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# Higher Ed News Weekly

from the Illinois Board of Higher Education

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September 28, 2007

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The Macomb Journal, September 20, 2007

## **Maguire retiring from Western**

MACOMB - John C. Maguire, assistant vice president for university relations at Western Illinois University, has announced his retirement effective Nov. 16, after more than 30 years at Western.

Maguire has been named director of public relations and fund development at McDonough District Hospital in Macomb, starting Nov. 19. A retirement reception has been set for 4 to 6 p.m. Nov. 14 in the University Union Lamoine Room.

He joined Western as assistant director of news services in 1977, and was named director of news services in 1982. Five years later, Maguire was appointed director of university relations. Named assistant vice president for university relations in 1994, Maguire directs Western's news, Web development, visual production and publication efforts.

He serves as chief spokesperson for the university and participates as policy adviser for the university's public relations, community relations and marketing programs, which included implementing an integrated marketing plan and graphic design theme for the university. He also works with the university's Board of Trustees.

Maguire is an associate member of the graduate faculty in the educational and interdisciplinary studies department, teaching in the college student personnel program.

"John has provided exceptional leadership for the university," Dan Hendricks, vice president for advancement and public services, said. "We are extremely grateful for his years of service; he will be missed."

During his tenure at Western, Maguire has earned the national Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) Research Writing Award in 2003 for his dissertation research, "Public Institutions in Higher Education Policies on the Crime Awareness and Campus Security Act of 1990 and the Buckley Amendment." Under his leadership, the university received a CASE silver medal in 1991 for school and college partnerships; a national bronze medal in 1985 for radio programming; and a CASE Grand Award in 1982 for improvement in overall advancement.

A Macomb native, Maguire earned his bachelor's and master's degrees at Western. He received his doctorate from Illinois State University.

The Chicago Sun-Times, September 26, 2007 (Page 1 of 2)

## U. of C. sociology professor

### Co-author of study on deaths in U.S., worked with Census Bureau

BY LARRY FINLEY Staff Reporter/lfinley@suntimes.com

Sociologist Evelyn M. Kitagawa's ground-breaking works looked at the nation's population from birth to death.

The University of Chicago professor was the co-author of a \$1 million study of 500,000 American deaths that found education, sex and income all influence how long someone may live.

"Although best known for her work on mortality, she also did pioneer work in fertility, being among the first social scientists to systematically study the phenomenon of cohabitation and out-of-wedlock childbearing that began to skyrocket in the 1960s," said University of Chicago retired sociologist Donald Bogue.

Mrs. Kitagawa, 87, died at the University of Chicago Medical Center on Sept. 15.

At the University of Chicago since 1951, she retired in 1989 and was the former chair of the department of sociology.

"She was among the first to study childbearing among adolescent girls, particularly in low-income and ethnic neighborhoods," Bogue said. "Her Ph.D. thesis was on fertility in Chicago. The baby boom was widely studied, and this was one aspect that [was] not being looked at so well."

"She was an excellent teacher," Bogue said. "She was a champion of civil rights and she was a feminist, but not militant. . . . She broke her way through the glass ceiling by talent."

The study on mortality was conducted with her mentor at the University of Chicago, the late Philip M. Hauser, a pioneer in urban studies and demography. With a \$1 million grant from the National Institutes of Health, they looked into the various personal, social and economic factors surrounding the deaths of 340,000 white Americans during four months of 1960. Their resulting book, *Differential Mortality in the United States: A Study in Socioeconomic Epidemiology*, was published in 1973.

The study found large differences in death rates according to income and education. White men and women between the ages of 25 and 64 with less education had higher death rates, the study found. The work also determined that low-income white women had a death rate almost twice as high as those in higher-income categories.

#### Relocation camps

Her other demography books include *Estimating Population and Income of Small Areas* (1980) and two books with Bogue, *Techniques of Demographic Research: A Laboratory Manual* (1964) and *Suburbanization of Manufacturing Activity with Standard Metropolitan Areas* (1955).

She was born Evelyn Mae Rose in Hanford, Calif. She received a B.A. with honors in math in 1941 from the University of California, Berkeley.

The Chicago Sun-Times, September 26, 2007 (Page 2 of 2)

Mrs. Kitagawa was head of the statistical analysis unit of the War Relocation Authority in Washington, D.C., from 1942 to 1946 and spent time living and working in various Japanese relocation camps. This was where she met her husband, the Rev. Joseph Mitsuo Kitagawa, who went on to become dean of the Divinity School at University of Chicago. He died in 1992.

After they were married, they came to Chicago, where she studied sociology at the University of Chicago, receiving her Ph.D. in 1951. That year, she began work as a research fellow at the Chicago Community Inventory, an urban research center that was later directed by Hauser.

She specialized in the demography of cities and neighborhoods and became one of the creators of the *Local Community Fact Book of Chicago*, published after the U.S. Censuses of 1950 and 1960, according to former colleague Stanley Lieberman, a sociology professor at Harvard University.

"These included a lot of data for each sub-area of the city," Lieberman said. "It was important for its time, allowing for rigorous investigation of a variety of topics dealing with urban phenomena -- not the least being segregation, health and social class."

She started at the university as an assistant professor of sociology in 1954, became a professor in 1970 and chair of the department from 1972 to 1978. She was also director of the Population Research Center from 1977 to 1987. After retirement in 1989, she served as a consultant.

She was a member of an advisory committee on population statistics for the U.S. Bureau of the Census from 1975 to 1978 and served as its chair from 1977 to 1978.

Her survivors include a daughter, Anne Rose Kitagawa.

No services have been announced.

Chicago Sun-Times, September 28, 2007 (Page 1 of 2)

## **Olympian became City Colleges exec**

**He was two-time NCAA champ, seven-time Big 10 champ**

**September 28, 2007**

**BY LARRY FINLEY Staff Reporter/lfinley@suntimes.com**

Charles "Deacon" Jones was sent to Boys Town by his mother in hopes that he would find some discipline. He found that, plus a talent for track that carried him through college, into two Olympic games and on to a career at the City Colleges of Chicago.

Along the way he broke track records in Nebraska, at the University of Iowa and in the NCAA. He competed in the 1956 and 1960 Olympics in the steeplechase event.

Mr. Jones died of complications from diabetes on Sept. 7 in Hillside. The Wheaton resident was 73.

His talent for sports was developed at the famous Boys Town in Nebraska, a long way from St. Paul, Minn., where he was born Charles Nicholas Jones in 1934, said Dr. Julia Dyer, his former wife.

"His mother decided that at about the age of 11 he was a handful, and his uncle suggested he go to Boys Town for a couple years," she said. "But he did very well there and stayed for all of grade school and high school."

The "mayor" of Boys Town at the time was William Maddux, now a Cook County Circuit Court judge.

Mr. Jones excelled at football, baseball and especially track, breaking enough records to earn himself a place in Nebraska's High School Sports Hall of Fame.

He also picked up the "Deacon" title at Boys Town because there were a lot of African-American ministers at the time called "Deacon," and Mr. Jones was one of the few black residents of Boys Town. Mr. Jones was a Roman Catholic and proud of a photograph of when the "Deacon" met Pope John XXIII in the 1950s, Dyer said.

"He went to the University of Iowa on a full athletic scholarship," Dyer said. "When he arrived at the University of Iowa he was 5 foot 9 3/4 inches and weighed 134 pounds. He was lean."

### **Ran in '56 and '60 Olympics**

While at Iowa, he was a two-time NCAA champion, a two-time All-American and a seven-time Big Ten champion. He took time out from college for the U.S. Army and ran on their track team. He is in the Iowa varsity hall of fame.

He set the school record at Iowa for the 3,000-meter steeplechase, which earned him a spot on the 1956 U.S. Olympic team in Melbourne, Australia. He competed again for the U.S. in Rome in 1960.

"He came to Chicago afterwards," his former wife said. "He heard about the University of Chicago Track Club and there were other Olympians here -- Willie White, Hayes Jones and Willie May."

Chicago Sun-Times, September 28, 2007 (Page 2 of 2)

Mr. Jones joined the City Colleges of Chicago in 1969, and became the director of financial aid at the old Loop College and then at Harold Washington College. His enthusiasm for young people and his achievements in sports were inspirations to the students there, according to John Wozniak, president of Harold Washington College.

"He left us with a couple of interesting artifacts," Wozniak said. "One is a set of original etchings which were made during the [civil rights] March on Washington [in 1963] . . . which include a very young Rev. [Jesse] Jackson.

"Another thing Deacon did for us was to meet with our young students and bring his Olympic torch," Wozniak said. "He got to keep it. It got a little beat up over the years, but it was amazing to see these young kids holding that thing.

"It was his way of male mentoring, inspiring them that if he could do things like that why couldn't they?" he said.

Survivors include two sons, Paul Meester and Kale Jones; a daughter, Debbie Kirkland; and five grandchildren.

A memorial service will be from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Saturday at University of Chicago's Bond Chapel, 1050 E. 59th St.

St. Louis Post-Dispatch, September 21, 2007 (Page 1 of 2)

## SIU trustees still stand by Poshard

By Kavita Kumar  
*ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH*

The Southern Illinois University Board of Trustees continued to stand by President Glenn Poshard on Thursday — a day after a panel reviewing plagiarism allegations against him met for the first time.

Also this week, a 10-member blue ribbon committee that was asked last year to evaluate the university's plagiarism policies released its report. Poshard formed the committee in December in response to a rash of plagiarism accusations against university leaders.

The 17-page report includes a working definition of plagiarism that differs with one that Poshard has often cited.

The report says plagiarism is "presenting existing work as one's own" and that it can be unintentional, resulting from carelessness or from not being familiar with citation conventions. Poshard has said that his understanding of plagiarism is that it must be intentional.

Poshard has defended himself in recent allegations that he lifted portions of his 1984 doctoral dissertation by saying he may have inadvertently made mistakes.

Still, the report says that context, intent, seriousness of the offense and extenuating circumstances should be taken into account when responding to offenses.

"Some instances of plagiarism are minor, involving small quantities of copied textual material, and these minor cases do not warrant extensive investigation," the report says.

David Gross, with Poshard's office, said, "The report represents some of the most critical thinking to date on the issue of plagiarism."

In his third statement of support in recent weeks, board Chairman Roger Tedrick said after the board meeting Thursday in Edwardsville that Poshard "has done nothing to undermine" the board's confidence and praised him for his efforts in his nearly two years as president.

Last week, SIUC Chancellor Fernando Treviño formed a panel of tenured faculty leaders to weigh the allegations against Poshard's dissertation as well as similar questions raised about his 1975 master's thesis. Some critics have argued that an external panel should review the accusations.

Treviño said Thursday that he had formed an internal committee in accordance with the school's policies and procedures. He said there have been two instances in the last eight years in which SIUC graduates have been accused of plagiarism. Those former students were offered informal hearings at which they agreed to make certain changes and kept their degrees, he said. More formal hearings can be held for more egregious cases, he said.

Ramanarayanan Viswanathan, president of the SIUC Faculty Senate and chairman of the plagiarism panel, said the panel is not working on a strict deadline but hopes to complete its work quickly, possibly by the end of the month.

He said the panel's task is to review the charges regarding the dissertation and thesis, but that it would not give recommendations on Poshard's future with the university. That, he said, would be up to the

St. Louis Post-Dispatch, September 21, 2007 (Page 2 of 2)

Board of Trustees.

Ryan Watson, an SIUE junior, presented the board with a petition with 75 student signatures. "We support our President," the petition states, "but we do not think he should get away with this if he is found guilty."

Poshard was stoic during the meeting and quieter than usual. He appeared to have lost weight.

He, along with the Board of Trustees, is no longer publicly commenting on the allegations until the panel concludes its work. But he said at a news conference that he was staying "totally focused on my work."

Several board members praised Poshard, a former U.S. and state legislator, at the board meeting for his work lobbying policymakers. The Illinois Senate passed a capital construction bill this week that includes \$145 million in projects for SIU, including \$69 million for a much-anticipated science building at SIUE.

"Well done, Mr. President," said board member Sam Goldman. "Thank you very much."

The Southern Illinoisan, September 21, 2007

## **Shawnee Community College celebrates 40th anniversary**

*By Codell Rodriguez, The Southern*

ULLIN - Shawnee Community College officially became over the hill Friday with a lunch and presentation by college President Larry Choate.

"Shawnee College has a wonderful history full of exciting times, and a great 40 years of educating the community," Choate said. "We are looking forward to the future, which we think will be our best times."

Choate's presentation, "Preserving the Past, Preparing the Future," looked at the school's history through a photo slideshow and revealed the college's new logo.

The school was established in 1967 to offer education to residents of Alexander, Johnson, Massac, Pulaski and Union counties. Wesley Wright, board of trustees chairman, said he can attest to its success.

"On behalf of the board of trustees I would like to let everyone know how we are proud of the college and all its successes for the last 40 years," Wright said. "As a graduate of Shawnee College, I know first-hand how much this college affects the region."

Pantagraph, September 23, 2007

**ILLINOIS STATE**

## **Students help at-risk youths**

**NORMAL** — More than 40 Illinois State University students traveled Saturday to St. Louis for a new once-a-month participatory service-learning experience, dubbed Service Splash.

The program, through the Student Volunteer Center, connected the college students with the Mathews-Dickey Boys & Girls Club.

Illinois State students were divided into two groups — one helped with the club's youth football, and the other at the club's main office, helping clean its office and work on an outdoor beautification project.

The idea was to give students a chance to explore the issues affecting youths in at-risk and low-income neighborhoods in an urban setting.

Each month, the Student Volunteer Center plans a Service Splash, allowing students the chance to volunteer without a long-term commitment. ISU leaders say the experience helps students identify issues that are important to them and understand why it is important to volunteer in the community and become engaged citizens.

Peoria Journal Star, September 24, 2007

## **U of I's big subsidies likely to decrease**

### **Rentals with farmers working land will cut back payout from feds**

BY Bruce Rushton  
OF GateHouse News Service

**SPRINGFIELD** - Between 2003 and 2005, the University of Illinois collected nearly \$1.2 million in farm subsidies, more than any other person or entity in the state.

"While I would agree that we got some big numbers, it's roughly related to the 14,000 acres of farmland we have in Illinois," said Kevin Noland, director of agricultural investment for the university. "That makes us one of the largest landowners in the state."

Much of the property was bequeathed to the university by donors with the requirement that income from the land be used to fund scholarships or pay faculty, Noland said.

But the university probably won't be collecting much from the United States Department of Agriculture in the future because it now rents most of its land to farmers for cash. Previously, the university had allowed farmers to work its land in exchange for a portion of the crop and profits.

Under USDA rules, subsidy recipients must have financial risk, so landowners who cash-rent land and get paid regardless of the weather or if crop prices aren't eligible for subsidies. Subsidies paid based on the number of acres owned or leased are usually factored into rents, however, so the university still benefits indirectly from farm subsidies. By cash-renting land, though, the university is losing the chance for big profits when commodity prices soar and harvests are good.

"Maybe this isn't a year that's working out best for us," Noland acknowledged.

Still, he said he can't envision the university going back to splitting crops with farmers. There's a certain comfort that comes with getting checks instead of crops.

"I think, for one thing, it provides our departments with a more predictable cash flow."

The News-Gazette, September 25, 2007 (Page 1 of 2)

## UI's new initiative gets first billing

By Christine Des Garennes

URBANA – University of Illinois faculty members convened for the annual faculty meeting Monday, at which they could hear from administrators and raise any issues or questions on their minds.

One of the first topics brought up by faculty members was the new Academy on Capitalism and Limited Government Fund, an initiative started by donors and alumni to support teaching and curriculum development, research, lectures, scholarships and more. The academy fund launches on campus later this week with a forum featuring Robert Novak and Steve Forbes.

"This is a fund and nothing else. There is no entity," said UI Chancellor Richard Herman. And it's within the UI Foundation, he pointed out. The foundation is the university's fundraising body.

Since the summer, some faculty members have expressed concerns about the initiative being housed in the Foundation and the perception that the academy fund and its organizers are circumventing the university's shared governance procedures.

History Professor Mark Leff asked Herman "what sorts of safeguards you're contemplating so that faculty won't face similar surprises in the future." Herman pointed to a new Senate Executive Committee's recommendation to create an ad hoc advisory committee that will work with him on reviewing proposals that would receive funding. That committee has been established.

Those who organized the academy fund are selling a "fundamental change in our curriculum, particularly the social sciences and the humanities. And I think that is troublesome," said Belden Fields, professor emeritus of political science.

"The reason for this (advisory) committee is to make sure wishes of the faculty are in fact respected," Herman said, adding that "the wishes of any donors shall never abrogate the rights of the faculty."

Also at the meeting, UI President B. Joseph White outlined several successes of the past academic year and touched upon upcoming events and challenges.

"I think this is a strong year for the Urbana campus," White said, citing the recent publication of history professor Vernon Burton's award-winning book, "The Age of Lincoln," the landing of the National Science Foundation's petascale supercomputer project and the \$100 million donation from Tom and Stacey Siebel.

In addition, the UI in recent months has hired Vice President for Academic Affairs Meena Rao and Chief Financial Officer Walter Knorr.

And the online education initiative is moving forward.

"Global Campus is ramping up to a January 2008 hard launch," with nursing and education programs planned to be available to students then, he said. Other programs are in the pipeline, he said.

"Overall, we're in a pretty good period financially," White said, referring to the 2 percent increase in state funding and an increase in the amount the state pays for "payments on behalf," which is for employee benefits.

The News-Gazette, September 25, 2007 (Page 2 of 2)

White plans to convene what he's calling a "resources summit" in early December. About 100 people, including administrators and members of the faculty, will review the university's financial issues, including faculty salaries.

White also called the capital bill approved last week by the state Senate and sent to the House "a big ray of hope." However, he added there were "many bridges" yet to be crossed.

The state's \$25 billion capital construction plan includes \$55 million for Lincoln Hall renovations, \$42 million for an Electrical and Computer Engineering Building, \$16.9 million for a Post Harvest Crop Research Facility, \$60 million for a Petascale Computing Facility, \$6.2 million for various capital renewal projects, and \$6.3 million for roads in the UI Research Park. The bill is pro-posed to be funded by expanding gambling in the state plus matching federal and local funds.

"If you know Mike Madigan, you might want to give him a call," White said.

On a more serious note, White raised the issue of the student-organized "Race, Power and Privilege" forum held in February.

"The forum demonstrated thousands of members of our community are not happy with our environment," he said.

During that forum, students spoke out against the now-retired Chief Illiniwek and outlined their concerns about issues such as minority representation among students and faculty and staff members.

White praised Herman's Inclusive Illinois, an initiative to foster diversity and inclusion on campus. But he also added, "This is a neverending challenge, and we have continued work to do in this area."

Peoria Journal Star, September 25, 2007

## **WIU club's poster called racially insensitive**

### **History trivia night flier pictured gallows, noose**

BY JODI POSPESCHIL  
OF THE JOURNAL STAR

MACOMB - A flier posted at Western Illinois University that contained an allegedly racially insensitive logo has prompted a diversity awareness discussion for several students from a history club.

The Associated Students of History recently placed a poster advertising a pizza and trivia night in several locations on the third floor of WIU's Morgan Hall, where the history department is located. The meeting was to be held the night of Sept. 13 in Morgan Hall.

The poster contained a picture of gallows with a noose hanging from it and read, "Don't get 'hung' up in your studies. Join us for a fun night of pizza and trivia."

A student who believed the poster was inappropriate pointed it out to a WIU faculty member, and it was removed.

Cathy Couza, director of Equal Opportunity and Access at WIU, said Monday that she was notified of the posting last week. She said she met with the adviser for the club as well as the dean and the chairman of the history department about the poster.

Couza said the students were also "made aware of the inappropriate nature" of the graphic.

"They took it very seriously," she said. "There was no intent to offend anyone."

The Associated Students of History is an informal club and not a recognized student group within the history department. The club's adviser met with the students and Couza said a follow-up meeting is planned for this week.

"This is not a symbol that supports the environment we're trying to create for our students," she said.

School officials also said the history club didn't seek the required approval of the school before posting the advertisement.

Jodi Pospeschil can be reached at 686-3041 or [state@pjstar.com](mailto:state@pjstar.com).

The Daily Herald, September 26, 2007

## Harper will spend money to get money

By Sara Faiwell | Daily Herald Staff

Harper College will spend up to \$100,000 to hire lobbyists in Springfield to help secure millions in state money.

Officials at the Palatine college say there's more than \$55 million under consideration right now in capital projects and grants and they need all the help they can get.

At a board meeting Tuesday, trustees voted 5-1 in favor of spending this money to hire consultants to do lobbying work. Specific firms have not yet been chosen. Trustee William Kelley cast the only "no" vote and declined to comment after the meeting.

Over the past five years, Harper has lost more than \$5 million in revenue as a result of state budget cuts, program cuts and unfunded mandates, officials say.

"We're really struggling with how to come to grips with all the state funding cuts," said spokesman Phil Burdick. "We have to fight for every dollar."

Items under consideration in Springfield are:

- \$17.9 million in funding for renovations to Buildings G and H on campus. Both were built in the 1960s and need repair.
- \$35.6 million to create a one-stop admissions and student life center. This new building would be centrally located on campus and would become a gathering place.
- House Bill 1434 to let Harper College offer select bachelor's degrees.
- House Bill 1876 that may require all community college districts create individual voting sub-districts.
- Various state grants.

Board Chair Laurie Stone said there's a chance many of these items will come forward in the fall veto session.

"We need to take some help down in Springfield," she said.

Burdick says that although the college hires lobbyists every year, the dollar amount set aside for it this year is so high because of all the state money Harper is trying to get.

The Courier News, September 28, 2007

## Conservative group looking to aid U of I

September 28, 2007

BY DAVID MERCER Associated Press

URBANA -- Conservative commentator Robert Novak said Thursday that his Washington colleagues were stunned to learn that a group of University of Illinois alumni was setting up an organization to encourage and finance conservative studies on campus.

They asked, "Capitalism and limited government at a public university? How can that be?" Novak, an Illinois graduate, told about 250 people gathered for the launch of The Academy on Capitalism and Limited Government Fund.

Some U of I faculty members fear that the group's plans to raise money to pay for classes and research on free-market capitalism and limited government would create an undue conservative political influence on campus. They also complain that the new group was formed without faculty input.

"The main thing that concerned me is that this was something that was sort of dropped on the faculty," associate history professor Mark Leff said in an interview. "We read about it in the newspaper, and all of the sudden we find out that there's this organization."

Conservative groups, which have complained that universities serve as little more than liberal training grounds, have emerged on and around campuses across the U.S. to press their own ideology.

"The left has made the university into a political platform," said David Horowitz, a conservative activist whose California-based Horowitz Freedom Center campaigns for greater conservative presence on campuses. "Of course there's going to be a reaction."

The John William Pope Center for Higher Education Policy, for instance, regularly pressures the University of North Carolina about what the group considers "shallow and trendy" teaching that ignores American history and conservative principles such as limited government.

Chicago Sun-Times, September 28, 2007

## **Downstate college slashes tuition**

**September 28, 2007**

One central Illinois college is bucking the trend of schools in much of the rest of the nation. Blackburn College will reduce tuition for new students by 15 percent. That'll amount to an annual tuition of \$13,500.

The News-Gazette, September 26, 2007

## **Governor signs education coordination bill**

By Kate Clements

SPRINGFIELD – A new state law is designed to help coordinate the state's education systems better from preschool through the end of college.

Gov. Rod Blagojevich signed HB 1648 on Tuesday, creating the new Illinois P-20 Council.

"As a state, we must be on the same page with the same goals and visions for the future of education in Illinois," he stated in a written release. "This legislation will help bring education and policy stakeholders to the table, where they can share the information and ideas needed to develop integrated education strategies for every level from early childhood through graduate education."

The legislation won unanimous approval in the General Assembly in the spring. According to the bill, the council "will develop a statewide agenda that will move the state towards the common goals of improving academic achievement, increasing college access and success, improving use of existing data and measurements, developing improved accountability, promoting lifelong learning, easing the transition to college and reducing remediation."

Danville Area Community College President Alice Jacobs said she had not yet seen much information about the council, but said the goals outlined in the bill are worthwhile.

"Certainly it seems to me that whenever we work toward better articulation between the various sectors of education, there are benefits," Jacobs said.

The new law will take effect on Jan. 1, 2008.

The governor will designate the chairman of the new council, and appoint six members, one to represent each of the following: civic leaders, local government, trade unions, nonprofit organizations or foundations, parents, and education research experts. Each of the four legislative leaders will also appoint a member, and statewide business organizations will name five members.

Statewide professional education organizations and associations representing teachers and faculty at all levels will get to make six appointments to the council, and associations representing local school administrators and school board members will get two. The Illinois Council of Community College Presidents will get one, as will university presidents and chancel-lors of the state's public universities and leaders of private institutions of higher learning.

The directors of the Illinois Board of Higher Education, Illinois Community College Board, Illinois State Board of Education, Illinois Student Assistance Commission, Illinois Work force Investment Board, Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, the Early Learning Council and the Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy will be ex-officio members, but will not have a vote.

"We look forward to working with the members of the P-20 Council to better position our students for success as they transition into post-secondary education and prepare to enter the work force," said a statement from State Superintendent Christopher Koch. "We are working informally now with our partners at the Illinois Community College Board and the State Board of Higher Education to bring about better coordination and having this formal link is an asset that will drive our decision making in the future."

