay back their loan debt? Why does the middle class always get squeezed?

At the root of all those problems is the most fundamental issue: Who should pay for college? Is college, touted as a ticket to prosperity, a personal investment, with its cost to be borne mostly by the individual? Or is it a public good, dedicated to the general welfare, its cost to be distributed among us all?

America's historical commitment to the education of its citizens is perhaps the most important link in the unbroken chain of our national obligation to justice, synonymous with national liberty. But today the burden of paying for higher education has shifted to students and families — and that burden weighs most heavily on poor students and poor families. The poor are subject to a narrowing set of higher-education options, coupled with greater debt and higher rates of academic failure than their more-affluent peers.

In 2006 a nonpartisan panel advising Congress estimated that in the 1990s, nearly a million to 1.6 million low- and moderate-income high-school students who were academically qualified to attend four-year colleges and wanted to enroll did not proceed to earn their bachelor's degrees. The panel, predicting that as many as 2.4 million students would follow the same unfortunate path in this decade, concluded, "These bachelor's degree losses are an unmistakable signal that our nation has yet to make the full investment in student aid necessary to secure our economic future — a dire warning that we are requiring millions of students to mortgage their future and ours as well." Just last month, the panel updated its prediction to as many as 3.2 million students.

The dwindling role of the Pell Grant is a case study in how changing national priorities have resulted in fewer opportunities for the less wealthy. Not long after the program was established, in the 1970s, a Pell Grant covered more than 50 percent of a student's direct costs at a public four-year college and peaked at almost 80 percent. Today the average grant covers only about 30 percent of tuition, room, and board.

Moreover, in constant dollars, the average Pell Grant has remained virtually unchanged, while college tuition has skyrocketed.

Recent Congressional moves to raise the Pell Grant will do little to help the situation. A 2006 increase in the maximum award, to \$5,400 from \$4,310, over five years barely keeps pace with inflation and hardly makes a dent in the total cost of a four-year college. That is reflected in the plummeting numbers of Pell Grant recipients enrolling in such institutions. In 1974, just after the inception of the Pell, 62 percent of recipients attended a public or private four-year college. Today that proportion has dropped to 45 percent. Because the majority of Pell recipients now are at two-year colleges and for-profit institutions, only 12 percent of students from the bottom quartile of income earn four-year degrees by age 24.

Further, in the past 35 years, the federal commitment to nonrepayable grants has been replaced by a reliance on repayable loans. In the early 1970s, 70 percent of federal aid was provided in the form of grants and 25 percent in loans. Today the ratio is almost reversed: 63 percent in loans and 37 percent in grants.

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The problem is reinforced at the state level. Unfortunately, even though almost all forms of public grant aid to higher education were conceived to assist those with the most need, states are one by one adopting merit-based standards for college grants. Nevada, for example, promotes a "Millennium Scholarship," South Dakota the "Opportunity Scholarship," West Virginia the "Promise Scholarship," and Georgia the "Hope Scholarship." That trend, coupled with more standardized testing, results in program funds that follow higher test scores — a dynamic that blows back on the disadvantaged, many of whom attend underfinanced public primary and secondary schools and are far less likely to score well than their more-affluent counterparts are.

Certainly it is difficult to argue against rewards for student achievement. But a look below the surface reveals the insidious straight-line relationship between family income and what we commonly accept as definitions of achievement. While that insight regarding the link between standard measures of academic accomplishment and wealth probably surprises few, it is discouraging to realize that legislators of all stripes feel the political necessity to cater to common, although obviously loaded, iterations of what constitutes merit. As a result, much of the public money committed to higher education is now flowing uphill, toward those who need it least.

A College Board analysis notes that as a result of lagging incomes and regressive governmental financial-aid policies, "the proportion of family income required to cover the total expenses net of grant aid at public two-year and four-year colleges increased significantly only for students in the lower half of the income distribution between 1992-93 and 2003-4."

Not surprisingly, students and their families have turned to the private-loan market to make up the difference between what they can pay and what college costs. Thus, even though most Americans believe that students take on too much debt, the private-loan market has now reached a volume of \$17-billion a year, with an average annual increase of 24 percent over the past 10 years.

The net result of our lack of public investment in higher education is this: In 1995 only 3 percent of the students in the nation's 146 most-selective colleges and universities came from the bottom income quartile, according to a 2004 report by the Century Foundation. The situation has not improved much, if at all, since then. The share of Pell recipients at the 243 "best" institutions as, defined by *U.S. News & World Report*, was just 6.9 percent.

