

The Plagiarism Plague

In the internet era, cheating has become an epidemic on college campuses

By Don Campbell

ATLANTA

THE PROBLEM OF CHEATING in academia hit Tom Lancaster in a very personal way more than a decade ago: The Emory University political science professor found his own research being plagiarized by one of his students.

Lancaster, now senior associate dean for undergraduate studies, had learned while researching elections in Greece that women and men use different polling booths and that their votes are recorded by gender.

He subsequently had his students enter the polling data from each precinct and do papers comparing gender voting patterns in different sections of Greece. Two years later, in a similar class on southern European politics, a student wrote a paper about gender differences in voting in Greece—even though that topic was not assigned—using data that could only have

been obtained from students in the previous class.

“The student,” said Lancaster, “had clearly in my mind simply plagiarized a previous paper—not necessarily the words—but had simply pulled out the data.” Lancaster took the case to the

Students can use computers, cellphones, and other high-tech gadgets to cheat and plagiarize their way to better grades.

Emory honor council, but the council judged the student not guilty because the data had not been published. The student admitted finding it in a fraternity file.

To add insult to injury, after Lancaster gave the student an F in the course, he found out a year later that the grade was



ROBIN NELSON, BLACK STAR FOR CROSSTALK

“Internet plagiarism is probably by far the most common form of cheating or academic dishonesty,” says Didi Kuo, a 2005 Emory University graduate who chaired the university’s honor council.

changed without his being notified.

“It really was the shot across the bow for me,” said Lancaster, who has been a crusader for a more stringent honor code

and judicial process at Emory ever since.

Today, in the era of the internet and other high-tech gadgetry, Lancaster’s story *continued on page 15*

Dillard’s Dire Straits

Historically black college struggles to survive amid New Orleans’ post-hurricane diaspora

By Robert A. Jones

NEW ORLEANS

DILLARD UNIVERSITY was built in the 1930s as a collection of sugary, neoclassical buildings set amidst green lawns and oak groves.

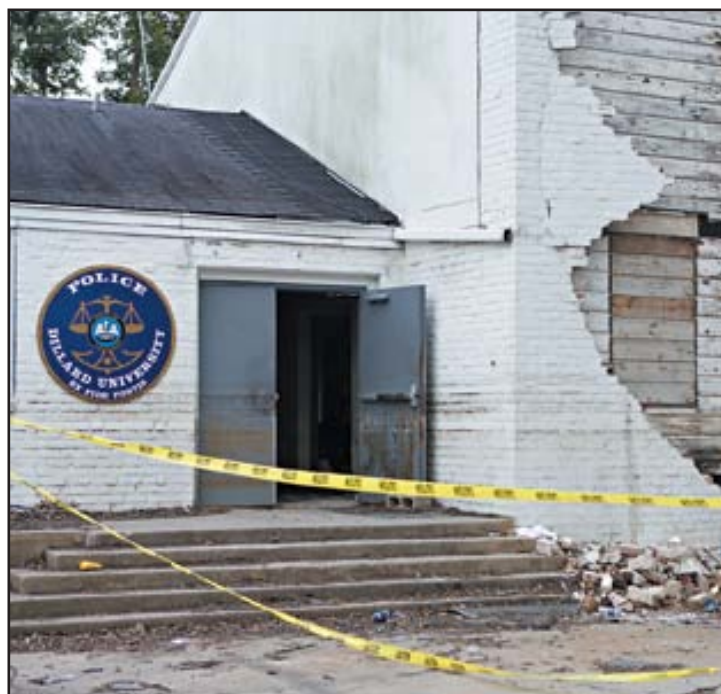
Five months after Hurricane Katrina, the Dillard campus remains closed, the building exteriors still showing the dirty lines that mark the high water levels.

Few small colleges have been blessed with such a gracious setting. Until last September, when hurricane Katrina struck, Dillard’s grounds seemed a place from another time, untrammelled by academic

building booms, parking hassles, and the other devils of modern campuses.

Oddly, the storm itself did little damage. If the destruction had stopped when the winds and rain subsided, Dillard’s future as a historically black college would not have been threatened. Even the vast majority of oak trees survived the initial storm.

But then came the water, flowing toward the campus from three directions. Dillard sits in the middle of the city’s Gentilly district, a lower-elevation neighborhood bordered by canals to the north, east and west. All of them broke and, within hours, Gentilly and the Dillard campus had been converted to a lake.



VANESSA BROWN, BLACK STAR FOR CROSSTALK

The Dillard University police building was among those heavily damaged by the hurricane and ensuing flood. Total campus damage was more than \$250 million, of which only a portion is covered by insurance.

Now, five months after the storm, the campus remains closed, the building exteriors still showing the dirty lines that mark the high water levels. The entrances to the university are sealed off and guarded to prevent vandalism.

And in the surrounding neighborhood, the pervasive sense of ruin seems even more acute. Great piles of debris line resi-

continued on page 4

In This Issue



JOHN STAREY, BLACK STAR FOR CROSSTALK

CAITLIN WARD, 21, expects to receive her associate’s degree from the Ivy Tech Community College Indianapolis campus in May. Attending the inexpensive two-year school enabled Ward and her two older brothers to be in college at the same time. Indiana has high hopes for its new community college system and college prep curriculum. (See page 7.)

Small State's Big Challenges

Rhode Island's educational system grapples with transition from manufacturing economy

By Jon Marcus

PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND

DRIVE THROUGH Rhode Island—it doesn't take long—and you'll pass mile after mile of huge mill buildings, their red-brick walls punctuated by rows of empty windows under cold, dead smokestacks. These are the vestiges of the manufacturing era. Some have been converted into offices or loft apartments or warehouses. Many are abandoned.

There are few places in America where the shift from manufacturing to the information economy is as evident as in these 1,000 square miles. And there are even fewer places where the success of that

Rhode Island ranks at the bottom nationwide in college affordability, and a dismal 42nd in the nation in state support for higher education.

economy is so clearly intertwined with public education at all levels.

"The word microcosm is probably the best description," said Robert Weygand, a former lieutenant governor and congressman who now is vice president for administration at the University of Rhode Island. "The problems of education in general in the United States are probably best exemplified by the problems that exist in Rhode Island."



Mary Sylvia Harrison is president of the Rhode Island Children's Crusade, which offers college scholarships to low-income students with good school records.

The list is familiar: Over-reliance on property taxes. Large numbers of non-native-English-speaking, immigrant students. Low state financial support and high tuition for public higher education. Strong teacher unions resistant to reforms. Partisan bickering. The huge burden on local districts of providing pensions and healthcare for retired teachers. Fiercely defended local control of schools.

The challenges of American education are writ large in this tiny state. And so are some of its promises.

Governor Don Carcieri, a onetime high school math teacher married to a former junior high school science teacher, is a rare proponent among Republican governors of increased investment in education. Carcieri has called for raising the long-declining annual state allocation for Rhode Island's public university, public college and community college (it is now \$182 million, or \$160.59 per capita, making Rhode Island a dismal 42nd in the nation in state support for higher education) and doubling need-based student aid, using \$20 million in proceeds from newly legalized video lottery terminals.

Carcieri has proposed a system of science fellows—master teachers who would serve as models of good classroom instruction. He supports charter schools, especially in urban areas, and he has pushed a unified statewide curriculum and merit pay for teachers. He appointed state education, business and labor officials to a new PK-16 Council to help high school graduates succeed in college—and made himself the chairman.

Carcieri has also formed a Science and Technology Advisory Council co-chaired by the vice president for research at Brown University and the head of URI's College of Environmental and Life Sciences, and ordered it to come up with recommendations for strengthening the state's science and technology sector.

You can't build a prosperous state without good schools, Carcieri said in his state-of-the-state address last year. And here, too, is where Rhode Island serves as a laboratory-quality example of how education is connected to the broader economy.

Manufacturing has fallen from 20 percent of the gross state product in 1990 to 12 percent today, while finance, insurance and real estate have increased from 21 percent to 30 percent. The number of biopharmaceutical jobs alone will triple in Rhode Island in the next ten years, the Milken Institute predicts, and the state will need educated workers to fill them. Yet, as a percentage of the total population, Rhode Island's workforce is declining, not expanding. "That by itself raises the question of whether Rhode Island will be able to field a highly skilled

workforce going forward," said Gary Sasse, director of the Rhode Island Public Expenditure Council. "When you look at what growth there is, most of the kids are coming from urban schools, and these are very troubled schools." They are the same schools that feed the public campuses.

For instance, consider the school system in Providence, the state's biggest. The number of children in that city swelled from less than 38,000 to more than 45,000 between 1990 and 2000, largely because of an influx of Hispanics.

Statewide, the Hispanic population in Rhode Island grew by more than 45,000 between 1990 and 2000, while other groups declined. Hispanics now account for 44 percent of all Providence residents under 18. Forty percent of these children live in poverty, up from 35 percent in 1990. One in five needs help learning English. Fewer than half of all adults in the city's three poorest neighborhoods have completed high school. The dropout rate is 35 percent, double the state average. And money is so short that Providence last year threatened to cut 14 days from the school year, lay off 20 guidance counselors, and eliminate sports.

And it's not just Providence. There are 36 separate school districts in Rhode Island, from affluent to impoverished. Their students' average combined SAT score in 2004 was 1005, below the national average of 1026 and the lowest of all the New England states.

Rhode Island also has New England's lowest high school graduation rate. On state assessment tests last year, a third of fourth graders fell below state standards in English, and half in math. Nearly half of eighth graders cannot read or write effectively. A report on student performance found that high schools did not appear to prepare many graduates for college. More than 40 percent of the students who graduated from Rhode Island high schools in 2002 and enrolled at the Community College of Rhode Island failed the college's reading test and needed remedial classes. Nearly half failed the writing test, and more than half flunked the math test.

Governor Carcieri himself drew blank stares when, while visiting an eighth grade social studies class in East Providence, he saw a trapezoid on the blackboard and asked the students if they knew what it was; the teacher finally filled the silence by admitting that they hadn't gotten that far.



Don Carcieri, Rhode Island's Republican governor and a onetime high school math teacher, has pushed for education reforms since taking office in 2003.

"Too many of our high school graduates cannot read a book, write an essay, or calculate a math problem," the governor said.

Turning out graduates prepared to work at high-tech firms "is a major issue for the governor, and he's putting it front and center," said Katherine O'Dea, executive director of the Tech Collective, an industry coalition. "The business community already recognizes the challenge. And the challenge is going to become a crisis if we don't start addressing it now." Paul Harrington, a Northeastern University economist who studies Rhode Island, agrees: "The long-term health of the economy is going to be based on the ability to supply large quantities of qualified labor," he said. "That's the economy that will win."

So Rhode Island has changed its century-old high school graduation requirements to include, beginning in 2008, senior

"Too many of our high school graduates cannot read a book, write an essay, or calculate a math problem."

—RHODE ISLAND GOVERNOR
DON CARCIERI

projects and portfolios—a short story, for example, or a report about a science experiment, or a collection of the student's artwork. Many elementary schools are focusing on reading. Some high schools have been divided into smaller components in which each student is known by at least one adult. And state officials are working on a common curriculum to be imple-

mented next fall.

Several other steps have also been taken to improve the state's educational system. An organization called the Rhode Island Children's Crusade is enrolling low-income students, beginning in the third grade, who pledge to stay in school and work hard in exchange for scholarships to college. The Rhode Island Student Loan Authority and College Planning Center of Rhode Island is offering a free SAT prep course; students who participated in the pilot program saw their average SAT scores improve by an average of 90 points.

More than half of Rhode Island schools have moved into the high-performing category under the federal No Child Left Behind Law; 166 were classified as "high fliers," up from 89 the year before. (Another 84 continued to be considered as in need of improvement.)

While Rhode Island's small size seems to make it an ideal state to try out reforms, it's a surprisingly tough place to put them into practice. "We move at a very, very slow pace," said Mary Sylvia Harrison, president of the Children's Crusade. Added the Tech Collective's O'Dea: "In California, if something is going on in San Francisco and you're in Sacramento, you don't even hear about it. But we're so close and tied in together, you can't not know what's going on from one community to the next. And when everybody has their little piece of something, they don't want to give it up."

For example, Carciari wants to eliminate a moratorium now in place that limits the number of charter schools to two per district, but the General Assembly, which is controlled by Democrats, won't do it until the governor does something about the way traditional public schools are financed. Teacher unions are against his merit-pay idea, saying merit is too hard to measure; if rewards are linked to test scores, they say, teachers in richer, more stable districts will have a better shot than those in inner-city schools.

The Education Partnership, a business coalition, is on the governor's side on this issue, recommending that the state assume control from local school districts over negotiating teacher contracts. The coalition also wants a four-tier pay scale for teachers: master, pre-master, basic, and below basic. Teachers who get two negative evaluations in one year could be fired immediately, and seniority protections would be weakened in favor of performance standards.