The Chicago Sun-Times, September 26, 2007

## Students' math scores are up

### HOW ILLINOIS KIDS DID | Modest gains in reading on national test

BY KATE N. GROSSMAN Education Reporter

Test results from the nation's only uniform way to compare students across state lines put Illinois in the middle of the pack nationally, with Illinois grade school students making significant gains in math but sliding back or making modest gains in reading since 2003.

About 36 percent of Illinois fourth-graders ranked as proficient in math, up from 20 percent in 2000. In eighth-grade reading, 30 percent rated as proficient, down from 35 percent in 2003.

Nationally, students posted strong gains in math and modest gains in reading since 2000 and 2003, according to results of a 2007 test of fourth- and eighth-graders, known as the "nation's report card."

In fourth-grade math, the average Illinois score matched or beat the average in 24 states. In fourth-grade reading, Illinois students matched or beat 26 states.

The test scores arrive as Congress debates renewal of President Bush's signature No Child Left Behind education law.

"It's definitely going to give the proponents some evidence that five years into the experiment, we're seeing some uptick in some parts of the country," said Bruce Fuller, a professor at the University of California at Berkeley.

The 2002 law emphasizes narrowing the achievement gap between white and minority students. Since 2003, Illinois black and Hispanic students have narrowed that gap in reading. Since 1990, Hispanic students have narrowed the gap in math. The gap between blacks and whites in math remains unchanged, though fourth-grade black student tests scores are on the rise.

Contributing: *AP*

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## Write or wrong: New exam for 8th-graders?

### CPS | Policy would focus on writing before high school

BY ROSALIND ROSSI Education Reporter rrossi@suntimes.com

Chicago public schools are putting writing on the front burner.

Next school year, 35,000 CPS eighth-graders would have to pass a new three-part writing test or get at least a C in writing to graduate under a new promotion policy facing a Chicago School Board vote today .

Kids who miss both those marks would have to go to summer school, and if they don't get at least a C there, they would have to repeat eighth grade.

#### SAMPLE QUESTION FOR STUDENTS **READY, SET, WRITE**

CPS eighth-graders could face questions like this next school year on a new writing test. They would have an hour to compose an answer:

*Your school has adopted an incentive program that rewards students for straight A's. Do you think this is fair? Do you agree or disagree with this program?*

Source: Chicago Board of Education

The move reflects a stepped-up focus on writing across the nation following a 2003 report by the National Commission on Writing that challenged schools to spend more time on the subject. Since then, writing has been added to two national college admission tests -- the ACT and SAT -- as well as to Illinois' annual achievement exams.

Next year's eighth-graders would get a "dress rehearsal." As seventh-graders this year, they would face a three-part writing exam that would count for half their writing grade. If they flunk the test and get less than a C in writing, the seventh-graders would only face optional summer school.

Teachers would grade at least two of the three parts, but CPS outsiders may grade the third part, said CPS elementary curriculum chief Xavier Botana.

Botana said the new writing push is part of a CPS focus on easing the transition of eighth-graders into high school, where a new University of Chicago study indicates the average freshman gets at least two F's.

"Principals say writing is one of the huge challenges that freshmen face," Botana said. "They are seeing kids who don't write much, and they don't write particularly well."

The new effort will include teacher training on how to grade the writing tests, as well as how to teach a longer writing process, involving several drafts, to prepare students for all kinds of writing assignments.

#### 'That's boring'

At the South Loop School, where kids write every day and older ones have a special writing teacher, some seventh-graders didn't like the new demands.

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"I think it's unfair," said Shawn Williams, 13. "Reading and math is enough," he said, referring to other tests and classes third-, sixth- and eighth-graders already must pass to be promoted.

"Most of the things we like to write about, we can't write about [on tests]," Shawn said. "You can't write what you feel. You have to write about spring break.... That's boring."

"It's fair," countered Sherdell Mallet, 13. "Writing is one of the most important classes in school."

Several South Loop parents liked the idea, including Julie Gujral.

"It's a fantastic idea. It will keep the kids on track," Gujral said. "Once they hit high school, if they are behind [in writing], they'll never be able to catch up."

But one critic worried that the new policy creates another reason to hold back kids, despite a U. of C. study indicating CPS eighth-graders who repeated a grade were more likely to drop out.

"It looks like they are doing this for selfish reasons, to motivate children to raise their test scores so the system looks better," said Julie Woestehoff of Parents United for Responsible Education.

Other new elements of the promotion policy would require kids to get a C, rather than a D, in their reading and math classes to avoid summer school.

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## **Altering accreditation — but how?**

In the year since Education Secretary Margaret Spellings formally embraced the work of her Commission on the Future of Higher Education and began her efforts to carry out its work, no topic has been more at the forefront than the system of regional and national accreditation that higher education, the government and states use to ensure the quality of American colleges and universities.

Although the topic was far from front and center in the commission's report, the Education Department has put changes in accreditation at the fulcrum of its campaign to force higher education institutions to be more accountable to the public. The department has turned up the heat on accrediting agencies in the department's process for recognizing and approving accreditors, and unsuccessfully sought new federal rules aimed at forcing the agencies to collect and report significantly expanded information on how well colleges they oversee educate students, the latter effort largely stymied by Congress to date.

Anyone who has been perplexed about the Bush administration's reasons for using accreditation as a tool to achieve its larger goals in higher education may have found some answers Friday at a session sponsored by the American Enterprise Institute, a think tank in Washington. The half-day event, "Higher Education Accreditation: Evaluating the System and Possible Alternatives," was not exactly an even-handed review of the accreditation system: The nine participants were heavily tilted toward critics who have spoken or written of accreditation's flaws, with a lone speaker, Judith S. Eaton of the Council on Higher Education Accreditation, who could be seen as representing the views of accreditors, though she herself is not one.

Four of the speakers were closely tied to the Spellings Commission, including its chairman, Charles Miller, who, freed from whatever constraints he felt while leading the federal panel, made clear a disdain for accreditation that had been muted in the panel's final report. Miller, who has continued to consult regularly with department officials since the commission formally shut down, gave a keynote address in which he described accrediting agencies as self-regulatory bodies that are "fundamentally and inherently biased" toward the colleges they supposedly judge, operate in secret, and "lack true oversight or public accountability." The accreditation system holds colleges to outmoded definitions of quality that discourage experimentation by traditional institutions and make it difficult for colleges with new instructional or business models to develop.

"Accreditation is the primary barrier to innovation in American higher education," Miller said. "Accreditation is the biggest barrier to real competition. Accreditation is the biggest barrier to real change."

Arthur J. Rothkopf, another Spellings Commission alumnus who was president of Lafayette College and is now a vice president at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, was one of several panelists who characterized the system of regional accreditation as a way for traditional colleges and universities to shield themselves from making necessary changes. College leaders have fought federal and other efforts to require accrediting agencies to make their reports on individual colleges public, and he accused higher education associations and campus presidents of "trying to run out the clock," resisting change to limit what the Bush administration can accomplish in the 15 months it has left in office.

"Guess what, that's not going to happen," said Rothkopf, who noted that his views on accreditation were "evolving," and presumably not in a positive direction. "People are concerned about quality and accountability," and "the academy has to understand" that that concern will remain even after Spellings and Bush are gone. "I urge my colleagues in higher education and at education associations to try to be more open to change, not to be so wedded to the status quo," he added.

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Sara Martinez Tucker, who was also a member of the Spellings Commission before becoming U.S. under secretary of education, said she and other department officials were deeply disappointed that the agency's efforts to pressure accreditors to hold colleges more accountable for student learning had been portrayed as an effort at "federalizing higher education." "We have no interest," she said, in increasing the federal government's role in dictating standards for accreditors or, in turn, for colleges, because "we recognize the uniqueness" of different kinds of institutions.

Eaton of the Council on Higher Education Accreditation, who went head-to-head with Education Department officials on the department's negotiated rule making committee for accreditation, challenged Tucker's characterization, saying she believed that the department very much has tried to impose its own standards for judging quality instead of letting the accreditors and colleges define that together. "We need the federal government to understand the difference between holding higher education accountable for quality versus deciding on its own what quality is," Eaton said. The former is appropriate, the latter is not, she asserted.

But while she was thrust into the role as the lone defender of higher education and accreditation at the AEI's stacked session, Eaton conceded nonetheless that significant change was necessary from within.

"Higher education itself needs to be realistic," Eaton said. "There is a low level of trust in social institutions ... and there are continuing demands for greatly enhanced accountability and transparency. Higher education is going to remain essential and it's likely to remain expensive, and that's going to continue to drive consumer-like behavior and scrutiny about our enterprise. Accreditors need to continue to work on accountability ... and we need it sooner rather than later."

The assault on accreditation and higher education continued during the session's second panel, which focused on potential alternatives to the traditional methods of accreditation. Anne D. Neal, whose American Council of Trustees and Alumni has blasted the accreditation system in several reports and who now sits on the Education Department's accreditation advisory panel, called for ending the link between accreditation and federal financial aid that gives the accreditors' stamp of approval so much significance.

Jeff Sandefer, an investor who has helped to found an independent M.B.A. program in entrepreneurship, predicted that the "monopoly of regional accreditation is sure to crumble like the Berlin Wall" as college spending and prices continue to rise and students realize that they can get a higher quality and more cost-effective education at institutions that operate outside the traditional higher education structure.

And Miller, the former Spellings Commission chairman, called for an alternative to accreditation in which investors or others interested in creating new forms of higher education would gain the ability to operate (and award federal financial aid) "prospectively," rather than having to wait years to gain an accreditor's imprimatur, which many for-profit and other providers of new higher education institutions argue often comes too late to allow them to succeed.

Eaton said she welcomed the idea of new kinds of accrediting agencies. "Let's compete," she said.

— Doug Lederman

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## Spellings Commission chairman sees college associations resisting recommended changes

By PAUL BASKEN  
Washington

Charles Miller, who served as chairman of U.S. Education Secretary Margaret Spellings' Commission on the Future of Higher Education, spoke with *The Chronicle* about changes he has seen in higher education in the United States in the year since the panel issued its final report. Following are excerpts of the discussion:

**Q. What differences has the Spellings commission made in higher education, one year later. For instance, who gets credit for that large Pell Grant increase just approved by Congress?**

**A.** The president started it. And without what we did with the commission, I don't think there's any chance it would have happened.

**Q. Didn't the Democrats push the Pell Grant increase?**

**A.** It wasn't on the table. The only thing the Democrats had come up with was the interest-rate change [for student loans], and that was in the House, and that's a bad idea to begin with. Before the commission report came out on the Pell Grant, the proposals were relatively modest. And the general academy's idea was to get more money for themselves, not for the Pell Grant.

**Q. The higher-education associations didn't support the Pell Grant increase?**

**A.** They didn't support the full increase in the Pell Grant that we and others came up with. And the Democrats in Congress never thought they'd have the cover from a Republican president to do the things they needed on the Pell grant, and especially with a lot of the money coming from the loan companies. So I don't think there's any doubt that the commission and the budget set by President Bush led to the size of the Pell Grant increase.

**Q. The commission members were chosen by the Bush administration, so aren't its report and recommendations a creature of the administration?**

**A.** It is the administration. But if you look at the membership, there was a very strong dose of people from the academy and independents that I wouldn't describe as either Republican or close to the administration's traditional values. I just think Bush is a different kind of Republican, and so is the [education] secretary, in the sense of being interested in the topic. No other one had come up with it.

On the commission side, the idea for more need-based aid was early on a consensus. There was very little debate about it. Some of the academy people, like David Ward, would mumble, Well, the devil's in the details. But what the associations were saying was they really want money to the colleges, and not to the students, and then they could spend it their own way.

But that is stuff that's kind of hidden from discussion in the commission process. We had always had a very strong interest in the need-based side, and the commission had identified how much had gone for merit-based aid and for other purposes. At the very end of the commission work, when we put that proposal on the Pell Grant out there, that was a pretty remarkable proposal.

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There were differences of opinion among Republicans, particularly with the president's budget, when he proposed where the money would come from, because he's locked into a fiscal policy that he can't raise taxes.

There's language in the report that's very critical of the financial-aid system. We didn't address that this time, but we still were able to say, without any big new entitlements, the one place in the financial-aid system that needed improvement, specifically, was the Pell Grant.

We didn't mind putting a specific recommendation on top of what we said, which was: You've got to throw this whole thing out and start over. They haven't come close to doing that. The financial-aid system is really badly broken, and this Congress didn't address it.

So even though the commission was formed by the administration, it'd be right to say the Bush people came up with the proposal specifically. But I think the commission also had wide support, with the exception of David Ward.

**Q. The American Council on Education, led by commission member David Ward, has said it does support increasing need-based aid.**

**A.** The House came up with bills that sprinkled money around in a whole bunch of new programs, gave it to the universities, and the associations not only didn't squawk about it, they supported it. They didn't support the Pell Grant increase.

**Q. Are you and other commission members doing any lobbying on behalf of the commission's recommendations?**

**A.** Different members did different things. I spent time during the commission talking to members of Congress and the leadership on both sides of the aisle. It'd be hard to call it lobbying because I didn't get too much into specifics. I tried to tee it up and see what people were thinking about, as much trying to hear things as tell them. I don't think people in Congress understood the significance of some of the things that were going on. Even though the Senate passed the bill 95-0, I don't think there's a handful of senators who knew what was in that bill.

Since the report, the secretary has been out using the bully pulpit. I think Sara Martinez Tucker [the under secretary of education] has been nonstop doing that.

There's been a lot more attention to what other people in the broad academic community are saying [rather] than just the associations. We're seeing the lobbyists on Dupont Circle who represent a broad set of the academy, but they're basically special-interest groups. And when we talk to people outside of Washington, outside of those association staff people, we get lots of different ideas and, in fact, a fair amount of encouragement about reform.

**Q. When you're out talking to people in academe, are you urging colleges to reduce their costs?**

**A.** "Reduce the costs" wouldn't be what I'd say. I'd say, learning to be more productive and efficient and transparent and competitive. It's very far from a market system. People use that term a lot because there are a lot of competitors, but I think there's anything but a market system, and I've written some things about that that I'd like to get published, so we can have real debate about it. As we get more output measures, like student learning, and have more transparency and more information in better forms, we'll be able to do that better.

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**Q. You can't hold down price growth without more measures of student achievement?**

**A.** There's a chicken and egg thing there. You can do some things, but you're not able to do them as well and as much as you should until you get better information.

**Q. What's your assessment of the secretary's implementation of the commission's recommendations?**

**A.** I'd have to understand the limits that the secretary would be under. She tried to do some things with accreditation that are part of her fiduciary duties. And actually the same thing with financial aid. She had two rule-making things started. Some of those financial-aid people that came to the rule-making [sessions] were hostile and negative to very simple ideas. And then when all that stuff broke about financial aid, all of a sudden they got humble. But the roadblocks that they put up were ridiculous. And yet she was trying to do what the secretary should be doing.

The same thing on accreditation: I think she did what was supposedly one of the most important things you could do. She has a legal and statutory fiduciary duty under that Naciqi group [National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity] to oversee the accreditation process. Well, she started a rule-making situation that got to a certain point where actually there was a consensus on a lot of issues, but then one person killed it. It has to be unanimous to be approved.

Then when they saw her trying to do something, they ran to Congress to change it. And so you can say, sure, she started some very important things she had a duty to do. I think the academy showed their colors, actually resisting, even in cases where there were clearly needs for changes. And some of the things weren't even that onerous. They were just basically good procedural things to do. Of course they did also start down the path of trying to find a way to simplify the financial aid system. They're working on that still. I think they've done better work there than they've shown to the public yet.

**Q. Some of what the secretary did in these areas was independent of the commission?**

**A.** You asked me the question, "Did she do some of those things?", and I'm saying, You bet. And she did them early on and she did them properly. She's got literally a duty to do that -- not just, Should she do it because of the commission? And it's not just statutory, there's a fiduciary duty that a person overseeing hundreds of millions of dollars in financial aid needs to do.

And when she started that, she got a very hostile response from the financial-aid people. They were so arrogant about how anybody could question anything. Then all of a sudden all of that stuff burst in their lap. And the first response from the leader of the financial-aid officers was even resistant to it.

The response of the academy to her trying to do what she was supposed to do was hostile and uncooperative. It's mostly the associations, because out there in the rest of the world, we don't find that, when we talk to other people. And I guess it's understandable: People in the lobby that work for the associations, I guess it's their duty to create a dragon to slay because they wouldn't be as important if they didn't have one. Sometimes they have to fight instead of cooperate.

On the other hand, on the student-learning things, a couple of the associations started getting things together. The early proposal by Nasulgc [National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges] and Aascu [American Association of State Colleges and Universities] was very helpful, and that's still alive. There are four or five of those things happening now. I think that they came out of the commission work and out of the work the secretary did.

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**Q. Were the major university associations, including the two you just mentioned, already aware of the need to improve the ways they measured and reported student achievement?**

**A.** Some of those things were happening already, but, frankly, it wouldn't have been done without the secretary and the commission because we raised the visibility so much on that issue, there was no place they could hide on that. If you have a mission to educate people, and the data is showing that you're failing, and it's costing you more to do the failure, sooner or later the public is going to say, What am I getting for what I'm paying here?, and that's what was happening. And the public universities saw it early, so they acted.

**Q. Naicu, the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, which represents private colleges, also plans to ask its members to put more information on their Web sites -- What's your assessment of that? Does it seem minimal compared to the Nasulgc-Aascu plan?**

**A.** Not only is it minimal, it's not very usable. It's information that was probably available already. It's not going to be worth anything because they're going to avoid real accountability.

Actually there's an Alice in Wonderland aspect to some of this stuff. I can give you quotes: "We want some ability to compare one with the other, but we don't want rankings." That's an oxymoron. If you compare something, what are you going to compare? "These are both wonderful; this is just more wonderful than the other one." I mean, Americans are just so oriented to rankings that we can't stop them.

**Q. The Collegiate Learning Assessment, which tests at the freshman and senior level to give a comparison of academic growth, is one popular standard examination for college students.**

**A.** It's the best one.

**Q. But there's a sense that these measurements don't work for the more elite colleges because they contribute to the enrichment of students in ways that tests such as the CLA can't measure. And the president of the Council of Independent Colleges cites, as an example, how an average student at a small independent college might be shown by the CLA to progress much more than a highly accomplished student who enrolls at an elite university such as Yale.**

**A.** What they're really saying is, We're not adding any value that's measurable. But there's a lot of evidence that those types of schools -- and Harvard admits it; some of the other ones don't -- have a curriculum that's so watered down, it really doesn't gain much. What the kids gain is they get the stamp of approval. They come in as top students; they leave as top whatever. What is the value of that? Well, they get their certificate stamped.

Do they get an education there? Probably not, that they wouldn't have gotten if they'd spent four years doing almost anything else. The only way we'd ever tell about how good they are is if we took a sample of kids with the same SAT and accomplishments that didn't go to college at all, and just went out in the world and compared them with what happens with Yale students.

We also know that students with high skill levels that go to other schools end up being accomplished people, at least equivalent to Yale, as far as we can tell -- CEO's of corporations, and journalists, things like that. So why wouldn't they study it? And Harvard is doing the CLA for some limited places, and I think Duke's doing it, the University of Texas -- those are all top-tier schools. We found out at the University of Texas at Austin that they weren't gaining as much in that test as (a) they could have, and (b) as some other schools were adding value.

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We could see a comparison within our own system on those skill sets. Now, sure there are other things they could measure, and I'm not saying they don't want to. But if that's the case with Yale and Harvard, what they don't want to admit is that they might not possibly show up very well there, and they're afraid to do it.

Yet Harvard has admitted their curriculum isn't adequate, and they've needed significant reforms, which they have implemented. And they're giving that test, the CLA, to some of their colleges. And not only that, they're giving it to some of their medical-school people, because they've realized that a doctor needs to be able to reason analytically or communicate in writing. And so, are you telling me they couldn't measure whether a Yale student has learned to communicate better? Of course they could. And they should.

And so with the CLA and that argument, "We give them something else," what are they giving them? Values like plagiarism? Binge drinking? You don't have to work very hard to get A's and B's.

**Q. Isn't one of the values students receive at elite schools the association with accomplished classmates?**

**A.** I heard a woman say, "Sure, I know that I might not get the added education. That's not what I'm concerned about; I like the gene pool." And that means, We don't have these other people here. They talk a lot about diversity; they give a good lip service to it. But we don't have it. We have an elitist system that protects the elite.

**Q. Some smaller private colleges are using the CLA.**

**A.** The liberal-arts colleges, especially the Naicu people who seem most offended by it, actually have the most to gain. The kind of things the CLA measures are what liberal-arts colleges purport to produce. So why would they be afraid to measure it?

[They say,] "We want comparability but we have too many different kinds of programs to compare us. We're all too different."

**Q. The commission recommended the simplification of the main federal student aid application form, the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, or Fafsa, perhaps reducing it to a single page. Yet a year later, it's still an eight-page form. Couldn't that have been one simple concrete accomplishment?**

**A.** The commission talked about doing that simplification. The secretary used that as an example of what the federal government could do because the information needed by the federal government is probably able to be reduced to one page. And there are a number of us that are pushing the simplification.

However, the states and the institutions have very complex needs, and much different systems -- they're the biggest resistance to simplification.

The place it should be looked at is Congress. But this Congress didn't even take it up. We just passed a huge amount of money to change the financial-aid system, and we didn't take one step toward simplification.

The Chicago Tribune, September 25, 2007

## **Bernanke: Education is best investment for all**

Associated Press

WASHINGTON

Education is the best investment not only for workers but also for the economy in a time of continuing competitive strain, Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke said Monday.

"Education ... is indeed an excellent investment for individuals and society as a whole," said Bernanke, who spent most of his professional life as a teacher and is married to one.

Economists have long recognized that the skills of the workforce are an important source of economic growth, the Fed chairman said at a U.S. Chamber of Commerce conference.

Although the U.S. has long been a leader in expanding educational opportunities, it also has grappled with challenges such as troubling high-school dropout rates, particularly for minority and immigrant youths, as well as frustratingly slow and uneven progress in raising test scores, he said.

Bernanke did not provide any hints about the Fed's next move on interest rates.

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## Sharp growth in athletics fund raising leads to decline in academic donations on some campuses

By BRAD WOLVERTON

As the country's biggest athletics departments have sought ways to pay for multimillion-dollar facility expansions, coaches' salaries, and other rising costs, their fund-raising operations have experienced enormous growth. But contributions to sports programs are eating up an ever-larger share of donations to colleges, *Chronicle* research suggests.

The country's largest athletics departments and booster clubs raised more than \$1.2-billion in 2006-7, a *Chronicle* survey has found, with some programs more than tripling their gifts in the past decade.

Growth in new facilities has fueled much of the increase: Between 2002 and 2007, colleges in the nation's six premier athletics conferences raised more than \$3.9-billion for capital expenditures alone.

Over the next few years, big-time athletics programs hope to raise an additional \$2.5-billion for new buildings, the survey found. And many programs are expanding their fund-raising staffs to solicit big gifts.

But the sports fund-raising success has come at a cost: While donations to the country's 119 largest athletics departments have risen significantly in recent years, overall giving to those colleges has stayed relatively flat, according to an article in the April issue of the *Journal of Sport Management*, which analyzed fund-raising figures reported by colleges to the Council for Aid to Education.

Among the surveyed institutions, athletics departments brought in an increasing share of the colleges' overall donations. In 1998 athletics gifts accounted for 14.7 percent of overall gifts. By 2003 sports donations had reached 26 percent.

The shift has frayed relations among fund raisers soliciting the same donors and has led to broader concerns about the growing importance of sports as overall funding for colleges has stagnated.

"There's a fear among faculty members that there is a discrete amount of money that alums and non-alums are willing to commit," says Dennis R. Howard, a professor of business at the University of Oregon and co-author of the article in the sports-management journal. "And the more the athletic program gets, the less there is to support the academic programs."

### Unparalleled Growth

Athletics departments have relied on private donations for decades. But in recent years, as spending on sports has grown at a rate three times faster than that for spending on the rest of the campus, athletics programs have turned to donors as never before.

And sports fans have delivered. Last year 27 athletics programs raised more than \$20-million each, the *Chronicle* survey found. Ten programs brought in more than \$30-million each.

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill led the way, collecting \$51-million. Next were the University of Virginia, Ohio State University, the University of Florida, and the University of Georgia.

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As sports needs have grown, athletics fund-raising has become an increasingly sophisticated business, with some programs overseeing multimillion-dollar licensing deals, affinity-credit-card programs, preferred seating, even game-day parking privileges. One booster club, Seminole Boosters Inc., at Florida State University, is securing \$70-million of debt for the university's athletics facilities.

One way programs bring in revenue is fairly straightforward: They charge a seat-license fee for football and basketball, requiring fans to make donations to secure their tickets. For seven out of 10 sports donors, that is the only contribution they make, research shows. To get the best seats, however, donors must contribute more -- often considerably more.

Seat-license fees, which start as high as \$2,000 in some programs, have led some donors to cut back their contributions to other parts of the college, says Jeffrey L. Stinson, an assistant professor of marketing at North Dakota State University, who has studied the effect of athletics fund raising on total giving to colleges.

"We don't necessarily see a decrease on a dollar-for-dollar basis," he says. "But you do see donors cut back a little on that academic gift because they just don't have the capacity."

Some booster clubs, including the Tiger Athletic Foundation at Louisiana State University, have overcome that problem by allowing academic contributions to count toward premium seating and other sports perquisites. In other words, a \$10,000 gift to LSU's chemistry department, for example, will help buy better football tickets.