The question before us is not so much how to cope with young people's competing for a limited number of precious college seats, but how to continue expanding the number of opportunities at high-quality, elite institutions of higher education. We are sliding down a slippery slope of personal self-interest in matters central to the public good. The generations that came of age from World War II through Vietnam today appear unwilling to commit the same level of resources they received to live in prosperity.

The millions of students left behind appear to be invisible to state and federal policy makers. But those students cannot simply be hidden from sight. Current discussions of the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act make the mistake of doing business as usual and fighting the last war — of focusing on cosmetic changes in the amounts and ways that federal grants are distributed, and on how a broken loan system might be patched. An imaginative rethinking of priorities — led by college leaders — is required, just as it was after World War II, to support financially needy students.

Everyone agrees that the cost of college is high. But what will be the consequences if we quietly, collectively let our public commitment to higher education deteriorate?

*Richard G. DiFeliciano is vice president for enrollment at Ursinus College.*

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## POINT OF VIEW

# Colleges Should Go Beyond the Rhetoric of Accountability

By RICHARD K. VEDDER

A growing chorus of critics — legislators, governors, alumni, students, parents, trustees, and others — is pressuring colleges to increase "accountability" and "transparency." The critics want colleges to measure whether they are actually achieving their core missions, especially educating undergraduates, and to give people the facts about what they find.

As a member of the Commission on the Future of Higher Education, known as the Spellings Commission, which highlighted the need for more transparency and accountability in its 2007 report, I have supported efforts to respond to such public concerns. For example, both the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges and the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities have developed voluntary systems of accountability, with common sets of measures to help people compare aspects of similar institutions, like cost and graduation rates.

While I am pleased by the new rhetoric supporting openness about internal operations and accomplishments, I remain skeptical of colleges' willingness to deliver truly useful information. Although they seldom directly attack transparency, institutions often object to specific ideas designed to open them to more public scrutiny. They insist that they don't have the information outsiders are demanding or that getting it would be costly or invade peoples' privacy. They complain that their institutional independence is being violated.

Behind such quasi-valid objections are less legitimate concerns. Colleges are afraid that establishing measures of what their students learn, and sharing the results, might reveal that they are, in fact, doing little, or that college A is doing less well than college B. Or that they are doing things they don't want the public to know — for instance, that administrators are getting large salary increases but professors aren't. Moreover, being accountable takes work and money, and some institutions don't want to make the investment.

Yet if colleges resist calls for accountability and transparency too much, they may pay a high price: the loss of institutional autonomy. The public and its political representatives are getting fed up. When that anger passes some threshold, the politicians will probably act, and colleges won't like the imposed solutions — and for good reason, because those solutions may meddle too much in institutions' affairs. Indeed, if you thought the Spellings Commission was rough on colleges, you haven't seen anything yet.

Right now, colleges are given considerable protection from political interference and operate autonomously. Professors can utter unpopular thoughts and explore zany ideas because it's generally accepted that deviations from conformity often propel scholars, institutions, and society to higher levels of intellectual achievement and prosperity. Indeed, a compelling case can be made for isolating colleges somewhat from the political pressures for conformity and uniformity.

But higher education depends largely on resources from the public. Great universities like Harvard and Yale receive more than one-third of their incomes from endowments, and perhaps an additional one-

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fourth or one-fifth through government research grants or other forms of federal support. Governments at both the state and federal levels provide appropriations, subsidies, and tax exemptions. They, along with taxpayers and private donors, need an accounting of how their money is being spent.

Meanwhile, rising tuition costs have increased public scrutiny of colleges and further undermined the arguments for institutional autonomy. Scandals around inappropriate spending — for instance, multimillion-dollar packages for departing presidents — have erupted with increasing frequency. Soaring compensation of top administrators has caused political leaders to believe that greater oversight is needed — and that everything important happening on campuses should be fully disclosed.

How can we as a nation protect colleges from undue political interference but also give supporters evidence that their money is being used prudently and consumers the information they need to make admission decisions? One solution would be for colleges to adhere to the spirit of the recommendations in the Spellings Commission report. They could start by providing:

- Data on sources of funds and expenditures, assets and liabilities, and other financial matters. Accounting techniques and procedures should be described, and accounts should be independently audited.
- The number of applicants and student acceptances; the quantity and distribution of student aid; the quality of incoming students; the attrition rate of students; graduation rates; the number of transfer students; and the breakdown of students by academic major, ethnicity, gender, and national origin.
- Measures of learning, including improvements on standardized tests like the Collegiate Learning Assessment, the percentage of students accepted for graduate or professional training, and student involvement in both classes and extracurricular activities as measured by such instruments as the National Survey of Student Engagement.
- Information on the careers of students who are out at least five years. What are alumni doing? What types of jobs do they have? Roughly, how successful are they? What is the estimated median work-related income of those who graduated five or 10 years ago?
- Analyses of faculty teaching loads and employment on campuses, including details on how employees are allotted to faculty, academic support, student services, research activities, and various auxiliary enterprises like housing and hospitals.
- Responses to the specific questions of interested parties, like the news media. How many shares of XYZ Company stock does the college own? How much money is a certain professor getting paid?

