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SIUE professor honored at Excellence in Teaching event

By ZHANDA MALONE, zmalone@edwpub.net
12/06/2007

An SIUE professor was among more than 100 educators recognized at the 19th annual Emerson Excellence in Teaching event.

Bradley Noble, associate professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering and Associate Dean of the School of Engineering at SIUE, was awarded an Emerson Excellence in Teaching Award recently. Noble received the award at a ceremony at the Ritz Carlton Hotel in Clayton, Mo.

"Since joining SIUE in 1996, Dr. Noble has consistently received outstanding comments from students in his classes," Hasan Sevim, dean of the school, said in a press release. "On course evaluations, students compliment him on his teaching style, enthusiasm and showing them how they can apply the theory they are learning."

Sevim also pointed out that Noble won the SIUE Excellence in Teaching Award earlier this year. The award is the highest accolade a teacher can receive at the university.

"It is very rewarding to help students cultivate and develop their own passion for the subject," Noble said.

"I try to keep in touch with my students after they graduate and when they tell me that I have been a positive influence in their life, it is the best part of my job. It is a real honor to receive this award and be recognized by the community," Noble said in a press release.

Noble resides in Jersey County with his wife Penny, and their two children.

The Emerson Excellence in Teaching Award Program annually recognizes 100 pre-school through higher education teachers throughout the St. Louis region for their vital role in shaping students' lives. Recipients are chosen for outstanding contributions to the teaching profession and to the students they teach. Winners of the award were formally honored at the ceremony where each honoree received an engraved Tiffany crystal apple.
Millikin to offer early childhood education program at LLCC

By PETE SHERMAN
STAFF WRITER

Millikin University is starting an early childhood education bachelor's degree program at Lincoln Land Community College.

The first session for the two-year, accelerated program begins in January, with once-a-week night courses lasting about four hours. Some weekend sessions might also be scheduled. The two-year program includes student-teaching assignments.

An informational meeting about the program is scheduled for 4 to 7 p.m. Monday at LLCC's Menard Hall, room M2203.

"There's a growing need for people in early childhood education," said Karl Radnitzer, an education instructor at Millikin and coordinator of its external programs. "Also, developmentally, we're learning the first five years of life are the most important."

Millikin has been running a similar program at its Decatur campus for about five years, he said. It is intended for people who wish to return to school and either finish their college degree or start a new career.

Radnitzer said at least 50 percent of the program's teachers will be Millikin professors, as opposed to adjunct instructors.

"Night (early childhood education) programs are rare," he said. "Most people who attend already work in the field but can't quit their jobs."

Radnitzer said the program will cost about $5,000 a semester, but financial assistance may be available through the TEACH Early Childhood Illinois education scholarship program.

Each two-year program will start in January. Millikin also is offering the same program at Parkland Community College in Champaign.

The Springfield School District, in partnership with the University of Illinois at Springfield, LLCC, Springfield College in Illinois and the Springfield Urban League also offers a program, called the Illinois Grow Your Own Initiative, for adults interested in earning a teaching degree.

For more information about the Millikin early childhood education program at LLCC, visit www.millikin.edu/pace/ or call Kim Murphy at 420-6771. To learn more about Illinois TEACH Early Childhood scholarships, visit www.inccrra.org. The Grow Your Own Initiative also has a Web site, www.growyourownteachers.org.

Pete Sherman can be reached at 788-1539 or pete.sherman@sj-r.com.
Blaming continued budget shortfalls, University of Illinois at Chicago's College of Dentistry on Friday announced plans to cut 15 faculty and staff members.

Dean Bruce Graham said the affected employees, most of whom work in the clinical and patient care areas, will be notified by Dec. 7. Educational programs will not be cut, but the size and scope of the programs could change, Graham said.

"We are hoping it will not affect patient services," Graham said, adding that the college treats more than 40,000 patients a year. "It might mean things go a little slower for patient care."

Graham attributed the budget shortfalls to insufficient state funding. He also said the granting of tuition waivers, which cover some or all of a student's $34,000 annual bill, also have affected the budget. The General Assembly this year granted 12 tuition waivers totaling $322,000 to dentistry students, Graham said. The college granted an additional $150,000 in waivers.

Graham said the staffing cuts, which will take effect in nine to 12 months, will save the college $800,000 next fiscal year.

About 44 percent of the state's dentists are graduates of UIC, one of two dental schools in the state. The other is based at Southern Illinois University.
Nursing program gets a 'go'

MACOMB - The Illinois Board of Higher Education Tuesday approved a Western Illinois University request to offer a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree.

The BSN degree, which was approved by Western's Board in June 2007, was created to meet the demand for additional education for nursing professionals in western Illinois. The 121- to 124-semester hour degree program will serve registered nurses who have completed an associate degree or a three-year diploma program.

"We are pleased that this new - and much needed - degree program was approved by the Illinois Board of Higher Education," said WIU President Al Goldfarb. "The Bachelor of Science in Nursing fits with the University's strategic plan goal to enhance academic offerings. We look forward to working with the region's healthcare facilities and community colleges to provide this quality academic program to their employees and students."

Lea Monahan was named the first director of Western Illinois University's School of Nursing in July 2007.

"This degree will add to, and enhance, the registered nurse's basic knowledge of the nursing profession and provide them with the opportunity for career advancement," Monahan said.

The program complements six health-related degree programs offered by WIU: undergraduate and graduate programs.
UI living-learning med professions group launched

By Christine Des Garennes
Tuesday December 4, 2007

URBANA — University students who are considering careers as doctors, veterinarians or nurses can now cram for tests together, participate in late-night chats and ponder their careers all while living in the same dorm.

This fall the university launched its newest "living-learning community," where students of similar interests live and study together in the same residence hall.

The Health Professions Living-Learning Community is not just about getting all the pre-med students together, organizers said.

Yes, it's open to students in pre-med, but also pre-veterinary school, students studying occupational therapy, physical therapy, occupational therapy or considering pharmacy school. There will also be a focus on helping underserved people, and students eventually will be involved in volunteer and community service opportunities.

"There's a real altruistic bent to the population in this," said Kirsten Ruby, assistant director of marketing for the UI's housing division.

The Health Professions community is centered on two floors — one for men, one for women — in Oglesby Hall within the Florida Avenue Residence Halls. Seventy-five students were selected for the community's first year, but there's room for 110 students.

The Pennsylvania Avenue Residence Halls are also home to the Intersections (for students interested in cultural and racial diversity) and Global Crossings (students interested in international affairs) living-learning communities.

"It makes a nice collection for our Urbana South community," Ruby said.

Program coordinator Kari Schueller described the Health Professions Living-Learning Community as "a community of understanding."

The first semester can be tough for all freshmen. For those considering careers in a health profession, "they have unique stressors on them, a specific timeline they have to follow, with certain classes required and exams needed for medical school," she said.

So far the program has offered the students tutoring services by graduate students in subjects such as calculus and physics. Academic advisers also are available to the students and they spend a few hours a week at the residence hall.

In addition, each of the living-learning communities offers classes, some of which fulfill the general education requirements.

A new seminar-style course called "Introduction to the Health Professions" was organized specifically for students living in the community. Half of the day's class is dedicated to bringing in a health professional,
such as a nurse practitioner, and the second half is dedicated to learning about what skills go along with that profession, Schueller said.

Not every freshman who wants to be a doctor will end up as a pre-med student. And some may enter as freshmen wanting to do something in a health field, but they're not sure which one. This class can help students get a broad understanding of the careers in the field, Schueller said.

"So far this year we're establishing ourselves in the campus community, formalizing what the program is and recruiting students," Schueller said.

Next semester the residence hall will host a guest-in-residence, Mary Lightfine, a nurse who's worked in places such as Afghanistan, Kosovo and Somalia. In the spring the university will also offer another course, "Issues in Medicine."

Organizers are considering holding a discussion series and social programs as well as a peer mentor program. And they're weighing how to create leadership opportunities for students, where students in the community would work toward obtaining a leadership certificate. Students would meet with a leadership coach, such as someone in the UI's College of Medicine or College of Nursing, and then earn points by attending or presenting at a conference, for example.

"I have high expectations for the community. I think in future years I'd like to see the community grow in terms of number of students, number of classes, and programs like faculty-dinner series," Schueller said. "There's definitely room for growth," she said.

To apply to any of the UI's seven living-learning communities, students must submit statements about what they hope to gain from living in the residence hall and what they hope to contribute to the community while living there, Ruby said.

The Macomb Journal, December 5, 2007

Provost named

Western Illinois University

MACOMB - "Jack" Jackie Thomas, senior vice provost for academic affairs and professor of English at Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, has been named provost and academic vice president at Western Illinois University, effective Jan. 1, 2008.

President Al Goldfarb said Thomas, who was highly recommended by the Provost Search Committee, will bring broad leadership experiences to Western. He replaces Joe Rallo, who left WIU in May to become president at Angelo State University in San Angelo, TX. Rallo had served as Western's provost since July 2003.

"Dr. Thomas' outstanding experiences in the areas of academic enrichment programs, diversity, student affairs, internationalization and distance learning; as well as his understanding of, and enthusiasm for, Western's strategic plan, mission and core values made him the top choice in a field of exceptional candidates," Goldfarb said.

"The search committee, chaired by Faculty Senate Chair Steve Rock, should be commended for bringing individuals with outstanding credentials to interact with the University communities," Goldfarb said. "On behalf of the Macomb and Quad Cities campuses, we look forward to working with Provost Thomas."

Thomas has served as senior vice provost at Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU), enrollment 23,000, since July 2006. Previously, he was vice provost for academic affairs for two years. He has also served as interim dean of the College of Continuing Education and Distance Learning at MTSU.

Prior to joining the MTSU faculty, Thomas was a professor of English (1990-2004) at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore, Princess Anne, MD, and director of the University of Maryland Eastern Shore Scholars Program (2002-2004). Thomas also served as interim president from 2001-2002 at Maryland Eastern Shore, as well as executive vice president (2001), associate vice president for academic/student affairs (2000-2001), executive assistant to the president (1999-2001), chair of the department of English and modern languages (1996-1999), associate professor of English and coordinator of freshman English (1995-1996) and assistant professor of English and coordinator of freshman English (1990-1995). Thomas also was the assistant track coach at Maryland Eastern Shore for eight years. He has also taught English and coached at South Carolina State University (1989-1990), and Johnson C Smith University.

He was the Kellogg-NAFEO MIS Leadership Fellow from 2003-2004 in the Office of the President at Alabama State University and also studied in Salzburg, Austria in Fall 1999 as part of the Salzburg Seminar, "Globalization in Higher Education." He was an American Council on Education (ACE) Fellow in Spring 1999, serving in the Office of the President at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore and was an American Council on Education (ACE) Fellow in Fall 1998, serving in the Office of the President at the University of Maryland Baltimore County. Thomas is also a 2005 graduate of the Harvard Institute for Management and Leadership Education program.

At MTSU, Thomas has created institutional diversity, academic enrichment, scholars, graduate feeder and enrollment management programs, as well as an annual literature and English conference. He has published professional articles on leadership in higher education from a African-American perspective and African-American literature, and he has given presentations at national and international conferences on such topics as underrepresented first-year students, institutional diversity, mentoring, meeting the needs of first-year students and classroom standards.

Thomas has a Ph.D. in English literature and criticism from Indiana University of Pennsylvania (1990); his master's degree in English education from Virginia State University (1984); and his bachelor's degree in English from Alabama A & M University (1983).

His annual salary will be $185,000.
Harper College to prune plant science program

Dim job market, few students noted

By Ray Quintanilla
Tribune staff reporter
December 6, 2007

After training hundreds of students for careers as arborists, naturalists and landscape designers, the plant science department at Harper Community College is slated to close, a victim of dwindling enrollment and what officials say are poor prospects for employment.

Despite criticism from students and faculty, the Palatine college says it will end the program in June because it can no longer afford to support the department, which has been in existence for 40 years.

"This is not a moneymaking program," said Phil Burdick, a spokesman for the college. "The enrollment has been declining for the last five years. With so few students, the college has decided it can't continue to sustain the program."

At its height, the department enrolled about 100 students, a number that has dropped to about 50, officials said. The faculty has one full-time instructor and a handful of adjuncts. The budget, officials said, is $195,000 a year.

Critics say the school should do a better job marketing the program and recruiting students. The issue is expected to surface again next week, when supporters say they will ask the Board of Trustees to reverse the college's decision.

Long before "going green" became a popular expression for protecting the environment, Harper was teaching students how to preserve trees and native plant life, said Chet Ryndak, one of the department's part-time faculty members.

"This school's efforts were way ahead of their time," Ryndak said recently as he and a group of students examined trees on campus for signs of disease. "You just can't measure all the good that's come" from the program.

Ryndak was the former superintendent of the Forest Preserve District of Cook County's Conservation Department.

"It will be a sad day when this program is done," said first-year student and Des Plaines resident Michael Vistain, 20, who is studying to become a landscape designer. "I don't know where I am going to get the training I need."

Many of those who completed courses in the plant sciences department are working for area park districts, greenhouses and golf courses, school officials say. The coursework helps students identify dangers to trees and plants, including harmful insects and fungi.

"Preserving our natural environment has become my new passion," said Gayle Gillmann, 45, who gave up a career in accounting to study plant sciences. "This is important work since what happens to plants impacts all of us."

College officials say they decided to close the department next year to give students ample time to complete courses or enroll at other colleges that offer similar programs. Among them is Joliet Junior
College in the south suburbs.

The decision to close the department wasn't easy, Burdick said. What sealed its fate, he said, was the unfavorable job outlook for workers trained in these fields.

However, Jim Ethridge, chairman of Joliet Junior College's department of agricultural and horticultural sciences, believes the employment picture isn't quite so gloomy.

About 400 full- and part-time students are enrolled in his department, he said, many of them recruited from local high schools.

"We recruit at about 80 high schools per year to get the numbers we have," Ethridge said.

When each of the department's 12 faculty members was hired, they were told recruiting students would be an important part of their job description, he said.

Joyce Grattoni, Harper College's coordinator of plant science technology and park and golf maintenance, is the department's sole full-time employee. Grattoni said she speaks before garden clubs and other groups interested in plant sciences to try to generate interest in the program.

The entire Chicago region, she said, is on the brink of a "green revolution" of sorts as public lands are returned into natural prairies.

There also are a growing number of homeowners, she said, who want landscaping attuned with nature -- not just any patchwork of plants, shrubs and trees.

"Everyone is becoming more environmentally aware," Grattoni said. "Students in this department learn about pest management and the right time and wrong time to use chemicals. These are important skills. I hope the Board of Trustees can see that."
MACOMB - The Illinois Board of Higher Education voted Tuesday to allow Western Illinois University to offer a nursing degree program.

The Bachelor of Science in nursing degree was approved by WIU's board of trustees in June. School officials said the degree program was designed to meet a need for additional educational opportunities for area nurses.

The new program is a 121- to 124-semester hour degree program for registered nurses who have already finished an associate degree or three-year diploma program.

"The (degree) fits with the university's strategic plan to enhance academic offerings," WIU President Al Goldfarb said. "We look forward to working with the region's health care facilities and community colleges to provide this quality academic program to their employees and students."