Meanwhile, as in other states, the cost of retired teacher benefits is sapping school budgets. This year, the state and local districts will pour \$128.5 million into the teachers' pension fund, \$51 million more than last year. The small town of Tiverton alone saw a 39.4 percent increase in its con-



"The problems of education in general in the United States are probably best exemplified by the problems that exist in Rhode Island," says Robert Weygand, a University of Rhode Island vice president.

tribution to the state retirement system for teachers. Carciari has proposed lowering these costs by imposing a minimum retirement age of 65 for teachers who have worked at least ten years, or 60 for those who have worked at least 30 years; pensions would drop from 80 percent of a teacher's three-year salary average after 35 years to 75 percent after 38 years. Now state workers and teachers can retire at any age with 28 years of service.

Polls show that residents blame teachers and other state workers for Rhode Island's high taxes. Teachers counter that they put 9.5 percent of their salaries into the pension fund, one of the highest proportions in the nation.

And, as in other states, Rhode Island school officials say they can no longer rely on local property taxes to pay for education. Rhode Island is second in the nation in its reliance on property taxes to pay for schools, behind only Hawaii. In the last five years alone, some 70 percent of every new dollar spent on education in Rhode Island came from local property taxes. Providence Mayor David Cicilline, whose city spends half its budget on schools, has proposed a statewide income or sales tax for education, similar to a tax adopted by Michigan in the 1990s.

Some legislators support consolidating the whole state into one big district, arguing that there are school districts all over the country that are the size of Rhode Island. "There are good and bad things that go with decentralization," said John Tyler, chairman of the education department at Brown University. "When you look at Rhode Island, we have 36 school districts in this state, a small state, and that means you have 36 different purchasing managers buying pencils."

With school funding pains now spreading to the suburbs, Mary Sylvia Harrison said "the sun, the moon and the stars all

seem to be in alignment" for the property tax to be replaced by some other funding mechanism. Fifteen other states now collect property taxes at the state level; in 16 others, there are lawsuits challenging the ways schools are financed. Harrison said that the issue will wind up in the courts in Rhode Island, too, if the legislature drags its feet on this no-win political issue. "I think people are becoming more in tune to the implications of sitting silent in the face of knowing there's an inequitable distribution of resources where the poor kids who need the most get the least," she said. "Though it might be a tough battle, it is a volatile civil rights issue."

The Rhode Island Public Expenditure Council has another plan. First, the council says, the state must figure out how much money should be spent per pupil. Said RIPEC's Gary Sasse, "Once you define what that figure is, you can say, okay, where should the money come from? It might be a question of looking at ways of having a more equitable distribution of the property tax or a system where you have a uniform property tax." This would not be "Robin Hood-like," he said. "In a state this small, you just aren't going to be able to do that." Instead of property tax revenues from rich towns going to poor ones, the difference would be made up by the state through income or sales taxes or proceeds from gambling.

But Brown's Tyler says that Robin Hood may have to come to the rescue after all. That's because the cash-strapped state government is already struggling to come up with money for schools, among other needs. The state's share of the cost of public education fell from 40 percent in 1995 to 37 percent last year. That makes Rhode Island 44th among the 50 states in state aid for all forms of education. Yet for every dollar a Rhode Island family earns, 11 cents already goes to taxes. That's ten percent higher than the national average. "If we want to move away from property taxes to a more broad-based system that's more reliant on some sort of state-level taxation, we face a tough task because we

The average combined SAT score in Rhode Island was below the national average, and the state has New England's lowest high school graduation rate.

have extremely high taxes to start with," Tyler said. "We have to get real and talk about whether we're ready to redistribute money. There's not a lot of room to raise taxes."

That is also a problem for higher education. Despite Carciari's calls to increase it, Rhode Island's investment in need-based student financial aid has shrunk by 42 percent over the past decade when compared with federal spending on aid. The state's investment in higher education as a whole has fallen by nearly 50 percent in the last

continued on page 6



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DILLARD

from page 1

dential streets, few houses are occupied, and virtually no businesses have reopened. At night, many blocks lie in darkness because electrical power remains a hit-or-miss affair in the Gentilly. Even by day, the neighborhood contains an overriding sense of quiet due to the absence of people.

Of all the universities in New Orleans, Dillard suffered the greatest physical damage and faces the gravest threat to its future. Unlike public institutions such as Southern University, Dillard does not have the resources of the state government to help with recovery. And unlike wealthier private institutions like Tulane, Dillard's endowment stands at a spare \$48 million.

The damage will surely run several times that figure. Early damage estimates of \$400 million, though widely publicized, probably overstated the rebuilding costs, but the total could easily reach \$250 million. And college officials have said that reimbursements from flood and storm insurance will fall far short of the needed

Of all the universities in New Orleans, Dillard suffered the greatest physical damage and faces the gravest threat to its future.

amounts.

Yet the problem of financing the physical recovery is only one of many daunting challenges facing the university. It must attract new and returning students even while its future remains uncertain. It must create a temporary campus at the same time it is rebuilding the old one. It must provide students with enough teachers and support staff at the temporary campus while radically downsizing its payroll.

And still more challenges lie outside the institution's control. What if Dillard succeeds in reopening its campus in a year only to find the surrounding neighborhood still moribund, leaving students without su-

permarkets, laundromats, restaurants or affordable housing? What about the environmental contamination left by the flood waters? And, most important of all, what if another storm hits and re-floods the city?

Dillard President Marvalene Hughes recalls the day when she first confronted the enormity of the rebuilding task. Just as the waters receded she was taken to the campus by escort to see the damage left by the flood. "I remember having these traumatic thoughts and fears," Hughes said. "Some cleaning up had begun, and there were these piles of ruined furniture and equipment everywhere. Every building had been damaged to one degree or another, and it was very, very painful. It left me in a state of shock."

After that visit, Hughes realized Katrina had propelled Dillard into unknown territory and inevitably would leave the college without clear answers to some questions. "No one knows how all these issues will work out," she said, "because, very simply, in the history of higher education no one has ever gone through this before."

The plight of Dillard carries a special poignancy because of its history as one of the nation's early black colleges. Though the present campus was built in the 1930s, Dillard's roots go back to post-Civil War years, when schools for blacks first became legal. Previously, the only educational opportunities for ex-slaves were offered by "native schools," underground institutions that rarely went beyond elementary education.

Even after they were legalized, black institutions suffered from chronic underfunding. Dillard was created when two faltering New Orleans colleges were offered the opportunity to merge and begin life anew on a campus financed by the General Education Board of New York, an arm of the Rockefeller Foundation, and the Julius Rosenwald Fund of Chicago, the philanthropic organization of the Sears Roebuck family.

The collection of white, columned buildings on wide lawns in the Gentilly district was the result. The new college survived the Depression, World War II, several lean periods of sparse funding, and an unknown but substantial number of hurricanes. Then came Katrina.

"Dillard supporters will need to get a fire in the belly if they want to see it continue and thrive," said Dolores Cross, former president of Morris Brown College in Atlanta (and a board member of the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, which publishes *National CrossTalk*). "These institutions (historically black colleges) don't have the financial strength that large, white universities have. Personally, I believe the country needs black collegiate institutions. In New Orleans, you can't talk about the loss of culture and history as a result of Katrina and not talk about Dillard."



After levees broke north, east and west of Dillard University, the campus was flooded to a depth of several feet. Four months after Katrina, as this picture of Kearn Hall shows, some of the water was still there.

On some fronts Dillard already has made significant progress. In January the university reopened in temporary quarters at the downtown Hilton Riverside Hotel, albeit with 1,060 students, a 50 percent decline from last September's enrollment of 2,000. Students are being housed on upper floors while attending classes in former meeting rooms that have been reconfigured for academic work. Some courses, not available at the hotel, will be offered at Tulane, Xavier and other campuses around the city.

Between now and June, Dillard will offer two semesters of academic work at the Hilton, each lasting 13 weeks rather than the usual 15. This arrangement, college officials say, will allow students to advance their college careers by an entire year even if they did not attend an alternative institution in the fall.

Across town, on the old campus, the cleanup phase is virtually complete. Workers have stripped the first floors of buildings down to concrete and steel, and removed the mold that bloomed everywhere during the flood. Hundreds of purifying machines the size of packing crates pulled residual moisture and mold spores from the interiors of buildings.

The cleanup, however, amounts to only the first phase of rebuilding the campus. A few smaller structures will be demolished completely, and then reconstruction will begin. No one is certain at this point how long the construction will take to complete or what it will cost.

Still, achieving these milestones has required heroic efforts by Dillard's senior staff, which numbers only about a half dozen. Most lost their homes in the storm and since have lived itinerant lives in hotel rooms. A temporary office was established in Atlanta but remained hampered by the loss of the university's central computer system and many electronic records.

Connie Seymour, Dillard's registrar, lost her home and most of her belongings to the flood. In the months since, she says she has spent all her waking hours reconstructing the university's record system and preparing for the opening at the Hilton. There has been no time, she said, to work on her personal losses.

"The experience forced me to decide what was really important, and, for me, the answer was Dillard," she said. "The other stuff can wait. I've discovered that good enough is good enough."

Seymour then laughed, and added, "In fact, considering my situation, good enough would be just fine right now."

Many of the senior officials had weathered hurricanes before, and they now concede that, in the days preceding the storm, they never imagined the holocaust that Katrina posed. In fact, President Hughes had initiated a staff retreat the weekend of the storm. Hughes had only arrived as president in July, and the retreat was designed as her first effort to deal with upcoming issues in the fall term.

The first day of the retreat was business-as-usual, said Bettye Parker Smith, Dillard's provost. "We knew there was something rustling around out there in the waters, but we had been through hurri-

Though the present campus was built in the 1930s, Dillard's roots go back to post-Civil War years, when schools for blacks first became legal.

canes many times before. But the next morning I watched the news, and the hurricane had switched course towards New Orleans. I said, 'Hold it, we need to find out what's going on here.'"

Within a short time the retreat was canceled and the administrators returned to campus to evacuate students who had not already left. Parker Smith now laughs at that memory. "That was a Saturday morning, and it's not so easy rounding up students on a Saturday. College students don't always go home on Friday night. We were facing real problems in tracking down some of these kids."

Fortunately, students who had remained on campus began calling their friends who had wandered elsewhere, and



Dillard University President Marvalene Hughes had been in office only a few weeks when Hurricane Katrina struck.

soon virtually everyone was on one of eight buses and headed for Centenary College in Shreveport.

The journey was eventful. One of the buses suffered a flat tire and then, as it crept up the highway in bumper-to-bumper traffic, suddenly began to issue smoke from a rear tire well. Students and staff members scrambled out, and no one was hurt. But they watched while the bus and their belongings burned down to charred steel.

Hundreds of purifying machines the size of packing crates pulled residual moisture and mold spores from the interiors of buildings.

After the students had spent several days at Centenary, the citizens of Shreveport raised \$30,000 to buy airplane tickets for them to go home. And thus began the familiar pattern of New Orleans refugees: everyone scattered to the four winds. After going home, many students eventually re-enrolled in other colleges across the country.

The staff spread out in a diaspora of its own. Parker Smith wound up in San Antonio living with her sister. Hughes found herself in several locations throughout the South. For the first several weeks, administrators operated without a central office and communicated mainly via cell phones.

Eventually they congregated in the Atlanta office that had been arranged by a member of Dillard's board of trustees. Dillard officials now had offices with telephone service but, even so, they discovered that Atlanta would hardly amount to a home-in-exile.

The problem was simple enough: As

much as Dillard needed intensive planning and fundraising in order to reopen, it also needed to retain its students. A university without students is not a university. At Dillard, the connection with students is particularly important because student tuition provides about 90 percent of the university's operating revenues. And that connection was eroding with every passing week.

So Hughes ordered a 12-city tour of "Town Hall" meetings that lasted from early November through mid-December and required Hughes, along with several members of the staff, to be on the road constantly, leaving them to deal with recovery issues from their hotel rooms or airplanes.

One of the Town Hall meetings, in Los Angeles, revealed both the frustrations and the inspiration of the tour. Billed as a presentation by Hughes, the meeting was suddenly turned over to Seymour and Freddie Hill, vice president for campus life, when Hughes was called back to New Orleans.

At the time of the Los Angeles event, both Seymour and Hill had been on the circuit for more than a month, and the weariness showed. Seymour actually checked the sleeves of her suit at one point because, she said, she had lost most of her clothes in the storm and had appeared at the Chicago Town Hall meeting with a sales tag still dangling from a new jacket.

Nonetheless they had come to entice students to return to Dillard, and they went about their work with humor and sometimes startling honesty. When one parent asked whether New Orleans was environmentally safe, Hill replied that she could not answer the question.