Ticket-license fees, along with revenue from luxury suites and premium seats, have helped many athletics departments grow quickly. So have mega-gifts. Last year T. Boone Pickens, a billionaire businessman, gave \$165-million to the athletics department at Oklahoma State University. In August, Philip H. Knight, co-founder of Nike, and his wife, Penny, donated \$100-million to the sports program at the University of Oregon.

Many athletics programs are seeing their biggest gains well below that level, however. LSU's booster club, which brought in \$35-million last year, saw its biggest jump in donors who give \$100,000 a year, says Ron Richard, chief executive officer of the club. The university has also doubled the number of athletics donors who give \$5,000 a year, to more than 200.

"With that amount of money, you get a guy who's on his way up," Mr. Richard says. "He's not a millionaire yet, but he's going to be."

By focusing on the wealthiest donors, even programs with smaller enrollments have grown quickly. Just 4,400 alumni make annual contributions to the athletics department at Wake Forest University, only a fifth as many as at some of its peer institutions. But Wake's supporters each give an average of \$3,000 a year.

### **Enticements to Give**

To get the really big gifts, programs often entice donors with behind-the-scenes access, such as sideline passes and private dinners in coaches' homes. Three years ago, Wake Forest established the Moricle Society, for donors who contribute at least \$55,000 a year. The program has brought in an extra \$1-million a year for the athletics department. Society members fly free on teams' charter flights, are wined and dined, and get private "chalk talks" from coaches before games.

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"We don't skimp on these people," says Cook Griffin, executive director of the Deacon Club, Wake's athletics fund-raising arm. "You can't spend too much on them."

Many athletics officials say they work hand-in-hand with their colleges' development offices, and that their efforts have led more donors to contribute to the college's general fund. At the University of Louisville, where private donations have nearly tripled in the past decade, to more than \$30-million last year, Rick Pitino, the basketball coach, recently visited a prospective donor to help land a big gift for the medical school.

At Louisiana State, Mr. Richard says he works closely with William G. Bowdon, chief executive of the LSU Foundation, the university's general fund-raising arm. The two men spent more than 30 years together in the Marine Corps, and their friendship has paid off. Within the past six months, the athletics fund helped arrange \$8-million in donations to academic programs, Mr. Richard says.

But critics at some colleges complain that the athletics fund-raising arm operates independently from the general development program, acting more like a marketing department than a charitable organization. Fund raisers in one big-time sports program recently installed their own software program to help cultivate donors, shutting out the university's development staff, says Mr. Stinson, the North Dakota State professor. In many programs, he says, there is "at least a competitive relationship if not an antagonistic one," between athletics fund raisers and college development officers.

Twenty years ago, athletics was the "stepchild" of fund raising -- but not anymore, says Bruce Flessner, a fund-raising consultant who works with many large colleges.

"They were the guys doing the golf tournaments, and no one took them seriously," he says. "Now they've pushed themselves front and center, and they're eating a big slice of the philanthropic pie."

College fund raisers play down the tension between the two sides.

"I don't want to give the impression that there's no rub from time to time as athletics is trying to raise money from big donors," says Bill Sturtevant, vice president for principal gifts for the University of Illinois Foundation. "But those things happen with other programs, too, and you just have to coordinate and work it out."

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## Information, please: As one consumer database debuts, higher-education leaders ponder another

By ERIC HOOVER

Consumers need a brand-new tool, something that slices and dices information about colleges into small, digestible pieces, allowing prospective students and their parents to more easily compare institutions.

So say higher-education leaders who are talking up new ways of evaluating colleges. On Tuesday, more than 100 college officials gathered at Yale University to discuss the possible creation of a Web site that would provide "educationally relevant" information about colleges without ranking them. Today, the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities plans to unveil an online database that lists statistics like graduation rates, tuition, and enrollments for more than 600 private institutions, as well as information about student life.

Those developments are, in part, responses to federal calls for clearer, more accessible information about colleges. Tuesday's daylong meeting at Yale, sponsored by the Education Conservancy, was inspired also by frustrations about the influence of *U.S. News & World Report's* annual college rankings.

Andrew Delbanco, a professor of English at Columbia University, who attended the private meeting, said participants discussed the need for a system that would help students match themselves to colleges. "Ranking implies passivity," Mr. Delbanco said, but matching "implies the responsibility on the part of an institution to say more about itself, and responsibility on the part of an applicant to think harder about himself or herself."

How, exactly, a Web site might promote self-assessment was a lingering question, one that the attendees planned to pursue in the coming months. During a news conference Tuesday evening, Lloyd Thacker, executive director of the Education Conservancy, a nonprofit group that opposes commercial influences in higher education, called the meeting a success. One reason: The gathering had brought together a diverse group -- presidents, deans, institutional researchers, and professors -- from an array of institutions, including elite ones, like Yale and Williams College, that fare well in rankings. "We generated interest and goodwill," Mr. Thacker said. "This effort will not stop here."

Several presidents and admissions deans said the discussion yielded few, if any, concrete plans, but many meaningful discussions about the college search process that they planned to carry back to their respective campuses. "We came away with as many questions as we started with," said William T. Conley, dean of enrollment and academic services at the Johns Hopkins University. "I don't think it's going to be a revolution, but an evolution."

The same might prove true of the new Web site unveiled by the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, or Naicu.

As officials huddled in New Haven yesterday, David L. Warren, Naicu's president, was preparing for his association's College and University Accountability Network to go live. The database, called U-CAN, lists information about participating colleges in a common format, and links to the institutions' Web sites. For each college, there are data on diversity, degrees awarded, and the percentage of freshmen receiving aid by type. There are also links to information about housing options, career services, and accreditation, as well as a button that reads "What Makes Us Special?", which links to a college's mission statement.

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Mr. Warren said he envisioned students and parents picking out a handful of colleges in the database, printing out their profiles, and spreading the pages on the kitchen table.

Given the similarities between Naicu's new Web site and the Education Conservancy's proposal, some presidents and deans have questioned how -- or if -- different information systems would fit together.

"The market will determine what's best," said Mr. Warren, who speculated that other databases -- such as those that two associations representing public colleges are preparing to introduce -- might one day meld with Naicu's. "We're building this rocket and riding it simultaneously," Mr. Warren said. "We'll probably put as much time into evaluating how this works as we have in designing it."

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## **Many public colleges have raised tuition despite big increases in state support**

By LAUREN SMITH

Public colleges often blame their tuition increases on state lawmakers who, the colleges say, have not given them enough extra money to keep up with rising costs. But this year, many states' public colleges received sizable infusions of public money and then raised tuition significantly anyway.

In nearly half of the states, both appropriations for higher education and public-college tuitions rose by 5 percent or more, substantially faster than inflation. In Colorado, for example, tuition jumped by 14.6 percent at the University of Colorado's Boulder campus and by 7.7 percent at the university's Colorado Springs campus, even though state lawmakers increased spending on higher education by 8.4 percent. In Nevada, public universities increased their tuition by 10.9 percent, despite having received a 6.4-percent increase in public support for the 2007-8 fiscal year.

In more than a dozen of the states where tuition did not rise as much, public colleges had little say over the matter because lawmakers had passed legislation limiting how much such institutions could raise tuition or freezing tuition at current levels.

The explanations for why public colleges continued to increase tuition despite getting more tax-dollar support vary from state to state. But in general, "the relationship between fees and funding may not be as direct as we think," said Arthur M. Hauptman, an independent consultant on higher-education policy. While reductions in state spending on higher education tend to quickly send tuition skyward, Mr. Hauptman said, major increases in such spending do not always cause tuition to level off or go back down.

### **On the Mend**

In some states, tuition has continued to rise because public colleges are still recovering from budget cuts made during the last economic downturn.

"You would think it would be reasonable to think that tuition will decrease when state support increases, and that is usually the case. But here we might just be playing a catch-up game," said Sandy Baum, a senior policy analyst at the College Board and a financial-aid consultant at Skidmore College.

"I think a lot of places have been doing a lot of cutting," Ms. Baum said, "and even if appropriations go up, it's going to be hard for them not to say, 'Well, now we need to make up for what's been lost in recent years.'"

Such is the case in Virginia, where lawmakers voted this year to increase spending on higher education by 5.3 percent in hopes of holding tuition down, but tuition in the coming academic year nonetheless increased by an average of 6.8 percent at public four-year colleges and by 5.9 percent at community colleges.

The continuing climb of tuition at such institutions makes more sense when one considers that Virginia cut its planned higher-education appropriation for the 2002-4 biennium by nearly \$300-million, or 22

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percent, higher-education officials said. The University of Virginia alone suffered a \$51-million reduction in its annual state appropriation, a loss that Colette Sheehy, the university's vice president for management and budget, said the institution is still making up for.

"So when the legislature says, 'Oh, gee, we're giving you all this general-fund money; why do you have to increase tuition?' -- I mean, they haven't even given us back what we lost," Ms. Sheehy said.

In other states, public colleges are increasing tuition to pay for things intended to help them become more competitive, like increasing faculty salaries.

The University of Hawaii system's Board of Regents, for example, raised tuition by nearly 20 percent for this academic year -- despite a 12.2-percent increase in the system's state support -- as part of a six-year plan to bring tuition at its campuses up to the level of peer institutions. As a result, students were asked to pay 19 percent, or \$816, more per year at its Manoa campus, in Honolulu; 18 percent, or \$528, more at Hilo; and 18 percent, or \$480, more at West Oahu. At the system's community colleges, students will pay 13 percent, or \$168, more.

### **Savings at a Cost**

Ironically, tuition spiked in some states as a direct result of policies intended to provide students with tuition relief.

In Georgia, lawmakers agreed to give public colleges a 10.5-percent increase in state support -- the biggest such jump in a dozen years -- and tuition nonetheless rose by as much as 15.5 percent at public universities. Higher-education officials placed much of the blame for the tuition increases on a 2006 law that guarantees students entering public colleges as freshmen that their tuition bills will not grow over the next four years.

"We had to put enough of a bump in that tuition so that we could cover costs estimated over a four-year period," said William R. Bowes, vice chancellor for fiscal affairs of the University System of Georgia.

A number of states are making similar pledges to keep tuition steady over a student's academic career, but higher-education experts question whether such guarantees actually do much to save students money over all. That is especially true for students who drop out of college after a year or two, and would have been better off paying tuition bills that rose over time.

State efforts to cap or freeze tuition, meanwhile, may do little to dampen the forces driving tuition up and simply set the stage for exceptionally large tuition increases as soon as the restrictions are lifted.

Some public colleges are experimenting with differential tuition rates, charging students varying amounts based on the actual cost of educating them in their field of study. Critics worry, however, that such policies will price students out of particular programs and curtail minority enrollments in certain fields.

As the price of attending public colleges continues to climb, university officials say they sense an alienation from their state legislators.

"It's easy to understand why legislators feel like they're pouring more and more money into it, but campuses feel like they don't have more money," Ms. Baum said. "I don't think it's that campuses don't care about keeping tuition down -- they do. But they are also intensely aware of how much it costs to carry on this operation in a reasonable way."

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## **\$25-Billion takeover of Sallie Mae is called off**

By MARTIN VAN DER WERF

A \$25-billion takeover of Sallie Mae that was announced in April was called off on Wednesday, the victim of a new law that will cut federal subsidies to student-loan providers.

President Bush is planning to sign the law, the College Cost Reduction and Access Act of 2007 (HR 2669), today. Among other things, the law will cut subsidies to for-profit lenders by 0.55 percent (*The Chronicle*, September 10). It is the second cut in federal subsidies to student lenders in the last two years.

Wall Street has been hinting in recent weeks that the consortium of banks and private-equity firms that had agreed to buy Sallie Mae was looking to renegotiate the deal. The buyers had agreed to pay \$60 a share, but the company's stock has been drifting lower. It closed Wednesday at \$45.01, down \$1.24 for the day.

The buyers said in a written statement on Wednesday that "the conditions to closing under the merger agreement, if the closing were to occur today, would not be satisfied as a result of changes in the legislative and economic environment."

"We have told representatives of the Sallie Mae Board," it continued, "that we are open to discussing a revision of the transaction that reflects this new environment."

The proposed buyers are the private-equity firms J.C. Flowers & Company, of New York City, and Friedman Fleischer & Lowe, of San Francisco, along with two banks, Bank of America and JPMorgan Chase & Company.

Sallie Mae released a statement late Wednesday afternoon saying that it "firmly believes that the buyer group has no contractual basis to repudiate its obligations under the merger agreement" and that the company "intends to pursue all remedies available to it to the fullest extent permitted by law."

The April purchase agreement included a penalty of \$900-million if either side pulled out of the deal. Sallie Mae officials did not return phone messages or respond to e-mail queries on Wednesday asking if they would pursue collecting the penalty.

Industry observers said they were not surprised by the announcement.

"It's just the first salvo in possible renegotiation of the deal," said Mark Kantrowitz, publisher of FinAid, a Web site about student financial aid.

SLM Corporation, the parent company of Sallie Mae, had warned in previous filings with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission that if HR 2669 was passed, it would hurt the lender's profitability. In its announcement on Wednesday, Sallie Mae put numbers to those statements. The changes in the law will reduce "core-earnings net income between 1.8 percent and 2.1 percent annually for the next five years," it said.

The termination of the deal also reflects the decreasing appetite for mergers and acquisitions amid tightening credit. A number of other multibillion-dollar deals have recently fallen apart. The Sallie Mae deal was one of the largest pending acquisitions.

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If the deal had gone forward, Sallie Mae was to have become a private company. Critics of the deal had said that with the affiliation with Bank of America and JPMorgan Chase, there would be further consolidation in the student-loan industry, and because a private company does not have to file as much information with the SEC, less would be known about its operations.

On the other hand, the termination of the deal may add fuel to the lending industry's complaints that the new law goes too far and cuts student-loan companies' subsidies too much.

As the bill was working its way through Congress, lobbyists for lenders said that the cutbacks in subsidies would drive smaller companies out of the federally guaranteed student-loan program and force the remaining providers to do away with borrower benefits, such as lender-paid loan-origination fees and rate reductions for those who make on-time repayments.

*Paul Basken contributed to this report.*

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## **Congress mulls change in student-records law to help prevent violence**

By JJ HERMES

Washington

In the wake of the Virginia Tech massacre last spring, Congress is considering a change in a key federal privacy law to encourage colleges to relay information to the parents or guardians of deeply troubled students. Some critics of the measure argue, however, that will only compound the colleges' confusion regarding what information they are allowed to share.

The measure under consideration, HR 2220, would amend the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, known as Ferpa, to allow colleges to disclose confidential information to a parent or guardian about any student who appears to pose "a significant risk of harm to himself or herself, or to others." It would also shield colleges from legal action in response to such disclosures, so long as they consulted a mental-health professional before relaying the information.

"Ferpa is very vague, and it leaves schools open to liability on both sides of disclosure and nondisclosure," argues the bill's sponsor, Rep. Tim Murphy, a Republican from Pennsylvania with a background in mental-health care. "What happens in schools and universities is the burden of judgment is being placed on people who have no training, and I think it's an unfair burden."

Representative Murphy says he intends to promote the bill in coming weeks as an amendment to the Higher Education Act, which is up for renewal this year. His measure, which has yet to come before the House subcommittee on higher education, had 21 co-sponsors as of Wednesday.

The bill faces opposition, however, from many college officials and higher-education lobbyists. They say it interprets current law too narrowly and is unneeded because colleges are already allowed to share the information it covers.

"My sense is that, under Ferpa, universities are able to do the kind of communication this bill seeks," says Martha D. Christiansen, associate dean of student affairs and director of counseling and consultation at Arizona State University at Tempe. "In my view, I don't believe a change in legislation is necessary."

Barmak Nassirian, an associate executive director of the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers, offers a harsher assessment of the legislation.

"My first reaction was: how inane," Mr. Nassirian says. "It legalizes what is already legal."

### **Heading Off Trouble**

Seung-Hui Cho, the student who killed 32 students and faculty members at Virginia Tech before taking his own life, had a history on the campus of bizarre and disturbing behavior. Many questioned how Mr. Cho had been allowed to remain in college, without his family being notified, after being put through a hearing for involuntary commitment. It soon emerged that the university's chief lawyer operated under the belief that Ferpa prohibited the institution from ever disclosing medical or counseling records.

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Federal, state, and the university panels formed in response to the incident concluded that too many college administrators favored an overly narrow interpretation of Ferpa, minimizing their disclosure of student information to avoid legal wrangling over exactly what the law covers.

To date, however, the only legislation responding to the massacre that has moved through Congress has been a gun-control measure calling for better communication between the states and the National Instant Criminal Background Check System. The House passed that bill, HR 2640, by voice vote in June. It awaits action in the Senate.

Ferpa already permits, but does not require, education institutions to disclose information to parents who claim a student as a dependent for tax purposes. The law also allows for communication with "appropriate parties," which Education Department officials say they interpret as including any parent, if such disclosure is, as the law says, "necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals."

College administrators say they can and do make such disclosures. Ms. Christiansen says that Arizona State has contacted parents without students' consent in cases where a student was a significant threat, but adds that the university does not keep records of how often such calls are made.

Lesley K. Sacher, director of Florida State University's Thagard Student Health Center, says that such communication happens "a couple of times each semester," but that "more frequently the parents call us, concerned."

### **Spreading the Word**

The investigative committees formed in response to the Virginia Tech tragedy have all suggested that collegiate officials need better understanding of what is allowed under federal privacy laws, but no report indicated a major flaw in Ferpa. In fact, a report issued last month by Virginia Tech administrators says officials there believe exceptions to confidentiality under the law "mirror the ethical obligations of psychologists and do not restrict effective practice and communication within the university community and with the mental-health community at large."

LeRoy S. Rooker, director of the Family Policy Compliance Office at the Education Department, is the department's expert on Ferpa and travels all over the country to educate administrators on proper interpretations of the law. He says his office is stepping up the number of presentations and training sessions it offers on what types of disclosures are allowed.

"It's something that's getting attention at the highest levels here," says Mr. Rooker, who would not comment directly on HR 2220 but agrees that the law already allows education institutions to disclose information to parents in an emergency.

### **Lawsuit Prevention**

A handful of lawsuits regarding such disclosure are brought against colleges each year, usually after suicides, as in a recent case involving Allegheny College, in Representative Murphy's state of Pennsylvania. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Gonzaga University v. Doe* in 2002 that individuals cannot sue an educational institution for releasing records under Ferpa, although that ruling does not prohibit cases from moving forward under state law.

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With those cases in mind, Representative Murphy insists that his legislation plugs a hole in Ferpa. "Although some may feel, and sometimes the Department of Education and the federal government say, it's already there -- well, if it's there, why are there so many lawsuits?"

Institutions are shielded from legal liability in HR 2220, but only if they get written certification from a mental-health professional that a student poses a "significant threat" before they release private information.

"My belief is that part of the decision-making process should be to look toward those who specifically have training in the field -- people in the mental-health community," Mr. Murphy says.

But the requirement that mental-health professionals sign off concerns some, including Mr. Nassirian, who argues that it "moves communication with parents a step back."

"I appreciate the instinct to want to help people, and the instinct to want to be seen to be helpful," he says. But when it comes to HR 2220, he says, "I think the two are in conflict here."

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## Meeting of the minds

In one way or another, leaders in higher education have been working for 20 years on trying to find valid and meaningful ways of measuring how well students learn. Although some institutions have developed their own measures, most college officials agree that there has been much less progress in revealing those results to the public and in finding ways to give students information they might use to compare their chances for success across different institutions, a point made bluntly and quite critically in last year's report of the Secretary of Education's Commission on the Future of Higher Education.

The discussion in recent months about how to alter that landscape has at times pitted the federal government against college officials: Education Department officials have accused some college leaders of dragging their feet and refusing to be held accountable for their performance, and many in higher education assert that the government has tried to impose an overly simplistic, overly standardized approach that fails to account for the rich diversity of colleges' missions and students.

Today, the Education Department plans to announce that it is giving three college associations a \$2.4 million grant to help them assess existing, and develop new, tests and other tools to measure student outcomes on a wide range of skills. Officials of the Education Department and the three groups — the Association of American Colleges and Universities, the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, and the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges — herald the development as a breakthrough.

The embrace of the project by the three groups, their leaders said, shows that colleges are unafraid to assess their performance, but want to ensure that the measures used are appropriate, intelligently crafted, and fully represent the many kinds of skills that students need. And the department's financial backing, said Sara Martinez Tucker, U.S. under secretary of education, shows that department officials meant it when they said they want colleges to "do it themselves," rather than have the government do it to them.

"It is my hope and expectation that this represents a transitional moment in both the dialogue about how to measure student learning and, even more important, in the actual practices we use to do that," said Carol Geary Schneider, president of the AACU, which is taking the lead on the project. "The primary responsibility for achieving educational excellence falls on colleges and universities themselves. And through this initiative, over 1,200 colleges and universities in three different associations will come together to move the assessment agenda forward, in ways that respect the best traditions and the most important purposes of American higher education."

Critics of the push for comparing the learning outcomes of institutions and individuals (notably the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities) have complained that the Spellings Commission and the Education Department have rushed to adopt standardized measures of general education skills (such as writing and critical thinking) that are not up to the task. They have also argued that other crucial desirable "outcomes" of an undergraduate education, such as civic engagement or ethical reasoning, cannot be measured by existing tools, and that some outcome measures popular on campuses — such as electronic portfolios — may have more promise than standardized tools.

The proposal put forward by the three associations — which the Education Department chose over several competing proposals in a competition, Tucker said in an interview — deals with all three issues. In full, said Schneider, the project aims to find ways to measure the "broad array of learning outcomes that most colleges and universities consider essential to a good education," such as those AACU laid out in its recent report, "College Learning for the New Global Century."

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The newly funded FIPSE project contains three main parts. NASULGC will lead the way on a project that will review the effectiveness of three major standardized measures of general education skills that are part of the Voluntary System of Accountability that the land-grant association and AASCU are crafting. Experts from the organizations that sponsor the Collegiate Learning Assessment, the Measure of Academic Progress and Proficiency and the Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency will work together with other testing experts to assess the tests' relative reliability and validity, so that "you will know it means when you score high or low on one of these tests," said David Shulenburg, vice president for academic affairs at NASULGC.

"When you've got something new, like measuring critical thinking, the academy is skeptical, and it wants lots of testing done before we start making decisions on it," he said. "We want it done right and we want to measure this by the standards that we use to measure the other kinds of research that we do. This grant will allow us to do that, to fill in that gap."

AASCU's part of the project (in which AACU will also participate) will involve an attempt to try to develop tools for measuring student outcomes that aren't easily measured, such as civic engagement, teamwork, personal and social responsibility, and the like. This effort aims to respond to the idea that many of the traits that a good liberal arts or general education develops are hugely important, but not easily measurable and hence difficult to assess. The goal would be to develop metrics or "rubrics" that colleges could use to measure some of those traits in their students.

The third piece of the project, on which the Association of American Colleges and Universities will take the lead, seeks to tap into the significant work that many colleges have done to try to measure their students' development using electronic portfolios. Many departments, schools and colleges have developed ways of using collections of student work to show progress not only on general skills like writing but on those tied to their fields of study. AACU's goal, said Schneider, is to assess the quality of existing e-portfolio assessments on campuses and further develop and share the best ones.

Tucker, the U.S. under secretary, said the decision to finance the project follows on Education Secretary Margaret Spellings' promise a year ago that she would "explore incentives to states and institutions to collect learning outcomes data." The Spellings Commission's report argued strenuously that the country needed better information about colleges' performance in educating students, and needed it sooner rather than later, Tucker said.

But the department's efforts to carry out the panel's recommendations have been misinterpreted as seeking a government, or a "one size fits all," solution, she said. "The report said that we need colleges to produce better information, and this signals what we've said all along: That we're not doing it to them, we're doing it with them."

Tucker said she was pleased at the broad range of institutions – public and private, two-year and four-year — that will be participating in this project through their associations, and by the relatively tight timeline for completing it – 18 months.

Leaders of the associations involved in the effort said they welcomed the department's approach, though they differed on how much they saw it as a change of heart. Constantine (Deno) Curris, president of AASCU, the state-college group, described it as a "significant step" by the department and a "statement that the department is supportive of the concept of building a Voluntary System of Accountability" like the one AASCU and NASULGC are developing.

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Schneider noted that college leaders “have been frustrated” that they have not gotten much credit from department leaders and the Spellings Commission for the work they have been doing for years on assessing student learning. And whether department officials intended it or not, the discussion generated by the Spellings Commission “was heard as a call for standardized testing, primarily if not exclusively.”

What’s important about the new grant, she said, is that it puts college officials and department leaders much more on the same page. “Everyone agrees that we have not been as transparent as we ought to be, as we might be,” she said. “The disagreement has not been about whether we should be accountable, but about making sure that we have forms of accountability that would actually strengthen learning,” for students and institutions. The cooperation between the government and college leaders makes that more likely, she said.

The extent to which the collaboration might represent a breakthrough might be most evident in the fact that even the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities — which has vigorously opposed department efforts to push colleges to use comparable, standardized measures of student learning — viewed the moment favorably.

“The idea of putting a competitive grant out there through FIPSE is a very positive development,” said Sarah A. Flanagan, vice president for government relations and policy development at the private college association. Flanagan said she had not seen the details of the proposal, so could not comment on every bit of its substance. But “we take this as a signal on [department officials’] part that they are willing to work in partnership with colleges in addressing some of the complex policy issues that face higher education.”

