

Texas Returns to Affirmative Action

Readjustment and confusion in the aftermath of recent U.S. Supreme Court decisions

By Carl Irving

AUSTIN, TEXAS

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS' flagship campus here plans to restore affirmative action in undergraduate admissions in the fall of 2005, using guidelines the campus administration believes to be consistent with last summer's 5-4 decision by the U.S. Supreme Court.

To support this change, the admissions office has gathered evidence that white students dominate most smaller, discussion-sized classes, which have few if any African American or Hispanic students.

A recent month-long survey of 3,600 current undergraduate classes, each with five to 24 students enrolled, found that 90 percent had one or no African Americans, and 43 percent had one or no Hispanics. Less than two percent of the

classes had one or no whites, who are expected to become a minority of the state's population next year.

UT-Austin officials believe this discovery vividly illustrates a problem that the Supreme Court majority wants the nation's campuses to address—the lack of a

Restoring affirmative action will require changes in Texas' seven-year-old, race-neutral admissions law.

“critical mass” of underrepresented minority students, enough so that they “do not feel isolated or like spokespersons for their race.”

The decision agreed with challenges to



JANA BIRCHUM, BLACK STAR, FOR CROSSTALK

This year's freshman class at the University of Texas-Austin is 16 percent Hispanic, four percent African American. Returning to affirmative action should increase those numbers.

University of Michigan undergraduate admissions policies, which had involved racial quotas. But in directly addressing the issue of affirmative action in higher education admissions for the first time in 25 years, the court said racial and ethnic backgrounds for underrepresented minorities could be used as one positive factor among others in deciding which stu-

dents to admit.

“The court itself didn't define ‘critical mass’ but it means having more than one student (in a class),” said UT-Austin Director of Admissions and Vice Provost Bruce Walker. But he added, “We won't return to the affirmative action of 1996, because [selecting students] has to be indi-

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Can Athletics and Academics Coexist?

Colleges and universities wrestle with big-time sports

By Don Campbell

ATHENS, GEORGIA

IT'S HALFTIME here in Bulldog Nation, where the University of Georgia football team is hosting the University of Alabama-Birmingham.

What was supposed to be a cakewalk for the Bulldogs—it's homecoming, for Pete's sake—is deadlocked at 10 to 10. In the 50 plush sky suites that hover over 92,000 fans in Sanford Stadium, there are

University of Georgia prides itself on being an institution that increasingly excels in both academics and athletics.

nervous looks and muted grumbling. But the mood brightens as the elite of Bulldog boosters turn their attention to chafing dishes piled high with catered delicacies. Wine is flowing almost as freely as the

sweetened iced tea, and in the sky-suite foyer, dessert tables overflow with delectable sweets.

Suddenly, a buzz sweeps the crowd as an elevator door opens and out bounds Uga VI, Georgia's beloved snow-white English bulldog mascot, trailed by a retinue that includes several photographers and a beefy, uniformed police officer. At 55 pounds and sporting a 36-13 record after four years of prowling the sidelines, Uga (pronounced Ugg-ah) is the sixth of his family called to duty—all five of his mascot ancestors are buried in marble vaults on a hillside outside the stadium.

Straining at his leash, the red-sweated Uga paws and snuffles his way toward the UGA Alumni Association suite, where he dutifully poses for dozens of pictures under the watchful eyes of his handlers and the Athens-Clarke County po-



ROBIN NELSON, BLACK STAR, FOR CROSSTALK

92,000 fans pack the University of Georgia's Sanford Stadium for most football games. The university fields winning teams and graduates a high percentage of its athletes.

lice officer.

For football fanatics and social gadflies alike, it doesn't get much better than this. No matter that the "Dogs" will only manage a meager three-point victory, or that down on the field, UGA President Michael Adams is getting booed by fans upset that he is forcing Georgia's legendary athletic director and football coach, Vince Dooley, to retire at the end of this school year.

The Saturday afternoon scene in Athens is a quintessential snapshot of how

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In This Issue



PETER ENSENBARGER, BLACK STAR, FOR CROSSTALK

In less than two years as president of Arizona State University, Michael Crow has won wide support on campus and in the state for what he calls “A New American University.” (See page 6.)

NEWS FROM THE CENTER

Clark Kerr and Howard “Pete” Rawlings, who died in recent weeks, were founding directors of the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education. The tribute to Kerr that appears below was written by Sheldon Rothblatt, professor emeritus of history and former director of the Center for Studies in Higher Education, at UC Berkeley. The article about Rawlings was written by Tim Maloney, a lawyer and former colleague of Rawlings in the Maryland legislature. It is reprinted with permission of the author and of the *Washington Post*, where the article first appeared.

Clark Kerr

ENDOWED with an enviable constitution, Clark Kerr, President Emeritus of the University of California, died at age 92 about midday on the first of December 2003. He had always appeared indestructible, his intellectual powers invariably on automatic pilot. He survived nasty attacks from the political left and right, and overcame the humiliation of an abrupt dismissal from office by the Board of Regents.

At his death, his renown was never greater. He had been ailing for a year, his vision impaired, and yet until the end he worried perhaps as much about the promise of America as he worried about himself. Alexander the Great is said to have wept because he had no more worlds to conquer. Clark Kerr wept, literally, because his ability to carry out a lifetime’s dedication to promoting a moral America through a moral higher education system was finally being taken from him.

Some readers may be startled by the characterization of Kerr as a “moralist.” Detractors associate him with a managerial ethos, an economist’s preoccupation with resource allocation, a policy analyst’s passion for problem-solving. One well-known journalist has disparaged him as an “elitist,” a word certain to raise hackles in a rancorous age. His neologism “multiversity” strikes some as a semantic barbarism.

None of these criticisms comes near to capturing his essence. But let us acknowledge that a careless reader of the Godkin Lectures given at Harvard in the spring of 1963 might be misled into suspecting his motives. The Federal Grant University, he said then, had no



poetry, but it was an “historical necessity.” It was new, it was different, and it was not to be dismissed but understood.

Yet this was said with a keen sense of loss, the Quaker and puritan at war with the realist. The philosopher John Stuart Mill might have made Kerr into a cross between the two great thinkers of his own age, the poet-metaphysician Samuel Taylor Coleridge and the legal reformer and utilitarian Jeremy Bentham. Like Bentham, Kerr wanted universities to be “useful”; and like Coleridge he wanted to preserve and advance their integrity.

The fact is that the fundamental thrust of Kerr’s entire life was to make certain that universities retained principles to which he himself was permanently loyal. The celebrated State of California Master Plan for Higher Education of 1960, for example, was more than a “treaty” or set of compromises between contending systems. It was also a blueprint for expressing basic national values of the first order.

He defined them in an essay first published in 1992. They were drawn from Jefferson’s conceptions of democracy and talent, from Franklin’s Enlightenment program of useful knowledge and from Keynes’ ideas about mixed social objectives. A later thinker, John Rawls, focused Kerr on theories of justice. In the Godkin Lectures he wondered out loud whether the unparalleled wealth and success of the modern university would lead to unbridled institutional aggrandizement. Money, he once wrote, was not the root of all evil, but it was the root of some.

Kerr certainly enjoyed attention, but never for its own sake. As he grew older, he liked to talk, but he was fundamentally a shy man who declined to write a conventional autobiography. In his recently-published memoirs, he made the University of California the pro-

The fundamental thrust of Kerr’s entire life was to make certain that universities retained principles to which he himself was permanently loyal.

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Howard “Pete” Rawlings

MARYLANDERS have just witnessed history, the conclusion of a public life truly worth living. It was, of course, the life of Delegate Howard “Pete” Rawlings, who died at 66 on November 14 after a four-year battle with cancer.

Although well known around Baltimore, Rawlings was not a household name in the Washington, D.C. area, even though his influence in Prince George’s and Montgomery counties was profound. For more than 25 years in the state legislature, the last 11 as chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, Rawlings had arguably more effect on Maryland residents than most of the Free State’s governors.

Rawlings helped create Maryland’s higher education reorganization act and was the impetus behind the restructuring of troubled public school systems in Baltimore City and Prince George’s County. He helped shape the modern Maryland Medicaid program and was the father of the state’s housing policy.

But Rawlings was much more than the sum of his extraordinary accomplishments. His career is an example of the power of moral courage in public office.

A mathematician by training, Rawlings arrived in Annapolis in 1979 after having taught in Maryland colleges and having worked as an activist on the desegregation of higher education. He loved to remember when he felt his first calling for public office.

“I was speaking at a faculty rally and gave a great speech,” he’d explain. “And when I finished, I set my faculty ID card on fire. The crowd loved it.”

Once Rawlings came to Annapolis, he didn’t have to light matches to be heard, nor did he strive to be a crowd pleaser. On the floor of the House, he would speak quietly and deliberately. The usually boisterous House would grow still, knowing that his message would be filled with hard truths and wise counsel.

Rawlings grew to be the legislature’s expert on the budget. He demonstrated the political maturity to put fiscal integrity ahead of his social justice commitments, as painful as it



often was. As governors and fiscal leaders came and went, he became the institutional memory on the budget, lending the reassuring sense that the state’s finances were under adult supervision.

Rawlings’ values were shaped in the Poe Homes, a public housing project in Baltimore, where he grew up. He remembered that “there were six of us, three in a bed, and life was good and secure and safe, and everyone was part of your family.” His parents educated all six children on his father’s postal worker salary, and each child went on to a substantial career.

Rawlings’ rise from Poe Homes became the formative experience of his political life. It shaped his commitment to education and housing and gave him the strength to overcome entrenched opposition to his reform efforts.

But the delegate’s greatest legacy will be in the public schools. Rawlings devoted a decade to reforming Baltimore’s public schools, ordering management audits and impounding funds, until finally, in 1997, the legislature overhauled the system management and appropriated \$254 million in new money. Baltimore schoolchildren now are posting higher test scores for the first time in a generation. Rawlings spearheaded similar efforts in Prince George’s.

For his courageous efforts, Rawlings was brutally criticized by groups that might have seemed to be his natural allies: labor, the NAACP and Baltimore officials. He took their criticisms in stride. He was that rarest of politicians, one for whom political fear did not exist. He loved to tally up the cards and letters that the interest groups would send to fight his latest reform initiative. And when the attacks turned personal, he would offer a lovely smile, knowing that the intellectual arsenal of his opposition had been exhausted.

The modern political culture frowns on the kind of legislative life led by Pete Rawlings. No political consultant would recommend it. Today, many politicians spend their days on fundraising call lists, cocktail parties, “photo op” public hearings and partisan posturing.

This stands in stark contrast to the life of Pete Rawlings. He had no ambition for higher office. Instead, he had a deep ambition to bring a better life to the poor children of Maryland. He leaves behind a historic record of accomplishment, but perhaps his deepest legacy will be his example on how to live a public life, fully, wisely and courageously. ♦

Howard “Pete” Rawlings’ career is an example of the power of moral courage in public office.

KERR from preceding page

tagonist. His prose style was spartan, reflecting his modesty; but it was also a highly-developed instrument for penetrating through the skin of issues that concerned him. These were the nature and condition of higher education in the United States, but it needs to be emphasized that this interest was inseparable from wider issues relating to the development of industrial democracies, his scholarly field before entering campus administration.

He had a grasp of the international dimensions and exhibited, in his plentiful writings and speeches, a remarkable understanding of many different kinds of social and political institutions. What is equally remarkable is that for a man constantly in the public eye, as much after his departure from the UC presidency as before, it must be stressed, his observations were uncommonly free of the academic clichés freely circulating today. Platitudes and commonplaces did not interest him. He sought deeper explanations.

As head of the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, he oversaw the production of a bookshelf of studies on every aspect of higher education. He deserves credit for virtually establishing contemporary higher education policy studies by gathering around him many of the most eminent names in the field: Martin Trow, Burton Clark, Neil Smelser, Fred Balderston, Henry Rosovsky, Seymour Martin Lipset, Earl Cheit, Alain Touraine and others who could be mentioned. His influence, and that of California, was spread around the nation and the globe.

He traveled and lectured. He was often enough in the state capital of Sacramento, meeting with legislators, civil servants and staff. He was frequently overseas. He continued to advise chancellors and presidents, and all the while he revisited his former ideas and principles, testing them under new circumstances, measuring them against recent changes. He entertained, but an evening at dinner with the Kerrs was also an oddly formal occasion where guests were expected to discourse on significant public developments.

Kerr's attention to detail is legendary—otherwise, he could hardly have made a career as an industrial relations mediator and arbitrator. But what is so astonishing about him was his capacity to express, in those short, sharp bursts, the core beliefs underlying the development of American democracy as they were actually embodied in the humdrum workings of institutions. As an intellectual, he possessed a

Lumina Foundation for Education has awarded the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education a one-year \$71,000 grant to learn more about students who enroll in postsecondary education, particularly those who borrow student loans, but fail to complete their educational programs. Lawrence E. Gladieux, consultant to the National Center, will serve as principal investigator, and Joni E. Finney, vice president of the National Center, will oversee the project. ♦

holistic understanding of how different institutions with different missions were nonetheless part of an organic structure. No campus or system could succeed without regard to the health of all the others. This is possibly easily said, but he meant it, and what is more, he worked out a practical framework for advancing the goal.

He appreciated the great range of American colleges and universities. He held degrees from Swarthmore and Stanford before taking his doctorate at Berkeley. It was Harvard, very likely, more than Berkeley or the other UC campuses that was his archetypal multiversity. But his archetypal college was Swarthmore. In the euphoria of institution building in the late 1950s and 1960s, he dreamt of a public campus committed to undergraduate teaching. He poured his soul and his hopes into the collegiate university of UC Santa Cruz.

Readers of Kerr's many essays and lectures or even his memoirs may well overlook the intensity of his emotional investment in Santa Cruz, or the profound disappointment about it that he carried to his grave. Sadly, he came to believe that no public university in the United States could ever achieve the excellence of undergraduate education typical of a private liberal arts college. It was not merely that Santa Cruz was unfortunately born when the counter-culture flourished, but that the values traditionally associated with historic forms of liberal education were simply unattainable within the parameters of a public research multi-campus system that he himself had encouraged. Reluctantly, if at all, he finally accepted the irony of this conclusion.

The holistic character of his thinking baffled those whose own views about higher education were more limited. Also, he did not wear his heart upon his sleeve for daws to peck at. Yet those with whom he closely worked were loyal, affectionate and admiring. When the burdens of office were removed, the freedom from day-to-

As head of the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, Kerr oversaw the production of a bookshelf of studies on every aspect of higher education.

day affairs allowed the moralist side of him to flourish. If anything, his national and international reputation rose, and his university remembered him with tributes, buildings and prizes given in his name.

These were not tardy gifts, compensation for past deeds. They were the recognition of an active life, disinterested in the best sense, a continuous effort to explore the moral limits of the modern university. Was it accessible to all who were qualified? Was it just? Was it publicly legitimate? Was it genuinely committed to education and learning? Did it respect history? Could it triumph over greed and self-interest?

He did not wish to live in a university without poetry. Was he, after all, more Coleridge than Bentham? ♦



Jean MacGregor (left) and Barbara Leigh Smith, winners of the 2003 Virginia B. Smith award.

Virginia B. Smith Award

Barbara Leigh Smith and Jean MacGregor received the Virginia B. Smith Innovative Leadership Award for 2003 at a ceremony in San Diego last November. The award, which carries a stipend of \$2,500, recognizes individuals who have brought about successful change in higher education.

Smith and MacGregor are co-directors of the Pew Charitable Trusts' National Learning Communities Project. Learning communities link courses around themes and enroll a common group of students.

The award is named for, and honors, Virginia B. Smith, President Emerita of Vassar College. It is administered by the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) and the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education. ♦



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A Helping Hand

The Community College of Denver reaches out to first-generation students

By Kay Mills

DENVER, COLORADO

BEFORE ENTERING the Community College of Denver, Jacob Garcia wasn't much interested in school. Now he is. The reason is the school's program that helps first-generation college students succeed by combining the efforts of case managers, counselors, tutors, classroom instructors and fellow students. "People e-mail you to let you know about things," Garcia said.

The Community College of Denver program provides help with financial aid applications, registering for classes, finding tutors, plus other academic and emotional support.

"Teachers support you. Before, I didn't want to go to school. Now that I'm here, I don't want not to go."

Garcia, 22, had dropped out of high school, worked for a supermarket, cut hair for awhile and eventually earned a high school equivalency diploma. Now that he has custody of his five-year-old daughter, Garcia "has to think of her future," he said. "My mom freaks out, seeing me do homework, because I never did before. She doesn't think I'll finish because so often I've not finished before. I want to prove to her she's wrong. I also want to be a good dad that my daughter sees doing something positive."

His story is not unique. First-genera-



Virginia Jimenez, a graduate of the Community College of Denver, now serves as a "student ambassador" in the first-generation student program.

tion students make up about 65 percent of the 13,529 students at this community college, which shares a downtown Denver campus with Metropolitan State College and the University of Colorado-Denver. Although not all first-generation college goers need or want to participate in this program, support services are available to all.

In 2002-03, the retention rate for students in the first-generation programs was a remarkably high 84 percent, an achievement that drew praise from Frank Newman, who heads the Futures Project at Brown University.

"What Denver has done that is more effective than others is reaching out to these students," Newman said. "Information is key. Remedial education is key. Financial aid is key. And very often for many of these students, child care is key."

The Community College of Denver program is eight years old. Students who sign up receive help filling out financial aid applications, registering for classes, and finding tutors if needed, plus other academic and emotional support. Since these students are the first in their families to attend college, their parents or spouses may not understand the complicated forms, the deadlines, the need for time to study, free of distractions.

"Many families don't believe it is financially possible" for their children to go to college, said CCD president Christine Johnson. Their children help support their families and the families need the money. "When you don't have food or might get evicted, the rent takes priority over college tuition," she said, adding that newer immigrants might feel insecure about college. "There's a confidence barrier," a lack of tradition, Johnson said. "You don't just give them a financial aid form—you help them fill it out. We have to demystify all this paperwork." There's a lot of handholding, she said, "but we call it purposeful handholding."

Each entering student is tested for placement in English and mathematics courses. Remedial work is mandatory for those students who need it, and some students must take four developmental math courses to get to the level they need for their degree.