Is there some information colleges should not provide, even if it is specifically requested? Yes. They should be able to have confidential discussions about personnel matters — whether to give tenure to a professor, how a supervisor evaluated a staff member's annual performance. Generally speaking, donors should be able to give anonymously. Medical records should be confidential, as should discussions with lawyers about legal issues and options.

In deciding what is off limits for disclosure, however, colleges should err on the side of openness, unless it's clear that disclosure would be materially harmful. Even if a disclosure may be financially damaging, reporting it can sometimes be desirable. The public should know, for example, if trustees have given a president a \$1-million golden parachute, even if it causes embarrassment leading to a decline in donations.

Indeed, regarding finances, colleges should be subjected to the same kind of accountability as businesses and other organizations. Corporations face scrutiny from stockholders, auditors, the

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Securities and Exchange Commission, and others. Under the Sarbanes-Oxley Act, corporate CEO's must certify the accuracy of the company's financial data, follow exacting accounting standards, and withstand external audit. To avoid facing similar mandates, more higher-education institutions should make more information publicly available on their Web sites, such as the data contained in the Form 990s they file with the Internal Revenue Service — as some colleges already do.

Colleges particularly resist calls to measure the value they add to student learning. They argue that institutions have different missions, and a one-size-fits-all formula for assessing learning won't work. But while no single test is perfect, virtually all colleges can agree that certain tests can measure knowledge in subject areas as well as critical-thinking skills. Colleges require admissions tests like the SAT and ACT because such exams measure students' potential. Surely they could administer a similar test at the end of a student's college career — maybe even the SAT or ACT again. At a minimum, colleges could require students to complete one from a menu of different tests. If needed, the College Board, ACT, and others could create new exams.

In addition, colleges could make public more information about their alumni beyond the highly successful ones whom they track for fund-raising purposes. They could require students who received financial aid to report their earnings for five or 10 years after graduation, with the stipulation that the information will be used only to evaluate aggregate postgraduate performance and will not be shared.

Another approach would be to obtain aggregate work-history data from the Social Security Administration. With a modest change in federal law, colleges could simply provide the administration with a list of Social Security numbers, and the administration would then give the colleges the median reported earnings of all graduates of a given class, which could then be made public. (To avoid privacy concerns, no individual's earnings history would be made available.) Why don't we require any college that receives federal funds to request and publish such earnings data?

Unlike the business world, there is no clear bottom line in higher education, so poor performance often goes undetected. But transparency is vital in evaluating what colleges accomplish. In fact, transparency confers immense benefits. Armed with more information, students who view education strictly as a financial investment may aim for low-priced colleges with good track records in producing graduates who go on to successful careers. Cost-conscious parents may seek out institutions with good four-year (versus six-year) graduation rates. Research sponsors and philanthropists may prefer to give money to colleges with low overhead costs. In short, providing more information would subject colleges to competitive pressures and lead to better allocations of resources. Transparency can help colleges, too, by raising public confidence and dissipating unfounded rumors about financial or other improprieties.

To be sure, transparency involves trade-offs — sacrificing a little institutional autonomy to meet the public's legitimate need for information. But colleges must move aggressively to meet this imperative — or face the consequences of increased, and perhaps costly and inefficient, regulatory mandates.

*Richard K. Vedder, director of the Center for College Affordability and Productivity, is a professor of economics at Ohio University.*

<http://chronicle.com>

Section: Commentary

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## Sociology Jobs Plentiful, But Do They Match?

New Ph.D.'s in sociology appear to have a healthy job market in which to land positions, based purely on the numbers. But an analysis released by the American Sociological Association also points to a potential mismatch in specialties, as hiring committees appear to be much more enamored of criminology than are sociology graduate students.

While some associations release annual reports on the availability of jobs in their field, the sociology group has not done so, so the report, "Too Many or Too Few Ph.D.'s?" offers the first data on the question in years. As other associations do in their disciplines, the sociologists prepared the study by comparing postings in the association's job bank with information on the supply of new Ph.D.'s. (While many jobs are not listed with association job banks, they are viewed as providing a general sense of the quantity and type of positions available, as many colleges routinely list positions there.)