"Personally I believe it's safe; otherwise I wouldn't be here," she said but then added soberly, "I know there are concerns. Personally, I don't have an address right now because my home was under water.

When I first returned to look at my house, we walked around with masks on our faces. We don't wear masks anymore, but you should look at the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) website and other government websites and come to your own conclusion about the safety of your child."

In general, the appeal had both emotional and practical elements. On the emotional side, the women portrayed Dillard as the ruined victim of the storm—which surely it was—but a victim that could be resurrected by students willing to devote their energies to the rebuilding process. Dillard's dire straits, they said, amounted to a rare opportunity to take part in a historic moment in the life of their institution and the city.

At one point Hill described New Orleans as the victim of not one but two



DANA SMITH, BLACK STAR, FOR CROSSTALK

Ruth Simmons, president of Brown University and a Dillard alumna, promised Brown's help in rebuilding Dillard's shattered office systems and also will help with fundraising.

disasters: a hurricane that was an act of God, and a flood that was an act of man. The second disaster made her particularly angry, she said, because it was altogether avoidable.

"When we return we will all have the chance to demand a government that will never again ruin the lives of half a million people by its neglect. For students, that experience is something that will stay with them for the rest of their lives," Hill said.

On the practical side, the argument was straightforward. Juniors and seniors would benefit by returning, because their accumulated credits would all work toward graduation. If they transferred or remained at their "host" colleges from the fall semester, they would certainly face new graduation requirements and the loss of some credits earned at Dillard.

In addition, they said, Dillard would offer any returning student a \$1,000 scholarship that was above and beyond any prior scholarships.

Some parents and virtually all the students at the meeting seemed to buy those arguments. But others had their doubts. One parent expressed worries about his daughter returning to a city when many of the residents had not returned. "I just don't see her going back when the city doesn't have people living in the neighborhoods. If the residents aren't going back, you have to ask yourself why," he said.

Another father said he would prefer it if Dillard delayed its reopening until the city was more functional. "What's the rush?" he asked. "Most of the city is down and out. I keep hearing about people getting sick with this New Orleans cough. What's the point of starting the college so soon when there's this total mess still there?"

After the meeting, however, the father conceded that his daughter would probably return. "She's a senior and she wants to go back," he said. "In the end it's her decision."

Of the many questions hanging over Dillard, one of the largest is the issue of insurance reimbursements. In general, Dillard seems to have fared better than most. Contrary to early reports, the uni-

versity did have business interruption insurance that has compensated it for lost tuition from the fall semester and will pay for much of the shortfall from the present semester at the Hilton.

Moreover, Hughes characterized the university's storm and flood insurance as "excellent." Thus far that insurance has picked up the bills for the cleanup on the campus and will pay for a significant portion of the reconstruction. Hughes said the university has not been forced to dip into its endowment to pay recovery costs.

Beyond those general comments, Dillard officials have been reluctant to discuss the details of the university's financial situation. However, discussions with officials from neighboring colleges—who face similar problems—suggest that pressures on Dillard come from two directions: student enrollment, which needs to rise steadily for the university to support its operations; and the shortfall between insurance payments and rebuilding costs.

As much as Dillard needs intensive planning and fundraising in order to reopen, it also needs to retain its students.

Of the two, student enrollment is probably the factor that will most determine Dillard's future. Lester Lefton, provost at Tulane, says that fixed costs dictate that any New Orleans university will need to recover half or more of its students to survive in the long term. "There are certain costs that can't be reduced when enrollment goes down," he said. "If an institution does not recover half its students, it's going to have a hard time making it."

That is particularly true for Dillard. Its small endowment cannot provide a substantial income supplement and, as a purely undergraduate institution, it receives little or no research funding from governments or foundations. Thus, its tu-

continued next page



VANESSA BROWN, BLACK STAR, FOR CROSSTALK

Wearing protective clothing to guard against exposure to toxins, a maintenance worker cleans a hallway in Stern Hall, on the Dillard University campus.

DILLARD

from preceding page

ition payments loom far larger than at state institutions or at a research university such as Tulane.

As a protective measure, Dillard severely cut back its teaching and administrative staffs in November, laying off 60 percent of those employees. Among the faculty, only the 41 tenured professors retained their positions.

More recently, as the reopening at the Hilton approached, the university offered temporary teaching contracts to 44 of the dismissed faculty members, but those contracts will expire at the end of the term.

The temporary nature of the rehiring will give Dillard a hedge against the possibility that student enrollment will not rise as rapidly as hoped, allowing the university to shrink or expand the teaching staff in future semesters.

And like its neighbor institutions, Dillard is also considering a makeover of its curriculum to further reduce costs. "We haven't gotten to the point of determining which majors are most essential," said Parker Smith. "But it's coming, and we will probably lose some. I have those thoughts around midnight."

In the arena of fundraising, the results remain unclear. Dillard officials have de-

clined to reveal precise numbers, saying only that their campaign has made significant progress. Over the past five months they have released figures for one private grant, from the Teagle Foundation, for \$500,000, and the United Negro College Fund has pledged to raise several million

The United Negro College Fund has pledged to raise several million dollars for all the black institutions affected by Katrina.

dollars for all the black institutions affected by Katrina.

Additionally, in December, former Presidents Bill Clinton and George Bush announced a \$30 million grant from private donations to be distributed among all universities along the Gulf Coast. Since the number of those institutions approaches 40, the significance of the grant for any single university will not be great.

And federal government aid—the anticipated 800-pound gorilla of post-Katrina support—thus far has proven a major disappointment. The federal legislation

signed in late December contained \$29 billion in recovery funding, but it included only \$190 million for higher education.

Moreover, those funds were split evenly between Mississippi and Louisiana, even though Louisiana's flooding produced far more institutional damage than in Mississippi. In Louisiana, for example, 83,000 students were displaced from their schools versus 12,000 in Mississippi.

Louisiana's \$95 million share will be split among 16 public and private campuses, according to a formula to be developed by the state's Board of Regents.

Of course, since the size of the insurance shortfall at Dillard is not known—or hasn't been disclosed—the impact of these funding amounts can not be determined. It appears, however, that Dillard's post-storm assistance from all sources amounts to less than \$10 million.

In her efforts to restore Dillard, President Hughes does have one important ally. Ruth Simmons, the president of Brown University and a Dillard alumna, has pledged the assistance of Brown's administrators and technical staff in rebuilding the university's office systems, and has also promised help in future fundraising. In late December Simmons invited Hughes to a weekend conference at Brown that addressed Dillard's recovery needs.

Dillard's fate will not be known for a

year or more. If the spring semester at the Hilton succeeds and is experienced by students as an adventure rather than an ordeal, favorable word-of-mouth will spread. If the rebuilding of the campus is complete by the fall, students will be able to look forward to a stable college career. Those factors will likely lead to a steady increase in enrollment.

If the trend moves in the opposite direction, Dillard's fortunes could turn downward in a fatal dive.

In one sense, then, Dillard is in the hands of its present and future students. Putting herself in the position of a parent, Provost Parker Smith said she doesn't know what she would say to a daughter who was weighing the decision of returning. "I think I would say, if you want to go, then do it. You will be taking part in an historic experience."

"It's like the civil rights movement. It was a lot different if you took part in the experience as opposed to watching from the outside. Those people who walked in and sat at the lunch counters had a very different story to tell their grandchildren from those who didn't, and I hope the next few years at Dillard will work out the same way." ♦

Robert A. Jones is a former reporter and columnist for the Los Angeles Times.

RHODE ISLAND

from page 3

25 years, the Postsecondary Education Opportunity Organization has reported.

And while the General Assembly passed several education initiatives this year, it left out funding for an \$8 million matching-grant program to encourage private contributions to the three public postsecondary institutions: University of Rhode Island, Rhode Island College, and the Community College of Rhode Island. Legislators said they just did not have the money. Less than 20 percent of flagship

URI's \$446 million annual operating budget now comes from the state, down from 28 percent a decade ago. Rhode Island ranks at the bottom nationwide in college affordability.

Meanwhile, the public colleges and universities have increasing numbers of unqualified students to contend with. "More and more of the students who come to our doorstep have passed the SAT and have reasonable grades coming in but are not really prepared," said URI's Weygand, who is also a former president of the New England Board of Education. "More and more every year are in an undeclared major, which normally indicates they're not certain of where they're going. That's the category of students that is more likely not to graduate, or to drop out."

At the same time, Weygand said, the university, which enrolls 14,749 students (Rhode Island College enrolls 7,287 and the Community College of Rhode Island 16,293), is trying to improve the SAT scores and class rank of entering freshmen. "There is much greater demand for us to be an institution that has higher SAT scores, greater retention, a higher graduation rate. That sometimes is in conflict with the idea of trying to lift those disadvantaged students." The pressure, he said, comes from the general public. "U.S. News & World Report and other rating agencies really begin to pigeonhole people based on those measures. In doing that, they also dismiss the mission of public institutions as to the greater good—that is, to raise up those individuals who need the extra assistance."

URI has teamed up with the

Children's Crusade and has guaranteed that community college students who maintain certain standards can automatically transfer to the university as juniors. "It's not enough," Weygand said. "What we really need to see is a quantifiable increase in the preparedness of students coming from the high schools."

Today, a higher education serves the role an apprenticeship in the mill once did, Weygand said. "Whether it was in Rhode Island, where there were the textile mills and the toolmaking companies, or in Maine, where there were the paper mills, or in Vermont, where there were the agricultural businesses, the students who graduated from high school went into those mills and learned the trade. They got their educations that way, and they were able to maintain a good lifestyle with those trades."

"Those trades are now gone. And the trade that's out there now is the information economy. We're still training and providing individuals with a quality education to move into today's economy, but today's economy is no longer the paper mills or the tool companies. It's biotech, informational science, health science—a range that needs much higher skills than ever before."

URI has concentrated on its pharmacy, nursing, engineering, bioscience, and world-renowned oceanography departments. It is building a \$50 million biotech and sciences facility and a \$15 million "inner-space" center for oceanographic projects. Bob Ballard, the explorer who located the Titanic, is on the faculty.

For Mary Sylvia Harrison of the Children's Crusade, the best way to change the system so that more Rhode Islanders can take advantage of these programs is to make the case that it is clearly in the economic interest of the state. "If you can't do it on the basis of philosophy and morality,

you have to go to people's pocketbooks," she said. "There's a compelling case to be made for preparing people to fill these 21st century jobs, eight out of ten of which will be in the information economy." Added Tyler: "Any state that wants to fully participate in the new economy, and be able to garner the benefits of that, would not want to be at the bottom in state support for higher education. Because higher education has become synonymous with being successful in the new labor market."

The Governor of Rhode Island created a new PK-16 Council to help high school graduates succeed in college—and made himself the chairman.

For all its problems, Rhode Island is an interesting place to watch this evolution, said Elizabeth Burke Bryant, executive director of the advocacy group Rhode Island Kids Count and a transplant from New Hampshire. "What has been exciting about working on public policy issues in Rhode Island is that its small size does allow it to be a laboratory to link together public policies that in other states are run by vast departments that never talk to each other," Bryant said. "You feel like you can practically get your arms around these children and make sure that all of them get the education they need to succeed." ♦

Jon Marcus is executive editor of Boston Magazine, and also covers U.S. higher education for the Times of London.

M.J. MALONEY, BLACK STAR, FOR CROSSTALK



Katherine O'Dea is executive director of the Tech Collective, an industry coalition that encourages programs that will improve the job skills of Rhode Island workers.

Indiana's 21st Century Scholars

A new community college system and college prep curriculum are improving the state's position

By Susan C. Thomson

INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA

IN ITS MIDDLE-AGE, Ivy Tech has been reborn—again. At the beginning of the current academic year, what began as a vocational-technical school 43 years ago and grew into Ivy Tech State College, with 23 locations around the state, became Ivy Tech Community College of Indiana.

New signs on the campuses, and a crisp new green and white logo, proclaim the

Ivy Tech State College has been transformed into Indiana's first system of two-year community colleges.

new name. A \$500,000 statewide advertising campaign—featuring smiling young people and accompanied, in its radio and television versions, by a soft rock beat—drives home a new message: The “new Ivy Tech” is affordable, close to home, the starting point of choice for students who want to prepare for good jobs or transfer to four-year colleges.

For the college, the name change comes as just desserts, a belated recognition of the

kind of school it pretty much already was.

For the state, community college is a whole new concept, something it never had before.

And for Stan Jones, Indiana's higher education commissioner, it's about time. “I think Indiana has always had a good higher education system,” he said. “One of the things we didn't have was a community college (system).”

Ivy Tech is the latest and most visible of a synergistic mix of initiatives that for 15 years or so have been reinventing Indiana public schooling from grade school through college. Chief among the others:

- An inventive program that allows all of the state's low-income students to qualify for college scholarships.
- Stiff statewide requirements for college preparation in high school.
- An organization that, by state law, brings a wide range of interest groups together to hash out educational policy.