Lea Monahan was previously named the director of WIU's School of Nursing.

School officials said numerous local organizations had a part in the original proposal for the program, including McDonough District Hospital, Carl Sandburg College, Blessing-Rieman College of Nursing, Spoon River College, Graham Hospital School of Nursing and John Wood Community College.

WIU already offers six health-related degree programs.

The next step in implementing the nursing program at WIU is to start the accreditation process with the Illinois Association of Colleges of Nursing, the American Association of Colleges of Nursing and the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education.
Lewis and Clark satellite campus opens

Nelson building renovated for school

BY JENNIFER K. HASAMEAR
News-Democrat

What was once a decaying set of historic buildings now serves as a place of higher learning, said the president of Lewis and Clark Community College.

"The most rapid growth in the Lewis and Clark district is taking place in the Edwardsville-Glen Carbon area, and the campus is already proving invaluable in serving students in this region," college president Dale Chapman said.

The final phase of the Lewis and Clark Community College N.O. Nelson Satellite Campus was dedicated Wednesday along with the Jay Hoffman Center. The building was named after Rep. Jay Hoffman, D-Collinsville, who was the driving force in obtaining the funding for the renovation.

"As to the historic character and legacy of Mr. N.O. Nelson, it is safe to say these buildings are fulfilling Mr. Nelson's personal philosophy of educating the head, the hand and the heart," Chapman said.

The $20 million renovation of the historic buildings created about 102,000 square feet of educational space, including 30 classrooms and labs, one lecture hall, and a 250-seat conference and meeting hall.

This final phase initiates the new home for the Southwest Illinois Advanced Manufacturing program, which connects the Edwardsville School District, Lewis and Clark Community College and Southern Illinois University Edwardsville. The program will allow Edwardsville High School students to begin studying engineering, carry those skills onto the community college level for two years and then go onto finish the degree at SIUE.

During the dedication ceremony, Edwardsville Mayor Gary Niebur said that for years, city officials questioned the future of the former N.O. Nelson Manufacturing Co. site. With Hoffman's assistance in obtaining the funding to renovate the site, it now will have a suitable future as a place of learning.

Hoffman also was thanked by a number of other people during the ceremony including District 7 Superintendent Ed Hightower, Illinois Community College Board President Geoffrey Obrzut, state Sen. Bill Haine, D-Alton, and U.S. District Judge Michael P. McCuskey.

N.O. Nelson Manufacturing Co. produced plumbing pipes and valves from 1890 until 1940. In the area surrounding the factory, houses in Leclaire neighborhood were financed by Nelson for his workers. In 2001, the former Leclaire Schoolhouse was renovated into the Edwardsville Children's Museum.
MACOMB - Western Illinois University announced Thursday that an emergency notification system will be up and running on the school's campuses in 2008.

The WIU Emergency Alert System is designed to notify students, faculty, staff and visitors at both the Macomb and Quad Cities campuses. The notification, for emergencies such as severe weather and threats to safety, will come in the form of phone and text messages and e-mails.

The school already has a log of the phone numbers and e-mail addresses from personnel and student files, but others are being asked to add their emergency contact information at www.wiu.edu/alertsystem. A sign-up area is on the sidebar on the left side of the screen, and users will need their school ID number and e-mail address to access the system.

"It's crucial that we are able to notify individuals on both our Macomb and Quad Cities campuses immediately in emergency situations as up-to-date communication helps minimize the spread of misinformation, restore order and provide direction," said Jackie Thompson, vice president for administrative services.

The first test of the emergency system is scheduled for Jan. 30.
Rural hospitals’ link to get boost

Network to add access to experts, leading to better care, officials say

By James Kimberly

Tribune staff reporter

Rural hospitals throughout Illinois will soon be connected to a high-speed fiber-optic network aimed at improving their health care by linking staff to the expertise and resources of much larger hospitals in the Chicago area, officials said Wednesday.

The network, expected to begin operation within a year, would allow emergency room physicians at rural hospitals to send complex CT or MRI images to specialists at other hospitals and get almost instantaneous feedback, said Roger Holloway, president of the Illinois Rural Health Association. That could potentially save lives by quickly conveying treatment instructions, he said.

Currently, most rural hospitals have Internet access equivalent to the speed of a home cable modem, and it could take hours, if not days, to transmit complex medical images, Holloway said.

"We have the ability to buy the latest CT scanner, but we don't have the ability to transmit that image to the radiologist who may live 35 miles away. This would allow us to do that," Holloway said.

Northern Illinois University in DeKalb and 11 other hospital and university networks announced the project Wednesday after Illinois was awarded a $21 million Federal Communications Commission grant to pay for it. The grant was part of $417 million the FCC awarded to 42 states and three territories to improve rural health care.

The grant, which will be paid over three years and requires 15 percent matching funds, will pay for the creation of a fiber-optic network able to transmit large data files at high speeds for 85 Illinois hospitals, from Delnor-Community Hospital in Geneva west to Galena-Stauss Hospital and as far south as Hamilton Memorial Hospital in Downstate McLeansboro.

In addition to helping Chicago-area physicians make real-time emergency room diagnoses from afar, hospital officials said the network would reduce costs by avoiding unnecessary transfers to those larger hospitals.

"The key here is to connect the rural places that aren't that far from Chicago to Chicago," said Walter Czerniak, associate vice president for information technology at NIU.

The network will be created by linking up to current fiber-optic networks, installing some new fiber-optic lines in some areas and using wireless broadband transmitters to fill in the gaps. The first hospitals could be connected to the network within the next year, and the entire network will take about three years to build, Czerniak said.

The network could benefit hospitals in other ways as well.

Small rural hospitals that could not afford to implement an electronic medical record system of their own could save money by sharing those of other hospitals in the network. Another benefit would be access to psychiatric consultations, because many rural hospitals do not have psychiatrists on staff or in the area.
Currently, such a patient can occupy a small hospital’s emergency room staff for hours while they wait for a psychiatrist to arrive for a consultation, Holloway said. Once the network is operational, it will be possible to consult with a psychiatrist in another city via teleconference, Holloway said.

NIU played a leading role in the Illinois Rural HealthNet Consortium, which included Illinois State University, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Southern Illinois University School of Medicine, the Metropolitan Research and Education Network and seven hospital networks.

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SPRINGFIELD -- A four-year-old law that allows children of illegal aliens to pay in-state tuition rates at Illinois public universities appears to be drawing fewer students than predicted.

A survey of several public universities found fewer than 300 students are taking advantage of the benefit this year, which is less than the more than 2,200 students who had been projected to qualify.

The issue has been the subject of lawsuits in other states, as well as a key component of immigration reform being debated in Congress. In recent weeks, it also has become a hot topic in the presidential race.

Illinois is among 10 states that have laws on the books allowing for cheaper, in-state tuition rates for students who are the children of undocumented immigrants.

In signing the measure into law in 2003, Gov. Rod Blagojevich said giving undocumented students equal footing in the education process will help more young people go on to “achieve their full potential.”

The Illinois Board of Higher Education does not track the numbers. But, according to a sampling of individual Illinois universities, the program doesn’t appear to be attracting throngs of students.

At the University of Illinois’ Chicago campus, there are 225 undocumented students who are paying in-state rates, compared to 49 at the U of I’s Urbana-Champaign campus.

Illinois State University reported having six students this semester. Southern Illinois University has two. Western Illinois University said it had no students paying the lower in-state rates.

Eastern Illinois University and Northern Illinois University could not provide any numbers.

NIU spokeswoman Melanie Magara said administrators aren’t tracking the situation, but speculated that the numbers at the DeKalb school mirror those of ISU and SIU.

“I have no reason to think it would be any different here,” Magara said.

The debate, meanwhile, has raged at the federal level. A package of legislation that included a mandate that all states charge in-state rates to the children of illegal immigrants has stalled in the U.S. Senate.

During a recent debate among the Republican presidential candidates, Mike Huckabee and former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney sparred over the issue. Romney contends children of undocumented aliens would get a “special deal” under the proposed federal law, while the former Arkansas governor said that children shouldn’t be “punished” for illegal actions of their parents.

The Illinois law, sponsored by state Rep. Edward Acevedo and state Sen. Antonio Munoz, both Democrats from Chicago, extends in-state tuition rates to undocumented immigrant students who attend Illinois high schools for at least three years and graduate from an Illinois high school.
Enrollment

This list shows how many children of illegal immigrants are attending a sampling of Illinois universities while paying in-state tuition:

University of Illinois-Chicago: 225
University of Illinois-Urbana-Champaign: 49
Illinois State University: 6
Southern Illinois University: 2
Western Illinois University: 0
Northern Illinois University: No number available
Eastern Illinois University: No number available

SOURCE: University figures
Universities to see growth in international students

Enrollment rebounds after 9/11

Associated Press

The number of international students attending American colleges and universities has nearly rebounded from a slump that followed the 2001 terrorist attacks, which triggered tough new visa restrictions and closer monitoring of foreign scholars.

During the 2006-2007 academic year, nearly 583,000 international students took classes at U.S. schools, just 3,000 fewer than the record enrollment set just before the crackdown began, according to a recent report from the State Department and the nonprofit Institute of International Education.

The enrollment figures were welcomed by government and academic officials who have worked to attract foreigners.

"This is a hugely important economic investment as well as an investment in human capital," said Tom Farrell, deputy assistant secretary for academic programs at the State Department, which released the report last month.

"We believe that people who study and learn here with us are better able to work with us later in their careers."

For years, U.S. schools made it easy for students from other countries to study here for long periods. But after one of the Sept. 11 hijackers entered the country on a student visa, the Bush administration got strict, adopting visa restrictions and reforms that allowed the government fast access to foreign students' information.

The FBI also worked closely to keep tabs on international students and watch for evidence of terrorism.

After enrollments declined, some officials grew concerned about the dwindling numbers because international scholars help keep the United States competitive in the global market and contribute $14.5 billion a year to the economy. Karen Hughes, undersecretary for public affairs at the State Department, described the students as "the single most important public diplomacy tool of the last 50 years."

In January 2006, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings co-hosted a summit attended by college presidents. The goal: To recruit more foreign students to U.S. schools.

That resulted in new grants to help foreign students study in the U.S., stepped-up recruiting in places such as India and China, and the hiring of new consular officials to expedite student visa applications.

According to the report, India sends more scholars to U.S. institutions than any other foreign country -- nearly 84,000 in 2006, a 9.6 percent increase over the prior year. China is second, followed by South Korea.
Educational benefits for illegal immigrants are a hot presidential-campaign topic

By SARA HEBEL

The questions of what to do about the estimated 12 million illegal immigrants living in the United States and how much public aid they should receive for education have ignited fierce debate in the presidential campaign, especially among the Republican contenders.

With Congress having failed this summer to pass legislation to overhaul the nation's immigration laws, the contentious issue has been kicked to the campaign trail.

There the debate over illegal immigrants and whether they should be granted access to such benefits as cheaper, in-state tuition rates and federal student aid has been fraught with emotion and political peril.

Believing that many Republican voters are looking for a president who will take a strong stance against people who entered the United States illegally, several of the Republican candidates—including Rudolph W. Giuliani and Mitt Romney—have sought to outdo one another in tough talk.

As Mike Huckabee rises in the polls in Iowa, where political caucuses are set for early next month, he has become a target of attacks.

The former governor of Arkansas favors making illegal immigrants eligible for state scholarships, putting him at odds with some of his Republican counterparts and with many of the conservative voters whom Mr. Huckabee, a Southern Baptist minister, has courted with his views on other social issues, such as his opposition to abortion.

The immigration issue has become a prominent concern among voters, with nearly one-quarter of adults citing it as one of their top two priorities in a poll conducted by The Wall Street Journal and NBC News. The telephone survey of just over 1,500 adults last month found that 38 percent of Republicans ranked it as one of their top two issues, compared with 27 percent of independents and 14 percent of Democrats.

Ross Eisenbrey, who has followed immigration policy as a vice president of the Economic Policy Institute, a Washington nonprofit group, attributes the growing concerns about illegal immigrants to the nation's faltering economy. As wages fail to keep pace with inflation and Americans' bank accounts suffer, he says, people are likelier to worry about who is competing for their money and where their taxes are going.

Heated Exchanges

The passions underlying the issue boiled over during a Republican presidential debate last month, when Mr. Huckabee and Mr. Romney, a former governor of Massachusetts, engaged in a testy exchange over whether illegal immigrants should be eligible for state scholarships.

Mr. Huckabee had supported a bill as governor that would have allowed some illegal immigrants who grew up attending schools in Arkansas to earn merit-based aid. (The legislation failed in the General Assembly.)
Helping immigrants earn degrees would bolster state coffers, he argued in the debate, because those people would pay more taxes on the higher salaries they would be likelier to earn, and the extra goods they could buy, than they would in low-wage jobs.

Mr. Romney bashed that argument, saying that Mr. Huckabee would give away "taxpayer money" to people who have broken the law. Doing so, Mr. Romney said at the debate, would limit state funds available for scholarships to help legal residents.

Mr. Huckabee retorted that such a view seemed un-American: "In all due respect," he said, "we're a better country than to punish children for what their parents did."

Outside the debate, Mr. Romney continued his attacks on Mr. Huckabee, mailing materials to Iowa Republicans last month that disparaged him for providing "shelter" to illegal immigrants, citing his position on granting them state scholarships.

The former Massachusetts governor has similarly criticized Mr. Giuliani, a former mayor of New York City. Mr. Romney, who vetoed a bill when he was governor that would have allowed illegal immigrants to pay in-state tuition, issued a news release in November in which he charged that Mr. Giuliani had operated a "sanctuary" city, in part because illegal immigrants qualified for in-state tuition at the City University of New York. (That policy, however, was signed into law by the governor, not by Mr. Giuliani.)

Mr. Giuliani has defended his record, saying that he provided immigrants access to public schools and other government facilities to protect the overall health and safety of the city. He has taunted Mr. Romney, in turn, about reports that he has allowed undocumented immigrants to do lawn work at his home.

**Congressional Debate**

Meanwhile, Mr. Huckabee has exercised caution since the November debate in voicing support for extending public benefits to illegal immigrants on a broader scale. On Sunday he told ABC News that he was "not sure" that he would support extending eligibility for Pell Grants and federally subsidized student loans to illegal immigrants who had attended high schools in the United States.

A measure, known as the Dream Act, containing some of those education benefits was included in the sweeping immigration bill that Congress debated this year. Another Republican contender, John McCain, a U.S. senator from Arizona, helped craft that legislation.

Many political observers have pointed to Mr. McCain's backing of the bill, which died in the Senate, as a factor in his decline in political polls. On the campaign trail, Mr. McCain has shifted his rhetoric. He now talks about how the nation needs to improve border security first, before turning to other issues, such as providing federal education benefits to some illegal immigrants.

Among Democrats, debates over immigration generally have not been as heated, in part because the candidates' views are largely similar.

The highest-profile scuffle over the matter involved Hillary Rodham Clinton's waffling this fall over a proposal in New York State to give driver's licenses to illegal immigrants. Her indecision about her views (first she was for it, and now she's against it) indicates that Democrats, too, are tiptoeing around immigration topics.
Nevertheless, Ms. Clinton and many of the other Democrats, including Barack Obama, have supported the Dream Act and advocated a path to citizenship for many immigrants.