Virginia Jimenez, 51, who serves now as a "student ambassador," working with about 35 first-generation community college students, tells them, "I understand the problems with taking the math." When Jimenez began classes at the college in 1997, she had just been laid off as a community worker because of state budget cuts. She had not taken math since ninth grade, and the prospect of getting up to speed was daunting. Jimenez did it—with the help of this program—and completed an associate's degree. Now she is working toward a bachelor's degree at neighboring Metropolitan State.

"We have to start at the bottom. Our



Peggy Valdez-Ferguson (center), a first-generation college student herself, now runs the Access and Success Project at the Community College of Denver.

high schools didn't prepare us," Jimenez said. "So many students are really embarrassed at having to start with fractions. They don't want to do it. But I tell them that's exactly where I started. It's so stressful." But the college's instructors are very helpful, she said, adding that without them, "I would have given up a long time ago."

This support from students like Jimenez who have made it through the community college is a key element in the school's work with newer students, according to Peggy Valdez-Ferguson, director of the Access and Success Project, which the first-generation student program is called. Valdez-Ferguson, who once was a first-generation student herself, said, "When students go to the orientation program, they see people who look like them. They can motivate them in a way that I can't because they are students, too."

"First-generation students tend to go to college near their homes," Valdez-Ferguson said. Students at the community college have the advantage of familiarity with the campus they share with the four-year schools, so transferring to one of them isn't as intimidating as it might otherwise be, she added.

The program began in 1995 with a \$1.3 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education under Title III of the 1965 Higher Education Act, aimed at strengthening colleges serving a high percentage of Hispanic students. Byron McClenney, who was the college's president then and later headed Kingsborough Community College in Brooklyn, said that it was one of a set of initiatives to reach the poorest people of Denver, disproportionately Hispanics and African Americans (CCD's current student population is 33 percent Hispanic and 17 percent African American).

A school must not only seek out minority students, McClenney said, "but also must figure out how you ensure once you've got them in the front door that they have a chance for success." Students must be engaged so that they feel part of a family, so that they feel comfortable, he added.

Toward that end, said Valdez-Ferguson, the college not only hired the case managers and developed the "student am-

bassador" aspect of the program, it also set up what are called "learning communities." These are, in effect, two courses in one—and credit is given for two courses—as two instructors teach their subjects together. All first-generation students in the program are required to take at least one learning community class. In these smaller settings, students have a chance to get to know their classmates and instructors, while receiving the help they need to succeed academically, Valdez-Ferguson said.

David Flores and Jose Puertas teach one of these linked learning community courses, combining advanced academic achievement with introduction to computers. Flores' part of the course covers self-awareness, the importance of diversity, goal setting, time management, critical thinking and note-taking. As a final examination, each student must talk about a career he or she might want to pursue, with the research done on the Internet and the report made as a Power Point presenta-

"I thought I was too old to go to school. I want to be somebody different, not waiting tables for the rest of my life."

—JOSE LUIS RIVERA,
A COMMUNITY COLLEGE
OF DENVER STUDENT

tion. Toward that end, Puertas is teaching the students how to use computers and software.

"We don't want students to be cut out of any educational opportunity because they lack skills or comfort levels" with computers, Puertas said.

Jose Luis Rivera, 39, a student in this class, said, "I'm a waiter. I thought I was too old to go to school." But, he added, "I want to be somebody different, not waiting tables for the rest of my life." A few weeks into the semester, however, he said he was "really stressing" because he was having trouble getting homework done. In addition to his full-time job, Rivera takes

care of his two-year-old son several mornings a week. “I was ready to just walk away.” But his instructors told him to do what he could. “‘You come here to learn,’ they said, ‘don’t worry about your grade.’ Now I don’t have that pressure.”

Rivera said that when he started at CCD, he “didn’t even know about financial aid. I thought I was going to pay for it myself.” Staff at the first-generation students program suggested he apply for financial aid, and he got it. The money covers his tuition and book costs.

Once its first grant ended in 2000, Valdez-Ferguson said, the program was absorbed into the college’s own budget with the new name, the First Generation Student Success Program. But school officials saw that once the students finished their first year at CCD and moved into the major subject areas, the college was losing them. “Students sometimes experience academic culture shock” as they move from introductory courses into specific academic disciplines, Valdez-Ferguson said. Retention was lacking in such fields as college-level algebra, biology, chemistry and information technology. So Valdez-Ferguson and others at the college knew they had to take steps to increase the number of graduates.

A second federal grant of \$1.9 million for 2000–2005 pays for what now is called the Access and Success Project, under Title V of the Higher Education Act. Valdez-Ferguson said this project aims at infusing into the college’s four academic centers—language arts and behavioral sciences, business and technology, educational advancement, and health, math and science—the concepts developed for helping the students through case managers. The idea of education case managers came out of the social services model, she said. “To some people that’s a negative, but at our college it has always been a valued term.”

Two case managers work with first-year students, and each has responsibility for about 300 students. These case managers know firsthand the kind of apprehension students may face. Debra Valverde started at CCD in 1989 and said she would just attend her classes and go home. “I had no guidance when I came in. I was an introvert.” One of the counselors asked her to help with an orientation program for high school students. “I think that was what hooked me, her getting me involved with the school. That helped me come out of my shell,” and eventually into a job as a case manager.

Once the students finish their first year, or 12 college-level credits, and begin an academic major, they are picked up by a case manager like Petia Ouzounova. Her parents had attended college, and she earned a degree at the University of Sofia in Bulgaria, did some freelance interpreting and taught, then came to Denver to study business. “The system was so different. I felt isolated. In Europe, we had always been with the same group. I suffered serious depression,” she said. In essence, she was a first-generation student because the American system was totally new to her.

Then she was hired to work in CCD’s

writing center, which provides tutoring for students who are having problems with essays and other forms of composition. She later became a case manager for students in business and technology. European students gravitate toward her for advice when they are confused. “I had some women from the Czech Republic. You give them a book, they’ll get an A, but the different processes throw them.”

Ouzounova’s colleague Michael Johnson said that the first-generation college students with whom he works face many barriers. For example, in the Hispanic culture, if someone’s grandparent dies in Mexico, the student needs to be gone for two weeks in order to pay proper respect. “In the traditional system, if you miss two weeks of college, you’re gone,” Johnson said.

But in these cases, and another in which a student’s younger brother was killed, Johnson was on the phone and sent e-mail messages to professors “to get them to cut them some slack. We’re seen as enablers who want to keep people in college who don’t belong there. But we can’t let all of the problems of life knock these students off the track. We’re an advocate. We’re representing them. These are not just another case of ‘the dog ate my homework.’”

The student ambassadors help as well. Cindy Mora, 41, and a junior majoring in criminal justice at Metropolitan State, works with 30 to 40 students at a time, making sure they take academic improvement courses, e-mailing them, trying to keep them on track. “A lot of times you don’t realize how much affects students’ lives,” she said. Mora had not been to school in some time when she came to CCD in 1999 and had to refresh herself on many things, so she knows that in counseling students “you have to remember where you were coming from when you started.”

Making sure that students keep current on financial aid deadlines is a task shared by the case managers and student ambassadors. All agreed that if students can get

Last year, the graduation rate for students in the first-generation program increased by 38 percent.

money off their minds, they can concentrate on their classes. Attending CCD costs a full-time student—one taking 12 credit hours—\$944.65 per semester in tuition and fees. This fall about two thirds of the students in the First Generation Student Success Program received financial aid, not including loans.

The program tracks its students through a database refined by Chantee Montoya, 26, who is working toward a CCD degree in computer programming. “The old system wasn’t very user-friendly” when she took it over in August 2002, Montoya said. She has adapted it so that the students can be flagged if they need some kind of academic intervention, and



“There’s a lot of handholding, but we call it purposeful handholding,” says Christine Johnson, president of the Community College of Denver.

tracked to see if they have sought tutoring or have filed financial aid applications. The system also documents the contacts that case managers and student ambassadors have made.

Last year, the graduation rate for students in the first-generation program increased by 38 percent, said Valdez-Ferguson. That contributed to an overall increase of 14 percent in degrees or certificates awarded by the Community College of Denver, as well as a 45 percent increase in graduates of color.

In 2002, 345 CCD students transferred to four-year institutions, almost half of whom were from underrepresented groups. The first-generation programs are just beginning to track their students to four-year institutions, so there is not yet any information about how well they are doing.

The college’s work with first-generation students has won national recognition. For example, the Policy Center on the First Year of College named CCD one of 13 “institutions of excellence.” This center, based at Brevard College in western North Carolina, seeks to encourage colleges to redesign their first-year programs so that students have better experiences. “The beginning student experience at many campuses isn’t given much thought,” said the center’s executive director, John Gardner. When students are bored by their classes or not engaged, they quit. “From the public policy point of view, there’s the issue of student attrition—the drop out and flunk out rates. That’s costly to the state, the institutions, the families and the students.”

Gardner said that if he had to point to one reason for CCD’s success, “it would be that people at that college are incredibly proud of their mission, and their mission is remediation—developmental education. Most American colleges are embarrassed about that. They want to hide it.” But CCD, he added, “is just extraordinary in this aspect—so respectful of their students and so proud of them.”

Valdez-Ferguson is constantly pushing for improvements in the program—such

as doing more to help students find what careers might be right for them. And she is still trying to “reform the academic culture” by encouraging development of more of the linked-learning community courses. But she is concerned about what Colorado’s large budget deficit, and the resulting cuts in higher education spending, might mean for the program.

Despite growing enrollment, CCD received a 17 percent cut last year and another 14 percent this year, leaving the college with a \$32 million operating budget, \$12 million of which comes from federal contracts and grants. To cope, the college increased class size and eliminated classes for which fewer than 14 students enrolled. Some vacancies in student services went unfilled until this year. “All students and all programs felt the impact of fewer staff and more students,” said CCD president Christine Johnson, but the college has continued to provide financial support for the first-generation student initiatives.

Johnson wants to strengthen what existed when she took over as CCD president in 2000. A first-generation college student herself, Johnson is a former English and Spanish teacher and high school principal in the Denver schools. She hopes to see more of that system’s graduates go on to college. Fifty-six percent of Denver high school graduates need remedial work, she said, so CCD, working with the school board and superintendent, is giving students a basic assessment test as juniors. This allows time for students to improve their English and math in the senior year. “They ought to be remediated in high school so that when they graduate they are ready,” she added.

Johnson said that she is aggressively raising money to support the first-generation programs. “The worst thing we could do is fill the students with hope and then say we don’t have quite enough money for you.” ♦

Kay Mills, a former editorial writer for the Los Angeles Times, has written four books, including one on the Federal Head Start program.

Ambitious Agenda

Michael Crow has brought an entrepreneurial spirit to Arizona State University

By Kathy Witkowsky

TEMPE, ARIZONA

LAST OCTOBER, on the sort of pleasant evening that helps explain the Phoenix area's phenomenal growth, Arizona State University President Michael Crow led a procession of university boosters carrying flickering candles and high hopes up "A Mountain," on the edge of campus. The event was part of homecoming weekend, and when the crowd amassed in front of the oversized stone and concrete A for which the mountain is named, Crow obligingly talked a little trash about the University of California, Berkeley, whose football team the ASU Sun Devils were to face (and ultimately suffer a crushing loss to) the next day.

Crow spent many a Friday night playing nose tackle for his high school team in Gurnee, Illinois, so he is no stranger to football. But it was strategy board games that consumed the rest of his weekends, games he found so engaging that he and his opponent often played straight through until Monday morning, without bothering to sleep.

Now the 48-year-old Crow has brought that same intensity and drive to ASU, where, as president for the past year and a half, he has focused his formidable strategic skills on creating what he calls "A New American University"—a research institution not separate and distinct from its community, on the traditional European model, but one that is firmly embedded in it: not only physically, but socially, culturally and economically.

So, as he gazed out upon ASU's main Tempe campus and the carpet of lights that spread into the Valley of the Sun beyond, Crow was thinking about a lot more than the upcoming contest at Sun Devil Stadium. He was thinking about his own bold game plan.

"I don't look just at the campus—that's



Jake Flake, speaker of the Arizona House of Representatives, is a strong supporter of ASU President Crow.

too narrow," said Crow, as he took in the enormity of the sprawl from his vantage point on A Mountain. "I look at the whole valley and think about how we can impact everything."

To Crow, the fact that metro Phoenix is growing at the fantastic rate of 100,000 or more new residents each year and is projected to be home to some 8 million people within 30 years isn't a daunting liability. It is a compelling asset. So, too, is the fact that ASU itself didn't become a full-fledged university until 1958.

"It's a brand new city with a brand new university on a huge scale," said Crow, who came to ASU from Columbia University, where he was executive vice provost. That might seem like a poor trade, but not to Crow. It's true that Columbia, Harvard and a dozen other prestigious institutions have become the model, the "gold standard" by which other American research universities measure themselves, he said. But, he added, "They are insufficient to alter the trajectory of the world." And that is exactly what Michael Crow wants to do, beginning with Phoenix.

The economy. The environment. Housing. Health care. Technology. Education at all levels. You name it, and Crow intends to have ASU involved. "The university is a critical catalytic force for the evolution of a successfully evolving creative city," Crow said. "If you build a university disconnected from the community, both will fail to achieve greatness."

And Crow doesn't want to settle for anything less.

His ambitious approach starts by embracing the massive influx of population flooding the area, building programs at three satellite campuses—including a new downtown Phoenix campus—to increase total enrollment from 57,500 to about 95,000 by 2020.

Simultaneously, he plans to improve the school's lackluster academic reputation by strengthening and creating selective high-quality programs, such as its honors college, within the larger university setting. He also intends to more than double annual research expenditures, from \$150 million to between \$300 and \$400 million, generating more overhead dollars for the university as a whole while targeting issues that affect the region, such as health care and environmental sustainability. Much of that research will take place at Crow's brainchild, the Arizona Biodesign Institute, a \$500 million interdisciplinary enterprise focused on the life sciences, which is already under construction and which Crow believes has the potential to spawn a whole new industry in Arizona.

In short, Crow declared, ASU "is not going to be a place. It's going to be a force." And if ASU hasn't yet earned that moniker, Michael Crow certainly has.

Almost invariably, Crow is described by those who work with him in terms associated with awesome natural phenomena. Hurricane Crow. Energy in human form. A whirlwind. It is not just his energy and



Arizona State President Michael Crow expects the \$500 million Biodesign Institute, rising behind him, to generate new research in the life sciences.

the furious pace at which he works that impresses people; it is also his keen intellect, and his commitment to building an entrepreneurial university that truly serves its community.

"He's what we need more of in higher education," said David Longanecker, executive director of the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education. Longanecker met Crow in the summer of 2002, shortly after Crow had taken office. "I was expecting an uppity guy from New York who didn't know much," said Longanecker. Instead, he said, he was bowled over by Crow's charisma, vision and strategic thinking.

"I think he will reshape ASU into this new image of a great American urban university," Longanecker predicted. What's more, he said, "I think there's a very good chance that it will be a new model—a model that others will follow."

Crow may have spent 11 years at Columbia, but he is as multi-faceted and anti-elitist as the university he seeks to create. His mother died when he was nine, and he and his four siblings were raised by their father, who was a crewman on Navy airplanes, and by an assortment of relatives. They moved constantly, all across the country, and Crow attended some 17 schools before he graduated from high school and enrolled at Iowa State University. There, he majored in political science and environmental studies but dabbled in science and engineering and lettered in track and field.

Crow went on to earn his Ph.D. in public administration with an emphasis on science and technology policy from Syracuse University, but unlike many academics, he is an unapologetic consumer of popular culture, including television. He is also an avid outdoorsman, who has led backpack trips in Montana, has done some orienteering in the mountains of New York state, and still tries to mountain bike at least once a week. This past fall, he hiked the

Grand Canyon rim to rim.

Crow believes that schools like ASU have a moral imperative to improve the world. ASU is "a knowledge factory," but producing knowledge for its own sake isn't good enough, said Crow, adding that he once directed a project whose title, roughly translated, was, "Why Does Science Always Screw Poor People?"

He encourages his administration and faculty to work together across disciplines to transform both themselves and their communities. "We better get to work because our job is to attack these problems. Not just study them—attack them," Crow told a roomful of faculty at the kickoff workshop for ASU's new Stardust Center for Affordable Homes and the Family. This is one of half a dozen interdisciplinary

The Phoenix area is growing at the fantastic rate of 100,000 or more new residents each year.

centers founded on Crow's watch that are largely focused on addressing regional needs.

Crow's innovative yet practical approach to his job is one of the reasons why the Arizona Board of Regents is so delighted with him.

"Michael Crow has brought an entrepreneurial spirit to Arizona State University, and at the same time he has energized the entire Phoenix community around ASU and its future," said Chris Herstam, president of the Arizona Board of Regents. "His energy, his intelligence and his ability to articulate a vision for ASU and the state of Arizona has been remarkable."

Crow took over as ASU president in July 2002. He replaced the much-beloved

from preceding page

and highly respected Lattie Coor, who retired after what is widely acknowledged to be a successful 12-year tenure at ASU. Still, said regents president Herstam, “We were facing enormous obstacles.”

The three state universities—ASU, the University of Arizona and Northern Arizona University—were at capacity-straining enrollments and were facing state budget cuts and private competition. Talented faculty members were leaving, and infrastructure was crumbling. “Business as usual would not suffice,” Herstam said.

Crow had not been included on the original list of presidential candidates, but his name cropped up because he had worked as a consultant for ASU’s research planning during the previous decade. The regents were impressed both with his record at Columbia, where he had turned the science and technology departments into money-makers, and by his innovative ideas for ASU’s future. He quickly became the regents’ top choice, even when they had to pony up \$468,000 for his annual compensation package—a big jump from the \$320,000 that Lattie Coor had earned.

“You get what you pay for,” said Herstam, adding that the regents gave Crow a “glowing” review in his first-year

“Michael Crow has energized the entire Phoenix community around ASU and its future.”

—CHRIS HERSTAM, PRESIDENT OF THE ARIZONA BOARD OF REGENTS

performance evaluation last September.

By all accounts, Coor had set the university on the right road. But Coor was an incrementalist, whereas “Mike skipped second, third and fourth gear and put the pedal to the metal,” said Rob Melnick, ASU’s associate vice president for economic affairs, who has worked closely with Crow in quantifying the university’s potential economic value to the state and the region.