As recently as the early 1990s, the state's higher education system was behind the national curve in attracting and graduating students. With less than 15 percent of residents 25 or older holding a bachelor's degree or higher, Indiana consistently ranked among the two or three lowest states in the educational level of its adults. Only 13 percent of its high school graduates had studied a college-prep curriculum. Only half were going straight on to post-secondary education—a college-going rate that put the state in 34th place nationally.

Such were the outward signs of what Jones and others describe as a perception, pervasive in Indiana, that high school graduates didn't need to go to college as long as they could get good jobs in manufacturing. But as that long-dominant sector of the state's economy began to rust away, it dawned on the state's business, education and political leaders that things had to be done to change that perception.

“What you had in this changing economy was a tremendous demand for skill improvement,” said Steve Ferguson, former state legislator, former member of the Indiana Commission for Higher Education, and now president of Indiana University's Board of Trustees and chairman of Cook Group Inc., a



PHOTOS BY JOHN STARKER, BLACK STAR, FOR CROSSTALK

Stan Jones, Indiana higher education commissioner, and Suellen Reed, the state's superintendent of public instruction, have worked together on reforms in Indiana postsecondary education, including creation of the state's first community college system.

worldwide medical products company based in Bloomington.

By 2002, the state's statistics were improving dramatically. Two-thirds of high school graduates were earning a college-prep diploma, and 62.4 percent, the tenth best rate in the nation, were going immediately to college. Even though Indiana's population was growing more slowly than the nation as a whole, enrollment in the state's public colleges and universities was increasing at a faster rate than the national average.

These new claims to fame came in addition to one important asset that Indiana already had: one of the nation's most generous financial aid programs for college students. It was then—and continues to be—rated among the nation's ten largest by the National Association of State Student Grant and Aid Programs. Unlike states that pour much of their financial aid into merit scholarships, Indiana spends about 90 percent of its resources on need-based help.

In 1990 Indiana took a major new step in that direction with the launch of 21st Century Scholars, a program that promises middle school students who qualify for the federal school lunch program eight semesters of full tuition at an Indiana public college or university, or a like amount at one of the state's private schools. All the students must do is sign up, maintain a C average in high school and stay out of trouble. Indiana was the first state to create such a program.

According to the State Student Assistance Commission of Indiana, about half of the students who have signed up in middle school have stayed the program's course through high school. Of those, roughly nine out of ten have gone on to college, where their numbers have grown from 1,442 in 1995-96, the year the first of them were freshmen, to 8,228 in the 2004-05 school year. The commission has just begun to collect data on how many have graduated.

One of the successes is Ron Adams, 22, of Hammond, Indiana, who expects to get his bachelor's degree in organizational

leadership and supervision in May from the combined campus of Indiana and Purdue universities in Indianapolis (IUPUI). The oldest of four children whose single mother works as a teaching assistant in a Head Start program, Adams credits her for always being “big on going to college.” All four of her children got the message. Adams' younger siblings include a sister at Indiana State University in Terre Haute, a brother getting ready to graduate from high school and attend IUPUI, and a sister who is a high school sophomore. All are in the 21st Century Scholars pipeline.

As much as possible, Adams says, he has tried to be a role model for the younger ones, talking up his positive college experiences and never sharing his difficulties, like his struggle as a freshman to get up to speed on a perplexing new computer system. Adams laments that none of his high school friends took advantage of the Scholars program, or went to college at all.

For Indiana, community college is a whole new concept, something the state never had before.

Many of his college friends who might have been eligible didn't sign up, either.

As the Scholars have grown in numbers, so have the state's grants to them. Last year these totaled \$17.1 million out of a total grants budget of \$161 million, an amount that itself had nearly doubled in seven years.

Those have included some rough budget years for a state that is anything but flush with money, yet year after year it has sweetened the grants pot. So how does the assistance commission get so lucky? Interim Executive Director Dennis Obergfell smiles when he hears again a question he says he gets a lot from his peers in other, less bountiful states. “We've been fortunate,” he said, in having a succession of

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In the biotechnology lab at Ivy Tech Community College, in Indianapolis, instructor Todd Murphy works with students Lori Bancroft and Kim McKinney

from preceding page

supportive legislators and governors, of both political parties, who believe in the commission's mission.

Nick Vesper, the commission's policy and research director, makes the process sound easy: "We figure what we need in order to meet student need and then go to the legislature and ask for the money, and they've been giving it to us." This year's maximum awards are up ten percent from last year's—to \$5,172 for state colleges and \$10,014 for in-state private ones.

Those grants that give Indiana students the means to go to college are indexed now to a college-prep high school diploma that came about in 1994 and was designed to

As recently as the early 1990s, the state's higher education system was behind the national curve in attracting and graduating students.

ensure that students arrive on campus at least somewhat prepared to do college work. This program is called Core 40, for the minimum number of semester credits it requires, among them eight of English, six of mathematics, six of science and six of social studies. By taking specific additional credits and meeting certain academic standards students can earn the diploma with "academic honors." With that they qualify for 20 percent more need-based aid than students without Core 40 diplomas.

Last year the legislature upped the academic ante on all of the state's students by making Core 40 the standard not only for admission to Indiana's public universities but also—beginning with the class of 2011, this year's seventh graders—for graduation from the state's public high schools. High school students will be able to opt out of the curriculum only with parental permission. Indianapolis Public Schools, the

state's largest district, with 39,000 students, has set a goal of graduating all students with some kind of Core 40 diploma by 2011.

John DeBoe, principal of the city's Crispus Attucks Middle School, says he has detected "resistance and anxiety" about that high aim, especially on the part of parents, who fear their children will drop out of school rather than risk failure on the Core 40 track.

State Senator Luke Kenley, a member of the senate education and workforce development committee, is more skeptical still. With two-thirds of Indiana's high school graduates already earning one of the new diplomas, and with special education students accounting for about 17 percent of the state school population, Kenley wonders how many more students Core 40 can gain. "I think we're into overkill here," he said.

Like much education policy in Indiana in recent years, Core 40 came about as a consensus of people from perspectives not always easily reconciled. In this case, they included representatives of higher education, elementary and secondary education and business, the latter faction led by the Indiana Chamber of Commerce, which has consistently backed higher educational standards at all levels.

An even broader group got together in 1998 and formed the Indiana Education Roundtable, which consists of a revolving roster of about 30 representatives of K-12 and postsecondary education, business, labor, government and others who make recommendations on the gamut of state education issues. Jones said the group was "born out of frustration that we were having these battles between Republicans and Democrats in the legislature and between the business and the education communities, and a sense that we weren't making progress and we needed to do it differently."

In 1999 the legislature wrote the Roundtable into a state law designating the governor and state superintendent of public instruction as its co-chairs. Since then the group has gathered clout, to the point



Students Amanda Nester, Michelle Engel and Jessica Reed (left to right) work in the laboratory kitchen that is part of the Culinary Arts program at Ivy Tech Community College's Indianapolis campus.

that it now drives the state's education agenda. In its current push for a seamless state system from pre-kindergarten through college, the Roundtable is calling for greater attention to kindergarten and pre-school, adult education, and high school and college dropouts. One-quarter of Indiana college freshmen don't make it to the sophomore year, the group reports.

By the Commission for Higher Education's own reckoning, fewer than half of students who start bachelor's degree programs, and fewer than a third who start associate's degrees, finish them. Although the percentage of residents 25 and older holding at least a four-year college degree has risen to slightly more than 21 percent, Indiana remains stuck among the bottom five states by that measure. "We're still a blue collar state," said Jones by way of explanation.

At all levels, Indiana education remains a work in progress, with Jones very much in the thick of it all. Besides constantly advocating for higher education, he is vocal in his support of proposed legislation that would require the state's public high schools to better track dropouts, potential as well as actual. Such across-the-board involvement is typical of a man Kenley described as "the thinker and driver" behind Indiana's education initiatives.

Jones is a career politician whose resume begins with 16 years as a state representative. Given a district that included Purdue University, his alma mater, and a mother who had been a teacher, Jones says he naturally gravitated toward education issues. As a legislator, working closely with then-Governor Evan Bayh, he wrote the House bill that created 21st Century Scholars. Later, as Bayh's senior education adviser, Jones was instrumental in bringing various interest groups together in support of the Core 40 curriculum.

As higher education commissioner, Jones pushed for creation of the Education Roundtable. Though he never has been a member of the group, "Stan was a part of the work," said Suellen Reed, a former public school teacher and administrator,

now the state's superintendent of public instruction. "He came to all of the meetings. He helped us pull things together."

She calls him Stan; he calls her Suellen. That they are on a first-name basis and say they are friends and collaborators speaks to the ability of Indiana's disparate education interests to join forces these past few years out of mutual concerns. In 1992 Jones and Reed ran against each other for state superintendent of public instruction, she as a Republican and he as a Democrat. Kenley, a Republican, says bi-partisanship has become the rule on state education issues because in Indiana the two parties are "not so far apart that if there's an issue of importance to us we can't get together."

In 1995 the higher education board

Indiana has one of the nation's most generous financial aid programs for college students.

picked Jones as commissioner. Steve Ferguson, the Indiana University governing board president, said Jones' "passion for what we were doing, his love for the state" made him the standout in a field of candidates for the job, most of them professional educators.

One of Jones' main accomplishments as commissioner is the transformation of Ivy Tech State College into Indiana's first system of two-year community colleges.

"Some legislators didn't know what a community college was," Jones said. Purdue and Indiana universities also took some convincing because, he explained, they feared community colleges would cost them students. Kevin Brinegar, executive director of the Indiana Chamber of Commerce, believes the state's two largest universities effectively "headed community colleges off at the pass" about 40 years ago by establishing regional campuses around

continued on page 11



Carol Bodie (right) instructs Melissa Lambright in Practical Nursing, one of the most popular vocational programs at the 23 Ivy Tech Community College campuses.

Enrollment Squeeze

Virginia's community colleges cope with increasing demand and a changing world

By Kay Mills

ANNANDALE, VIRGINIA

BEFORE REGISTRATION starts for classes at Northern Virginia Community College, nursing student Elizabeth Brooks of nearby Reston sets her clock for quarter to midnight. She turns on her computer, gets the screen ready, and then proceeds to “hope and pray nothing goes wrong.” That’s the only way she and thousands of other students have a chance to enroll in the classes they need.

This online registration “shootout,” as Northern Virginia’s president Robert Templin calls it, results from heavy enrollment

State projections foresee 27 percent growth in enrollment for Virginia’s 23 community colleges, or 40,083 more students, by 2012.

pressure on classes that provide a pipeline to the programs students want. NVCC, with six campuses in the burgeoning Washington, D.C. suburbs, had 37,609 students last fall, up two percent from 2004. It faces a possible enrollment demand of more than 11,000 additional students by 2012.

At Tidewater Community College, in the Norfolk-Virginia Beach area, enrollment is expected to increase by more than 6,000 students by 2012. (Last fall’s enrollment was 21,400.) Overall, state projections foresee 27 percent growth for Virginia’s 23 community colleges, or 40,083

more students between last fall and 2012 in a system that already enrolls 146,472.

Meantime, the state’s public four-year institutions are likely to add only 12,000 more undergraduates by 2012. Other growth states such as California, Florida and Texas are seeing similar trends even as state financial support often has failed to keep pace.

“We are all in similar boats—our boats are just a different color,” said Glenn DuBois, chancellor of the Virginia Community College System. “I can’t think of any state in which the leadership would say we have all the resources we need.”

California’s community college enrollment fell off slightly last fall from the 1.6 million attending in fall 2004, because the job market is better and because of the fall-out from two tuition increases. However, Robert Turnage, the system’s vice chancellor for fiscal policy, said, “We think that enrollment demand will come back.” California community colleges expect to serve almost two million students by fall 2010, a 22 percent increase over fall 2004.

Texas community colleges have added some 110,000 students since fall 2000, and enrollment now stands at about 558,000 students. Enrollment flattened some this year because the schools don’t have the capacity to offer enough courses, and students either go elsewhere or nowhere, said Steve Johnson of the Texas Association of Community Colleges. The percentage of community colleges’ revenue that the state provides has dropped from 60 percent in 1984 to 34 percent this year, Johnson said.

In Florida, enrollment growth at community colleges has averaged about 6.5 percent in recent years, although that, too, has leveled off because of some improvements in the economy and disruptions by hurricanes in 2004 and 2005. The state’s 28-college system enrolled 800,036 last year, with 20 percent more students projected by 2010-11.