Bill Richardson, governor of New Mexico, has signed legislation that allows some illegal immigrants living in his state to pay in-state tuition and receive state scholarships.

Mr. Richardson, who spent his childhood in Mexico, said he was "disgusted" by the way Republican candidates have been "trying to outdo each other on demonizing immigrants."

In an interview with Bloomberg Television last month, he argued that attacking immigrants "is not only wrong, it's bad for the economy."
Edwards taps his working-class childhood to focus on issues of opportunity and equality

The former senator has made college access a central part of his presidential campaign

By KARIN FISCHER

None of John Edwards's children graduated last May from Greene Central High School, in rural eastern North Carolina, but the former U.S. senator was as proud as any parent.

Sixty-one percent of the 171 cap-and-gown seniors were heading for college in the fall, an astonishingly high number in a blue-collar community where most young people have viewed their post-high school options as factory or farm.

And a program started by Mr. Edwards will help pay their way to a higher education.

Dubbed College for Everyone, the privately financed plan covers a year's tuition, books, and fees at a North Carolina public college for Greene County students who have completed college-preparatory courses, stayed out of trouble, and agreed to work at least 10 hours a week while enrolled.

"The chance to go to college meant everything in my life, and I want every young person to have that chance," Mr. Edwards said at the graduation, where he announced that he would take the two-year-old pilot program national and make it a centerpiece of his bid for the 2008 Democratic presidential nomination.

Few contenders this presidential season have made higher education as fundamental to their candidacy as has Mr. Edwards. He also calls for simplifying federal financial aid, overhauling the student-loan system, and training more teachers to work in public schools in educationally underserved communities.

For Mr. Edwards, who grew up making do in small, Southern towns, the issue of college access feeds into a broader theme of his campaign, that of providing economic, educational, and social opportunity to all Americans.

"I think it's fair to say that Senator Edwards brought real questions of economic inequality into the political arena in a profound way," says Gene R. Nichol, president of the College of William and Mary and a former dean of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's law school, from which both Mr. Edwards and his wife, Elizabeth, graduated. "He has drawn attention to these issues."

First in His Family

Mr. Edwards grew up in mill towns in North Carolina and South Carolina, the son of a textile worker. His family was not poor, but there was not much money to spare. His parents had to take a bank loan pay the hospital bill when he was born.

Although his father worked his way up to middle management, he was passed over for promotions in favor of workers with college degrees, Mr. Edwards has said.

Mr. Edwards attended North Carolina State University, graduating in 1974 with a degree in textile technology, a practical fallback in case his plan to become a lawyer failed. The first in his family to earn a bachelor's degree, he worked his way through college.

"There was no way I was going to waste my education when I was paying for it by unloading trucks and working on road crews," he told The Chronicle in 2004. (Mr. Edwards's campaign declined a request for an interview for this article.)
As a lawyer, he gained a national reputation as a tenacious advocate for people who had been injured in workplace or medical accidents. His share of the big money awarded his clients made him a millionaire.

But everything changed when, in 1996, he lost his 16-year-old son, Wade, in a car crash. (The Edwardses have three other children: Cate, a 25-year-old student at Harvard Law School; Emma Claire, 9; and Jack, 7.) A year later, Mr. Edwards, a political novice, jumped into the race for a U.S. Senate seat from North Carolina. He confounded pundits by defeating the Republican incumbent, Lauch Faircloth.

In the minority party for much of his six-year tenure in a bitterly partisan Senate, Mr. Edwards notched few legislative victories. However, in 2000, he was on the short list of vice-presidential candidates considered by Al Gore. In 2004 Mr. Edwards sought the presidency himself.

**Getting in the Game**

Mr. Edwards first put forward the idea behind College for Everyone during the 2004 campaign. But the concept was not embraced by Sen. John F. Kerry of Massachusetts, the eventual Democratic nominee, after he chose Mr. Edwards as his running mate.

After their loss that November, Mr. Edwards returned to North Carolina, where he soon set out to put his college-access proposal into practice, if on a smaller scale. He secured private donations to pay for the cost of the scholarships, a total of about $300,000 per year. Over two years, 191 scholarships have been awarded.

Greene County was selected because its income and education levels lag behind those in the rest of the state. Seventy percent of elementary- and secondary-school students in the county qualify for federal free or reduced-price lunch programs, says Steve Mazingo, the school district's superintendent. Just 8 percent of county residents have bachelor's degrees, compared with 23 percent statewide.

Initial results for the pilot version of the program suggest modest gains, with 61 percent of students in the 2006 and 2007 graduating classes enrolling in two- or four-year colleges, up from 54 percent in 2005. More than 75 percent of students from the class of 2006 who went to college completed the first year.

By sending the message that college is an option, regardless of income, says Mr. Mazingo, College for Everyone has provided the "missing piece" in the county's own efforts to improve college-going rates. "To have the first year paid for," he says, "is a way for students who didn't know how to get in the game."

Robert M. Shireman, director of the Institute for College Access and Success, a California-based nonprofit group, has provided feedback to Mr. Edwards and several other presidential candidates on their higher-education proposals. He likes the College for Everyone model because it combines financial assistance with strong academic preparation and counseling. In addition to having to complete required course work, students receive guidance in applying to college and for financial aid.

One of the biggest challenges to expanding the program nationwide, however, is the price tag, which the Edwards campaign has estimated at $8-billion. The candidate has proposed paying for the program by eliminating federal student-loan subsidies to banks and other private lenders and by increasing the tax on capital gains.

But some critics question whether a new government program is necessary. Why not expand current student-aid programs or focus on providing students with better information about existing public and private sources of financial aid?

George C. Leef, director of the John William Pope Center for Public Policy, a Chapel Hill-based research organization that studies college finance, questions the efficacy of proposals like Mr. Edwards's, while noting that they are popular with the middle class.
"Being in favor of more education," says Mr. Leef, "is as easy as being in favor of motherhood and apple pie."

**Issues of Inequality**

College for Everyone was not the only project Mr. Edwards pursued between his two bids for the presidency. He was contacted by Mr. Nichol, law dean at Chapel Hill at the time, who was interested in having him return to the law school to teach. The two men found a shared passion in exploring issues of economic inequality and poverty. The result was the Center on Poverty, Work, and Opportunity, which was established on the flagship campus in 2005.

From the outset, the program sought to combine academic research with the hands-on experience of those working in the field, says Marion G. Crain, a professor of law who was the center's assistant director under Mr. Edwards.

The center convened panel discussions and brought together scholars and practitioners, most notably in its New Orleans Recovery Initiative, in which North Carolina faculty members work with community groups in the storm-ravaged city on rebuilding efforts after Hurricane Katrina. The center also made use of Mr. Edwards's political connections to attract prominent speakers like John J. Sweeney, president of the AFL-CIO.

But Mr. Edwards's political background led to concern among faculty members who felt that university money was going to finance a "front" for another presidential bid, says Ms. Crain, who is now the center's director. The criticism died down over time, she says, after people on the campus saw that Mr. Edwards was "involved in a hands-on way, that this really was his vision."

Officials of the program, along with Mr. Edwards, also tried to separate its work from his political ambitions, she says. He resigned as director of the center in December 2006 and is no longer involved in its work.

**Refining His Ideas**

Still, Mr. Edwards clearly used his time off from politics after the 2004 campaign to refine his policy positions, says Ferrell Guillory, director of the university's Program on Public Life and a former editorial-page editor of *The News & Observer*, in Raleigh. This time around, the candidate has offered substantive ideas that are anchored in, but also expand on, his experience growing up in a working-class family, Mr. Guillory says.

For example, he proposes creating a cabinet-level post to fight global poverty, and expanding health-care coverage to all Americans by giving subsidies to uninsured families and extending current federal programs.

The same themes resonate in his broad higher-education platform, which focuses on improving college access by, for example, providing more college counselors to high schools that serve large numbers of low-income students, and simplifying federal financial-aid forms to encourage more students to complete them.

"He is running less on his biography," Mr. Guillory says, "and more on his policy prescriptions."
Universities' revenue from licensing inventions increases, report says

By GOLDIE BLUMENSTYK

The number of universities earning more than $10-million annually from their licensing of inventions inched up in the 2006 fiscal year, according to survey results released on Monday.

A summary report on the survey, conducted by the Association of University Technology Managers, also suggests that universities created a record number of start-up companies—approaching 500—based on inventions of their researchers.

New York University earned the most of any single institution identified in the survey, collecting more than $157-million in revenue, according to the report, "U.S. Licensing Activity Survey: FY 2006."

Abram Goldfinger, the executive director of technology transfer there, said that as in past years, royalties from the university's most successful product, Remicade, which is used to treat arthritis and other inflammatory diseases, accounted for the majority of that sum. Income from a new cancer drug and several new medical devices that came onto the market also helped to account for its $20-million increase in income over the previous year.

"What's important is that this is having an impact on people," Mr. Goldfinger said, adding that he expects the growth to continue: The university has formed several new software start-up companies, and its medical inventions are the basis for 13 drugs and devices now in various stages of clinical trials. "There's an active pipeline that could lead to future success," he said.

The 10-campus University of California system led in overall revenue with income of $193.5-million. The figure includes $100-million from a settlement that the university reached with the Monsanto Company in March 2006 over patent-infringement claims related to a genetically engineered growth hormone used for cows (The Chronicle, March 10, 2006).

Over all, 28 institutions reported annual licensing income of more than $10-million, up from 25 that did so in the 2005 fiscal year. Forty-two institutions earned more than $5-million last year.

Year-to-year comparisons of overall figures on licensing activity measured by the survey—such as revenues, numbers of patents filed, numbers of licenses executed—have always been imprecise because not every institution participates each year. Also, starting with its report on the 2005 fiscal year, the association ceased distinguishing the totals for university respondents from the two-dozen-plus hospitals that also participate in the survey. (It also no longer provides information on other kinds of licensing-related activity, such as data on legal costs that universities incur in protecting their patents, although it is possible that such information may become available in 2008, when the association says it plans to publish more data from the survey on its Web site.)

Nonetheless, from the data the association did supply in its summary report, it appears that universities are creating spinoff companies at a greater pace than ever before. The 155 identified institutions reported forming 484 spinoff companies in 2006, far surpassing the 425 created by the 151 identified universities in 2005 and the 425 companies spun off in 2004 by 164 respondents.
Carnegie Mellon University is among the universities that have been making spinoffs a high priority. It reported forming 12 such companies in 2006, versus just two in 2003. The new ventures include Deep Local, which makes mapping technology, and Sim Ops Studios, which uses video-game technology to train firefighters and other first responders. Both companies are based in the university's hometown of Pittsburgh.

The university traces the growth in spinoffs to its decision in 2001 to streamline its approach to starting companies in which the inventors intend to remain involved as founders. For those companies, the university requires only a very small royalty and only a small ownership stake. "We stay out of the way of any investors," said Robert Conway, a senior manager at Carnegie Mellon's Center for Technology Transfer and Enterprise Creation. "That has made it a lot easier for companies to get started."

Continuing a change that it initiated with its report on the 2005 fiscal-year data, the technology managers' association did not say how many universities responded anonymously to its licensing-activity survey or indicate how many of the top 100 universities, based on research spending, participated in the survey.

One top university that is notably absent from the list of 155 identified participants is Yale University. The managing director of Yale's Office of Cooperative Research, E. Jonathan Soderstrom, also happens to be the president-elect of association. He did not respond to inquiries seeking comment about Yale's participation in the survey.
SIUE and the Madison County Arts Council were among eight organizations awarded Excelerator grants by The AT&T Foundation Monday.

SIUE was awarded a $13,600 grant to support several students in a pilot nursing program, which will provide computer and mentoring tutors for at-risk students.

"The grant enabled us to purchase laptop computers to be disbursed to students as they are admitted into the Student Nursing Achievement Program," SIUE School of Nursing Director of Development Angie Peters said. "The first set will actually be distributed in January of 2008. The students are elated as this is a resource that they would not have the means to purchase on their own, and it will support them in accessing resources to enhance their academic success."

A $6,000 grant was awarded to the Madison County Arts Council to support the purchase of three desktop computers, one laptop, a printer and a software upgrade of Microsoft Office products to improve the management of the office as well as provide enhanced online education programs for the community.

The AT&T Excelerator Program provides technology access to organizations working to strengthen undeserved communities.

"For the past six years, the AT&T Excelerator program has demonstrated the importance of how technology can benefit communities and organizations," said Paul La Schiazza, president of AT&T Illinois.

"These and other organizations in southwest Illinois will continue to use technology funded by this program to empower the community and change the lives of the people whom they serve on a day-to-day basis. We commend Senators Clayborne and Haine and Representatives Beiser, Hoffman and Holbrook for their dedication in assisting nonprofit organizations in the region and understanding the vital role that technology plays in their success," La Schiazza said.

Senator Bill Haine said in a press release it is important that those who provide technology also invest in it.

“Technology dominates our lives in so many different ways that we often take it for granted. But many nonprofit groups don’t have the budgets to invest in these tools that are so valuable and cost effective,” Haine said.

“I want to thank AT&T for continuing to make these types of investments in our communities, which pay more important dividends today and tomorrow.”
Parents appear to be saving enough to cover the college costs they expect to pay, but they're likely underestimating those expenses - and their ability to maintain their current savings rate - according to a new survey from Fidelity Investments.

A typical family is on track to cover just 24% of college costs, including tuition, fees and room and board, according to the inaugural College Savings Indicator from Fidelity, based on a survey of about 2,300 parents with college-bound children age 18 and younger.

The indicator takes into account parents' current savings, their planned future savings rate, and their expectation for type of school (including private or public), among other factors.

Covering just one-fourth of college costs doesn't sound like much, but on average the parents surveyed said they plan to pay just 27% of college expenses with savings, covering another 16% of the expense with income earned while their children are in college.

Added to that, they expect their children to pitch in 26% of the total cost, scholarships and grants to cover another 20%, and personal gifts and loans to cover the 11% shortfall. About half of families expect their children to attend a public in-state college, with costs totaling $77,000. The average combined cost of a four-year private or public college is more than $100,000, according to Fidelity.

But parents may be too optimistic. Savings plans appear to veer off track as children get older, with parents of children within one year of entering college being the least prepared, with savings on hand to cover just 13% of college costs, and parents with kids in any year of high school prepared to cover 17% of college costs.

Also, parents are overly optimistic about grants and scholarships, with 81% of those surveyed expecting a merit-based grant, compared with the 62% of students who receive such aid, according to the Fidelity report.

One reason savings may veer off track as kids get older, according to Fidelity, is that parents often stash college savings in regular accounts, along with other assets.

Twenty-six percent of parents said they use a dedicated college account, such as a 529, UGMA or Coverdell education savings account, but 42% of parents said they keep college savings in general accounts, preferring to have that money on hand for other purposes if need be.

"Often, when savings are not held in a dedicated college savings account, parents are more likely to tap that money for other expenses, posing what we believe could be [a major] risk to parents trying to achieve their college savings goal," said Carolyn Clancy, executive vice president of Fidelity Personal and Workplace Investing.