Right off the bat, Crow took advantage of the regents’ desire to end their cookie-cutter approach to the state’s three public universities. ASU, he said, would welcome growth, leaving selectivity to its historic rival, the University of Arizona, which is preparing to cap enrollment, and allowing Northern Arizona University to focus on undergraduate education.

But to grow, ASU needed money.

Crow didn’t waste any time finding some. First, he helped convince the regents to approve a sorely needed 39 percent tuition hike, bringing annual in-state undergraduate tuition to \$3,500. (Despite the increase, ASU is still less expensive than two thirds of state institutions; the impact of the increase has been partially offset by a 14 percent set-aside for financial aid.) Then, last spring, Crow shocked longtime education watchers when he pried \$440 million for research infrastructure out of

the conservative, cash-strapped legislature; \$185 million of that is earmarked for ASU, the rest for U of A and NAU.

Crow’s quest for dollars has not stopped there. He has secured \$120 million in private donations—including two record-setting \$50 million gifts. And he has set in motion more than \$300 million worth of construction projects that will add a million square feet of research space to the university.

The idea is to make ASU less dependent on state funding by allowing it to generate more of its own revenue—to move it from a state “agency” to a state “enterprise.” But all along, Crow has insisted that money was simply a way to improve the entire university and by extension, the Phoenix community.

He has put to rest early concerns that he was too focused on science and technology, with such diverse interdisciplinary projects as the Stardust Center for Affordable Homes and the Family; the Center for the Study of Religion and Conflict; the Center for Law, Science and Society; and the Center for the Study of Rapidly Urbanizing Regions. By steering a \$10 million gift to the creative writing program last fall, Crow showed his willingness to support educational excellence in all forms, even those that generate more ideas than revenue.

He also has become personally involved in the faculty tenure process, which has been tightened; given raises to the top ten percent of faculty in an attempt to retain them; offered early retirement to long-time faculty in order to free up funds and spots to hire new talent; and hired several highly regarded administrators. One of these is former SmithKline Beecham executive George Poste, an internationally renowned scientist who is directing the Biodesign Institute.

Perhaps most importantly, Crow has created a buzz and an excitement about ASU that reaches far beyond the campus, into corporate boardrooms and the halls of the state capitol.

“When I see what Michael wants to do for this state, I just get goosebumps,” gushed Phoenix home builder and philanthropist Ira Fulton. Fulton has long been a generous supporter of education, but although he had studied at ASU, he had never given a penny to the place until Crow was hired. “I can read people, and Michael Crow is a really unusual, talented person,” said Fulton. “I instantly liked him because he’s a do-it-now guy. No nonsense.”

So when Crow asked for Fulton’s help implementing his vision, Fulton didn’t hesitate: In June, he gave \$50 million to endow the Ira A. Fulton School of Engineering, and shortly afterward gave another \$5 million to endow a chair in the College of Education.

“That’s just a starter. He’ll be hearing more from me down the road,” said Fulton, who has pledged to use his influence to raise another couple hundred million from the business community.

Crow is no stranger there. Shortly after arriving in Phoenix, he joined the executive council of the Greater Phoenix Economic Council, and “from the first executive

council meeting he attended, we have been forever changed,” said Council CEO and President Rick Weddle. “Our discourse around significant matters was immediately elevated.”

What Michael Crow is doing at ASU “is not only significant. It’s embedded. It’s symbiotic,” said Weddle. “We see the university and the regional economy changing, shifting and evolving in lockstep. Our goals, our vision, are fundamentally aligned.”

And there may be no better spokesman for those goals than Michael Crow. He is not a great orator, and he can sometimes appear defensive, arrogant and humorless in front of a crowd. But one-on-one or in small groups, he is said to be extraordinarily personable and inspiring.

Nowhere was that more apparent than at the state capitol last spring. Most long-time education observers were stunned when Crow defied naysaying skeptics and persuaded the Republican-controlled Arizona legislature, which faced a deficit in excess of a billion dollars, to invest \$440 million in research infrastructure at the three state universities. His pitch was simple: Give the universities the means to become less dependent on the state, and in turn they will generate money not only for themselves but for the entire metro area.

“Frankly, I bought it. I bought his philosophy,” said Jake Flake, Arizona’s conservative Republican Speaker of the House. A lifelong rancher, Flake puts Crow’s ideas into agricultural terms to explain why he fought a hard-won battle for the bill: “You can’t get a corn crop without planting corn. And you can’t get a calf crop without putting bulls on your cows. And that takes money.”

Historically, Arizona’s universities have submitted budgets that included requests for a vast array of needs and programs. But Crow abandoned that approach and instead came up with a proposal that, beyond existing operating funds and enrollment growth, focused exclusively on money for research infrastructure.

“It was brilliant,” said University of Arizona President Pete Likins. So brilliant that, immediately upon seeing the ASU proposal, Likins dumped his own more traditional budget in favor of Crow’s approach. Recalled Likins: “I said, ‘Damn! He’s right! We should not blur our message by asking for a lot of things.’”

Still, the odds didn’t look good.

A headline in the weekly *Phoenix New Times* dubbed it “Mission Impossible,” and virtually everyone Crow spoke with agreed.

“I was told we had no chance of success,” the president said.

Undaunted, Crow organized a full-court press on behalf of his research infra-



Rick Weddle, president of the Greater Phoenix Economic Council, thinks Arizona State University and the Phoenix area are “evolving in lockstep.”

structure bill. He became a common sight at the capitol, lobbying alongside U of A president Peter Likins and NAU president John Haeger. ASU also hired lobbyist and former Republican congressman Matt Salmon, a highly respected member of his party and a former state legislator who had recently lost a narrow gubernatorial election. The university enlisted the support of business, labor and trade groups, which stood to gain substantially from the construction boom the bill would finance.

Meanwhile, Crow unleashed a barrage of paperwork. Every lawmaker received a copy of his “New American University” white paper, which details his vision for ASU, and a copy of “Investing in Arizona’s Future,” a half-inch-thick report in which Crow makes his case for investment in science and technology. He also wrote letters to each and every lawmaker, even those who had gone on record against the bill.

Throughout, Crow eschewed a social-equity argument for university funding in favor of one emphasizing the potential financial payback. Crow and his team predicted an 11-to-1 return on the state’s investment, through research and development it would spawn. The economic-engine argument was not a completely new

Crow has secured \$120 million in private donations—including two record-setting \$50 million gifts.

tack, said Likins. But this time around, it got through in a way that it had not in the past.

“President Crow was the first I’ve ever heard say, ‘I want more money now so I can be less dependent on you later,’” House Speaker Flake said. He also was the first university president to visit Flake’s hometown of Snowflake, where, in a show of gratitude after the bill passed, he “bragged up the hometown boy” to the students at the local high school, said Flake, who still beams when he talks

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GEORGIA

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big-time football has come to dominate so much of college life in America. But there are no apologies offered for that on this campus. Because if the university celebrates its athletes lavishly, it also spares no expense in giving them the best academic support that money can buy.

“Quite frankly, in most of these programs, the objective is not graduation, it’s keeping them eligible so they can compete.”

—FORMER UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN PRESIDENT JAMES J. DUDERSTADT

And, according to the latest tally from the U.S. Department of Education, it’s paying off.

For most of the season, the Georgia Bulldogs had the best graduation rate—67 percent—of any team in the Associated Press top-ten poll of Division 1 football. Although graduation rates tend to fluctuate from year to year, that was 13 percentage points higher than the national average of 54 percent, and put the Bulldogs well ahead of such football powerhouses as Texas, with a 19 percent graduation rate, the University of Southern California (45 percent), and Michigan (50 percent). With a ranking by *U.S. News and World Report* as one of the nation’s top-20 public universities, Georgia prides itself on being an institution that increasingly excels in both academics and athletics.

It offers some evidence that the NCAA is justified in claiming that athletes are performing better academically as a result of reforms instituted over the past two decades. But while the improvements in 2003 for collegiate sports as a whole are promising, yielding the highest graduation



Rhonda Kilpatrick directs a tutoring and counseling program for University of Georgia football players.

rates since statistics were first kept in 1984, the picture is complicated by the numbers attached to the big-money sports, football and basketball.

When scholarship athletes in all sports are included, 62 percent of those who entered colleges and universities six years ago graduated last year—three percentage points higher than the student body as a whole. But when the big-revenue sports are broken out, the numbers fall noticeably. Among all football players, 54 percent graduated, but the rate for African American football players was 49 percent. The overall rate for Division 1 male basketball players was 44 percent, but for African American males it was just 41 percent.

Moreover, there are statistics showing that 57 universities in Division 1 have not graduated a single black male basketball player in the past ten years.

Critics, meanwhile, question whether comparing athletes’ graduation rates with the rest of the student body is even valid, because of the special attention and lack of financial worries that scholarship athletes enjoy. They also contend that looking at graduation rates across the spectrum of college sports is misleading—academic success is not much of an issue, for example, for swimmers and tennis players. The focus, critics contend, should be on the top 20 schools competing for a spot in football’s Bowl Championship Series, or in the “Sweet Sixteen” of basketball’s NCAA playoffs.

The issue of graduation rates is heating up again because of actions being taken by the NCAA. Having already imposed tougher requirements for academic progress by athletes who entered college last fall, the NCAA is expected this spring to approve a major change in how graduation rates are calculated, a change that is expected to sharply increase graduation rates for schools which in the past lost players to the professional leagues or because of coaching changes.

The experience here at the University of Georgia demonstrates that athletics and academics can coexist to the benefit of both. Whether the subject is blocking or book learning, Georgia doesn’t settle for second class. Among southeastern universities, for example, it routinely holds first or second place in the number of academic all-Americans and postgraduate scholars in football.

But it hasn’t always been a pretty picture. Nearly two decades ago, an English professor named Jan Kemp was fired for challenging the university’s preferential treatment of athletes. She sued the university, won a settlement in excess of a million dollars, and was reinstated. But the wreckage from the Kemp lawsuit later led the university’s president to resign, and prompted Dooley, the only major figure left relatively unscathed, to place greater emphasis on the academic side of athletes’ lives.

Today, on a campus that is smothered by monuments to sports icons and the marketing of red and black memorabilia, the focus on academic support for athletes is impressive.

It starts with an imposing new \$7 million athletic academic center named for

Rankin M. Smith Sr., a long-time UGA booster and former owner of the Atlanta Falcons professional football team, whose family’s \$3.5 million donation jump-started a fundraising drive for the facility.

With outside walls of pre-cast stone, inside walls paneled in dark wood, and furnished with plush leather chairs and sofas, the Smith Center feels more like a top-dollar law firm than a hangout for jocks. Its 31,000 square feet of space includes a 230-seat study hall, 20 tutoring rooms, 60 computer stations, a student lounge, an awards banquet hall, a writing lab and a high-tech classroom seating 55.

The hardware turns your head, but it’s the software that counts: an annual budget of \$800,000, ten full-time staffers headed by an associate athletic director and including three counselors for the football team, and more than 80 tutors comprised mainly of graduate students and volunteers from the community. “The tutors are available to all athletes, not just the struggling ones,” said Rhonda Kilpatrick, director of football academic counseling. Even high achievers make use of tutors, she added.

This kind of commitment, while upscale, is not unusual. The University of Michigan is spending \$15 million on a new academic support facility—a sum that former Michigan president James J. Duderstadt calls “ludicrous.” Texas A&M is spending \$8 million on a similar facility and doubling from six to 12 the number of part-time counselors. Oregon State is increasing its full-time academic support staff from four to five, and the University of Oregon has increased its staff by two.

Richard Lapchick, director of the Institute of Diversity and Ethics in Sport at the University of Central Florida, says such expenditures are warranted “because it’s symbolically important to be doing those things. It sends a message to the student athletes...that this is a priority; they’re not just building football facilities. They’re building these centers to help you become intelligent students—not just student-athletes.”

Here at Georgia, according to Associate Athletic Director Glada Horvat, the substance quickly overtakes the symbolism. The process of mentoring athletes begins on their first official recruiting visit to Athens, where they meet with counselors and a university professor even before they sign a letter of intent.

“Once we sign them,” said Horvat, “I take over with the red tape and bureaucracy associated with a major university. We support them with administrative help through orientation. I talk with parents for months before they actually come, so we can establish rapport.” At orientation, said Horvat, students are turned over to academic counselors and “go through everything other students go through—they just



“Athletes have a full day,” says Vince Dooley, University of Georgia Athletic Director. “There are demands on them that other people don’t understand.”

have background support.”

Like all students, athletes who are least qualified academically (admitted with less than a 430 verbal SAT score or less than a 400 math SAT score) must take placement tests in reading, English or math, and if they don’t score high enough, must take remedial courses in the subject areas where they do not place. They have three chances over three semesters to make at least a C in the course and then make an acceptable score on the placement test. If they fail three times, state education policy requires that they be dismissed for three years. The remediation courses count toward full-time student status, but not toward degree credit, a factor that seems likely to become critical as the NCAA establishes tougher rules for athletes—requiring that they make steady progress toward a degree or face unspecified sanctions.

UGA doesn’t provide a breakdown on how many athletes require remediation, but horticulture professor Gary Couvillon, who recently stepped down after ten years as faculty athletic representative, offered an example. In the 2002-03 academic year,

There are statistics showing that 57 universities in Division 1 have not graduated a single black male basketball player in the past ten years.

352 incoming UGA students required remediation, of whom 51, or about 15 percent, were athletes. “The fact that ten percent of all students accepted here had to be remediated mostly says something about our high schools,” observed Couvillon.

The academic support unit, meanwhile, is constantly monitoring the progress of the athletes. Incoming football freshmen, for example, are assigned to a counselor and placed in a mentoring program.

“We’re informed on their academic



THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR
PUBLIC POLICY AND
HIGHER EDUCATION



Responding to the Crisis in College Opportunity

Last year and this, the major burden of reductions in state higher education budgets has been borne by students and families in the form of reduced college opportunity, steep tuition increases and higher levels of student debt. In this supplement of National CrossTalk, there is an appeal to governors and legislators to protect college access and affordability during the budget crises that plague almost every state, along with profiles of students across the country who are struggling to complete their educations in the face of rapidly rising costs and dwindling course offerings.

In fall 2003, it is estimated that at least 250,000 prospective students were shut out of higher education due to rising tuition or cutbacks in admissions and course offerings. Mid-year restrictions on enrollment and transfer in some states could increase this number. In addition, many more students are accumulating substantially larger debt as a way to pay for the unpredictable and steep hikes in tuition.

In 2003, many states reduced funding for higher education disproportionately to overall state funding cuts. Few would argue that higher education can or should be exempted from reductions required by state financial problems, but disproportionately large cuts in

state higher education appropriations were the principal cause of the steep tuition increases and the rolling back of higher education opportunity. Reducing college opportunity is a short-term reaction that is counter to the nation's long-term need for greater numbers of highly educated citizens.

In 2004, governors and legislators should recognize the long-term educational needs of the country and its citizens. They should give the highest priority to student opportunities to enroll in college and to complete college programs, including transfer from two-year to baccalaureate-granting public institutions. In 2003, states (directly or indirectly) and public colleges and universities replaced most lost state revenues by increasing tuition. The consequence was that the major burden of reductions in state higher education budgets was borne by students and families in the forms of reduced college opportunity, steep tuition increases, and increased debt. The highest priority for state budgets in 2004 should be to protect college access and affordability for students and families. Governors and legislators should deliberately and explicitly seek feasible alternatives to what has become an almost automatic shifting of state revenue shortfalls to students and families.

Ultimately, the long-term solution to financing higher education requires shared understandings among

taxpayers and their elected representatives in local, state, and federal governments, students and families, and colleges and universities. In 2004, however, governors and legislators are on the front line. While they must plan for long-term solutions, they must devise short-term strategies that prevent the further erosion of college opportunity.

Short-Term Recommendations (Emergency Measures) for Governors and Legislators

If the state must cut higher education funding in 2004...

- Do not cut higher education disproportionately to overall state funding cuts, as was the case in many states in fiscal year 2003.
- Do not make cuts in state appropriations to those colleges and universities that serve primarily students from low- to middle-income families.
- Temporarily freeze tuition at community colleges and public four-year colleges that serve predominantly low- to middle-income college students.
- Increase or at least maintain funding for need-based state financial aid programs, even if it means reallocating resources from colleges and universities.
- Increase tuition moderately at public research universities to the extent that the state can make a commensurate increase in need-based financial aid.

If the state can increase funding for higher education in 2004...

- Invest new state resources in institutions accommodating enrollment growth.
- Give funding for enrollment growth a higher priority than funding for inflation adjustments.
- Hold tuition increases to the rate of growth in family income in each state.
- Invest new resources in state need-based financial aid programs, even if this requires reallocation of state resources that support higher education.

To prepare for the nation's long-term needs, each state should...

- Begin a process to achieve major productivity increases in higher education—that is, maintain or decrease the costs of delivering high-quality education.
- Assure transfer opportunity to four-year colleges for all qualified community college students.
- Initiate a process to specify and implement long-term higher education goals that would increase college access and completion.

Principles to Guide Short-Term (Emergency) Decision-Making

Capacity: Provide a space for every eligible student to enroll in higher education.

Safety Net: Protect the higher education “safety net”—that is, low tuition at open access institutions and state need-based financial aid.

Transfer: Assure the transfer of qualified students from two- to four-year public colleges and universities.

Emergency Priorities: Establish policies to deal with the short-term emergency (the erosion of access and affordability for low- and middle-income families).

Differentiation: Consider differential policies (by sector/institution/region) to preserve access and affordability. In other words, do not treat all colleges/universities the same.

Unintended Consequences: Avoid short-term solutions that create structural dependencies that are not in the state's interest—for example, recruiting high percentages of out-of-state students for increases in revenue.

Statewide Policy: Establish and support statewide financial aid policy. The state cannot effectively delegate to colleges and universities its ultimate responsibility for adequate and equitable student financial assistance.

Interdependent Policies: Assure all state finance policies for 2004—those related to state higher education appropriations, tuition, and state financial aid—are consistent with these principles and priorities.

Conclusion

Ultimately, state leaders must invest significant time and attention to plan for the future of higher education opportunity. No other entity—not the colleges and universities, not the students and the families—can effectively address these issues without the sustained attention of governors and legislators. While the federal government has a critical role in supporting higher education opportunity, the states have the principal responsibility and cannot expect a federal “bailout.” The strategies and principles recommended here are initial steps needed to stop the hemorrhaging of college access and affordability in 2004. In the long-term, new policies are needed to respond to the rapidly evolving global and technological marketplace. New policies can raise the educational attainment levels of the states and the nation by assuring college opportunity for all Americans who are qualified and motivated.