Nationwide, community college officials have been trying to convince policymakers that “we’ve got to invest in higher education, including the community colleges,” said George Boggs, president of the American Association of Community Colleges. “We have to wake up as a nation to the growing skills gap and the increasingly global economy,” areas in which community colleges can fill many needs, Boggs said. But he doesn’t think people understand

what’s at stake. “Sputnik alarmed us all, and the nation responded quickly, beefing up the math and science curriculum. We’re now seeing a different kind of challenge, one that isn’t as visible.”

Elizabeth Brooks, the Northern Virginia Community College nursing student, is one of those affected by the enrollment squeeze in Virginia. Brooks, 49, who repairs high-speed photo and digital office equipment two days a week, wanted to start a career in nursing but needed several science courses to begin. “I didn’t have the luxury of quitting my job to take the courses at the times I could get them,” she said. She learned from fellow students how to play the registration game. “You also have to have all your records in good shape or you are in trouble at midnight,” she said.

Last November’s registration for the current semester was “very traumatic for some of the nursing students,” Brooks said. Owing to some glitches, some people were not able to register at midnight; in another case, too many people were permitted to register for one class and had to accept leftovers. Although Brooks knows the system now, and stayed up until 2:30 AM to register, she still had problems getting one class.

Part of the squeeze on classes stems from the deteriorated condition of the Annandale campus’ science facilities. One side of the building may be too hot when the other side is freezing. “Our lab counters are old, worn, and often loose, and cabinets and sinks are deteriorating in many labs,” said Annandale Provost Barbara Saperstone. “We have had places where mold was growing on the walls, but we have tried to get rid of it when we find it.”

“Every single program requires some natural sciences,” said Charlene Connolly, provost for Northern Virginia’s three-year-old medical education campus in Springfield, just south of the Washington Beltway. “That is our bottleneck. Anything with a lab is limited.” And these courses fill up at five minutes after midnight.

Many Virginia community colleges were built in the 1960s; now they need renovation, partly because they are old and partly because the students using them have changed. “The traditional view is that it is older students who are at community colleges—they go to class and go home,” Saperstone said. “Now we have younger students, who are staying longer on campus, looking for a place where they feel comfortable,” she said, adding that colleges need to develop student lounges and other areas where students can work on laptops or meet between classes. Now when it rains, students come inside but often have to line the halls, where it’s noisy, especially with cell phones ringing.



Elizabeth Brooks, a nursing student at Northern Virginia Community College, must register online at midnight to get the classes she needs to graduate.

State voters passed an \$845.9 million higher education general obligation bond issue in 2002, with \$159.4 million earmarked for community college construction and renovations. But that money has made only a dent, and campuses are already facing overruns because of rising construction costs. The State Council on Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) estimated during the last biennium that \$21 million should be spent in each two-year period over the next ten years to address community colleges’ deferred maintenance needs. Because this biennium’s spending fell short of that, SCHEV is recommend-

Some Virginia community college courses, particularly in the natural sciences, fill up at five minutes after midnight on the day registration begins.

ing \$34.7 million for community college repairs through 2008.

Higher education spending in Virginia has been on a roller coaster for the last 15 years. In the 1990s the bottom fell out of the economy. “For two years all we did was budget cuts,” said Karen Petersen, executive vice chancellor of the community college system and a former state education secretary. “By 2000 the General Assembly understood that higher education was in disarray” and created a joint legislative committee that established what it called budget “base adequacy guidelines” that were largely enrollment driven. “The guidelines indicated that community colleges were poorly funded.”

The early 2000s brought two more years of funding cuts and tuition increases.

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Until this year, Virginia “has simply not funded higher education in good times and definitely has not funded higher education in bad times,” says Robert Templin, president of 37,000-student Northern Virginia Community College.

from preceding page

With tuition going up at four-year institutions, and with these schools limiting their enrollments, students turned to community colleges. “We serve 60 percent of the state’s undergraduates,” Petersen said. “We’ve grown the size of a University of Virginia or Virginia Tech in the last ten years,” and “we’ve done it with no increase in full-time faculty.”

Virginia’s community colleges compete for state support with K–12 education, Medicaid and transportation. SCHEV recommended increasing spending on community colleges during the next biennium by \$136.3 million from the general fund, or 42 percent, and by \$222.3 million from all sources. The main reason for the proposed

In the early 2000s, with tuition going up at four-year institutions, students turned to community colleges.

larger-than-average increase is an attempt to hire more full-time faculty.

Virginia Governor Mark Warner, limited by law to one term, submitted his last budget before leaving office in January. Warner called for spending \$385.7 million on community colleges in FY 2007, and \$392.9 million in FY 2008 (increases of 18 and 20 percent respectively from the current fiscal year’s appropriation). Warner also would increase funds for student financial aid by \$3.1 million each year, and included money for new construction and renovations.

Warner had led a tax reform effort—some increases, some reductions—in 2004 that put more money into postsecondary education during his administration. Without those reforms, Warner said in an interview, the state was “in danger of dismantling one of the best higher education systems” in the nation.

Warner presided over a restructuring of higher education in Virginia. Much of the

public’s attention focused on the unprecedented autonomy given to public four-year institutions. But from Chancellor DuBois’ point of view, a key part of the restructuring is its emphasis on transfer agreements to smooth the path into four-year institutions for community college graduates. For example, Blue Ridge Community College, in Weyers Cave, now has a guaranteed transfer deal with James Madison University. Blue Ridge enrollment spiked 18 percent in one year, DuBois said. He hopes that by next fall all of the system’s 23 community colleges will have transfer agreements with the state’s public four-year institutions.

Under the restructuring legislation, SCHEV will assess how well the universities and community colleges meet goals such as increasing access to higher education, ensuring that it remains affordable, improving student retention, contributing to efforts to stimulate the state’s economic development, and working to improve public schools. “Some of these are measures that favor the community colleges wonderfully well, such as (increasing) access,” said Daniel LaVista, SCHEV’s executive director. “You can shut your eyes and throw a dart at the map, and a community college is the largest provider there.”

Lt. Governor Tim Kaine, also a Democrat, succeeds Warner, and he voiced support for the governor’s education initiatives during the campaign last fall. Asked before the election whether he thought his successor would step up to the plate for higher education, Warner said, “This should be a no-brainer. Without a competitive higher education system, we won’t do what we want.”

But he added, “There are still legislators who are suspicious of higher education, who think money is frittered away in higher education. We need to more directly tie it to economic development and thus make it harder for someone to unwind.” Warner said he wants to “make the case that the state needs to make this investment.”

The budget Warner has proposed is “extremely determining of the final outcome, barring some catastrophic event,” said Don Finley, executive director of the

Virginia Business Higher Education Council and also a former state education secretary.

Virginia has a strong economy now, said Finley, whose organization consists of business leaders who support higher education. If that continues, “the money will be there and all of higher education should get respectable increases” from the state. “If we fall back to the average [revenue growth] of the last few years or go into a recession, then it won’t be there.”

“In the last 15 years,” said President Templin of Northern Virginia Community College, “the state has simply not funded higher education in good times and definitely has not funded higher education in bad times, leaving us in bad shape.” Enrollment has not grown appreciably in the last few years at Northern Virginia, but Templin said his campuses are expected to get one-fourth of the state’s future community college enrollment growth.

Students at Virginia community colleges pay close to the national average—\$2,191 for a full year—according to College Board figures. Courses cost \$68 per credit hour, except at NVCC, where tuition has just gone up to \$71. Its tuition will increase by another two to four percent a year through 2008-09 so the school can add

Although \$159.4 million was recently earmarked for community college construction and renovations, it has made only a dent, and campuses are already facing cost overruns.

faculty to cover increased enrollment and meet the higher costs of operating in the expensive Northern Virginia area. NVCC currently pays its faculty salaries that are not considered competitive with those of area public schools. This year its instructors with master’s degrees and two years’ experience earn \$39,218, while local public school teachers with the same education and experience receive \$47,150.

As for programs in areas that Templin sees as potentially driving the economy, he said that so far his college is doing “only token work” in the field of biotechnology and not nearly what it should with wireless technology. An existing program in net-



President John Cavan of Southside Virginia Community College (left), a former college basketball player, still practices with the Southside Virginia team.

work security “should be ten times the size that it is.” In nanotechnology—that is, working with exceptionally small matter—the college is developing curriculum but is not yet offering classes.

Templin has other worries as well. “How do I provide thousands of new police, fire and healthcare people? We are not prepared for a national catastrophe, a terrorist attack, a pandemic,” he said. “Who is going to be the first to detect a biological outbreak, the first to arrive at an attack? Who’s going to take care of the people? [It will be] our graduates, but we are not putting out enough.”

Some 170 miles south of Northern Virginia Community College lies the rural area known as Southside—old tobacco country that is losing population and jobs. “It’s the forgotten portion of Virginia,” said John Cavan, Southside Virginia Community College’s president since 1983 and a former college basketball player who still practices with the Southside Virginia team. Cavan aggressively pursues programs for students in this ten-county region. “If we started programs and waited until we had money to do them, we wouldn’t do them,” he said.

Cavan especially touts a heavy equipment program in Blackstone, where SVCC operates one of several centers in addition to campuses in Alberta, Keysville and Emporia. Students learn diesel technology, motorcycle maintenance and truck driving in separate programs. It’s a high-cost effort “but all the graduates get jobs immediately,” said Cavan. A local construction firm has contracted with the college for training.

“A lot of community colleges across the country want to be like four-year institutions,” Cavan said. “We’re not afraid to get



Students work in a medical physical therapy lab on the Annandale campus of Northern Virginia Community College. Enrollment in labs like this has been limited by obsolete equipment and lack of funding.

TOM COGILL FOR CROSSTALK



Vincent Brown (left) and Dwayne Tharp are instructors at a High Performance Manufacturing Training Center run by Southside Virginia Community College.

into the dirty-fingernail programs. I never say no to business or industry.”

The state has accepted modest enrollment growth at the University of Virginia and other public four-year schools, leaving community colleges to take up the slack,

Higher education spending in Virginia has been on a roller coaster for the last 15 years.

said David Breneman, dean of UVA's Curry School of Education. UVA or William and Mary can raise millions from alumni, but community colleges usually don't have the same resources. “To expect community

colleges to thrive in a privatizing world is pretty naive,” Breneman said.

But Frank Friedman, president of Charlottesville's Piedmont Virginia Community College, seems determined to try. “First, we have to cut expenditures somewhere,” said Friedman, whose college enrolls 4,300 students and expects to have an additional 1,000 by 2012. “We look at programs that aren't fully enrolled, such as automotive technology, which we had to close. The higher demand now is in health sciences, engineering and computer sciences. Student support services suffer because they are non-revenue producing. I hate to sound like a businessman—I'm an educator—but that's the case.”

Piedmont has upgraded its grants office and just received a \$1.7 million, five-year grant under Title III of the Higher Education Act to strengthen the institution by

restoring some of its support programs such as tutoring and career counseling. The school has expanded its private fundraising through the PVCC Education Foundation's campaign for Opportunity and Excellence. In October it announced an unrestricted \$500,000 gift and has raised \$11.2 million so far.

“Universities realized 30 years ago that they had to do something to help themselves, but community colleges came late to that understanding,” said statewide Chancellor DuBois. His system now has a seven-point plan to double its collective holdings from \$75 million to \$150 million by 2009, principally to increase the colleges' capacity and to provide scholarship money.

Republican Senator John Chichester, chairman of the state Senate Finance Committee, worked with former Governor Warner to increase higher education funding. He said the state still needs the remedial work and the workforce training that the community colleges provide, in addition to preparing students for transfer to four-year institutions.

“All of these ingredients put pressure on community colleges,” Chichester said. “They may have to take this hard look—none want to admit this—but they have limited space, fewer faculty, more adjunct faculty. They may get to the point that reluctantly they may have to delve into what applicants derive the greatest experience from going to college,” those in academic programs or those in workforce training. They may have to reconsider the open-door policy, he said, before adding, “That's not a good idea—I'm the first to admit it.”

But community colleges continue to be underfunded, Chi-

chester said. “They are innovative enough to get the best educational bang for the buck. They do get extra from a dollar spent. We are closing in on the time we must either up the ante in the funding arena or take steps to curb enrollment.”

Few people who arrive in the legislature as freshmen understand the tie between education and Virginia's economic development, Chichester said. Yet “every businessman and everyone who has to go to the marketplace for skilled workers understands the role of the community colleges.” ♦

Kay Mills, a former Los Angeles Times editorial writer, is the author of “Changing Channels: The Civil Rights Case that Transformed Television” (University Press of Mississippi, 2004).



Virginia's 23 community colleges are expected to add more than 40,000 additional students by 2012, says Glenn DuBois, chancellor of the two-year college system.

DENNIS BRACK, BLACKSTAR, FOR CROSSTALK

INDIANA

from page 8

the state and allowing them to offer two-year associate's degrees.

“Unfortunately the regional campuses have evolved in the direction of trying to be main campuses,” Brinegar said. “They wanted to offer bachelor's degrees, graduate programs.”