The overall picture is quite positive. The association had listings in 2006 for 1,086 unique positions, 610 of them for assistant professors. During that same year, 562 Ph.D.'s were awarded in sociology. The report notes that not all of the posted positions in any year are filled by new Ph.D.'s or at all, but given that there are also postdoctoral positions, positions for which no rank is specified, and positions not included in the ASA job listings, the outlook is encouraging for new Ph.D. recipients.

Where things are slightly less certain is in the area of specialties. More than one third of the assistant professor positions did not specify a subfield. But the top subfield specified (nearly three times more than the runner up) was criminology/delinquency, and the sixth most popular subfield was a related one, law and society. The concern of those who prepared the report is that evidence suggests grad students are focused elsewhere. The report notes that grad students join sections of the association that reflect their scholarly interests, and that with the exception of race and ethnicity, the top specialties listed in job ads did not match the sections that are most popular with students. The most popular grad student areas, judged by section membership, are: sociology of culture, sex and gender; organizations, occupations and work; social movements, and race.

Here are the top fields specified for jobs as assistant professors:

### Top 10 Specialties Specified in Assistant Professor Jobs Ads for Sociologists, 2006

Rank	Field	Number
1.	Criminology/delinquency	86
2.	Quantitative methods/statistics	29
3.	Theory	21
4. (tie)	Urban/community	19
4. (tie)	Race and ethnicity	19
6.	Law and society	15
7.	Medical	13

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8.	Race, class and gender	12
9. (tie)	Demography	11
9. (tie)	Family	11
9. (tie)	Social psychology	11

Jerry Jacobs, a professor of sociology at the University of Pennsylvania and co-author of the report, said he wasn't surprised to see criminology on top of the list, but that "the number is striking." (The other author is Roberta Spalter-Roth of the association's research division.)

Jacobs said that the research alone couldn't determine whether the inconsistent match of specialty areas and student interests was troublesome. For instance, he said it wasn't clear whether the jobs listed were going to sociology Ph.D.'s or people coming out of criminal justice programs. While many sociology departments have criminologists, other criminology programs have split off, and Jacobs said that if those programs place students, there would be an impact on new sociology Ph.D.'s "and the job market wouldn't look nearly as good."

Further, he said that it is always hard to tell, when specialties are listed, how much a department will stick to them. In some searches, he said, the field is desirable to a department, but a candidate who is otherwise outstanding (but isn't in that area) may be considered and hired. In other cases, the specialty isn't viewed just as desirable, but essential. The data available for the study don't give a sense of the split between "might be nice," and "absolutely a prerequisite."

Christopher Uggen, chair of sociology (and a criminologist) at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, said he's not surprised by the demand for people who study crime. Uggen said that he defines himself as "a sociological criminologist" and sees criminology as a vital part of sociology, but that not everyone in the field has shared that view.

"There's always been a guardedness and sometimes an outright distrust of the field of criminology by some in sociology," he said. Some have seen criminologists as "instruments of state power" and others have said that the field was "too narrowly framed," he said. While some of that has changed, he said, "many fine departments don't have expertise in crime, law and deviance," Uggen said.

While the new data from the association aren't shocking to Uggen, he said that some in the field have talked about the interest in criminology as "a blip," and that this report should make them reconsider. "I think sociology loses criminology at its peril," he said.

Uggen said that the demand for more criminologists is logical, and that departments should embrace this when designing their offerings. He said that he saw both intellectual and practical reasons for the discipline to be adding slots in criminology and making sure that all sociologists have some exposure to the field.

The intellectual argument comes from the realities of so many Americans being behind bars. "With the scale of punishment in the United States, you can't understand the stratification system without understanding criminal justice. You can't understand racial inequality without understanding the criminal justice system," he said. As an example, Uggen said that a generation or so ago, a sociologist could

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have studied occupational mobility between fathers and sons, left out the incarcerated, and not worried about skewed results. Today, that would be impossible, he said, without “a huge sample selection problem,” so the hiring of criminologists makes a lot of sense.

If any department chairs are unconvinced, Uggen has an argument that should win them over. Undergraduates flock to courses about crime, he said. “Undergraduate enrollment is the coin of the realm,” Uggen said, and criminology courses produce the numbers with which a department chair can make “a much stronger claim to a faculty line.”

— **Scott Jaschik**

## Caught Off Guard — But Why?

When the bottom fell out, where were the disaster plans?