The need for governors and legislators to articulate new policies for higher education is an urgent one. This urgency is dictated by two factors.

■ *First*, state budgetary structures put higher education at a disadvantage as it competes for state support against other equally important public services. The current state economic difficulties differ from those of the past: Over the past twenty years, state support for higher education has increased. It has done so, however, through the “boom and bust” cycles that saw disproportionate cuts during fiscally difficult times and generous increases during prosperous times. The disproportionate cuts of 2003 follow this pattern, but a “boom” in 2004—or even the next decade—is unlikely to see the generous increases of past cycles. Few believe that state financial resources available in the late 1990s will return soon.

■ *Second*, current financial difficulties facing the states will likely dominate their agendas for the next few years. Over the long-term, the state and the nation face far greater challenges in the era of intensifying international economic competitiveness: the challenge of assuring educational opportunity for the nation's growing and diverse high school graduating classes; and, increasing the number of college-educated workers to replace retiring baby boomers. The “No Child Left Behind” principle must be expanded to “No Child or Adult Left Behind.” All Americans must share the task to realize this vision. But only governors and legislators have the authority and primary responsibility for making this vision a reality.

On October 26 and 27, 2003, the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education assembled a small group of policy experts to address the condition of higher education as states approach the 2004 legislative sessions. The co-conveners were David Breneman, Dean of the Curry School of Education of the University of Virginia, who chaired the session, and Patrick Callan, President of the National Center. Participants were asked to identify the most critical issues facing the states in 2004 and recommend priorities and strategies.

The statement developed at the October meeting was revised after consultation with a national meeting of state legislators and review by the National Center's Board of Directors. The participants in the October meeting have continued to guide the development of the statement. However, “Responding to the Crisis in College Opportunity” is the responsibility of the National Center.

Participants in the meeting were:

Robert Atwell
President Emeritus
American Council on
Education

Paul E. Lingenfelter
Executive Director
State Higher Education
Executive Officers

David Breneman
*Dean, Curry School of
Education*
University of Virginia

David A. Longanecker
Executive Director
Western Interstate
Commission for Higher
Education

Patrick Callan
President
National Center for
Public Policy and Higher
Education

Jaime Molera
President
J.A. Molera Consulting

Joni Finney
Vice President
National Center for
Public Policy and Higher
Education

Scott Pattison
Executive Director
National Association of
State Budget Officers

Heather Jack
*Director of State and
Media Relations*
National Center for
Public Policy and Higher
Education

Nancy Shulock
Executive Director
Institute for Higher
Education Leadership
and Policy
California State
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Dennis P. Jones
President
National Center for
Higher Education
Management Systems

Richard Wagner
*Retired Executive
Director*
Illinois Board of Higher
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Heli Acevedo

University of Illinois-Chicago

HELI ACEVEDO, a 21-year-old junior at the University of Illinois' Chicago campus, practically lives on campus from morning until night. A junior majoring in graphic design, he is either in class, sitting behind a desk at the Latino Cultural Center, where he has a part-time job, or working on a project in the computer lab. "The lab closes at 9 PM," he said, "so I

have to get everything done by then."

Acevedo entered UIC immediately after graduating from high school in 2000 and has been taking a full course load every semester since then. He is the eldest of six children. Neither of his parents attended college. The dropout rate at his high school was high, and not all of his teachers expected much of Acevedo. Sometimes, he didn't expect that much of himself. "I didn't think I was a college prospect," he said.

Thus far, Acevedo has been able to afford college through a combination of grants, scholarships and part-time work. Due to his family's size and income, the university determined that the family could not be expected to help pay tuition. "Mostly I'm doing it on my own," he said about tuition payments and other expenses.

He works on campus in order to help cover his costs—a more flexible setup that allows him to do some studying and negotiate his hours more easily. The internship at the cultural center—roughly 20 to 30 hours a week—helps to cover the added cost of supplies. Acevedo's current work-study job pays a little more than \$6 per hour. In the past, he has worked at a furniture store and at a flea market.

To keep his expenses as low as possible, Acevedo lives at home in a southwest Chicago neighborhood called Back of the Yards, which draws its name from the long-gone Chicago stockyards. His family is extremely supportive about his schooling, Acevedo said, and he is grateful for the stability and encouragement he has received at home.

"Things are tight, but in the end they always seem to work out fine," he said. "Sometimes I have to wait a week or two to buy things. My job's not that hard, even though the pay's not that great." He doesn't own a

car, a cell phone, an MP3 player or a laptop computer. "Thirty dollars a month for a cell phone goes a long way for other things," he said.

Thus far, Acevedo, has avoided taking out student loans, including a summer semester when he paid for his courses out of pocket. "I just saved up the money and did it that way," he said. But he has come close to taking out loans and thinks he will have to, sooner or later, especially since he has changed his major and is struggling to get the classes he needs.

As he progresses into his upper-level course requirements, Acevedo says that lack of faculty and limited course offerings are a problem. "There just aren't enough teachers," he said. "You have to wait a semester to take a course. Sometimes you have to wait a whole year." He took Art History 110 last spring and wanted to take 111 this fall, but it was not offered. "They don't teach both," he said, citing fewer sections, reduced numbers of electives, and larger classes. "The number of courses has gone down in general," he said. "It's kind of like you're wasting time."

Course availability also has forced students like Acevedo to pile on the work in some semesters. Last fall, he took five courses—"a big load"—so that he could get into a needed graphic design class in the spring. "If I didn't take those classes, then there wouldn't have been time to submit my portfolio for review, and it would have delayed me a whole year," he said.

Acevedo has learned to register for classes quickly. "If you don't get in you're going to have to wait," he said. When a \$363 hold showed up on his records this fall he went to the aid office immediately and got them to release it for a day so he could register for classes and pay a late fee. Still, Acevedo couldn't get into Documentary Photography, one of his most desired classes, because of the delay.

Acevedo said that asking for help is especially important when dealing with a university bureaucracy that can otherwise seem intimidating. "Financial Aid tells you what you have to do, but not how to do it," he said. "I asked a lot of people for help." Counselors from a Latino student support organization also helped him out his first year, but mostly he asked a lot of questions. "I pretty much figured it out on my own," he said.

—Alexander Russo

Thus far, Acevedo has been able to afford college through a combination of grants, scholarships and part-time work.

Marianna Melik-Bakhshyan

Los Angeles City College

MARIANNA MELIK-BAKSHYAN pressed ahead with her education after emigrating from Armenia to the United States with her family two years ago—attending Hollywood High School and Los Angeles City College at the same time. But her ambition to transfer to the University of California at Los Angeles or the University of Southern California for a pre-law program has been stymied by the fallout from the state's budget cuts.

Melik-Bakhshyan had earned her high school diploma in Armenia, but when she moved to this country she was told it would be best, since she wanted to attend an American university, to get an American high school diploma. So during the day, she took English, U.S. history and other classes at Hollywood High while enrolled in math and English classes at night at the community college. "Sometimes I wondered how I made it,"

said Melik-Bakhshyan, 19, but she received her diploma from Hollywood High last June.

Melik-Bakhshyan had planned to complete her required courses and transfer to one of the four-year schools this fall. But several of the political science classes she needs have been cancelled, so it will be fall 2005 before she can go to either UCLA or USC.

She will be able to get a required philosophy class during the winter session, which lasts five weeks in January and February. And she may be able to take one of the political



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science classes that she needs at Los Angeles Valley College, which is farther from her home but still in the Los Angeles Community College District. But one of the other political science classes is not being offered this spring at Los Angeles City College.

When California was drowning in red ink early last year, LACC suffered a \$5 million mid-year budget cut. After months of wrangling, the Legislature passed and Governor Gray Davis, who has since been recalled, signed a budget that cut the state's 108 community colleges by

\$250 million, or 9.4 percent. The net reduction was \$86.8 million, because the budget also increased student fees at the community colleges from \$11 per credit hour to \$18, and because of anticipated growth in property tax revenues.

LACC, which had a budget of \$52.5 million in 2001-02 and \$49.65 million in 2002-03, received \$51.68 million for this school year, but a spokesman said its costs had gone up "astronomically." Because of \$3.7 million in cost increases—for pensions, health insurance, contracted pay increases, electricity and gas bills, among other things, the college cut half its athletic program, instituted a hiring freeze, eliminated some administrative positions, and reduced library and counseling hours.

Class offerings were especially affected. Last spring, 1,518 class sections were offered, compared with 1,624 the previous spring, a decrease of 6.5 percent. Last fall, 1,553 class sections were offered, compared with 1,758 in fall 2002, or a 12.1 percent decrease. In November, the state's former community colleges chancellor, Thomas J. Nussbaum, reported that course section offerings throughout the system were down 8.7 percent. Enrollment in the college system dropped 5.2 per cent in fall 2003 compared to fall 2002, or approximately 90,700 students.

"The cuts have postponed my transferring" and then going on to law school, Melik-Bakhshyan said. She said she has a 3.7 grade point average and so seemed confident that she could transfer once she has the necessary courses.

During the day, Melik-Bakhshyan took English, U.S. history and other classes at Hollywood High while enrolled in math and English classes at night at Los Angeles City College.

She is not certain what area of law she wants to pursue, but said she is drawn to the subject because she felt it was important that "people know their rights and how to protect them." Her parents left Armenia with Marianna and her three younger sisters, Melik-Bakhshyan said, because of the political and economic conditions there. Her father and mother were dentists in Armenia; now he works as a dental technician and she as a dental assistant.

Melik-Bakhshyan receives financial aid that covers her tuition and is enrolled in the Extended Opportunity Program and Services at LACC. That provides a book voucher worth \$250. She fears that the longer she has to wait to transfer, the more tuition is likely to go up at either UCLA or USC, adding that she might have to get a full-time job next semester.

She has been working seven hours a week in LACC's tutoring center, which has also been a victim of the budget cuts. People who use this English lab need help with essays or vocabulary or grammar. With a large concentration of immigrants at the community college, Melik-Bakhshyan estimated that English is a second language for about 45 percent of the people who come to the center. But the center's hours were severely curtailed last year because of the college's hiring freeze and 44 percent cut in its English program, said department chair Alexandra Maeck. "We're struggling" to keep the center alive but on a reduced basis, said Maeck.

"Budget cuts really affect students," said Melik-Bakhshyan. "Some drop out because they can't afford the higher fees. Because of the cutting of sections, others are postponing their transfers." Nonetheless, she said, she feels that "getting an education is very important for society so that there are people to lead and develop the country."

— Kay Mills

"Getting an education is very important for society, so that there are people to lead and develop the country."
—Marianna Melik-Bakhshyan



Denise Brown Emerson College

WHEN 26-YEAR-OLD DENISE BROWN completes her graduate work at Emerson College in May 2005, she expects to have amassed a daunting \$56,000 in student loans. For Brown, the only child of a single mother, getting a college education always meant taking out loans and working. That is what enabled her to earn a bachelor's degree from Bentley

College, in Waltham, Massachusetts. And the pattern continues at Emerson College, in Boston, where Brown juggles her graduate studies in integrated marketing and communications with a full-time job at a public relations firm. Both Bentley and Emerson are private colleges.

"It's a big deal to put me through college," said Brown, the first in her

family to attend. "My mom did the paperwork, sat me down, and I knew going into Bentley that I'd come out owing \$30,000. At 18 years old, \$30,000 was just a number to me."

At Bentley, a school focused on business, Brown took public relations classes, as well as business core requirements such as accounting, finance and marketing. She minored in computer information systems. Brown took out \$30,000 in federal subsidized Stafford loans over the four years. She also worked during her freshman and sophomore years in the Bentley alumni relations department, earning \$6 per hour. She did not work during her junior and senior years.

In summer, Brown worked 40 hours a week as a temporary employee at Cellular One and several other companies, to gain office experience.

For Denise Brown, the only child of a single mother, getting a college education always meant taking out loans and working.

Brown's four years at Bentley, including tuition, room and board, cost \$120,000. The non-loan balance of \$90,000 came from her work earnings, grants from the college and some help from her mother, who owns a furniture refinishing business.

After graduating from Bentley in 1999, Brown took the summer off and then began to work full-time. Her current job is at Blanc & Otus, a Boston public relations firm. She began paying off the \$30,000 in undergraduate loans in 1999 and still makes payments of about \$250 a month. Her graduate school Stafford loans, which will amount to about \$26,400 by the time she finishes, do not have to be paid until after graduation. At that time, Brown expects to be paying about \$450 a month for both the undergraduate and graduate loans.

As an undergraduate, Brown lived on campus. In order to save money while going to graduate school, however, she gave up her apartment and moved back home with her mother. "I save about \$900 a month on the rent, utilities and food I was paying with my two roommates," she said. "I am aware that I'm on a budget. The \$250 a month for loans now doesn't seem that outrageous, but it would have been a lot worse if I still lived in an apartment."

Brown works 40 hours a week and is a full-time student at Emerson, taking eight credits per semester. She has no grants from the school, so she pays for tuition and fees with the loan money. "There's no other way

I could have gone to graduate school except loans," she said. "The \$26,400 didn't stop me from going for it, though." Brown said she could have deferred her undergraduate loan repayments, but with the debt load she is facing after graduate school, she decided to start paying them down right away.

Brown's work and school schedule can be challenging. She leaves work right on time in order to get to class, which runs three hours and 45 minutes. "It's hard to keep my concentration after working all day," she said.

Although tuition has increased steadily during her years in college, Brown says she really hasn't felt the impact immediately because the loans covered the costs. "If Emerson raises tuition next year, I'll get bigger loans," she said. "You don't really feel it until it hits you when you write out the loan checks later. Then reality hits."

Brown believes the costs and looming debt are worth it. "I hope a graduate degree takes me further," she said. "I'm learning things now that I wouldn't see in my work environment until further down the road."

—Lori Valigra

"I knew going into Bentley College that I'd come out owing \$30,000. At 18 years old, \$30,000 was just a number to me."

— Denise Brown



Bridget Burns Oregon State University

BRIDGET BURNS aspires to a career in politics, and, as a former student body president, debate team star, and member of the State Board of Higher Education, the 23-year-old Oregon State University student is well on her way. A transfer student familiar with the finer points of tuition policy and financial aid, she has become an outspoken advocate for low-income

students, often using her own experiences as Exhibit A.

"Board members and legislatures don't share the perspective of a low-income student," she said. "There are different types of student leaders. I'm not one of the student leaders who becomes friends with the administration. I was notorious for saying it like it was."

A Montana native, Burns left home at the age of 18 to attend North Idaho College, a two-year school in Coeur d'Alene. She moved to Oregon initially for a job, and then ended up transferring to OSU. Now Burns is 36 credits away from graduation, but faces a Catch-22: Because of new tuition policies, affording 18 credits a term for the next two semesters won't be easy, but if she puts off some of her courses until the fall, she may lose her federal Pell Grant.

In fall 2002, Burns would have

"There are different types of student leaders. I'm not one of the student leaders who becomes friends with the administration."

— Bridget Burns

had to pay just \$1,338 for 18 units. But this year, after board decisions to raise tuition and stop capping tuition at 12 credits, the same 18 credits will cost \$1,792. That's one reason why Burns and the other student board member cast the only votes opposing the move to lift the tuition plateau.

"This is like a tax," she said. "It selects people who want to get ahead, or low-income people who need to graduate on time. It makes students stay in class longer, and that contradicts our enrollment policy, to get people out of the classroom as quickly as possible."

Burns is not eligible for an Oregon Opportunity Grant, because her parents live back in Montana, where she grew up. She earns money here and there, this year serving as a resident advisor for a fraternity in exchange for a free room, and earning about \$150 a year leading a campaign finance reform program on campus. But being on the debate team limits her money-earning options. "I can't really get a job," she said. "I'm gone every weekend on competitions around the country."

To make up the difference, Burns has accrued about \$30,000 in loan debt in the last five-plus years. She acknowledges that her current six-year graduation plan is "considered excessively long," but believes her circumstances justify it.

"Realistically, with the leadership I've taken, it's not that long. And when you transfer, you automatically lose a year." Of the 70 units she completed at North Idaho, Burns said only about 30 transferred to OSU.

She came to Oregon during better budget times, but in the last year, in a pattern seen by all of the state's universities, OSU's state budget was cut by 18 percent. Amid the threats to higher education, new Democratic Governor Ted Kulongoski has embarked on a shake-up,

As a member of the State Board of Higher Education, Bridget Burns has become an outspoken advocate for low-income students.

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firing four members of the State Board of Higher Education, leaving only Burns, another student, and a professor.

Burns, who got to know the governor by joining him at several bowling events organized by his campaign, praises Kulongoski's thinking on higher education. "I think he figured out that higher education is really the key to getting Oregon back on track economically," she said.

But she is discouraged by the current budget picture. Last year, as student body president, Burns worked to ensure a \$2.2 million increase in financial aid funding and to raise an additional \$300,000 for a contingency fund for students with unmet need. This year, she says, the increase has vanished.

"I feel like we have crossed the threshold," she said. "The cost of education is so excessive. The financial aid formula is prehistoric."

Whether she graduates in the spring or fall, Burns is determined to do something about higher education funding. Her plan is to attend law school, work as a federal prosecutor, run for state Senate by age 45 and

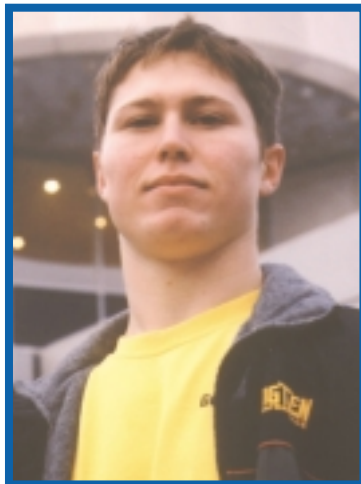
eventually win a seat in the U.S. Senate.

But her shorter-term political and career goal is to fight for campaign finance reform, because the present system "keeps higher education from being a priority," she said. "There isn't an impetus to fully fund higher education. How elections are funded determines how public policy is shaped. If somebody gives me \$5,000 instead of \$4,000 for a Pell Grant, it doesn't help them. Students don't vote and students don't contribute to your campaign."