Meanwhile, he added, their associate's degrees were failing to focus on the workplace skills Chamber of Commerce members wanted in their employees. Besides, added Jones, “Their tuition was twice as much as it would be for a community college, so they weren't affordable for typical community college students.”

Kenley says he and other legislators simply had no idea how many students community colleges would attract. In 2000 the legislature took a tentative first step toward the semblance of a statewide community college system when it forced a cooperative arrangement between Ivy Tech and Vincennes University, a public, two-year liberal arts school with a single campus in a remote corner of the state. Vincennes was to provide the liberal arts, Ivy

Tech the technical side of a typical community college curriculum.

Jones promoted the idea, with support from then-Governor Frank O'Bannon and leaders of both legislative houses. But the plan was ill-conceived. At Vincennes, enrollment was falling, and faculty members were being laid off. There was no chance that the small school could provide liberal arts instruction all over the state.

But the arranged marriage went ahead, leading to what one Ivy Tech faculty member called five “dark years,” marked by spats over funding, faculty assignments and logistics.

Finally, last year the legislature granted the reluctant spouses a divorce and gave Ivy Tech the community college name and the green light to go it alone.

Jones is philosophical about that failed first try. From his perspective it was better to forge ahead, even against the odds, than to wait until all the wrinkles were ironed out. “We could have spent 25 years of planning and not gotten where we wanted to go,” he said.

The “new Ivy Tech” has been on such an enrollment roll that it has paced the state's gains in college students. In 2000,

the Commission for Higher Education decided to aim for a total of 30,000 more students in Indiana's public colleges and universities by 2009. After only four years the state was almost 90 percent of the way toward that goal, with Ivy Tech accounting for the bulk of the increase.

The growth has come from students

Unlike states that pour much of their financial aid into merit scholarships, Indiana spends about 90 percent of its resources on need-based help.

across the age spectrum. Toward the upper end are those like Steve Ballard, 50 and a career changer. Mindful of the physical toll his work as a builder and remodeler can take, he said, he just couldn't see himself doing it for the rest of his work life. Anxious to “find something else before it's too late,” he enrolled in the col-

lege's popular hospitality administration program and is learning to be a baker and pastry chef.

Over the last decade, however, the average age of Ivy Tech students has declined to 25 from 31 as more people like Caitlin Ward, now 21 and expecting her associate of arts degree in May, have enrolled. Like her two older brothers, she went straight to Ivy Tech from high school. “It was the only affordable way for all of us to be in college at the same time,” she said.

Jones reads Ivy Tech's changing demographics as a gain in “kids who wouldn't have gone to college until they were older. We're getting them younger, which is much more effective.”

But he is still not satisfied that the state is getting enough of them. “We still believe there are huge numbers of adults and young people who could go to college that are not,” he said, putting the number at 20,000 to 30,000 more who could be enrolled in the next ten years. ♦

Susan C. Thomson is a former higher education reporter at the St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

OTHER VOICES



Higher Education's Dirty Little Secret

Hidden college fees have become a "stealth tuition"

By Terry L. Meyers

WHEN PARENTS AND POLITICIANS bewail high and increasing college costs, they point to rising tuition as the culprit. But if you turn a spotlight on one of the dark corners of academe, you'll discover something few colleges and universities 'fess up to. It's not just tuition that is driving up the price of an education. It is also fees—and more villainously, because they are so often hidden.

At Wisconsin's public universities, undergraduate fees to support activities, programs and buildings not funded by the state or by tuition have doubled in only ten years, to an average of \$711 annually. At the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, fees have reached \$1,148 a year. Until recently no one really noticed, but now state legislators, regents of the state university system, newspapers and students are on the case. One regent, Thomas Loftus, has labeled such fees "sort of a stealth tuition increase that is pricing too many people out of the UW system."

One particular fee seems not to get much attention: the money students pay for intercollegiate sports, especially football and basketball. Even at Division I schools with nationally ranked teams and television deals, athletic fees help support intercollegiate athletics. (Recreational and intramural sports usually have their own fees.)

At a large school with television income and rich benefactors, the intercollegiate athletic fee might be relatively modest. But at less fortunate schools, those fees can be high. And they're high in part because they are tucked away (sometimes carefully so) and grow in

Fees can be abused through silence or by institutional duplicity that borders on mendacity.

secret, with no one paying attention except those with an interest in keeping them out of sight. There is no transparency and hence no constituency to act as a brake.

Most Americans assume that a bill or an invoice from a respectable entity like a university details all significant costs. Look at the bills you get from your dentist or hospital (well, maybe better not to look at that hospital bill!), or from your car mechanic or waiter. The restaurant check tells what you paid for each item you ordered. That

martini, wine, onion soup, baked trout, chef's salad and pecan pie—each is listed and priced individually.

But in most cases parents can learn little from the invoices received from the university their child attends—and little more from the school's catalog and website. Rarely do these go beyond a bare-bones listing, "Tuition and Fees." It takes time and effort to dig deeper for a breakdown of what stands behind that entry. And sometimes not even a computer whiz can find where the money actually goes; the information is not available. If restaurants took this obscurantist route, your check would read simply, "Dinner: \$87.57."

But consumers of educational services—students and parents—may not know the academic territory and may assume that "Tuition and Fees" represents what they are paying for courses and professors, teaching assistants and classrooms. "Tuition," they think, is the one big-ticket item, with "fees" being the nickel and dime stuff—nothing too big or major. Maybe \$50 for the bus system, \$75 for the recreational sports building and program, perhaps \$75 for a lab fee, and \$100 in support of the computer or telecommunications system.

All too often, this trust is misplaced. Fees can be abused through silence or by institutional duplicity that borders on mendacity. Even when the information is made available, it's likely to be in places that most families wouldn't know to look. In Virginia, the state I know best, fees are set forth in an annual report published on a website by the State Council of Higher Education. It is not a source familiar to many Virginia families.

Places a parent or student might check are not forthcoming. On the website of Norfolk State University, a historically black institution whose students may not always be as affluent as those at some colleges, it at first seems easy to find the schedule of tuition and fees. Tuition (\$2,370 a year, in-state) is broken out per credit hour, and the costs of a semester, including 15 credits, a double room, and a meal plan, are summarized for both in-state and out-of-state students. There is also a handy chart of "other charges," 27 fees ranging from an accident insurance fee to a university withdrawal fee. Most are modest and clear: a late registration fee of \$75, for example, and a bowling fee of \$20. But there is no listing for the

University's fee for intercollegiate athletics, a whopping \$1,100 per student per year.

Or take Old Dominion University, in Norfolk. At its website, ODU shows what it calls "tuition rates" plus "selected mandatory fees"—only three of which it mentions, totaling a mere \$92 a year: a "general service fee" of \$9 to cover a copy of the catalog, matriculation, graduation and the like; a "student health fee" of \$53; and a "transportation fee" of \$30. Seems straightforward enough. But hold on—no figure is given for "tuition" as it is generally understood, for the fine print reveals that ODU defines "tuition" in a way George Orwell would be delighted to uncover. "Tuition," ODU says, is a "University term" that "refers to a comprehensive fee which includes a student activity fee of \$63.53 per credit hour for Norfolk campus courses..." If you download the tuition and fees pdf that the site offers, you find a note that in addition to those "selected mandatory fees" some lab or music courses have fees "beyond tuition costs." There is no mention of an intercollegiate athletic fee.

Where is it? Look back at the peculiar definition of tuition as including an "activities fee" of \$63.53 per credit hour—that's where Old Dominion University hides its intercollegiate athletic fee of \$666. (In-state tuition runs \$3,542 per year.)

A similar example of chutzpah is to be found at Christopher Newport University. I once asked the head PR person at Christopher Newport what the athletic fee would be. He told me he was not authorized to release that information and I would have to approach the president's chief of staff. Each time "tuition" is listed at CNU's site an asterisk notes "Includes Tuition, Comprehensive Fee, Technology Fee and Capital Fee." Again a trusting parent might conclude that the fees are nickel and dime stuff—and never guess that CNU actually has an athletic fee of \$859 tucked away in its "tuition" of \$5,826 annually.

My own school, the College of William and Mary, also charges a lot of money for intercollegiate athletics: \$1,008 per student per year. (Annual in-state tuition is \$4,815.) In the past, William and Mary too hid its athletic fee, but lately, encouraged by resolutions from the Student Senate and the Faculty Assembly, it has struggled toward honesty. It now lists all its fees online (though by semester, which misleads those who expect college costs to be expressed in yearly terms). And William and Mary promises soon to itemize all costs in its catalog as well and to tell parents and students, on the bills it sends out, where to look for the breakdown.

I believe all institutions should emulate these steps. Even better, they should print all fees directly on each invoice. But, Sam Jones, William and Mary's vice president for finance, has determined that at this college such a step is physically impossible (we're talking about 36 fees). In a fetching outburst of frankness, Jones recently claimed to a student reporter that "people simply want to know what they need to pay and don't want a whole list of fees." He added, "bottom line," that "the parents are paying the bill and students simply aren't concerned."

Secretiveness is the industry norm. Although all kinds of statistics are gathered about higher education by all kinds of departments of education, think tanks, foundations and institutes, no one compiles a national database of athletic fees. With Google and a few keystrokes, you can find out more than anyone would reasonably like to know about virtually anything in higher education that can be measured. But you won't find a source that breaks out fees across the country.

(A reference librarian who interested herself in the question told me a few years ago that when she tried to compile some information on athletic fees, she found such chaos, such differing terms, interpretations and applications, that any comparisons or analysis seemed futile. If anyone out there is looking for a big research project whose payoff might be a serious reexamination of funds and their allocation in America's colleges and universities, this compilation of data should be tempting.)

It's not difficult to guess why it's so hard to get accurate information about athletic fees. As has sometimes been said, sports is the national religion of America. And those folks in the grandstand—many of them not students—don't care who helps pay for their amusement. If college athletic programs can be supported by fees on students, and if no one cries out (i.e., if no one notices), then the costs are bearable (i.e., they are borne by someone else). Bread and circuses have their use.

But public scrutiny of higher education's dirty little secret is increasing. The *Richmond Times-Dispatch* and *USA Today* have looked into athletic fees, and the *Newport News Daily Press* in Virginia recently editorialized against "outrageous" athletic fees, especially "when colleges are having trouble maintaining their academic core."

Bringing athletic fees into the light of day might complicate the funding of big-time football and basketball teams, but honesty—transparency—remains the best policy. Secrecy invites and rewards mendacity. Follow the money, prosecutors say. Parents, students and taxpayers have a right to know how funds are allocated at public institutions. They, too, need to follow the money and thus help lead higher education along the path of honesty. ♦

Terry L. Meyers is a professor of English at the College of William and Mary.

At the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, fees have reached \$1,148 a year.

Secretiveness is the industry norm. Although all kinds of statistics are gathered about higher education, no one compiles a national database of athletic fees.



Got College? Universities are being marketed just like "Brand X"

By David L. Kirp

QUESTION: What do colleges and universities have in common with the city of Atlanta? Answer: Both are busily promoting themselves with new slogans of dubious value.

Atlanta, which once called itself "the city too busy to hate," is spending \$8 million to publicize its makeover motto: "Every Day Is an Opening Day." The aim is to boost tourism, but to judge from the ensuing confusion—"What does it mean?" is the common response—it will be about as successful as New Coke.

"Solutions for Our Future" is the tag line that the ad agency hired by the American Council on Education has devised to boost popular support for higher education. While that's a clearer message than Atlanta's pitch, the cockiness rings hollow. As anyone who has attended a higher education conference during the past few years can attest, solutions are in short supply. Angst is everywhere in the air, and the cliché words are "crisis" and "challenge."

Higher education's leaders don't seem to have much confidence in their "product" or

clarity about how to reach their target market. Amid mismanagement scandals, anger over rising tuition and limited access, they haven't developed a convincing response to the old taunt, "Where's the beef?"

While colleges and universities do have an image problem, the troubles go far deeper. The core issues are entirely familiar: the lack of access to a quality education for the children of poor and working class families (ironically, the very families

whose support the campaign is soliciting in its TV ads); the waste that is attributable to universities' hyper-competitiveness, whether in installing sushi bars or recruiting faculty superstars; the institutions' failure to demonstrate that they are spending their money wisely, and their reluctance to attempt an assessment of the intellectual worth of a college education.

The emphasis on marketing is, in part, a triumph of style over substance. Perhaps the best example is the priority placed on athletic scholarships, regardless of how that might adversely affect the academic mission (as the old saw goes: a college that the football team can be proud of).

College mottoes used to be obscure scraps of Latin, like Fresno State's "Lucem Accipe Ut Reddas"—that's "accept the light in order that you might return it," for the non-cognoscenti. But apparently "true erudition"—"Eruditio Vera," the old motto of Centenary College in Hackettstown, New Jersey—has disappeared. In this market-driven age, advertising agencies and management consultants are the gurus. They have brought branding, marketing, logo-ing and sloganeering to the campus: Centenary College is now "Dedicated to Your Success."