As the economy took a dive in the first half of this year, and states started slashing budgets, higher education leaders were often left scrambling. Unsure where to cut their budgets on short notice, university officials turned to predictable — though not always strategic — solutions:

Vacant positions went unfilled.

Tuition hikes were approved.

Enrollments were frozen.

The latest economic downturn, which has left a host of state universities grappling with major shortfalls, is part of an ongoing cycle of ups and downs that have a familiar feel in higher education. And yet, precious few institutions plan — at least publicly — for how to deal strategically with such budget deficits when they inevitably arrive.

“We get this deer in the headlights reaction at universities when the budget comes down,” said Travis Reindl, who heads a national initiative aimed at making college more affordable and accessible. “It’s a reactive as opposed to a proactive approach to this.”

Reindl, program director of Jobs for the Future, says institutions should begin discussing and drafting plans to deal with cuts well before they happen. Just as university leaders lay out agendas for bold and expensive new initiatives, so too should they have a plan for where they would take a budget hit.

“They should be having those kinds of discussions even when the budget is way up,” Reindl said.

While such planning sounds smart enough, there are potential pitfalls. For obvious reasons, university leaders are loath to advertise where they’d stick the knife if called upon to cut.

“From a planning perspective, there probably is some wisdom to it,” said Jim Applegate, vice president for academic affairs at the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education. “But to lay that out and make it too public might be to invite it.”

Such was the fear for officials at Florida State University, who only recently revealed that they’d been squirreling away cash for several years in anticipation of the housing market going bust. Larry Abele, provost at FSU, said there was great concern that the university could be punished for its prudence. If lawmakers learned FSU had a \$90 million reserve, they might have made their own plans for those dollars.

“I promise you we were terrified early on,” Abele said. “You know the politics of Florida are just insane.”

Just as Abele had feared, lawmakers caught wind of the university’s strategy, and they wanted answers at the highest levels of government. Gov. Charlie Crist actually called Florida State leaders in for a meeting several months ago, asking questions about the university’s reserves.

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"We said 'we are protecting our students, and we don't want to be punished for it,' " Abele recalls.

FSU was able to keep its reserves intact, but the university is still looking at bleak years ahead. Florida State took a \$31 million cut for the upcoming 2009 fiscal year, in which the State University System's funding was reduced by 6 percent, or about \$130 million. As a result, FSU will eliminate more than 200 faculty and staff positions.

State officials are signaling even more cuts within the 2009 fiscal year that begins July 1. And despite FSU's advanced planning, Abele bluntly concedes that "if things don't turn around by 2010-2011, we are screwed."

### **Protection From Backlash**

The concerns Florida State officials harbored about unveiling their secret money-saving plan illustrate just how difficult it is to establish trust among all the stake holders in higher education.

"If you don't have the commitment, I could hardly blame college presidents for not setting aside rainy day funds in good times," said Joni Finney, vice president of the National Center for Public Policy in Higher Education. "Then in the bad times the state knows you have this money, [and] they'll cut you more. I think it is a risky strategy for public universities to do that."

In Kentucky, a clearly stated policy on state priorities appears to have been what saved universities from more dramatic cuts. Democratic Gov. Steve Beshear had initially proposed a 12 percent funding decrease, but lobbyists and university leaders cited an 11-year-old Kentucky statute as a key reason for sparing higher education. The Postsecondary Education Improvement Act sets a number of specific goals, among them to push the University of Kentucky into top-20 status among public universities by 2020.

"All of this was laid out in statute, passed by the Legislature, signed by the governor," Applegate said. "So it is in fact Kentucky's agenda because it's in law."

Kentucky's universities were ultimately given a 3 percent cut for 2009, on top of the 3 percent decrease they endured in 2008. The cuts, while less than expected, are still forcing layoffs and tuition hikes that range from 5 percent to 9 percent across the system. A much-touted statewide scholarship program is also being scaled back.

Higher education leaders in California are hopeful that, as in Kentucky, the state's cuts will be less than initially expected. California State University and the University of California were slated for a \$312 million cut in Republican Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's original budget. Lawmakers, however, are now working with a budget that lessens the blow to \$215 million.

California's budget is still being hammered out, and it's unclear whether universities will be able to hold onto the gains they've made over the course of the session, according to Richard West, California State University's executive vice chancellor and chief financial officer. The debate may ultimately come down to whether a tax increase can be passed to offset a budget shortfall of as much as \$20 billion, West said.

"It's the usual debate in California," he said. "We've just begun a long summer, I'm sure."