Other parents face bigger risks ahead: Forty-two percent of parents surveyed have not yet started to save for college. Of those, 25% said they intend to start saving while 17% said they have no plans to save.
Meanwhile, parents who said they're investing in a 529 plan are on track to meet 52% of college expenses, according to the survey.

**Worrisome Prospect**

Certainly, college costs are a major worry for parents. Fifty-three percent of parents said they're concerned that financial constraints will limit their children's educational choices.

Often, parents of teenagers nearing college say they've made changes to reduce costs or increase savings. Thirty-two percent of parents of 13- to 18-year olds said they're considering having their child live at home to save costs, 25% are focusing on public schools instead of private ones, 22% said they've cut back on spending so they can save more, and 8% have decreased the amount they're saving for retirement.

For others, finding the means to fund college is nigh impossible. About one-third of parents cite their low earnings as a barrier to saving for college, one-fourth of parents point to debt as a problem and 17% see day-to-day expenses as an obstacle to saving.

Sixty-nine percent of the parents surveyed said saving for education expenses is too overwhelming, and 65% agree they will never be able to save enough for their children's college costs, according to the survey.

**On Kids' Shoulders**

While parents today said they will pay more, on average, than their own parents paid for their education, that doesn't mean kids today are off the hook. Parents say their kids will pay a total of 26% of college costs, and a major portion of that will be through student loans, parents say.

"One of the more concerning data points was the high reliance on student loans," Clancy said.

"The process of paying back those loans will likely impede a student's ability to start saving in their early working years for other financial goals, such as buying a first home or retirement," Clancy said. "It's more expensive to pay back a loan than it is to plan and save ahead of time for future college costs, especially if parents are saving in a tax-advantaged 529 plan."

Fifty-five percent of parents agreed that it is parents' obligation to pay the full cost of their children's education. Yet 79% said children won't appreciate college as much if they don't share responsibility for paying for it.
NIH casts critical eye on how it gives grants

Nearly $15-billion for colleges is at stake in a review of the process for evaluating proposals

By JEFFREY BRAINARD

Washington

The National Institutes of Health's methods for reviewing and financing academic research proposals are often praised as the gold standard. Some American scientists, though, have recently offered less flattering descriptions, like "broken" and "arbitrary."

NIH officials have heard both arguments, and plenty in between, in recent months. They have begun their broadest-ever self-examination of how the agency chooses grant proposals for biomedical research. That is important for universities because the NIH is the country's single largest source of money for academic research. Just over half of its budget, $29.2-billion this year, goes to institutions of higher education.

The NIH's director, Elias A. Zerhouni, says he is prepared to advocate shaking up the status quo to make improvements. "All possible ideas are on the table," he says. This week a special advisory committee, which has been sifting through reform proposals over the past six months, should suggest a few to try.

Many of the proposals focus on improving the peer-review process which, many scientists complain, evaluates grant applications too conservatively. The panels of volunteer reviewers from academe that make up the heart of the system, the scientists say, tend to favor research projects that only slightly advance existing knowledge instead of testing innovative ideas that could transform medicine and health care.

That tendency also makes winning grants particularly difficult for young researchers, who face unprecedented problems finding the money to start independent careers.

Those problems have been aggravated by the NIH's tight budget, which has fallen behind inflation since 2003. Mindful of the need to stretch dollars, peer reviewers are less willing to gamble on risky ideas and unproven scientists.

"It seems fairly clear that the system has become so ponderous and creaky that it's going to need major change one way or the other," said David Korn, a senior vice president of the Association of American Medical Colleges.

But he and others worry that the budget squeeze and stubborn attitudes will make such changes hard to pull off.

A Doubling of Applications

NIH leaders began the review of grant-making in June. A panel of outside academics held six meetings around the country and solicited written comments. More than 2,000 people and organizations responded with complaints and suggestions.
The last time the process came under such scrutiny was in 1997. Since then, peer review of grant applications has become more complicated because the cutting edge of biomedical research is becoming more interdisciplinary, requiring reviewers to know more about more fields. And because of the stagnant budget, more investigators have been chasing a declining number of new grants.

The annual number of grant applications to the NIH almost doubled, to nearly 80,000, after 1999, when Congress began a five-year effort to double the agency’s budget. The budget doubling spurred universities to increase their laboratory space and expand their scientific work forces, which helped drive the increase in applications.

But Congress followed that buildup with a series of more-modest increases that fell below inflation. That has left the NIH’s buying power for research about 8 percent lower today than in 2004, one year after the doubling ended. As a result, the percentage of applications financed by the NIH, known as the “success rate,” has fallen from one in three in 2001 to the current one in five.

Worse for investigators, they are spending more time trying to win NIH grants. The success rate for applicants on their first attempt has fallen to about 12 percent, from 28 percent in 1998. The NIH allows applicants to revise and resubmit an application twice after an initial rejection. Although success rates are higher in those subsequent rounds, not everyone reapplies. Those who do find the process frustrating and time-consuming.

"An investigator might be better advised to gamble at a casino, where the rate of return is much better," wrote one scientist to the NIH. (The agency told scientists who submitted written comments that it would keep their names confidential, to encourage candor.)

For peer reviewers, the effect of the squeeze is to encourage nitpicking. Academics who volunteer for the NIH’s review panels say the low approval rates force them to make fine distinctions among excellent applications that formerly would have made the cut in the first round.

"We need to reduce the amount of what I call wasted energy in the system," Dr. Zerhouni said. "It's not right for you to apply six times to get a grant from the NIH. You’re good or you’re not good, and let’s just cut the rigmarole out."

With the nitpicking comes conservatism, Dr. Zerhouni and other observers say. They worry that the trend might throttle research ideas that seem like long shots but could lead to major advances in the treatment of health conditions like cancer, obesity, and other chronic conditions that afflict America’s aging population.

**Older, Not Bolder**

"Increasingly, reviewers are taking an adversarial stance — they think their role is to try to figure out how the applicant was trying to trick the government into giving them money," said Keith R. Yamamoto, executive vice dean of the University of California at San Francisco School of Medicine.

"That's not exactly what we're looking for in a healthy review endeavor," said Mr. Yamamoto at an October meeting. He is a co-chairman of a working group overseeing the NIH’s evaluation of its peer-review process and a long-term member of a peer review panel.
The NIH is already considering several ideas to streamline its application and review procedures, reduce the paperwork burden on applicants, and increase the ability of peer reviewers to conduct meaningful reviews. For example, the NIH's advisory committee recommended this year that the agency reduce the maximum length of its research-grant application from 25 pages to 15. The National Science Foundation's application is 15 pages, and the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's form is only five.

Some observers see that and other proposed procedural changes as desirable but incremental. Such minor alterations will not, they say, alleviate another serious problem that has been highlighted by the budget crunch: the graying of NIH grantees.

Scientists over 50 make up 44 percent of the recipients of the NIH's principal research grants, up from 31 percent in 1998. Meanwhile, the proportion of recipients 40 and younger has fallen.

Aggravated younger scientists charge that peer reviewers tend to be tenured faculty members who, the critics say, are merely protecting their colleagues. (The NIH enforces conflict-of-interest rules, but critics suggest that back scratching goes on nevertheless.)

Those complaints emerged from this year's public-comment process and from an NIH-financed survey in 2002 of attitudes among scientists who had recently received their first research grants from the agency. The survey also included postdoctoral researchers, who are typically not permitted by universities to apply for NIH grants because they are not faculty members. Seventy-two percent of the postdocs and 59 percent of the grant recipients agreed with this statement: "The 'peer review' system of evaluating proposals for research grants is, by and large, unfair; it greatly favors members of the 'old boy network.'"

And agreement with this statement was almost unanimous: "Eminent scientists and scholars are more likely to receive research grants than others who submit proposals of about the same quality."

Bias against younger scientists is also aggravated by reviewers' reluctance to take chances, complained many who wrote to the NIH about peer review. The glut of applications has heightened a tendency among reviewers to expect "preliminary data" related to the hypotheses in grant applications. That means applicants are required to have already conducted some of the experiments. But scientists just beginning their careers have not had the chance to do that.

Faced with such pressures, talented young scientists are simply giving up and leaving biomedical research, says Brian C. Martinson, a demographer with the HealthPartners Research Foundation, a nonprofit organization in Minneapolis. He was the lead author of the 2002 study of new grantees.

**More Help for Young Scientists**

To relieve pressure on both younger and more-established researchers, some experts are calling for the NIH to award more grants to scientists based on their brilliance and boldness, with less emphasis on the specifics of a particular experiment and whether it might achieve expected results.

The agency has already embraced that approach on a relatively small scale. One program, called the NIH Director's Pioneer Awards, provides $500,000 annually for five years. But only about a dozen researchers win one each year, out of several hundred applicants.

Another new grant program, called Pathway to Independence, helps postdoctoral researchers land faculty jobs by giving them a "dowry," as Dr. Zerhouni calls it, of research money. Here again the program is modest: It handed out about 200 awards this year, while U.S. universities awarded 6,831 doctorates in the biological sciences in 2006.
And beginning in 2006, the NIH for the first time set an explicit goal for raising the number of investigators it supported who had never before won NIH grants. The number of those grantees had dipped to about 1,300 that year, which the agency's leaders pledged to raise to about 1,500, the average of the preceding five years. The NIH gave those applicants extra credit on the numerical scoring system that it uses to award grants. As a result, the number rose to more than 1,600 for the 2007 fiscal year, which ended in September.

A more controversial idea to help younger investigators is to cap the number of NIH grants that any one researcher can hold at once. Approximately 200 principal investigators now hold four or more grants. In the written comments to the NIH, several scientists questioned whether those researchers could productively manage their "superlabs." Capping the number of grants, the writers said, would extend the dollars to a wider pool.

That proposal faces opposition from Dr. Zerhouni and others who fear it might stymie the best scientific proposals. The director favors an expansion of "positive inducements" for universities, like the Pathway grants for postdocs. But the idea of capping grants is not limited to a fringe element. In its written comment to the NIH, the Association of American Medical Colleges supported a step in that direction: limiting applicants to one grant application at a time for any particular type of grant.

A Zero-Sum Game?

Some scientists who are skeptical of the reform proposals argue that it's impossible to define innovation precisely or predict who will turn out to be an innovative scientist. In written comments, they voiced worries that steering more money to new programs for young and innovative researchers while the NIH's budget is flat might hurt applicants for the agency's traditional grants.

Several scientists who wrote the NIH said there was nothing broken in the agency's peer review. Researchers could avoid scrapping with each other for money, they said, if academics and patient advocates lobbied Congress for a larger budget.

The lawmakers' response is hardly a sure thing, though. Although the NIH budget for 2008 remains incomplete, the new Democratic-led Congress has so far shown only a little more generosity than its Republican predecessor. Many legislators see the NIH budget as having received its fair share when it was doubled. The budget is now among the largest of all nondefense federal agencies.

And a financial expansion alone is not a cure-all for the maladies afflicting NIH grant making. In the late 1990s, officials set a goal of doing more to finance innovative research and help scientists begin their careers. The agency's budget doubling provided an opportunity, but progress was limited, as evidenced by the current problems.

More money for the NIH could even add to the problems of younger scientists, considering that biomedical research in America depends heavily on their relatively cheap labor, Mr. Martinson says. Without other changes, more money would simply extend what he sees as a system that resembles a Ponzi scheme.

More cash, he said, would only encourage principal investigators to hire more postdocs and seek graduate students to carry out their projects — work that does not improve career prospects for the younger scientists.
"There's this unquestioned assumption that more is always better, that having more scientists out there will increase the number of 'eureka moments,'" he says. "It comes down to, What is a sustainable scale for this enterprise?"

Going forward, Dr. Zerhouni says he expects the NIH will only incrementally change how it reviews and makes grants, partly because of the tight budget. To get the most impact from that approach, he wants the agency to collect data on which changes work and which do not. Those experiments should begin by next spring.

That kind of methodical follow-up will require a long-term effort and leadership. As a nominee of President Bush, Dr. Zerhouni's remaining time in his job is short. So these issues may end up on the plate of his successor.
Philanthropists and alumnae discuss whether colleges spend money as donors intend

By ERIN STROUT

Representatives of high-profile lawsuits against three colleges, speaking at a conference on Thursday in Washington, described what they say is a growing battle to ensure that donations to higher education are used for the purposes for which they are given. But others who attended the event pointed out that such disputes are rare.

The Center for Excellence in Higher Education, a nonprofit organization formed in September that helps donors to negotiate gifts and to hold recipients more accountable for how the money is used, sponsored the event, "Donor Intent and the Future of Higher Education Philanthropy."

Among the participants were William Robertson, the lead plaintiff for the Robertson Foundation in a case against Princeton University; Renee Seblatnigg, president of the Future of Newcomb College Inc., the organization supporting the heirs of donors in a case against Tulane University; and Anne Yastremski, executive director of Preserve Educational Choice, an organization that supports several lawsuits against Randolph College, in Virginia.

While the lawsuits are based on different circumstances, they all allege that the institutions are not using gifts in the ways the original donors required. Officials and lawyers at Princeton and Tulane Universities and Randolph College disagree with those allegations, though they were not represented in Thursday's program.

Mr. Robertson is the son of Charles S. and Marie H. Robertson, who gave $35-million to the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton in 1961. The gift is now worth more than $800-million and the family contends that the university has spent more than $200-million on programs outside of the mission of the Robertson Foundation, which manages the funds generated by the donation. The case is pending in a New Jersey court, and ultimately the foundation would like to sever its ties with Princeton (The Chronicle, October 25).

"This money could be used to support programs at other colleges and universities interested in the Robertson Foundation's foreign-policy mission," Mr. Robertson said. "We believe they deserve the opportunity."

Ms. Seblatnigg explained the case that two heirs of Josephine Louise Newcomb have brought against Tulane, after the university dissolved its 120-year-old women's college as part of a "renewal plan" to save money after Hurricane Katrina. A Louisiana court of appeals ruled in September that the university was within its rights to merge the undergraduate college into a new coeducational undergraduate division (The Chronicle, October 24).

When an audience member asked if she believed politics played a part in the court decisions, Ms. Seblatnigg said, "it is what it is."

"I would like to wish we were in court somewhere else, but we're not," she said.

Donors, students, and alumnae of Randolph College, formerly Randolph-Macon Woman's College, have brought four separate lawsuits against the institution in the wake of decisions by its governing board to
start enrolling men and to sell some of the college's most valuable artwork to regain financial stability (*The Chronicle*, October 2).

In one suit, the plaintiffs say that in a recent college fund-raising campaign that garnered more than $100-million, donors were misled because they believed their gifts were going to "educate women in the liberal arts," and not to finance a coeducational institution.

"I don't think the trustees ignored donor intent, but that they didn't even think about it," said Ms. Yastremski.

Jewelle Bickford, a trustee of Randolph College who attended the conference, disputed the claims Ms. Yastremski made about the college's decisions and financial status during a question-and-answer session.

"The Board of Trustees has to be financially responsible," she said. "We were presented dire choices and we made those decisions because of the fiscal reality that we're under."

Despite the high-profile nature of the disputes involving Princeton, Tulane, and Randolph, higher-education fund raisers say the cases are isolated incidents and do not represent a widespread problem. Rae Goldsmith, vice president for communications and marketing for the Council for Advancement and Support of Education, attended the program. In an interview afterward, she said her organization sees "a very different picture than what was painted."