Generally bromidic and undistinguished, university mottoes are also indistinguishable. Take your pick: "Dedicated to Your Success," "An Education for Success," "Experience Southeast, Experience Success," "Think Success," or "We Teach Success." A decade ago, in his much-discussed book, "The University in Ruins," Bill Reading railed against the vacuity of "excellence." Imagine what he'd make of "success."

It is small wonder, then, that almost no students know the slogan of their alma mater. A survey of Texas undergraduates revealed that more students can identify the products associated with "Just Do It," "Snap, Crackle and Pop" and "Yo Quiero" (Nike, Rice Krispies and Taco Bell) than know what happened on July 4, 1776, let alone the official motto of North Texas State ("Discover the Power of Ideas").

Turn an ad-man loose on the problem and the results can be disconcerting. On the AdSlogans.com website, George Felton, an English professor and the author of an eponymously titled book on advertising, dispenses free advice to selected institutions of higher learning. Felton is sympathetic to the plight of Quinnipiac University, whose underwhelming motto is "Challenging Students to Meet the Challenges of the Future." The real problem, he opined, is "pronouncing the place. Try this: 'Quinnipiac rhymes with Win A Free Mac.' And that's just what you'll do when you apply for early decision. Upon acceptance, we'll give you your choice of an iMac or iBook for school. Cool! See how naturally the slogan leads to strong selling copy?"

To St. John's College, with its intense Great Books curriculum, Felton urges a bit of ad

copy theft. The school should take the slogan of Altoids mints, "Curiously Strong," and "turn it into 'The Curiously Curious College' or 'The School with Seriously Strong Strictures.'" If St. John's doesn't bite, he added, West Point can use the same motto.

"Take your position in the marketplace, peruse the great slogans of our time, then just plug and play," Felton wrote. That's the ad-industry version of "know thyself," and it's pretty good advice. Once university presidents get beyond the platitudes about acquiring a liberal education that is both practical and challenging, doing research that is both immediately productive and path-breaking, few of them can persuasively explain what their institution stands for even if they have ten minutes, let alone ten words.

Mottoes will only work for institutions that know themselves. "Tread lightly on learning for learning's sake," Felton cautioned, but that's only true at party schools. Johns Hopkins University is a palace of medical science, and its message, "One Brilliant Thought Can Change the World," gets that across. Brown University's laissez faire academic philosophy is famously summed in the motto "Freedom with Responsibility." Sarasota University is a very different kind of place, a virtual institution with students from across the country pursuing their degrees, including psychology Ph.D.s, online. "Sarasota University. Now in California" captures the sense that the school isn't tethered to one place.

Challenge-plagued administrators can learn a lot from Dickinson College. A few years back, the new president, Bill Durden—who, not coincidentally, had been working for Sylvan Learning Systems, a for-profit education company, before coming to Dickinson—hired a marketing consultant to devise an emblematic phrase. "Freedom + Guidance = Growth" describes the school, the consultant reported, but it didn't separate Dickinson from the pack. "Reflecting America, Engaging the World" was a stronger "positioning statement" because it "sets Dickinson apart," the consultant said. But because Dickinson had so few minority students, he added, that motto didn't "reflect current reality, and would therefore require substantial institutional change to implement."

Dickinson went with the sexier slogan, even as it made the needed changes. In the span of just two years the college doubled its percentage of minority students.

In doing so, Dickinson has not adopted the "give them what they want" mentality. Bill Durden is well aware that colleges are a very special kind of market, one in which consumers are not always right. "We're different from business," Durden said. "We'll listen [to students, alumni and donors], but don't confuse our good will with our agreeing with you. Sometimes we'll change our mind, but we won't break. It's important to know your product...to know your brand."

When the issue of branding came up at a TIAA-CREF conference last fall, a university administrator noted that all of my examples came from schools with a relatively narrow focus. "We want to do it all. How do you get that message out?" I pointed to the example of Arizona State University. With 60,000 students (and aiming for 90,000 by 2020), it is the fourth largest university in the country. ASU calls itself the prototype for "the new American university," an institution "responsible for the economic, social and cultural vitality of our region." The ambition is clear, the goal focused—and with Michael Crow steering the ship of this new multiversity, the aspiration is within the outer reaches of the doable.

The ad campaign being developed by the American Council on Education's consultants stresses that higher education is important not just to those who go to college but also to the entire society—that universities promote innovation, boost the economy and create a more informed citizenry. This theme will be pitched to the elite, via ads in the *Wall Street Journal*, as well as to the hoi polloi, in commercials aired during the NCAA basketball championships.

This is a very expensive way to get the word out. What's more, the message isn't new. The hope that those ads will generate a "groundswell of public support" is about as plausible as Atlanta's belief that "Every Day Is an Opening Day" will draw hordes of tourists.

Addressing some of the many important issues facing higher education effectively will require universities to act in tandem—not by underwriting wishy-washy advertisements, but by taking positions on important and controversial matters. It means reaching an agreement on the primacy of need-based scholarships, instead of aid awards whose sole purpose is to boost a college's rankings. It entails setting some shared teaching expectations for hotly recruited faculty luminaries, rather than competing over how few courses they will teach. It involves promoting a "value added" or "student engagement" metric in teaching, rather than slavishly adhering to whatever criteria *U.S. News & World Report* deems important in devising its rankings.

"But what about the antitrust laws?" I was asked at the TIAA-CREF conference when I suggested this level of cooperation. Administrators cringe at the memory of the Justice Department's lawsuit challenging the agreement among the Ivy League colleges and MIT not to compete in calculating financial aid—or at least they use that litigation as a convenient excuse not to do anything. What they forget is that, alone among these schools, MIT stood up to the government, and in 1991 it won the case. The aftermath is telling: The Ivies didn't restore what was known as the "overlap" agreement, and the financial aid wars were revived.

Any collaboration among rivals potentially brings antitrust problems. But as wealthy individuals and corporations understand, lawyers' role isn't to say no, but to figure out how, if at all possible, to satisfy their client's wishes. "Getting to 'yes'" is their creed. It would be a cheap, smart move to convene the smartest antitrust law professors in the land and see what strategies they can devise.

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Take your pick.**

In this market-driven age, advertising agencies and management consultants are the gurus. They have brought branding, marketing, logo-ing and sloganeering to the campus.

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It is far from clear, however, that colleges and universities would ever surrender even a bit of their competitive advantage in order to advance the common cause of good higher education. Better branding, they imagine, will help to do the trick, enabling their school to lead the pack: Tellingly, although the ACE image-makers wanted to use the motto “Solutions for America,” the University of Richmond held tight to the copyright.

The go-it-alone strategy might work—for the short run and for a few places, since competition produces many more losers than winners. But unless academic leaders stop wringing their hands and start tackling some of the basic problems of higher education together, not even the ad-man who dreamed up “Got Milk?” can save them. ♦

David L. Kirp, a professor of public policy at UC Berkeley, is the author of “Shakespeare, Einstein, and the Bottom Line: The Marketing of Higher Education,” and is a frequent contributor to National CrossTalk.



Colleges at a Crossroad

The future of higher education is a vital concern

By Michael H. Moskow

IN RECENT YEARS, much discussion has taken place in the educational community about whether institutions of higher education have been unable to maintain the implicit “social compact” that once defined the relationship between universities and the public. This compact was based on a belief that education was largely a public good and, as such, government support was warranted. This notion has eroded over time.

Today, many argue that higher education is a private good whose benefits primarily accrue to the student who is able to use his or her higher education to achieve a more satisfying quality of life and often significantly higher wages. This more market-driven notion

Universities need to become better educators of the general public and marketers of their product if they hope to attract greater tax support.

suggests that higher education is an investment in an individual’s human capital that has limited public spillovers. Therefore, it should be primarily financed by the individual.

For universities to flourish, they need to revisit this “social compact” and make a clearer case for the public good content of education. In order to do this, universities will need to be more transparent in their operations so that the public can have a better sense of what the value of the institution is to society.

Universities need to more tightly define their mission and be more explicit about how funding is used to meet the multiple missions of a university, including education, research and public outreach. Polls indicate that the public primarily values universities as places of formal education and often does not understand the return to society generated from the use of public funds for university research. In sum, universities need to become better educators of the general public and marketers of their product if they hope to attract greater tax support.

Another aspect of transparency is allowing for an easier understanding of the finances of higher education. Higher education is far from a homogeneous economic sector. The financial structure and missions of schools vary significantly. The public flagship university and the local community college serve differing student populations and objectives. Private colleges and universities are significantly different than local state colleges.

The advent of the private for-profit university is yet another change to our system of higher education. How does the business model of these for-profit institutions differ from the traditional university business model, and are these institutions better meeting the needs of certain populations of students?

This variety is a source of strength in that it can cater to the differing needs of students, but it is also a source of confusion for people attempting

to make higher education policy. For example, I asked a researcher on my staff to evaluate whether trends in tuition are making college less accessible. This seems like a pretty straightforward question. However, his answer was something less than crystal clear. As he put it, college has never been more accessible than it is today—and it’s also never been less accessible.

It is now more accessible if one considers record enrollment and that the costs of attending community college can be completely covered if a student is eligible for a full Pell grant. In fact, one study found that 30 percent of community colleges actually charge negative tuition if financial aid is taken into consideration. But figures from the College Board show that, while the sticker price of the average four-year public college or university represents only five to six percent of family income for a well-off family, the cost of the same education consumes a staggering 71 percent of family income for a low-income family.

Are students from low-income backgrounds being priced out of education? You can only answer this question by knowing exactly how much aid is provided to low-income students and whether a particular school has the resources to fully fund need-based aid. Depending on the answer to this question, college may or may not be affordable and accessible.

In addition, the return-on-investment of a college degree must be considered. If higher education is truly an investment in human capital, shouldn’t students view this as an investment at least as important as buying a car or a first house? Taking on debt for a benefit that will span over an individual’s life doesn’t seem to be a bad strategy. If someone is willing to borrow \$20,000 to buy a car, should it be unrealistic to encourage them to borrow at least as much to finance an education? Given that the most recent statistics suggest that college graduates earn in excess of \$1 million more over their lifetimes than high school graduates, student debt should not necessarily be alarming.

Finally, if colleges and universities are going to redefine the social compact to restore public support, they will have to address graduation rates. There are many reasons why students don’t complete their degrees, so it would be unrealistic to expect 100 percent graduation rates. Nationwide graduation rates, however, stand at 50 percent, and it is not unheard of to find schools with graduation rates of 20 percent. Particularly for the nontraditional student population, universities need to devise strategies that will ensure that these students get degrees. Public confidence in universities will be higher if graduation rates rise.

Clearly the area of higher education policy is not meant for the timid. The historic and increasing importance of higher education to our economic wellbeing makes this a policy area where we must succeed. Right now, the U.S. has a university system that is the envy of the world, but the world is catching up. I hope that we can begin a dialog that will help us all better understand the challenges facing universities and what strategies will help us maintain the vitality of this key sector. ♦

Michael H. Moskow is president and CEO of the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago. This article is excerpted from remarks made by Moskow at a recent conference on the future of higher education.

Shouldn’t students view higher education as an investment at least as important as buying a car or a first house?



CHEATING

from page 1

seems almost quaint. Fraternity and sorority files are antiques when students can use computers, cellphones, calculators and iPods to cheat and plagiarize their way to better grades.

And the response among college administrators, faculty and students on honor councils has been inadequate, uneven and at times confused. Those who would fight fire with fire, or technology with technology, are squared off against those who want to change a culture that—beginning in high school—spawns the atti-

Online services now exist that will sell a student an essay on practically any subject imaginable.

tude that cheating is no big deal.

What's not debatable, according to ongoing research, is that cheating and plagiarism in the country have reached epidemic proportions on college campuses.

The Center for Academic Integrity, based at Duke University, calls the latest findings from the research by Donald McCabe, a Rutgers University professor, "disturbing, provocative and challenging." McCabe has surveyed some 50,000 students on more than 60 campuses since the fall of 2002.

Among his major findings, released last summer:

- On most campuses, 70 percent of students admit to some cheating, with half admitting to one or more instances of serious cheating on written assignments.
- Internet plagiarism is exploding because students are uncertain about how to properly use content from the internet, with 77 percent of those surveyed saying it is not a serious issue.
- Faculty are reluctant to take action. Some 44 percent of faculty members surveyed over the past three years who were

aware of cheating in their classes did not report it.

- Academic honor codes do reduce cheating: The incidence of serious test cheating is one-third to one-half lower on campuses that have honor codes.