For more news on Bridget Burns, watch the Oregon State Senate in 2025.

—*Pamela Burdman*

Burns' plan is to attend law school, work as a federal prosecutor, run for state Senate by age 45 and eventually win a seat in the U.S. Senate.



Jason Dixon University of Iowa

JASON DIXON is a 20-year-old junior business major at the University of Iowa and captain of the men's gymnastics team. Like many others, Dixon faces a middle-class family dilemma: His parents make enough money to disqualify them from financial aid but not enough to pay for an entire four-year education.

Unlike many of his teammates, Dixon, whose specialty is the rings apparatus, does not have an athletic scholarship. Over the years he says he has applied for about 20 scholarships of all types, and hasn't qualified for any of them. As a result, he has had to work during summers and semester breaks, take out loans, and, for the first time this year, work while going to college. But Dixon is not bitter, because he already has achieved his hard-fought dream: to compete as a collegiate gymnast. His love of gymnastics, a sport at which he was not skilled enough to get a scholarship, left him with the choice of either

going to an in-state school that offered discounted tuition to residents or to a community college.

"In-state tuition was one of the biggest considerations in going to the University of Iowa," said Dixon, who started gymnastics at age four, along with his two sisters. "Plus my gym coach had ties to the university to help me get in."

Dixon's parents helped substantially during his first two years at Iowa City. First-year tuition, room and board cost \$8,741, of which \$2,000 came from a job at a local Dairy Queen during high school in his home town of Council Bluffs. Second-year charges for

tuition, room and board rose to \$9,712, with Dixon again contributing \$2,000 from summer work at a concession stand at a local lake and as a Little League baseball umpire. He worked those jobs again after his

sophomore year. But then a previous agreement with his parents kicked in: Dixon was to get a taste of the real world by paying his own way the last two years of college.

"I didn't think that was a good idea, because it's really tough to do that," Dixon said. "But if I had everything handed to me, I wouldn't like it as much as if I worked for it."

If real world experience is what Dixon's parents had planned, they picked the right time. University of Iowa tuition and fees rose 19.4 percent this year—to \$4,993 for full-time resident students, one of the largest percentage increases in the nation. Books and supplies cost about \$840 a year. University officials estimate that for two semesters, a reasonable budget for a student like Dixon, who is living off campus, is \$14,933, up \$1,072, or 7.7 percent, from a year ago. That includes tuition, fees, room, board, personal expenses, books, supplies and transportation.

For his junior year Dixon has taken out two loans totaling \$10,750. Of that amount, \$1,750 is a federal Stafford subsidized loan and \$9,000 is a private loan. His work coaching boys from a local gymnastics club brings in \$30 per week, which he uses for personal expenses and supplies. Dixon also has some of the money left over from his summer jobs, and lives close to a budget, which he has detailed on a computer spreadsheet. If tuition goes up again next year, which seems likely, Dixon says he will just have to get a bigger loan.

The gymnast's schedule would be a challenge for anyone. On a day when he works, he wakes up at 7:30 AM, attends three classes from 8:30 until 12:30, and then eats at the off-campus apartment he shares with two roommates. From 1:30 until 5 PM he practices gymnastics with his team, goes home for dinner, and then comes back to the university's gym, where he coaches the boys from 6 until 7:30. Then, it's back home to study.

But for Dixon, the hard work and determination are part of the reward. "I've grown as a gymnast so much that I've probably doubled my abilities

If tuition goes up again next year, which seems likely, Jason Dixon says he will just have to get a bigger loan.

University of Iowa tuition and fees rose 19.4 percent this year, one of the largest percentage increases in the nation.

since I came here,” he said. “It’s because of the good coaching, equipment, and being around such high-caliber gymnasts.” Dixon is making enough of a contribution to the team’s score to get him considered for at least a partial gymnastics scholarship next semester or next year, although he expects to take out another loan as well.

Of his experience after several months of paying his own way, Dixon

said, “It causes you to be more responsible, to better understand the money you have and to realize the value of time.” After graduating next year, Dixon plans to return home, invest in real estate, and continue coaching gymnastics.

—Lori Valigra



Kimberly Silvers

University of Illinois-Chicago

KIMBERLY SILVERS, a 28-year-old single mother, is a senior at the University of Illinois’ Chicago campus. She lives with her ten-year-old son Eric in a two-bedroom campus apartment and is one semester away from graduating with a bachelor’s degree in political science.

Little of her college experiences has come easily. Silvers worked for several years after high school, then enrolled at Western Illinois University, where she made the dean’s list, despite working at two minimum-wage restaurant jobs and getting little or no child support from her son’s father. Getting by was a struggle. Silvers describes times when she had no phone and the only electricity in her apartment came through a generous neighbor’s extension cord.

Feeling isolated at Western Illinois, she transferred after two years to the University of Illinois-Chicago and almost immediately encountered a variety of academic and financial difficulties. The course work at UIC was much harder, she says, the commute to campus was 90 minutes each way, and the commuter-oriented urban campus seemed cold and unfriendly. Also, Silvers changed her major from education to political science. “It was pretty much like starting over as a freshman,” she recalled.

Since then, Silvers has been in and out of school, either to earn enough to pay her university bills or because of academic probation. Facing academic and

financial obstacles that seemed increasingly insurmountable last year, Silvers decided to join the Army Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC), which has turned out to be a wise decision.

“I did it because of the uncertainty,” she said. “ROTC pays tuition for school and a (monthly) stipend. They’re willing to work with you more.” As long as Silvers keeps her grades up and continues to make academic progress, the money keeps coming.

For the first time, Silvers has a group of friends and teachers within the university who know and care about her, she said, and a place on campus where she can hang out and get her work done. “They get on

me about my incompletes,” she said one day in the ROTC computer lab, “but if it wasn’t for the ROTC, I wouldn’t be in school.”

ROTC is no free ride, however. Silvers has early morning training sessions three days a week and regular weekend activities. Eric gets himself up and off to school by himself most days.

In addition to her classes and ROTC training, Silvers currently has two part-time restaurant jobs. She works three shifts a week at Chili’s, a job that gives her less-expensive health and dependent coverage than the university offers. She also picks up one or two shifts a week at a downtown Chicago bar. Still, she usually manages to watch her son’s basketball practice after school and even play a game or two with him afterward.

Budget cuts at UIC have delayed her progress, Silvers said. “It seems like they’re cutting courses or professors all the time.” Also, sometimes all the upper-level political science courses, which Silvers needs to complete her major, are scheduled for the same days and at the same times. “You have to take what you can get, not what your focus is,” she said.

Students with past-due bills or academic problems are not allowed to register for the next semester, making it even more difficult for Silvers to get the courses she needs in order to graduate. “Every semester it seems like I’m calling a professor and begging them to register me late,” she said.

Silvers’ face is flushed, and her eyes tear up when she talks about all the challenges and setbacks she has faced. Getting through school obviously has been an ongoing struggle and will leave her \$30,000 to \$40,000 in debt. “It has been quite a ride and I am not quite done yet,” she said.

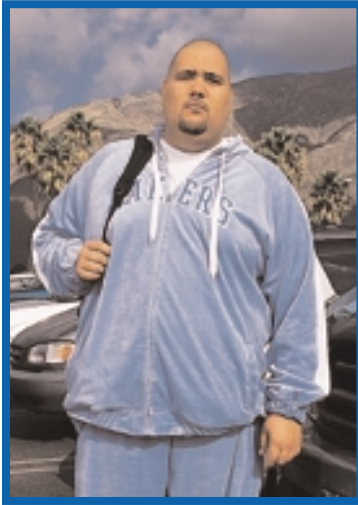
Despite the obstacles, Silvers has been able to hold her life together. “My focus is on trying to feed my son and make his life as normal as possible,” she said. “I will graduate and commission from Army ROTC in May. At that time, I will go active duty as a second lieutenant, branched to military intelligence.”

Silvers said one of the main lessons she has learned is to ask for help. “You have to make yourself known,” she said. “If you don’t get noticed, you can just float through the system. If you don’t fight for an education, you’re not going to get it. You really have to work hard. It’s not just about getting good grades but about knowing people, talking to people, making your face known.”

—Alexander Russo

Facing academic and financial obstacles that seemed increasingly insurmountable last year, Silvers decided to join the ROTC.

Getting through school has been an ongoing struggle and will leave Silvers \$30,000 to \$40,000 in debt.



Matthew Zepeda

Mt. San Jacinto College

MATTHEW ZEPEDA needs one required mathematics class in order to transfer from Mt. San Jacinto College, where he is student body president, to the University of Southern California. But because of California budget cuts, Math 135—calculus for social science and business students—wasn't offered last fall semester at the 13,000-

student campus in Riverside County, east of Los Angeles, nor did it appear on the spring course schedule. So Matthew is driving 51 miles each way two afternoons a week to take the class at Santa Ana College, in Orange County.

Zepeda, 26, qualifies for the state's Extended Opportunity Program and Services (EOPS), which provides counseling, tutoring and book and meal vouchers for low-income students. But students must take 12 credit hours to remain eligible. Zepeda is taking 12 credits, but three of them are for the math class in another district, so he expects to lose his book voucher, worth about \$250. He calculated that the extra driving will cost him \$25 to \$30 a week in gasoline as well.

The class meets at 7 PM, and it takes Zepeda up to two hours in rush-hour traffic to get there because, as he described his freeway route, "the 91 is nasty." That means "two hours of study time that's basically taken away," he said, or two hours he could be working on student government

business, or "just two hours I could have to myself."

Still, Zepeda considers himself fortunate in that he has already taken most of the courses he needs. Students who could not get in to the University of California or California State University systems, or could not afford to attend those universities, are turning to community colleges, and "with that kickdown from the UCs and CSU, they need

classes that they would have taken on those campuses," Zepeda said. For that reason, classes with lower enrollment, such as his math course, lost out.

This year's operating budget for Mt. San Jacinto is \$34.1 million, \$1.4 million below last year's. The reduction came on top of a \$1.1 million mid-year cut because of the state's budget crisis. To handle the cuts without turning any students away, the college reduced its office supply, service and equipment accounts, delayed maintenance projects, and laid off temporary employees.

Zepeda could not afford to go to college right after high school graduation, so he worked at a variety of jobs, mostly as a laborer. His mother, a single parent, is a respiratory therapist who earned too much money for Matthew to qualify for financial aid, but not enough to help him pay for college. Once Zepeda turned 24, he said, his mother's income no longer needed to be included on the aid forms. He receives a statewide Board of Governors waiver of tuition and has a federal Pell Grant, which pays for such expenses as parking, gas and books, beyond what is covered by his EOPS voucher.

Tuition at USC last fall was \$14,346 a semester. Room and board was \$4,316, plus books and transportation costs. Community college tuition is only \$18 per credit unit (up from \$11 a year ago), so it was "way better" for him to start college closer to home at Mt. San Jacinto, Zepeda said. He hopes to attend the Marshall School of Business at USC and is optimistic that USC will help with financing his education there.

When he has the opportunity, Zepeda tells politicians not to cut funding for schools and colleges. "Schools are turning out higher-bracket taxpayers," he said. "The government is going to get out what it puts in, and studies show that people with education make a better living."

—Kay Mills

Zepeda hopes to attend the Marshall School of Business at USC and is optimistic that USC will help with financing his education there.

Matthew Zepeda could not afford to go to college right after high school graduation, so he worked at a variety of jobs, mostly as a laborer.

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background,” said Kilpatrick. “We know who might need more structure. In the first semester they’re in a structured study hall and provided a tutor. Depending on how they perform, they might get more flexibility after the first semester.”

But they are never far from the watchful eye of the academic support staff. “We are constantly re-evaluating, especially with freshmen with weaker academic

With all the attention being lavished on athletes, critics argue that graduation rates for athletes should be higher than they are for the rest of the student body.

backgrounds,” said Kilpatrick. “We may need to increase tutoring from one to three times a week after seeing the first test scores.” Early last November, for example, with about five weeks left in the first semester, Kilpatrick said she was placing some football players into “a very structured, intensive situation, to try to save some things late.”

The constant monitoring involves both grades and class attendance. Class checkers provide attendance records to the counselors and they in turn provide to the football coaching staff a weekly spreadsheet on student-athletes who have missed class.

The counselors also meet with the coaching staff bi-weekly, and sometimes weekly, to go over such issues as the athletes’ study hall schedules. And they meet with academic advisors regularly to talk about what they are recommending to their advisees about future course loads, urging them, for example, to list several alternatives to give the time-pressured athletes the most flexibility. “They’re very good about that,” said Kilpatrick. “We have a good relationship.”

UGA officials insist that athletes get no special breaks. “All athletes are mainstreamed into the general student body,”

said Couvillon. “There are no majors for athletes here, like some schools have. They’ve got to pick a major that currently exists, and they’ve got to show progress toward a degree or they’re not going to remain eligible.”

While the athletic department does not provide a breakdown of majors chosen by athletes, a compilation of majors listed in the Bulldogs media guide indicates which are most popular among its football players. Of those who had declared a major last year, the leading choice was sports studies, followed by business or pre-business, consumer economics, education and child and family development.

With all the attention being lavished on athletes, critics of the system argue that graduation rates for athletes should be higher than they are—higher, in fact, than for the rest of the student body. It is a charge that evokes strong emotions on both sides of the academic-athletic divide.

Murray Sperber, an Indiana University professor who has written and lectured widely on the disproportionate influence of athletics in college life, sums up the argument:

“It’s like comparing apples to alligators. The main reason most students don’t graduate is financial—it’s not academic. Only a tiny percentage of students actually flunk out—it’s harder to flunk out than stay in. But the cost of college keeps going up and up. Many students leave because they just can’t afford it. Whereas, I never met an athlete who couldn’t pay his tuition bill, or dorm bill, because it’s paid for them as part of their athletic scholarship. Tutoring tends to be expensive for average students, whereas athletes have the best tutors on campus. They have wall-to-wall tutoring. So you can’t compare reasons why athletes leave school with why regular students leave school... because athletes don’t have to work all night delivering pizzas the way a lot of my students do.”

Sperber bears no animus against athletes: “One of the things they (athletes) have learned is discipline,” he said. “Over the years, I haven’t met many dumb jocks. The athletes I’ve had after their eligibility is over have often been excellent students. They’re often much better than the sort of

frat-rat, beer-drinking students. In that sense, I never blame the athletes. They’re caught up in a system that’s much bigger than them, and that the adults have worked out.

“To try to pretend that the majority of them are getting a meaningful education, as the NCAA pretends, and as the new graduation statistics will pretend, seems to me a disservice to a vast majority of athletes, who are really underachieving academically.”

At UGA, officials from Athletic Director Dooley on down reject the notion that athletes are getting an easy ride. “There’s an incredible time demand on athletes, pressure demands that could make up for the lack of other demands that students have,” said Dooley. “Athletes have a full day; there are demands on them that other people don’t quite understand.”

Assistant Athletic Director Susan Lahey, who was lead football counselor for 12 years and now counsels UGA’s Olympics athletes, says that paying athletes’ tuition and room and board still leaves them with expenses that the university does not and can not provide. “To say that student-athletes have no financial problems would be very inaccurate,” Lahey said. “Their part-time job—being an athlete—pays them tuition, board and books, but they can’t go get a job; they don’t have time to make money to buy pizzas and go to the movies and that sort of thing.”

Added Lahey’s successor, Rhonda Kilpatrick: “One thing I feel very sympathetic toward them for, is when I give them their schedule. I say, ‘this is tough.’ It’s seventeen weeks of doing this. And it’s not like you have one bad week, where it’s a tough week for time management—this is every day. And then on Saturday they’re [playing] and on Sunday they’re recovering and rehabbing. We’re talking about every day; it could be from 6 AM to 10 PM that they have a commitment with no more than an hour and a half window, and it is an exhausting life for these young men, and it’s not one tough week. This is it for the long haul.”

Couvillon, the former faculty athletics representative, offered a further defense of athletes: “They’re held to a higher standard than regular students because they’ve got to show continuing progress. They’ve got to decide on a major and show progress on that major by the time they’re juniors. Other students don’t have to do that. They have to maintain certain other standards in order to maintain their eligibility.”

Eligibility is just one of several issues now in flux as the NCAA moves to reform the rules in ways that seem somewhat contradictory.

For example, graduation rates themselves could rise dramatically over the next few years because the way in which they are calculated is changing. Since the U.S. Department of Education began requiring schools to publish their athletes’ graduation rates in 1990, coaches and athletic directors have complained that they were penalized because student-athletes who transferred to another school or turned pro were counted against a school’s graduation rate.

That way of calculating “really doesn’t give a true picture, unless you go behind the scenes and look at it,” said Oregon State University Athletic Director Bob De Carolis. He cited 2002 as an example: “Our basketball graduation rate was zero percent. That was a byproduct of having six recruits who came in that year (six years earlier), and I believe five of them transferred—in good standing—to other schools, and all of them graduated. And the other one went pro, but we hit the



An athletic scholarship does not pay for all of a player’s expenses, says Susan Lahey, assistant athletic director.

black mark at zero because of the way it’s calculated.

The new NCAA rule says that athletes who leave a school early in good academic standing will not count against the graduation rate of that athlete’s class. Students who transfer in from other schools can also be counted in the graduation rate.

Meanwhile, the NCAA has loosened requirements that scholarship athletes must meet in order to play as freshmen, and at the same time tightened requirements for academic progress in order for athletes to remain eligible. It’s a sort of carrot-and-stick approach.

For all intents and purposes, the NCAA is scrapping the SAT by allowing freshmen to play with a minimum SAT score of 400 if they have a high enough grade point average from high school in core subjects. The move is seen as a way to avoid lawsuits claiming that standardized tests discriminate against minorities.

The looser admission requirement—

“All athletes are mainstreamed into the general student body. They’ve got to pick a major that currently exists, and they’ve got to show progress toward a degree or they’re not going to remain eligible.”

**—GARY COUVILLON,
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA**



Gary Couvillon, former faculty athletic representative, says there are no “Mickey Mouse” majors for University of Georgia athletes.

the “carrot”—worries athletic leaders like Georgia’s Dooley, who for two decades has worked to strengthen academic demands on student-athletes.

“I disagree with it,” Dooley said, “because it’s opened the door too wide in the front, but narrowed the door in the back. If you take off that SAT score, it just sends a message out there that it’s not important.”