— Doug Lederman

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## Senators weigh idea of requiring payout rates for large university endowments

By JJ HERMES  
Washington

Several senators expressed interest on Wednesday in a proposal that would require large university endowments to pay out a certain percentage of their total worth each year in order to retain their tax-exempt status.

Those comments came during a meeting of the Senate Finance Committee that was ostensibly about offshore tax loopholes. The committee has been weighing legislation that would tax certain elements of university endowments and put restrictions on the offshore hedge-fund investments that some endowments make (*The Chronicle*, May 30).

Witnesses who testified before the committee on Wednesday included experts from education-oriented research and policy organizations, but no university or endowment officials.

Two of the witnesses suggested that Congress consider legislation mandating that endowments with assets exceeding \$1-billion be required to spend at least 5 percent of their assets each year.

Several senators asked the witnesses if endowments would be able to handle such a requirement.

Such a payout scheme would still "leave them in very good shape," replied Lynne Munson, an adjunct fellow at the Center for College Affordability and Productivity. In earlier written testimony, Ms. Munson said, "Many schools have been rolling over so much money for so long that they should easily be able to accommodate a higher rate of payout."

Many of the larger university endowments enjoy windfall gains -- Yale University is scheduled to announce today a 28-percent return on investments in its most recent fiscal year, and Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology recently announced returns of 23 percent and 22 percent, respectively, during the same period. Yet tuition continues to climb at most universities, prompting some lawmakers and others to question what wealthy endowments are spending their money on, or whether they are hoarding their gains.

"If Harvard, Yale, Princeton, MIT, or Stanford had paid out one-10th of 1 percent of their endowment for undergraduate tuition, undergraduate tuition increases would have been unnecessary to maintain the budget," Jane G. Gravelle, an economist with the Congressional Research Service, said in written testimony before the committee.

Higher-education leaders took exception to some of the ideas expressed at the meeting, saying the government should not be meddling with college endowments.

"There should be no government regulation on how an endowment is spent," said M. Peter McPherson, president of the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges. "Nor should endowment spending policy be tied to anything else, whether it is tuition or anything else."

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Mr. McPherson said colleges have many competing needs, and require the flexibility to spend a lot one year and less the next, if they choose.

"If you start regulating how much is spent and when, people better study it a long time because there is likely to be some unintended consequences," he said.

Ms. Gravelle based her testimony on an August 20 report to the Finance Committee that responded to questions about the gains made by higher-education endowments, and the potential for slower tuition growth if more endowment returns were distributed to financial aid.

The report, which was made available to *The Chronicle*, indicates that institutions with endowments valued at more than \$1-billion had an average return on investments of 15.2 percent in 2006, and a payout rate of 4.6 percent. "Tuition growth was 0.9 percent of the endowment, and student aid was 2.9 percent of the endowment," the report says.

In her testimony, Ms. Gravelle indicated that a required payout rate would be an "alternative" to restricting educational institutions from investing in offshore hedge funds that are not taxed.

Private charitable foundations are required to pay out at least 5 percent of their assets, but that rule does not apply to educational endowments.

At one point at the hearing Wednesday, Sen. Charles E. Grassley of Iowa, the senior Republican on the committee, broached the idea of expanding a 5-percent payout requirement to cover endowments valued at \$500-million or more, to help "more working families see the benefits" of lower tuition bills. More than 60 higher-education endowments now have assets that top \$1-billion, and more than 125 such endowments top \$500-million.

Senator Grassley also discussed recent conversations he has had with the Internal Revenue Service about requiring institutions to disclose more information about their endowments on the annual forms that nonprofit organizations file with the tax agency (*The Chronicle*, June 15).

Any Congressional mandates on large educational endowments would certainly face institutional opposition. Matthew W. Hamill, a senior vice president of the National Association of College and University Business Officers, said this was the first time he had heard of Congress seriously discussing a minimum payout requirement.

"I think such a proposal would cause a fairly significant amount of consternation among higher-education institutions," Mr. Hamill said.

*Martin Van Der Werf contributed to this article.*

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## A year later, Spellings report still makes ripples

### More colleges test students and share data

BY PAUL BASKEN  
WASHINGTON

A year ago, Charles Miller, a former chairman of the University of Texas' Board of Regents, walked into the U.S. Education Department here and dropped off a glossy 76-page document with a crisp red cover.

Its recipient, Secretary Margaret Spellings, promptly hailed the final report of her Commission on the Future of Higher Education as a turning point: It was the day, she hoped, when U.S. colleges reoriented their mission to provide the highest possible quality of education to the most students possible at the lowest possible cost.

Such epochal aspirations motivate many government commissions. One year later, however, there is accumulating evidence that the vision in this case might, at least in some key aspects, actually be realized.

"Something is changing out there," says Patrick M. Callan, president of the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education. After initial criticisms of the Spellings commission and the sometimes caustic tone of its yearlong deliberations, many college leaders are recognizing common ground.

"This was not," Mr. Callan says, "some group of ideologues or people who had no respect for higher education or had an ax to grind."

Among recent key developments seen to stem from or be encouraged by the Spellings commission:

- Hundreds of U.S. colleges are using standardized student-achievement tests, allowing comparisons between institutions, while investigating options for creating more such tests.
- Several major college groups are set to outline in coming weeks projects in which their members will post to their Web sites specific performance-related data to allow direct comparisons between institutions.
- Congress, with broad bipartisan backing, this month approved the largest increase in federal student aid since the GI Bill in 1944.

"We're under way," Ms. Spellings said in an interview with *The Chronicle* last week. "Are we done? Heck no. We haven't even started."

#### Previous Reports

The Spellings panel cannot claim all the credit. Democrats, who took over Congress from the Republicans last fall, had long urged a substantial student-aid increase. And the commission's general goal of making college more affordable for more students, and more responsive to U.S. economic needs, was already being highlighted by others.

The department's own Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance, in a September 2006 report issued just as the Spellings commission was wrapping up its own work, warned that between 1.4-million and 2.4-million potential U.S. college graduates would fail to enroll or to complete their classes because

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of financial obstacles. A year earlier, the National Academies issued a report warning that the U.S. risked losing its technological and economic pre-eminence if it didn't graduate more science students.

The contribution last September of Ms. Spellings's commission, led by her Texas friend, Mr. Miller, had its shortcomings. It offered most of its recommendations in the form of general guidance rather than specific objectives. It overlooked major problems such as the conflict-of-interest scandal that subsequently enveloped both college financial-aid offices and the student-loan industry. It had no student representation. It contained no significant international comparisons.

And in terms of specific goals that Ms. Spellings devised in response to the report — from redesigning high-school tests to simplifying the federal student-aid application form — few have been put in place so far.

Yet the Spellings commission tackled college orthodoxies in ways that previous panels had not. Rather than urge more government funds or suggest some shifts in academic focus, the Spellings panel proposed a direct challenge to some deeply cherished and longstanding ways in which colleges operate, calling on higher education to shed some of its mystery and fundamentally prove the value it delivers.

That change should be accomplished, the commission said in its final report, by devising new "accountability measures" that allow comparisons of student performance. That means developing standardized tests and compiling and sharing more data on both "inputs" and "outcomes," including total student costs and college completion rates, it said.

Such proposals prevented the commission from granting its unanimous approval. One member, David Ward, president of the American Council on Education, withheld his vote, saying he could not be sure how Congress might translate his colleagues' language into legislation.

Even so, many member institutions of ACE are already moving ahead, embracing standardized testing and comparative data as a means both for improving internally and competing for new students.

The American Association of State Colleges and Universities, with more than 400 member institutions, and the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges, with more than 200 members, are at the forefront. The two groups plan to introduce a common system of data presentation this fall, to be posted on college Web sites, which will publicly provide data ranging from projected costs of attendance to standardized-test results.

### **Testing Students in Texas**

One major university system is already doing it. For the past few years, Mr. Miller's successors at the 15-institution University of Texas system have been testing students, in groups of freshmen and seniors, using an exam known as the Collegiate Learning Assessment. Results are publicly posted.

The CLA, developed by the RAND Corporation, is designed to measure critical thinking, problem solving, analytic reasoning, and written communication. It is now in use at about 230 U.S. campuses, and was suggested by the Spellings commission as an example of outcomes-based assessments that other colleges could consider. Other examples include the National Survey of Student Engagement, in which students answer such questions as how much class time is spent in discussion.

At the University of Texas at Dallas, the outside assessments have helped improve classroom instruction, says Robert S. Nelsen, vice provost. Mr. Nelsen, who teaches his own course, "Exploration of the Arts,"

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said that data from the National Survey of Student Engagement helped him realize he needed to have his students spend more time critiquing each other's work in classroom discussions.

Another Texas campus, Permian Basin, in Odessa, has been advertising its scores on the Collegiate Learning Assessment after results showed that the small and little-heralded university, which accepts 95 percent of students who apply, had the system's highest rate of academic growth between the freshman and senior years.

Mark G. Yudof, chancellor of the University of Texas system, likes the competition. "The idea of stimulating universities to do this is very valuable," he says.

Other institutions — including many of the nation's most prestigious universities — remain much less sure. "The very underlying concept of comparability, that the Spellings commission proposed, we object to," says David L. Warren, president of the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, which represents nearly 1,000 private institutions.

Mr. Warren's organization is also proposing that its members provide some common sets of self-descriptive statistics on their Web sites. Unlike the plan being proposed for the public colleges, however, Mr. Warren's version will not include any test-based data. He contends that the missions of private colleges are too varied and too complex to be captured by any broad-based tests.

The public colleges share some of that concern, says M. Peter McPherson, president of the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges. Their associations are proposing that member colleges take several years to decide what types of test data will be included in their public reports.

Mr. Warren's opposition is more categorical, emboldened by "focus group" sessions his group held with prospective college students and their parents. The participants said they wanted to choose colleges on the basis of factors such as job-placement rates and admissions to medical schools.

"In all of the focus groups," he said, "not a single parent, not a single student, ever said, 'Gee I absolutely want learning-outcome measures, I can't see how I can make a decision if I don't have learning-outcome measures.'"

### **Movement by Some Colleges**

Mr. Miller rejects such logic, saying colleges that resist meaningful tests of student accomplishment fear they will be shown to be "not adding any value that's measurable."

Many elite U.S. colleges' curriculums are so "watered down" that students don't learn much, he says. "What the kids gain is they get the stamp of approval — they come in as top students, they leave as the top whatever. But what is the value of that?"

Among some groups of private colleges, Mr. Miller's point of view may be winning the day. Many members of the Council of Independent Colleges, which represents more than 500 liberal-arts institutions — generally a less-wealthy subset of Mr. Warren's organization — are also trying out the Collegiate Learning Assessment, says the group's president, Richard H. Ekman.

The council's members are largely outside the group of 100 to 200 "truly selective" private U.S. colleges, and "they are trying to put their best foot forward" to attract applicants, Mr. Ekman said. "What the CLA and other measures of cognitive growth provide to these colleges is another source of evidence that they're a good place to go to school," he says.

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That type of debate over standardized tests is a political tightrope that Ms. Spellings already walks on the elementary- and secondary-school level. The Bush administration strongly supports mandatory state-based testing in public schools, yet it rejects any form of national test, even as some states respond to the federal pressure by weakening their standards.

That degree of dispute over national testing on the college level appears far away, Ms. Spellings told *The Chronicle*. Testing, even if the format is determined for now by the colleges, "will empower consumers, and it will be huge step forward," she said. "And some other secretary in the future can worry about what happens after the first, second, and third steps happen."

Either way, student-aid advocates warn that the argument over testing and data may be drowning out a more extensive examination of still-rising college costs. The commission proposed a series of steps to reduce "nonacademic barriers" to college attendance, including curriculum revisions at the high-school and community-college levels to avoid unnecessary repetition of course work. But few may have noticed, said William E. Troutt, president of Rhodes College, in Memphis, who chaired the National Commission on the Cost of Higher Education in 1998.

"Nine out of 10 college presidents could not describe the commission's message on affordability," Mr. Troutt said. "That's unfortunate, because nine out of 10 college presidents wake up every morning thinking about affordability."

#### **'Public Discussion' Prompted**

For all the work remaining, the commission has "started to provoke a long-overdue public discussion," Ms. Spellings said. "We have put the elephant in the middle of the dining-room table, and we're starting to talk about stuff that we ought to be talking about."

The pace of that reform, the secretary said, may be too slow for some and too fast for others. "To the extent that grownups don't like change, and any change is too much change for some people," she said, "that may be true."

She suffered one major setback when she proposed new regulations requiring outcomes-based assessments as part of the federal accreditation process. Colleges, which need that accreditation to remain eligible for the government's \$83-billion student-aid program, lobbied lawmakers who then persuaded Ms. Spellings to abandon the effort.

The overall battle remains ahead, Ms. Spellings said.

"We are in the infancy in American higher education of being able to describe to our publics — whether they're state legislatures, Congress, parents, philanthropists — what we're doing, and to what effect," she said. "And we all have a responsibility to start to answer that question. And we've barely begun."

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## **As President Bush signs bill increasing student aid, several lenders announce cuts in staff or benefits**

By KELLY FIELD  
Washington

With a flourish of his pen, President Bush signed into law on Thursday legislation that will provide the largest increase in federal student aid since the GI Bill, while sharply cutting government subsidies to student-loan providers.

"Today is a reaffirmation of our commitment, our determination to help more Americans realize their dreams by getting a good education," said Mr. Bush, who was flanked on one side by Pell Grant recipients and Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings and by members of Congress on the other.

The new law, which goes into effect on Monday, the first day of the 2008 fiscal year, will slash government subsidies to student-loan companies and use the savings to reduce the federal deficit, raise the maximum Pell Grant to \$5,400 over five years, and halve the interest rate on subsidized student loans.

Supporters say the law will make college more accessible to low-income students and will ease the debt burden for college graduates.

"Today, the president signed a bill that strengthens America's future by providing much-needed help in paying for college," said Gabriel Pendas, president of the United States Student Association.

But critics warn that the cuts in subsidies paid to lenders will drive smaller companies out of the federal student-loan program and force the remaining loan providers to eliminate borrower benefits, such as lender-paid origination fees and rate reductions for on-time repayments. Even before Bush signed the bill, a handful of lenders had announced plans to lay off workers and scale back borrower benefits.

Nelnet, a major national student-loan company based in Nebraska, was one of the first to react. Three weeks ago, it announced it would lay off 400 employees and close five small loan-origination offices to make up for lost revenue. Then, on Thursday, it confirmed rumors that it will no longer pay loan origination fees for students who take out Stafford Loans, which are need-based federal loans. The change means that, starting Monday, borrowers will have to pay up to 2.5 percent of their loan balance in origination fees.

Another lender, U.S. Education Finance Group, said on Wednesday that it had laid off 25 of its 45 employees and would stop offering borrower benefits on new Stafford Loans starting October 1. The combined cuts will shrink the lender's annual budget from \$8-million to \$3.5-million.

The Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency, which stands to lose \$44-million under the bill, is also weighing cutbacks. Scott E. Miller, a lobbyist for the agency, said it had imposed a freeze on hiring and on new contracts, but was not planning layoffs and will maintain its loan-forgiveness programs for public servants. All other borrower benefits, he said "are being looked at with a very serious eye."

"We need to figure out how to protect those benefits," he said.

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And earlier this week, the GCO Education Loan Funding Corporation announced that it would temporarily stop purchasing federal consolidation loans. In a statement, GCO's chief executive, Ron Page, said that "given current market conditions and legislative changes ... we cannot offer a price for consolidation loans that is high enough for clients to recover their origination costs."

At a lending-industry conference on Thursday, Dallas Martin, the retiring president of the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators, suggested that Congress may have gone too far in scaling back subsidies -- its second such cut in the past two years.

"We've spent a lot of time debating what is the breaking point -- how much can you cut" before lenders leave the guaranteed-loan program, he said at the annual legislative conference of the National Council of Higher Education Loan Programs. "I think with the new cuts we've put through, we are getting pretty close to the bone."

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## **Federal support for academic research trailed inflation in 2006, but institutional spending rose**

By JEFFREY BRAINARD  
Arlington, Va.

Federal spending for academic research and development fell in the 2006 fiscal year, after adjusting for inflation, for the first time in nearly 25 years, the National Science Foundation said in a report released on Wednesday. However, total expenditures rose after inflation, driven by a large leap in spending by universities themselves.

The federal government provided \$30.03-billion in the 2006 fiscal year, a decrease of 0.1 percent from 2005 after inflation. The last time federal spending on academic research failed to keep up with inflation was in 1982. Total expenditures for academic research from all sources, however, rose by 1.2 percent after inflation, to \$47.76-billion. Universities helped raise the grand total by upping their own spending by an eye-opening 10 percent, to \$9.06-billion.

Funds from industry, which had declined each year from 2002 to 2004, rose for the second year in a row, reaching \$2.43-billion in 2006, an increase of 5.8 percent.

Money from state and local governments failed to keep pace with inflation, rising by only 2.5 percent, to \$3.02-billion, according to the report, "Academic Research and Development Expenditures: Fiscal Year 2006."

Biomedical researchers in particular have been singing the blues about money since 2003, when an effort to double the National Institutes of Health budget over five years ended. Since then, the NIH's budget -- the largest single source of funds for academic research -- has received increases below inflation. But in 2005 and 2006, slow growth also hit the NSF's budget, which is the second-largest source of federal money for academic research.

Total federal spending probably rebounded for the 2007 fiscal year (which ends on Sunday) because Congress and President Bush began a drive this year to double spending for the NSF and the U.S. Energy Department's Office of Science over seven years.

Until 2006, federal financing for academic research had a good run over the long term: According to the NSF's report, from 1982 to 2005, that spending rose by an average of 5.5 percent each year after adjusting for inflation.

Research universities closely watch the annual report's ranking of the 100 academic institutions that received the most federal funds. The ranking is seen as an indicator of both the quality and scale of academic research because federal agencies award most of this money competitively.

In 2006 the Johns Hopkins University was again miles ahead of all other institutions because its ranking reflected spending by its Applied Physics Laboratory, which alone received \$672-million in federal money.

From 2005 to 2006, the top 20 institutions remained the same, and the rankings for most other institutions on the list changed little.

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Two big exceptions were Case Western Reserve University, which leaped 20 places, to 24th, and the University of Maryland at Baltimore, which rose 19 spots, to 53rd. Another big gainer was Arizona State University at Tempe, which rose 13 places, to 87th.

The biggest drops happened to Georgetown University, which fell 11 spots, to 104th, and the State University of New York at Stony Brook, which fell 10 spots, to 85th.

For the report, the NSF surveyed 650 institutions that award bachelor's or higher degrees in science and engineering and spend at least \$150,000 on research and development in those areas.

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## **Textbooks getting heavier on the wallet**

### **Soaring costs have students scrambling**

BY ANGELA CAPUTO Staff writer

When Bryan Fox enrolled at Moraine Valley Community College this year to prepare for a career as a physical therapist, he figured college would be expensive.

But the 18-year-old hadn't anticipated dropping more than \$500 on textbooks this semester.

"I just didn't have that much money," said Fox, who toyed with withdrawing from a biology class after finding out those books alone would cost him \$365. "I thought about taking it next semester," he said.

The class was a prerequisite for other courses. So the Palos Heights teen joined the ranks of college students struggling to pay for costly textbooks.

The U. S. Government Accountability Office reported in 2005 on the a stratospheric rise in textbook prices, which have increased by an average of 6 percent, or twice the rate of inflation, each year for the better part of the past two decades.

The report prompted Illinois lawmakers this spring to look at ways of curbing higher-education expenses through a series of bills. But they fell flat this spring, leaving no immediate relief in sight.

One bill would have required publishers to be more transparent about the cost of materials when marketing them to professors.

It's not that book salespeople are necessarily being dishonest, said Brad Bridges, who oversees textbook sales at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. They are, however, increasingly marketing bundled materials - where new textbooks are sold with extras like lab manuals or access codes to Web sites - which can add up quickly.

"That's truly a good deal but only if you use them," said Bridges, who is serving on a task force created to address rising book prices.

Otherwise, the materials are overpriced, he said. And Bridges has seen firsthand how mounting book costs have stinging consequences, particularly among full-time students who, on average, each spent \$900 on books last year.

The consumer protection legislation attempted to force publishers' hands in making materials sold exclusively in bundles available individually. That would help open the market for cheaper, used books for students.

"(The consumer legislation) is an issue that some of the publishers are resisting," said state Sen. Ed Mahoney (D-Chicago), who chairs the higher education committee.

Mahoney said the measure - which passed the Senate and went into the House in March - isn't dead.

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While he expects it to come up again next session, state Rep. Harry Osterman (D-Chicago), a sponsor of the House version of the bill, isn't so sure.

"We have a lot of other priorities," he said, citing issues such as mass transit.

Another textbook-related bill would require public colleges to form advisory committees that would figure out how to reduce textbook costs on their campuses.

That's not going to be as easy as it sounds, said Kashif Shah, who oversees book sales at Moraine Valley, where a similar committee - made up of college officials, faculty and staff - was launched last year primarily to educate faculty about the cost of textbooks and increase the flow of used books.

It might look like college bookstores are making money hand over fist, Shah said, but "it's just not so."

"All the prices are driven by the publishers," said Shah, who pointed to the publishers' cut of each dollar spent on a new textbook, which is more than double the 22 cents per \$1 that schools earn, according to research conducted by the National Association of College Stores.

Much of that spending is attributed to marketing and production on the publishers' end. At the University of Illinois, 1 percent to 3 percent of book sales typically are cleared as profit, Bridges said.

Course materials may be increasingly expensive, but Bruce Hildebrand, director of the higher education division of the American Association of Publishers, said that's because publishers are on the cutting edge of developing new multimedia materials that are rolled into the price of books professors select.

"This business is done on a faculty-member-by-faculty-member basis," Hildebrand said. "You have never heard a faculty member say, 'I was forced to order this book.' "

While publishers make their biggest profits off new-book sales, students and bookstores fare much better through used books.

College bookstores yield, on average, a 36 percent profit reselling the materials, according to the same report produced by the trade group representing college bookstores. Standard practice is to reduce the cost of a used book by 25 percent of the cover price on a new version.

Saint Xavier University bookstore manager Janice McMahon said the private college has less of a markup, but, like Shah, she declined to disclose exactly how much the store earned last year.

At Moraine Valley, not much of the profit can be attributed to chemistry professor Mark Churchill.

The veteran teacher no longer requires his students to purchase pricey copies of new textbook editions - which he says don't change much from year to year anyhow. All they have to spend is \$25, which covers the copying costs for a workbook and lab manual he's designed.

Churchill has been approached about publishing the materials by the salespeople who come to campus looking for business.

"I'm sure it wouldn't cost \$25 anymore," he said of the choice he made, in part, with his students in mind.

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"When you add up tuition for a three-hour class, sometimes the books could cost more than the class," Churchill said.

There are a growing number of students shopping Web sites and even ordering international editions of textbooks in an effort to keep their out-of-pocket costs down, according to Nicole Allen, an organizer with the national student-driven campaign Make Textbooks Affordable.

"Even the savviest price-hunting student isn't going to solve the problem by finding the cheapest books," Allen said.

"The problem is that (textbook sales) isn't like the regular consumer market. The student has no choice about whether they'll pay it or not. And the publisher can charge whatever it wants."

With two kids in college, Orland Park mom Dee Solski agreed that buying the books is unavoidable.

"I think what I used to pay for a whole year, he pays for one book," she said jokingly as she walked out of a college bookstore with a handful of books for her son.

Chicago Sun-Times, September 24, 2007 (Page 1 of 2)

## Crushing debt

### **SUICIDE | Man who owed as much as \$100,000 felt trapped by his student loans and 'lower than low' that he had no job**

September 24, 2007

**BY DAVE NEWBART Staff Reporter/dnewbart@suntimes.com**

Jan Yoder was preparing for her son's funeral when the phone rang. It was another student loan collector wanting to know when her son would pay up.

Her terse response: Jason is dead. And, she said, "You are part of the reason he took his own life."

It was those calls and the burden of crushing debt, she says, that led her depressed son to take the drastic action of killing himself late last month. He did so in the Illinois State University chemistry building in Normal -- in the very lab where he did his research to earn his master's degree.

It was those calls and the burden of crushing debt, she says, that led her depressed son to take the drastic action of killing himself late last month. He did so in the Illinois State University chemistry building in Normal -- in the very lab where he did his research to earn his master's degree.

"It made him feel lower than low to tell somebody every week, 'I don't have a job,'" his mother says now. "It drags you down. You feel like nothing."

Jason, 35, owed more than \$65,000, according to the National Student Loan Data Service. But it's possible his debt was higher because that figure only includes government-backed loans and not the high-interest private loans students increasingly rely on. He told family members his debt had grown to more than \$100,000.

While relatives acknowledge Yoder had fought depression on and off for years, advocates for student borrowers say his case is another example of a student feeling trapped by student debt. Unlike most other debt, the loans cannot, by law, be discharged through bankruptcy, and collection agencies have extraordinary powers to collect them by garnisheeing wages or even Social Security benefits.

"When it gets to the point where people are fleeing the country, going off the grid or taking their own lives, you know something has gone horribly wrong," said Alan Collinge, founder of Student Loan Justice, which is pushing to change student lending laws.

The average debt load for graduate students in all fields nationwide climbed by 150 percent in the last decade to \$37,600 in 2004, according to the Project on Student Debt.