McCabe also found that cheating is a major problem in high school. In surveys of 18,000 high school students over the last four years, more than 70 percent of those in public or parochial schools admitted to having cheated on a test.

McCabe has been churning these figures out for many years, but is anyone taking them seriously? At the high school level, said McCabe, "I'd say they are, but boy that's not based on a lot of data." At the college level, he said, "Some are taking it seriously enough, and some are doing a PR job, talking the right story but not fundamentally changing. Some are staying away from it because of the negative publicity that can be associated with it. Some schools I've surveyed have not had great results and they've gone public with it. I give them a lot of credit for that."

There is also anecdotal evidence to suggest that the problem is getting worse, or that it is more likely to be detected.

The University of Maryland ran a sting operation that netted cheaters in its graduate business school.

Louisiana State University's medical school suspended one student and reprimanded four others after they were accused of cheating on a pharmacology exam.

At Utah Valley State College, David Keller, a philosophy professor and director of the college's Center for the Study of Ethics, had a teaching assistant randomly check student papers and found that one-third of them were taken from the internet. "All he did was type in two or three sentences on Google, and it took us to these really bizarre websites that you and I wouldn't even know about," said Keller. "I wrote to the students and said, 'Your paper is not your paper and you presented it as your paper. You plagiarized this paper and here's the original website it came from and you're caught, and I'm giving you an F.'"

The University of Virginia economics department investigated the possibility that a sizeable number of its graduate students might have cheated on an exam, but declined to disclose the results of the investigation, citing student privacy. UVA, which has one of the toughest honor codes in the country, was embarrassed in 2001 when widespread cheating was found in an introductory physics class, and 48 students subsequently quit or were dismissed from the university.

The big culprit is the internet, according to researchers, higher education officials and students alike. Other kinds of technology-driven cheating occur, of course. Students may use text messaging on their cellphones to exchange test answers, or enter them on graphics calculators, or download answers or lectures on their iPods, but those methods can be dealt with by banning those devices from the classroom during tests.

The internet, however, is ubiquitous. It is a tempting venue for students looking

for ideas and essays that closely parallel their assignments. In fact, online services now exist that will sell a student an essay on practically any subject imaginable. And there are also online services for faculty that will run essay excerpts through a search engine to see if they match anything available on the internet.

"Internet plagiarism is probably by far the most common form of cheating, or academic dishonesty," said Didi Kuo, a 2005 Emory graduate who chaired the university's honor council. "The main difference is that, instead of before, when you had bits and pieces of plagiarism from books and articles, when students actually went to the library, now you just get huge chunks of entire papers that come from a web source."

Renee Williams, an Emory student honor council member who previously chaired the honor council at Emory's Oxford College, believes internet plagiarism is on the rise. "It's just so easy and accessible," she said.

"A lot of it has to do with the fact that people get desperate," she added. "Whereas before, if you were up at 4:30 in the morning, there really wasn't a lot you could do to finish a paper. But now it's so tempting to go to that one website and get that one idea and not cite it, or just read the website and formulate the ideas as your own. It's more accessible to people because they're more pressed for time. The technology simply facilitates it. But it's also easier to find it (the plagiarism), too."

Patrick Allitt, a philosophy professor who directs the Emory Center for Teaching and Curriculum, said he usually detects internet plagiarism in writing assignments because the writing is too good. "They've copied from someone who's a professional writer," he said.

"It jumps out at you that it's probably not the student's own work, if you've already seen the rotten writing they do most of the time," said Allitt, author of the book, "I'm the Teacher; You're the Student." "Often they are not experienced enough to realize how much worse their writing is than the writing they're copying."

David Keller, at Utah Valley State, has changed the way he teaches because of internet plagiarism. He used to let his philosophy students write about topics of their choice. "Now I think it's better to give them a very narrow subject so they can't just go to the internet and download any paper," he said. "I also tell my students that I have as good an internet access as they do."

The problem in dealing with cheating is that it involves more than technology, it also reflects the attitudes of students and faculty, and the culture in which they coexist.

High schools don't emphasize ethical values nearly enough, some experts argue, and students thus arrive at college with an



The intense competition to gain admission to certain colleges, and to do well once there, leads many students to cheat, Timothy Dodd, executive director of the Center for Academic Integrity, at Duke University, believes.

attitude that it's alright to cut corners, or they simply don't understand what constitutes plagiarism.

"Getting into the best school—and seizing whatever means necessary to make that happen—seems to be valued more than the actual education," said Timothy Dodd, executive director of the Center for Academic Integrity. "Loading up on courses, majors and extra-curriculars—a quantity of involvement—has produced highly scheduled and busy young people who have to resort to shortcuts, to check everything off on their daily planner, and who have no time for reflection. Combine that with the reigning cynicism that surrounds business, politics, sports and reli-

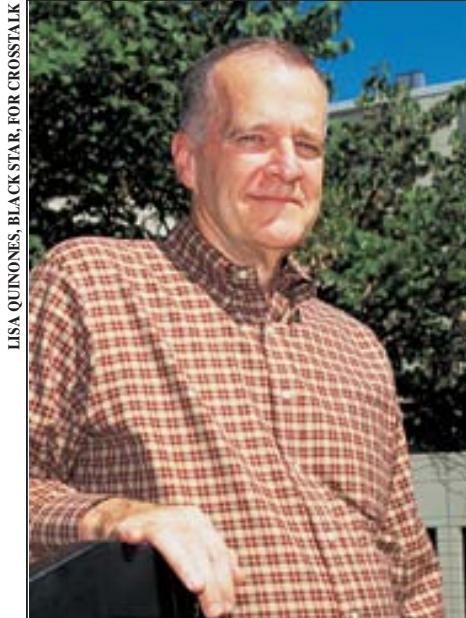
"In the absence of a comprehensive focus on academic integrity, students will resort to and justify cheating as a way to get ahead in our society."

—TIMOTHY DODD, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE CENTER FOR ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

gion, and it is no surprise that in the absence of a comprehensive focus on academic integrity, students will resort to and justify cheating as a way to get ahead in our society."

Emory graduate Kuo echoed that assessment. "At places like Emory and top-tier private universities, there is a high level of competition and a need to succeed, coupled with a privileged background," said Kuo. "So a lot of times, students have this attitude, of, you know, my father is whoever he is, and therefore I can get away with things. I'm not saying cheating is confined to these groups, but by and

continued next page



A study by Rutgers University Professor Donald McCabe found that on most campuses 70 percent of students admit to some cheating.

from preceding page

large, students feel that they can get away with things and that they also deserve good grades, because of the money they're paying to go here or because they worked so hard in high school."

And while faculty are the main sources of cheating complaints, some are reluctant to report cheating because they are concerned about the effect on the students, or

A growing number of colleges and universities have adopted honor code systems, but their operations and range of sanctions vary widely.

feel that the honor code system is not efficient.

Some faculty at Emory "feel the system is broken and it's not worth turning in cases," said Dean Lancaster. "Some are cynical."

Faculty may also be "all mercy and no justice," said Dodd. "They take the long view, which is, 'Will my action in some way preclude a successful future for the student?'" In general, Dodd said, students "come to the table more concerned and more aware of the extent of the problem than faculty."

If there is a broad consensus on the extent and cause of the problem, there is no consensus on how to solve it.

While a growing number of colleges and universities have adopted honor code systems—no one has a precise tally of the total—their operations and range of sanctions vary widely. They routinely devote two or more hours of the orientation program for first-year students to explain the honor code, and most require students to sign a paper saying they will uphold the code.

The gold standard for honor codes is at Washington and Lee University and the University of Virginia. On those campuses, exams are not proctored, students



Patrick Allitt, a professor of philosophy at Emory University, sometimes can detect internet plagiarism because the quality of writing is so much better than in the student's other work.

are required to report cheating they observe, and students run the judicial system. And there is only one sanction if a student is found guilty—expulsion.

Other universities have adopted a "modified" honor system with a range of penalties. At the University of Maryland, for example, most students who are found responsible for academic dishonesty receive an "XF" grade which is recorded as "failure due to academic dishonesty." First-time offenders can usually have the "XF" removed from their record if they attend an academic integrity seminar.

Rutgers University's McCabe favors the "modified" approach because his research has convinced him that students are not going to turn in their classmates.

"Students object to a system that tries to put an obligation on them to report," said McCabe. "There have been a number of schools in the last decade or so that tried to go to the full-fledged honor code and lost the vote at the student level on that issue. They've come back a couple of years later without the reporting requirement, and they've been successful."

More and more schools, with and without honor codes, are opting for the technological approach to policing cheaters. This is not just a matter of students using cut-and-paste to rip off master's theses and research papers found on the web. Schools are up against a wide range of online services with names like "Term Paper Relief" and "The Paper Store" that will, for a cost of \$10 to \$20 a page, provide "research assistance" for students to "use as a guide" in their "own original work."

To combat this, as well as internet plagiarism generally, an online service called "Turnitin.com" has become the hottest thing on the market. It charges schools thousands of dollars a year to permit their faculty to submit essays and other student papers to be checked for plagiarism.

At the University of Iowa, for example, which spends about \$11,000 a year on Turnitin, Associate Provost Lola Lopes says that anecdotal reports from faculty suggest that Turnitin has solved the plagiarism problem in their classes.

But Turnitin is controversial and has been rejected at some campuses after faculty protested that using the service routinely is unfair to students.

Allitt, who wanted to see the service introduced at Emory, says the dean of the college was willing to purchase it, but that some faculty said it would be a violation of the honor code to assume that students might be violating it.

"They (faculty) want to assume that students aren't cheating—until they have overwhelming evidence to the contrary," said Allitt. "And they thought it would be an act of bad faith on our part to do that. But I certainly think it's necessary, because there's no doubt that it's going on all the time around us."

In much the same vein, discussions about using Turnitin at Washington and Lee have floundered. "Having it used on a regular basis makes the assumption that people are assumed guilty until proven innocent, rather than the other way around," said Dean of Students Dawn Watkins.

Rutgers University's Donald McCabe also opposes the regular use of plagiarism-detection programs. "If you're going to use it on everything that's submitted, you're saying to students, 'I can't trust you; I've got to check everything you do.'" McCabe said he uses Turnitin "only when I have other reasons to believe I might have a problem. In other words, I'm going to give my students the benefit of the doubt unless I see something that concerns me."



Tom Lancaster, an Emory University political scientist, once found his own research being plagiarized by a student.

Emory honor council member Renee Williams disagrees that there is a presumption of guilt when papers are checked automatically for plagiarism.

"Anywhere you go in life, you're going to have to be held accountable," she said. "If you're a businessman, you're going to be audited. If you're honest and do your work the way it's supposed to be done, I really don't see a problem with it. You're at a university, you chose to come here, and you should be ready to accept the standards that are put forth by the university. You're not forced to come here."

There is also debate within the academy over whether making the judicial process more open might act as a deterrent. Most honor councils work under strict rules of confidentiality, and their record of convictions and acquittals, and range of penalties levied, may be little known to the student body at large.

One aspect of the Washington and Lee system is a noteworthy exception. Students who are found guilty of honor code violations there may appeal their convictions, but if they do, it is heard in a public trial open to anyone in the university community. Such trials are extremely rare—Dean Watkins can't remember one in more than ten years. "When a decision is handed down by the student executive committee," she said, "it is highly unlikely a student is going to appeal that decision."

Objection to most forms of publicity stems from fears of litigation brought under a federal law which protects student privacy, but some university officials believe that more publicity would act as a deterrent to academic dishonesty.

Allitt praised the efforts of Emory honor council members, but said they are working with a "broken system" that is too slow and cumbersome. "What's worse," he said, "it's so shrouded in secrecy that it's got no deterrent aspect. When a student gets punished, no one else gets to hear about it. So the next generation of cheaters are not deterred because they don't know what's happened to the previous generation. A kid who goes through it is astonished to discover what's

happening to him or her—they don't have any point of comparison."

But those with the broadest perspective on academic dishonesty argue that playing "gotcha" with students is not the answer—that fostering the right environment is the only long-term solution. This approach focuses heavily on stressing moral values in orientation sessions and expecting faculty to make clear to students what won't be tolerated.

At Washington and Lee, said Watkins, "We spend so much time at the front end educating our students about the process, that the fear of that single sanction—expulsion—is so great that we tend to have lower levels of self-reported cheating than most places.

"Part of our known culture is that we're a place where the honor system is a key school tradition," she added. "And I think that in itself helps us in stemming the growth of cheating."

"We have to inculcate in students the

Schools pay online services thousands of dollars a year to permit their faculty to submit essays and other student papers to be checked for plagiarism.

habits of character," said Duke University's Dodd. "We have research that suggests that students who do not abide by the norms and standards of the academic community are more likely to violate the norms and standards of the workplace. Students need to hear consistently that academic integrity matters, and they need to understand consistently what the guidelines are as they apply in each and every class." ♦

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