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### **Big-Ticket Projects, Even in Lean Years**

Even as California grapples with declining resources, universities have bankrolled expensive new projects. The University of California at Irvine, for instance, will open its new law school in the fall. The school was approved in 2006, despite the California Postsecondary Education Commission's assertion that there was no need for one.

In New York, the Legislature's recently approved budget includes more than \$50 million to build three new law schools, the Associated Press reported. The expenditures got the green light, even as the State University of New York initiated cuts as high as 6 percent in the budgets of some of its 64 campuses.

And in Florida, where universities are now slashing budgets, lawmakers have approved a total of three new medical schools between 2001 and 2006.

The approval of costly new programs, even in lean times, is nothing new for higher education. The tendency is perhaps indicative of lawmakers' desires to fund something new and exciting, rather than invest in infrastructure projects or deferred maintenance.

Finney, a professor of practice at the University of Pennsylvania's Graduate School of Education, referenced California's approval of a law school at Irvine as an example of skewed funding priorities in a state without a clear plan.

"Absent a broader agenda, I could see how the 'new' is more interesting than a set of priorities," she said in an e-mail.

In Maryland, however, there has apparently been buy-in to a plan aimed at cutting costs to control tuition and deal with potential budget shortfalls. Since the launch of the Effectiveness and Efficiency Initiative three years ago, the state's universities have documented \$80 million in savings, according to William E. (Brit) Kirwan, chancellor of the system. Over the same time, state revenues haven't dropped as some might have feared they would. To the contrary, state funding has increased by some 30 percent, Kirwan said.

"In my wildest dreams I did not expect the kind of positive response we got," he said. "My sense is there's kind of hunger out there for higher education to be more cost conscious, and we don't enjoy that reputation with a lot of people."

— Jack Stripling

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## Energy Boost

Colleges and universities across the country are struggling with major budget cuts, but a few states that are big on energy production are flush with funds.

Take North Dakota, where higher education leaders are so optimistic about the state's economy that they've pushed for a 23 percent increase in recurring funds for colleges and universities over the next two-year funding cycle. That's on top of the \$82 million request for campus security upgrades, deferred maintenance and other one-time projects.

In contrast, states like Arizona, Florida and Nevada are dramatically cutting budgets. And while those states are among the hardest hit by the economic declines brought on by the housing market, most other state leaders are also expressing concern about the 2009 budget picture, according to the National Conference of State Legislators.

Charles Kupchella, president of the University of North Dakota, says he realizes his state is uniquely positioned for growth in an otherwise gloomy economy. That said, he's not boasting about North Dakota's good fortune.

"I guess I'm politically astute enough not to crow about it," said Kupchella, who is stepping down as president Monday after nine years at the helm.

Furthermore, Kupchella is all too aware of how quickly economic outlooks can shift.

"Easy come, easy go," he said. "Some days it's boom; some days it's bust. And you have to manage somewhere short of spending all that you have."

As with North Dakota, higher education leaders in Wyoming and Alaska are expecting an infusion of funds in the coming year. In a recent survey of legislative offices across the nation, those three states were the only ones to express optimism about 2009. The common link? Energy production. With oil prices now soaring to near \$140 per barrel, North Dakota and Alaska are seeing strong returns. Likewise, Wyoming's natural gas production has contributed to an economic boom in the Cowboy State.

North Dakota will finish its 2007-2009 funding cycle with an estimated \$700 million left in state coffers. But even with such a rosy economic outlook, some lawmakers have criticized university leaders for proposing a big-ticket budget.

Responding to critics, North Dakota's Board of Higher Education recently curtailed its one-time funding request by \$50 million, eliminating a proposed endowment pool. Even so, the budget proposal would raise the 11-campus system's base budget to \$544 million, an increase of \$103 million.

William Goetz, the North Dakota system's chancellor, assures that the current proposed budget is a "needs-based" budget. To that end, the budget includes \$50 million for deferred maintenance and \$21 million for emergency preparedness.

The strong economy in North Dakota also presents a window of opportunity for higher education to make up some ground. The state's per student appropriations were \$4,726 in 2006-7, which is \$2,095 less than the regional average and \$1,992 less than the national average, according to a report released in March by the university system.

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Goetz, who has begun a series of editorials about the university system's needs, is still struggling to convince residents and lawmakers that current funding levels are inadequate.

"We have a challenge to get out and visit with the public and legislators and legislative candidates to interpret what these increases entail," he said. "At this point, the message has not been conveyed."

### **Staying Focused in Wyoming**

University of Wyoming officials say they've been working for some time to explain the importance of higher education to lawmakers and the public. As such, they've tied the mission of the state's lone university to Wyoming's own future: energy. Five of the university's seven colleges have some energy emphasis, and the university launched its School of Energy Resources three years ago.