#### **'When are you going to pay?'**

At ISU, the average debt for undergraduates is \$16,000, a 15 percent increase in the last five years, although some students leave with bills as high as \$60,000. ISU does not track graduate student debt.

Jon Gudenrath, ISU's associate director of financial aid, said counselors talk to students about taking on too much debt, but "in the end it's the student's choice. We can't say, 'You can't have this [loan].'"

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ISU chemistry Professor John Hansen said Yoder did "very well" in school but rarely spoke of his debt. However, it took him several years to finish his master's thesis in chemistry, increasing his loan total.

When he graduated in summer 2006, he was unable to find a job despite sending out dozens of resumes. Meanwhile, he watched his loan balance grow. He moved back in with his mom, who lives in a small trailer home in Normal.

When the collectors called, they asked him, " 'When are you going to pay? Can't you get your mom to sell her house? Couldn't you sell your car?'" according to his family.

Although Jason helped set up a fledgling tea room his mother runs with her sisters, he was wary of taking a job outside of his field because he feared his wages would be garnisheed. That could tip potential employers to his credit woes. Collinge said many employers won't hire people with bad credit.

Late last month, in the middle of the night, Yoder apparently let himself into the ISU lab. Then he hooked up a tube to a nitrogen valve and ran it inside a plastic bag around his head, according to sources familiar with the scene. He was pronounced dead of apparent asphyxiation later that morning.

After his death, at least two pharmaceutical firms attempted to contact him about job openings, Jan Yoder said.

Chicago Tribune, September 24, 2007

## **Moraine Valley to boost tuition**

Tribune staff report  
***September 24, 2007***

Moraine Valley Community College will boost tuition about \$50 per year for full-time students starting in the spring semester, officials said.

Trustees at the Palos Hills college cited a reduction in state contributions before approving the tuition increase last week.

The cost of a credit hour will increase by \$2, bringing the per-credit hour rate to \$69. Including fees, which will remain the same, the total will be \$74 per credit hour.

"We are receiving \$550,000 less from the state in 2008 than we did in 2007," said Robert Sterkowitz, chief financial officer. The tuition increase will bring in about \$300,000, officials said.

Moraine Valley has increased tuition every year for the last four years, and the increases have been necessary to keep pace with rising salaries and health-care benefit costs, Sterkowitz said.

Trustees also approved a 3.8 percent increase in the annual budget that started in July 2007.

The Chicago Tribune, September 25, 2007 (Page 1 of 2)

## **Donation helps U. of C. surpass \$2 billion fundraising goal**

### **\$25 million helps school exceed its fundraising target**

By Jodi S. Cohen

Tribune higher education reporter

The University of Chicago announced a \$25 million donation Monday to support faculty hiring, pushing the university over its \$2 billion goal for its 5-year fundraising campaign.

The South Side university is the seventh campus nationwide to raise at least \$2 billion during a capital campaign.

Taking liberties with one of Shakespeare's best-known lines, university trustee Paul Yovovich told staff during a celebratory luncheon Monday: "2B or not 2B is no longer the question."

The fundraising campaign, the "Chicago Initiative," originally had been set to end earlier this year, but officials moved the end date to June 2008 after a sluggish start.

The donation announced Monday comes from the family foundation of Jeanette Lerman Neubauer and Joseph Neubauer, a university trustee and 1965 MBA graduate who is chairman and chief executive of Aramark Corp.

The gift establishes the endowed Neubauer Family Fellows Program, which will be used to recruit new faculty members who recently received their PhDs. The program will provide four faculty members annually with research funding for five years.

The first group is expected to be hired by fall 2009 and will be recruited from a wide range of academic disciplines, officials said. The level of funding for the faculty members will depend on the support needed to accomplish their work.

"We want this gift to enhance the university's ability to compete for the very best young scholars," Neubauer said in a statement.

The latest donation brings the total received or pledged during the campaign to \$2.13 billion.

About \$1.25 billion has been earmarked for faculty and research support. About \$530 million is for student programs, including financial aid. An additional \$250 million was donated as part of annual giving or for unrestricted purposes.

The money has helped build a new dormitory and facilities for the sciences, athletics and the Graduate School of Business.

But some of the specific campaign goals have not yet been met, and officials plan to focus on raising more money for the sciences and student aid during the next year.

"There are unmet needs across the university and those are the ones where we will focus in the remaining part of the campaign," said Ron Schiller, U. of C.'s vice president for development and alumni relations.

The Chicago Tribune, September 25, 2007 (Page 2 of 2)

About half of the \$2 billion is from donors who contributed at least \$5 million each.

The campaign's largest donation, \$100 million from an anonymous donor and U. of C. graduate, established the Odyssey scholarships, to be given beginning next year. The program will provide full scholarships for about 800 students a year whose family incomes are less than \$60,000.

U. of C. has an endowment of \$6.2 billion.

There currently are two dozen universities in the midst of campaigns of at least \$1 billion, including the University of Illinois, which earlier this year kicked off a \$2.25 billion campaign.

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Bloomington, The Pantagraph, September 25, 2007

## **Proposal could send taxpayer money to private colleges**

BY KURT ERICKSON  
KURT.ERICKSON@LEE.NET

SPRINGFIELD — Although prospects for a statewide construction program remain in legislative limbo, its passage could result in millions of taxpayer dollars being funneled to the state's private colleges and universities.

That has drawn concern from some lawmakers, who question whether public money should be going to places like Illinois Wesleyan University in Bloomington or Augustana University in Rock Island.

"I have a little bit of a problem with it," said state Rep. Mike Bost, R-Murphysboro, who counts Southern Illinois University as the biggest employer in his district. "I don't necessarily like it."

Under terms of the proposal approved last week by the Illinois Senate, the state would set aside \$200 million to help pay for construction projects at private institutions.

By contrast, the state's public universities and community colleges would see an influx of more than \$730 million for construction projects.

David Tretter, director of the Federation of Independent Illinois Colleges and Universities, said the money could help the schools comply with a state mandate requiring all college dormitories to be outfitted with sprinkler systems by 2013.

"This could be a crippling financial issue for some of these schools. It's a good investment," said Tretter. "We're not talking about building Taj Mahals."

At Illinois Wesleyan University in Bloomington, Carl Teichman, director of government and community relations, said the institution needs to retrofit some of its residence halls with sprinklers.

"This could be a way to get it done," he said.

Bryan Marshall, a spokesman for Millikin University, said the Decatur institution was not expecting any money through the program if the General Assembly and Gov. Rod Blagojevich come to an agreement on the plan.

Marshall said the university has already made sure there are sprinklers in all of its dormitories. "If that's what it is for, we would not need it," said Marshall.

The future of the overall construction plan remains in flux.

The Blagojevich administration has been vigorously promoting the plan in all areas of the state. On Tuesday, lawmakers and top aides were in Rockford and Champaign to call on the House to take action on the plan. A day earlier a similar event occurred in Mount Vernon.

The Illinois House returns to action Monday and will hold a hearing on cuts Blagojevich made last month that stripped millions of dollars in local projects from the state budget.

It is not clear whether the House will take any action on the construction program, which would be funded by a massive expansion of gambling, including a new, land-based casino in Chicago.

Herald & Review, September 26, 2007

## **State construction program could include \$200 million for private colleges**

*By KURT ERICKSON - H&R Springfield Bureau Chief*

SPRINGFIELD - Although prospects for a statewide construction program remain in legislative limbo, its passage could result in millions of taxpayer dollars being funneled to the state's private colleges and universities.

That has drawn concern from some lawmakers, who question whether public money should be going to places such as Illinois Wesleyan University in Bloomington or Augustana University in Rock Island.

"I have a little bit of a problem with it," said state Rep. Mike Bost, R-Murphysboro, who counts Southern Illinois University as the biggest employer in his district. "I don't necessarily like it."

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By contrast, the state's public universities and community colleges would see an influx of more than \$730 million for construction projects.

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Peoria Journal Star, September 28, 2007

## **Upward Bound to get about \$1.2 million in funds**

Friday, September 28, 2007

**PEORIA** - President Bush signed legislation Thursday that restores funding for the Upward Bound college-prep program at Illinois Central College.

The legislation allocates about \$1.2 million in funding needed to operate the program over the next four years.

The 15-year program appeared to be coming to an end this summer when ICC officials learned that it had lost its federal funding, but restoration began to look likely this month.

ICC has to wait for the arrival of a grant award notice from the U.S. Department of Education before it can resume the program.

Upward Bound has served more than 1,200 students, offering tutoring, academic advisement and career counseling to low-income or first-generation college students from District 150. About 80 students participate each year, and another 60 kids are in a summer program.

About 90 percent of students successfully complete high school and enroll in post-secondary education.

Upward Bound is accepting applications for this school year. Normally, services start in mid-September, so officials are hoping there won't be much of a delay. To learn more about the program or apply, go to [www.icc.edu/upwardBound](http://www.icc.edu/upwardBound).

The Chronicle of Higher Education, September 25, 2007

## **Education Department unveils redesigned web site with college data**

The U.S. Education Department, which has been pressing colleges to provide the public with more and better information about themselves, is taking another step toward doing that itself.

The department unveiled today a redesign of its seven-year-old college-information database. The site has been renamed College Navigator, and it contains a series of improvements designed to help prospective students compare colleges on factors such as programs offered, retention and graduation rates, prices, financial aid, campus safety, and accreditation. While making it easier to compare and store that data, the new site contains no additional information beyond what could have been found on the previous site, because of legal limits on what statistics the department may collect.

“One of the big flaws, obviously, is the data that supports it,” the education secretary, Margaret Spellings, said in an interview last week.

—*Paul Basken*

The Chicago Tribune, September 27, 2007 (Page 1 of 2)

## **Web site gives private colleges a bit of a boost**

### **19 Illinois schools profiled on new site**

By Jodi S. Cohen  
Tribune higher education reporter

Responding to calls for more accountability in higher education, the trade group representing the nation's private colleges and universities unveiled a Web site on Wednesday that gives prospective students more information about the schools.

Want to know the student-faculty ratio at Loyola University Chicago? (13:1)

How about the percentage of freshmen who return for their sophomore year at Elmhurst College? (79 percent)

And the average loan debt of Lake Forest College undergraduates? (\$19,976)

The site -- [ucan-network.org](http://ucan-network.org) -- comes after pressure from Congress and Education Secretary Margaret Spellings' higher education commission to provide more consumer-friendly tools for students and families weighing their college choices.

The Education Department also updated its Web site this week to make it easier to evaluate and compare colleges.

College officials said they hope the new tools, complemented by another site expected from the association representing public institutions, will provide an alternative to the much-criticized annual college rankings from U.S. News and World Report.

The information is provided by the colleges and pulled from an Education Department database.

"We believe that what we have here is a very useful next step in the architecture of the college search," said David Warren, president of the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, which is hosting the U-CAN site, or University and College Accountability Network.

About 440 colleges and universities had profiles on the site Wednesday, including 19 in Illinois, and 150 more are expected to be added in the next week.

Each college's page includes a narrative introduction about the institution; up to 47 statistics on admissions, enrollment, student body characteristics, and financial aid; and several links to the college's Web site for more information on areas such as study abroad, sports and services for students with disabilities.

The site has limited search options, with users only able to search for schools by ZIP code, state or religious affiliation, but officials said more criteria may be added.

Users also cannot currently rank colleges by any specified criteria such as graduation rate.

"We are just launching this thing, and we are entirely alert to the fact that it will change and alter as we go forward," Warren said.

The Chicago Tribune, September 27, 2007 (Page 2 of 2)

The Education Department site, [nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/](http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/), allows users to search for schools based on tuition cost, campus setting, sports and academic majors.

Supporters say the new sites fill a need by putting information that can be cumbersome or difficult to find, such as net tuition or the average loan amount of graduates, in one location.

"Having this database ... makes it much easier for the consumer, in this case the prospective students and parents, to find out what is best for them," said Philip Hale, Loyola's vice president for public affairs. "Does this provide absolutely everything a student or parent could wish for? Probably not. It is a very, very good first step."

[jscohen@tribune.com](mailto:jscohen@tribune.com)

Chicago Tribune, EDITORIAL, September 22, 2007

## The next 'No Child' law

September 22, 2007

Congress has started its debate on the renewal of the education reform law known as No Child Left Behind, and there's great risk that the law will be emasculated in the effort to "improve" it.

The central triumph of the law has been that schools must report how well all their students are doing. If a school is failing to educate a cohort of children, such as Hispanic students, it can't hide that fact.

One reason the schools can't hide is that the law requires them to report their students' performance on standardized tests, which create a national benchmark. A lot of educators dislike such tests. They argue that one-size-fits-all measurements don't show the breadth of what students have learned and compel teachers to focus more on testing than teaching.

Such testing is imperfect. But the solutions proposed in the next version of No Child would allow states and schools to evade accountability. They could use a number of measurements -- essentially pick the measurement that's most favorable to them. Sen. Russ Feingold (D-Wis.) and Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) aim to eliminate high-stakes testing altogether.

Allowing states and districts to choose their measurements would allow them to dodge and weave around the intent of the law. That can't be allowed to happen.

Congress should focus on one change in how the next law deals with success measurements. It should allow schools to measure success by how students grow from year to year. Now, the standard is how many students reach a certain level of proficiency.

That fails to recognize success in raising the performance of the most struggling students. In Chicago schools, for instance, the most heartening story in the last decade has been the exodus of kids from the very lowest quartile of student performance in the nation. Many Chicago kids have moved up from the bottom, but they haven't necessarily reached a level that would mark them as proficient in math or reading. So Chicago schools, under the federal law, don't get full credit for their gains.

Such a change in measurements would recognize real success, without letting schools off the hook for their failures.

There are things to like in the proposed revision of the federal law, particularly the emphasis it would put on performance pay for teachers. But Congress has to keep the focus on a national measurement in core subjects. It can't let schools backslide on accountability.

The Chicago Sun-Times, COMMENTARY, September 27, 2007

## **Tuition economics 101: Pick a college you can afford**

Would you sell your home, put off retirement or dip into your 401(k) to buy a Lamborghini or Hermes handbag for your teenager? Didn't think so. Then why do so many status-minded parents insist on buying their kids a "designer" education at an expensive private university? Plenty of accredited public schools offer a better value and a solid education.

An Ivy League degree certainly will grab attention. But what about the degrees from other smaller private schools? Are they really better than the one from the University of Illinois? Do the math. Save your money. Save yourselves. And save this generation from mortgaging their future.

Today's students are well aware of the lurking financial burden once they leave the books and toga parties behind. A recent UCLA study said two out of three freshmen had "some" or "major" concerns about how they'll pay for college. In no way are public university students immune. Consider the recent case of the 35-year-old Illinois State University graduate student whose family said he killed himself because he couldn't pay \$100,000 in student loans.

Consumer protections for those taking out loans have been watered down in the last decade, and big lenders like Sallie Mae made things more difficult by persuading Congress to remove bankruptcy protection from private loans.

It doesn't have to be so bleak. We can stick it to the big lenders by borrowing less, by sending students to cheaper schools -- maybe even having them live at home and attend community college, transferring later to a four-year college. Ultimately, what students do in college is more important than where they go. But first, parents have to get a grip.

A mind is a terrible thing to waste. Losing your mind, agonizing over unpaid student loans worth the value of a luxury car, is tragic.

The News-Gazette, OPINION, September 28, 2007

## **UI earned its award**

**Friday September 28, 2007**

It was not just local supporters of Chief Illiniwek who took notice earlier this year when University of Illinois administrators and trustees were skulking around in the shadows as they greased the skids for the ouster of the Chief.

The Illinois Press Association noticed as well. Last week, it awarded the UI a "Worsty" award for its intentional effort to circumvent the state's Open Meetings Act and oust Chief Illiniwek in private. The IPA issues these awards annually to publicize abuses of the state law on opening meetings in the hope, usually vain, of discouraging future violations.

For those who don't recall the details, Lawrence Eppley, chairman of the UI board of trustees, announced on Feb. 16 that the Chief was out. How did he know that? Well, pursuant to plans to avoid a public showdown, Eppley, acting in concert with UI President B. Joseph White, held individual conversations with trustees that were not subject to the open meetings requirement to determine the consensus of the board. Then he made his announcement.

It was all neat and clean, except for the subsequent complaining about not only about what the board did (dump the Chief), but also what the board did not do (show the character to act in public). It was not exactly a profile in courage, although it was totally in keeping with the bureaucratic mentality of trying to sweep tough issues under the rug.

Naturally, the UI got all huffy about its "Worsty" award, trotting out PR man Tom Hardy to assure the public that not only didn't the UI do what it clearly did but that it would never, ever even consider such a thing.

But Hardy, White and Eppley et al. can't escape the facts. They received, on the UI's behalf, an award they richly deserve.

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## Accountability and the applicant

Twin pressures on colleges to release more student- and consumer-friendly information — to be more accountable to the public and to create an alternative to magazine rankings perceived as excessively based on reputation — are manifesting themselves with new online databases from the U.S. Department of Education and from colleges themselves, as presidents have increasingly stated the importance of defining the metrics by which they are measured.

Meanwhile, college leaders at a Tuesday conference, “Beyond Ranking: Responding to the Call for Useful Information,” sponsored by an admissions reform group, the Education Conservancy, stressed a need to go even further. Colleges, participants in the conference said, shouldn’t just provide information to the passive seeker, but also encourage self-assessment on the part of applicants and a more interactive admissions process over all.

The Department of Education’s newly revamped college search Web site, now called College Navigator, offers a robust search engine allowing students to find and compare colleges based on everything from sports teams to states to SAT scores (the newly designed site, however, does not include any new information, beyond what was available on the department’s old College Opportunities Online Locator, because of statutory limits on data collection).

Additionally, the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (NAICU), which has challenged the Bush administration’s efforts to expand its data collection activities in higher education, today launches its own consumer-friendly Web site, the University and College Accountability Network (UCAN), comprised of profiles of hundreds of private colleges.

The new online resources come as deliberate responses to the Secretary of Education’s Commission on the Future of Higher Education, which released a report calling for greater accountability and transparency on the part of colleges one year ago today. And they come also as college leaders discuss how they can provide better information to counter what many of them — including those involved with the Education Conservancy — see as the undue and inappropriate influence of the *US News and World Report* rankings.

“Too many decisions about higher education — from those made by policy makers to those made by students and families — rely heavily on reputation and rankings derived to a large extent from inputs such as financial resources rather than outcomes,” the Spellings Commission’s report notes. “Better data about real performance and lifelong working and learning ability is absolutely essential if we are to meet national needs and improve institutional performance.”

The Education Department’s latest effort does not include the information on student outcomes that became a focus of the commission’s report, and of the department’s campaign to alter federal rules governing accreditation, because it has not been authorized by Congress to collect it. But “they’re doing all they can with the data they have,” said Charles Miller, the commission’s chairman. The College Navigator site updates the department’s COOL database which, the department’s Vickie L. Schray said, simply “was not very cool. You basically had to be a statistician to get in there and manipulate the information to answer some very critical questions for students and families.”

The department designed College Navigator with the input of 11 focus groups in eight states, with the search engine geared toward providing the information that students said they were seeking. The department found that low-income and first-generation students in particular, Schray cited as one example, were very interested in searching by geography to get a comprehensive list of institutions located nearby. Students can search the site using such varied characteristics as tuition, program or major, campus setting, size, the availability of distance education or credit for life experience, religious

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affiliation and institution type. Visitors to the site can view data from up to four colleges in side-by-side comparisons.

Meanwhile, NAICU's new U-CAN Web site, online as of today, aims to provide comparable data while emphasizing the distinctiveness of each individual institution, said David L. Warren, the association's president.

About 600 of NAICU's nearly 1,000 member colleges have signed up so far to post profiles based on a common template (also developed with the help of focus groups) that features admissions, enrollment and graduation data — with the specific metrics defined uniformly by the association — in addition to somewhat more difficult-to-find information like average undergraduate loan burden at graduation, average net tuition and undergraduate class size. Each profile also includes a narrative describing what makes a university unique, and a large number of hyperlinks throughout connect students to the university's home page, where they can find more information on everything from transfer of credit policy to internships to study abroad.

"In the end, the board voted to move forward with the template in part because colleges have the opportunity to distinguish themselves," Warren said. "This tries to humanize the process, tries to simplify the process. I think it does those things without losing the vital data or complexity."

NAICU's U-CAN site, which lacks the extensive search and on-screen comparison functions of the Education Department's College Navigator (although Warren said more precise search capabilities could be added based on user feedback), deliberately does not include comparable information on student outcomes out of respect for varying institutional missions. Following a link, "For More About Our Students" on Elon University's profile, for example, takes a user to data from Elon's National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) results. But colleges can link to whatever they find appropriate in that same spot on the template, not just their NSSE scores. "What we have opposed is any prescriptive outcome measure," Warren said.

Miller, the Spellings Commission chair, however, criticized the private college group's approach for limitations in search and comparability. "They're making an effort to act like they're making progress and personally it doesn't seem like much progress to me," Miller said. "They've been the biggest opponent to real transparency, that entity has, so I just have skepticism about them being transparent."

Yet, participating private college leaders seemed to appreciate U-CAN's combination of the qualitative and quantitative. Douglas C. Bennett, president of Indiana's Earlham College, praised the NAICU and Department of Education resources alike as good first steps in an audio press conference following the Education Conservancy's "Beyond Ranking" conference at Yale University Tuesday. "They're tremendous steps forward, they're much more useful than things we've had in the past, but we need to do even better than that. They end up being fairly passive measures that project information to students," Bennett said.

The 100 participants at the Yale conference brainstormed about strategies for designing self-assessment measures that would challenge prospective students to approach the admissions process more actively, Bennett and others said. While participants in the news conference were vague on details, generally speaking, Bennett explained, there should be some formal mechanism through which students ask themselves questions like, "What kind of person am I? What kinds of things make me comfortable, what kinds of things challenge me, what's my growth path, who am I as I go to college?"

"We feel that is so important to move from a passive model of consumption, of buying a product off the shelf as it were," said Kenyon College President S. Georgia Nugent. "That as educators we can and we should emphasize that education is not a product that you buy, it's an activity that we engage in."

— Elizabeth Redden

Education Week, September 26, 2007

## **College readiness**

An emphasis on strong leadership, rigorous courses, and effective instruction can help low-income students succeed in high school and prepare for higher education, concludes a report by the San Francisco-based WestEd, an education research organization.

Commissioned by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the report analyzed the similarities between five high-performing high school programs that primarily serve low-income and minority students across the nation. Each program emphasizes college as an attainable goal, provides rigorous college-preparatory courses, establishes a well-defined curriculum for all grades, strengthens academic and social supports during freshman year, and encourages out-of-school youths to return to the classroom.

The Chronicle of Higher Education, September 26, 2007 (Page 1 of 3)

## **Controversial NCAA proposal would allow colleges to cash in on players' images**

By LAUREN SMITH

A controversial proposal by the National Collegiate Athletic Association would broaden the way companies are allowed to use college athletes in advertising campaigns, giving athletics departments more opportunities to trade on players' popularity.

The proposal, which an NCAA panel will vote on in January, has attracted little attention because it was introduced as an amendment to existing rules.

Athletics officials who support the proposal say that they aren't seeking to exploit athletes, and that the changes would align outdated NCAA rules with today's technologies. Some players also support the amendment.

But critics say the proposal would go too far, allowing sponsors to expand their reach without compensating players for the use of their likenesses in commercial promotions. While players would continue to earn nothing for the use of their likenesses, their colleges, conferences, or the NCAA could reap profits from the advertisers.

Any move to broaden the use of athletes' images in advertisements is "misguided," says Amy P. Perko, executive director of the Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics.

In the past, the commission has opposed any attempt to allow more commercial endorsements in college sports. Next month it plans to discuss the proposal at a meeting in Washington.

### **What's Permissible?**

As it is now, companies are allowed to include pictures or images of college athletes in their advertisements as long as the athletes do not promote commercial ventures. In addition, companies are permitted to show only their corporate logos and names, not their products.

Under the proposed changes -- which were introduced in June by a panel on academics and eligibility, a powerful NCAA committee made up of athletics officials and faculty members -- companies would be allowed to advertise their products and services in association with pictures or images of college athletes, as long as the players did not specifically endorse the products.

Making such changes would provide colleges, conferences, and the NCAA "greater flexibility in developing relationships with commercial entities that benefit the athletics program, the proposal says.

Some faculty members, lawyers for athletes, and college-sports watchdog groups say the plan would undermine players' ability to be paid for advertisements in which they appear, and strip them of a say in how their likenesses are used.

"There is a little bit of disingenuousness in this," said Ellen J. Staurowsky, a professor and chair of the graduate program in the department of sport management and media at Ithaca College. Until players are compensated by the advertisers, she said, "these kinds of practices are problematic."

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Marc Isenberg, a lawyer who has written about the commercialization of college sports, said broadening the ability of companies to use athletes' images was a "slippery slope."

"The problem I see," he says, "is that student-athletes retain little if any control over the athletic department's use of their likenesses."

That could lead to problems like one that arose several years ago, he said, when MET-Rx, a nutrition company, sponsored players of the week at some Pacific-10 Conference institutions. Later some of the company's nutritional supplements were found to contain androstenedione, which is banned by the Food and Drug Administration because it poses health risks similar to those of steroids.

In 2005 the NCAA faced criticism for a Web promotion by Pontiac that posted pictures of new cars beside college-football video highlights. The ad allowed fans to vote for their favorite game-changing play and awarded \$5,000 scholarship contributions to winning institutions.