"The $28-billion contributed to higher education last year came from many individual gifts, and there have been so few cases of disagreement," she said. "It really begs the question of what other agendas are at work."

But during his remarks, Frederic J. Fransen, executive director of the Center for Excellence in Higher Education, said donor intent is a growing concern in higher-education philanthropy.

"We see a pattern where colleges and universities accept gifts for a specific purpose and over time either lose sight of that purpose or deliberately ignore it," he said.

The center, based in Indianapolis, is supported by the Marcus Foundation, the John Templeton Foundation, and the John William Pope Foundation.
Caught in the web

The Internet age has posed a new set of challenges to traditional newspapers everywhere – decisions about what content to post when and where, questions about how to allocate staff (separate editors and reporters for print and Web?), and the like.

The issues can be even more vexed for student publications where the lines of decision making authority and editorial control can be blurry, as continuing controversies at two universities make all too clear.

At Oklahoma State University, the editors of the Daily O'Collegian, the more than 80-year-old campus newspaper, have for several weeks refused to let the articles they write for the print publication appear on ocolly.com, the newspaper's online portal, because the student journalists are at odds with the university administration’s publications board over who should have the power to hire and fire staff for the online operation.

And the editor of the student newspaper at Connecticut’s Quinnipiac University has been threatened with the loss of his job in the wake of his public criticism of a university policy that bars the weekly Quinnipiac Chronicle from posting articles on its Web site until after they have already appeared in print. The editor, Jason Braff, argued that the policy impaired the newspaper’s ability to keep the campus informed, but Quinnipiac officials said it was designed to improve the accuracy of the Chronicle’s reporting, “in light of a student’s enthusiasm to release ‘breaking news.’”

“This is indicative of the kinds of things that come up, when new things that were unanticipated come on the horizon,” said Tom Weir, director of the School of Journalism and Broadcasting at Oklahoma State. “It’s not just us — new technology is creating messes with all kinds of traditional newspapers, and we’re all struggling to figure out how to deal with them.”

Oklahoma State

The content of The Daily O'Collegian has been published on the Internet for more than a decade, but under a somewhat unusual arrangement in which the entities are almost completely separate. The campus publications board, made up of administrators and faculty members, appoints a student editor who manages the editorial operations of The Daily O'Collegian in print, and then a professional general manager — who also oversees the business operations of the newspaper — appoints an editor of ocolly.com, the Web site on which the newspaper’s content is published.

The Web site contains some content besides the newspaper’s (which is uploaded automatically each morning), such as video reports from students in the journalism school's broadcast division. But in general, said Weir, the journalism school dean who also sits on the publications board, The Daily O’Collegian's staff has had little or no involvement in the content or operation of the Web site. Jenny Redden, the newspaper’s editor in chief, does not dispute that contention, but notes that it was only this fall that journalism school officials have sought to give the Web site a more meaningful editorial presence, with talk of adding significant new content. “It’s true we haven’t made it much of a priority, but before it wasn’t something to be excited about,” she said in an interview Sunday. “Now that they’re talking about doing more with it, of course the editor in chief would want to have more of a role in it.”

It was one effort to expand the Web site’s content that started the current controversy. One student approached the general manager, Fritz Wirt, about the possibility of blogging on the Web site. To the dismay of the newspaper’s staff, the student had been kicked off the newspaper’s reporting staff, Redden said (though the student in question says he left on his own, according to Weir).
Redden urged the publications board to block the hiring and to make clear that the newspaper’s editor, not the general manager, should have the authority to hire anyone to produce content for the Web site that bears the newspaper’s name. "At no point should a non-student ever be hiring writers," Redden said.

The publications board rejected Redden’s demand, Weir said, not because its members necessarily disagreed with her assertion that the newspaper’s editor should have the power to hire and fire Web contributors, but because the board did not have the authority under the existing constitution and bylaws to make that call. Instead, Weir said, the board said it would appoint a committee to study the structure and operations of the newspaper and the Web site and decide how it should work going forward.

“No one’s ever said that the editor can’t have control over hiring and firing on the Web site,” Weir said. “All the board said is that we don’t have the authority to do what it was asked to do, and that we need to study it.”

Redden said that by dismissing her request to “put [hiring of Web contributors] on pause until the new bylaws are written,” and by leaving the status quo intact, “that was them granting [the general manager] approval of hiring and firing.” After much discussion with the newspaper’s staff and past journalists at Oklahoma State, Redden made a startling decision: to keep all new content from The Daily O’Collegian off the ocolly.com Web site.

In a note published in the print newspaper, Redden wrote of the decision: “This action goes against the heart of a student-run publication. If students control a publication, they must have the ability to hire and fire employees of that publication. When non-students are afforded this power, the publication is no longer student-run. It belittles me and the other editors in the newsroom, undermining our authority to the point that we are ineffe ctual. Staff members see now that they can treat us however they would like: They can miss deadlines, refuse to follow directions, fail to show up to work, etc. What is our recourse? We can fire them, but they can in turn seek employment at the Web site.”

The newspaper staff began posting the articles it produced on mySpace and its photos on Flickr; the Web site, meanwhile, began posting content from the Associated Press and the university’s sports information department in place of the newspaper’s. A note that the Web site’s managers posted in early November said: “There have been some interesting developments inside the offices of The Daily O’Collegian. In short, the newsroom has started a protest and is withholding all content from the Web site. Please be patient in the coming days.”

Alumni, who are among the primary users of ocolly.com, have been anything but patient. In comments appended to the Web site note about the controversy, one wrote: “As an alumni who relies on the O’Colly web site as a means to stay informed and connected to the University I have a couple of comments. First, I am entirely supportive of the idea of an exclusively student run publication to the extent is practical and possible. However, I think it shows a ridiculous amount of immature and unprofessional behavior to ‘withhold’ information from the web site in the name of a disagreement. The editors’ attempts to bolster their position at the expense of this website is childish at best. Forgive the cliché, but two wrongs don’t make a right. Editors: Resolve this problem like the proficient and qualified leaders that you surely are. Shutting down the flow of information indeed cannot be the answer.”

**Quinnipiac**

The situation at this small private college in Connecticut might be seen as evidence that efforts by administrators to stem the flow information on their campuses often backfires. In this instance, a policy that the university’s president hoped would stop campus discussions from becoming a “press conference to the world” landed Quinnipiac in Sunday’s *New York Times* (and now on *Inside Higher Ed*) in an unflattering way.
The seeds of the controversy were sown during the last academic year, when university administrators grew troubled when the weekly student publication reported on its Web site about an incident in which two male basketball players got into trouble for allegedly urinating in public. Quinnipiac administrators, who had not seen the student paper’s article, were unhappy when they received calls from reporters at local newspapers asking them to respond to the *Quinnipiac Chronicle*’s article. They introduced a policy (after consultation with the newspaper’s editors) mandating that articles would not appear on the Web site until after they had appeared in print.

As President John Lahey described it in a speech to the student government association in September, as reported by the *Quinnipiac Chronicle*: “What was decided [last year] was that the electronic version would come out at the same time as the hard-copy version so at least dinosaurs like me who read the hard copy version get an opportunity to read it before the external world hears about it.”

This August, editors at the student publication itched to write an article about a racial incident that was revealed to students and staff in a campuswide e-mail message from Quinnipiac’s dean of students. Because the first print issue of the *Chronicle* was not planned until mid-September, the paper’s editors planned to publish an article on its Web site — but administrators put the kibosh on their plans, saying it would violate the policy established the previous year.

In mid-September, Braff, the editor, criticized the administration’s policy in an editorial that questioned whether it was legitimate to award a free press award named for the former CBS newsman Fred Friendly when its own policies seemed inconsistent with his memory.

“Before the university hands out awards to world-renowned journalists for their courageous preservation of arguably the most important right we as Americans hold, freedom of speech, they should take a look at themselves in the mirror,” Braff wrote. “They might find the reflection surprising.”

That column and a subsequent article about the situation in a local newspaper brought Braff a harshly worded letter last month from the university’s vice president and dean of students, Manuel C. Carreiro, which the *New York Times* quoted as saying: “Please understand that any disregard for university or Student Center policies, or any public statement by you expressing disagreement with such policies, will seriously place your position and organization at risk with the university.”

A university spokeswoman, Lynn Bushnell, said in an e-mail message Sunday that she did not believe Carreiro’s letter represented a threat to Braff’s position as editor. In a statement she released earlier, she said: “We do not discipline students who criticize the university or its policies. We do discipline students who fail to follow clearly established policies. However, student leaders, especially those in paid positions, are expected to generally be supportive of university policies. If they disagree with established policies, we expect them to go through normal administrative channels to try to change policies.”

Administrators and Braff and other editors have been discussing possible changes to the campus’s policies; they met last Wednesday. But the two sides appear far apart in their perceptions of whether the prohibition on publishing articles on the Web site without the approval of campus administrators (which has been granted in a small number of circumstances, mostly related to sporting events) represents denial of free speech.

Braff said in an open letter to the president this fall: “It is apparent from your actions and statements that you are trying (and succeeding) to limit our outreach and access. As a private institution, Quinnipiac is not required to adhere to the First Amendment. However, the administration’s recent actions are a threat to freedom of the press on our campus.”
Bushnell, the vice president for public affairs, said that the policy on Web publication is meant to protect the students, not impair their rights. “The policy is intended to reduce the potential for serious error in light of a student’s enthusiasm to release ‘breaking news,’ ” she said.

But Lahey’s own words suggest that he believes some campus conversations should take place outside the view of student or other news media. He told the student government group this fall: “I frankly don’t want to talk about diversity in this kind of forum, or anything else that is remotely sensitive and not purely factual. But I am open to exploring with student government how the student body can have serious discussions about sensitive matters, and not open to newspaper reporting, for factual purposes.”

In an e-mail message early Monday, Braff said: “The policies in place right now are preventing the student journalists on this campus from following through with the techniques we learn in the classroom. However, I am pleased that the administration now seems willing to talk about it, and am hopeful something can be worked out relatively soon.”

— Doug Lederman
The importance of intellectual community

By GEORGE E. WALKER, CHRIS M. GOLDE, LAURA JONES, ANDREA CONKLIN BUESCHEL, and PAT HUTCHINGS

Anna is a brand-new doctoral student, and she has been looking forward to returning to academe after being away for a few years. She has thought a lot about her research and teaching interests and is thrilled when she sees a flyer announcing a departmental seminar by a well-known scholar in her field. She knows she is unlikely to have an opportunity to question him in person again, so she prepares some ideas to try out for the discussion after the talk.

Anna is pleased to see lots of people at the seminar, including many of the senior faculty members. It is exactly the kind of experience she has been hoping for—a setting in which all the members of the department come together to discuss the big ideas in the field. A reception is planned for after the talk, so Anna looks forward to meeting more of her colleagues in an informal setting.

The talk is everything Anna hoped for, and, as the presentation concludes, she knows exactly what question she wants to ask, albeit a little nervously. Marshaling her courage, she is one of the first with a hand in the air. But again and again, she is passed over, and she soon realizes that all of the people asking questions are senior faculty members.

It also begins to dawn on Anna that the questions she's hearing are not really questions; they are more like speeches, not really intended to invite engagement with the speaker, and are unrelated to other "questions." Anna turns to the veteran grad student next to her with a quizzical look.

"What's going on?"

"It's always like this," he whispers. "The faculty use these events to one-up each other and rehash old arguments." She'll get to know the pattern soon enough, he suggests, pointing out that most grad students don't bother attending anymore because they end up just talking to each other, not to the faculty members or the guest.

He's right, Anna thinks. The crowd includes only a scattering of graduate students. And though she hasn't completely given up on meeting the speaker at the reception afterward, Anna realizes that her earlier enthusiasm is fast evaporating. With the beginnings of a hollow feeling in her chest, she wonders if she has been misleading herself about being a part of this community.

* * *

Doctoral students bring different motivations to their work, but most want to be surrounded by others who share their passion. They long to be part of an intellectual community, and they are right to want that because intellectual community is not simply a feel-good atmosphere. It is the foundation for the core work of doctoral education: building knowledge.

The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching recently spent five years working with selected academic departments to improve the effectiveness of doctoral education. The Carnegie Initiative on the Doctorate involved 84 departments in six fields: chemistry, education, English, history, mathematics, and neuroscience. Over the course of the project, participating departments made a
commitment to examine their own purposes and effectiveness, to implement changes in response to their findings, and to monitor the impact of those changes. Carnegie’s role included visiting the departments, interviewing campus team members, and bringing project participants together (sometimes by discipline, sometimes by theme) to report on their progress, learn from one another, and help us make sense of their experiences in ways that others can build on. In addition, both faculty members and students participated in projectwide surveys, the results of which served as rich grist for discussion and debate about the preparation of scholars.

We fully expected to focus with our campus partners on new ways to think about, say, the dissertation and the qualifying exam. We expected to concentrate on new directions for the disciplines and their implications for the future of doctoral education. We expected debate around the practices of mentoring and advising. What we did not fully anticipate was the importance that intellectual community would come to have in the project’s work, and the extent to which students would contribute to, shape, and enrich that community. Again and again, the faculty members and students we encountered seized on the concept of intellectual community as central to the character and quality of doctoral training.

Intellectual community influences, among other things, how people wrestle with ideas (is there honest exchange or hostile subversion?); how teaching is valued (do people recognize which faculty members and graduate students are good teachers?); and how students engage with senior colleagues (do faculty patronize students or are they open to the potential of junior colleagues?). It also affects how failure is treated (are risks supported or avoided?); how people work together (is collaboration actively promoted by the structures of the department?); how independence and creativity are encouraged (do students have multiple, planned opportunities to tackle new questions and projects?); and how the department and its members stay connected to the field (is there energy and excitement in work that is pushing new frontiers?). All of those facets, and many others, affect not only the intellectual life of the department, but the formation of scholars and the contributions they will be prepared to make as stewards in the multiple settings in which they work and live.

Because intellectual community is intangible, it rarely gets the attention that goes to more concrete elements of doctoral education, like the curriculum or qualifying exam. Yet its implications are significant. Students who do not become engaged with the departmental community are more likely to drop out. And a recent study from Harvard University found, in a significant shift from prior generations, that new faculty members are more likely to value collegiality over salary. If departments are to be competitive in attracting and retaining talented faculty members and students, they must concern themselves with issues of intellectual community.

Paradoxically, given its importance, intellectual community is difficult to pinpoint. In fact, it is often most noticeable by its absence, as in Anna’s story. Indeed, some people would claim that doctoral programs are settings in which independent intellect trumps intellectual community—and that the purpose of the Ph.D. is to identify and cultivate individual genius. But, in fact, individual achievements may not be as individual as they seem. For both novice and experienced scholars, intellectual energy and passion are triggered by engagement with the field and its pressing questions. In that sense, intellectual community has a kind of chicken-and-egg quality: Ideas are both magnets for it and products of it.