Rick Miller, who works with the Legislature on behalf of the University of Wyoming, said it's been important for the university not to shift its mission and focus just because the state is in the midst of an economic upswing.

"This [economy] is good news for higher education, but it's not like 'oh, this is a great year, let's dream up things we haven't dreamed up before,' " said Miller, vice president for governmental, community and legal affairs. "It's part of the [established] plan. [Lawmakers] have a pretty good idea what our priorities have been."

The university's sales pitch appears to have been effective. In March, lawmakers approved a two-year budget of \$393 million, a 16 percent increase from the \$340 million allocation the university received in its previous biennial budget. Community colleges received a similar percentage increase in state aid, which rose from \$186 million to \$219 million.

### **Double-Edged Sword**

While energy producing states have a clear advantage in today's economy, rising oil prices aren't necessarily the windfall they may appear to be. In Alaska, where officials expect surpluses in the billions of dollars, university leaders say they're still struggling to maintain quality.

"We're one of the richest states in the nation, and sometimes you wouldn't know it by looking around," said Kate Ripley, spokeswoman for the University of Alaska System.

The state finished its most recent legislative session with a \$1.3 billion surplus, and that figure could grow to \$8 billion or more depending on oil prices, according to the Office of Management and Budget.

But the rising oil prices that have bolstered Alaska's economy have also increased the cost of doing business for colleges and universities. Alaska has the second-highest gas prices in the country at \$4.564 per gallon, and prices can be nearly twice that much in rural areas.

Alaska's 30,000-student system is largely spread across three primary campuses, but there are students in extremely remote areas that rely on annual barge deliveries for heating oil.

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“You don’t even want to know the cost of heating oil out in these villages,” Ripley said.

Despite rising costs, there’s still some cause for celebration in Alaska. The system received a 7 percent (\$20 million) increase in recurring funds for the 2009 fiscal year. Additionally, universities were given \$107.2 million in non-recurring funds, about half of which went to maintaining facilities.

While Alaska’s universities heavily invested in infrastructure, the system’s budget isn’t all heating oil and building repairs. Lawmakers actually declined a request for a new biological sciences lab, opting instead to build a \$15 million sports arena on the Anchorage campus.

“They were all excited because our Seawolves did so well this year,” said Ripley, referencing recent basketball successes. “They were riding that wave of support there.”

— Jack Stripling

## How the For-Profits Go for Students

The University of Phoenix spent \$278 million last year on advertising, most of it online — making Phoenix the top online advertiser in the United States. While Phoenix and a few of its competitors have mammoth student recruiting budgets — not to mention name recognition — most for-profit colleges don't have either. At the annual meeting of the Career College Association, which started Wednesday in Las Vegas, one of the hot topics was just how to recruit students, and the discussion wasn't about Phoenix (which isn't a member) but about much smaller institutions, most of them not nationally known, institutions where school presidents and owners know their admissions reps and pay a lot of attention to who is bringing in students and who isn't.

At a discussion of recruiting issues, the general tone was one of challenge. Many college leaders said that they feel more competition than ever for students — and that some of the new technologies they use to attract student are effective only when backed up by sometimes expensive staffing. When one speaker said that the “conversion rate” on prospective student leads was significantly lower than a decade ago, everyone in the packed room agreed. Top reasons cited were that there are more career colleges in local communities and more online offerings, competing everywhere.

The discussion of ideas for how to respond ranged from the latest in technology and off-shore call centers to decidedly low-tech issues — such as the physical appearance of admissions reps.

The discussion was led by two long-time players in for-profit recruitment and admissions and audience members jumped in — generally confirming what the session leaders were saying. Here are some of the top trends discussed:

**Pickier prospects:** Joan Ellison, who leads the online division of the Pinnacle Career Institute and was one of the session leaders, said that a decade ago, students enrolling at career colleges were from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, and that today they are more likely to have the confidence and experience that comes with work experience. “We have more career changers and people who want to advance,” she said. That translates into much more detailed demands for information.

Audience members said that the old model for the sector was to assume that prospective students enrolled (or didn't) based on an initial conversation. Now more conversations are needed, and potential students have already been online and learned about a range of options. One audience member said that “before we presented and they enrolled. Now they want to know everything.”

**Changing priorities:** Michael Platt, CEO of Ad Venture Interactive, a company that works with many career colleges on recruiting and enrolling students, said that there have been significant shifts in the answers he sees on surveys of enrolled students on why they picked a particular career college — and these point to how colleges should shape their programs. Ten years ago, he said, the top answers were the availability of financial aid and job placement records. While those things still matter, he said, career colleges without them aren't being considered by students, so these aren't decisive factors as they once were.