Critics assailed the NCAA, saying it was using the players to sell cars. Despite the display of vehicles, the association declared the campaign a football promotion, and not a commercial promotion.

### **Misunderstood Intentions**

In 2005, the NCAA considered broadening the rules governing the use of players' names and pictures, but the proposal was modified by a committee before it was adopted, marginalizing its effectiveness.

Two athletics officials who helped write the new proposal defend it vigorously, saying it is intended only to clarify NCAA rules introduced decades ago, when the Internet and other multimedia platforms did not exist.

Current rules about permissible commercial endorsements apply only to printed advertisements. The proposed change would give athletics departments guidance in dealing with evolving media such as streaming Internet and cellphone technologies.

Michael Rogers, faculty athletics representative at Baylor University and chairman of the NCAA's subcommittee on amateurism and agents, said some people have misunderstood the proposal's intentions.

"There was some fear originally that it would allow a student-athlete to hold up a can of soda and say, 'Buy this, drink this,'" Mr. Rogers said. "That's not what we're doing."

Christine A. Plonsky, director of women's athletics at the University of Texas at Austin, emphasized that the proposal would still protect athletes from commercial exploitation. "There are many, many ways that we can present messages where the company's message is definitely attached to the activity, but you're not asking a student-athlete to endorse or in any way back the actual product," she said.

Audiences are "sophisticated enough," she said, "to know what they're being dealt in a commercial or a sponsorship message."

The NCAA's Division I Student-Athlete Advisory Committee, made up of 30 athletes and former athletes from various conferences, supports the measure.

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Kerry Kenny, a former basketball player at Lafayette College and the committee's vice chairman, served on a study group that examined how athletes' names and pictures should be used. The group concluded that the current rules needed updating.

As long as athletes are portrayed in a positive light, Mr. Kelly said, "we were all for any legislation or direction the NCAA was going to take."

Some high-profile athletes, too, like the idea. Chris Lofton, a preseason all-American basketball player at the University of Tennessee, said he loved seeing his image broadcast and would have no problem being a part of a product advertisement.

"It's good for the school, it's good for the players, and good for the team," he said.

He just had one suggestion for the NCAA: If players' names and pictures are used, why not pay them?

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## Dealing with 'job outs'

At first glance, the process seems to be working as intended. Students enter work force development programs looking to begin or jump-start a career. Many are sought after, recruited and leave with a job.

But in some cases, the offers come shortly after the students begin their programs, meaning that they haven't had a chance to earn a certificate or associate degree. This, educators worry, prevents students from reaching their long term career goals.

And for colleges, the implications are far-reaching. Beyond the revenue impact of losing students mid-year without being able to replace them, certain programs end up with low completion rates. That gets the attention of college trustees and state legislators, who may threaten to shut down the programs.

Jan Bray, executive director of the Association for Career and Technical Education, said an increasing number of the group's members have expressed concern about the so-called "job out" trend in recent years. Because of the rising demand for skilled workers, particularly in technical fields, employers are plucking students from training programs with some frequency.

"Industry in our area is concerned with the bottom line — getting the employees in when needed," said David Hughes, associate vice president for technical education at National Park Community College, in Arkansas.

The question posed to Hughes and another two-year college president during a panel discussion at a U.S. Chamber of Commerce convention on education and the work force: Are businesses, with these hiring practices, undermining the efforts of community and technical colleges and cutting into the supply of highly trained workers?

Bray said the perception of some programs — particularly in high-demand fields such as information technology — has been hurt by early recruitment. In a 60-credit-hour program, it's not uncommon now for only 25 percent of students to complete degree requirements. The high turnover rate complicates a college's operations, Bray said, and forces directors to justify their programs to trustees — though they usually are able to make the case for keeping them.

"People crunch the numbers and it doesn't look good," she said. "Everyone has to understand the story beneath the facts and figures."

Hughes, despite noting the "job out" trend, doesn't blame companies. He said colleges need to respond by offering shorter certificate programs for students who feel pressure to earn more right away.

Bryan Albrecht, president of Gateway Technical College, in Wisconsin, said the college has done just that. It offers intensive employment training programs, most lasting several months, and it holds some classes at business sites to attract the evening student attending part time.

Several of his programs in the manufacturing field have been hit hard by the early raids. Up to 50 percent of students in a given cohort will leave before graduating — many with job offers. Of those who "job out," he estimates that about half end up eventually completing their program requirements.

Both Hughes and Albrecht said they try to make staying enrolled more attractive by allowing students to take paid internships or by setting up apprenticeships. And they said their colleges make a point of

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aligning their programs to fit the needs of the local work force — which in many cases comes down to consulting with manufacturing companies.

The presidents say they understand that they simply will not hold on to some students. “It’s a difficult position for us to say that if you stay for two years you’ll get a better job when they can get a job for \$20 an hour now,” Hughes said.

Still, the relationship between the colleges and local businesses can often seem one-sided, with the institutions consulting companies on course content and lab equipment and the companies taking some of the top students away before they finish a given program. But Albrecht said the parties hold more of a symbiotic relationship. For instance, if a business recruits two of his students away early, he will ask company officials to recommend or even find two candidates to replace them.

It’s also give-and-take with faculty retention, he said. Colleges invest in labs only to lose faculty members to industry jobs. But he said colleges do plenty of recruiting at companies as well, searching for candidates to teach either part- or full-time.

— Elia Powers

Education Week, September 26, 2007 (Page 1 of 4)

## Engineering a blueprint for success

**A rapidly growing program aimed at propelling more U.S. students toward engineering careers is attracting recruits beyond the usual pool of prospective high school talent.**

By Scott J. Cech  
*Wheaton, Md.*

Amid the clicking of computer mice and muted consultation, Wheaton High School teacher Marcus Lee's class of 11th and 12th graders pored over the electronic blueprint for a four-story building they were designing on their desktops. The calculations for each floor needed to be set just right if the structure was to stand on its own.

"What we want to do is lay a foundation," Mr. Lee explained. He was addressing the students in his civil-engineering and architecture class, but he could just as well have been talking about the goal of his school's Academy of Engineering—and that of Project Lead the Way, the national curriculum it uses.

Often referred to by its acronym, PLTW is a rigorous four-year program of honors-level math and science, plus engineering, culminating in at least precalculus and advanced science classes, along with an intensive, hands-on collaborative engineering project. The curriculum is produced by Project Lead the Way Inc., a 10-year-old, Clifton Park, N.Y.-based nonprofit organization dedicated to increasing the number of American college students who study and ultimately work in engineering fields.

The program has swiftly grown to include about 2,200 schools in 49 states. Last school year, 175,000 students were enrolled in PLTW classes nationwide.

Shane R. Stroup, the director of Wheaton High's Academy of Engineering, gives the rigor of PLTW's curriculum much of the credit for the success his students have had so far.

Members of the academy's 26-student class of 2007—its first graduating class—went on to study in mechanical, electrical, nuclear, and other engineering fields at such selective universities as the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Cornell University, claiming more than \$1.6 million in scholarships. Eighty-nine percent of Wheaton High's 1,325 students are members of racial or ethnic minorities, and 41 percent receive free or reduced-price lunches.

"I think the reason was because of the Project Lead the Way curriculum," said Mr. Stroup. "It prepared these students."

It's a familiar refrain that the United States is critically short of students prepared to perpetuate the nation's decades-long pre-eminence in science, engineering, and the mathematics critical to both.

But when it comes to doing something about it, educators who have studied the alternatives say there's no one else offering as much rigor in the so-called STEM fields of science, technology, engineering, and math education to as many students as Project Lead the Way.

"What we found was that PLTW offers the best curriculum out there," said Bart Aslin, the director of the Society of Manufacturing Engineers Education Foundation in Dearborn, Mich. "It's a pipeline vision to let as many students as possible see the excitement of science, technology, math."

PLTW was singled out by the congressionally chartered National Academy of Sciences in its oft-cited 2005 report "Rising Above the Gathering Storm," which recommended that the program serve as the national model for expansion of science and engineering education.

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Still, the program is neither cost-free nor easy. Because of the hands-on nature of many PLTW classes, implementing the curriculum can cost up to \$95,000 per school depending on what computer equipment and facilities a school already has. Robotic equipment and automated manufacturing machinery required for PLTW elective courses, such as Computer Integrated Manufacturing, can cost tens of thousands of dollars more.

Schools or districts must also pay for the specialized two-week summer training for teachers at one of PLTW's 30-plus partner colleges and universities. The per-teacher cost of the required course varies, but can exceed \$2,000.

To the teachers who attend—70 percent of whom have previously taught career and technical education, and may not have any formal engineering training—the cost may feel like the least of it. Mr. Stroup, the Wheaton High engineering-academy director, called the training “boot camp.”

“These classes are very hard-hitting,” concurred Renny Whittenbarger, an engineering teacher at Cleveland High School in Cleveland, Tenn. “PLTW will fail you. ... You have to pass their exam before they let you [teach].”

At Wheaton High School, a clutch of adults filtered into Mr. Lee's darkened class early one recent Monday morning, watching as the students compared notes on their building project. The students were showcasing the kind of collaborative effort that PLTW emphasizes, in lieu of the “eyes on your own paper” style of learning that prevails in many classrooms.

“What's really impressive to me is to see the kids helping each other out—you never see that at the university level,” whispered James W. Sturges. “That's how we work in engineering.”

Mr. Sturges was visiting in part because he's the president of the Montgomery County school district's advisory board on careers in engineering, scientific research, and manufacturing technologies, but also because he is the director of mission assurance at the Bethesda, Md.-based aerospace giant Lockheed Martin Corp.

“We're the biggest employer of engineers in the United States,” said Mr. Sturges, who is himself an engineer. “If we can't get [enough of] those, it's going to affect our business.”

Those same concerns gave rise to the project that would become PLTW.

In the 1980s, Richard Blaise, now a vice president of PLTW, was the director of occupational education for the Shenendehowa Central School District in Clifton Park, N.Y. To help expand his district's technology education offerings, he reached out to local industry leaders, including Richard C. Liebich, now PLTW's chief executive officer and the chairman of its board of directors, to form a technology advisory board.

Mr. Liebich, a former president of Houston-based Sysco Foods, was then running Transport National Development, an industrial cutting-tool manufacturer in Orchard Park, N.Y.—one of several similar companies he would eventually head as CEO and chairman.

Mr. Liebich was having trouble hiring engineers, “and it became apparent then that, yes, we need to do something,” said PLTW spokeswoman Crickett Thomas-O'Dell.

Funding the nascent idea through Mr. Liebich's Clifton Park-based Charitable Venture Foundation, Mr. Blaise and his staff were able to field-test what would become PLTW at upstate New York middle schools in the late 1980s and early 1990s. By the 1997-98 school year, when PLTW was spun off to become a separate nonprofit group, high schools piloted the program, and by 2000-01, over 300 schools in more than 25 states offered the curriculum.

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Project Lead the Way is now self-sufficient, running on revenues from the licensing of PLTW software and the sale of teaching tools to schools, Ms. Thomas-O'Dell said.

David Waugh, a dean emeritus of the University of South Carolina's college of engineering who has observed PLTW with interest but is not involved with the program, attributes much of its rapid expansion to the fact that while many precollegiate educators recognize the importance of engineering, few teach the subject.

"So many people in high school have very little idea about what engineering really is," said Mr. Waugh, a past president of the Alexandria, Va.-based National Society of Professional Engineers. "They have science classes, and they'll encounter things like chemistry and even physics, but with engineering, they don't encounter anything. That's sort of where it ends."

By contrast, PLTW puts engineering firmly in the foreground, and it mixes lots of projects into the curriculum.

"We make it fast-paced and hands-on," said Steve Clariday, the career education director at Cleveland High in Tennessee.

As part of a Cleveland High PLTW engineering class, students work in teams to build cardboard boats that they'll race in the school's swimming pool. But first they have to calculate how many cubic feet the boat should be, how fast it will sink, and other factors on their own; the only equation they're given is that one cubic foot of cardboard will sustain 60 pounds.

"They get frustrated," Mr. Clariday said, "but they get to know the math."

Cleveland High students also have designed tools to help people in their community, including a can opener with an extra mechanical advantage to help a woman with arthritis, and a rake that a one-armed man can use comfortably.

Along with other nations' more-aggressive prioritization of technical education, raw population trends do not favor future American pre-eminence in engineering.

According to projections by the Paris-based Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's directorate for education, India will produce more than twice the number of American and European college graduates combined by 2015. China will have even more.

The United States "cannot build a workforce of just white males in engineering," said Laurie Maxson, the director of Science Technology & Engineering Preview Summer Camp Academy in Colorado Springs, Colo.—a transition between PLTW's middle-school-level Gateway to Technology program and its high school curriculum.

"They're focusing on all groups—all groups in this country are underrepresented when it comes to engineering," the University of South Carolina's Mr. Waugh said of PTLW.

According to data gathered on behalf of PLTW in 2005-06 by the evaluation firm TrueOutcomes Inc. of York, Pa., the program has had some success in recruiting students of color.

White students still account for more than 70 percent of PLTW students. But they're only slightly overrepresented in PLTW classes compared with the enrollment of the schools in which they operate. Hispanics also are slightly overrepresented in PLTW classes, relative to the populations of their schools.

African-Americans are underrepresented by about 20 percentage points in PLTW classes, compared with their share of their schools' overall enrollment—"not where we want to be," said Carolyn Helm, PLTW'S pre-engineering curriculum project director.

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“But we’re doing a heck of a lot better than colleges,” in whose engineering programs African-American students are even more underrepresented, she said.

The program has had trouble attracting girls, who make up only 17 percent of PLTW classes. “We really have a hard time getting females involved,” Ms. Maxson said.

Yet Project Lead the Way has made strong inroads among two other groups that are not always well represented in STEM fields: the less-well-off and the academically unspectacular.

According to the TrueOutcomes data, the program is available at schools across the economic spectrum, but is represented especially well at schools that serve free or reduced-price lunches to more than 70 percent of their students.

“We don’t have money for college,” said Jessica Steinmann, a 16-year-old senior in Wheaton High’s engineering academy. “This is a way out.”

A Haitian immigrant, Ms. Steinmann now plans to study aeronautical engineering in college.

Andrew Kim, a 17-year-old Korean-American senior in the Academy of Engineering, came into the program in 9th grade as a special education student with poor grades. Now he is breezing through honors-level classes and hopes to study mechanical engineering at either MIT or the University of Maryland Baltimore County.

“My dad actually didn’t want me to go to Wheaton High School,” said Mr. Kim, recalling his father’s fears about “thugs in the hallways.” The school is the poorest in mostly affluent Montgomery County, Principal Kevin E. Lowndes said.

But Mr. Kim said the academy’s rigor has won his father over, and now his younger brother, a 9th grader, has joined the program.

If PLTW hewed to the usual strategy of putting high-rigor academic programs only in well-to-do areas, said Mr. Sturges, the Lockheed engineer and advisory-board president, “you wouldn’t put this [engineering academy] in a high-FARMS [free and reduced-price meal system] area, you’d put it in a no-FARMS area.”

Mr. Lowndes, the Wheaton High principal, said “the most impressive thing” about the engineering program is what it does for average students. “It’s teaching them through a cohort how to be successful in school and why it’s important to take the rigorous courses,” he said.

As Lynne M. Gilli, the program manager of the Maryland Department of Education’s career and technical education instructional branch, put it: “We are not trying to recruit the best and brightest” for PLTW pre-engineering programs. “We’re trying to recruit the top 80 percent.”

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## College dwellers outnumber the imprisoned

By SAM ROBERTS

The number of inmates in adult correctional facilities in the United States has topped two million for the first time, the Census Bureau said yesterday. But in a reversal from 2000, more Americans over all now live in college dormitories than in prisons.

In a detailed look at people living in what the bureau calls group quarters, the census counted 2.3 million Americans in college and university dormitories, 2.1 million in adult correctional institutions and 1.8 million in nursing homes.

The number of state and federal prisoners in 2006 was more than double the prison population in 1990 and up slightly from nearly 2 million in 2000. Women accounted for 10 percent of the inmates in 2006, compared with 8 percent in 1990.

In 2000, the last year that the census measured people in group quarters, inmates in adult and juvenile correctional institutions slightly outnumbered dormitory dwellers at colleges and universities.

According to government figures, more than twice as many young black men are now attending college than are imprisoned.

A number of studies, including one by the Justice Policy Institute, which advocates alternatives to incarceration, have pointed out that over all, more black men are in prison than are enrolled in colleges and universities.

But among 18- to 24-year-olds, while black male prisoners outnumber black men living in college dorms, more young black men are enrolled in college (and live either on campus or elsewhere) than are incarcerated.

In 2003, according to Justice Department figures, 193,000 black college-age men were in prison. While 132,000 black college-age men were living on campus, an additional 400,000 or so were attending college but living someplace else.

Among all 18- to 24-year-old men and women, according to an analysis by Andrew A. Beveridge, a demographer at Queens College of the City University of New York, 93 percent more whites, 40 percent more Hispanics and 29 percent more blacks were living in dormitories than in prisons.

The Census Bureau's 2006 American Community Survey found other wide disparities on the basis of race and ethnicity.

Among people living in group quarters, whites were almost twice as likely to be living in a dormitory than a prison, while Asians were nine times more likely to be in a college dorm than in prison.

But blacks and Hispanics were about three times as likely to be imprisoned than to be living in a dormitory.

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Put another way, about 46 percent of the prison population constituted whites who are not Hispanic, 41 percent were black, comprising Hispanic and non-Hispanic, and 19 percent identified themselves as Hispanic. Since 2000, the proportion of the prison population made up of whites and blacks had declined slightly; the share of Hispanics increased.

Among immigrants living in group quarters, Europeans were more likely to be in nursing homes, Asians in dormitories and Latin Americans in correctional facilities.

In contrast to the prison population, residents of nursing homes were disproportionately women (nearly 70 percent, down slightly from 2000) and white (84 percent).

Blacks accounted for 13 percent, about their share of the total population. Almost three-quarters were 75 and older; their median age was 83.2.

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## After Virginia Tech, campuses rush to add alert systems

By ANDREA FOSTER

Two colleges hit by violence within the past two weeks used new emergency-alert plans -- of different types -- to keep their communities safe.

The shooting and wounding of two students at Delaware State University on September 21 sent resident advisers knocking on dormitory-room doors in the middle of the night. Three days earlier, thousands of people at the University of Maryland at College Park received an alert on their cellphones warning them of a violent crime near a freshman dormitory.

"A carjacking occurred at Easton Hall at 8:48 p.m. this evening," read the Maryland text message, sent 50 minutes after the incident was reported. "The suspects were in a compact car with DC tags." One of the five criminals held a student and his girlfriend at gunpoint before he and an accomplice drove off in one of the victims' cars. The remaining criminals fled in their own car. The university police issued the alert to get help locating the suspects and to warn others on the campus to avoid the criminals.

Mindful of the massacre at Virginia Tech in April, colleges across the country are beefing up campus security. For many, the effort includes a plan to get word of an immediate safety threat on the campus out in minutes. Maryland is among hundreds of colleges that have signed contracts with vendors in the last six months to help push text and voice alerts to students' cellphones in an emergency. At Delaware State, the plan was multipronged, involving personal warnings and quickly printed posters.

While the cellphone alerts are promising because they can quickly reach students wherever they are, the technology usually involves voluntary participation, and students are reluctant to turn over cellphone numbers to campus officials. Realizing that technology can and often does fail, most colleges are combining high- and low-tech methods to advise people of what to do in a crisis.

Virginia Tech was criticized for failing to promptly warn students and others on the campus about the presence of a gunman after he murdered two students on April 16. A few hours later, he killed 30 people and wounded 17 more before killing himself.

For future emergencies, Virginia Tech has decided to use 3n, a Glendale, Calif., company that specializes in community alerts. The company uses a system that allows the university to send warnings to cellphones and via instant-messaging systems to people who have accounts with Yahoo, MSN, or America Online. Users can request to have the warnings delivered three different ways and can have their parents, spouses, and others off campus get them, too. Institutions have been flocking to these vendors. "Almost daily we're signing up another college or university," said Marc Ladin, vice president for global marketing at 3n. Another company, Omnilert LLC, in Leesburg, Va., boasted in July that more than 100 colleges had signed up for its e2Campus text-messaging alert system.

### **Voluntary System**

The emergency-alert services typically ask students and faculty and staff members to enter their contact information via a form on a college Web page. They are told that their telecommunications carriers may charge them for any incoming cellphone messages from the service but that the college will only issue alerts about perilous situations like natural disasters, terrorist attacks, or violent crimes.

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Since cellphones accompany students everywhere, the services -- which typically work with any cellphone carrier -- seem to be a good way to push messages within minutes to the largest group of people on a campus. The services can be set up quickly and cost only a few dollars per student, which some colleges pass on to students. At Maryland, the service is provided through Roam Secure, in Arlington, Va., at a cost of \$60,000 for the first year. Each subsequent year is expected to cost between \$12,000 and \$13,000.

Vendors have the bandwidth to send thousands of outgoing calls at a time. And because the infrastructure for the alerts is off campus, floods, hurricanes, and other disasters that strike a college are unlikely to knock out the system.

But many colleges are finding that only a minority of the campus community provides personal contact information, and that they need a marketing campaign to promote the systems.

At Maryland only 8,000 people on the campus, or about a quarter of the population, have agreed to receive alerts since the system was inaugurated in May.

"We would prefer that more people sign up," said Paul Dillon, a spokesman for the university police. Drew University, in New Jersey, recently established an alert system through Connect-ED, which is operated by the NTI Group, of Sherman Oaks, Calif. As of mid-September, 27 percent of the 3,000 people on the campus had signed up for the service.

Mike Richichi, Drew's director of computing and network services, is hoping three-fourths of the campus population will participate.

Only 20 percent of the 35,000 people at Louisiana State University at Baton Rouge have signed up for an emergency text-messaging service through ClearTXT, in Cary, N.C. University officials have posted messages on the institution's Web site and manned a table in front of the student union to encourage students to participate.

Virginia Tech, where 54 percent of those on the campus have signed up for the service it calls VT Alerts, is taking a similar tack, posting "Have you signed up for VT Alerts?" on the home page of the college's Web site. Next to the message is a picture of a cellphone; users click on the message to get to participation instructions.

Colleges usually don't force students and others to provide their contact information, because vendors with access to the data are not bound by the same federal privacy laws that govern colleges.

Institutions have been more successful getting students to sign up when they have sent letters to parents about the importance of the emergency-notification systems.

The University of Connecticut sent such letters, and 14,000 out of 25,000 people, or 56 percent of those on the campus, provided their cellphone numbers, said Barry M. Feldman, vice president and chief operating officer for the university. Connecticut has also improved security by updating a 50-year-old siren system and installing phones dedicated to emergency calls around the campus.

### **Learning From Mistakes**

Few colleges have actually used their emergency-alert systems. But those that have found they don't always work as planned or satisfy everyone.

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*The Diamondback*, Maryland's student newspaper, criticized the university police for failing to send an emergency alert after several students were sexually assaulted near the campus this month. The crimes occurred only a few days before the carjacking. The suspects in that case are still at large.

Kevin Litten, editor in chief of *The Diamondback*, said the campus police appear to handle off-campus crimes against students with less urgency than those that occur on the campus.

But Mr. Dillon, the university-police spokesman, said the sexual assaults did not warrant cellphone alerts because one victim did not inform police of the attack until 16 hours after it occurred. "The danger was not ongoing or imminent," Mr. Dillon wrote in letter published in *The Diamondback*.

Rice University used its text- and voice-alert system for the first time in August when the tail end of tropical-storm Erin flooded the campus and surrounding streets, bringing traffic around Houston to a halt. The university sent out a cellphone message that within 30 minutes was received by 7,000 students and faculty and staff members. A second message went out to members of the community when the danger had passed. About 65 percent of people on the campus have signed up for the alerts, which are provided by MIR3 Intelligent Notification, based in San Diego.

But many people who received the alert hung up before listening to the whole message. Because the voice was computer-generated, they thought it was an advertisement, said Barry R. Ribbeck, Rice's director of systems architecture and infrastructure. The university has since decided to use an announcement recorded by a person rather than a computer, and to send the message from a phone number that people will recognize as university affiliated.

Rice officials discovered during a recent trial run of the alert system that about 400 people on the campus didn't receive a test message because they were using their cellphones and their voice mail did not kick in. The university is investigating the cause.

"We continue to refine it as we learn more about it," Kamran Khan, Rice's vice provost for information technology, said about the alert system.

The Rice police also warned people of the flooding by blocking roads leading to the campus.

Indeed, low-tech solutions are often highly effective. Though questions have arisen at Delaware State because police had questioned the suspected shooter and then released him, authorities are still applauded for keeping students secure after the crime. Going door to door minutes after the shootings worked well in keeping Delaware State students inside their dormitory rooms, according to S. Daniel Carter, senior vice president of Security on Campus, a Pennsylvania group that monitors campus violence. Still, the university lost no time after the shootings in talking to vendors of cellphone notification services.

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## **Campuses go high-tech to tighten security**

### **Word can get out in a matter of minutes**

#### **Associated Press**

When a masked freshman came to campus at St. John's University with what police said was a loaded rifle sticking out of a bag, the school alerted students via cell-phone text messages within 18 minutes.

And when a suicidal gunman was reported to be on the loose at the University of Wisconsin, the school sent out mass e-mails and took out an ad on Facebook to warn students.