What qualities make intellectual communities more vibrant, enriching, stimulating, welcoming, and suited to the formation of scholars and the building of knowledge? First, they have a shared purpose—a commitment to help students develop into the best scholars possible so that they, in turn, may contribute to the creation and growth of knowledge. Strong intellectual communities are also:
Diverse and multigenerational. True intellectual exchange must include a wide range of opinions that challenge and inform thinking. Scholars who are not actively involved in an environment of diverse viewpoints and healthy debate may find their work intellectually malnourished. Often doctoral programs approach the topic of diversity as a concern for numbers of people who can be counted in different ways-and attention to access is a crucial agenda. But an equally important motivation for diversity is to ensure access to a wide range of viewpoints that enrich intellectual exchange. In addition, a vibrant intellectual community is one in which students are integrated as junior colleagues. Indeed, a key finding of our research is just how great a contribution students, who bring fresh perspectives, can make to the intellectual life of a department.

Flexible and forgiving. Mistakes can be a source of strength. Unfortunately, however, departments are often structured and supported in ways that leave little time and few resources for projects that might not pan out, and in an academic culture that increasingly values "productivity," the need for reflection and thought is profoundly undervalued. Creating a space-literally and metaphorically-to try out new ideas, to "take a flyer," to play, and to step back and reflect on what has been learned is essential.

Respectful and generous. Without creating a climate of political correctness, it is necessary to treat one another respectfully regardless of differing opinions. Understanding that one person's success does not come at the expense of another's, scholars should also share opportunities ("Have you seen this grant application?"); intellectual resources ("Here are three articles you might find helpful"); and connections ("Let me introduce you to Professor X because you will find each other's work interesting"). Generosity seems to flourish when senior faculty members are confident in their own expertise and assume the responsibility to serve as mentors to the next generation of scholars.

Each of those elements of intellectual community—shared purpose, diversity, flexibility, and generosity—advances knowledge, ideas, and the formation of scholars. But intellectual community is not simply a matter of ambiance, and it does not happen by accident or by magic. Work is required. Faculty members and students (who need not always wait for faculty members) must look for and seize opportunities, putting in place whatever activities, strategies, and structures are most conducive to community in their setting. Occasionally that may mean developing new activities, but it may well be that reshaping existing elements and features of the program will bring significant benefits. In any event, the need is not only for continuous nurturing of and attention to the quality of intellectual community; it is for concrete actions that promote such community.

For example, while we have noted that important breakthroughs are more likely in settings that allow for risk taking and failure, how can that permission to fail be systematically tapped as a source of learning? A historian with whom we worked proposed one concrete answer: a seminar series in which speakers describe projects that didn't work, and how they proceeded from those failures-making visible a process that is otherwise invisible, mysterious, and even scary.

Strong intellectual communities also:

Engage students fully in the life of the department. A department with a healthy intellectual community involves students in serving on committees, hosting outside scholars, planning events, being mentors to junior students, and shaping policy. Students (especially those at the beginning of their program) need explicit invitations and routines for such engagement. For instance, in response to the type of problem that we described at the beginning through Anna's story, the history department at the University of Pittsburgh has instituted a rule for one of its seminar series: The first three questions must come from students. That small gesture speaks volumes.
Collaborate on the curriculum. Like the work that goes into a set of departmental goals, curriculum design and course development can bring people together around questions of purpose, as they often quickly move from discussions of specific content to larger debates about what knowledge scholars in the discipline should acquire. For instance, faculty members in the School of Education at the University of Colorado at Boulder engaged in lengthy discussions about what students should know and be able to do. Although the process was often contentious, there is now a clear understanding, among both faculty members and students, of what course work and thus what content and skills are expected of all students. That understanding informs a continuing revision of other aspects of the doctoral program, including comprehensive exams and expectations for the dissertation. Similarly, in the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor chemistry department, doctoral students have opportunities to work with faculty members on the design of undergraduate curriculum—again a chance both to debate ideas and build professional community.

Share research across boundaries. Every department has program subareas, and those are often lively intellectual communities in themselves. One strategy for creating intellectual community is to create research seminars that bridge subspecialties; such connections are especially important as disciplinary boundaries blur. Connections with others in different subareas can lead to new collaborations, especially if the department invites students to organize such activities.

Open classroom doors. For graduate students, seeing how and what others teach is an opportunity not only to expand their pedagogical repertoire but also to observe various modes of explanation, different metaphors, and other models for transforming key ideas in the field. For faculty members, that approach communicates an interest in the work of colleagues and students and also provides a chance to reflect on their own teaching. Departments where classroom doors are open, metaphorically and otherwise, are settings for building a particular kind of intellectual community that some are calling a “teaching commons.”

Set aside time for reflection. Many of our partners in the Carnegie Initiative on the Doctorate use departmental retreats as a time to step away from day-to-day demands. Agendas vary from a focused attempt to solve a specific problem to a wide-ranging program that includes many different opportunities to think, discuss, argue, and create. Setting aside time to think—and to build the community in which careful thought is possible—sends a powerful signal.

Create physical spaces for community. Much of the research on organizational culture points to the value of informal interaction. Although, by definition, that is not something that can be planned, the chances that it will happen increase when there are kitchens, lounges, bulletin boards, and electronic spaces where department members can connect with others. In that spirit, the English department at Texas A&M University at College Station provides refreshments for students each week at a regular time and invites them to get together in a new lounge to talk about whatever issues are important to them.

Encourage social events. Although intellectual community requires more than potlucks and softball games, social activities clearly strengthen a community that already has intellectual ties. Many math departments, for instance, have a tradition of afternoon teas—informal times when students and faculty gather to discuss ideas and problems. Such events allow students to get to know faculty members in a relaxed setting.

There are many ways to promote intellectual community, but it is important not to simply create occasions but to ensure that they actually foster the intellectual and professional development of graduate students. Each strategy must be evaluated in light of the outcomes it is intended to produce. In addition, even if a robust intellectual community exists, there are always new members who need to be brought into the intellectual life of the department.
That point was brought home to us by the response of graduate students to our survey, in which we asked them to "tell us anything you would like us to know about your sense of belonging to a community." Many respondents wrote eloquently about their experiences, both positive and negative. A student from an English department said: "The sense of community at my institution was actually one of the deciding factors that led me to choose my program over similar programs at other institutions. Especially within my subfield, I find that my colleagues are ready and willing to help each other learn, to confer with each other about each other's current research, and to share our experiences and resources (especially when it comes to teaching). There isn't the sense of cutthroat competition I found at other institutions I visited when I was a prospective student. Over all, I'd say that the collegiality among graduate students enhances the learning environment my institution provides."

Those words speak to the importance of intellectual community in the earliest stage of doctoral work—indeed, as an influence on the choice of program. With that in mind, some programs have paid special attention to how students enter and become part of their department.

The diversity of students' backgrounds, ages, races, and academic preparation—"a strength in an intellectual sense"—can be especially challenging. To try to deal with that diversity—to respect and encourage it but also ensure students meet the goals of the program—the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor's School of Education has restructured its first-year experience, instituting a core curriculum for all new students. In addition to giving them a consistent and coherent experience of taking classes together and sharing new experiences, that approach is intended to "enrich students' common experiences prior to their engaging in deep specialization."

Several Carnegie Initiative on the Doctorate programs have also developed structured mentoring programs for entering students. The math department at the University of Southern California, for example, assigns to new students both a faculty member and a senior graduate-student mentor, ensuring two different points of access to the departmental community.

As new students become more experienced members of the departmental community, it is important to shift roles from passive recipient to more active contributor—or, as psychologist Jerome Bruner puts it, between "learning about" and "learning to be." How does that transition, a crucial one for all doctoral students, occur?

According to the students we surveyed, informal activities are most common, such as giving and receiving feedback from fellow students and being mentors to other students. The good news is that students seem to have found ways to learn from one another. But we found missed opportunities as well; departments could take better advantage of existing structures to involve students in more formal aspects of the community—such as departmental committees on hiring and admission. Those experiences can give students real practice with the range of roles they will encounter in professional settings and significantly increase their engagement in the community.

The data also suggest that whereas students are comfortable with each other, many have not yet found ways to engage with faculty members, either formally or informally. One simple route to this end is to ask students about their experiences. Several of the initiative's departments had successful "town-hall meetings—open discussions that allowed students to offer feedback. Both faculty members and students report learning a great deal that they didn't expect from those meetings. Such interaction across roles and generations ensures that a community not only casts a wide net for good ideas, but fosters students' development as full participants.
Finally, several of the initiative’s programs have placed special emphasis on developing the professional and intellectual identities of students. Consider, for example, the interdisciplinary program in neuroscience at Georgetown University. With an eye toward reducing the sense of hierarchy that separates faculty members and students, the program employs course work, experiential learning, and "neurolunch—a forum for students to present research to a group of faculty members and students. Doctoral students are also expected, for example, to develop an annual research seminar to promote communication among scientists, gain feedback, and develop practical presentation skills. In addition, they are asked to serve on administrative committees such as those for admissions, curriculum, and student advising.

Larger than the sum of its activities and structures, intellectual community is both a reflection and a product of the rich exchange of ideas and perspectives that characterizes scholarly life at its best. It is knowledge centered but also relationship based. And its importance lies in creating environments in which all qualified students can succeed as responsible stewards of their disciplines, academic citizens, and contributors to the larger society.

Indeed, focusing on intellectual community underlines a basic truth about graduate education: that it is, ultimately, about learning. Learning is the central business, the core task, of both students and faculty members—and the learning in question is often of a special kind because it breaks new ground and builds new knowledge. Much of the debate about higher education over the last century has been about the tension between research and teaching, and how the former crowds out the latter. Learning, and the intellectual community that nurtures such learning, may just be the nexus where those two functions come together in more productive, integrative ways in doctoral education. And, of course, those are also the conditions in which the formation of scholars can occur most productively.

George E. Walker is vice president for research and dean of the graduate school at Florida International University. Chris M. Golde is associate vice provost for graduate education at Stanford University. Laura Jones is director of heritage services and university archaeologist at Stanford. Andrea Conklin Bueschel is a senior program officer with the Spencer Foundation. Pat Hutchings is vice president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. This essay is adapted from their book, The Formation of Scholars: Rethinking Doctoral Education for the Twenty-First Century, to be published next month by Jossey Bass. Copyright © 2008. This material is used by permission of John Wiley & Sons Inc.
International study finds U.S. 15-year-olds behind the curve in science

By PETER SCHMIDT

The results of an international assessment of scientific literacy among 15-year-olds being released today shows American students to be scoring slightly below the average for the group of 30 nations that sponsored the test, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

Sixteen of the 29 other nations in which the test was administered late last year posted average scores higher than that of the United States.

The United States posted an average score of 489 on a 1,000-point scale (with the mean set at 500), placing it just above the Slovak Republic and Spain, and just below France and Iceland. The top scorer was Finland, with an average score of 563, followed by Canada, Japan, and New Zealand.

Of the 30 OECD nations, 25, including the United States, are classified by the World Bank as high-income. The international scientific-literacy assessment also was administered in 27 non-OECD "jurisdictions" (which include nations and entities like Hong Kong) representing more of a cross-section of the world in terms of wealth. In comparisons with participants in that group, the United States fared better, outscoring 19.

A close examination of the results for the United States shows that racial and ethnic gaps in educational performance contributed to the nation's mediocre showing. The average score for non-Hispanic white 15-year-olds in the United States was well above the international average, at 523, but black U.S. students posted a mean score of 409—a below the averages for every other OECD nation and all but eight of the 27 non-OECD nations and jurisdictions. The average score for Asian-American students was a 499, while the average for Hispanic-American students was 439.

Despite the lingering differences between racial and ethnic groups, the United States appears to have no gender gap in scientific literacy among 15-year-olds, with both boys and girls on average earning the same score. Among the OECD nations as a whole, boys slightly outscored girls, although the picture varies widely from nation to nation, with girls scoring considerably higher in Turkey, Greece, and many of the jurisdictions outside the OECD.

The scientific-literacy test, administered by the OECD's Program for International Student Assessment, or PISA, involved a two-hour pencil-and-paper examination and a 30-minute background questionnaire. The U.S. sampling involved 5,611 students at 166 private or public schools, and was randomly selected and weighted to be nationally representative.

The scientific-literacy test was the third international assessment administered by PISA, which measured reading literacy in 2000 and mathematics literacy in 2003. A full report on the results of the science test will be available today on a U.S. Department of Education Web site.
Junior faculty members identify colleges that treat them well

By AUDREY WILLIAMS JUNE

Brown, Stanford, and Duke Universities, and Dartmouth College are among the institutions of higher education that junior faculty members say treat new scholars especially well, says a report released today by the Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education.

The report, "Top Academic Workplaces 2005-2007," is based on a survey in which almost 7,000 tenure-track faculty members from 78 colleges and universities used a five-point scale to rate how satisfied they were in categories that included the tenure process, work and family balance, and collegiality.

The organization, which is based at Harvard's Graduate School of Education, places universities and colleges into separate categories for its assessment. Thirty-eight institutions were highly rated in at least one of a dozen work-life categories.

The authors of the report said their purpose is not to label one institution as the "greatest place to work," but instead to highlight how well institutions are doing in key areas that early-career faculty members are likely to be concerned about, said Kiernan Mathews, assistant director of the collaborative, which is also known as Coache.

The collaborative found that Brown and Stanford Universities were each rated as "exemplary" in eight of the 12 categories evaluated. Duke University was outstanding in seven categories, and Dartmouth College received high scores in six categories.

Among liberal-arts colleges, Bowdoin, Davidson, and Kenyon each received high marks in five of the areas assessed by Coache.

The new report updates a report released by the organization earlier this year (The Chronicle, February 2) by adding more institutions and including master's-level colleges. The addition resulted in colleges such as Appalachian State University and California State University at San Marcos being rated exceptionally well in some of the categories. "This just shows that their faculty are satisfied in certain areas," Mr. Mathews said of all the master's colleges represented. "These institutions can hold their own against well-resourced and prestigious institutions."

The new report also had some revelations about general job satisfaction among the faculty members surveyed. Over all, junior faculty members rated their job satisfaction as a 3.65 on the 5-point scale. Women were just slightly less satisfied than men (3.63 versus 3.66), and members of minority groups and white faculty members had satisfaction rates that were basically the same (3.64 versus 3.65).

There were much sharper differences in satisfaction rates depending on the type of institution at which faculty members were employed. Those at universities were less satisfied than those at colleges (3.60 versus 4.06), and faculty members at public universities were less satisfied than their peers at private institutions (3.60 versus 3.79).

A summary of the report is available on the collaborative's Web site.
The debate over the relative costs of the federal government’s two competing student loan programs has simmered or raged, depending on the moment, ever since the Direct Loan Program was created 15 years ago. Supporters of the direct loan program have long asserted — and various government reports have agreed — that the government-run program costs less per loan than the Family Federal Education Loan Program, due mostly to the large subsidies that the government has paid to participating banks and guarantee agencies.

Although lender groups have long complained that the figures misrepresent the picture by leaving out some key administrative and other costs of the direct loan program — and have generated competing studies to make their case — many observers have accepted the premise that the guaranteed loan program is more expensive for the government to operate.

Many college officials and student aid experts have long since tired of the argument, but the question has been far from academic. It has driven federal policy making, including legislation in two of the last three years that designed to wring tens of billions of dollars in profit out of the lender-based loan program. And it is even creeping into the 2008 presidential campaign, with several Democratic candidates have suggested that they would seek to kill or limit the “more expensive” guaranteed loan program to try to squeeze out further profits that they can re-direct toward other financial aid purposes.