Because high school grading standards are notoriously uneven, Dooley and others are concerned that, in the absence of a

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GEORGIA

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meaningful standardized test like the SAT, universities will admit athletes who are not prepared for college-level work, and that keeping them eligible to play will put an additional burden on academic support staffs. Some worry that it will prompt colleges to offer easier majors for athletes or to inflate their grades to keep them eligible.

The “stick” in the new scenario is that scholarship athletes must make faster progress toward their degree in order to retain their eligibility. Under the new “40-60-80 rule,” they will have to complete 40 percent of their course credits by the end of their second year, 60 percent by the end of the third year and 80 percent by the end of the fourth year. This replaces the old formula of 25-50-75. They also will have to make faster progress toward achieving the 2.0 grade point average required for graduation. And the amount of credit that remedial courses are given toward eligibility has also been cut, meaning that first-year students might have a harder time meeting the 40 percent requirement the next year.

That is a big jump in requirements, especially for second-year athletes. “The goal is fair, and if they get to that fourth year, the odds are good,” said UGA’s Kilpatrick. “But that 40 percent requirement (after

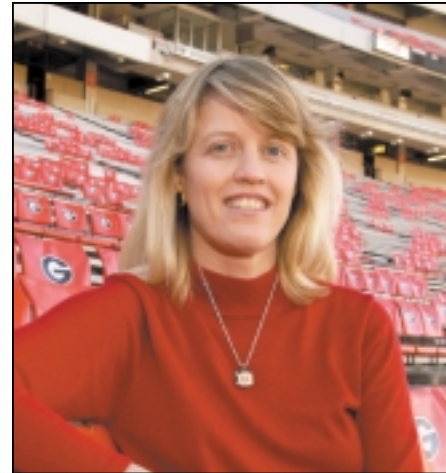
two years) doesn’t give them a lot of leeway.”

This gets to the heart of the matter, in the view of those on the academic side who say that, despite all the focus on graduation rates, many major sports programs are more concerned with retaining athletes than graduating them.

Many college sports leaders insist, not surprisingly, that athletes will meet whatever challenge is thrown at them. But Duderstadt, the former University of Michigan president who laid out a scathing indictment of college athletics in his recent book, *Intercollegiate Athletics and the American University*, makes a different argument:

“You’re bringing in kids with very weak (academic) background, you give them precious little time to study anyway, and when they do have the time they’re battered and bruised and worn out. And what happens is these kids move into their classes in the first few weeks and suddenly realize they don’t have a snowball’s chance in hell of competing academically. So their academic aspirations go out the window and survival takes over, and at that point they come back into the athletic fold. And, quite frankly, in most of these programs, the objective is not graduation, it’s keeping them eligible so they can compete.”

In the end, then, the pressure to win in a commercial-entertainment world pow-



ROBIN NELSON, BLACK STAR, FOR CROSSTALK

Special help for University of Georgia athletes begins on the first campus recruiting visit, says Associate Athletic Director Glada Horvat.

ered by BCS football and basketball’s “March Madness” is apt to overshadow concerns about how many athletes graduate.

Demetrius Marlowe, president of the National Association of Academic Advisors for Athletics and an assistant to the vice president for student affairs at Michigan State, pinpoints the problem: “In big-time athletics right now—I hope people aren’t being dishonest or trying to run away from it—it’s about revenue generation. Yeah, it’s about student-athletes and giving them opportunities, but in order to

give them opportunities in this economic time, you have to create revenue.”

At UGA, where the football team generates 85 percent of all athletic department revenue, and where 27 more sky suites are on the drawing board at Sanford Stadium, Couvillon put the tension between athletics and graduation rates into a down-home perspective. Shortly after he took over the job of faculty athletic representative a decade ago, he recalled, he had the occasion to attend a Kiwanis Club luncheon in the town of Griffin, Georgia. He was seated at a table with four other men when the host announced that UGA football coach Ray Goff would be speaking the next day at a Kiwanis Club in a nearby town, and that everyone was invited. Goff, Couvillon explained, was not having a good year on the gridiron.

“One of the guys leaned over to me and said, ‘that’s the last time that blankety-blank is going to speak anywhere.’ And I said, ‘What are you talking about? Do you realize that he graduated 70 percent of his athletes last year?’

“And he said, ‘We don’t want to hear that stuff. Do you think that University of Georgia sticker I’ve got on the back of my truck is for the bi-o-chem-is-try department?’” ♦

Don Campbell is a freelance writer and a lecturer in journalism at Emory University.

ARIZONA

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about it.

Republican Representative Doug Queland, a vigorous opponent of the bill, is skeptical that the investment in research infrastructure will pay off. “It was way too much, too soon and too fast,” he said.

By moving so quickly, Crow has ruffled some feathers within the university as well, particularly among faculty members who are nervous about where they fit in the new scheme of things. And some have been offended by what they perceive as a top-down, autocratic approach. But there has been no organized opposition to Crow, and he has a talent for winning over his critics.

“Every method of promoting change has its costs, and I feel that some very high-cost methods are being engaged in,” said Marie Provine, director of the School of Justice Studies. But Crow is working diligently and skillfully to improve the university, and he has shown that he is willing to listen to faculty concerns, as he did recently, when he met with Provine and her faculty to discuss their opposition to a proposal that would move the school off the main campus. “He’s not aloof, and that’s a virtue in my book,” Provine said.

That fact was immediately obvious to Alfredo de los Santos Jr., and his colleagues at ASU’s Hispanic Research Center. On the day Crow took office, de los Santos and two of his center colleagues brought a large stack of material about the state’s growing Hispanic population to the president’s office, along with a note asking for a meeting with him. The response was astonishingly prompt and thorough: Within 24 hours, Crow’s assistant called to set



PETER EISENBERGER, BLACK STAR, FOR CROSSTALK

Enrollment in Arizona State’s three campuses is expected to grow from 57,000 to 95,000 by 2020.

up that meeting, which was held within eight days.

“Not only did he respond quickly to our request to meet with him, it was clear he had read and assimilated the information we had provided him,” said de los Santos. That impressed de los Santos, as has Crow’s inclusive vision for ASU and his notion of coupling higher tuition with more financial aid for the neediest students. All of which is necessary if ASU is to serve the state’s rapidly growing Hispanic population.

This year, minority enrollment at ASU hit a record 22 percent, about half of which is Hispanic. Those numbers are certain to increase: By 2012, Hispanics are expected to make up the largest number of Ari-

zona’s high school graduates, said de los Santos, who believes Crow’s plans to grow the university—especially his plan to build a downtown campus that will be near Hispanic neighborhoods—will benefit them. “I am a fan,” said de los Santos.

A newly published survey of 300 ASU faculty and staff indicates that he is not alone. Even ASU officials were startled to discover that 84 percent of faculty and staff surveyed said they are at least “somewhat” familiar with Crow’s vision, and nearly the same percentage said they held a favorable opinion of that vision. What’s more, 86 percent thought he had a high probability of successfully achieving it. (At the same time, nearly a quarter of faculty said that Crow would benefit from continuing to meet with and listen to them.)

Even so, Crow isn’t counting his victories just yet. “We have gotten off to a very good start,” he acknowledged. But at the same time, he said, “I feel significantly challenged.”

For good reason.

Crow has convinced the business community and the faculty to accept his ideas. Now he has to keep the governor and the legislature on board. And that could be trickier.

Lawmakers and Governor Janet Napolitano not only must buy into Crow’s vision but will have to come up with additional financing to support the enrollment increases that are at its core—especially since an increasing number of those new students are likely to need financial aid.

“The state cannot get the 60 percent growth in enrollments over the next 15 years without some additional investment in their public sector—or they won’t have a public sector,” warned Longanecker, of the Western Interstate Commission for Higher

Education. And Michael Crow is likely to get some of the blame. “If some resources don’t come, people are going to say, well, this guy is sort of the Music Man.”

A key test will come early this year, when Crow plans to ask the legislature for a \$54.2 million increase in state support, mostly to cover enrollment growth. ASU hasn’t received any increases in its base budget in the past three years, despite an enrollment increase of more than 7,600 students. Legislators have indicated that they are sympathetic to the school’s cause, but Crow still faces an uphill battle.

“I think they deserve every penny of that,” said House Speaker Jake Flake. “But I’m not going to raise taxes to get it for him.” Flake said he would likely support a partial funding increase, but he doubted it would represent even half the amount requested. “We just don’t have it,” he said.

Then, too, the jury’s still out on whether Crow’s ambitious research goals are achievable, and whether his Biodesign Institute will really pay off. “Arguably, no university has gone from where this university is to where Mike wants it to be as fast as he wants to get there,” said an exhausted-looking Jonathan Fink, ASU’s vice president for Research and Economic Affairs. “Will it work? It’s going to take ten years to see if it’s successful.”

In some ways, though, Crow has already been extraordinarily successful. “My job,” he said, “is to help conceptualize what a great 21st-century university should look like.”

Now all that’s left to do is create it. ♦

Kathy Witkowsky is a freelance reporter in Missoula, Montana, and a frequent contributor to National Public Radio.

OTHER VOICES



Access Denied

Low-income students are hit hardest by the latest round of tuition hikes and budget cuts

By David L. Kirp

IT WAS PAGE-ONE NEWS last fall when a “confidential” report on Berkeley admissions, prepared for UC Regent (and San Diego Padres owner) John Moores, showed that in 2002 the university admitted nearly 400 students with combined SAT scores below 1000 while turning away 600 applicants with scores above 1500. Just a few months earlier in the University of Michigan cases, the U.S. Supreme Court had upheld the use of race to promote diversity in college admissions, and the rancor generated by that decision carried over into this new contretemps.

Admissions judgments don’t, and shouldn’t, rest on the results of a three-hour test, Berkeley officials argued; the process of “comprehensive review” properly takes into account high school academics, life experiences and the like. However, when an analysis of 2001 admissions data showed that minorities with low SAT scores were nearly twice as likely as whites to be admitted, Moores and fellow regent Ward Connerly went after Berkeley (and UCLA, where the figures were similar) for doing an end-run around Proposition 209, the California measure authored by Connerly that bans affirmative action.

This controversy took on the appearance of a food fight when Robert Berdahl, Berkeley’s departing chancellor, sent Moores a blistering response. “You have done a disservice to the university and shown contempt for the reasoned discourse about complex issues,” wrote the normally mild-mannered administrator, a riposte that Connerly called “impertinent.” Berdahl “should be grateful he works for a university,” Connerly added, “where he is protected by academic freedom.”

The University of California has led the way nationwide in demonstrating that, compared with high school grades and scores on subject matter-oriented tests (the “SAT 2s”), SAT 1 “aptitude” tests do a bad job of predicting academic success, while favoring students whose parents can afford to send them to cramming schools.

In scolding the university for having abandoned the “goal of academic excellence,” Moores trivialized a serious issue; at the November regents meeting, the most conflict-laced in years, several regents criticized him for releasing an analysis that was “incomplete, inaccurate, and hurt students.” Even Connerly joined the chorus, calling the study’s potential impact on students “unfair, unfortunate, and the worst thing we could do.”

The performance of those 400 low-SAT-scoring students is a case in point—academically they are all making the grade at Berkeley. So, tellingly, are the students who transfer from community colleges. Seemingly everyone admires the transfer program, including those who decry affirmative action or “comprehensive review.” After all, the policy of admitting students who have done well in community college to an elite university embodies iconic American values—that judgments should be based on the content of a man’s character (to borrow the felicitous phrasing of Martin Luther King Jr.) and not the color of his skin, that hard work pays off, that there are second chances in American lives, that public universities serve as engines of mobility. The fact that, at Berkeley, these transfer students have similar majors and about the same graduation rates as students who come to the campus as freshmen is taken as confirming the wisdom of the policy.

Yet if those who equate meritocracy with high SAT scores were to inquire more closely into the transfers’ high school records, they might have cause to rethink their position on diversity generally. Compared with those admitted to Berkeley as freshmen, slightly more of these students are minorities; the bigger difference is that their median family income is about 30 percent lower. Their SAT scores aren’t even recorded, and for good reason: Most

of them never bothered to take that exam, since anyone with a high school diploma can enroll in a community college. Moreover, based on how well many of them did in high school, an SAT score of 1000 would have seemed like an impossible dream.

None of this would surprise an experienced professor, who knows at first hand that when it comes to academic success the “hungry-to-learn” factor matters more than Kaplan-sculpted SAT scores. The true present danger for higher education in California has nothing to do with the 600 students with sterling SAT scores who didn’t get those spots at Berkeley but almost certainly wound up at estimable universities. Nor more generally does it have anything to do with affirmative action. Rather, it concerns the thousands of students—disproportionately minority and even more disproportionately poor—who are effectively being denied access to college by budget cuts and steep tuition increases. And in this regard, as California goes, so goes the country.

When California’s Master Plan for Higher Education was unveiled in 1960, it instantly became the international gold standard for expanding access to a college education. That plan promises every high school graduate a good and affordable education. The top 12.5 percent of the state’s high school graduates are guaranteed a place in the University of California system, and the top third are assured a spot in one of the state universities, such as San Francisco State University or Sacramento State University. All high school graduates can enter a community college, and if they succeed there, they’re entitled to transfer to a UC institution.

Here’s the tragedy: The Master Plan hasn’t officially been repealed, but its guarantee of universal higher education is history. Tuition at the University of California has been kept comparatively low (\$5,437 a year as compared with \$6,149 at the University of Virginia and nearly \$8,000 at the University of Michigan), but that’s quickly changing. This year the cost of attending the University of California was raised a jaw-dropping 30 percent, an increase second in magnitude only to the University of Arizona.

The picture is even grimmer at the community colleges. As increases in enrollment have outstripped state funding, many campuses have been forced to cut courses and put a cap on enrollment. To balance the books, the community colleges raised their fees this year by more than a third, from \$11 to \$18 a unit. That’s only about \$100 a term, but community college students are especially sensitive to tuition increases. Many come from poor families that haven’t sent their offspring to college and don’t take the benefits of higher education for granted—the higher the cost, the less they’re willing to risk a job now for uncertain prospects later.

At Berkeley, the percent of transfer students who say that financing their education is the toughest challenge they face nearly doubled, to 86 percent, between 1997 and 2002 (the year before the 30 percent tuition hike). And while Berkeley freshmen are becoming increasingly cost-conscious, there’s still a noticeable gap in the proportion of the two groups who report that money is their major concern.

Across the state, community college officials estimate that fall 2003 enrollment was more than 100,000 less than they had been expecting; and because of the loss of state revenue, they had to turn away 50,000 students. What’s most characteristic about these students isn’t their race or ethnicity but the fact that, whether they’re white, black, Asian or Hispanic, they often come from poor and working class families.

The same pattern is replicated nationally. A study by the Century Foundation estimates that if the nation’s 146 most selective colleges, which enroll about ten percent of undergraduates, abandoned affirmative action, about 5,000 black and Latino students would have to enroll elsewhere. Using a broader definition of selectivity that includes the 379 colleges and universities classified by the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education as Research I, Doctoral I or Baccalaureate College-Liberal Arts Colleges, affirmative action affects just .05 percent of all college slots—even making the unrealistic assumption that every minority student benefits from the policy.

This is an important half a percent, to be sure, since many of the nation’s future leaders will come from this group. But while the fate of the new minority elite grabs the attention of Right and Left alike, across the country hundreds of thousands of students, a majority of whom are white, are being locked out of higher education. What William Julius Wilson described a quarter of a century ago in *The Declining Significance of Race* is truer now than it was then, and as true for higher education as for any segment of the society—the size of one’s bank account, not the color of one’s skin, has the biggest impact on an individual’s life chances.

In California, the transfer students who have been held up as an example of the promise of higher education are among the chief casualties of higher tuition and declining state support. The Master Plan’s promise of mobility—do well in community college and you can enroll in a university like UCLA or Berkeley—has fallen victim to the state’s fiscal woes. To keep pace with the growing number of transfer applicants, the state agreed to underwrite four percent annual growth for the university, but during the budget negotiations in spring 2003, the lawmakers broke

Across the country hundreds of thousands of students, a majority of whom are white, are being locked out of higher education.

This year the cost of attending the University of California was raised a jaw-dropping 30 percent.

When it comes to academic success, the “hungry-to-learn” factor matters more than Kaplan-sculpted SAT scores.

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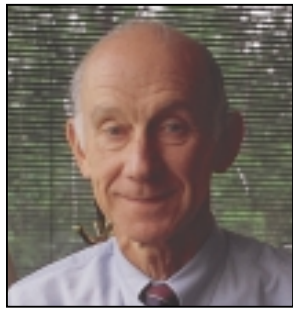
that agreement.

The impact has been as dispiriting as it is predictable. The University of California closed off enrollment for the spring 2004 semester, and more than 2,000 transfer applications were returned unread. The California State University system, facing the same pressures, has turned away as many as 30,000 students. The picture for next fall looks grimmer.

During last fall's recall election, California's politics made perfect fodder for the late night TV talk show hosts. When it comes to higher education, though, the state's dismal story is being repeated across the country. If John Moores and others who are stuck in the affirmative action quagmire want a real cause, they should take up the cudgels for these educationally disenfranchised students. ♦

California's Master Plan for Higher Education hasn't officially been repealed, but its guarantee of universal higher education is history.

*David L. Kirp, professor of public policy at the University of California at Berkeley, is the author of the recently published *Shakespeare, Einstein, and the Bottom Line: The Marketing of Higher Education* (Harvard University Press, 2003). Research assistance for this article was provided by Bryan Quevedo.*



The Business We're In

When standard formulas fail, the work of policymakers has got to change

By Gordon K. Davies

SINCE THE END of World War II and the introduction of the GI Bill, higher education policy development has focused extensively on building institutional capacity, as higher education became a general public good rather than an elite privilege. Institutions have been funded to absorb ever-greater numbers of students and to build intellectual capital. And they have done it well.

To be sure, there never was enough funding. As Howard Bowen pointed out years ago, because there is no limit to how good education can be, there also is no limit to how much money can be spent on it. Describing this exuberant period which, in retrospect, probably ended in the late 1980s, Jim Furman once joked that Illinois had built higher education facilities so rapidly that it crossed the border into Indiana and built some there without realizing it.