As the school year starts, colleges around the country are applying the lessons of Virginia Tech and using high technology to get the word out fast in a crisis.

"This was certainly a surprise. No one thought that we would be testing this latest technology this quickly for an emergency," said James Pellow, executive vice president of St. John's.

The 20,000-student Roman Catholic school in Queens activated its new text messaging system just three weeks ago. The scare came on the same day that the student paper ran a front-page story on the system, under the blaring headline: "In case of emergency."

This week's incidents at St. John's and UW-Madison -- both of which ended without bloodshed -- underscore how campus security has changed since Seung-Hui Cho killed 32 people on the Virginia Tech campus in April.

Cho shot his first two victims just after 7 a.m. More than two hours later, he massacred 30 people in a classroom building across campus. It was not until 9:26 a.m. that the school sent the first e-mail to students and faculty. An investigative panel concluded that lives could have been saved if alerts had been sent out earlier and classes canceled after the first burst of gunfire.

Since then, hundreds of schools administrations have installed text-messaging systems to communicate with students.

Omnilert, a company based in Leesburg, Va., saw its business surge after the Virginia Tech rampage. It is now supplying more than 250 colleges and universities around the country with instant messaging capability -- a system called e2Campus.

St. John's purchased its inCampuAlert text-messaging system from a California company called MIR3 Inc. over the summer, also in response to the Virginia Tech slayings.

The system sends a message not only to cell phones, but also to digital signs in public places like student unions or dorms, as well as to computers, PDAs and beepers.

"Nearly every major college and university in the country is either in the process of implementing a text message warning system or seriously considering do it," said S. Daniel Carter, senior vice president of Security on Campus, a nonprofit organization based in King of Prussia, Pa., that pushes for safer college campuses.

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School officials have not completely given up more traditional ways of communicating with students.

Last week, after two students were shot and wounded at Delaware State University, campus police and residence hall advisers knocked on doors and told students to stay in their rooms, and warnings were posted on the school's Web site and at dorms.

But it is clear that schools are taking advantage of every innovation they can.

In Wisconsin, officials paid the popular social networking site Facebook \$100 to post a flier on the UW-Madison social network. The ad asked users to click on a link for an update on the campus emergency. That took them to the university's home page, which carried the latest information on the search for a suicidal gunman. Authorities still had not located the man as of Thursday.

In the St. John's incident, text messages were sent so quickly that a student who helped subdue the suspect felt his cellphone vibrate with the information while he was restraining the gunman.

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## **Economists concoct new method for comparing graduation rates**

**BY DAVID GLENN**

A pair of economists at the College of William and Mary have devised a new way of comparing colleges' graduation rates — a method, borrowed from business analysis, that they believe is fairer and more useful than the techniques used by *U.S. News & World Report* and the Education Trust.

The professors, Robert B. Archibald and David H. Feldman, developed an interest in graduation rates as they worked on a forthcoming book about higher-education finance.

"We became curious about the problems with many accountability measures," says Mr. Feldman. "We began to wonder about how you could think meaningfully about graduation rates. The approach that *U.S. News* and most others have used struck us as not really the best way of doing it."

The basic challenge of comparing graduation rates is, of course, that colleges have widely varying missions and student bodies. It is not very enlightening, for instance, to compare the raw graduation rate of an Ivy League university with that of a regional institution whose resources are thinner and whose students are older and less well prepared for college-level work.

Most previous attempts to solve that problem have used a statistical technique known as regression analysis. With that technique, scholars have studied how colleges' characteristics — including their students' average SAT scores and high-school grades, and the institutions' per-student expenditures — generally affect graduation rates. After those broad relationships have been established, using statistics collected by the U.S. Department of Education, and other data, scholars can look at a particular institution and ask: Given this college's student body and resources, is its graduation rate higher or lower than one would expect?

That general technique underlies the "graduation-rate performance" measure in the *U.S. News* rankings, as well as the comparisons published at the College Results Online Web site, which was developed by the Education Trust, an independent research group that works for higher academic achievement among underprivileged groups.

Mr. Feldman and Mr. Archibald believe that a technique known as production-frontier analysis is superior to traditional regression analysis. In production-frontier analysis, scholars look for companies — or, in this case, colleges — that are most efficient at a given level of "input" characteristics. Those highly productive institutions are said to "define the efficient frontier." If another college with identical characteristics — say, average SAT scores of 1150 and per-student expenditures of \$5,000 — has a worse graduation rate, it is said to lag behind the frontier.

To a layperson, that method might not sound very different from regression analysis. But Mr. Archibald and Mr. Feldman say it has several technical advantages. For one thing, regression analysis assumes a straight-line relationship between inputs and graduation rates, whereas production-frontier analysis can reveal if that relationship is actually a curve. And production-frontier analysis encourages colleges to compare themselves to similar institutions with "best practices," whereas traditional regression analysis tacitly encourages colleges to compare themselves to an average — which Mr. Archibald believes might encourage complacency.

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### **Anomalies Found**

The economists describe their method in a paper scheduled for publication in the February 2008 issue of *Research in Higher Education*. A prepublication version has been posted on the journal's Web site, which is restricted to subscribers. An earlier version of the paper is available to the public on Mr. Feldman's Web site.

Mr. Archibald and Mr. Feldman looked at data for 187 colleges and constructed a simple model with two "student characteristic" variables, based on SAT scores and high-school grades, and two "institutional effort" variables: the percentage of faculty members who are full time, and expenditures per undergraduate student.

After plugging in those data, along with graduation rates, for the 187 institutions, the professors determined that 35 of them with strong graduation rates defined the efficient frontier. (Those 35 institutions include Auburn University, Harvard University, Howard University, and Texas A&M University at Commerce.)

The scholars also analyzed the 187 colleges using a regression analysis similar to that used by *U.S. News*. In most cases, they found that their production-frontier analysis and their regression analysis broadly agreed. But they identified 39 anomalies: Twenty-seven institutions, including Emory University and the University of California at Berkeley, had above-average scores when production-frontier analysis is used but below-average scores when regression analysis is used. Those institutions, the authors suggest, might receive unfair negative ratings from *U.S. News* when they are actually performing reasonably well, at a level close to the production frontier. (That concern is hypothetical, because the economists' regression model is not identical to that of *U.S. News*.)

Twelve institutions, including Temple University and the University of Maine at Orono, had below-average scores in the production-frontier analysis but above-average scores in the regression analysis.

In their paper, Mr. Archibald and Mr. Feldman write that Temple, Maine, and the 10 other institutions in that category should not be satisfied with the positive reports they might receive (again, hypothetically) from *U.S. News*. Those colleges are far from the production frontier, according to the scholars' analysis; other colleges with similar student bodies and resources have significantly higher graduation rates. "These institutions should be taking a look at how peer institutions are performing so much better than they are," they write.

Mr. Archibald and Mr. Feldman also noted that in both production-frontier analysis and regression analysis, "tech schools," like Carnegie Mellon University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, appear to do badly. It might be fairer, the economists suggest, to evaluate such institutions separately. Technical institutions, they write, can plausibly "claim that they are producing a different product, a science graduate, and that this product is more difficult and costly to produce than the standard graduate."

### **Praise and Criticism**

The paper has drawn praise from Kevin Carey, one of the creators of the Education Trust's college-comparison system. Mr. Carey, who is now research and policy manager at Education Sector, an independent think tank in Washington, says the two economists' "basic approach makes sense." He is pleased that their model mimics the Education Trust's emphasis on identifying "peer institutions" that colleges might not be aware of.

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"Anything that can provide institutions with more information that will allow them to identify higher-performing peers that they can learn from is a good thing," he says. "Institutions tend to define their peers regionally or, if they're a national institution, whoever they happen to be competing against for students. And the problem with that is that, particularly if you're having trouble with graduation rates, the institution that's most like you, that you could learn from, might be on the other side of the country. You might never have heard of it."

But other scholars have raised doubts about Mr. Archibald and Mr. Feldman's project. Stephen R. Porter, an associate professor of research and evaluation at Iowa State University, wrote in an e-mail message to *The Chronicle* that he is concerned that their model might be too sensitive to small changes in the input variables. For example, he wonders if the list of 35 colleges on the efficient frontier might look very different if the economists had adjusted their expenditure-per-student variable to account for the higher cost of living in urban areas.

"If so," Mr. Porter wrote, "then that calls into question the whole enterprise. How well an institution performs depends not only on student characteristics and institutional effort; performance also depends on the whims of the researcher." (He believes that the *U.S. News* regression model suffers from a similar flaw.)

Mr. Feldman replies that such a criticism would have more sting "if we were really attempting to create a hard ranking of schools." But the point of the new paper, he says, is simply to demonstrate how production-frontier analysis might be done. "We're asking people to view regression results with skepticism, and to accept that there are other ways, however imperfect, to process the information."

Clifford Adelman, a former research analyst at the Education Department who is now a senior associate at the Institute for Higher Education Policy, says the project does nothing to repair the fundamental flaw in most college-graduation measures. The basic flaw, he wrote in an e-mail message to *The Chronicle*, is a "federal formula that excludes from both numerator and denominator (a) students who don't start in the fall term and who start part time (roughly a third of beginning traditional-age entrants, and a higher percentage of beginning older students), and (b) those who transfer in (and transfers, both from community colleges and other four-year schools, account for roughly 35 percent of all bachelor's degrees awarded)." Some of the 187 institutions in the economists' sample, Mr. Adelman noted, "serve considerable proportions of students who fall in both of those groups."

Mr. Archibald and Mr. Feldman agree that there may be serious flaws in the typical calculations of graduation rates. More broadly, they note shortcomings in federal data collection of college results.

"The output data for colleges and universities in the United States is really very bad," Mr. Feldman says. "The only one that we have where the variable is collected in the same way across schools is graduation rates. And we would be the first to point out the weakness of attempting to rank schools on the basis of just one measure."

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## Europe challenges U.S. for foreign students

### Continental universities add more courses in English and step up their recruiting

BY AISHA LABI

Like many Chinese students, one of the first things Guo Weiqiang looked for when he decided to study abroad was a place where he could improve his language skills.

"Everyone wants to speak English in China," he says. But while many of his friends took the obvious route and applied to American universities, Mr. Weiqiang chose a different path: He decided to go to Finland.

His university in his home city of Beijing, the Capital University of Economics and Business, has several exchange programs with Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences, in Helsinki, and all of the courses he wanted to take were in English.

Mr. Weiqiang, who goes by the nickname Gary and whose shaggy hair, hooded gray sweatshirt, and faded jeans would look at home on any American campus, thinks the tendency of his peers to focus on the United States is shortsighted. "In my mind, Europe will overtake America" as China's main trade partner, he says.

But he also admits that his decision to spend a year in Finland was not entirely objective. "I just prefer Europe over America," he says with a shrug.

His is an increasingly common sentiment among international students. Although the United States remains the world's preferred destination for students looking to earn degrees abroad, it is ceding ground to its rivals in Western Europe. Britain has long been the United States' main competitor for international students, but Continental countries like the Netherlands, France, Germany — and yes, Finland — are increasingly popular destinations.

Europe is "waking up," says Bernd Wächter, director of the Brussels-based Academic Cooperation Association, "to the fact that there is a global education market, and to the fact that things like marketing and recruitment are not dirty and unethical activities."

A confluence of events has brought about this interest. A growing number of Continental universities are using English in the classroom; European governments and institutions are more aggressively marketing their education overseas; universities are setting up more partnerships with foreign institutions to create pipelines for prospective students; and virtually all European nations are synchronizing their degree programs so that what was once a hodgepodge of degrees is now more accessible to foreign students. Some countries, such as Britain and the Netherlands, have also extended the amount of time foreign graduates can stay in the country and work.

Europe's heightened focus on international students is driven by the pursuit of both dollars and diversity.

As European nations struggle to finance their largely public higher-education systems, some countries are turning to fee-paying foreign students as one way to augment their coffers. But educators insist that money is not the main goal, saying that their motivation is similar to that of Americans — they want talent and cultural vibrancy on their campuses.

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The tendency of overseas students, particularly at the graduate level, where much of Europe's English-language education is concentrated, to specialize in subjects that are falling out of favor with home-grown students, such as the hard sciences, also makes foreign students increasingly important to the survival of some departments. And a number of countries with aging populations, such as Finland, see foreign students as way to fill university seats.

### **Language Fluency Not Required**

The shift toward English is the longest-standing of the various factors bringing more foreign students to Western Europe, and perhaps the most significant. In the 1950s, the Netherlands became the first non-Anglophone country in Europe to teach courses in English and today offers 1,300 programs in the language. Germany offers more than 500 degree programs in English, catering to its 250,000 international students. In Denmark, one fourth of all university courses are now offered in English.

Even France, with its deep-seated scorn for the creeping Anglicization of its national language, assures foreign students in its marketing brochures that they "no longer need to be fluent in French to study in France."

Finland, while much less visible than those countries, offers a telling illustration of how deeply committed many European universities are to developing an international student body. The Nordic nation of just over five million people offers 400 English-language graduate programs at its 20 universities and 29 polytechnic institutions.

"As a small country, we know we are dependent on knowledge produced outside the country," says Anita Lehtikoinen, who oversees higher education at the Finnish Ministry of Education. "The only way we can attract students is to offer courses in English."

The 9,000 degree-seeking foreign students and 7,100 exchange students enrolled in 2005 represent just a fraction of Finland's 305,000 students, but the country has embraced English as one of the keys to Finnish higher education's future.

Like other Western European nations, Finland faces the demographic time bomb of a rapidly aging population and low birth rate, and universities will soon be increasingly dependent on foreign students to fill their lecture halls.

"Our goal is to double the number of degree-seeking international students here by 2010," says Ms. Lehtikoinen.

Some graduate courses in Finland are already dominated by foreign students. At a two-hour University of Helsinki morning lecture on "The Evolution of Shape" this spring, by Jukka Jernvall, a biology professor, none of the handful of students in the room were Finnish. The 46 slides that flashed across the projection screen all had English captions.

The growing number of foreign students at Finnish universities has many benefits, says Mr. Jernvall, who also teaches courses at the State University of New York at Stony Brook. Finns are famously taciturn, which can pose frustrations for professors seeking to elicit discussion, he says, and adding foreigners to the mix often livens things up.

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"Bringing in foreign students is a key form of outreach" and will yield some of the positive dividends American universities have reaped for so many years, he says. "One of the strengths of the United States is that people move around, they form personal and scientific networks, and there's a dynamism you get from that."

### **Making the Pitch**

To attract overseas students, universities — and entire countries — are marketing their offerings in ways that even a decade ago would have been anathema to Europe's staid higher-education culture. Aggressive recruitment strategies, complete with glossy brochures, inviting online tours, and departments staffed with foreign-recruitment officers, are all relatively new to a region that has traditionally looked no farther than neighboring towns to populate its universities.

A number of countries provide centralized services — available online — designed to be a first port of call for students considering studying abroad. These sites tell students about the country itself, study options in English, visa and work regulations, and the costs students can expect to face.

Finland's ambitious campaign is coordinated through its Centre for International Mobility, which offers prospective international students comprehensive information through brightly colored brochures such as "Why Finland? Some of the Many Reasons for International Students to Choose Finland."

Some European countries are also setting up overseas outposts. The German Academic Exchange Service, a government-financed organization that promotes international educational cooperation, has branch offices and information centers in three mainland Chinese cities and Hong Kong, among other places, helping it to attract roughly 30,000 Chinese students to German universities each year. The Netherlands Organization for International Cooperation in Higher Education has Asian branch offices in China, Indonesia, and Vietnam, which provide information about degree programs, scholarships for which international students might be eligible, and immigration rules.

Although they are essentially competing for the same students, European universities also work together, collaborating through road shows or joint fairs, says Mr. Wächter, of the Academic Cooperation Association, an independent organization focused on improving academic cooperation within Europe and between institutions in Europe and abroad.

The European Commission, the executive arm of the 27-member European Union, has organized seven European higher-education fairs across Asia in conjunction with the British, French, German, and Dutch study-abroad organizations. Dozens of universities are participating.

Aamer Iqbal Bhatti, an engineering professor at Mohammad Ali Jinnah University's Islamabad campus, says Pakistani students are finding out about the attractions of Europe partly through word of mouth, but also because countries such as Germany are relatively strong, economically, which means that students are more likely to find jobs there after they graduate. He also said that some British universities, which have held fairs in Pakistan, offered "on-the-spot admissions."

### **Following the Money**

Money is an increasingly important factor in the Europeans' drive to recruit foreign students. Historically, tuition has either been nonexistent or nominal in Europe, and in most countries, a college education is still free. But as government budgets shrink and expenses grow, universities across the continent are wrestling with the reality that they need to find other sources of income. The Netherlands and Denmark recently began charging tuition to foreigners.

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Britain is the most extreme example. British universities began charging tuition a decade ago, and in September 2006, a controversial increase went into effect that allowed universities in England to charge up to about \$6,000 a year. The rates apply to students from Britain and other other European Union nations, but foreign students can be charged even more.

Britain, not coincidentally, is the most aggressive of the European nations in recruiting foreign students, and the most public about how important these students are to the financial health of its higher education.

Over the next four years, Finland — which does not charge tuition for domestic or foreign students — will allow universities to transform from entirely public institutions to quasi-private ones, paving the way for the likely imposition of tuition in many graduate programs. Universities have lobbied for the ability to charge foreigners tuition, and that eventuality clearly underlies some of the efforts to boost foreign numbers.

Increasing tuition brings with it, of course, the risk that students might seek a cheaper education elsewhere. Markus Laitinen, who directs international affairs at the University of Helsinki, says that universities have to be careful not to flood their campuses with foreign students simply because they see them as sources of revenue.

"We need continuity, a long-term perspective," he says. "We have to look farther than the next academic season."

For some countries, such as Britain and the Netherlands, the financial benefits of attracting large numbers of foreign students are undoubtedly part of what motivates ambitious recruitment efforts. But, says Mr. Wächter, more lofty considerations are a factor for all European countries. "It's the old idea of having ambassadors of the country in the future," he says. "It's about considerations of national prestige and internationalization."

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## **Frustrations with standardized testing boil at annual admissions conference**

By ERIC HOOVER  
Austin, Tex.

Chauncey Veatch, the keynote speaker at the annual conference of the National Association for College Admission Counseling, earned numerous rounds of applause from several thousand admissions deans and high-school counselors who gathered here on Thursday. But the loudest cheer came when Mr. Veatch, a former recipient of the National Teacher of the Year Award, made an offhand comment about the role of testing in education. "Achievement," he said, "is not just success on standardized tests."

Exactly how colleges should use standardized tests in admissions is a question that Nacac, as the association is known, has taken up in earnest. Recently, Nacac created the Commission on the Use of Standardized Tests in Undergraduate Admission, which plans to produce its final report next year.

Speaking at a session later Thursday, the commission's chair, William Fitzsimmons, dean of admissions and financial aid at Harvard University, described the issues the panel has begun to tackle. Although he and other members of the commission stopped short of suggesting that they would ultimately recommend the abandonment of the SAT and ACT, several said they hoped to explore whether other measures, such as subject tests and noncognitive evaluations, could -- and should -- play a more prominent role in the admissions process.

"We're interested in whether there's anything this commission can do to get the world focused on multiple criteria for college admission," Mr. Fitzsimmons said. "We would like to see more emphasis on curriculum-based tests, because we know they predict well."

During a long and spirited discussion, many members of the standing-room-only audience blamed standardized tests for a range of sins: fueling high-school students' anxieties, promoting cheating, and perpetuating inequities in higher education. Several urged the committee to consider the fact that white students score higher, on average, than black and Hispanic students do, and how that disparity affects the admissions process. One high-school counselor said that the SAT had created "an avalanche of gamesmanship that favors those who are socioeconomically advantaged."

Some members of the panel agreed that lingering score gaps had challenged the fairness of standardized tests in admissions. "The SAT for many, if not most, institutions adds predictive value," said Philip A. Ballinger, director of admissions at the University of Washington. "But are there social or cultural effects that outweigh the predictive value?"

The commission also plans to study the effect of test preparation on students' performances on tests. Some panelists complained that there was a dearth of independent research on the issue. "If test prep really makes a gigantic difference, we should let the public know what the truth is," Mr. Fitzsimmons said. "If access to test prep is pretty much confined to the rich, we have an issue on our hands."

Mr. Fitzsimmons said the panel also plans to examine the misuse of tests by high schools and colleges, issues relating to test biases, the links between high-school curriculum and standardized tests, and ways that Nacac might better train its members how to use and evaluate tests -- and how to describe the role of testing to the public.

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Mary Lee Hoganson, Nacac's departing president, said the increasing diversity of college applicants had prompted Nacac to create the panel. "We have this huge dichotomy in this country," Ms. Hoganson said. "More kids are coming to our colleges having taken standardized tests just once. How do you compare that kid to a kid who's tested, tested, and tested?"

The panel plans to present its findings at Nacac's next annual conference, in Seattle. Panelists said its final report would probably contain recommendations for admissions officials and high-school counselors.

"No one," Mr. Fitzsimmons said, "wants to produce a report that's dry, general, and simply disappears on to somebody's bookshelf."

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## Report notes trends in college admissions

By ELIZABETH F. FARRELL  
Austin, Tex.

Common assumptions about trends in college admissions were both confirmed and challenged by a report released on Thursday at the National Association for College Admission Counseling's annual conference here.

Assumptions that more students are applying to more colleges are fueled in part by rising numbers of high-school graduates.

While 3.2 million students are expected to graduate from American high schools this year -- more than ever before -- the proportion of students enrolling directly in college after graduation has not changed significantly over the last 10 years, according to the report. The population boom is expected to continue until 2009, when a projected 3.3 million students will earn their high-school diplomas. The number of high-school graduates is expected to stay at that number until 2016.

The report, "The State of College Admission," is based on data collected from 386 colleges and 1,508 high-school counselors.

Among other findings, it noted that despite the recent decisions by some high-profile institutions (including Harvard and Princeton Universities and the University of Virginia) to abolish their early-decision admissions programs, more students are applying early-action and early-decision over all. Colleges offering students one or both of those options reported an increase for the second year in a row of students applying through the programs. (The association's definitions of early and regular admissions options are available here.)

According to the report, more colleges want to feel wanted by their applicants. The percentage of colleges ranking a student's demonstrated interest in their institution as "considerably important" rose from 7 to 21 percent over the past four years.

The survey also looked at colleges' hiring criteria for admissions professionals. Anyone hoping to land such a job should have proven skills in marketing and public relations, it found: Institutions rated those skills as second only to experience in college admissions.

In the preface to the report, the association, which is known as Nacac, spoke of the hurdles facing the college-admissions field in general: "The presence of an expanding industry of businesses related to college admission continues to challenge this association and its members and affiliates to ensure that the student interest in the admission process is not forgotten."

At the meeting, many counselors who help high-school students apply to colleges bemoaned the number of applications their students submitted. But Nacac's data indicate that students applying to seven or more institutions are still in the minority, at only 18 percent.

Applicants who fret over their SAT and ACT scores may become more stressed if they read Nacac's report: It suggests that colleges are relying more than before on standardized test scores in making admissions decisions. In 1997, only 50 percent of colleges said test scores were "considerably important" in their evaluation of applicants, compared to 60 percent in the most recent survey.

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Then again, those same applicants can breathe a sigh of relief if they are not among the top-ranked members of their high-school class. Class rank, which was important to about a third of surveyed colleges in 1997, is now considered important by less than a quarter of them (23 percent).

After those students have calmed down, however, they can pull more hair out over their college-application essay, which has become even more crucial to a growing number of institutions. While only 18 percent of colleges surveyed considered the essay important in 1997, 28 percent do so now.

The full report is available for purchase on the association's Web site.

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## The college try may not get you into college

By NAOMI SCHAEFER RILEY  
*September 28, 2007; Page W11*  
Chicago

On a beautiful fall day last week, I found myself on the main quadrangle of the University of Chicago, walking with the school's admissions director, Theodore O'Neill, when a freshman girl approached us. "How's it going?" Mr. O'Neill inquired of her orientation week. "This place is Mecca," she answered.

Mr. O'Neill decides who gets to go on this pilgrimage, and there are hundreds, maybe thousands, of high-school seniors who would kill for the opportunity I have today -- to spend an uninterrupted hour talking with him. These eager boys and girls might try to enthrall Mr. O'Neill with their knowledge of the faculty's research, their love of community service, their expansive vocabulary, their passion for wind instruments or veterinary medicine or juggling. *Anything* that might make them stand out.

When Mr. O'Neill joined the admissions staff here in 1981, things were different: The acceptance rate for undergraduates was 70%. Today, it's about half that (even though the freshman class has doubled to 1,300). A quarter-century ago, the freshmen who ended up at the University of Chicago were mostly just smart kids who graduated from decent high schools, a sizable chunk in rural Midwestern towns.

Now it's a different ballgame. This fall, Mr. O'Neill will sort through several thousand applications, trying to find the perfect freshman class. What has made it so much harder for students to get into top colleges? And what is this cutthroat competition doing to kids?

To begin with, there was a baby boomlet around 1990, the year many of today's high-school seniors were born. Also, despite skyrocketing tuition, more parents can afford to send their kids to college, and higher education is more important for gaining secure employment.

Mr. O'Neill says that "students today have a better sense of what it takes to make themselves *look* like good candidates." They take as many AP classes as they can, prepare for the SATs, polish their essays, etc. And many parents pay tutors and coaches to help with this effort. But he tells me it is an "open question" whether the university's applicants are actually of a higher quality than those of 25 years ago. How many areas of American life are there today in which people work harder and spend more money only to see the same results they did decades before?