While most independent analyses have shown that competition between the two student loan programs has helped taxpayers and borrowers and should be sustained, lenders perhaps rightly fear that their program could be at risk if Democrats controlled the White House as well as Congress.

So it is perhaps not surprising that student loan providers are finding a measure of satisfaction in Education Department numbers that they say show that even using the formula favored by direct loan advocates, the guaranteed loan program will, going forward, cost the government less per loan to operate than direct lending does.

The data, which were drawn from budget numbers and other reports issued recently by the department and circulated by supporters of the guaranteed loan program, suggest that in the wake of the College Cost Reduction and Access Act — which cut subsidies for lenders by more than $20 billion and added several benefits for borrowers in the direct loan program — the federal subsidy (the net budgetary costs measured as a percentage of the amount lent) for loans in direct lending will be 4.26 percent, compared to 1.72 percent for the guaranteed loan program. In other words, the direct lending program would now be about two and half times more costly to operate than its alternative is.

In many ways, such a result is hardly surprising, given the large cuts that imposed by the 2005 and 2007 budget reconciliation measures, said Kevin Bruns, executive director of America’s Student Loan Providers, which represents dozens of lenders. President Bush’s 2008 budget proposal, which proposed a $16 billion cut in subsidies to lenders, projected that the subsidy rates would be very close if the president’s proposal were carried out, Bruns noted. So after Congress sliced as much as $6 billion more out of subsidies for the guaranteed loan program, and enacted benefits such as an income-based repayment option that could add to the costs of a direct loan, “no one should be surprised that the tables have turned,” said Bruns.

For Bruns and other supporters of the lender-based student loan program, the new budget numbers mean that presidential candidates like Hillary Clinton, John Edwards and Barack Obama should stop promising to kill off the guaranteed loan program to save money. “Let’s get real — no one’s going to save money doing that, and it might even cost money,” Bruns said.
More broadly, he said, supporters of the direct loan program have consistently used the presumption that the guaranteed loan program is costlier as a primary argument in favor of direct lending. If it turns out that there is no cost advantage to direct lending, as these numbers suggest, Bruns said, “what it should mean is that cost really should no longer be a factor in criticizing the FFEL program, and it ought to become a debate about the comparative quality of the two programs and the best way to deliver loans to students. It should be about customer service, and innovation and reliability. We invite that.”

As one might expect, given the years of contention over the question of the two programs’ costs, supporters of direct lending aren’t quite ready to concede the ground that Bruns suggests — at least based on unofficial calculations that, while based on Education Department documents, have been put together by backers of the guaranteed program.

“Anybody can pick out whatever numbers they want and make whatever case they want,” said Thomas Butts, a former University of Michigan lobbyist and one-time deputy assistant U.S. education secretary who works closely with the National Direct Student Loan Coalition. “We’ll see the president’s 2009 budget in another couple of months, and if they show a change in numbers, that’s all well and good. But I don’t think it’d be much of a service to get out there at this point, prematurely, with numbers that may not mean anything. I’m not going to take anybody’s numbers other than [the White House Office of Management and Budget] and [the Congressional Budget Office].

Butts raised several questions about the numbers making the rounds this week, such as what assumptions they make about how many borrowers may be drawn into the direct loan program by income-based repayment and other new borrower benefits, and how they treat guaranteed loans that are consolidated into the direct loan program, among other things.

He also challenged Bruns’s assertion that the budget numbers — even if they were to show that direct lending now costs more to subsidize than the guaranteed loan program — would necessarily mean that savings couldn’t still be derived from cutting back the guaranteed loan program. “Once you dig into this further, and look at all the fraud and abuse stuff that keeps rolling out from different audits, there may be some other policy reasons to think about simplifying [the student loan] system,” Butts said, referring to Education Department findings that some lenders have pocketed tens or even hundreds of millions of dollars by exploiting loopholes in federal laws and rules.

Bottom line, even if and when indisputable new numbers come out: The argument is unlikely to end anytime soon. Think Hatfields and McCoys.

— Doug Lederman
Colleges move boldly on student drinking

Exploiting an exception to federal privacy laws, schools increasingly notify parents when kids are caught with alcohol

By ELIZABETH BERNSTEIN
December 6, 2007; Page D1

When Mindy and Tom Gunn sent their son away to college this fall, they expected the school to send them a bill. They didn't expect a letter saying he'd been caught drinking.

But two weeks after their son John enrolled at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, the school notified them that the 18-year-old had violated the campus drinking policy. The letter encouraged his parents to talk to him about it. And it invited them to call a school official if they had questions.

"One of my biggest fears when we sent him away was that he'd get into the party scene," says Mindy Gunn, 48, of Janesville, Wis. "I was glad to know the school will keep track of what he does and let me know."

The Virginia Tech shootings and other tragic incidents on campuses this year have shown that many colleges and universities are reluctant to reach out to parents when there are signs of trouble, such as a missing or potentially suicidal student. Citing a federal law meant to protect student privacy, many schools rope off young people's records from parents and authorities. But in one area, administrators are increasingly exploiting an exception in the law that allows them to reach out: drinking and drugs. A growing number of colleges, such as Texas Tech and Ohio University, are deciding to call mom and dad about underage drinking and illegal drug use, often at the very first signs of trouble.

In an effort to involve parents early on, the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque this fall began sending letters to parents of underage students the first time their child is caught drinking or using drugs - a toughening of their four-year-old policy of notifying parents after a second offense. Parents "have been an integral part of their sons' or daughters' lives forever," says Randy Boeglin, dean of students and director of residence life. "Our challenge then is to bring them into the partnership mode with us."

Schools say they are being spurred to create or strengthen parental-notification policies by new reports of excessive drinking on campuses, as well as worries over their own liability for students' substance-abuse problems. The concern is that student injuries related to alcohol use could give rise to lawsuits. In addition, the tragedy at Virginia Tech in April, where a troubled student killed 32 people and then himself, has served as a catalyst for schools to re-evaluate how and when they will reach out to parents.

They're also getting indirect encouragement from the U.S. Department of Education, which recently provided new guidance for colleges and universities on the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, or Ferpa, the 1974 law that protects the information in a student's educational record, including grades and
disciplinary reports. FERPA contains exceptions that allow schools to share information with parents or authorities in certain circumstances, including when the school deems there is a "health or safety emergency" or if the parents declare the student to be a tax dependent.

The college parental-notification policies for alcohol and drug violations utilize an exception added in 1998 to FERPA that allows schools to call parents if a student gets an alcohol or drug violation and is under 21 years of age. After the law was changed, some colleges created parental-notification policies, while others insisted that contacting parents would go against their goal of nurturing independence in their students.

Whose Responsibility

The alcohol exception is perhaps easier for colleges to use than exceptions for, say, health and safety, where it is harder to determine when to act. "What is a health or safety emergency? And what is an imminent risk of danger to the student? Those are nebulous terms...whereas the drug and alcohol exception has a direct tie to judicial proceedings, so it's clear whose responsibility it is to act," says Karen-Ann Broe, senior risk analyst at United Educators, a risk-management and insurance company in Chevy Chase, Md.

To ensure that all schools understand their options, last month the DOE issued three new FERPA guides: for parents, universities and K-12 schools. "We want to emphasize that you can involve parents with these students if there are problems," says LeRoy Rooker, the director of the Family Policy Compliance Office at the DOE, which administers the law.

Indeed, college administrators are eager to find a solution for alcohol and drugs, which they say are among the most pervasive and intractable health-and-safety problems on their campuses. A study published in March by the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University, or CASA, found that in 2001 there were more than 1,700 deaths from unintentional alcohol-related injuries among college students, up 6% since 1998. Also in 2001, 97,000 students were victims of alcohol-related date rape or sexual assault, and almost 700,000 students were assaulted by a student who had been binge drinking.

Comprehensive Solution

For years, colleges have been struggling to get a handle on the problem. They've made kids caught drinking illegally take online alcohol-education courses and banned alcohol advertising from sporting events. Now, more schools are seeing parents as one component in a comprehensive solution.

"Students are increasingly tied to their parents 24-7 with instant messaging, text messaging and cellphones," says Fran Cohen, dean of students and assistant vice president at the University of Rhode Island, one of the first schools to adopt a parental-notification policy, in 1999. "There's tremendous potential for parents to support the decisions of students."

But there are skeptics of the policies, as well. Some administrators worry that notifying parents at the first sign of trouble prevents students from learning to cope with their own problems. And campus health-care providers worry that the threat of parental notification will make students less likely to seek help for alcohol-related illnesses.

Even some parents are voicing concern: When the University of Missouri announced it was implementing a parental-notification policy several years ago, a number of parents wrote the school to say they felt the plan violated their children's right to privacy. The university then tweaked its proposed policy. Now, it
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sends a form at the beginning of each year to parents of new students under the age of 21 and asks them to sign and return it if they don't want to be notified that their child is using drugs or alcohol. So far in 2007, 37 parents have opted out.

Nevertheless many parents, and even students, say the notification letters can be useful. Immediately after his violation for underage drinking at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater in September, Mr. Gunn called his mom and told her a letter was coming from the university. She talked to him about being responsible and told him he would have to pay the $250 legal fine himself. (He was also put on probation for a year by the school, and ordered to take a $35 online alcohol-education course.) Now he says he hasn't been drinking since the incident. "The policy keeps kids in check," he says. "You can't really do anything and get away with it."

In May 2006, the University of Georgia ramped up its parental-notification policy. Instead of contacting parents after a second violation, administrators now send a letter home after the first offense. At the same time, the university toughened its minimum sanctions for an alcohol violation, putting students on probation for a first offense and suspending them if they get a second offense while on probation.

Last semester, the university sent out 248 notification letters to parents; 174 have gone out since the beginning of August, says Brandon Frye, assistant dean of students. But he says it's too early to tell if the policy is successful in reducing underage drinking.

'It's About Involvement'

Schools agree that for the policies to work, the key is to engage parents. "It's not just about notification, it's about involvement," says Lori Berquam, dean of students at the University of Wisconsin. In 2005, the university began calling parents of students who have alcohol or drug violations in certain circumstances, such as when a student is transferred to a detoxification center or a student gets three violations (a fourth results in suspension).

When talking to parents, Ms. Berquam or someone on her staff explains the school's concerns about their child and asks the parents if there is any background information they may be able to supply. If the school feels it is warranted, it may recommend counseling.

Tony and Lee Ann Christ say they desperately wish their son's school had reached out to them. In February 2004, their son, Brian, then a senior at the University of Virginia, called home and told his dad he needed help: He had become addicted to heroin. The elder Mr. Christ immediately took Brian out of school and sent him to rehab. In December 2004, he died of an overdose at age 22.

A Referral to Counseling

After his death, his parents learned that the university had caught their then-18-year-old son with marijuana in his room two weeks into his freshman year. The school had also caught him with beer in his room the next semester. The university's judiciary committee found him guilty of violating the school's alcohol and drug policy in both instances and mandated community service. The first time, a dean also referred him to counseling. The school never notified his parents, despite having a parental-notification policy already in place.

Officials at U.Va say the school's policy is to notify parents only after an actual arrest, or if there is reason to believe a student's health is in jeopardy. "We're trying to help students become independent adults and manage their own affairs," says Patricia M. Lampkin, vice president for student affairs. "It's a balancing act."
Brian was never arrested. And the school points out that his family did have an opportunity to observe him themselves when he took a leave from school the semester before he came out about his drug problem.

But Mr. Christ says he nevertheless wishes the school had taken the early signs more seriously. "Privacy as it's practiced today keeps parents in the dark," says Mr. Christ, 58, a stockbroker from Falls Church, Va.

This year, Mr. Christ encouraged U.Va to adopt a policy, called Brian's Rule, in which they would agree to "promptly and fully inform parents" if a dependent student's behavior was deemed destructive or illegal. The school declined to approve the plan, saying it believes its current policies are adequate.
Declining dollar has colleges scrambling to cover study-abroad costs

By KARIN FISCHER

As the dollar dips to all-time lows, study-abroad programs are feeling financial pressure, forcing colleges to cut costs, tap reserve funds, or increase charges to students.

In the last year alone, the dollar's value has tumbled 5 percent against the pound, 7 percent against the yen, 10 percent against the euro, and 14 percent against the Canadian dollar. Brian J. Whalen, president of the Forum on Education Abroad, an independent organization of study-abroad providers, estimates that the dollar's performance has forced colleges' study-abroad costs to rise 10 to 15 percent over the last several years.

Currency fluctuations, and their effect on study abroad, are nothing new, of course. In the early 1990s, the enrollment of American students in Japanese institutions fell nearly 15 percent, thanks largely to unfavorable exchange rates.

Still, the dollar's recent deterioration comes amid efforts to encourage more students to study abroad. Especially worrisome, educators say, is that the dollar has taken one of its sharper slides in Europe, which absorbs some 58 percent of all American students who study abroad, according to the Institute of International Education.

Western Europe's conversion to the euro has made the dollar's crash particularly noticeable. "In the past, we weren't facing a unified bloc like Europe," says Geoffrey Bannister, president and chief academic officer of Cultural Experiences Abroad, a for-profit provider of study-abroad programs.

Thus far, the dollar's weakness appears to have done little to dampen American students' enthusiasm for studying overseas. But study-abroad officials are concerned that a protracted decline in the dollar, which many expect, could preclude some low-income students from traveling abroad to study or shorten their visits.

The drop in the dollar, the officials say, may also accelerate trends toward study in nontraditional destinations, where a dollar stretches further.

Controlling Costs

Study-abroad administrators, however, are grappling with a more-immediate challenge: how to control costs for students already abroad and for those about to depart for January-term or spring-semester trips.

Setting fees has become a guessing game. Since the fall semester began, the value of the euro has increased more than 8.5 percent against the dollar, upending budgets.

"It wasn't that long ago that I was budgeting for a worst-case scenario of $1.45," Catherine C. Marshall, director of education abroad at Ohio University, said of the euro's value late last month. "Yesterday, it was $1.48."

At Austin College, a small, liberal-arts institution in Texas, the falling value of the dollar has meant resetting fees for many of its four-week January programs. The price for one of the faculty-led trips, a
course in Greece focusing on classical mythology and history, has been adjusted four times since it was first listed in May, from $3,955 to $4,283.

Truett Cates, director of Austin College's study-abroad office, says that just one student has withdrawn from an overseas trip because of the increased expense. Still, he worries about constantly recalculating fees, which many students begin paying 10 months in advance. He says he has asked faculty organizers to look for savings and is exploring paying more of the costs up front to avoid further drops in value.

"I don't want to nickel-and-dime students," Mr. Cates says.

Other program directors say they are renegotiating arrangements with local providers, cutting back on side excursions, and making contingency plans if costs continue to soar. Eric Lund, director of international and off-campus studies at St. Olaf College, in Minnesota, says he has done away with several lectures he had planned on a trip he will lead this January to South Africa, saving the cost of speakers’ fees.

Mr. Lund said St. Olaf officials have been supportive of overseas study, recently increasing his office's budget by $300,000 to support semester-long programs abroad.