In all of this capacity building, we came to behave as if institutions were ends in themselves, not means to achieving public purposes. We tended to forget that no institution can survive unless it finds its meaning outside itself.

A substantial population growth in many states will lead to increased demands for access to higher education over the coming decade. But states with low participation rates and stable or even declining populations—states like Kentucky and West Virginia—also have to increase enrollment substantially. They have low rates of participation in education beyond high school and their economies are hindered by the lack of a skilled and knowledgeable workforce. In many, if not in all, states with a population that is increasing, there also are sub-populations that historically have been under-served by the educational systems: California, Texas and Virginia are only three examples.

This is not a time for business as usual. It is an opportunity to define our work in ways to improve the quality of lives in our states.

Political, economic and technological changes in our world now call into question even the most aggressive capacity building of the post-World War II period. These changes have not been as sudden as they might feel (as I suggested, I think they were becoming evident as early as 1989), but they also are not glacial. Change is occurring and it is occurring quickly.

The sorting function of higher education—colleges and universities deciding, by whom they admit, which women and men will have professional lives that require advanced edu-

cation—is obsolete. Postsecondary education, some kind of education beyond high school, now is essential to persons seeking decent lives for themselves and their families. Indeed, persons with only a high school credential are punished cruelly by the modern economy.

Where do we go? What can we expect? Adrienne Rich, in the thirteenth of "Twenty-One Love Poems," wrote these lines:

*Whatever we do together is pure invention
The maps they gave us were out of date by years*

The work we have done in our professional lives is changing, has got to change. Our great opportunity is to re-define that work. We can help people in higher education, and those who provide support for it, to stay focused on the importance of the work they do, even as they prepare new maps to replace those that are out of date by years.

Ken Ashworth, when he was Texas state higher education executive officer, liked to say that state coordinating bodies were "speed bumps" on the road of institutional ambition. We promoted fair and equitable distribution of resources. We mediated conflict. We slowed down, but never really stopped, mission creep. If we try to do the same work in the 21st century, we shall fail those who depend upon us.

This is not a time for business as usual. It is an opportunity to define our work in ways like this: To improve the quality of lives in our states; to insure the public health; and to promote the general welfare.

I suggest that this new work begins at the state level, with consideration of such issues as educational achievement, per capita income, voting rates, migration to and from other states, physical health, adult illiteracy, public school measures of learning, the well-being of children, and rates of incarceration. If we were to examine this information county-by-county, by race and by sex, and look for the pockets of educational disadvantage, we would find correlations among these and a myriad of other personal and social difficulties. Higher education then can be understood as a public health issue. Decisions about institutional mission, allocation of resources among institutions, student financial aid, the ugly ditches that separate high schools from colleges, and community colleges from universities—all these and more will change.

Kentucky can serve as just one example. On balance, the state has a poorly educated work force. Per capita income is about 82 percent of the national average, and about one million persons in a potential work force of 2.4 million are functionally illiterate (that is, they have difficulty reading, writing and doing basic arithmetic to an extent that disqualifies them for all but the most basic kinds of jobs).

It is no accident that Kentucky ranked 40th among the states in the annual tabulation called "Kids Count," which is published by The Children's Defense Fund to track how well children are living in the states. One of our goals in Kentucky was to improve postsecondary education so children would live better. A major reason why Kentucky's Council on Postsecondary Education assumed responsibility for adult basic education was to help poorly educated mothers and fathers gain the skills they needed to ensure that their children would be ready to go to school. The state doubled its funding for adult basic education.

But the situation is not simple—there are states with very fine university systems in which children live poorly according to "Kids Count." It is possible to build universities that are strong by common measures while disregarding the needs of children. It is, indeed, possible to build great systems at the expense of our children.

Physical health, family health, economic self-sufficiency and educational attainment are all closely correlated.

In Kentucky, we created the maps by county that I described earlier. We showed the highest incidences of lung cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, children living in poverty, unemployment, and low per-capita income. The maps looked very similar to one another because physical health, family health, economic self-sufficiency and educational attainment are all closely correlated.

The Collaborative for Postsecondary Education Policy, a project funded by The Pew Charitable Trusts, is working now with five states to improve policy by focusing on how well the educational needs of a state's citizens are being met. We lay out these maps for policymakers and influential citizens, trying to show them that a skilled and knowledgeable population is not only essential to the economy but to the very social fabric of the state and its communities.

The Collaborative's members are the Education Commission of the States, the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, and the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education. Together, they bring significant resources to each of the states with which we have entered into partnership.

Good labor economists, statisticians and others have told me that there is no "causal nexus" between universities and the quality of children's lives. That may be true but the correlations are undeniable. And if there is no causal nexus, I believe we should assert one. We should say that it is not acceptable—that it is unconscionable—to build a great university system in a state that is in the bottom ten or fifteen in how well children live. The well-being of individuals, families and communities should be included in our work and in our performance standards.

A hundred years ago, Henry Adams was coming to the end of both his life and an account of his education. He had undertaken, in *The Education of Henry Adams*, to explain the place of everything in the historical record and to demonstrate the progress of hu-

Institutions of higher learning are means to an end, not ends in themselves.

mankind through the ages. He had failed, but he would not give up. He had not developed a verifiable uniform theory of history, so he would try once more.

In "The Education," Henry Adams wrote, "To the tired student, the idea that he must give it up seemed sheer senility. As long as he could whisper, he would go on as he had begun, bluntly refusing to meet his creator with the admission that creation had taught him nothing except that the square of the hypotenuse of a right-angled triangle might for convenience be taken as equal to something else. Every man with self-respect enough to become effective, if only as a machine, has had to account to himself for himself somehow, and to invent a formula of his own for his universe, if the standard formulas failed..."

A skilled and knowledgeable population is not only essential to the economy but to the very social fabric of our states and communities.

...invent a formula of his own for his universe, if the standard formulas failed...

"The effort must begin at once, for time pressed. The old formulas had failed, and a new one had to be made, but, after all, the object was not extravagant or eccentric. One sought no absolute truth. One sought only a spool on which to wind the thread of history without breaking it."

The old formulas have failed; the maps are out of date. We need to begin again, recognizing that institutions of higher learning are means to an end, not ends in themselves. Correlations between educational advantage and decent, ac-

countable and responsible lives are important. Education is not a trivial pursuit but a deeply ethical work that will determine the future of our society.

Our work involves great attention to details because good policy decisions are grounded in good information about what's really going on out there. There is a lot of bean-counting, a lot of negotiation, a lot of mediation and compromise.

And there is a lot of teaching. Primarily, we are teachers. Every time we attend a meeting or appear before legislators, editorial boards, the Rotary, or any other group, we can try to leave people with one new thought, one provocative idea about higher education and its place in our lives. We can try to leave them with one thing they want to tell someone else later that day.

Once on a climb in Italy, I grabbed a piece of rock that came off in my hands. I fell about 20 feet until the rope caught me, and I bounced a bit and settled down.

Then I discovered that I still was holding onto the piece of rock that had come off in my hands. It was the last piece of security I had, so I'd hung on to it even though it was entirely useless.

We need to let go of the useless things ourselves and help others to do the same. That's teaching. It's also leadership. ♦

Gordon K. Davies is executive director of the National Collaborative for Postsecondary Education Policy. He is a former president of the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education, and directed Virginia's State Council of Higher Education for 20 years. This article was adapted from remarks made at a SHEEO meeting last summer.



"Policy Speak" in the Crosshairs

Jargon-heads face friendly fire

By Todd Sallo

BENCHMARKING A RECENT proactive paradigm shift has revealed a curriculum model (of a model curriculum, modeled on a fully articulated student-oriented effort-based system) that represents the wave of the future, even as it remains mired in the past.

Data-based inquiries of demand-driven, civic-minded initiatives that are market-based, choice-based, technology-based and segmentally neutral, have incentivized education practitioners and pedagogical personnel to pursue selective flexibility in the utilization of evaluative instruments and assessment tools in learning-oriented, community-level functional analysis.

Knowledge-producing organizations can leverage developmental assets as knowledge

products by championing a targeted, learner-centered, knowledge-intensive, cross-sectional centerpiece initiative that impacts and empowers the at-risk demographic without systematizing comprehensive role strain.

A blue ribbon panel has determined that this model bottom-lines as revenue neutral, with a dollar-cost-analysis that reveals both weak power and negative growth.

No doubt some of you are still trying to make sense out of the paragraphs above. You can stop now. Perhaps a "policy wonk" somewhere has actually deduced an unintended meaning in all that gibberish. If so, please notify the editor immediately.

For anyone who is well schooled in the language of policy organizations, foundations and "think tanks," this kind of writing has a familiar ring—some of it even sounds cliché. In fact, though taken out of context, all of the terms and expressions above were culled from actual reports, papers and articles in the field of higher education policy. And with a little tweaking, those paragraphs could even be mistaken for the genuine article, virtually indistinguishable from the barrage of buzzwords that comes out of many policy organizations.

Some linguists refer derisively to this type of jargon-laden language as "policy speak" or "foundation-ese." This is not unique to higher education, of course. Many fields have their own trademark lingo, and some terms take on a life of their own, finding use in unrelated fields, like viruses that jump from one species to another. Much of the jargon regularly employed in the field of higher education policy, for instance, is borrowed from finance and economics, or from the military.

A recent Doonesbury cartoon makes great sport of this. In a commencement address, the president of mythical Walden College is attempting to reassure the graduating class that the economy is not a "denied environment," and that their "high-value assets" prepare them well for the future. "Will there be challenges on the way? Blowback, mission creep, friendly fire? Roger that, graduates!" he says. "But never forget: Your education is a force multiplier, effects-based training that will allow you to stay on plan! You're ready, people, so lock and load!"

The military has long been a leading purveyor of this type of abstract language, and the recent war in Iraq provided a perfect opportunity for them to confect and disseminate a lot of jargon which was dutifully repeated, sometimes *ad nauseum*, by a pliant press.

One of the more common reasons for using jargon is to cushion the impact of the message—hence the invention of such euphemisms as "collateral damage" and "friendly fire." In the modern parlance, we do not "fight the enemy," but rather "engage combatants"—as if a tea party were about to break out. In policy speak, this often takes the form of substituting words like "funding," "investment" and "resources" for the harsher variations of "money." Urban black kids become "at-risk youths." Help becomes "assistance" or, better, "empowerment."

But some jargon serves no such purpose. It is not only unnecessary to the task of communication, but actually obscures the message. A good example is "boots on the ground," one of the more entertaining bits of military jargon that recently gained popularity (and attendant overuse). Does "200,000 more boots on the ground" represent another 200,000 soldiers, or must we divide by two, on the assumption that each soldier has two boots? Have the soldiers walked so many miles that their worn-out boots need to be replaced, thus requiring more boots on the ground?

A CNN report from last April began, "With U.S. boots on the ground at Saddam International Airport, sustained explosions rocked Baghdad on Friday morning." Was anyone wearing these U.S. boots? Did the boots have to sustain the explosions without human reinforcements? Donald Rumsfeld did not clarify.

Of course, the real reason for using this expression, and many others like it, has nothing to do with conveying useful, specific information—in this case, about troop deployments. Rather, its use says, "I am an expert in this field, an insider. I am someone who knows the lingo, so you should listen to me."

It is the equivalent of the secret handshakes used by benevolent societies and fraternities, in that it has no inherent meaning or value on its own (and could even seem bizarre to the uninitiated), but it gets you in the door. Its use seeks to invoke a shared legacy or point of view. It says, "I'm a member of the club; I'm on your side."

Higher education organizations have their equivalents of "boots on the ground." (In fact, some of them have probably already appropriated that term for their own use, perhaps as a way to dramatize renewed calls for more K-12 teachers.) Adjectives such as "proactive," "comprehensive" and "intensive" are commonly applied, even though their meaning is nebulous at best, because their use confers the appearance of expertise and proficiency. Expressions such as "high-stakes" and "new paradigm" lend a sense of drama and gravity

"Jargon kills a general conversation, serving merely to identify the speaker as the possessor of secrets inaccessible to the multitude."

—CHRISTOPHER LASCH, IN
"PLAIN STYLE"

continued next page

from preceding page

to otherwise ordinary run-of-the-mill issues. “Benchmarking” implies a serious, scientific analysis. And why form a committee, when you can establish a “blue ribbon” panel?

Language of this type can sometimes be used to announce a political point of view, party affiliation or other bias. In education policy speak, words like “underrepresented” and “diversity” tend to reveal a left-leaning attitude, while expressions like “family values” and “back to basics” usually show the opposite. If the purpose is pure communication, then this is not all bad. When understood by the intended audience, it can be useful in conveying a great deal of information succinctly—like technical language among experts.

But much of the time, language of this type is not used for such high-minded reasons, but rather merely to impress people. While it pretends to communicate grand ideas broadly, its primary purpose is simple puffery.

In his book, “Plain Style,” Christopher Lasch argues that “esoteric terminology” appeals especially “to those who wish to impress others with a display of special learning.” Lasch recognized the fact that each craft or profession tends to evolve a special terminology of its own, but, “since outsiders can make no sense of it,” he wrote, “jargon kills a general conversation, serving merely to identify the speaker as the possessor of secrets inaccessible to the multitude.”

Lasch decried “the clotted jargon we see in print” as being largely “pompous and pretentious,” and advised the use of ordinary language whenever possible. “Abstractions are often indispensable, of course,” he allowed. “Sipped in small amounts, they may have a slightly intoxicating effect, not inconsistent with verbal clarity. Over-indulgence, however, leads to slurred speech and eventually destroys brain cells.”

It is a diplomatic way of saying what we all know: A lot of what passes for serious writing is just plain bull. And literature from the field of education policy is full of examples:

“To stay the course is to embrace change when change holds promise for bringing us closer to our vision. Much of TERC’s innovative, inquiry-based curricula requires changes in teacher practice, including acquisition of content knowledge, ability to lead project-based learning, skill in creating ‘team engaged’ rather than ‘teacher instructed’ learning experiences, and ability to support and assess student progress using several assessment tools.”

—Hands On!, a publication of TERC, Spring 2001

“Jeffrey A. Fromm, the president of KnowledgeQuest Education Group, a New York-based firm that provides consulting and financial services to education-related businesses...describes these entrepreneurs generally as ‘mission driven’ and motivated by a ‘dual bottom line’—concerned about making a difference as well as making money.”

—Education Week on the Web, December 1, 1999

“Participants will use the High Schools That Work (HSTW) key practices and indicators to assess the state of current practices in their high schools...and brainstorm a set of actions that the school can take to shift from an ability model design to an effort-based system.”

—Description of a workshop, 11th international conference of “Connecting Classrooms, Communities and Careers”

“Written for those working with young people on building their ‘developmental assets’—factors that can impact success in life. Provides hands-on, experiential activities and worksheets aimed at helping young people discover their abilities and understand their responsibility in nurturing their own assets.”

—Description of “Building Assets Together: 135 Group Activities for Helping Youth Succeed”

“In a piece called ‘The Soul of a New University,’ Arthur Levine calls on higher education to recognize the convergence of knowledge-producing organizations joining television and publishing in creating an array of technology-based knowledge products that would make the contemporary place-bound campus obsolete.”

—Edward Zlotkowski, American Association for Higher Education Forum on Faculty Roles and Rewards, January 2002

“This series overview introduces Dr. Judith Langer’s theory of literary envisionment and envisionment-building classrooms and invites us into real classrooms of real teachers to see how this the-

In education policy speak, words like “underrepresented” and “diversity” tend to reveal a left-leaning attitude, while expressions like “family values” and “back to basics” usually show the opposite.

ory plays out in practice with real students.

Like all good pedagogical theories, Dr. Langer’s theory of envisionment-building classrooms is philosophically concrete, yet allows for a widely diverse range of classroom practices. Grounded in key understandings about human beings as learners and as makers of meaning, the basic tenets of envisionment theory could productively underpin literature instruction in any classroom, at any grade level.”

—Description of a video series offered by Annenberg/Corporation for Public Broadcasting

“These forces have produced a highly competitive, turbo-charged, equity-driven performance culture, with several implications for government, non-profits, and communities.”

—“Working Better Together: How government, business and nonprofit organizations can achieve public purposes through cross-sector collaboration, alliances and partnerships,” by R. Scott Fosler

To be fair, these samples were taken out of context. The writers would surely insist, with some justification, that this is not merely babble dressed in peacock feathers—that, given a chance, they could explain what they meant and why they needed to use all that verbal plumage.