Well, that's not quite true, according to Mr. O'Neill, who proudly points to what he thinks is one of the biggest improvements to the University of Chicago in the past few decades -- diversity. The school used to be about two-thirds male and overwhelmingly white. Now the gender ratio is about even, and 7% of the student body is black, 9% is Hispanic and 1% is Native American.

How has this happened? For one thing, Mr. O'Neill tells me, he has de-emphasized the SATs in the admissions process. They're used as "corroborating evidence" for what his staff learns from teacher recommendations, high-school records and essays. Ultimately, Mr. O'Neill believes that "there are some things that are more important than test scores."

A few months ago, black presidential hopeful Barack Obama, a former U of C lecturer, told George Stephanopoulos that he didn't think his daughters should be treated differently in the college admissions process from any other "advantaged" kids. But Mr. O'Neill disagrees. He would give the Obama girls "a

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break" anyway: "Those children, for all their privileges, will have interesting things to say about American society based on what I'm assuming their experiences are."

On Tuesday, Mr. O'Neill participated in a meeting of the Education Conservancy, which is "committed to improving college admission processes for students, colleges and high schools." Hosted by Yale University, the meeting consisted of 100 college administrators discussing how to get "beyond rankings." College "ranksters" -- as Conservancy president Lloyd Thacker refers to U.S. News and similar surveyors -- can be blamed, he argues, for much of the crazy atmosphere surrounding college admissions.

At a news conference after the meeting, some of the administrators complained that rankings didn't provide enough data or tried to quantify things that aren't quantifiable. What was needed were more "descriptive" measures of colleges. (Mr. O'Neill expressed the same sentiment when I spoke to him.) The group is trying to develop a system in which high-school students would be asked to evaluate their own "learning styles," and then a Web site would "match" them with colleges providing the right sort of learning environment.

Leave aside the silliness of asking a high-school student for this level of self-knowledge or the fact that most colleges sound the same when describing themselves. The real problem is that such a system would add another fuzzy element to the admissions process.

As it is, colleges already discount so many of the concrete measures. In addition to ignoring test scores (when it's convenient), admissions officers have a hard time keeping track of which high schools are rigorous and which are not. The U of C has freshmen matriculating from 900 different high schools this year. What does an "A" mean at any of them? "We don't know," Mr. O'Neill replies. What about the essays? More and more kids pay coaches to compose them. The U of C has picked some odd topics to get around this -- "Write an essay somehow inspired by super-huge mustard" or "Use the power of string to explain the biggest or the smallest phenomenon" -- but coaches can get creative, too.

I suspect that what bothers kids most about the process is not the cutthroat competition they face, but the arbitrary nature of the whole thing. You struggle to give schools what they want. But ultimately folks like Mr. O'Neill may simply ignore your grades or your test scores, focusing instead on whether you've had the right "experiences" or have the right skin color to be admitted to the sacred city.

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## Training the future nursing faculty

When it comes to shortages in nursing, the conversation typically involves practitioners. In academic circles, however, you're just as likely to hear about another pressing concern: Many nursing professors are nearing retirement, and there aren't enough candidates ready to take their place.

One in five nurse educators plans to retire within three to five years, according to the National League for Nursing, a membership group that includes nursing faculty.

Or, take this snapshot: In Iowa, upwards of 40 percent of all nursing faculty are likely to end their careers within the next 5 to 10 years, according to Rita Frantz, dean of the University of Iowa's College of Nursing. In that program, the average age of the faculty is about 55. "That's typical," Frantz said. "Many nurses work for years before getting their master's degree, and then are doing their doctoral work into their 40s."

That's why Iowa's program is shifting its emphasis away from undergraduates and toward students who can soon enter the teaching ranks — a move that Frantz said is addressing the faculty shortage problem.

The school is increasing its capacity to train students who are seeking a master's level degree in nursing, and at the same time cutting in half (from 150 to 75) the number of bachelor's of science in nursing candidates admitted per year. Instead of making the primary focus undergraduates who are likely to leave the state after graduation, Frantz argues, why not concentrate on students who are more apt to stay?

"In order to increase faculty and licensed clinicians who will work here, this reconfiguration of our program will better meet the needs of the state," she said.

Persuading students to choose teaching can be a tough sell. Nursing faculty are generally paid less than their counterparts in hospital or clinical settings who have the same level of education. Many full-time faculty take on extra administrative or teaching positions to boost their salaries.

Because nursing schools adhere to strict student-to-faculty ratios (often 10:1 or 12:1), a shortage of teachers could make it impossible to educate more nursing students.

"Faculty shortage is the biggest problem we have," Geraldine "Polly" Bednash, executive director of the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, said earlier this year. "Most of the focus is on producing people at the bottom of the pipeline, but we aren't looking out for the future."

Iowa's nursing school is the only one in the state that prepares nurse educators at the doctoral level. The new plan, approved by the institution's Board of Regents, includes adding a doctor of nursing practice degree, which prepares nurses to take advanced hospital leadership and faculty positions. Frantz emphasized that this track isn't meant for research — the program has separate space for Ph.D. candidates.

The school is continuing to develop a program that enables students who have already earned a bachelor's degree in a non-nursing field to earn a master's degree and pursue a nursing career. For the past several years, Iowa has piloted the so-called "second degree" program, which is being reconfigured as an entry-into-practice master of nursing science program that gives students who have met prerequisites a higher degree after 18 months.

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Frantz said graduates of the program will be prepared to be nurse educators in undergraduate programs, or to work in community colleges. And because many will be older students who have started other careers, the hope is that they are more likely to stay in state to teach.

“The level of preparation needed for leadership that’s required in nursing these days mandates that nurses be prepared at the master’s level,” she said.

Iowa will also increase enrollment in its RN-to-BSN program that educates registered nurses throughout the state through online courses. The program is increasing its online teaching capabilities and targeting potential students who likely aren’t right out of college.

Since the school’s changes were just announced, Frantz said she has yet to hear significant feedback. She defends the decision to cut back on undergraduate slots, asserting that training more master’s students who can sit for a licensure exam will not decrease the number of students the school is preparing to become licensed clinicians.

Both Beverly Malone, chief executive officer of the National League for Nursing, and Robert Rosseter, associate executive director with the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, said decreasing bachelor’s-level numbers to make way for a greater graduate-level focus isn’t a trend.

Enrollment in baccalaureate nursing programs, after dipping below 80,000 nationwide in the late 1990s, has steadily increased since — rising to 133,578 in 2006. Still, more than 42,000 “qualified” nursing students were turned away from these and graduate programs due to a lack of faculty, clinical placement sites and classroom space, Rosseter said.

Iowa’s decision “may be the school’s best option when it comes to addressing the nursing shortage and making the best use of limited resources. The cutting of baccalaureate nursing slots ... is all about the resources an institution receives, not whether they value the baccalaureate degree.”

— Elia Powers

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## **Bills target rising college textbook prices**

**One of the bills' authors, Assemblyman Jose Solorio (D-Santa Ana), said his bill was shaped in part by his days at UC Irvine. It focuses on publishers as well as the practices of college bookstores and faculty.**

By Larry Gordon, Los Angeles Times Staff Writer  
September 24, 2007

The high price of college textbooks is a hot issue, not just among disgruntled students weary of spending more than \$100 on an economics or a chemistry tome. In Sacramento political circles, efforts to lower those costs have produced two pieces of legislation that are competing for Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's signature.

The main authors of both are Democrats, and the two legislators say they are trying, among other things, to get more advance information to college professors about the pricing of books and whether additional material in new editions is substantial enough to merit ordering them. Requiring new editions makes it tough for students to buy or trade cheaper secondhand copies.

But the two bills vary enough that one has the support of the Assn. of American Publishers and the other is backed by the California Public Interest Research Group, which has sharply criticized the publishing industry.

The Republican governor has until Oct. 12 to decide whether to sign one, both or neither of the bills. Schwarzenegger has not taken a position on the matter, according to his press office.

The College Textbook Affordability Act, SB 832, written by state Sen. Ellen Corbett (D-San Leandro), was being advocated by CalPIRG in a series of meetings last week at college campuses, including USC and UC Santa Barbara.

The bill requires publishers to provide faculty a price list of all books in a subject area, an estimate of how long the publisher intends to keep the texts on the market and a list of substantive changes the newest editions contain. Those lists would also be posted online.

Corbett said her bill was influenced by her own difficulties in finding out about book pricing and edition information when she taught political science in Chabot-Las Positas Community College District in Northern California.

"I had to dig for the costs," she said. Getting easily accessible information to faculty "could have a huge impact" on what books students are required to read, she said.

The other bill, AB 1548, whose main author is Assemblyman Jose Solorio (D-Santa Ana), is called the College Textbook Transparency Act.

It requires that publishers print on or in new texts a summary of differences between the current and previous editions and provide faculty, upon request, a printed or online list of wholesale prices and edition changes.

Under Solorio's bill, campus bookstores at public universities would have to disclose their retail pricing policies. It also prohibits anyone from receiving anything of value in exchange for ordering a certain book. And it restricts the resale of instructors' editions, because those contain test samples and answers.

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Teachers would then want new editions with different tests.

Solorio said his bill was shaped in part by his days at UC Irvine, where he was student body president and knew firsthand how difficult it was to afford textbooks. He wants to focus not just on publishers but also to address the practices of college bookstores and faculty.

"I'm holding everybody accountable," he said, describing his bill as more comprehensive than Corbett's.

Solorio said he voted for Corbett's bill, though she abstained on his. He added that he would be happy if the governor signed either one.

"I just want to ensure over time that the price of textbooks comes down," Solorio said.

In addition to the publishers' group, his bill has the support of the California Postsecondary Education Commission and the California State Student Assn., among others, according to analysis provided by the Legislature.

CalPIRG, which sponsored Corbett's bill, contends it is the better legislation because it requires lists of prices and editions to be posted on websites; listing such information on the Internet is optional in Solorio's bill. The requirements of Corbett's bill would go into effect upon signing, while many of the required disclosures in Solorio's bill would not go into effect until 2010, student activists point out.

Sahil Chaudry, president of USC's undergraduate student government, was among speakers at a campus event last week urging the governor to sign Corbett's bill. Other supporters include the UC Student Assn., the California State Student Assn. and the Community College League of California, according to legislative analysis.

Bruce Hildebrand, the publishers association's executive director for higher education, said his organization strongly opposed Corbett's bill. He predicted it would actually cause prices to rise, partly because of what he called its unnecessarily broad requirements for price and edition change reporting. Much of that material is already available on the Internet, he said.

CalPIRG's sister organization in Massachusetts said it surveyed nearly 300 professors in that state last year and found that book prices were not easy to find. For professors who met with sales representatives, 77% said those salesmen rarely or never volunteered the price. Of those professors who use publishers' websites to research textbooks, less than half said those sites typically list prices.

In 2004, a CalPIRG survey reported that students in California and Oregon spent an average of \$898 a year for books and that the average cost of a new textbook was \$102.44. Student leaders said they expected those figures to have risen significantly since then. A federal report two years ago said that college textbook prices had climbed at twice the rate of inflation over the last two decades.

A wide range of efforts are afoot across the country to tame price increases. Some schools offer students the option of renting books and have organized book swaps and websites that offer secondhand texts. In May, an advisory committee to Congress recommended a variety of measures to control textbook costs, including more extensive use of books available on the Web.

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## **Delaware State earns praise for quick response after shooting on campus**

By MARTIN VAN DER WERF

When the police at Delaware State University received a call at 12:54 a.m. Friday that shots had been fired outside a dormitory, the emergency plan kicked in almost at once. By the time the police chief, James T. Overton, arrived on the campus at about 1:10 a.m., other administrators were calling resident assistants or knocking on their doors, telling them to keep students in their rooms.

By 2 a.m., Mr. Overton was briefing a group of vice presidents and other top administrators. He woke the president at his on-campus home to tell him of the incident. Officers wrote an official warning, made paper copies, and taped those notices to the outside doors of all campus buildings. By 5 a.m., with the suspect still on the loose, all classes and other events were canceled for the day.

A month after a panel criticized the response of Virginia Tech administrators and police officers to the shootings there last April, the police at Delaware State may have created a new template for how university officials should respond to a shooting. At the same time, the incident on the Dover, Del., campus brought the 3,500-student historically black institution back into the spotlight for a reputation it has been trying to control: an association with gun violence.

Guns are not allowed on the campus. Students who have them are immediately suspended, and may be expelled and prosecuted, said Mr. Overton. But at least one student was carrying a weapon when two groups of students converged on the campus early Friday after a late-night card game and a snack at an on-campus cafe.

The gunman fired four to six shots, the police said. Two students were struck. They have been identified in news reports as Shalita Middleton and Nathaniel Pugh, both 17, and both from Washington, D.C.

According to news reports, Ms. Middleton was listed in serious condition at a local hospital. She has been unable to speak with police officers. Mr. Pugh was also still hospitalized on Sunday. It was unclear if he had spoken with authorities.

University officials said they could not confirm the injured students' identities.

### **Earlier Incidents**

In August, two students from the university and another who was about to begin classes there were shot to death in Newark, N.J.

Some news reports about Friday's shootings quoted students as saying that the incident took place after arguments between rival groups from Washington and northern New Jersey, as part of a dispute that occasionally flares up on the campus. Mr. Overton said that the motive was still under investigation, and that there appeared to be no connection between the Newark slayings and the most recent shootings.

In another recent incident involving weapons on the campus, two masked men, one armed with a shotgun, entered a dormitory room last fall and stole a video game.

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Two shootings on campus in 1992 led the institution to put security guards at all four roads that enter the campus. At night and on weekends, anyone entering the campus must show identification. That security system, unusually tight for a college campus, is still in place.

In the past, the university has been criticized for being too slow to respond to potentially dangerous incidents on campus. But this time, "they absolutely did their best, and did a lot of things right," said S. Daniel Carter, senior vice president of Security on Campus, an organization in Pennsylvania that monitors campus violence.

While some have complained that faculty and staff members and students living off the campus were not notified quickly enough, Mr. Carter said that the officers focused on what was most important -- those on the campus.

"When you have an at-large shooter on your campus, the lesson is you've got to secure your facilities," he said. Even if a person with a gun has no other targets, "they're armed, they're dangerous, and they may not be making the best decisions."

The police at Delaware State were still searching Sunday for the suspected gunman in Friday's shootings. "We strongly believe it is a student," said Mr. Overton.

### **Lessons Learned**

The shootings were the first on an American college campus since Seung-Hui Cho, a student, killed 33 people, including himself, at Virginia Tech in April. A panel that studied the shootings said the police and administrators should have considered closing the Blacksburg, Va., campus after Mr. Cho shot his first two victims, in a dormitory. He shot the other 30 in a classroom building some two and a half hours later.

Since the Virginia Tech tragedy, police departments, on campuses and off, have been consumed with trying to ensure that their emergency-notification procedures are updated, said Raymond H. Thrower, Jr., director of public safety and security at Gustavus Adolphus College, in Minnesota, and president of the International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators. More campus police departments, he said, are doing more exercises with other local police departments so each gets comfortable with the work styles and priorities of the others.

At Delaware State, the police found, in a review of procedures after the Virginia Tech shootings, that their contact numbers for administrators and other police and crisis-management agencies were out of date, said Mr. Overton. They have since been updated. All of the institution's 14 armed police officers and 13 unarmed security guards were trained in August in how to respond to active shootings.

"What we learned is you have to get the word out quickly," he said.

The dispatcher's office was told on Friday to give details to anyone who called in. Leaflets describing the incident were posted not only on college buildings, but also on the windows of a number of recreational vehicles parked on university property by racing fans in town for a Nascar event. Dover International Speedway is adjacent to the campus, and the university allows some fans to park on its property.

"Several things worked in our favor," said Mr. Overton. "It was at night, so I didn't have students headed to campus. We have a secure perimeter, so we could almost immediately stop all traffic from coming onto campus. And since there was really almost no one at work, we didn't have to have any sort of mass evacuation."

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Delaware State is set to sign a contract this week to start a campuswide emergency-warning network that will be delivered through text messages. Many other colleges across the country have already installed similar systems, or are in the process of buying them.

But the advent of that sort of technology should not make colleges too comfortable, said Ann H. Franke, a lawyer and risk-management consultant to colleges.

"Most colleges need to get better," she said. "They need to practice."

The Delaware State incident showed that colleges need to respond quickly to shootings, but that is pretty obvious, she said. "A lot of colleges have not thought through when they should use their emergency warning networks. Should they send a message when there is a forcible rape, or an arsonist, or a hate crime on campus?"

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## Young Iowans: Debt causes exodus

### Graduates leave state for better-paying jobs, panel members say

By JASON CLAYWORTH  
REGISTER STAFF WRITER  
September 26, 2007

Student loan debts and how they might force young Iowans from the state in search of better-paying jobs elsewhere loomed as one of the issues Gov. Chet Culver's professional youth commission pondered Tuesday at Drake University.

"As long as student loans are as big as they are around here, we are forcing people to make that decision" to seek employment outside of Iowa, said Kyle Carlson, chair of the Generation Iowa Commission.

Carlson, 27, is a recent graduate of Drake University's law school and works as an attorney for Planned Parenthood of Greater Iowa. He carries roughly \$200,000 in student debt, which works out to monthly payments of more than \$1,000.

That's more than his mortgage payments.

"I could go to Chicago, do the same job and make \$30,000 more a year, but I don't want to," said Carlson, who grew up in Waverly. "I'm probably in the minority, but I think we can do things to make this state a better place to live."

Lawmakers this year created the Generation Iowa Commission to find ways to attract and retain young residents. Tuesday marked the second meeting of the youth commission, which will provide lawmakers in January with an outline of possible solutions.

The issue is critical to the state on multiple levels, including the state's economy. Estimates from Iowa Workforce Development show the state will have 100,000 skilled-labor jobs without people to do them within the next five years.

The shortfall of workers is largely due to the state's aging baby boomer population, currently between the ages of 43 and 61, who will begin retiring in large numbers in upcoming years.

On Monday, lawmakers held their first Skilled Worker Shortage Study Committee meeting, where they generally agreed that the problem could cripple the state's economy. Major Iowa employers such as Rockwell Collins and John Deere told legislators Monday that more than 50 percent of some segments of their work forces are eligible for retirement within the next five years, which they said will leave a gap in qualified and skilled workers.

Generation Iowa commission member Sara Morrow said incentives for businesses as well as better marketing of existing state programs could help attract and retain young Iowans. Morrow, 29, is a Spencer resident and a program director for the YMCA. She stays in the state, she said, because Iowa offers a high quality of life.

"I've always been here. My family is here. I like the small-town feel" of Iowa, she said.

Officials from the Iowa Department of Economic Development told lawmakers Monday they are in touch with about 215,000 Iowa alumni who have left the state. Part of the goal is to bring them back.

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State Rep. Dave Deyoe, a Republican from Nevada, sits on the Generation Iowa board as a lawmaker liaison. He attended Tuesday's meeting.

"I've got a son who is in high school and a daughter who is in college," he said. "I hope we can find a way for them and other kids that age to find a way to stay in the state."

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## **U. of California campus benefits from referring students to a for-profit college**

By PAUL BASKEN

At a time when some American colleges stand accused of illegally profiting from unsavory associations with businesses involved in awarding federal student aid, at least one major public university has found an apparently legal partner: a for-profit university.

For the past five years, the University of California at Irvine has had an arrangement with Capella University, an online for-profit institution based in Minneapolis, in which Capella pays the public university \$500 for every continuing-education student referred to it. Capella has paid at least \$12,000 under the program.

The U.S. Education Department considers such arrangements legal. But critics are not so sure, saying the payments appear to violate the spirit, if not the letter, of a general federal ban on per-student recruitment incentives.

Such an agreement between two universities "raises serious questions about the breadth of potential conflicts of interest at college campuses using funds, at least in part, from federal student aid," U.S. Rep. Thomas E. Petri, a Wisconsin Republican and former vice chairman of the House of Representatives education committee, said when informed of the relationship by *The Chronicle*.

The University of California refused to answer questions about either the payments or related documents that have been uncovered. But a spokeswoman for the Irvine campus, Cathy Lawhon, issued a written statement after six days of consultation with university lawyers, in which she said: "We believe that our business relationship with Capella was conducted in full compliance with the law. However, we have asked legal counsel to review the agreement."

In addition to accepting the money from Capella, the University of California at Irvine appears, according to e-mail messages and a student who uncovered them, to have tried to hide the payments.

While setting up the relationship, Gary W. Matkin, dean of continuing education at Irvine, wrote an e-mail message in September 2002 to Capella's president, Michael J. Offerman, to tell him that Capella's "lawyers still have problems with our marketing arrangement, even though we have been careful not to talk about per-student arrangements."

"At no time did either Capella nor UCI ever tell me" about the referral payments, said the student, Jeffrey La Marca, of Rancho Santa Margarita, Calif., who enrolled at Capella in 2003 after earning three certificates in information technology at Irvine.

Mr. La Marca discovered the fee structure when he obtained e-mail messages and other documents through a public-records request as part of an unrelated lawsuit against Capella.

### **Safe Harbors**

Under its 1992 renewal of the Higher Education Act, Congress banned commission-based recruiting by colleges that receive federally guaranteed student aid. The intent was to take away an incentive for recruiters, motivated only by the commissions they would receive, to enroll students in programs they

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were not prepared for. Senate staff members at the time described cases in which recruiters had visited welfare offices and low-income housing projects, hoping to find people willing to sign up as college students and receive federal aid.

But the Bush administration published regulations in November 2002 that modified the ban on incentive payments. The regulations created a series of conditions, known as "safe harbor" exemptions, that expanded the types of recruitment payments that would be allowed under the law.

Capella's relationship with Irvine, which started in the fall of 2002, dates from that period.

Under the 2002 regulations, universities are not considered to be among the entities barred from receiving per-student payments for recruiting, said an Education Department spokeswoman, Jane Glickman. She said that the department would not discuss individual cases such as the arrangement between Irvine and Capella, but that "the payment of a per-student fee for the marketing services is not in itself a violation of the incentive-compensation prohibition."

The administration's regulatory interpretation of the law is improper in the view of the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers, which led college and student representatives in arguing against the administration's language in 2002.

The regulations "would be establishing a policy that will undoubtedly result in future scandals," the groups -- including the American Association of State Colleges and Universities and the United States Student Association -- warned at the time.

The discovery of the arrangement between Irvine and Capella comes as American colleges and student-loan companies are facing a series of criticisms and investigations concerning their handling of more than \$83-billion annually in federal student aid. Much of the pressure has been driven by New York State's attorney general, Andrew M. Cuomo, who has been exploring whether the lenders have been providing illegal inducements to win student-loan business.

The chairman of the Senate education committee, Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, Democrat of Massachusetts, issued a critical report on student-loan marketing practices early this month that repeatedly complained about lenders paying referral fees to colleges based on the volume of private loans taken out by students. "Such arrangements violate college officials' fiduciary duty to provide neutral, unbiased loan advice to students, since the kickback the college receives creates a strong financial incentive to steer students toward a particular lender," the report says.

The payments to Irvine by Capella raise similar concerns, said Barmak Nassirian, an associate executive director of the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers. "Even if it is legal, is it seemly and appropriate in light of everything else that's going on?" Mr. Nassirian said.

### **Credit and Blame**

Irvine and Capella describe their partnership as an articulation agreement, a common type of alliance in which one institution agrees to recognize the credits and course work of another.

Mr. La Marca, who is 49, enrolled at Capella hoping to use his credits from Irvine toward a master's degree. He withdrew after completing one quarter, complaining about the quality of a new software program that operated Capella's online service, and sued for tuition reimbursement. The case is pending.

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Like Ms. Lawhon, of Irvine, a spokesman for Capella initially declined to comment, then issued a written statement. In the statement, Michael Walsh said 36 students had "taken advantage of the articulation agreement over the past five years."

The payments by Capella help "offset the costs to Irvine for informing their students and alumni of the articulation agreement," Mr. Walsh said. More than 70 percent of Capella students receive some form of financial aid, including government-backed loans, the university says on its Web site.

Both Ms. Lawhon and Mr. Walsh declined to say whether their universities were involved in similar practices with other institutions.

The Education Department believes it is "not uncommon" for colleges to sign contracts with other colleges to develop and provide academic programs, with compensation paid on a per-student basis, Ms. Glickman said.

The University Continuing Education Association agrees. "There are a lot of different models," said Kay J. Kohl, the group's executive director and chief executive, for working out how one institution reimburses another.

But the Irvine contract with Capella appears to be substantially different in that colleges don't typically pay each other purely for student referrals, said Virginia Moxley, a director of the Institute for Academic Alliances, which advises colleges on such arrangements.

"I have had conversations with for-profit" institutions, said Ms. Moxley, dean of the College of Human Ecology at Kansas State University, "and their models and the public models just don't mesh easily, to form a good partnership."

"I think it could be done, but maybe what you tend to end up with is something more like this -- UC-Irvine has become a vendor supplying students to Capella," she said.

The potential conflict in such a relationship is higher if the students were not informed about the fee payments, or their academic adviser was, Ms. Moxley said.

Representative Petri said he shared such concerns. Colleges should accept students "based on academic merit -- not on a college's financial gain," he said, and students should be made aware of any fees exchanged.

For such a small amount of money, Ms. Moxley said, Irvine may now be regretting the arrangement.

"This is not a relationship I would get into as a public institution," she said.