Elsewhere, study-abroad administrators say they have been able to mitigate recent cost swings with supplemental funds or by dipping into reserves. Dickinson College is diverting about 2 percent of its revenue from study-abroad fees to ensure that it has adequate reserves to cover extra expenses, said Mr. Whalen, of the Forum on Education Abroad, who is also an associate dean at Dickinson and executive director of the Office of Global Education there.

**Overhead Expenses**

Campuses with larger study-abroad programs can also hedge against currency shifts by buying euros and pounds on the futures market, locking in guaranteed rates.

Buying currency ahead of time can shield colleges from midyear surprises, but institutions that operate their own centers abroad still are paying more for rent, utilities, and faculty salaries as the dollar falters.

Dartmouth College, for example, pays a daily stipend in euros rather than dollars to faculty directors on its European programs, so they are not penalized by the exchange rate, says Lindsay J. Whaley, associate dean of the faculty for international and interdisciplinary studies.

Some officials are seeking less-expensive ways to structure their programs. Dickinson has added fall-term and academic-year options on its study-abroad program in Cameroon and is considering expanding other single-semester programs to make more efficient use of existing infrastructure. Syracuse University recently opened an overseas center in Beijing but in the future may look to establish more cooperative agreements and exchanges with foreign universities, which have fewer overhead costs, says Daeya M. Malboeuf, an associate director of study abroad at the university.

Experts say that if the dollar continues to stagnate, it could drive more students toward less-pricey short-term study-abroad programs, whose popularity has grown in recent years.

And while no institution said it had plans to pull out of Paris or leave London behind, rising prices could further fuel a growing shift toward studying in less-traditional locations in Africa, Asia, and South America, where exchange rates are more favorable.
Mr. Bannister, of Cultural Experiences Abroad, says the number of students enrolling in his group’s program in Buenos Aires this coming spring is up 52 percent over a year ago, while those going to Prague, which has not yet converted to the euro, has increased by 150 percent.

"Paradoxically, there's a good side to the dollar's decline because it's causing students to look at different destinations," he said.

To date, however, most campus-based administrators say the dollar's tumble appears to have had little influence on students' choices, in part because of colleges' efforts to lessen the impact and in part because the steepest declines against the euro have occurred so recently.

But study-abroad officials say they worry that sticker shock could deter the very students they are trying to encourage to study overseas - those from low-income households - from going abroad. Several institutions say they are working to expand the amount of need-based aid available to students studying abroad. Daytona Beach Community College, for one, is trying to set up a long-term fund to pay for scholarships to study overseas.

John K. Hudzik, vice president for global engagement and strategic projects at Michigan State University, says colleges need to find ways to control costs "or we risk reducing access and squeezing out kids on the lower rungs of the economic ladder."
Describing Clery Act requirements, appeals court sides with university that named student in crime warning

By SARA LIPKA

How colleges should report crimes on and near their campuses is a high-stakes question that, for the first time, a federal appeals court has tried to answer.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit ruled on Wednesday in favor of Johnson & Wales University, in Providence, R.I., which a former student had sued for defamation after it named him as an assailant in a crime alert. Colleges are required to issue “timely warnings” under the federal campus-crime law known as the Clery Act, but how fast those warnings should come and what kind of information they should include is the matter of much debate, and some administrators have pushed for more guidance from the U.S. Department of Education (The Chronicle, December 7).

The unanimous decision by a three-judge panel, which affirms a lower court’s ruling, says that Johnson & Wales handled the situation appropriately.

"The need to assure safety and security for campus communities counsels that doubts should be resolved in favor of notification," wrote Judge Bruce M. Selya. "School officials must act expeditiously to satisfy their responsibilities under the Clery Act."

At issue in the case, Christopher Havlik v. Johnson & Wales University, was an alert the institution posted on September 21, 2004. The statement named Mr. Havlik and his fraternity, Zeta Beta Tau, in describing an incident that had occurred four days earlier on a public street near the university’s campus. Some members of the fraternity had confronted other students who had declined to join, the notification said. They showed a knife, it said, and Mr. Havlik struck one of the nonmembers, who was later determined to have a fractured skull.

The university’s safety-and-security office drafted the alert, and its general counsel, Barbara L. Bennett, approved it.

In separate judicial proceedings at the university, Mr. Havlik was dismissed from Johnson & Wales. He appealed that decision through the university’s grievance procedure and lost.

Meanwhile, the Providence police pressed charges against Mr. Havlik, and a state court judge found him guilty of assault. He appealed that decision to a higher state court, and a jury acquitted him. Then he sued the university in federal court.

Mr. Havlik accused Johnson & Wales of defamation, for naming him in its alert, and breach of contract, for not providing what he considered a fair appeal process for his expulsion. A federal judge ruled for the university, emphasizing its "legal duty to publish the crime alert" and finding its appeal process reasonable. Mr. Havlik appealed that decision to the First Circuit court.

A Rare Case

Clery Act cases do not frequently turn up in court because, according to a 1998 amendment, colleges cannot be sued under the law. In this case, however, Mr. Havlik argued that the so-called immunity was
invalid because the college had acted with malice. (He said the vice president for student affairs had called his fraternity brothers “thugs.”)

Wednesday's ruling finds no ill will on the part of Johnson & Wales. Ms. Bennett, the general counsel, included Mr. Havlik's name and fraternity in the alert, the opinion says, because she "believed that the information would be useful to the campus community."

More broadly, the ruling affirms colleges' judgment in complying with the law. The Clery Act "stipulates no hard-and-fast rules but, instead, gives institutions of higher learning substantial leeway to decide how notices should be phrased and disseminated so as most effectively to prevent future incidents," it says. The opinion also gives colleges room to decide whether crimes that occur off their campuses merit timely warnings.

"We reject the notion that the coverage of the act turns exclusively on the use of a surveyor's theodolite," it says. "Reasonableness is the beacon by which institutions must steer, and reasonableness is not totally constrained by mathematically precise metes and bounds."

The university's lawyers praised the judges' decision for what they saw as common sense. "They enunciated a rule of reason, which I think is the proper way to look at this act," said Paul V. Curcio, of the Providence-based firm Adler Pollock & Sheehan.

Mr. Havlik's lawyer did not respond to requests for comment late on Wednesday.

Other colleges should consider this case a green light to issue specific information in timely warnings, said S. Daniel Carter, senior vice president of Security on Campus, a watchdog group.

"This case clearly demonstrates that they have the law on their side," he said. "If an institution feels it's important to identify a known suspect in a timely warning, they have legal protection to do so."

Colleges are typically reluctant to name students in such alerts because of the prospect of being found liable in cases like this one, Mr. Carter says. Now they can do so confidently, he says, but they should use terms like "alleged perpetrator" rather than Johnson & Wales's definitive "assailant."

Still, Mr. Carter says, this case shows that colleges "ought to err on the side of warning their communities."
Graduate schools improve on preventing Ph.D. dropouts, study finds

By JOHN GRAVOIS

Academe has gotten used to bad news when it comes to statistics on how many doctoral students actually finish their Ph.D.'s, but a landmark study of doctoral-completion rates has turned up some optimistic results: American universities appear to be getting better at retaining their Ph.D. students.

That is one of the main findings of a new book, *Ph.D. Completion and Attrition*, released today by the Council of Graduate Schools.

The book, which is the first monograph in a series to be published as part of the council's Ph.D. Completion Project, reports that a quarter of doctoral students who entered Ph.D. programs in the 1996-97 academic year had dropped out by their fifth year of study.

By contrast, students who enrolled in doctoral programs in 2000 had an easier time sticking around past the fourth year. Only 19 percent of them had left by year five, the book says.

Those numbers are significant, said Lewis Siegel, a dean in residence at the council, because most Ph.D. students who abandon their doctoral programs do so before the fifth year.

"More than two-thirds of the students who will ultimately withdraw have done so by the end of their fourth year," said Mr. Siegel. "You have a much higher chance of completing if you've gotten through the four years." In other words, attrition rates seem to be slowly but steadily improving over time.

Graduate schools have been struggling for years to stanch the flow of graduate students who abandon their Ph.D. programs, and the council's data suggest that something has been working. Now the question is, What is that something?

Later stages of the Ph.D. Completion Project will try to answer just that.

The new book reports data collected from doctoral programs at about 30 universities over a time span of roughly 10 years. It analyzes the differences between doctoral completion and attrition rates across fields and subfields, and for different institutional types and class sizes. (*The Chronicle* reported on many of the findings that went into the book in July.) Now, having reported those statistics, the council hopes to study how to change them.

"This is just the baseline," said Robert Sowell, the council's vice president for programs and operations. "This is where we start."

In the next stages of the project, which is set to last until 2010, the participating universities will try to test the effects of various strategies and interventions-like increasing the use of mentors, adopting family-friendly policies, and modifying admissions practices-on completion and attrition rates.

The council also plans to release statistics on Ph.D. completion and attrition rates broken down by gender, race, and citizenship in the spring.

More data from the book can be found on the council's Web site.
MONTCLAIR, N.J. -- It was after 1 a.m. on a Sunday when college freshman Amanda Phillips arrived at the train station. She was nervous about walking alone in the dark to her dorm at Montclair State University.

So Phillips activated a GPS tracking device on her school-issued cell phone that would instantly alert campus police to her whereabouts if she didn’t turn it off in 20 minutes. After a five-minute walk, she safely reached her dorm room, locked the door behind her and turned off the timer.

"I think this is a great idea. It makes me feel a lot safer. And it's not even that expensive," said Phillips, an 18-year-old from Delaware.

Had she not turned the device off, an alarm would have sounded at the campus police station, and a computer screen would have displayed a dot with her location, along with her photo and other personal details.

Montclair is one of the first schools in the U.S. to use GPS tracking devices, which along with other security technology are increasingly being adopted on campuses in the wake of the Virginia Tech massacre last spring.

Students can use the timer, or, in an emergency, activate the GPS technology to instantly alert police.

"Maybe they're hiding and are hurt. Maybe they wouldn't want to talk because they’re hiding behind a desk and the gunman's in the room. They'd have a better chance of being located," said campus police Sgt. Paul Giardino.

So far, not many students are using the feature. The university, which has 13,000 undergraduates, said the timers get turned on only about five to 10 times a week.

In the little more than a year that the system has been fully operational, the alarms have gone off only about once per month, and it was a false alarm every time, usually because someone forgot to turn off a timer.

Giardino said the false alarms aren't nuisances - they are training opportunities for the 32-member police force. "I can get my guys to get out and learn how to handle these," he said.

Two years ago, well before Virginia Tech, Montclair State made the cell phones mandatory for all first-year students living in dorms at the largely commuter school in suburban New York City. Now, all new full-time undergraduates - whether they live on campus or off - are required to buy them. About 6,000 students have them now.

Karen Pennington, vice president for campus life, said she and others on campus wanted to use the phones for instruction - letting professors take instant polls in class, for instance - and for safety as well.

While students praise the safety features, some grumble that the phones are mandatory and that they must be bought through the school for $210 per semester, on top of tuition and fees totaling more than $7,600 a year.
The phones come with free, unlimited text messaging, the capability to read campus e-mail, free calls after 7 p.m. and free calls to other Sprint phones, but only 50 minutes per month of anytime talking. Students must pay extra to add minutes. And though students pay by the semester, the phones work year-round.

The university contracted with the New York-based upstart Rave Wireless for the safety technology and Sprint for the cell phone service. Montclair State said it is not making money on the deal. It said the total cost is around $2 million per year - almost exactly what the school collects from students to fund it.

Sprint added cell towers so that virtually every inch of the campus gets service.

Raju Rishi, co-founder of Rave, said Montclair State was the first to use the safety feature, called Rave Guardian. A half-dozen other schools, including nearby Fairleigh Dickinson University and the University of North Carolina, now use similar systems, Rishi said.

Rishi said campus police are not monitoring the movements of students who don't turn on the GPS feature. "There's no Big Brother," Rishi said. "You need a subpoena to locate somebody against their will."

Security on Campus, a King of Prussia, Pa.-based advocacy group, gave Montclair State an award for the innovation. The group's vice president, Catherine Bath, said the technology will probably become more widespread.

"When I'm out walking my dog at night, I would love to have one of these," she said.
A wide-ranging plan to use Kentucky’s community college system to improve the state’s economic standing was unveiled Monday night at Bowling Green Technical College before a gathering of local legislators and industry leaders.

The initiative, labeled by the Kentucky Community and Technical College System as the Plan for a Competitive Commonwealth 2008-2020, outlines a mission to address the state’s economic needs over the next decade.

The plan outlined Monday by KCTCS President Michael McCall includes measures to improve the state’s workforce education, allow more students to transfer into Kentucky’s four-year colleges and universities and offer more remediation services to improve overall readiness for college and the work force.

McCall said the goals of the plan would be met if the General Assembly were to increase its budget allocation to KCTCS by $32 million each year until 2020.

“We know that funds are tight and that the General Assembly is dealing with a lot of concerns, but we also need to let you know what it takes to be adequately funded,” said McCall, speaking to an audience that included House Speaker Rep. Jody Richards, D-Bowling Green, state Sen. Brett Guthrie, R-Bowling Green, and Sen. Richie Sanders, R-Franklin.

Ultimately, the plan proposes the following outcomes:

• Increasing enrollment in the state’s community and technical colleges to 115,800 by 2020;

• Tripling the number of annual transfers into four-year institutions from 3,100 to 11,334 by 2020, with a total of 114,000 students transferring during a 12-year span;

• Increasing full- and part-time faculty from 6,315 to 10,500;

• Increasing from 43,687 to 57,374 the number of students in workforce training programs, a total of 345,500 students enrolled in the programs during a 12-year span;

• Enrolling 15 percent of high school students in dual credit college programs, an increase from the current total of nine percent;

• Increasing enrollment in adult education and literacy programs from four percent of Kentucky’s adult population without a high school diploma or GED to 10 percent.

Created in 1997 by state legislation, KCTCS and its 16 schools provide workforce training for thousands of students statewide.
Research conducted by KCTCS leadership indicates that 83 percent of new jobs created in the state during the next seven years will require some sort of post-secondary education, but not more than an associate’s degree. McCall referred to these as “middle skills jobs.”

A series of dialogue sessions with CEOs across the state conducted by McCall and Utah consulting firm The Clements Group revealed that Kentucky’s industry leaders believed that the state faced a shortage in the number of nurses, medical technical professionals, teachers, skilled trade workers and information technology professionals.

Bowling Green industry leaders who participated in the dialogue sessions indicated that they will not have a large enough labor pool locally from which to draw employee candidates for non-technically skilled entry-level, technically skilled trade or supervisory-level positions in the next three years.

In the short term, BGTC looks to address the issue by requesting $975,000 from the state in the upcoming budget session for the construction of an allied health building on campus.

BGTC President and CEO Nathan Hodges has led a school that has seen enrollment of traditional students more than triple from about 1,400 to more than 5,000 since 2000.

Hodges said he hoped the KCTCS plan would have the ultimate effect of providing access to higher learning to everyone who wants it while helping those unprepared for higher education to receive the remediation skills necessary to help them adapt.

“This is an important time for all of us as we plan for the future of the commonwealth, and I think Dr. McCall’s plan will be mapping the way for us over the next 12 years,” Hodges said.