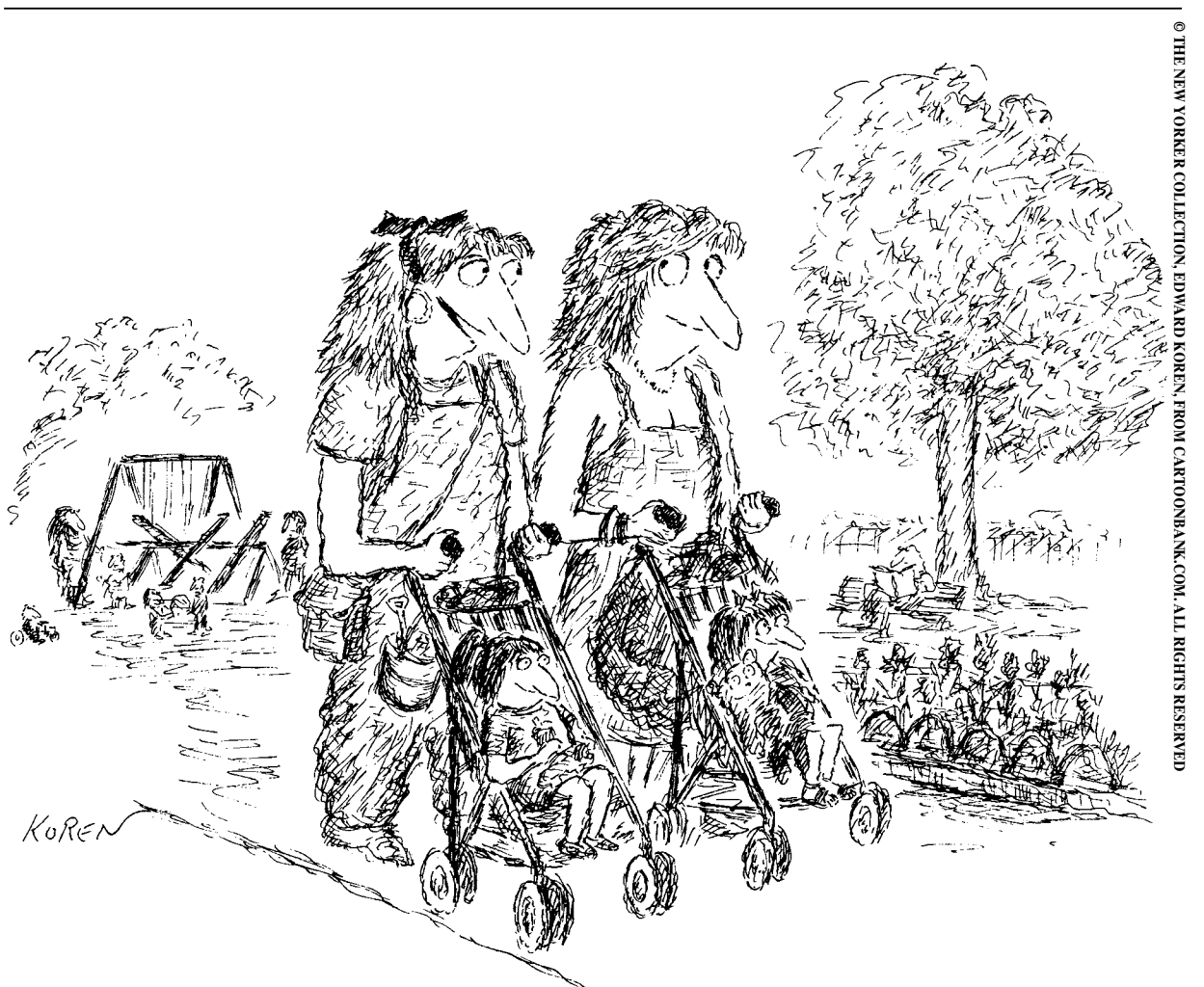
They might point out that these words were not intended for a general audience—that a group of experts in the field would certainly be aware of their deeper meanings. Perhaps. But it can be a tricky thing to presume too much about one’s target audience. There is a tendency to overestimate the extent to which a given group of people shares a common understanding of an esoteric language. And “experts” cannot be relied upon to admit that they have failed to understand something. Who wants to risk looking foolish?

So, how do we know when we’ve crossed the line? At what point does the appropriate use of technical language degenerate into buzzwords and jargon? This is not a simple “black and white” matter; it’s a judgement call. Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart summed up this type of dilemma best in his famously opaque effort to define hard core pornography in a 1964 case: “I shall not today attempt further to define the kinds of material I understand to be embraced within that shorthand description; and perhaps I could never succeed in intelligibly doing so. But I know it when I see it.”

It can be very tempting to substitute a highfalutin term for something more mundane. But most of the time, it’s no accident—we know it when we’re doing it. If a simpler word would suffice, though, isn’t that preferable?

Appropriately, Christopher Lasch’s advice in this matter is plain as it is true. “If you intend to communicate with readers, instead of merely making a formidable first impression,” he wrote, “use ordinary language.”

Todd Sallo is an editor for National CrossTalk.



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“How are her scores?”

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vidualized.”

The court's ruling means seeking “a robust exchange of ideas” and “more spirited discussions,” in classes small enough to allow this, said campus admissions research director Gary Lavergne. He believes campuses must switch from the perspective of a “group of 7,000 people. We had stopped thinking in terms of the classroom. The case for race consciousness has to be at the classroom level.”

Because state law requires a year's notice, the policy change will not take place until fall 2005, when African American

At Austin and College Station, minority enrollments trail far behind their respective shares of the Texas population, which is about 12 percent African American and more than one third Hispanic.

and Hispanic backgrounds will be considered as one of 12 factors used in evaluating as many as 35 percent of freshman applications. That will reinstate affirmative action for the first time since 1996, when the Fifth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals banned racial preference policies in Texas, because they discriminated against whites.

Protests may be forthcoming from parents, legislators and others, because restoring affirmative action very likely will require changes in the seven-year-old, race-neutral admissions law for this overcrowded campus, which has more than 52,000 students. The law, which is intended to circumvent the Fifth Circuit ruling, guarantees automatic admission for the top ten percent of graduates from each Texas public high school, without re-

gard for the quality of the school. Currently nearly three of every four Austin freshmen are “ten percenters.”

While the law applies to all public campuses in Texas, only two—UT-Austin and the main Texas A&M campus at College Station—must deal with far more freshman applicants than they can handle. Austin received more than 24,500 freshman applications this year, admitted 11,000 and enrolled 6,544.

In contrast to UT-Austin's plans, Texas A&M President Robert M. Gates has made it clear that his campus will not consider race in deciding which students to admit. In a statement last fall, he made only passing reference to the Supreme Court decision but did announce plans to increase efforts to diversify enrollment, which is now only two percent African American and nine percent Hispanic.

But UT-Austin has chosen a different course. After months of discussions, bolstered by the survey of 3,600 undergraduate classes, President Larry R. Faulkner released a campus statement, warning that a critical mass for the two underrepresented minorities requires “a holistic, individual assessment of each student's background and record.” Besides ethnicity and race, the admissions office next year will also review academic strength, written essays, leadership, honors, special circumstances, family responsibilities, awards, socio-economic status of the family, community service, experience in overcoming adversity, and work experience.

“Increasing the size of the entering freshman class, as has been done in the past, can no longer sustain race-neutral alternatives,” the Faulkner statement said. While the ten percent admissions policy had provided “some modest improvements in diversity, it now threatens the quality of the educational experience because of the rising number of students being admitted using only one criterion.”

The UT-Austin policy that was found to be unconstitutional by the Fifth Circuit in 1996 did not use a point system to help minorities qualify for admission as undergraduates, as the University of Michigan policy did, but it did employ a quota system designed to achieve the same result. While details of the new approach have not yet been formulated, it will require additional staff to review test results, essays and personal histories, Walker said.

It is clear that the proposed changes, which are expected to receive endorsement from the university's board of regents later this year, will not leave room for all ten percenters who want to enroll. Between classes, students crowd the walkways of the Austin campus, often slowing progress to a crawl. “We've hit the wall. There's no more shoulder room,” Bruce Walker said. “The university is already the largest single-campus institution of



PHOTOS BY JANA BERCHUM, BLACK STAR FOR CROSSTALK

Jess Butler, a Texas school official, worries that the new admissions policies exclude many talented students who come from suburban high schools.

higher education in the United States.”

He and other campus officials favor limiting automatic admission to the top five percent of each high school's graduates, but only the state government can make that change. Governor Rick Perry has called a special legislative session for this year, probably in the spring, to deal with funding for public schools, and there is speculation that he will expand the agenda to include the college admissions issue. Interviews indicate legislators are divided on the question, with views ranging from eliminating the ten percent rule entirely, to leaving it untouched.

The affirmative action ban cut sharply into minority enrollments at Austin and College Station. Several years of recruiting, financial aid and summer courses at the Austin campus, directed mostly at 70 high schools with large numbers of African American and Hispanic students, helped restore black enrollment last fall to four percent of the incoming freshmen, the same level as before the ban.

The percentage of Hispanic freshmen last fall climbed to 16 percent, two percent more than in 1996, but both totals trail far behind their respective shares of the Texas population, which is about 12 percent African American and more than one third Hispanic. The latter are expected to become the Texas majority in another 20 years.

At the Texas A&M campus in College Station, half of each freshman class will continue to come from the top ten percent in their high schools. Beginning in fall 2005, one third of the other half will be admitted on the basis of “individual merit, based on academic achievement, extracurricular activities, unusual experiences, leadership potential and special talents,” a campus statement says. The rest—about 17.5 percent of the admitted freshmen—will be eligible if they graduate among the top 25 percent of their high school classes and score at least a combined 1300 on the SAT, with minimum scores of 600 on both the math and verbal sections.

To help the campus find more minority students, Texas A&M President Gates

has opened student recruiting centers in the Rio Grande Valley, San Antonio and Dallas. More personal contacts will be made to persuade qualified African American and Hispanic students to enroll, because in the past, less than half of those who have been accepted actually enroll. These tactics parallel the successful moves made by the Austin campus several years ago.

Gates recently hired James A. Anderson, vice provost for undergraduate affairs at North Carolina State University for the past 11 years, as the campus' first vice president for diversity. “The expectations are for me to work directly with department heads involving hiring a diverse faculty, including (more) women,” said Anderson, who is African American. The

Between classes, students crowd the walkways of the Austin campus, often slowing progress to a crawl.

campus plans to hire 400 new faculty in the next four years.

The switch back to affirmative action is bound to confuse parents and students, Bruce Walker, the UT-Austin admissions director, conceded. Since the latest ruling, Walker and his staff have had to overcome widespread misunderstanding among parents, students and counselors, about how to get into the state's most popular campus.

“The ten percent was a clear, simple message to every high school how to get automatic admission,” Walker said. “Now the message gets muddled. We haven't done affirmative action for seven years. Now we have to explain another change in policy.”

That reflects similar uncertainties around the country, said Travis Reindl, director of state policy analysis for the American Association of State Colleges and Universities. “The good news is that

continued next page



“Parents will kill themselves to get their children” into the University of Texas-Austin, says campus administrator David Laude.

from preceding page

the courts upheld the core principle of diversity," he said. "The bad news is that they didn't fill in many of the blanks. It's a toe-in-the-water kind of discussion. There's a great deal of wariness on the campuses." But Reindl believes that opponents of affirmative action policies now face a large hurdle. "It took the court 25 years to take up the issue again. I would

To help the campus find more minority students, Texas A&M President Robert M. Gates has opened student recruiting centers in the Rio Grande Valley, San Antonio and Dallas.

predict that there would be a significantly different court before the next time."

Most faculty leaders at UT-Austin welcome the Supreme Court ruling but are concerned about space problems and availability of courses on the overcrowded campus. Increasing numbers of applicants are being turned away from the colleges of architecture, business, communications and engineering because the ten percent policy applies to the Austin campus as a whole but not to its individual units. For example, the business school faculty recently reduced enrollment of undergraduate majors from 10,000 to 5,000. Increasingly, students must choose alternative majors.

"We have about a thousand English majors now, and from what I can see, the liberal arts probably are bearing the brunt of this," said Larry Carver, an English professor and director of the liberal arts honors program. "Forty percent of the liberal arts students are majoring in something that's not their first choice."

Like many of his colleagues, Carver has mixed views about current admissions and what is to come. "We get some really good students who probably wouldn't have thought of coming here (before the ten percent policy took effect)," he said. "If you really wanted the best students, you would probably recruit them from 20 high schools, and, yes, they'd graduate in four years. But we really can't be that kind of institution. I don't think the faculty wants it. We wouldn't get the kid out of the (Rio Grande) Valley and the Panhandle."

Carver's comments reflect the two prevailing and conflicting views among many faculty members, according to David A. Laude, associate dean for undergraduate education and a professor of chemistry. One wants the campus to be an elite university and get the very best students. The other, toward which Laude leans, wants diversity, "representing what the university should be. But, we have limited capacity, and therefore I'd like to see a modified, nice, practical compromise," Laude said with a dubious grin.

"Complaints about squeezing out

strong students below the top ten percent have been much exaggerated, but the squeeze is beginning to happen and can only get worse," said law professor Douglas Laycock, who helped to represent the university in its losing appeal against the 1996 court ban. That case had focused on the law school's point system, used to admit more African Americans and Hispanics.

"I assume we will get authority to resume consideration of race, and I assume we'll get critical letters," said Laycock, who teaches constitutional law. "But I think we've carefully thought through what we need to do and will be able to defend ourselves."

A related issue concerns public scholarships designating race. Laycock is confident that such financial support will incorporate language suggested by the Supreme Court, to enhance diversity by taking the individual, not numbers or race, into account. Such help can make all the difference, he said.

"When I was a kid from a blue collar background, I had no doubt about the value (of going to college), but I was petrified about going into debt to do it," Laycock said. "We have to find ways to meet that need without simply using race."

African American and Hispanic students who were interviewed for this article strongly supported the ten percent admissions policy; they criticized the use of SAT scores as a measure of eligibility, and seemed unsure about the virtues of restoring affirmative action.

Ten percent admissions is "non-racial and good for south Texas," said Francine Rocha, 20, a junior and Hispanic from Laredo, majoring in biology. (South Texas is predominantly Hispanic.) "Minorities generally have lower SAT scores, and fewer standardized test skills."

"If I grew up in white suburbia I would have had better teachers," said Layron Livingston, an 18-year-old African American freshman, who graduated from a small public high school east of Dallas. "I believe the SAT is overrated. It reflects what you have been doing in high school, but doesn't predict college work. My SAT score was bad, but I'm one of those who can do the work."

Legislators have decidedly mixed feelings about the ten percent policy, and many are unsure about how affirmative action will fit in.

State Senator Teel Bivins, chairman of the finance committee, strongly endorses the ten percent law. "It's racially neutral, creates geographic equity for small towns and increases black and Hispanic enrollments," said Bivins, a Republican from Amarillo, in the mostly rural Panhandle. "Any proposal for change will require advocates well armed with arguments," he said.

Representative Norma Chavez, a Democrat from El Paso and a member of the House higher education committee, is not certain whether she favors changing the law. "We need to re-look at the ten percent, but I'm not ready to pull it out," she said. "I would agree to affirmative action; I do not think the public universities are enrolling enough minorities. Unfortu-

nately, institutional racism still exists."

State Senator Jeff Wentworth, a Republican from San Antonio, calls the law "flawed" because it does not require college prep courses and shuts out students from good high schools with high test scores who do not make the top ten percent. "In light of the recent Supreme Court ruling, the top ten percent law should be repealed, and I have drafted a bill to that effect," he said in a press release. Wentworth proposed that the campuses be given the option of considering race and ethnicity as factors in admitting students.

Interviews with several directors of statewide associations indicated that most public high school officials support the ten percent policy but have reservations similar to those expressed by Senator Wentworth.

"I understand and support ten percent admissions, but believe many talented students deserve the opportunity to go to UT-Austin and are being excluded," said Jess Butler, superintendent of a school district west of Austin that includes Westlake, a highly regarded public high school.

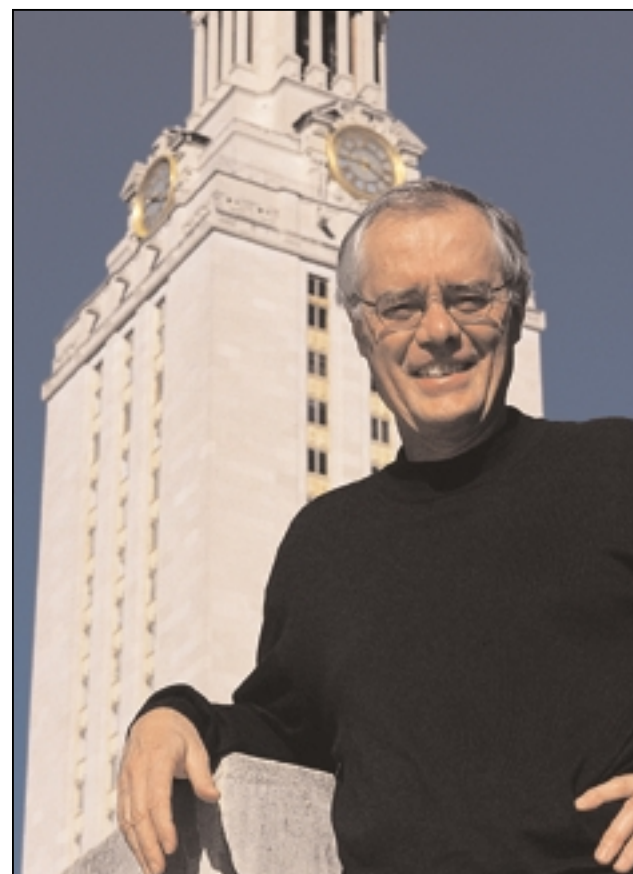
"A majority of our kids are looking at private schools and out-of-state colleges," said a district official who would only speak as a background source. Increasing numbers of Westlake graduates now enroll at two Texas private campuses: Southern Methodist and Texas Christian universities, or at out-of-state public campuses such as the University of Colorado and the University of Georgia. Similar trends are under way at other affluent suburban schools around Dallas and Houston, other officials confirmed.

A different kind of challenge prevails in poorer districts, such as one in San Antonio, which has many students from poor, Hispanic families. An official there said most who seek college training enroll in nearby campuses because they are poor or because their parents do not want them to go far from home.

State Demographer Steve Murdock agrees that the rapid increase of the Hispanic population requires urgent efforts to increase their numbers at degree-granting campuses. At latest count, a third of Hispanics in Texas who were born in the U.S. did not graduate from high school.

"There's a desperate need to insure that Texas has the skills and education to compete with what has become an increasingly international society, a very daunting task," said Murdock, a sociologist at Texas A&M.

"The alternative is that Texas will become a third world country," said Senator Bivins, a strong supporter of a statewide effort titled "Closing the Gaps," which helped gain support for upgrading re-



"Forty percent of the liberal arts students are majoring in something that's not their first choice," says English Professor Larry Carver.

quired high school courses, beginning next fall.

But for many Texas parents and their children, who fervently seek entrance to the Austin campus, any clear or simple solution seems beyond hope at present. "What do you do about these kids in poor schools, being born in a small town or a central city?" asked Murdock.

Several officials interviewed here spoke enviously about the University of California, which has several nationally prominent research campuses. Freshman applicants to UC list several alternate campuses, and, at least until the current state budget crisis, most of those who were qualified were accepted by one campus or another. "We need two or three more UT-Austins tomorrow," Professor Carver said.

Mark G. Yudof, chancellor of the University of Texas system, estimates it would cost at least \$100 million to transform a campus like UT-Arlington or UT-El Paso into a nationally prestigious research university, and the money to do that simply is not available. "Vision without resources will leave us only with unfulfilled dreams," he told an alumni audience.

For now, the competition to enter UT-Austin, or to a lesser extent Texas A&M, will remain fierce, and the debate over who deserves to enroll at these schools will continue to rage.

"This campus means a great deal more than just a place to get an education," said David Laude, the associate undergraduate dean at UT-Austin. "One of the reasons I think people aren't willing to go out and build better colleges elsewhere (in the state) is because it's not UT-Austin. Parents will kill themselves to get their children here." ♦

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