Starting about five years ago, he said he noticed that a top factor was increasingly personal attention for students. People are saying “pay attention to me — I don't want to be in an auditorium with 300 students.” That remains high on student lists, he said, but has more recently been joined by a value placed on accelerated programs, especially compared to offerings elsewhere. “They want to get through there fast,” Platt said.

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**Comparisons to nonprofit colleges:** Student interest in personal attention gives career colleges an opening, Platt said, because they compare favorably to many nonprofit colleges. Prospective students need to understand, he said, that at traditional colleges there will be many professors “spending as little time with students as possible” and letting the teaching assistant “do the work.” This information, he said, was very important to share with “our demographic.”

One career college official in the audience said that comparisons to nonprofits are important because more of the same students appear to be applying to both nonprofit and for-profit programs. Her college runs two-year and four-year programs, and she said that she has noticed a significant increase among 18- to 20-year-olds who are saying that they are enrolling because they couldn't get into their desired nonprofit program. “A greater majority of our student body is saying that we were their third choice and that's where they ended up,” she said.

**The new admissions rep:** Ellison said that changes in student demands have led to changes in who is hired as admissions representatives. “Your admissions reps need to be very savvy, know their competitors, because the prospective student has that information at their fingertips,” she said. While sales experience is still better than admissions experience, she said, career colleges are looking for different sales backgrounds than before.

Platt described the evolution this way. Ten years ago, career colleges just hired the best sales people — people “who could sell ice to Eskimos.” That evolved to more of “the psychologist” model, where admissions reps acted as counselors, telling prospective students “let me help you feel better about yourself,” but now that has stopped working, too. He said the current ideal admissions rep is “the influencer and the mentor.”

Given the difficulty military recruiters have in filling their quotas, Platt said that those who are successful would make ideal college admissions reps. He also cited research that says the reasons people don't join health clubs are a combination of fear and laziness — and that a particular type of sales person is effective at reaching those people. That person is an ideal hire for a career college, he said. Audience members said that, for the same reason, those who sell weight loss programs are also effective at career colleges.

With the growth of online offerings, several in the audience said that they had gone to separate admissions teams for their campus-based and online programs. Several noted that they still believed longstanding conventional wisdom that on-campus representatives need to be gregarious and good looking. But several also said that they were having success hiring as online admissions reps people who are somewhat socially dysfunctional because, on the phone, “they can be who they want to be.”

**The new technology:** While there was a wide consensus that the Web has opened up new paths to recruit students, there was also frustration that the Internet alone doesn't do the trick. Several new businesses are selling career colleges a service that provides instant notification to an admissions representative the minute someone expresses interest online in a program. Platt said that astute career colleges are staffing their admissions offices so that someone can respond to such inquiries instantly. There is no more opportune time to call a prospect, Platt said, than while they are still online having sent in an inquiry. He said he was shocked by career colleges that tolerate lags of several days in such responses.

One woman in the audience said that competition is so intense that even though her institution tries to call students within five minutes of notification, her institution is sometimes finding the prospects on the phone with another college that has responded first.

— Scott Jaschik

The Chronicle of Higher Education, June 27, 2008

## Defensive, or Offensive?

By JJ HERMES

A group of business students at the University of Washington learned firsthand a key lesson of capitalism: Fear sells.

The students were casting about for a workable business model as part of an entrepreneurship course. After a number of high-profile violent crimes near the Seattle campus — including a hammer attack on a female student in January — they decided the market was ripe for self-defense kits. The students packaged a "W Defense" box, consisting of police-grade pepper spray and a powerful whistle and licensed with the university's logo.

In less than three weeks, they sold nearly 250 kits at \$21.95 apiece. They peddled the kits at the bookstore and elsewhere on the campus.

A local-television news report showed one man hawking the kits to passers-by: "How's it going, bub? Do you have a girlfriend or sister on campus? Have you guys heard of our W Defense kit that we're selling?"

The students found the most receptive audience for their sales pitch on Greek Row.

"We've been presenting to all the sororities on campus," said Jordan Reynolds, a junior studying entrepreneurship, finance, and sales at the business school who acted as the "CEO" of the defense-kit business. "That's really been our most successful retail outlet."

Mr. Reynolds predicted that the students would net about \$1,000. But the students wouldn't pocket the money: The profits were to support future ventures in the entrepreneurship course.

*Send ideas to* [short.subjects@chronicle.com](mailto:short.subjects@chronicle.com)